



Welcome to First Steps International Academy!

Thank you for considering First Steps International Academy for our 2021 Summer VPK program or the Fall 2021-2022 VPK Program!

Please read ahead to learn more about our VPK Program and enrollment process:

What is VPK?

VPK stands for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.

The Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK) Program is a FREE educational program created to prepare every four-year-old in Florida for kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success. The VPK program offers each child an opportunity to perform better in school and throughout life by offering quality programs that include developmentally appropriate curricula with a focus on early literacy skills, developmental standards, accountability, substantial instruction periods, manageable class size, and qualified instructors.

How many school hours are included in FSIA VPK Program?

- **Summer:** 300 instructional; 9 hours per day are **totally FREE – No registration fee**
- **School Year:** 540 total instructional hours; 3 hours per day are **totally FREE.** 9:00 am to 12:00 Pm / 1:00pm to 4:00pm.
- **FSIA offers the Extended VPK Program**, which complements the 3 free hours, for a full immersion in our learning experience. You can choose between 8:00 am to 4:00pm and 7:00 am to 6:30 pm

What does FSIA Summer VPK Program offer?:

If your child didn't take advantage of the Fall VPK Program, he/she is eligible for Summer VPK Program.

- 300 instructional hours
- No Registration fee to enroll in Summer VPK Program.
- 5 Days a week, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm; 8 1/2 hours a day: **FREE!**
- Lead instructor with bachelor's in early childhood education.
- Bi-Lingual Program English - Spanish
- Internationally renowned VESS Educational Model (as explained below)
- Free Babysitting
- Educational Field Trips (included)
- Living the Arts
- Hands on, Minds On
- Daily School-Parent communication via our platform (Class Dojo)



- Classes can have a maximum of 11 students with one lead instructor or a maximum of 20 students with a lead instructor and an assistant.

What does FSIA VPK Program offer?:

- 540 instructional hours
- Lead instructor with bachelor's in early childhood education.
- Classes can have a maximum of 11 students with one lead instructor or a maximum of 20 students with a lead instructor and an assistant.
- Graduation Ceremony and End of the Year Show.
- No Registration fee to enroll in VPK Program.

What does VPK Fall Extended Program offer?:

FSIA Extended Program enriches the VPK program by providing a full immersion into our educational environment and culture. The Extended Program includes everything in the VPK Program, PLUS:

- Bilingual Program: English - Spanish
- Internationally renowned VESS Educational Model, which includes:
 - Fun, sensory-based activities as provocation for learning
 - Thinking as a Pedagogical Strategy
 - Visible Thinking routines from Harvard University
 - Mental Dispositions
 - Concept Maps
 - Thinking Keys
- Enrichment Classes (Included and Extra ones)
- Open Door Policy for parents
- Field Trips (included)
- Free Babysitting
- Parental involvement activities
- Daily School-Parent communication via our platform (Smartcare)
- The children who attended our extended VPK program will be able to take advantage of **keeping the same schedule, and continuing to pay the same amount they paid throughout the year for the whole summer session (if the explorers program is chosen);** even though the VPK has already been completed.

Why chose FSIA VPK Program?

First Steps International Academy VPK program highly exceeds all minimum Florida VPK standards. We are leaders in the implementation of The Visible Thinking Methodology from Harvard University in Early Childhood Education. Our revolutionary bilingual Early Childhood Program promotes



creative thinkers and builds a culture of thinking in a happy and safe environment. By identifying individual's needs and targets, we promote fulfillment of each child's potential while striving for excellence. Through our world-renowned, research-based educational model, **VESS**, we foster inquisitive and analytical minds, so that they may learn skills, concepts and technology that will guide their studies and approach to life, long after they have left us. At FSIA, children discover knowledge and develop their skills through inquiry and exciting experiences!

Our Extended VPK Program complements the regular program for an amazingly provocative and enriching learning experience. Please read ahead to learn more about our VESS educational model and philosophy!

Who is eligible for Florida's VPK Program?

Any child who lives in Florida and who turns 4 by September 1st, 2021 is eligible for Florida's FREE VPK Program.

Recent Changes in VPK Eligibility: A new law extends VPK eligibility for 4-year-olds with birthdays from Feb. 2 through Sept. 1 in a calendar year. Parents can enroll their child in the state's free, voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) education program that year or wait until the following year when their child is 5. This allows parents of younger 4-year-olds to postpone the year their child begins VPK, enabling the child to begin kindergarten and start first grade as a slightly older, more mature student.

Children in Florida are not required to attend either the state's prekindergarten or kindergarten programs but are required to attend school the year they turn 6 by Feb. 1. The new law takes effect July 1.

Four-year-old children with birthdays from Feb. 2 through Sept. 1 will be eligible to enroll in VPK that year or postpone it to the next. Four-year-old with birthdays from Sept. 2 through Feb. 1 are eligible to enroll in VPK the following program year as long as the child has not yet been admitted to kindergarten (please see chart below):

Your child remains eligible until kindergarten admittance, or unless they reach the age of 6 years by February 1 of any program year.



 4 Years Old 	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
2/1/19 thru 9/1/19		Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible
9/2/19 thru 2/1/20		Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible
2/2/20 thru 9/1/20*			Not eligible	Not eligible
9/2/20 thru 2/1/21	Not eligible		Not eligible	Not eligible
2/2/21 thru 9/1/21*	Not eligible			Not eligible
9/2/21 thru 2/1/22	Not eligible	Not eligible		Not eligible
2/2/22 thru 9/1/22*	Not eligible	Not eligible		

* Two years of eligibility

If parents think their child is not ready for Kindergarten:

There are a few points of information to consider:

1. If the child has not attended the VPK program yet and their date of birth falls between February 2nd and September 1st, they qualify for a VPK Postponement.
2. If the child has attended the VPK program, then a VPK Re-enrollment must be submitted along with required documentation to determine if the child is eligible to be re-enrolled in the subsequent program year.
3. A child may only re-enroll in a subsequent program year if:
 - The child attains the age of 4 years old between February 2 and September 1 of his or her initial program year of eligibility; and,
 - The child has not yet been admitted to kindergarten; and
 - The child is granted a re-enrollment



Registration and Enrollment:

For registration and Enrollment in FSIA VPK Program, follow these steps:

1. Register your child for the VPK Program at the following link: www.vpkhelp.org/ Families may register any time before August 15th.

To register, you must have proof of the following:

Proof of age: A child must be four years old on or before September 1st of that school year in order to participate in the VPK Program during that school year, or the following summer. Parents must provide proof of their child's age (for example, an original or certified copy of the child's birth certificate or immunization records).

Proof of residency: Children must live in Florida to participate in any VPK Program. Parents must show proof that the family lives in Florida. Examples of this include a parent's driver's license, utility bill or paystub.

2. Enroll your child in FSIA VPK Program. It's as easy as 1,2, 3:

1. Fill out our Registration Application
2. Bring signed VPK Certificate, and...
3. Bring your child's Blue and Yellow Form (Immunization records)

3. Once you enroll, you will receive a Welcome e-mail with the school calendar year, a copy of our Statement of Policies and an invitation to Smartcare - our online platform where you can see daily photos of your child in school!

VPK Calendar:

Summer VPK (2021-2022 School Year)

Starts: June 8th 2021

Ends: July 28th 2021

School Year VPK

Starts: August 18th 2021

Ends: June 9th 2022

Free VPK: 9:00 am – 12:00 am / 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Lunch is available for the Free VPK hours: monthly lunch fee is \$150.



Extended Program

FSIA is open from Monday – Friday, from 7:00 am – 6:30pm.
 Extended hours are available as follows:

Part Time: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm (FREE 3 hours of VPK + Lunch + Snacks + 3 Enrichment Classes)

Full Time: 7:00 am – 6:30 pm (FREE 3 hours of VPK + Lunch + Morning Snack + Afternoon Snack + F3 Enrichment Classes)

Extended Fees can be found on the Tuition Sheet attached to this package.

Days of No VPK Program: The VPK Program follows the Broward County Public School's calendar. As such, there will be No VPK Program on the following days:

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| ● Sept 6 th , 2021 | - Labor Day |
| ● Sept 7 th , 2021 | - Teacher Planning Day |
| ● Sept 16 th , 2021 | - Teacher Planning Day |
| ● October 20 th , 2021 | - Teacher Planning Day |
| ● Nov 11 th , 2021 | - Veteran's Day |
| ● Nov 22 nd –26 th , 2021 | - Thanksgiving Week |
| ● Dec 20 th –31 st , 2021 | - Winter Break |
| ● Jan 11 th , 2022 | - Teacher Planning Day |
| ● Jan 17 th , 2022 | - Martin Luther King Day |
| ● Feb 21 st , 2022 | - Presidents Day |
| ● Mar 18 th , 2022 | - Teacher Planning Day |
| ● Mar 21 st –25 th , 2022 | - Spring Break |
| ● Apr 15 th , 2022 | - School Closed- Good Friday |
| ● May 30 st , 2022 | - Memorial Day |
| ● June 10 th , 2022 | - End of the Year Graduation Ceremony and Show |

First Steps International Academy remains open for some of the days in the above calendar, but we will have a special schedule for VPK students. VPK Day fees for Days Off and Holiday Weeks can be found in the tuition sheet.

What to wear:

We understand that children need to be in comfortable clothes, appropriate for indoor activities. For their safety, sandals, flip-flops, jellies, or boots may not be worn to school. We recommend that all children wear sneakers. To foster independence, we encourage children to use clothing that they can easily manipulate. School uniform is mandatory for VPK Extended Program. It is not mandatory for VPK Only Programs.



What to Pack?

Children can bring a re-usable, spill-proof water bottle. Extra snacks from home are allowed, always peanut-free and healthy options. If you need ideas for snacks, please feel free to ask us!

VPK Attendance Regulations:

VPK is a FREE program. 540 hours must be completed during the Fall School Year. Absent days are permitted, but regulated with a daily classroom attendance that must be signed by parents every month. A prolonged amount of absences could result in the finalization of the FREE VPK program and families would need to re-apply with Early Learning Coalition in order to continue the program.

Finally, please allow me to share a couple of highlights about our school:

- First Steps International Academy is a full-service preschool serving children from one year to five years of age.
- We are leaders on the implementation of The Visible Thinking Methodology from Harvard University in Early Childhood Education.
- Our revolutionary bilingual Early Childhood Program promotes creative thinkers and builds a culture of learning in a happy and safe environment.
- By identifying individual's needs and targets, we promote fulfillment of each child's potential while striving for excellence.
- We foster inquisitive and analytical minds, so that they may learn skills, concepts and technology that will guide their studies and approach to life long after they have left us.
- Children discover knowledge and develop their skills through inquiry and fun and exciting experiences!

Once again, we thank you for your interest in making your child part of our Culture of Thinking for the 21st Century!

We invite you to contact us if you have additional questions 954-888-9775 and visit our website www.fsiapreschool.com for more information. Please also feel free to email us at any time.

We look forward to seeing you soon,
Once again thank you and kind regards

First Steps International Academy



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