

Message from ELC



Dear Early Learning Provider:

Thank you for all the phone calls, letters and e-mails to members of the legislature. The amendment introduced by Representative Flores was unanimously approved this morning by the Full Appropriations Council. The amendment reduces the base VPK student allocation by just 1% instead of the 15% originally proposed by the PreK-12 Appropriations Committee. The class size and teacher credentials remain the same as they are now.

The action today gets us one step closer to our goal of preserving VPK per student funding. The House and Senate must now agree on the final allocation. Following are revised talking points so that the education effort can continue with members of the Senate.

Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Funding

Support the House budget proposal for VPK which allocates \$402.3 million to preserve the high-quality programs Florida voters envisioned.

This would reduce the VPK per child spending by 1% in alignment with FEFP reductions of .74% providing equity in reductions for education programs while still providing children with a high-quality educational foundation, ensuring future academic success.

Current Proposed Funding Allocations

As of March 23rd, 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.

<u>House PreK-12 Appropriations Recommendations</u>	<u>Senate PreK-12 Appropriations Recommendations</u>
Total VPK Budget: \$402,321,505	Total VPK Budget: \$350,509,999
Base Student Allocation: School Year \$2549 and Summer \$2,168	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: Maintains current ratio of 1 to 1:10 or 2:18.	Teacher to Student Ratio: 1 to 12 and an assistant for any class up to 20; with the 21st student the secondary instructor must have a CDA credential for a total class size of 24 (Current 1:10/2:18).

Senate position represents a \$375 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.

Committee on Education Pre-K - 12 Appropriations

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