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VPK PREPARES CHILDREN FOR EARLY LEARNING SUCCESS

~ VPK providers ranked according to student performance ~

TALLAHASSEE – Florida Education Commissioner Eric J. Smith today announced students who completed Voluntary Prekindergarten Programs (VPK) last year performed better on key Kindergarten readiness measures than children who did not participate. In addition, children who only attended a portion of a VPK program outperformed students who had no exposure to the program at all. As a result, over 100,000 Florida children stepped into a Kindergarten classroom this year better prepared to learn and succeed in school.

"These results are further proof that participation in the VPK program can make a difference in a child's academic career," said Commissioner Smith. "By engaging our children in the learning process as early as possible, we instill in them an excitement towards school and provide them with the building blocks for future academic success."

Students who attended a VPK program, even part of the time, performed better in three key early learning areas: alphabet recognition, sound recognition and classroom readiness.

VPK providers are rated on a scale of zero to 300 based on how well their students performed in the three key early learning areas. Parents can find out more about the performance of a specific VPK provider by visiting <https://vpk.fldoe.org/InfoPages/ReportCriteria.aspx>.

On Tuesday, February 19, 2008, the State Board of Education will set the minimum VPK Provider Kindergarten readiness rate, which identifies those providers who have met or exceeded minimum performance expectations.

"The Voluntary Prekindergarten program is an exceptional opportunity for our children to build a foundation for success in the classroom and in their eventual careers," said Monesia T. Brown, Director of the Agency for Workforce Innovation. "These impressive performance measures are a credit to the providers and early learning coalition partners dedicated to ensuring Florida's children are ready to learn."

Florida's VPK program is jointly administered by the Department of Education, the Agency for Workforce Innovation, and the Department of Children and Families. The Department of Education oversees standards, curricula and professional development; the Agency for Workforce Innovation administers the day-to-day operations of the program including policy development, financial management and oversight of the 31 Early Learning Coalitions; and the Department of Children and Families provides oversight of child care licensing, regulation, Florida's Gold Seal Quality Care program and issues credentials for child care personnel.

For more information, visit [VPK Readiness Rate Fact Sheet](#).

