



Welcome to FSIA!

Thank you for considering First Steps International Academy for our 2022 Summer VPK program or our 2022-2023 Fall VPK Program!

Please read below 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 a developmentally appropriate curriculum 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's VPK Program?

- **Summer:** 300 instructional hours; 8 hours per day for **FREE – No registration fee**
- **School Year:** 540 total instructional hours; 3 hours per day for **FREE – No registration fee**
- **FSIA offers the Extended VPK Program**, which complements the 3 free hours, for a full immersion in our learning experience.

What does FSIA Summer VPK Program offer?

If your child didn't take advantage of the Fall VPK Program in the 2021-2022 school year, he/she is eligible for FSIA Summer VPK Program taking place in 2022:

- 300 instructional hours
- No registration fee to enroll in Summer VPK Program.
- 5 days a week, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm. 8 hours a day are **FREE!**
- Classes can have a maximum of 12 students with one lead instructor.

What does FSIA School Year VPK Program offer?

- 540 instructional hours
- No registration fee to enroll in VPK Program.
- 5 days a week, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm / 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm. 3 hours a day are **FREE!**
- 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 Extended VPK Program offer?

FSIA Extended VPK 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
- Extracurricular Activities (Included and Extra ones)
- Open Door Policy for parents



Why chose a 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 needs and targets, we promote fulfillment of each child's potential while striving for excellence. 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.

Who is eligible for Florida's VPK Program?

Any child who lives in Florida and who turns 4 by September 1st, 2022, 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 February 2nd through September 1st 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 years old. 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 February 1st.

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, 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 2nd and September 1st 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 21st.

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 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 Form,
2. Bring signed VPK Certificate, and...
3. Bring your child's Blue and Yellow Form (Immunization records).

Once you enroll, you will receive a Welcome e-mail with the school calendar, a copy of our Statement of Policies and an invitation to Smartcare, our online platform.

VPK Calendar:

Summer VPK (2022):

- Starts: June 14^h, 2022
- Ends: August 12th, 2022
- Schedule: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

School Year VPK (2022-2023):

- Starts: August 16th, 2022
- Ends: June 8th, 2023
- Schedule: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm / 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Extended VPK Program (2022-2023)

- Starts: August 1st, 2022
- Ends: June 8th, 2023
- Schedule: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm or 8:00 am to 5:30 pm

Days of No Summer VPK Program (2022):

- July 4th, 2022: Independence Day
- July 25th to 29th, 2022: Edu1st Teachers' Professional Development Week

Days of No VPK Program (2022-2023):

- September 5th, 2022: Labor Day
- September 26th, 2022: Teacher Planning Day
- October 5th, 2022: Teacher Planning Day
- October 21st, 2022: Teacher Planning Day
- November 11th, 2022: Edu1st Training & Development Day
- November 21st to 25th, 2022: Thanksgiving Week
- December 26th, 2022 to January 6th 2023: Winter Break



- January 13th, 2023: Teacher Planning Day
- January 16th, 2023: Edu1st Training & Development Day
- February 20th, 2023: Presidents Day
- March 17th to March 24th, 2023: Spring Break
- April 7th, 2023: Edu1st Training & Development Day
- April 28th, 2023: Edu1st Training & Development Day
- May 29th, 2023: Memorial Day
- June 8th, 2023: Last day of VPK

What to wear:

We understand that children need to be in comfortable clothes, appropriate for indoor activities. For their safety, sandals, flip-flops, crocs, 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 (blue polo shirt) is mandatory for the VPK Extended Program. It is not mandatory for the VPK Only Programs. Blue or khaki pants for the bottom.

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. By Florida regulation, 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 number of absences could result in the finalization of the FREE VPK program and families would need to re-apply with Early Learning Coalition to continue the program.

Once again, we thank you for your interest in our school!

We invite you to contact us if you have additional questions. Don't forget to visit our website and learn more about us!