



Pay attention to your instincts.

Trust your ability to make wise decisions for your child. Pay attention to any feelings of uneasiness that you may have experienced during the visits. If you were able to take your child with you, what was their reaction? Could you picture your child in this setting? Were the learning materials and activities you observed the kinds your child would enjoy? Keep in mind that children respond in their own unique ways to new places. Also, don't rule out other factors that could influence your child's reaction (for example, being hungry, tired or having a natural fear of new people or places). Overall, parents should be welcome in the classroom and facility and encouraged to be involved in the program.

A good choice.

Now that you have done your homework and some careful thinking, you are ready to make your choice. Remember, once you have selected and enrolled your child in a program, that is just the beginning. You will want to speak with your child's new teacher often to make sure that your child is happy and ensure your decision was a good one.

Parents Rights and Responsibilities

Rights

- To enroll my child with an eligible provider or school of my choice, subject to the provider's or school's agreement to admit my child.
- To be free from the provider or school requiring me to pay any fee or charge for the VPK program.
- To have the provider or school admit my child in the VPK program without requiring me to enroll my child (or pay) for additional services (*i.e. full-day, extended-day, or wrap-around services*).
- To receive VPK services for my child without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, or national origin.

Responsibilities

- To find an eligible provider or school willing to enroll my child.
- To provide transportation for my child to and from the VPK program, although some providers or schools may offer transportation.
- To follow the provider's or school's attendance policy.
- To verify my child's attendance each month.
- To allow my child, after completing the VPK program, to be screened for readiness to enter kindergarten in order to confirm the VPK program's effectiveness.

Choosing Quality Voluntary PreKindergarten (VPK)

A Family Checklist for Evaluating PreKindergarten Programs



Choose wisely.

Choosing quality Voluntary PreKindergarten (VPK) is one of the most important decisions you will make for your child. A good VPK program will help your child learn new skills, develop socially and be prepared for kindergarten. The early years are crucial first steps to your child's reading success in school. This checklist will help you select the best VPK program for your family. Depending on your particular needs, you probably will have some questions of your own.

Do your homework.

Visit and compare at least three VPK programs. Each program is different and one that would be a good fit for one child may not be for another. Make appointments with prospective VPK programs and, if possible, take your child with you to the interview. Try to spend at least 30-60 minutes on each visit. The best time to visit a VPK class is in the morning.



Think positive.

Look for positive and caring relationships between teachers and children. It is equally important that you feel comfortable and trusting of all staff. The environment should be cheerful, safe and appropriate for 4-year-olds. Choose a program that reflects your ideas about parenting and provides enriching learning opportunities for your child.

Be a smart shopper

Good programs have the basics covered. The license should be current (and posted) and the facility should provide you with their written policies and procedures regarding illness, disaster preparedness and other emergencies.

Ask questions.

Follow up on any unanswered questions that you may have. Write questions down as they come to mind. Request an opportunity to ask your questions either by telephone or during a second visit to the program.

