

# Brevard Public Schools



## Program



# Parent Handbook

2024-2025

# **WELCOME TO THE VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM!**

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This handbook will provide some general information about the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program that will be helpful to you and your child. It is important for families and teachers to work together as partners to ensure the best educational experiences for children. Please take the time to review this booklet. The information provided can help make the transition from home to school a successful one for your child. It is our goal to provide your child with an environment that is safe, nurturing, and rich in learning experiences.

**We look forward to having your child  
join our prekindergarten school family!**



## MISSION STATEMENT

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The mission of our prekindergarten program is to prepare our students for success in Kindergarten and beyond.



### Prekindergarten GOALS for Brevard Public Schools

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Brevard Public Schools Prekindergarten programs are committed to the following program goals:

- Provide a high quality, developmentally appropriate prekindergarten program promoting children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development.
- Provide a safe, nurturing learning environment for all children.
- Integrate the **HighScope** educational framework and **Ready To Advance Curriculum** to support mastery of the **Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards**.
- Promote active learning experiences by encouraging children to explore, create, and manipulate a variety of materials with adult support.
- Partner with families to support children's learning and development by establishing relationships based upon mutual trust and respect.

# PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

## 2024-25

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Brevard Public Schools offers Title I **Step *FOUR*ward VPK**, **Blended VPK**, and **Early Childhood Education (High School) VPK** programs at select elementary and high schools throughout the county. The programs promote high quality, full day early childhood education with a focus on early language and literacy. All classes are staffed with a Florida Department of Education early childhood certified teacher and a highly qualified instructional assistant. The VPK programs incorporate strong family engagement activities including family meetings and parent participation in classrooms.



### Title I Step *FOUR*ward VPK

The **Step *FOUR*ward VPK** program maintains a class size of 20 children with a teacher to child ratio of 1:10. Children eligible to attend the program must be four years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> and live in the attendance area of one of the following schools:

Apollo Elementary

McAuliffe Elementary

Columbia Elementary

MILA Elementary

Dr. W. J. Creel Elementary

Palm Bay Elementary

Croton Elementary

Pinewood Elementary

Fairglen Elementary

Riviera Elementary

Golfview Elementary

Sabal Elementary

Harbor City Elementary

Turner Elementary

## **Blended VPK**

The **Blended VPK** program is an inclusion program consisting of ten VPK students and eight students with exceptional education needs. These 18 students must be four years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> and are not required to live in the school's attendance area.

Atlantis Elementary

Oak Park Elementary

Audubon Elementary

Riviera Elementary

Columbia Elementary

Saturn Elementary

Dr. W. J. Creel Elementary

Sea Park Elementary

Lockmar Elementary

Sunrise Elementary

Longleaf Elementary

Turner Elementary

McAuliffe Elementary

Westside Elementary

Meadowlane Primary

Williams Elementary

MILA Elementary



## **Early Childhood Education (High School) VPK**

The **Early Childhood Education VPK** program is located in select high schools and has a maximum class size of 20 children with a teacher to child ratio of 1:10. Children eligible to attend this program must be 4 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

Merritt Island High

Palm Bay High

Satellite High

Viera High

The Step *FOUR*ward VPK, Blended VPK and High School VPK programs are available to eligible children at NO COST to families.

# PROGRAM DATES

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## Elementary Schools

August 19, 2024 – May 28, 2025  
Monday through Friday  
Times vary by school



## High Schools

September 3, 2024, to May 2, 2025  
Tuesday through Friday  
Times vary by school

**There is NO school for students on the following dates:**

September 2, 2024	Labor Day
October 14, 2024	Student Holiday
November 11, 2024	Veterans' Day
November 25*, 26*, 27*, 28-29, 2024	Thanksgiving
December 23, 2024 January 3, 2025	Winter Break
January 20, 2025	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February 17, 2025*	Student Holiday
March 14, 2025	Student Holiday
March 17 - 21, 2025	Spring Break
April 18, 2025*	Student Holiday
May 28, 2025	Last Day for Students

**There will be early release day every Friday  
beginning August 11.**

**\* Make-up days for inclement weather.**

# ATTENDANCE

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It is important that your child is on time and attends every school day to ensure both the success of your child and the program. Each day is planned to provide valuable learning experiences.

Your family support is needed to provide consistency with attendance. **Parents need to be aware of the following:**

- In the event your child must be absent, please notify the school immediately AND submit written documentation for all absences upon their return to school. Written documentation can be a parent or doctor's note or legal document.
- The teacher will keep a daily log of attendance for each student. At the end of the month, you will be asked to review the attendance record, attest to the accuracy, and state your desire to have your child remain in the program by signing and returning the *Parental Choice* form to the school. If you do not sign and return the form within a reasonable time, your child may be withdrawn from the program.
- Regular attendance is a program expectation. Withdrawal procedures may begin for any child who has frequent absences and tardies.



# PROCEDURES FOR ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

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In order to maximize the school experience, it is expected that your child will arrive on time and be picked up on time.

## Arrival:

Arriving on time provides for a smooth, calm transition for your child from home to the school setting. **If you arrive early you will need to wait with your child until class begins.**

Late arrivals create classroom disruption and can affect the educational growth of your child and others in the classroom. **If a child arrives after class begins, the parent needs to accompany the child to the school office to sign the child in for the day.**

## Dismissal:

Picking up your child on time eliminates the anxiety your child will feel when you are late.

If your child must be picked up early, a note should be sent to the teacher indicating an early dismissal is needed and what time. **The parent or adult picking up the child must report to the school office to sign the child out for the day. The adult must be authorized to do so in writing and show photo identification. Parents are expected to comply with the school's arrival and dismissal procedures.**





# STUDENT HEALTH

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## Schools will follow the current BPS Health & Safety plan.

For the well-being and health of all children and teaching staff, parents are requested to please keep your child home if the following symptoms are evident:

- **Fever**
- **Vomiting or diarrhea**
- **Signs of a contagious illness**



If a child has a health-related issue or needs emergency treatment at school, every effort will be made to contact families.

**Parents are required to provide the school office and teacher with names and phone numbers to use if contact with a parent is necessary. Please keep this information current.**

Your child will only be released from school to an adult (with photo identification) whose name is indicated on your release list. A child will not be allowed to leave the school with anyone who has not been given written permission.

## MEDICATION

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Your child may develop a health condition that indicates the need to bring prescription medication to school. Only medicine **approved by a physician** will be administered to children at school (including non-prescription and over the counter medication). All medicine must be in the original container and include the child's name, type and date of prescribed medication, amount, and time of dosage. Medication will only be administered through the front office.

# **BREAKFAST and LUNCH**

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Good nutrition is important to a child's growth and development. All children are offered a **free breakfast** at school every day with plenty of time to eat. Children have the choice of buying a school lunch or bringing a packed, nutritious lunch from home. Lunches from school can be provided free or at a reduced price if the family qualifies. The school office can assist families with the federal free/reduced lunch program eligibility process.

Full Price Lunch	\$2.50
Reduced Price Lunch	\$0.40

**If your child has a food allergy,  
please notify the classroom teacher immediately  
to avoid an allergic reaction.**

## **Meal Prepayment Options**

Parents can prepay for lunches either in the school cafeteria or online at [www.mypaymentsplus.com](http://www.mypaymentsplus.com).



## APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

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Active learning is the focus of the prekindergarten program. A variety of materials will be available to children including paints, water, and sand. Outside play is also a part of their daily routine. Children should wear comfortable clothes and appropriate shoes for both classroom and outside activities. Please provide an extra set of labeled clothes for your child in case of emergency.

## FIELD TRIPS

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Field trips are the ideal way for young children to experience, first-hand, the world around them. Field trips can be used to introduce or enrich all areas of learning. When opportunities and resources permit, field trips are planned to extend and enhance classroom experiences. Each participating child must have a permission form signed by the parent or legal guardian. Transportation is provided by school buses. Children are supervised and chaperoned by adults at all times while on field trips.

*If you are interested in chaperoning, contact the school office as soon as possible about becoming an approved volunteer.*

*Approval of your volunteer status must be received by the school prior to attending field trips.*



# **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

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Our prekindergarten children participate in a variety of developmentally appropriate educational activities. With birth to age five marking a period of rapid development, the young learners in our classrooms receive instruction and support that promotes development using the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards as the foundation for providing enriching learning experiences.

The components of our prekindergarten program consist of integrating:

- The Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards
- Ready to Advance Curriculum
- High Scope framework
- Star Early Literacy
- Best practices for promoting Kindergarten Readiness



**The Florida Early Learning and Development Standards**, developed by the Florida Department of Education are based on principles that incorporate knowledge about child development and the ways that young children explore, create, and think in eight areas of development.

- I. Physical Development
- II. Approaches to Learning
- III. Social and Emotional Development
- IV. Language and Literacy
- V. Mathematical Thinking
- VI. Scientific Inquiry
- VII. Social Studies
- VIII. Creative Expression Through the Arts



**The Ready to Advance Curriculum** is designed to support high quality teaching and learning experiences for young children. This evidence and research based, comprehensive, curriculum includes collaborative activities that promote the development of the whole child- socially, emotionally, behaviorally and academically. Knowledge building lessons using Ready to Advance is focused on 10 units of study:

All About Me  
Families and Friends  
Communities and Health  
Community Jobs and Fall  
Celebrations and Winter  
Animals  
Transportation  
Spring and Growing Things  
Farms and Food Sources  
Insects and Ecology

The High Scope educational framework includes five essential elements. These elements are:

- Promotion of **active learning**
- A **classroom arrangement** that invites children to engage in personal, meaningful learning experiences
- A consistent **daily schedule** that supports active learning
- **Observation and notetaking** regarding each child's development
- A **curriculum** that regards children's interests and choices



# PROGRESS MONITORING

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**Star Early Literacy** is a computer-based, progress monitoring tool designed to measure the early literacy skills of beginning readers. This adaptive progress monitoring tool addresses children's mastery of literacy and early numeracy concepts that are directly related to their future success as readers. Star Early Literacy monitors proficiency in three broad domains:

- Word knowledge and skills
- Comprehension strategies and constructing meaning
- Numbers and operations

The integration of each of the components of our prekindergarten programs work together to provide a strong foundation for young children to develop positive self-concepts and relationships, skills of independence, early language, literacy, and numeracy skills and readiness for the rigors of kindergarten and beyond.



## POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

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Challenging behavior can interfere with a child's learning and development. Promoting children's social emotional development and establishing a positive learning environment are primary goals of the program. Positive discipline helps children be successful socially. Throughout the day, children are guided toward using appropriate behavior.

Teachers will support children by teaching acceptable alternatives to unacceptable behaviors so children can interact positively in the classroom environment. Children are encouraged to do their own problem solving. Conflict resolution strategies are used to help them develop positive social skills. If a child has difficulty practicing appropriate behaviors, teachers will work with parents and together provide supportive strategies to problem solve and meet the child's needs.

A child may be withdrawn from the program if behavior threatens the safety of self/others or continues to disrupt the teaching and learning process despite interventions.





# **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

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Every family plays an important educational role in the life of their child. Family engagement is valued and strongly encouraged within the prekindergarten program. The education of a child is a shared responsibility between families and schools. When families actively participate in the education of their child, at home or at school, children have a greater chance of positive learning experiences and outcomes.

Throughout the program, families have the opportunity to become actively involved in their child's learning experiences through:

- Parent Partnership Meeting/Home Visit**
- Open House/Orientation**
- Family Communication Folders**
- Family Conferences**
- Classroom Volunteer Opportunities**
- Field Trips**
- Special Classroom/School Events**

When family members volunteer in the classroom, their extra hands and hearts can make a difference for all children. Family members benefit by learning about their child's experiences at school. Children benefit too, by seeing family members demonstrate an interest in their education at school.

**When families and schools work together on behalf of children, everyone benefits**



# WHAT PARENTS CAN DO FOR THEIR CHILD

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**Communicate with teachers.** Teachers are grateful to see parents. They are eager to celebrate successes and to discuss challenges a child might be experiencing. Please check your child's family communication folder regularly for important information. Bring concerns to the teacher's attention as soon as possible, and partner to find an appropriate solution.

**Read to your child daily.** Allow your child to select books to read. Encourage your child to read (tell the story by looking at the illustrations) aloud to you. Enjoy reading together!

**Encourage your child.** Let children know you appreciate their efforts, contributions, and accomplishments.

**Make sure your child gets enough rest.** No one does their best when sleepy or tired. "Enough rest" for children means eight or nine hours of sleep.

**Keep your child healthy.** Take your child to the doctor for regular checkups and booster shots. Notify the teacher of any medical problems. Maintain a balanced diet at home and include regular exercise. Clean hair and clothes will add to building a child's self-esteem.

**Help children maintain good attendance records.** This will be the beginning of creating good habits that will last a lifetime. When children miss school, they may fall behind causing them to become anxious and frustrated.

**Monitor and limit TV and electronic devices.** Discuss with your child the appropriate shows to watch and games to play. Try to watch and play together and talk about the things your child is learning.



## FOR FAMILIES

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1. Please send your child to school in play clothes because activities such as painting, coloring, gluing, sitting on the floor, and playing outside are part of the daily routine.
2. Label personal items such as sweaters and backpacks with your child's first and last name.
3. Please dress your child in clothes that can be easily managed alone in the bathroom.
4. If your child is absent, please send a note upon return. Regular attendance is very important to a child's educational progress.
5. If your family moves, changes telephone numbers, or changes emergency numbers, send a note including the new information as soon as possible. This is for your child's health and safety.
6. You must send a written note regarding **any** change in transportation.
7. Read all notes and information sent home with your child. If there is a need to respond, please do so the following day.

8. Participate as a volunteer with field trips and other activities. Contact the school office about becoming an approved volunteer now to allow plenty of time for processing before your help is needed at school.
9. Allow time each day for your child to tell you what activities were experienced at school. For example, “Tell me about your picture,” “How did you make this?” “What songs did you sing?” or “What did you do at work time?”
10. Be supportive and positive with your comments. For example, “I can see you worked really hard in making this,” or “Thank you for sharing this with me.”
11. Provide access to appropriate books and other reading materials for your child.
12. Read aloud to your child every day.
13. Provide opportunities to do and see things together.
14. Play games with your child.
15. Monitor and limit television viewing and use of electronic devices.
16. Sing with your child.



## UNITY

I dreamed I stood in a studio  
And watched two sculptors there.  
The clay they used was a young child's mind  
And they fashioned it with care.

One was a teacher – the tools he used  
Were books, music and art.  
The other, a parent, worked with a guiding hand,  
And a gentle, loving heart.

Day after day, the teacher toiled with touch  
That was careful, deft and sure.  
While the parent labored by his side  
And polished and smoothed it o'er.

And when at last, their task was done.  
They were proud of what they had wrought.  
For the things they had molded into the child  
Could neither be sold nor bought.

And each agreed they would have failed  
If each had worked alone.  
For behind the parent stood the school  
And behind the teacher, the home.

---Author Unknown

# BREVARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Remember to visit the district webpage at  
[www.brevardschools.org](http://www.brevardschools.org)



By clicking on the “Parents & Students” tab, you can access information and resources available for all parents & students.

Visit the webpage at  
<https://www.brevardschools.org/o/bps/page/voluntary-prekindergarten-vpk>

and click on Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) for additional resources as well as the Early Childhood Education link.

Visit your child’s school website for information specific to that school.

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**Educational Services Facility**  
**2700 Judge Fran Jamieson Way**  
**Melbourne, FL 32940-6601**

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