



learning today... leading tomorrow

SEMINOLE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Voluntary Pre-K Program (VPK)

PARENT HANDBOOK

School Year 2017-2018

**239 Rinehart Rd.
Lake Mary, FL 32746
407-320-0463**



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WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF VPK

Your child is about to begin an exciting time of learning through new experiences and new friends in Seminole County's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK). The program is designed to help transition children to kindergarten and will focus on skills in the areas of early literacy, reading, writing, math and socio-emotional development. The classroom is arranged to give children the opportunities to grow and develop at their own pace. Each child can succeed in VPK and this sets the stage for all of the school years that follow.

Parents are a vital part of every child's education. You are the first and most important teacher for your child. Your input and ongoing communication with your child's teacher is essential to your child's success at school.

To learn more about our VPK Program, please visit our website at www.scps.k12.fl.us/vpk .

District Support:

Dr. AnaLynn Jones, Director of Early Learning, analynn_jones@scps.k12.fl.us

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VPK Program Goals

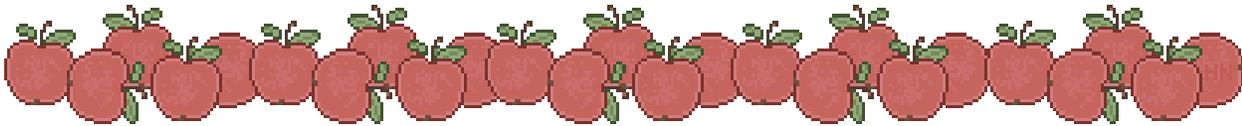
- To enhance self-concept and improve self-esteem through a variety of projects and curricular activities that will result in acquired competencies
- To provide opportunities to grow in all areas of development: social, emotional, physical, intellectual and aesthetic
- To instill a love of reading and promote early literacy
- To enhance aesthetic appreciation and cultural awareness and acceptance
- To improve social skills through appropriate role models/mentors
- To enhance creativity through a variety of media
- To improve gross motor skills and promote an improved body image
- To develop close relationships with families and encourage a positive attitude in parents and students toward school and learning

Our Philosophy

Children need to:

- feel loved
- feel safe and secure
- feel a sense of belonging
- feel good about themselves
- learn to get along with others
- practice good health, nutrition and safety
 - have consistency in their lives
 - be engaged in learning through play
 - be actively involved in their learning





ENROLLMENT GUIDELINES

Seminole County Public Schools participates in Florida's Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) Program. State law mandates that children must be 4 years old on or before September 1st of the school year. There are no exceptions. SCPS offers 540 hours during the school year or 300 hours during the summer.

The programs offered during the school year are:

- 1) Full Day sites - VPK in the morning and wraparound Pre-K in the afternoon until the end of the school day. These are for families needing a full day of care for their child. 3 hours are provided free by the state. The additional hours are paid for by the parent. The fee is \$310 per month. Financial assistance may be given to parents that qualify. For information, call the Early Learning Coalition of Seminole at (407) 960-2460. **If a student drops from full day to half day, he/she may be moved to a school that offers half day.**
- 2) Hybrid sites - space is available for full or half day students. There are 14 spots for full day students and 6 spots for VPK only students. The fee is \$310 per month for students who stay until the end of the school day.
- 3) Half Day sites - A 3 hour free VPK program in either the AM or the PM.
- 4) Home Zone sites - Students attend the full day free of charge. They must live in the school zone and meet qualifying factors.

To enroll: Parents need to first obtain a Certificate of Eligibility which they can apply for online at familyservices2.floridaearlylearning.com and follow the steps. For questions, please call the Early Learning Coalition of Seminole at (407) 960-2460.

Then bring the Certificate of Eligibility to the Pre-K office located at 239 Rinehart Rd, Lake Mary. Proof of residency and birth are required as well as proof of immunization and physical. Please call the Pre-K office at (407) 320-0463 for a list of required documents. **Students with incomplete paperwork will be placed on a waiting list.** Once all required paperwork is submitted, the child will be moved to the class list if the capacity of students has not yet been reached. If the class is full, the parent may choose another school where there are openings. **Students may only transfer from one VPK program, either public or private, to another program once.**



Exceptional Education

SCPS makes their VPK programs accessible to children with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. VPK is not considered a part of the Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). If a child has an active Individual Education Plan (IEP) and receives Exceptional Educational Services, the services **will not be provided** through the VPK Program. VPK works closely with the Exceptional Education Department to help all students experience success.

Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Specialized Instructional Services (VPK SIS) education program is a new option for parents of 4-year-old children with disabilities that is available outside the traditional VPK classroom setting. If your child has a current individual educational plan (IEP) from your local school district that calls for specialized instructional services, you can choose VPK SIS instead of traditional VPK school-year or summer programs.

Classroom Guidelines

The VPK classroom is designed to be a home away from home for your child. You will see learning centers filled with interesting games and materials that will spark your child's imagination and make learning fun. Each child needs to be in school **on time every day** so valuable learning experiences are not missed.

Calendar/Hours

The 2017-2018 School Year VPK Program will operate according to the approved school district calendar, August 10, 2017 - May 25, 2018. Please check your child's school for the arrival and dismissal hours.

Staff

The VPK Program staffs each class with a Child Development Associate (CDA) or higher and a classroom assistant. All employees meet qualifications as required by the State of Florida. The student/teacher ratio is 11:1 or 20:2.

Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable clothes, including closed-toe shoes such as sneakers for safety when participating in outdoor learning experiences. Girls should wear shorts underneath skirts or dresses. Please send in an extra set of clothes, including socks, in case of an accident or spill.



Nutrition

If your child has any food allergies or sensitivities, please be sure that information is indicated on the Student Emergency Card. To ensure the health and safety of all children, only store-bought and pre-packaged food should be sent in for distribution to students (class snacks, birthday cupcakes, holiday treats, etc.). No homemade items will be distributed to students.

Toileting

Children may use the bathroom as needed during the day. All children who participate in VPK must be able to attend to their own toileting needs. Due to health and safety concerns, staff members **will not** be responsible for changing a child should a toileting accident occur. Students will be sent to the clinic to change. Please make sure your child has a change of clothing daily, including socks. Parents may be contacted if they are needed to help their child change his/her clothing. Please give your child's teacher your most current phone number in case you need to be notified.

Backpacks

If possible, please send in a standard -sized backpack for your child to carry papers to and from school, a blanket or towel for rest (full day classes only) and a complete change of clothing (socks included). Please check your child's backpack daily to remove any notes or information and to make sure he/she is not bringing toys, money, lip balm or valuables to school.

Rest Time

VPK/ Pre-K students enrolled in full day classes will rest for approximately one hour per day. A cot or mat will be provided for each child. Please send a clean towel each week to place on the cot. (Students participating in the half-day program will not nap during the day.)



Health Guidelines

If your child becomes ill before leaving for school, please keep him/her at home. A child who is sick must be picked up as soon as possible after the parent has been notified.

Medication

If your child takes medication, either prescribed or over the counter during the school day, the child's doctor must write a note stating what the medication is for, the dosage, and how it is to be administered. The parent must bring the doctor's note and medication to the front office or clinic at the school. Under no circumstances will children be permitted to transport medication of any kind to or from school. Make sure your child does not have medication in his/her backpack, including cough drops and medicated lip balm.

Medical Emergencies

The school will contact the parent immediately if a serious accident or injury occurs. Please make sure your child's teacher has your most current phone numbers.



Curriculum Guidelines

The Pre-Kindergarten VPK Program uses a framework (High Scope) that emphasizes "active learning" by students through play, exploration, and guided discovery. Social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development is supported in a responsive classroom setting, which encourages student independence and promotes critical thinking and problem-solving. Frog Street Press is the curriculum used in our VPK classes and is approved by the FLDOE as being developmentally appropriate for pre-school children.

The VPK Program is a developmentally appropriate program based on the Florida Department of Education 2011 "Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds." These standards can be found at <http://www.fl DOE.org/earlylearning>. The standards provide guidance on ways classroom instruction and the classroom environment can promote learning. The program's instructional focus will address the following domains:

- Physical Development
- Language, Communication, & Emergent Literacy
- Social & Emotional Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Cognitive Development & General Knowledge

Daily Routine

The teacher will provide a pictorial daily schedule of activities. This will help children learn time concepts and skills for planning and predicting.

Large Group (Circle Time)

Daily, the entire class will gather for group activities that encourage relationship-building, turn taking, music, storytelling and other activities that address the Four-Year-Old Standards in order to prepare children for success in kindergarten.

Small Group Time

Children will spend time with an adult and a few other students learning new skills in early literacy, math, science, problem-solving, and social emotional area



Curriculum Guidelines

Technology

Students in each classroom are given the opportunity to work on a computer daily. In addition, most of our classrooms have an interactive white board to enhance the curriculum.

Learning Centers

Each classroom will have areas set up where children can go individually or in small groups. They will be able to read books, build with blocks, pretend play, listen to music, work creatively with art materials, and fill, pour, measure, and explore at the sensory table. Children are encouraged to make choices, play together, solve problems, practice small and large muscle skills, and learn new words and ideas.

Outdoor Learning

Children will be given the opportunity to experience outdoor learning each day. This is a teacher-directed time where children interact with peers to learn how to get along with others, increase large muscle skills and learn the language of outdoor fun. Nature provides many ways to learn language, science and math.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Worksheets are not part of the VPK curriculum, and instead, students work with manipulatives and other real materials for building literacy, math, and science skills. Reading daily to your preschooler is a recommended homework practice.



Assessment

Report cards and grades are not used in VPK. Students are given the Florida VPK Assessment at the beginning, middle, and end of the program to measure growth. The VPK Assessment includes progress monitoring in the areas of print knowledge, phonological awareness, mathematics, and oral language/vocabulary that are aligned with Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds. During the first 30 days of kindergarten, students are given the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener which is designed to determine their readiness for kindergarten.



Transportation / After School Guidelines

It is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation to and from school. **Bus transportation is not provided.** It is expected that children be dropped off and picked up at the necessary time. Please be sure to list any adults able to pick up your child on the Student Information Card. **They must be at least 18 years old.** Your child will not be released to any unauthorized person. They will need to show proper identification (photo ID) before the child is released. If any emergency contact information changes, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the child's teacher and the Pre-K office at (407) 320-0463. Your child's safety is our number one priority.

KidZone & Beyond (Formerly Extended Day)

Students who attend VPK /Wraparound full day sites are eligible to attend KidZone & Beyond either before or after school at select sites. For information and rates, please call 407-320-9303.

Drop Off and Pick Up

Please do not drop your child off before the designated arrival time. No one will be available to care for him/her until the teacher comes on duty. Should you arrive prior to the time when supervision is provided, it will be your responsibility to provide supervision for your child until the teacher's duty time starts.

Children must be picked up at the designated time, *on time*. If the teacher has to escort your child either back to the classroom or to the office to wait for you, a \$1.00 per minute fee will be charged beginning the minute she leaves the car pickup area. **Students who are picked up late more than 3 times may be dismissed from the program.**

By contract, the VPK employees are not to work beyond their scheduled duty day. Late pickups often require them to do so. Please follow each individual school's arrival and dismissal procedures.



Procedures for the Wraparound Tuition:

Tuition for Wraparound is \$310/month or \$3,100 for the school year. It is based on 180 school days so each monthly fee will be the same. Wraparound begins after the 3 hour free VPK block and goes until the end of the school day. Payments are made for the upcoming month. For example, payment for August is due in July, etc.

- 1) The first payment for August:
 - Tuition must be made in the Pre-K Office at 239 Rinehart Rd, Lake Mary 32746.
 - Payment begins July 10, 2017. In order to secure your child's spot, payment must be made by Monday, July 31, 2017.
 - You may pay with VISA, MasterCard, or money order. **No personal checks or cash can be accepted.**
 - At time of payment, you will receive instructions on how to pay the monthly tuition online as well as be given an Online Payment Calendar.

- 2) For online payments:
 - Online payments will begin at the end of August for September's payment. Please keep in mind that payments are due a month in advance. For example, September's tuition is due when the window opens in August.
 - The online payment window will be open the last 10 days of each month. Please refer to your Online Payment Calendar for exact dates.
 - You can access PaySchools to make your online payment by visiting www.scps.k12.fl.us. Click on the following tabs: Schools, Early Learning, Voluntary Pre-K. You will see the Payment Schedule, instructions on how to access the site, and the link to make payment for the school in which your child attends VPK.

- 3) For late payments:
 - Payment for full day, (PM portion of the day), must be paid by the end of the payment window or a \$20 late fee will apply. Late payments must be made in the Pre-K Office with VISA, MasterCard, or money order. Please check your Online Payment Calendar for these dates.
 - **Three (3) days after the window closing, if payment still hasn't been made, the child will no longer qualify for the PM portion of the day and parent will be responsible for transferring their child to a half day site where space is available.**
 - If payment arrangements need to be made, please call Geri Cassanova at 407-320-0232 before the payment window closes.



Attendance Guidelines

Teaching your child that regular attendance and promptness are important is best done by ensuring that your child is at school each day and is on time. When children are late, they miss important parts of the daily routine and interrupt the learning for other students. In order for your child to be thoroughly prepared to enter kindergarten, he/she needs to be present for the full day of instruction.

If your child is tardy, you must pick up a tardy slip in the school's office and follow the schools procedures for getting your child to class.

When your child is absent, you must provide written documentation as to the reason upon their return

Students who have excessive absences (more than 4 per month) may be dismissed from the program. In addition, students who have 10 consecutive absences will be withdrawn from the program unless extenuating circumstances occur and arrangements have been made through the Pre-K office.

All parents are required to sign the Verification of Student Attendance at the end of each month to verify attendance. This is required by the state and is a requirement for your child to remain enrolled in the program. If it is sent home, please sign and return it within 2 school days.



VPK Discipline Guidelines

It is the goal of the VPK Program that children meet with success each day and that He/she attain the skills necessary to be successful in Kindergarten and beyond.

In order for your child to meet with success each day, classroom rules are modeled, practiced, and posted. Rules are based on respect, courtesy, and self-discipline. Student behavior is managed through positive reinforcement, redirection, conflict resolution, and modeling. Positive discipline techniques are used to help students learn to make appropriate decisions and choices regarding their behavior.

A child may be removed from the program if behavior threatens the safety of him/herself or others after interventions have been tried and have failed. In addition, a child may be removed if the behaviors continue to disrupt the teaching/learning process despite interventions.

VPK PARENT AGREEMENT
Seminole County Public Schools
School Year 2017 - 2018

As a Parent/Guardian, I:

_____ understand that all communication regarding the Pre-K Program is to go through the Pre-K office at 239 Rinehart Rd, Lake Mary, (407) 320-0463, and not the school office.

_____ understand that transportation is not provided for my child to attend VPK.

_____ will ensure that my child is in class on time and is picked up on time by an adult who is at least 18 years old. I understand that my child may be dismissed from the program if I am late picking him/her up more than 3 times.

_____ understand that I will be charged a fee of \$1.00 per minute for each minute I am late picking up my child after dismissal if the teacher has to escort my child either to the classroom or the office. The fee will begin the minute the teacher leaves the car pickup area.

_____ understand that if my child has more than 4 absences per month or 10 consecutive absences he/she may be withdrawn from the program unless arrangements have been made through the Pre-K office.

_____ understand that if my child's behavior becomes such that he/she is injurious to him/herself, other students, or staff members OR if my child's behavior is disruptive to the teaching/learning process, I may be called to pick up my child from school. I further understand that future incidences may result in the removal of my child from the VPK Program.

_____ understand that my child needs to be able to attend to his/her own toileting needs. Staff members will not be responsible for changing my child. I will be contacted if I am needed to help my child change his/her clothing.

_____ will sign the Verification of Student Attendance Form (Long Form) at the end of each month, as required by the state, within 2 school days.

_____ understand that once my child goes to kindergarten, he/she must attend the home zone school or the assigned region school.

_____ understand that payment for full day, (PM portion of the day), must be paid by the end of the payment window or a \$20 late fee will apply. Three (3) days after the window closing, if payment still hasn't been made, the child will no longer qualify for the PM portion of the day and parent will be responsible for transferring their child to a half day site where space is available.

I have read, understood, and initialed each item listed above.

Parent/Guardian Signature/Date

Child's Name

School