



FREE EARLY-YEARS DECISION WORKBOOK

# Florida Early Years and Kindergarten Decision Guide

A calm planning workbook for families comparing play-based learning, public kindergarten eligibility, compulsory-attendance timing, and Florida home education pathways.

## Inside this resource

- ☐ Age-and-date fact sheet
- ☐ Education-path comparison
- ☐ Readiness without pressure
- ☐ Play, language, literacy, math, and movement plan
- ☐ Records and transition checklist

**Created by a homeschool parent. Built for Florida families.**

Updated October 2026



## WRITE THE FACTS FIRST

# Age rules and readiness are different questions

A child's legal attendance timeline, public-school kindergarten eligibility, developmental readiness, family capacity, and preferred education path should be considered separately.

Child's date of birth

Age on September 1

Age on February 1

Current care/education setting

County of residence

Possible path this year

Possible path next year

Official source or district contact  
checked

### Current statutory starting point

Florida Statute 1003.21 addresses compulsory-attendance ages and public-kindergarten eligibility. A child who turns 5 on or before September 1 is eligible for public kindergarten. Compulsory attendance uses a different age rule. Read the current statute and ask the district about the family's exact dates and transition scenario.



## COMPARE THE PATHS

# Who holds responsibility and records?

| Path                                                                | Who administers                                           | Records to clarify                                                 | Questions before choosing                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Family-directed early learning before compulsory attendance applies | Parent/guardian                                           | Family learning notes; future-entry evidence if useful             | What does the child need now?<br>What future transition is likely? |
| District-registered home education                                  | Parent/guardian with district registration for attendance | Notice, portfolio, annual evaluation, termination/transfer records | When should the program begin for this child?                      |
| Public/charter school                                               | School/district                                           | Enrollment, health, age, placement, attendance                     | What is the age cutoff and enrollment timeline?                    |
| Private school or home-based private-school option                  | Private school                                            | Enrollment, attendance, progress, withdrawal, services             | What does the contract promise and who issues records?             |
| PEP scholarship pathway                                             | Parent plus scholarship-funding organization              | Learning plan, assessment, purchasing, renewal                     | What are current eligibility and annual requirements?              |



# Use patterns, not a single worksheet

| Area                          | What I notice | Supports that help | Next playful invitation |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Language and conversation     |               |                    |                         |
| Stories and print awareness   |               |                    |                         |
| Counting and quantity         |               |                    |                         |
| Fine-motor use                |               |                    |                         |
| Large-motor movement          |               |                    |                         |
| Attention and transitions     |               |                    |                         |
| Self-care and independence    |               |                    |                         |
| Social-emotional regulation   |               |                    |                         |
| Curiosity and problem solving |               |                    |                         |

## Development varies

This page is an observation tool, not a diagnostic screen. Raise developmental, hearing, vision, speech, motor, behavioral, or health concerns with the appropriate qualified professional.



# Play, stories, movement, and real life

| Anchor               | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|----------------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Read aloud and talk  |        |         |           |          |        |
| Songs/rhyme/language |        |         |           |          |        |
| Counting/math play   |        |         |           |          |        |
| Art/fine motor       |        |         |           |          |        |
| Outdoor movement     |        |         |           |          |        |
| Life skill/helping   |        |         |           |          |        |
| Rest and connection  |        |         |           |          |        |

## Keep it humane

Young children learn through secure relationships, play, movement, conversation, repetition, stories, exploration, and participation in real family life. More pages are not automatically more learning.



## KEEP A LIGHT RECORD

# Useful evidence without recreating school

| Date | Experience | What the child said/did | Photo/sample | Possible next step |
|------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
|      |            |                         |              |                    |
|      |            |                         |              |                    |
|      |            |                         |              |                    |
|      |            |                         |              |                    |
|      |            |                         |              |                    |
|      |            |                         |              |                    |
|      |            |                         |              |                    |
|      |            |                         |              |                    |
|      |            |                         |              |                    |

Favorite books and songs

Interests that keep returning

New independence

Questions for a future school or provider



## PREPARE THE TRANSITION

# Questions for the next setting

- ☐ Confirm the child's age-based eligibility and attendance timeline from current official sources.
- ☐ Ask the receiving school or program which enrollment, health, age, and prior-learning records it requires.
- ☐ Clarify grade placement, kindergarten completion, and transfer-credit decisions before assuming an outcome.
- ☐ Share useful support information without defining the child by a single score or checklist.
- ☐ Coordinate effective dates if changing from home education, private school, PEP, or another program.
- ☐ Save written confirmations, enrollment decisions, and copies of every submitted record.

Next setting/contact

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Documents requested

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Questions asked

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Decision and effective date

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VERIFY

# Official early-years and attendance sources

[Florida Statute 1003.21 - School attendance](#)

[Florida Department of Education - Parent Home Education Resources](#)

[Florida Department of Education - Home Education](#)

[Florida Division of Early Learning - Voluntary Prekindergarten](#)

**Reviewed  
October 2, 2026**

This workbook provides educational planning, not legal, medical, or developmental advice. Confirm current law and the exact child's dates with the responsible district or program.

## My next three actions

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