



2025-2026



DESOTO COUNTY SCHOOLS
VPK PROGRAM

Voluntary Prekindergarten

Office of Instructional Services

 www.desotoschools.com



DeSoto VPK Program Handbook

Limited Space Available - Apply Soon!



How Do I Apply?

STEP 1: First, obtain a VPK Certificate of Eligibility (Voucher).

To acquire your Certificate of Eligibility (voucher) for the 2025-2026 school year, please use one of the resources below:

- Early Learning Coalition (ELC): (941) 954-4830 or <https://www.elcfloridasheartland.org/>
- FLDOE Division of Early Learning Family Portal: www.floridaearlylearning.com

STEP 2: Complete the DeSoto VPK Application.

Go to the Family Service Center website and click on the "Applications" tab at the top of the page. You can complete the electronic application or print it and turn it in to the Family Service Center with approved VPK Certificate of Eligibility (voucher). Printed applications are also available at the Family Service Center.

Program Options & Fees

- **VPK Morning Only: 8:15 AM-11:30 AM** **FREE**
Priority enrollment consideration will be given for those families enrolling in Extended Day.
- **VPK & Extended Day: 7:45 AM - 2:15 PM** **\$80/week + \$30 enrollment fee**
After VPK hours, parents can choose to have their child stay until the end of the school day. Payment Deadline: The enrollment fee and first week's tuition (\$110 total) must be paid by July 24, 2025, to secure your child's spot for the 2025-2026 school year. If payment is not received by this date, the spot will be offered to the next child on the waitlist. Payments can be made by cash, check, credit card at the school location or the Family Service Center. We hope to have an online payment system soon.
- *Please note: **A separate application** is required for the after-school child care program, Mustang Care (2:15 - 5:30 PM). The application is also available on the Family Service Center Website. If you are enrolled in Extended Day, the **Mustang Care enrollment fee** will be waived.*

Extended Day Program Information

- Tuition is \$80/week for the Extended Day Program (7:45 - 2:15 PM), regardless of attendance or number of days in the school week. Spring Break, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Break will not be charged.
- All fees must be paid in advance by the Friday prior to the upcoming week. If payment is not made in advance a \$10.00 late fee will be assessed.
- Consistent late payment can result in dismissal from the Extended Day program, and the student's schedule may be changed to the VPK Morning Only program ending at 11:30 AM.
- The \$30 enrollment fee for Extended Day is non-refundable. There is a \$10 discount on the enrollment fee for each additional child (e.g. Child 1 enrollment fee = \$30, Child 2 = \$20).
- When enrolling, parent(s)/guardian(s) must sign a "Parent/Guardian VPK Program Agreement."
- Credits are not issued for a student's absences. The full weekly fee must be paid even when a student is absent.
- The school district is not permitted to extend credit; therefore, all services must be paid for in advance. Parents must be responsible for advance payment of the **Extended Day** services. Students will be excluded from the extended day program for non-payment.
- Notice of dismissal or change in schedule will be sent home via email or by phone.

- The **enrollment fee** and **first week's Extended Day tuition** (\$110 total, non-refundable) must be paid by **July 24, 2025** to secure my child's spot in Extended Day services. If payment is not received by this date, the student will not be permitted to stay beyond the free VPK morning hours. Payments can be made by cash, check or credit card at the school location or the Family Service Center. We hope to have an online payment system available soon.

VPK Attendance

Although it is voluntary for your child to enroll in a VPK program, it is NOT voluntary for your child to attend. The expectation is that your child will be on time and in school EVERY DAY, unless there is an excused absence (See [Student Code of Conduct](#) and [Academic Calendar](#)).

- If your child has more than three absences, **excused or unexcused**, and/or is tardy more than three times per month, your child may be removed from the program.
- All absences must be documented. Parents must sign and date a monthly attendance certification form and teachers must maintain them for auditing purposes.

Late Pick-Up Fees

It is expected that your child will be picked up promptly at the end of the instructional day. For Extended Day, if a parent is tardy in picking up his/her child after dismissal time, a late pick-up fee will be charged. Parents will be assessed a \$1 late fee for every minute past 2:30 PM, required with the next tuition payment. In both VPK and Extended Day, a student may be withdrawn from the program if there are repetitive late pick-ups.

VPK Progress Monitoring

The Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring Program is the statewide, standardized program known as Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) Star Early Literacy. It is implemented in all VPK programs as required by s. 1002.68, F.S., and used to assess student achievement of the performance standards established in s. 1002.67(1)(a), F.S., in early literacy and mathematics. Teachers and lead instructors will provide printed progress monitoring reports to parents/guardians.

VPK Discipline Policy

If a child, parent, or caregiver's behavior excessively disrupts the learning of other students, causes damage to school property and/or is unsafe to self or others, the child's placement may be reconsidered. This includes shortening the child's daily schedule or withdrawing the child from the VPK Program. All students enrolled in DeSoto County School District must adhere to the Code of Student Conduct. Classroom expectations will be shared with parents at the beginning of the school year.

Financial Assistance

We are actively exploring ways to support families with financial need. If assistance becomes available, we will provide detailed information prior to the July payment deadline. If you believe you may qualify for financial assistance, please indicate this in your application. We will share any available resources and assistance options accordingly.

VPK Transportation

Transportation is **NOT** provided for students in the VPK program. Parents must drop off and pick up students each day.

VPK Personal Care and Toileting Issues:

Children who are enrolled in the VPK program are expected to be toilet-trained (i.e. Children must be able to use the restroom facilities without assistance from staff.)

VPK Parent and Family Involvement

Parents and Families are encouraged to stay involved in the education process by committing to ongoing home-school communication, attending scheduled conferences and supporting a student's continued progress at home! One easy way to stay engaged with learning at home is through reading together daily and spending quality time together!

VPK Contact Information

Nocatee Elementary School

Ms. Brandy Tackett, Principal

brandy.tackett@desotoschools.com

District Administrative Contacts:

Mrs. Kristie Joens, Director of Instructional Services

kristie.joens@desotoschools.com

Dr. Jake Reynolds, Deputy Superintendent

jake.reynolds@desotoschools.com

**VPK Program Application Form
2025-2026 School Year**

Instructions: Parent/Guardian completes the form and submits it to the Family Service Center.

Submitting this application does not guarantee enrollment, as space is limited. If enrolling in the Extended Day Program or Mustang Care, the enrollment fee and first week's tuition listed below must be paid by July 24, 2025, to secure your child's spot for the 2025-2026 school year. The parent/guardian completing this registration will be responsible for all payments. Additionally, the names and phone numbers of at least two other individuals authorized to pick up your child must be provided. All individuals picking up a child must present a valid ID and sign the child in and out.

Please select ONE of the following program options.

<input type="checkbox"/> VPK Morning Only 8:15 - 11:30 AM FREE	<input type="checkbox"/> Extended Day 7:45 AM - 2:15 PM \$80/Week + Enrollment Fee	<input type="checkbox"/> Extended Day with Mustang Care 7:45 AM - 5:30 PM \$130/Week + Enrollment Fee
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Child Name		DOB	
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Street Address			
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City		Zip	
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Medical/Allergy Information	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<i>If yes, please explain in the box below.</i>

Child lives with	<input type="checkbox"/> Mother	<input type="checkbox"/> Father	<input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Guardian
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Parent/Guardian Name		Phone	
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Street Address			
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Email		Place of Employment	
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Parent/Guardian Name		Phone	
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Street Address			
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Email		Place of Employment	
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Names of those NOT allowed to pick up the child:

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Authorized Pick Up Contacts

Contact Name		Phone	
Contact Name		Phone	
Contact Name		Phone	

Do you believe you may qualify for financial assistance?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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Parent/Guardian VPK Program Agreement

I understand that:

This parent handbook has been developed to provide our students and families information on the policies and expectations for VPK in the School District of DeSoto County. Parents/Families are encouraged to review the parent handbook and partner with us as we begin their child's formal educational journey.

I have read, understood, and agree to the following:

_____ (Initial) **Tuition and Payment Policy**

Tuition for the Extended Day Program (7:45 AM – 2:15 PM) is \$80 per week, regardless of attendance or the number of school days in the week. All fees are due in advance. If payment is not made in advance, a \$10 late fee will be assessed. Consistent late payments may result in dismissal from the Extended Day program, and the student's schedule may be changed to the morning VPK program. In such cases, a notice of the schedule change will be sent home via email or with the student.

_____ (Initial) **VPK Attendance Policy**

If your child has more than three absences and/or tardies per month, your child may be removed from the program. All absences must be documented. Parents are required to sign and date a monthly attendance certification form, and teachers are required to maintain them for auditing purposes.

_____ (Initial) **Late Pick-up Fees for Extended Day**

It is expected that your child will be picked up promptly at the end of the instructional day. If a parent is tardy in picking up his/her child after dismissal time, a late pick-up fee will be charged. Parents will be assessed \$1 late fee for every minute past 2:30 PM, required with the next tuition payment. A student may be withdrawn from the program if there are repetitive late pick-ups.

_____ (Initial) **VPK Discipline Policy**

We recognize that positive discipline teaches and encourages healthy social and emotional development. If a child is having difficulty in this area, the parent (guardian) and teacher will work together to meet the needs of the child and the classroom. All DeSoto County students must adhere to the Code of Student Conduct if there is a pattern of extreme and disruptive behavior the child may be withdrawn from the program.

_____ (Initial) **Personal Care and Toileting Issues**

Children who are enrolled in the VPK program are expected to be toilet-trained. (i.e. Children must be able to use the restroom facilities without assistance from staff.)

By signing below, you confirm that you have read, understood, and agree to the policies and expectations in the parent VPK handbook.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name	
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Parent/Guardian Signature		Date
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