

Child's Name: _____

Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program:

What I Learned in VPK! Child Portfolio



My Child's VPK Experience

Child's Name

attended VPK during the _____ School Year Summer
Year (Circle One)

Program Information: _____
Program Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone Number

This Child Portfolio was completed by _____

About the Child Portfolio

The purpose of this portfolio is to provide parents with information and guidance to continue preparing their children for Kindergarten. Parents should utilize this booklet to understand what their children were taught in the VPK program, areas in which their children excelled, and in areas for which they may need additional supports.

The information provided in this portfolio is divided into eight domains listed on page three. Each domain contains a brief description and examples of what is learned, as well as the list of VPK standards. A standard is an expectation of what children should know and be able to do by the end of the VPK year. Each standard is rated on a scale of "Look What I Learned," meaning the child shows understanding of the concept; "Help Me Practice," meaning the child has not completely mastered the concept; and "Help Me Learn," meaning the child has not learned the concept and might need additional supports to learn the concept.

This information can be used by parents and families to work with their children and enhance their skills where needed prior to entering Kindergarten. This information can also be shared by the parents with the child's Kindergarten teacher so they can understand the child's skills level. Also included in this portfolio are Online Resources for Parents, a brief one-page summary of the child's VPK accomplishments, Techniques for Reading to Your Child, and space for parent notes.

Online Resources for Parents

Bright Beginnings: Includes resources and strategies designed to help parents get involved in their child's education.

<http://www.brightbeginningsfl.org/Parent/Default.aspx>

Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL): Promotes the adoption and sustained use of evidence-based early literacy learning practices by early childhood intervention practitioners, parents, and other caregivers of young children

<http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org>

Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children: Promotes policies and advances evidence-based practices that support families and enhance the optimal development of young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities.

<http://www.dec-sped.org>

Early Childhood: Where Learning Begins: Mathematical activities for parents and their 2- to 5-year-old children.

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EarlyMath/title.html>

Get Ready to Read!: Provides an easy-to-administer, research-based screening tool to early childhood educators, child care providers, and parents in order to help them prepare all children to learn to read and write.

<http://www.getreadytoread.org>

Helping Your Child Learn Math: Resource for parents to help their children learn math in everyday events.

<http://www.math.com/parents/articles/helpmath.html>

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): Focuses on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age eight.

<http://www.naeyc.org>

National Center for Early Development and Learning: Focuses on enhancing the cognitive, social and emotional development of children from birth through age eight.

<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncedl>

National Center for Learning Disabilities: Promotes high quality early education services and supports all children, including those who struggle with learning.

<http://www.nclld.org>

PBS Parents: Child development tracker with a list of general goals for children ages 4-5 in preparation for kindergarten.

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/childdevelopment>

Zero to Three: Supports the healthy development and well-being of infants, toddlers, and their families.

<http://www.zerotothree.org>

Introduction

The *Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Standards* describe skills that four-year-old children should know and be able to do by the end of their VPK experience. Fully recognizing parents as their child's first teacher, this portfolio is designed to help families understand what their children learned in the VPK Program, as well as things they can do at home to create developmentally appropriate learning environments for their children.

This Child Portfolio describes how the VPK Education Standards can be used to help children of different backgrounds, abilities, temperaments, and interests to learn and develop. Families will find examples of play activities that support children's development at home.

The eight "domains" of development that are included in the VPK Education Standards are:

- Physical Health
- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Language and Communication
- Emergent Literacy
- Mathematical and Scientific Thinking
- Social Studies and The Arts
- Motor Development.

Using the Florida VPK Education Standards with Diverse Learners

The *Florida VPK Education Standards* were not developed to be "one size fits all." Children learn at different rates and have different experiences, abilities, and interests. When adults understand and embrace these differences, trust develops, relationships grow, and healthy learning follows. Teachers must be aware of individual differences and respond to them in ways that will meet each child's needs. This is especially true when the VPK classroom includes children with disabilities, children of different cultures and ethnicities, and children whose native language is not English.



Physical Health

Physical health and learning go hand-in-hand. Physical health impacts every aspect of development. With increased coordination, balance, and strength, four-year-old children are great explorers of their environments. They are able to accept learning challenges that were out of their reach just a few short months earlier. When children are physically active and healthy, their social well-being is enhanced. By using their bodies to move, act, and react, children gain self-confidence. Their vision and hearing skills are refined in ways that facilitate language learning. They are also developing skills that enable them to be active partners in managing their health, safety, and physical fitness.

Here are examples of activities that support children's physical health at home.

- Talk about the importance of brushing and flossing teeth and practice together.
- Encourage children to wash their hands often. Talk about how germs are spread and the impact germs have on us and model good hygiene practices.
- While grocery shopping or fixing a snack, talk about choosing healthy, nutritious foods over unhealthy ones.
- Schedule regular well-child check-ups with a doctor or other health care provider.
- Take your child to the park to play on outdoor equipment.
- Teach your child to swim or take him/her to swimming lessons.

I. Physical Health			
Standard	Help Me Learn	Help Me Practice	Look What I Learned
A. Physical Health			
1. Shows characteristics of good health to facilitate learning			
2. Demonstrates visual ability to facilitate learning			
3. Exhibits auditory ability to facilitate learning			
4. Performs oral hygiene routines			
5. Shows familiarity with the role of a primary health care provider			
B. Knowledge of Wellness			
1. Shows that basic physical needs are met			
2. Follows basic health and safety rules			
3. Participates in physical fitness activities			
4. Makes wise food choices			
5. Performs some self-care tasks independently			
Notes:			

Approaches to Learning

Approaches to Learning is not about specific knowledge content or skills. It is about *how* the child learns new skills. Some four-year-olds seem to be bursting with the desire to explore and accept new challenges, while others need more structure and encouragement when trying new things. The role of parents, teachers, and other adults should be to provide opportunities for success. All children, regardless of learning style or special needs, can learn and be successful.

Here are examples of activities that encourage children to explore their environment and actively engage in learning at home.

- Ask questions that will encourage children to think, wonder, and ask more questions. Use open-ended questions that begin with who, what, when, where, why, or how, and that cannot be answered with just “yes” or “no.”
- Include children in planning special events (e.g., birthday parties, family vacation, weekend activities).
- During dinner, in the car, or at bath time, provide opportunities for children to discuss and review what they did during their day.
- Provide age appropriate toys which require thinking. This includes puzzles, blocks, or sorting toys.

II. Approaches to Learning			
Standard	Help Me Learn	Help Me Practice	Look What I Learned
A. Eagerness and Curiosity			
1. Shows eagerness and curiosity as a learner			
B. Persistence			
1. Attends to tasks and seeks help when encountering a problem			
C. Creativity and Inventiveness			
1. Approaches tasks with flexibility and inventiveness			
D. Planning and Reflection			
1. Shows some planning and reflection			
Notes:			

Social and Emotional Development

Social and emotional readiness is critical to a child’s successful transition to kindergarten. Young children who are able to understand and express their own feelings, understand the viewpoint and feelings of others, cooperate with peers and adults, and resolve conflicts, are more likely to be successful in school. Positive relationships with adults lead to positive relationships with peers. Four-year-old children are developing important skills related to joining in conversations, asking questions, and listening to other people. They learn how to interact with a variety of people and in different situations.

Here are examples of activities that encourage children’s social and emotional development at home.

- Support children when they make mistakes. Acknowledge their efforts (e.g., tell child, “I see you worked hard on that.” or “You almost made it.”).
- Model respect for others and good conversational skills (e.g., not interrupting others when they are speaking).
- Introduce children to other adults in the community.
- Help your child find words to describe feelings.
- Set the tone that learning is good, fun, and important.

III. Social and Emotional Development			
Standard	Help Me Learn	Help Me Practice	Look What I Learned
A. Self-Concept			
1. Demonstrates self-concept			
2. Shows some self-direction			
B. Self-Control			
1. Follows simple classroom rules and routines			
2. Uses classroom materials carefully			
3. Manages transitions			
C. Relationships with Adults			
1. Interacts easily with familiar adults			
2. Seeks adult assistance appropriately			
D. Relationships with Peers			
1. Interacts easily with one or more children			
2. Develops special friendships			
3. Participates in the group life of the class			
4. Shows empathy and caring for others			
E. Social Problem-Solving			
1. Seeks adult help when needed to resolve conflicts			
Notes:			

Language and Communication

When placed in environments that are rich in language, new experiences, and conversation, children develop skills in understanding what others say to them and in using spoken language to express their own ideas and experiences.

Here are examples of activities that encourage children’s language and communication development at home.

- Ask children questions (e.g., “What was your favorite part of the day?” “What did you do at school?” “Whom did you play with?”).
- Read stories to children and ask who, what, where, when, and why questions about the stories.
- Speak clearly at a comfortable pace and an easily heard volume, inside and outdoors.
- Let your child know what she/he says is important. You do this by listening to your child.

IV. Language and Communication			
Standard	Help Me Learn	Help Me Practice	Look What I Learned
A. Listening			
1. Gains meaning by listening			
2. Follows two- and three-step directions			
B. Speaking			
1. Speaks clearly enough to be understood without contextual clues			
C. Vocabulary			
1. Shows an understanding of words and their meaning			
2. Uses an expanded vocabulary to describe many objects, actions, and events			
D. Sentences and Structure			
1. Uses age-appropriate grammar in conversations and increasingly complex phrases and sentences			
2. Connects phrases and sentences to build ideas			
E. Conversation			
1. Uses language to express needs and feelings, share experiences, predict outcomes, and resolve problems			
2. Initiates, asks questions, and responds to adults and peers in a variety of settings			
3. Uses appropriate language and style for context			
Notes:			

Emergent Literacy

Learning to read and learning to write are among children’s most important achievements. These skills open the door to a world of learning, discovery, and creativity. Children who have early experiences with books and other forms of print (e.g., recipes and road signs) are more likely to come to school excited about learning to read and write.

Here are examples of activities that support emergent literacy in children at home.

- Create comfortable, inviting spaces for reading. Provide good lighting and make the space cozy by adding throw pillows, bean bag chairs, and a book basket.
- Play a clapping game with the children, clapping once while saying each syllable in children’s names.
- Provide your child with materials (e.g., crayons, pencils, paper) and a space for writing.
- Let your child see you write.
- Provide magnetic letters for your child to practice forming her/his name and words she/he wants to know.
- Encourage your child to invent her/his own spelling for words (e.g., shopping lists, reminder notes, messages, signs, and stories).
- Give your child books as gifts and take your child to the public or school library to get a library card and check out books.
- Accept your child’s “pretend reading.”
- Read your child’s favorite stories over and over again.

V. Emergent Literacy			
Standard	Help Me Learn	Help Me Practice	Look What I Learned
A. Emergent Reading			
1. Shows motivation for reading			
2. Shows age-appropriate phonological awareness			
3. Shows alphabetic knowledge			
4. Shows understanding of text read aloud			
B. Emergent Writing			
1. Shows motivation to engage in written expression			
2. Uses letter-like shapes, symbols, and letters to convey meaning			
3. Demonstrates age-appropriate ability to write letters			
4. Shows knowledge of structure of written composition			
Notes:			

Mathematical and Scientific Thinking

Mathematical and Scientific Thinking involves the skills and strategies that children use to explore and learn about their world. Children begin to count, sort and manipulate sets of objects. Children also begin to identify and compare two- and three-dimensional shapes and to explore symmetry as they build with blocks and other concrete objects. The natural world and physical events are fascinating to four-year-old children. When adults respond to children's questions, inquisitiveness and scientific thinking are fostered.

Here are examples of activities that support children's mathematical and scientific thinking at home.

- Incorporate math into everyday activities (e.g., counting body parts, how many places to set at the dinner table, counting as high as possible before the traffic light changes from red to green).
- Provide supervised opportunities to examine how tools work (e.g., looking at and discussing pulleys, taking apart broken appliances).
- With close supervision, involve children in the meaningful use of household tools (e.g., eggbeaters, magnets on the refrigerator, funnels).

VI. Mathematical and Scientific Thinking			
Standard	Help Me Learn	Help Me Practice	Look What I Learned
A. Mathematical Thinking			
A(a). Number Sense			
1. Demonstrates understanding of one-to-one correspondence			
2. Shows understanding of how to count and construct sets			
3. Shows understanding by participating in the comparison of quantities			
4. Assigns and relates numerical representations among numerals (written), sets of objects, and number names (spoken) in the range of five to ten			
5. Counts and knows the sequence of number names (spoken)			
6. Shows understanding of and uses appropriate terms to describe ordinal positions			
A(b). Number and Operations			
1. Shows understanding of how to combine sets and remove from a concrete set of objects (receptive knowledge)			
2. Shows understanding of addition and subtraction using a concrete set of objects (expressive knowledge) or story problems found in everyday classroom activities			
3. Begins to develop an understanding of separating a set into a maximum of four parts, with teacher support and multiple experiences over time			
A(c). Patterns and Seriation			
1. Recognizes patterns and non-patterns (e.g., red/blue, red/blue vs. rainbow)			
2. Duplicates identical patterns with at least two elements			
3. Recognizes pattern unites (e.g., red/blue, dog, cat; red/blue/yellow, dog/cat/cow)			

Mathematical and Scientific Thinking (continued)

VI. Mathematical and Scientific Thinking (continued)			
Standard	Help Me Learn	Help Me Practice	Look What I Learned
4. Orders, compares, and describes objects according to a single attribute (seriation)			
A(d). Geometry			
1. Understands various two-dimensional shapes, including circle, triangle, square, rectangle, oval, and other less common shapes (e.g., trapezoid)			
2. Shows understanding that two-dimensional shapes are equivalent (remain the same) in different orientations			
3. Understands various three-dimensional shapes, including sphere, cube, cone, and other less common shapes (e.g., cylinder, pyramid)			
4. Analyzes and constructs examples of simple symmetry and non-symmetry in two-dimensions, using concrete objects			
A(e). Spatial Relations			
1. Shows understanding of and uses several positional words (e.g., above, below, next to, beside, on top of, inside, outside)			
2. Describes relative position from different perspectives (e.g., "I am on top of the climber and you are below me.")			
3. Understands and can tell the difference between orientation terms such as horizontal, diagonal, and vertical			
4. Uses directions to move through space and find places in space (e.g., obstacle courses, <i>Simon Says</i> , <i>Mother May I?</i> , hop scotch, giving simple directions)			
A(f). Measurement			
1. Compares continuous quantities using length, weight, and height			
2. Represents and analyzes data			
B. Scientific Thinking			
B(a). Inquiry			
1. Asks questions and uses senses to observe and explore materials and natural phenomena			
2. Uses simple tools and equipment for investigation			
3. Makes comparisons among objects			
Notes:			

Social Studies and The Arts

Prekindergarten children demonstrate knowledge of social studies by identifying attributes of familiar people and understanding family roles and relationships. They are developing new ways of examining and noticing places and the environment. Group rules are becoming easier to understand and follow, and four-year-old children have a beginning understanding of leadership.

The arts provide children with opportunities to express ideas and feelings, use words, manipulate tools and media, and solve problems. Through the arts, children learn to express what they know, pursue their own interests and abilities, and appreciate the contributions of others. They begin to understand that others can be creative in different ways and show appreciation for differences by asking questions and commenting.

Here are examples of activities that support children’s understanding of social studies and the arts at home.

- Ask children to dance or move to different tempos and styles of music (e.g., classical, rock, and jazz).
- Allow children to use markers, chalk, finger paint, etc., to express themselves.
- Play different types of music in the CD player on the ride to and from school and sing songs in the car.
- Save scraps, bits, boxes, and other things from around the house to use for creative experiences.

VII. Social Studies and The Arts			
Standard	Help Me Learn	Help Me Practice	Look What I Learned
A. Social Studies			
A(a). People, Past and Present			
1. Identifies similarities and differences in personal and family characteristics			
A(b). Human Interdependence			
1. Begins to understand family needs, roles and relationships			
2. Describes some people’s jobs and what is required to perform them			
2. Begins to be aware of technology and how it affects life			
A(c). Citizenship and Government			
1. Demonstrates awareness of rules			
2. Shows awareness of what it means to be a leader			
A(d). People and Where They Live			
1. Describes the location of things in the environment			
2. Shows awareness of the environment			
B. The Arts			
B(a). Expression and Representation			
1. Uses a variety of art materials for tactile experience and exploration			
2. Participates in group music experiences			
2. Participates in creative movement, dance, and drama			
B(b). Understanding and Appreciation			
1. Responds to artistic creations or events			
Notes:			

Motor Development

Four-year-old children love to move, and their increasing coordination and motor skills open up new opportunities for active exploration of their environment. Research and experience confirm that free play alone is not sufficient for the development of physical skills; planned movement activities are needed. Exposure to many different types of movements should be the goal, rather than high performance in particular skills.

Here are examples of activities that support children’s motor development at home.

- Provide daily unstructured times for physical activities (e.g., going on a bike ride, kicking a ball back and forth, taking a walk).
- Provide children with opportunities to use a variety of tools (e.g., writing tools, tongs, egg beaters, screwdriver).
- Display children’s writing and artwork on the fridge or display board, or frame as gifts for relatives.

VIII. Motor Development Standards			
Standard	Help Me Learn	Help Me Practice	Look What I Learned
A. Gross Motor Development			
1. Moves with balance and control			
2. Coordinates movements to perform simple tasks			
B. Fine Motor Development			
1. Uses strength and control to perform simple tasks			
2. Uses eye-hand coordination to perform tasks			
3. Shows beginning control of writing, drawing, and art tools			
Notes:			

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to Polk County Schools for the use of several of their parent tips from their Kindergarten Readiness Checklist.

Summary of VPK Accomplishments

VPK Domain Summary

Physical Health

Approaches to Learning

Social and Emotional Development

Language and Communication

Emergent Literacy

Mathematical and Scientific Thinking

Social Studies and The Arts

Motor Development

Parent Resources

Techniques for Reading to Your Child¹

Before reading the story:

- Introduce the book, discussing the cover, title, author, and illustrator.
- Look at the pictures to discover what the story is about.
- Discuss special or new words that are in the story.
- Talk about places, people, and things in the story with which your child is familiar.
- Remember to keep the introduction simple and quick.

During the story:

- Allow time for your child to look at and talk about the pictures (pictures and illustrations are very important).
- Talk with your child about the characters and story events.
- Ask questions: What do you think is happening? What would you feel if that happened? What might happen next (prediction)? Would you ever do that? Did you think that would happen?
- Allow your child to ask questions as you read and answer their questions.
- Accept and be positive about your child's responses to your questions.

After reading the story:

- Go back to the beginning of the story and have your child turn the pages and share comments or questions they might still have.
- Have your child retell the story to you.
- Compare the story situations to your child's experiences.
- Could you do that? Has that ever happened to you? Did we ever do that?

Parent Notes

¹ Techniques for Reading to Your Child adapted from Polk County Schools' *Tips on Reading to Your Child*.

This document was developed by the Florida Department of Education,
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