

Sample Press Release:

If your company or organization would like to support Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) enrollment efforts in our community or is collaborating with the ELC by distributing information and/or hosting a VPK registration event, the below press release is available for your use. The highlighted areas are customizable. Please feel free to include a quote from your representative as well.

The below release may also be modified for in-house distribution by your Human Resources department in order to inform staff of the importance and availability of VPK.

Date: Brief description of VPK registration event

One sentence summary or a highlight / featured notable

PINELLAS COUNTY, Fla. (Month Day, Year) -- In partnership with the **Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County (ELC)**, <Your Organization> is hosting < event, date, location> to help some of our youngest neighbors get registered for Florida's free Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program and other early learning initiatives.

VPK is a state-funded prekindergarten program for 4 and 5 year olds who reside in Florida. Participating children must be 4 years old on or before September 1. Parents can enroll their child in the state's free and voluntary education program that year or wait until the following year when their child is 5. The 2020-2021 school year starts this August.

VPK in Florida

- Florida is one of the first states to offer **free prekindergarten to all 4-year-olds**.
- Results of kindergarten screenings show children who complete VPK are **better prepared** for kindergarten than those who did not complete or did not attend VPK.
- **More than 300 centers offer VPK in Pinellas County** – these include private, public and charter schools and private childcare centers.
- There are **school year** and **summer** VPK programs as well as **specialized** instructional services for 4-year-olds with special needs.

Why VPK?

Lindsay Carson, CEO of the **Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas**, encourages families to participate in this free program, emphasizing the importance of its impact on academic, behavioral, and social benefits, "VPK offers children a play-based experience that builds the foundational skills necessary for academic and lifelong success." VPK builds a strong foundation for school with education aligned with various stages of a child's development. High-quality prekindergarten programs not only help children with kindergarten readiness, but also lead to better school performance and higher graduation rates. <Insert quote your company/organization representative.>

Helping Families With VPK Registration

Our event will include **same-day rapid registration for Florida's FREE VPK program, giving approved families their certificate of eligibility the same day**. Rapid registration is available to families at either of the Coalition offices, between **<time>** and **<time>**. To complete rapid registration, families need to bring:

1. **Proof of child's age**
 - *Birth certificate OR child's passport*

2. **Proof of Florida Residency (address/name must match application)**
 - *Valid FL driver's license or ID card OR*
 - *Current utility bill OR*
 - *Current signed lease*

VPK is a valuable resource to help a child gain the skills to thrive in kindergarten and beyond. We encourage you to spread the word about our registration event! The resources below can be used to inform your family, friends, and general community about the importance of VPK in a child's formative years.

Questions? Call the Early Learning Coalition's VPK team at 727.400.4411, option 3, then option 1.

*The **Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County** is a nonprofit agency focused on high-quality early care and education – working with families and childcare providers to prepare children to enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life.*

<Insert your company/organization's boilerplate.>

###