

Gulf School District Early Childhood Education Services

Each program has different admission qualifiers and funding sources.

The two programs are:

1. Voluntary Pre-K (VPK)
2. Exceptional Student Services (ESE)

Voluntary Pre-K (VPK)

- Authorized by Florida Statute
- Student must be 4 on or before September 1 of the enrollment year
- This is not a required program
- Parents may choose a free school-year program or a free summer program. The school-year program is 540 hours; the summer program is 300 hours. The child may attend beyond the free hours the State provides, but it is the parent's responsibility to pay for those additional services
- To obtain a voucher, contact the Early Learning Coalition 850 747 5400

Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

- Three to five years old children are served in this program. The child is evaluated. If the child qualifies for an exceptional student education program, a meeting is scheduled with the parents to make a formal determination of eligibility. An Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is developed to address the identified learning need
- All students who are eligible for ESE Pre-K must be served
- For additional information contact Child Find 1-877-873-7232 Ext 2310

Other Services are:

1. For-Pay slots, - Parents pay fee for children to attend, if slots are available.
2. School Readiness Extended day Services – Contracted through Early Learning Coalition
3. Collaboration with North Florida Child Development, Inc. for transportation, additional slots, and specific services as needed. This agency gives preference to children who are referred by Gulf County Schools, if staff/child ratio has been reached by the district.
4. Children determined in need of assistance based on school readiness criteria, including Homeless will be served. Additional staff will be hired, if needed to remain in compliance.

Eligibility for School Readiness Slots/Program/Services in Gulf County

Section 411.01(6), F.S., establishes program eligibility for school readiness programs that serve children below kindergarten entry age. Effective July 1, 2003, the law was revised to modify previously established eligibility criteria. Based on these revisions, priority for participation in school readiness programs must be given to children age three years to school entry who are served by the Family Safety Program Office of the Department of Children and Family Services or a community-based lead agency pursuant to Chapter 39 and for whom child care is needed to minimize risk of further abuse, neglect, or abandonment as provided in the Rilya Wilson Act.

Other eligible populations include children under the age of kindergarten who are

- Children at risk of welfare dependency, including economically disadvantaged children, children whose parents are in welfare transition programs, children of migrant farm workers, children of teen parents and designated homeless
- Children of working families whose income is below 150% of the federal poverty level
- Children for whom the state is paying a relative caregiver payment

Additionally, school readiness coalitions may establish priority consideration for

- Children with disabilities who are not economically disadvantaged but are served in exceptional student education programs
- Children who are economically disadvantaged, children with disabilities, and children at-risk of school failure from birth to 4 years of age, who are served at home through home visitor programs and intensive parent education
- Children who meet federal and state requirements for eligibility for the migrant preschool program but who do not meet the criteria of economically disadvantaged.