

**6M-8.621 Program Assessment Requirements for the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program.**

(1) Definitions. The following definitions are applicable to all rules under Chapter 6M-8, F.A.C.

(a) “Classroom” means a private provider’s or public school’s VPK class that includes a child in the VPK program, as defined in Rule 6M-8.100, F.A.C.

(b) “Composite Program Assessment Score” means an average of all Division of Early Learning-adopted program assessment dimension scores from VPK classrooms, omitting the negative climate score if included in the tool.

(c) “Contract Minimum Threshold” means the minimum composite program assessment score, as defined in subsection (3) of this rule, a provider must achieve on the program assessment to be eligible to contract for the VPK Program pursuant to Section 1002.68(5)(a), F.S.

(d) “Early Learning Coalition” or “coalition” means the entity charged with administering the VPK Education Program at the local level pursuant to Sections 1002.53, 1002.68(2), and 1002.73, F.S. “Early Learning Coalition” or “coalition” includes applicable Florida Department of Education (FDOE) contractors.

(e) “Negative Climate Score” means the measure of the level of expressed negativity shown by teachers, children, or both in a classroom.

(f) “Observer” means a certified reliable prekindergarten observer that meets the requirements outlined by the vendor to conduct a classroom observation with validity and reliability.

(g) “Program Assessment” means the measurement of the quality of teacher-child interactions, including emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support for children ages three (3) to five (5) years required by Section 1002.68(2), F.S.

(h) “School-year program” means a school-year prekindergarten program consisting of five-hundred and forty (540) instructional hours delivered by a private provider under Section 1002.55, F.S., or by a public school under Section 1002.63, F.S.

(i) “Summer program” means a summer prekindergarten program consisting of three-hundred (300) instructional hours delivered by a private provider or public school under Section 1002.61, F.S.

(2) Program Assessment Administration. Early learning coalitions are responsible for the administration of the program assessments. Each VPK provider must annually participate in a program assessment of each VPK classroom for both the school-year and summer VPK programs. All program assessments must occur during VPK instructional hours with the coalition-approved lead VPK instructor, aide, substitute, or VPK director present for the duration of the observation. All program assessments must occur with at least one (1) enrolled VPK student present.

(a) All program assessments will be conducted by coalition observers or FDOE-approved vendor observers.

1. For school-year programs, program assessments must be conducted no earlier than fifteen (15) instructional days after the program start date.

2. For summer programs, program assessments shall be conducted no earlier than five (5) instructional days after the program start date.

3. Each coalition must ensure all program assessments, including second program assessments, are conducted before the scheduled program end date.

(b) All observers must have a current certification required by the vendor to conduct a classroom observation with validity and reliability. To the extent possible observers must have the ability to speak, understand, and write in the language of the classrooms they are observing.

(c) Observers must enter and save all dimension scores and notes into the FDOE-approved vendor system within five (5) business days of conducting a classroom observation.

(d) The coalition must notify VPK providers via the Provider Portal of their score for each observed VPK classroom within fourteen (14) calendar days of the observation being completed. An observation is considered complete, when the observer has entered the classroom observation data into the FDOE-approved system. Upon a provider’s written request, and within fourteen (14) calendar days, the coalition must provide individual classroom notes to the provider.

(e) VPK classrooms organized as a multi-class group, as defined in Rule 6M-8.400, F.A.C., must have one (1) classroom observation completed, and the resulting classroom observation score will be used for each classroom in the composite program assessment score calculation.

(3) Contract Minimum Threshold. The minimum composite program assessment score a VPK program must achieve is 4.00. A provider’s school-year and summer VPK programs are considered separately. Providers that score below the contract minimum threshold, may not participate in the VPK Program in the consecutive program year and thereafter until the provider meets the

contract minimum threshold.

(a) VPK providers that score below the contract minimum threshold based on their composite program assessment score may request from the early learning coalition a second program assessment within the same program type and year at the provider's expense. Providers must provide payment to the early learning coalition for the second program assessment prior to the program assessment being conducted.

(b) A second program assessment for a VPK classroom or classrooms must be requested from the coalition in writing within thirty (30) days of receipt of the composite program assessment score. For second program assessments, each requested classroom will be observed, and its score will replace the previous score to calculate a new composite program assessment score.

(4) Special Considerations.

(a) In the event of a change of ownership, sale, sale of assets, conveyance of ownership, or other transfer of ownership interest that requires a VPK provider to execute a new VPK Provider Contract per subsection 6M-8.301(9), F.A.C., the provider may submit a request to the coalition to retain the existing composite program assessment score if at least 50% of VPK classrooms and their assigned instructors that were previously assessed remain the same. If the provider elects not to retain the existing score, the provider is required to obtain a program assessment pursuant to subsection (2) of this rule. If 30% or fewer of the VPK program hours remain at the time of the ownership change, a program assessment is not required until the consecutive program year.

(b) Observations conducted in VPK classrooms during participation in the School Readiness program assessment under Rule 6M-4.740, F.A.C., that meet the requirements of this rule, may be used for meeting contract minimum threshold, provided the observation was conducted within VPK program hours.

(5) Composite Program Assessment Score Calculation.

(a) The composite program assessment score will be calculated using the combined average of the dimension scores, excluding negative climate scores, from each VPK classroom's observation and will be rounded to two (2) decimal places.

(b) All active VPK classrooms registered in the Provider Portal for each VPK provider must be observed to calculate the composite program assessment score.

(6) Program Assessment Scheduling.

(a) In scheduling a program assessment early learning coalitions or their designees must select a two (2)-week window when a VPK provider's regular activities are occurring, and allow the provider to choose up to three (3) days the provider is not available for observation

(b) If the provider experiences a temporary closure, as defined in Rule 6M-8.204, F.A.C., on the day it is scheduled to be observed, the provider must request to reschedule the program assessment within two (2) weeks of the original program assessment.

(c) If a the coalition-approved lead VPK instructor, aide, substitute, and VPK director have an extenuating circumstance which causes all to be absent from a classroom on the day it is scheduled to be observed, the observer must reschedule the program assessment within two (2) weeks of the original program assessment. A provider should notify the observer as soon as the provider is aware of any extenuating circumstance which would cause rescheduling of the program assessment

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