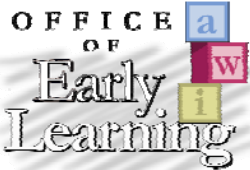
	AGENCY FOR WORKFORCE INNOVATION Office of Early Learning		
	SUBJECT FILE: 508.05	POLICY NUMBER: OEL-PI-0010-05	
	UNIT: Program	STAFF CONTACT: Joseph R. Gillespie, (850) 921-3192	
	ISSUE DATE: April 21, 2005	DEPUTY DIRECTOR: Gladys W. Wilson	

Subject: Verification of developmentally appropriate curricula used for VPK program

References: Section 1002.55(3)(b)3., F.S.¹
 Section 1002.67(3)(a), F.S.
 Section 1002.75(2)(d) and (e), F.S.

Purpose: To provide information about procedures used in verifying that private prekindergarten providers and public schools in the VPK program use developmentally appropriate curricula

Background: In December 2004, at its 2004 Special Session “A,” the Legislature enacted House Bill 1-A (ch. 2004-484, L.O.F.), which created the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK) Program. The Governor approved the bill and it became effective on January 2, 2005. The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) to develop and adopt performance standards² for students in the VPK program which address the age-appropriate progress of students in developing, among other things, emergent literacy skills (s. 1002.67(1), F.S.). The bill requires each provider’s or school’s curriculum³ to be developmentally appropriate and, among other things, “[e]nhance the age-appropriate progress of students in attaining the performance standards adopted by [DOE]” (s. 1002.67(2)(b), F.S.).

The bill specifies that “[e]ach private prekindergarten provider and public school may select or design the curriculum that the provider or school uses to implement the [VPK p]rogram, except as otherwise required for a provider or school that is placed on probation” (s. 1002.67(2)(a), F.S.). The bill requires DOE to assign each provider and school a “kindergarten readiness rate,” expressed as the percentage of the provider’s or school’s students who are assessed as ready for kindergarten on the statewide kindergarten screening (s. 1002.69(5), F.S.).

¹ All citations to sections in part V of ch. 1002, F.S. (ss. 1002.51-1002.79, F.S.) were created by s. 1, ch. 2004-484, L.O.F.

² Performance standards define expectations for a child’s knowledge, skills, and abilities (*i.e.*, *what* a child is expected to know and be able to do).

³ A curriculum is a systematic methodology for teaching a child (*i.e.*, *how* to teach a child what he or she is expected to know and be able to do).

If a provider's or school's kindergarten readiness rate falls below the minimum satisfactory rate adopted by the State Board of Education for two consecutive years, the provider or school is placed on probation and loses the privilege of selecting or designing its own curricula (ss. 1002.67(3)(c)2. and 1002.59(6), F.S.). While the provider or school remains on probation, it must use a curricula reviewed and approved by DOE (s. 1002.67(3)(c)2. and 3., F.S.). The bill further requires DOE to maintain a list of approved curricula available for use by providers and schools on probation (s. 1002.67(2)(c), F.S.).

House Bill 1-A requires each early learning coalition, in accordance with procedures adopted by the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI), to verify that private prekindergarten providers comply with VPK program requirements (ss. 1002.67(3)(a) and 1002.75(2)(e), F.S.). The bill similarly requires each school district to verify, in accordance with AWI's procedures, the compliance of its public schools. *Id.*

The bill also requires early learning coalitions, when determining the eligibility of licensed private prekindergarten providers that do not hold a current Gold Seal Quality Care designation or which are not accredited by an accrediting association that is a member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation (<http://www.ncpsa.org>), the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (<http://www.citaschools.org>), or the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools (<http://www.faans.org>), to verify in accordance with AWI's procedures that each provider has developmentally appropriate curricula before the provider delivers the VPK program (ss. 1002.55(3)(b)3. and 1002.75(2)(d), F.S.).

Instructions: To be eligible to deliver the VPK program, each private prekindergarten provider and public school must complete and submit the statewide registration application (Form AWI-VPK 10) to its respective early learning coalition. The application form includes, among other things, questions soliciting information concerning the curricula selected or designed by each provider and school. These questions require each provider and school to confirm that its curricula address each of the VPK performance standards adopted by the Department of Education.

Statewide evaluation procedures adopted by AWI, rather than local coalition policies, shall govern each early learning coalition's review of the registration applications and determination of each private prekindergarten provider's eligibility, based on the provider's responses in its application. To ensure that the VPK program is uniformly administered statewide, such that similarly situated providers are evaluated in a similar manner, each early learning coalition must follow the AWI procedures.

The Agency for Workforce Innovation's evaluation procedures for reviewing questions concerning a provider's or school's curricula require the coalition to objectively verify that the provider or school has confirmed that its curricula address each of the VPK performance standards. The procedures do not permit a

coalition to look beyond the application or use its discretion to subjectively conclude whether a provider's or school's curriculum is developmentally appropriate. In sum, the procedures do not permit a coalition to substitute its judgment for the provider's or school's judgment of whether a curriculum is developmentally appropriate.

Statewide monitoring procedures adopted by AWI, rather than local coalition policies, shall govern the early learning coalitions' monitoring of private prekindergarten providers for verification of the providers' continuing compliance with VPK program requirements. The Agency for Workforce Innovation's procedures address the coalitions' responsibilities for verifying that each provider uses a developmentally appropriate curriculum. Early learning coalitions must uniformly apply the procedures to ensure program integrity.

PLEASE DIRECT QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS TO THE STAFF CONTACT LISTED ABOVE.
