

Frequently Asked Questions about FLKRS

1. What is FLKRS?

FLKRS stands for *Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener*. State law requires screening for all public school kindergarten students within the first 30 days of the school year. Kindergarten teachers use the results to help understand each child’s readiness for school and plan lessons to meet individual needs. The Office of Early Learning also uses the results to calculate kindergarten readiness rates for VPK providers.

The Florida Department of Education selects the screening instrument, which assesses how prepared each student is for kindergarten based on performance standards the department adopted for VPK.

2. What will the new FLKRS be this fall?

The department selected the Star Early Literacy[®] assessment. Some school districts already use this to screen kindergarten students in the first 30 days. All school districts will begin using it this fall.

3. What is Star Early Literacy?

It is an online, “adaptive” assessment that students take by themselves in about 15-20 minutes.

4. What does the assessment cover?

Star Early Literacy contains 27 items that assess early language and number skills. The assessment aligned with the *Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011)* and aligns with the Early Learning and Developmental Standards: 4 Years Old to Kindergarten (2017) to be used beginning fall 2018. Star Early Literacy covers the same areas as the VPK Assessment—phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, vocabulary and number sense.

5. How do children take the assessment?

Children take it by themselves on a computer. It is in a game-like format, similar to apps children may use. The assessment is *adaptive*, meaning that questions get harder or easier based on how children respond. The computer “knows” which question to ask next based on a child’s previous response. Children typically complete the assessment in 15-20 minutes.

Star Early Literacy practice questions and a computer mouse tutorial are available so children can become used to the format before taking the assessment. A practice resource is also available at <http://www.renlearn.com/lp/Florida%20K-Readiness%20Practice/>.

6. Why does FLKRS focus on certain areas rather than all developmental and learning areas for children?

Florida has used state kindergarten readiness assessments for approximately 20 years—since before VPK started. Assessments have varied over the years, but there has been an instrument that focuses specifically on emergent literacy skills since VPK began. Those skills are considered strong predictors of a child's later reading abilities. This is consistent with VPK's statutory emphasis on emergent literacy and Florida's emphasis on reading. While young children are more than the sum of their emergent literacy skills, assessing these skills has been an important part of understanding the VPK child's growth in this area, since they grow similarly in other developmental areas. Children who are doing well globally, including in social and emotional skills, are generally able to attend to the pre-academic skills they learn in VPK.

7. How will this change affect me as a VPK provider?

Scores from the assessment will be used to calculate readiness rates for VPK providers.

8. What can I do to prepare?

Here are some tips you can use to prepare children for success:

- Keep doing the great things you *are already* doing with children. The assessment aligned to the *Standards for Four-Year-Olds* (2011) and aligns with the *Early Learning and Developmental Standards: 4 Years Old to Kindergarten* (2017) to be used beginning fall 2018.
- After you administer the VPK Assessment, note the reports available showing results by child, by class and by center.
 - a. Share VPK Assessment parent letters with families. They are available in English, Spanish and Haitian-Creole.
 - b. Take the *VPK Assessment Instructional Implications* course (instructor-led now, available online summer 2017). This course shows how to read and interpret assessment reports so you can plan instruction based on children's needs.
 - c. Plan instruction based on how the class and individual children progress.

9. How can I be involved in further conversations and/or decision-making?

Program accountability is important in evaluating the work of providers the state contracts with and ensuring children receive the highest quality VPK program possible. The early learning office is looking at how to use VPK Assessment data along with FLKRS data to possibly calculate VPK provider readiness rates in the future. Plans for calculating readiness rates will be part of rule development this upcoming year. Individuals may sign up to receive rulemaking updates at <http://bit.ly/2r36FM9>.

Other resources

More information on FLKRS is available on the [Florida Department of Education \(FDOE\) website](#).

For more information on the VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate, visit the [Office of Early Learning \(OEL\) website](#).

State laws that apply: [Section 1002.69](#), Florida Statutes (F.S.), requires the Florida Department of Education to adopt a statewide kindergarten screening instrument that assesses the readiness of each student for kindergarten based on the performance standards adopted by the department under section [1002.67\(1\)](#), F.S., for VPK.