



# Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Duval County Kindergarten Readiness Rates Show VPK Participants Are Better Prepared**

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla. March 4, 2009** — The Early Learning Coalition of Duval announces the “Kindergarten Readiness Rates” for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Providers for the 2007-08 year. The rates show that **children who participated in VPK are better prepared to succeed in school.** “Kindergarten Readiness Rates” measure how “ready” a child is for kindergarten. The State of Florida and ELC of Duval use this data to help determine how well our local children are doing and to gauge the effectiveness of private and public VPK providers in preparing four-year-olds for kindergarten. Rates are calculated by the Florida Department of Education and are available at our website; [www.elcofduval.org](http://www.elcofduval.org).

Over 8,500 children were enrolled in VPK throughout 07-08. The results found that **children who attend and finish a VPK program are better prepared to enter kindergarten** than children who did not. The Duval County School Board administered the screening to all public school kindergarten students as part of its annual process to determine the “readiness” of kindergarteners. Additionally, private school kindergarteners participate in the screening at their local public elementary school. The screening looks at how well the child understands literacy and learning concepts, alphabet recognition and letter sound recognition.

These “Kindergarten Readiness Rates” reflect the 350+ Duval County providers of VPK in 07-08. **Duval County VPK providers scored an average rate of 245.** The highest rate a provider could receive is 300 (100 percent for each of the three screening tools). Rates were calculated on the number of children who attended at least 70% of the provider's school-year or summer program and who were screened on any one of the three measures.

The screening instrument (Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener--*FLKRS*) measured how well the children could identify letter names and initial letter sounds as well as how they met the statewide VPK standards. The screening instrument was comprised of portions of the Early Childhood Observation System™--*ECHOST*™--which measures statewide VPK standards) and two sections of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills™--*DIBELS*™--which measures letter name/letter sound recognition).

**“Every year the message is loud and clear. When we invest in high quality early learning programs, like VPK, we have children who are better prepared for learning and can be more successful in school. This is the third year we have seen this trend, and it is a commendation on the work of our child care provider partners and the work we do as a community.”** said Susan Main, ELC of Duval, Executive Director.

To learn more about *Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten* or the Early Learning Coalition of Duval call (904) 208-2044 or visit [www.elcofduval.org](http://www.elcofduval.org)

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