

Frequently Asked Questions

2016-2017 Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate, Low Performing Providers, and Providers on Probation

What is the VPK Provider Readiness Rate?

1. What is the VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate and why is it administered?

The readiness rate reflects the percentage of screened children a VPK provider has adequately prepared for kindergarten. The readiness rate is based on the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS). This year, Florida administered a new kindergarten readiness screener, and we expect performance to improve in future years. This year's rates serve three purposes. They set a starting point from which we can set higher expectations; they enable the Office of Early Learning to pinpoint programs that need additional support; and they provide parents with information to help them make critical education decisions for their children.

2. What are the criteria for receiving a readiness rate?

In order to receive a readiness rate, a provider must serve at least four children who completed 70 percent or more of the instructional hours of the VPK program AND have been matched to a score on the FLKRS. Providers who offered school year and summer VPK programs will receive two separate rates for school year and summer VPK programs.

3. What is the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS)?

[FLKRS](#) stands for Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener. State law requires screening for all public school kindergarten students within the first 30 instructional (school) days of the school year. Private schools may administer the FLKRS as well.

Kindergarten teachers use the results to help understand each child's readiness for school and plan lessons to meet individual needs. The Office of Early Learning uses the results to calculate the kindergarten readiness rate for each VPK provider. Currently, FLKRS uses the Star Early Literacy assessment, selected as a result of a public competitive procurement process.

4. How is a readiness rate calculated for a VPK provider?

The VPK Provider Kindergarten readiness rate is calculated in accordance with [Rule 6M-8.601, F.A.C.](#) In order to have received a satisfactory rate, a VPK provider must have at least sixty (60%) percent of children score a minimum of 500 on the Star Early Literacy assessment. For 2016-17 rates, a score between 60 and 100 percent is satisfactory.

5. Why was 500 chosen as the minimum score?

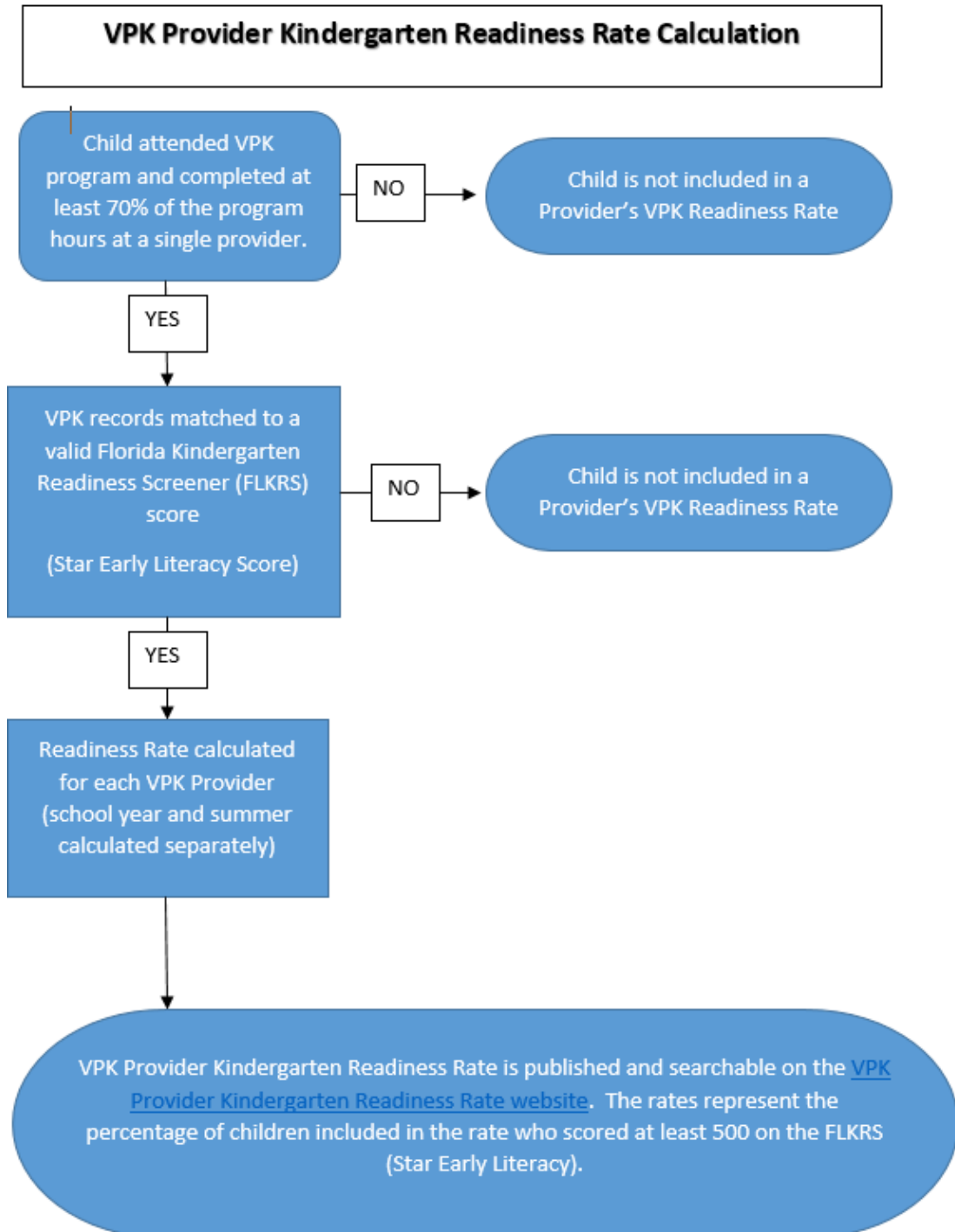
The creators of the Star Early Literacy assessment identified 500 as the score that would be expected for a 5-year-old. The average score for a student who completed VPK was 541. The average score for children who did not participate in VPK was 487.

6. Are English as a Second Language (ESOL) students and students with special needs included in the score?

ESOL students who were screened and have a valid and reported score are included in the VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate. ESOL students who were not screened or were screened but coded as a non-participating student by the kindergarten teacher/administrator are not included. All included students must have also completed 70 percent of the VPK hours to be part of the readiness rate calculation. The process is the same for students with disabilities. In both cases, the decision to indicate that a child is not participating is made at the local level and is meant to determine that the test is inappropriate for that student.

7. Do you have a diagram to illustrate how rates are calculated?

Yes. This diagram illustrates how rates are calculated:



8. What happens to a provider if they receive a rate below the minimum rate?

A provider whose readiness rate is less than 60 percent (0-59%) is low performing.

For the 2016-17 and 2017-18 readiness rates:

- No provider will receive a new probationary status.
- An existing provider on probation whose readiness rate meets the criteria in the new rule is removed from probation.
- An existing provider on probation whose readiness rate does not meet the criteria will remain on probation in their existing status (e.g., a provider on probation in year two (2) will remain a year two (2) provider on probation).

9. Why are rates being published this year if no new providers are going on probation?

State law requires the Office of Early Learning to adopt of a statewide kindergarten readiness rate. In previous years, legislative proviso directed the Office of Early Learning to not adopt a rate.

10. Where can the public see published current and previous year VPK readiness rates?

The VPK Program Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate Website is where each provider's readiness rate is published. Statewide search functionality is available at <https://vpk.fldoe.org/>. Please note, no provider was assigned, and no readiness rate published, for the 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 VPK program years.

11. Why do some children do better on the VPK Assessment (pre-assessment (AP1) and post-assessment (AP3)) than on FLKRS?

OEL has looked at previous years' district data between VPK Assessment and Star Early Literacy in a district which used both for several years to determine level of correlation and found correlation with both AP1 and AP3. OEL will continue to review the data statewide.

Star Early Literacy contains 27 items that assess early language and number skills. Star Early Literacy covers the same areas as the VPK Assessment—phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, vocabulary and number sense. An overview comparing the two assessments is available here:

<http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/sites/www/Uploads/4.%20VPK%20Assessment%20and%20Star%20Early%20Literacy%20Overview%209-2017.pdf>. The second document attached shows how our standards from 2011 align with those in 2017, in the domains assessed by Star Early Literacy (also the same areas as VPK Assessment).

12. How can we be sure that FLKRS was administered properly?

Statewide, nearly 200,000 children were screened in Fall 2017 using Star Early Literacy, with very few reported issues.

Star Early Literacy Pretest Instructions and the Star Early Literacy Administration Manual are discussed during training and are also posted on the DOE FLKRS website at <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-student-assessment/flkrs>. The pretest instructions and the administration manual include a script and pages to use as handouts to help kindergarten teachers walk through a basic orientation with their students. The pretest instructions, administration manual and the practice video include guidance on using a keyboard, mouse and a tablet. The teacher selects a setting in order for children to view the practice video on using a touchpad.

Each school district assessment coordinator is trained and then trains the district teachers. Technology accommodations available are outlined in the Department of Education's (DOE) FAQ document on the DOE FLRS website.

One concern heard over time is that kindergarten teachers may score a child low at the beginning of kindergarten to make the kindergarten teacher look better by the end of the year, which is not possible with a computer-based assessment.

13. How can we see a sample FLKRS test?

Star Early Literacy Pretest Instructions and the Star Early Literacy Administration Manual are discussed during training and are also posted on the DOE FLKRS website. A sample test may be accessed at <https://www.renaissance.com/lp/florida-k-readiness-practice/>. Please remember, this is an adaptive test, targeted towards students aged 3-9.

14. I've heard that some of the questions are not age-appropriate. How could that be?

Star Early Literacy is an adaptive test designed to measure the development of children aged 3-9. An adaptive test adjusts the difficulty of a test based on if a student is answering correctly or incorrectly. As a result, if a student does very well, they could be asked to answer questions that would normally be asked of older children.

15. Why can't I see more detail on the FLKRS results for children who attended my program?

FLKRS is administered during kindergarten and is therefore covered under the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). There are strict limitations on sharing this data. The Office of Early Learning is working on providing county-by-county breakdowns of students' aggregated scores on the individual domains tested.

Low Performing Provider Status

16. What is a low performing provider?

A low performing provider has a 2016-17 VPK provider kindergarten readiness rate of 0-59%. While not on probation, the low performing status indicates that the provider should take steps to improve their readiness rate.

17. What can a low performing provider do to improve?

- A low performing provider can implement approved curricula (question 29 below) and/or the staff development plan (question 30 below).
- Even though Star Early Literacy is compatible with both the 2011 standards and the revised standards, providers should ensure staff are implementing the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: 4 Years Old to Kindergarten, beginning Fall 2018. More information, resources and examples of developmentally appropriate practice can be found here: <http://flbt5.floridaearlylearning.com/>. A provider should continue to use developmentally appropriate practices while ensuring rigor when implementing the standards.
- Providers should ensure they are reviewing VPK Assessment reports after each assessment period to guide instruction based on needs and strengths of individual children. Additionally, providers can administer AP2 of VPK Assessment, if they are not doing so already.
- Providers should take advantage of professional development offered online or by OEL-approved trainers or early learning coalitions.
- Providers can look at their family engagement practices to increase communication and collaboration to best support children's learning.

18. What VPK-specific trainings are available to VPK providers?

There are many online and instructor-led options, with a few new titles coming in Summer/Fall 2018:

- Implementing the Florida Standards in Preschool Classrooms: 3 Years Old to Kindergarten (online and instructor-led, new in Summer 2018)
- Integrating the Standards: Phonological Awareness (online, instructor-led)
- Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors (online, new version coming Fall 2018)
- Language and Vocabulary in the VPK Classroom (online)
- Mathematical Thinking for Early Learners (online)
- Making Sense of Sets and Numbers (instructor-led)
- Counting and Operating with Numbers (instructor-led)
- Patterns, Measurement and Data (instructor-led)
- Shapes and Spatial Relationships (instructor-led)
- Working to Create Positive Learning Environments: Preventative Strategies (online, new in July 2018)
- Developing the Socially and Emotionally Competent Child (online, new in July 2018)
- English Language Learners in the VPK Classroom (online)
- How to Administer the Florida VPK Assessment (online and instructor-led)
- VPK Assessment Instructional Implications (online and instructor-led)
- VPK Director Credential Course (online, new in July 2018)

19. How can a VPK program find out who their VPK Regional Facilitator is?

The VPK Regional Facilitator map includes contact information for all facilitators here:

http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/sites/www/Uploads/files/About%20Us/Regional%20Facilitators%20Maps-May%2018%202017_ADA.pdf

20. What support can the VPK Regional Facilitator provide?

Each VPK Regional Facilitator provides a variety of in-person training and technical assistance, free of charge to VPK providers. Facilitators may provide site visits, brainstorming solutions for a problem, or connect a provider with someone who has the answer to a question. Facilitators do not monitor VPK providers.

21. How can I keep up to date on new things happening with VPK?

Read the monthly VPK Snapshots newsletter, available here:

http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/oel_resources/publications/vpk_snapshots.aspx

Sign up for workshops and hearings about new rules that will affect VPK here:

http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/statewide_initiatives/laws_and_rules/proposed_rules/workshops_and_hearings_signup.aspx

Provider on Probation (POP) Status

22. When is a VPK provider placed on probation, if the provider was not already on probation from previous year(s)?

Beginning with the 2018-19 VPK program year readiness rate (to be published in Spring 2020), a VPK provider will be placed on probation if the provider's readiness rate falls below the minimum rate adopted by [Rule 6M-8.601, F.A.C.](#)

23. What will happen if a provider remains on probation for multiple years?

A provider that receives three consecutive rates that do not meet the minimum rate set by [Rule 6M-8.601, F.A.C.](#) is subject to removal from the VPK program.

In order to continue, the provider must apply for, meet all criteria and receive a good cause exemption in order to remain eligible to offer VPK in accordance with [Rule 6M-8.603, F.A.C.](#) Providers removed from the program are removed for a period of five years.

24. What is a good cause exemption?

A provider on probation may apply for and may receive a good cause exemption if the provider is in compliance with the VPK Assessment Pre- and Post-Assessment requirements and the provider has no Class I Violations, or does not have two or more Class II violations. Additionally, the provider must demonstrate learning gains as well as show unique and extraordinary circumstances encountered when delivering the VPK program.

25. How does a provider get off probation?

A provider must earn a readiness rate that meets or exceeds the minimum readiness rate established in [Rule 6M-8.601, F.A.C.](#) for the program type (school year or summer) for which they are on probation.

26. What if a provider is on probation and does not receive a readiness rate the next time they offer the VPK program?

The provider remains on probation.

Improvement Plan for Providers on Probation

27. What is the process for the provider to complete the improvement plan?

For providers that remain on probation based on the 2016-17 VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate, those providers will need to ensure that their existing improvement plan is up-to-date and in an approved status at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the next VPK program, in accordance with [Rule 6M-8.700](#) and [Rule 6M-8.701](#), F.A.C. **Providers who are low-performing this year who were not previously on probation do not need to complete an improvement plan.**

In order to view the existing improvement plan, the provider will need to log onto the VPK Readiness Rate site at <https://vpk.fldoe.org/Default2.aspx> and click on “Final Readiness Rate and Improvement Process.” Providers will need to update the improvement plan, if applicable, based on the selected target areas and dates associated. Providers may also change target areas selected.

28. Who reviews and approves the improvement plan?

All improvement plans for providers on probation are reviewed and approved by the early learning coalition that is responsible for the county where the provider operates. If a provider has made any updates or changes to the improvement plan those changes will require approval by the early learning coalition.

29. What are the steps if a provider on probation chooses the curriculum option for the first target area?

VPK providers that choose this option must select and implement an approved curriculum from the list of OEL approved VPK curricula for providers on probation, as outlined in [Rule 6M-8.604, F.A.C.](#)

- Curriculum Materials - The provider must purchase an approved VPK curriculum for each VPK class and provide a receipt or proof of donation to the early learning coalition. The entire approved set is required for each VPK class.
- Curriculum-Specific Professional Development - The provider must ensure that all VPK-related staff take part in the approved, required training and show proof of documentation to the early learning coalition.

The provider must implement the approved VPK curriculum in each VPK class, throughout the VPK program year. More information can be found here: http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/providers/provider_resources/vpk_curriculum.aspx. A new list of approved VPK Curricula for Providers on Probation is expected Spring 2019.

30. What are the steps if a provider on probation chooses the Staff Development Plan for the first target area?

VPK providers that choose this option must implement the staff development plan outlined in [Rule 6M-8.605, F.A.C.](#) with all VPK-related staff. The forms for the staff development plan, and the plan itself are found at the links below, detailing what must be completed and documented to maintain compliance.

- [Approved Staff Development Plan for VPK Providers on Probation](#)
- [Exhibit A: Staff Observation](#)
- [Exhibit B: Monthly Feedback Template](#)
- [Exhibit C: Assessment Results Meeting Template](#)

Contacts

31. Who should a provider contact with questions or for more information?

Please contact the VPK team at OEL by emailing vpkquestions@oel.myflorida.com or calling 1-866-447-1159.