

Message from ELC



Dear Early Learning Provider:

VPK funding is in jeopardy! We need to engage all early learning partners and stakeholders to educate legislative members on the implications of reductions. Please share this information broadly and ask that phone calls and emails be sent to members on the attached spreadsheet. The spreadsheet contains members of the House and Senate appropriations committees who will be addressing the VPK budget next week. All members can be contacted on these important funding decisions regardless of whether or not they serve your district/area. Contacts should start right away and be completed by close of business, Monday, March 22nd.

In addition to these committee members, please contact your local Representatives/Senators to make them aware of your concerns. It will be important for all members to be aware of this issue as it moves forward. Additional contact information can be found on our website under the Legislative Updates button.

Below is a fact sheet and sample letter/e-mail that can be used by providers and parents to express concerns about the proposed VPK funding reductions. Please encourage everyone to individualize their messages and educate members on their personal concerns and what reductions would mean from their perspective. Recommend that parents use their child's first name and include the name of their VPK provider.

PROVIDER SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Representative/Senator XX:

I am writing to ask for your support to maintain the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) base student allocation at \$2,575 in order to ensure the continued high-quality programs Florida voters envisioned when they voted VPK into the state constitution. With anticipated growth and potential funding reductions, Florida could become the largest program in the nation with one of the lowest rates for per child spending.

The House and Senate PreK-12 Appropriations committees have proposed reductions in the VPK per child funding of nearly 15%. As a dedicated early care and education provider and family advocate, I ask that you carefully consider the implications of VPK budget reductions on the families and the children we prepare for kindergarten.

To offset the proposed reduction in the base student allocation, the proposal includes an increase in the ratio that would allow 24 children one classroom with two teachers. It is important to understand that due to space limitations, most facilities would not be able to accommodate 24 children in a classroom based on child care licensing standards. This means that the substantial reduction would impact the ability of VPK providers to meet the high quality standards that we are committed to providing and may mean that we cannot afford to participate in the VPK education program. Also keep in mind that most VPK providers are small businesses that make up the fabric of our economy. The reductions will negatively impact the families and children that we serve, the public school system by having to pay for remedial education, my business, and our local economy.

Florida's children are counting on you to provide them with the resources they need to learn and thrive so that they are prepared when they enter kindergarten.

Thank you for your hard work for the children of Florida.

Sincerely,

PARENT SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Representative/Senator XX:

I am writing to ask for your support to maintain the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) base student allocation at \$2,575 in order to ensure the continued high-quality programs Florida voters envisioned when they voted VPK into the state constitution. With anticipated growth and potential funding reductions, Florida could become the largest program in the nation with one of the lowest rates for per child spending.

The House and Senate PreK-12 Appropriations committees have proposed reductions in the VPK per child funding of nearly 15%. As a parent, I ask that you carefully consider the implications of VPK budget reductions on the families and the children we prepare for kindergarten. This year, I made a conscious decision to enroll my child, (insert child's name), in a high-quality center that provides VPK. I am very concerned about some of consequences that will happen if budget reductions are passed. I wonder whether my child's center would still be able to offer the same caliber of care or if they will even continue to participate in the program that even at today's base student allocation is so drastically underfunded.

I appreciate that you have a tremendously important and difficult decisions to make this session. However, I ask that you reconsider the reductions to the VPK budget and so that children continue to receive a high-quality educational foundation, ensuring future academic success.

Thank you for your hard work for the children of Florida.

Sincerely,

Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Funding

Maintain VPK per child funding at \$2575 in order to ensure continued high-quality programs Florida voters envisioned.

Based on enrollment projections, program funding total will need to be \$411.5 million to continue providing children with a high-quality educational foundation, ensuring future academic success.

With anticipated growth and potential funding reductions, Florida could become the largest program in the nation with one of the lowest rates for per child spending.

Current Proposed Funding Allocations

As of March 16th, the House and Senate PreK-12 Appropriation committees have released their anticipated reductions to the VPK Program. Below is a chart that represents the cuts in state general revenue and the impact on the program.

House PreK-12 Appropriations Recommendations	Senate PreK-12 Appropriations Recommendations
Total VPK Budget: \$348,915,886	Total VPK Budget: \$350,509,999
Base Student Allocation: School Year and Summer \$2,190	Base Student Allocation: School Year and Summer \$2,200
Coalition Administrative Spending: 4.5% (Current 4.85%)	Coalition Administrative Spending: 4.5% (Current 4.85%)
Teacher to Student Ratio: 1 to 12 and for any class with a thirteenth student secondary instructor must have a CDA credential for a total class size of 24 (Current 1:10/2:18).	Teacher to Student Ratio: 1 to 12 and for any class with a thirteenth student secondary instructor must have a CDA credential for a total class size of 24 (Current 1:10/2:18).

House position represents a \$385 dollar cut per child for a reduction of nearly 15%

Success in VPK

- Constitutionally mandated prekindergarten program, free to every four year old in Florida.
- Children that participate in the VPK program consistently perform better on the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener than children that did not participate in VPK.
- Consists of quality indicators including developmentally appropriate curriculum, teacher credentials and ratios.
- Program has served approximately 654,000 children since it began in 2005 and is the second largest prekindergarten program in the nation.
- In 2009-2010, it is estimated that the program will serve approximately 70% of all four year olds in Florida. The total projected to be served is 160,555.
- Program growth is estimated to continue. Current estimates anticipate the program to serve 75% of all four year olds by 2010-2011.

Senate Policy and Steering Committee on Ways and Means

Senator JD Alexander (R) (CHAIR)	District 17, Lake Wales	alexander.jd.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5044
Senator Ted Deutch (D) (VICE CHAIR)	District 30, Delray Beach	deutch.ted.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5091
Senator Thad Altman (R)	District 24, Melbourne	altman.thad.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5053
Senator Carey Baker (R)	District 20, Eustis	baker.carey.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5014
Senator Michael S. "Mike" Bennett (R)	District 21, Bradenton	bennett.mike.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5078
Senator Victor D. Crist (R)	District 12, Tampa	crist.victor.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5068
Senator Alex Diaz de la Portilla (R)	District 36, Miami	portilla.alex.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5109
Senator Mike Fasano (R)	District 11, New Port Richey	fasano.mike.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5062
Senator Don Gaetz (R)	District 4, Destin	gaetz.don.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5009
Senator Rudy Garcia (R)	District 40, Hialeah	garcia.rudy.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5106
Senator Dan Gelber (D)	District 35, Miami Beach	gelber.dan.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5121
Senator Mike Haridopolos (R)	District 26, Melbourne	haridopolos.mike.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5056
Senator Anthony C. "Tony" Hill, Sr. (D)	District 1, Jacksonville	hill.tony.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5024
Senator Charlie Justice (D)	District 16, St. Petersburg	justice.charlie.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5075
Senator Alfred "Al" Lawson, Jr. (D)	District 6, Tallahassee	lawson.alfred.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5004
Senator Evelyn J. Lynn (R)	District 7, Daytona Beach	lynn.evelyn.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5033
Senator Joe Negron (R)	District 28, Palm City	negron.joe.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5088
Senator Durell Peaden, Jr. (R)	District 2, Crestview	peaden.durell.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5000
Senator Nan H. Rich (D)	District 34, Crestview	rich.nan.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5103
Senator Gary Siplin (D)	District 19, Orlando	siplin.gary.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5190
Senator Eleanor Sobel (D)	District 31, Hollywood	sobel.eleanor.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5097
Senator John Thrasher (R)	District 8, Jacksonville	thrasher.john.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5030
Senator J. Alex Villalobos (R)	District 38, Miami	villalobos.alex.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5130
Senator Frederica S. Wilson (D)	District 33, Miami Gardens	wilson.frederica.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5116
Senator Stephen R. Wise (R)	District 5, Jacksonville	wise.stephen.web@flsenate.gov	(850) 487-5027

House Full Appropriations Council on Education and Economic Development

Rivera, David (R) (CHAIR)	District 112, Miami	email	(850) 488-7897
Reagan, Ron (R) (VICE CHAIR)	District 67, Sarasota	email	(850) 921-7747
Saunders, Ron (D)	District 120, Tavernier	email	(850) 488-9965
Adams, Sandra (R)	District 33, Oviedo	email	(850) 488-0468
Bogdanoff, Ellyn Setnor (R)	District 91, Fort Lauderdale	email	(850) 488-0635
Brisé, Ronald A. (D)	District 108, North Miami	email	(850) 488-4233
Chestnut IV, Charles S. (D)	District 23, Gainesville	email	(850) 488-5794
Flores, Anitere (R)	District 114, Miami	email	(850) 488-2831
Galvano, Bill (R)	District 68, Bradenton	email	(850) 488-4086
Gibbons, Joseph A. (D)	District 105, Pembroke Park	email	(850) 488-0145
Glorioso, Richard (R)	District 62, Plant City	email	(850) 488-0807
Grimsley, Denise (R)	District 77, Sebring	email	(850) 488-3457
Hays, D. Alan (R)	District 25, Umatilla	email	(850) 488-0348
Poppell, Ralph (R)	District 29, Titusville	email	(850) 488-3006
Proctor, William L. (R)	District 20, St. Augustine	email	(850) 488-2977
Skidmore, Kelly (D)	District 90, Boca Raton	email	(850) 488-1302
Thompson, Geraldine F. (D)	District 39, Orlando	email	(850) 488-0760
Weatherford, Will W. (R)	District 61, Wesley Chapel	email	(850) 488-5744



Join Our
Mailing List 

2555 Ponce de Leon Blvd. Suite 500; Coral Gables, FL 33134