



# Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP)

## Frequently Asked Questions

# Overview of VKRP and Requirements

## What is the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP)?

VKRP gives schools, teachers, and families a more complete picture of school readiness in 4 key areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Self-Regulation, and Social Skills in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. Initiated by Elevate Early Education (E3) and developed in partnership with the University of Virginia and the Virginia Department of Education, VKRP builds a more comprehensive understanding of school readiness and success. For more information on VKRP, visit [www.vkrponline.org](http://www.vkrponline.org).

## What does the data show?

Historically, about 40% of Virginia's kindergartners enter kindergarten without the resources, opportunities, and experiences to be successful in one or more of four critical learning domains: Literacy, Mathematics, Self-Regulation, and Social Skills.

According to recent VKRP data, students from families with low incomes who attend public preschool are more likely to be categorized as ready for kindergarten compared to their peers who do not attend preschool.

## Who is required to participate in VKRP?

All kindergarten students must be assessed in the fall and spring.

For 2024-2025, the following publicly funded three-year-old and four-year-old children are required to participate in VKRP in the fall and spring:

- VPI classrooms. This includes students enrolled in a VPI classroom but who may not be funded through VPI state dollars (e.g., an ECSE student or a locally funded student in a classroom supported by VPI). This includes VPI students in a community-provider setting.
- VECF Mixed Delivery Classrooms.

Pre-kindergarten classrooms in public schools that are not funded by VPI (such as a full ECSE classroom, Head Start classroom, Title I classroom, or other locally supported pre-k classroom) are encouraged to use the VKRP assessments with their students, but they are not required currently.

## When do students participate in VKRP?

VKRP and Virginia Literacy Partnerships (VLP) strategically plan assessment terms to help reduce overlap and burden. It is recommended that the VKRP mathematics assessment (the Early Mathematics Assessment System; EMAS) be administered by teachers during the two weeks immediately prior to the start of the school division or program's literacy assessment (Virginia Language & Literacy Screener: Pre-K; VALLS: Pre-K and Virginia Language & Literacy Screener: Kindergarten; VALLS: Kindergarten) to allow time for the EMAS assessments to be completed before beginning literacy assessments. The VKRP social skills and self-regulation rating scale (Child Behavior Rating Scale; CBRS) should be completed by teachers after four to six weeks of instruction to allow adequate time for teachers to observe students' skills. The VKRP assessment calendar can be found on [the VKRP public website](http://the VKRP public website).

## Does participating in VKRP require any costs from school divisions and/or programs?

No. VKRP provides training for teachers and other personnel and provides all the assessment materials without any cost to school divisions/programs.

## VKRP Assessments

### What assessments are included in VKRP?

VKRP includes a coordinated set of assessments that measure a student's skills in early literacy (through Virginia Literacy Partnerships), mathematics, self-regulation, and social skills.

[Virginia Literacy Partnerships](#) (VLP) collects data using the Virginia Language and Literacy Screening System (VALLSS) and includes the Virginia Language & Literacy Screener: Pre-K (VALLS: Pre-K) and the Virginia Language & Literacy Screener: Kindergarten (VALLS: Kindergarten).

The Early Mathematics Assessment System (EMAS) is used to measure students' mathematical thinking. The EMAS is a reliable and valid assessment that draws on modern cognitive science, developmental and educational research. The EMAS is a direct assessment of early mathematics skills, administered by teachers, and takes about 20-25 minutes per student.

The Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS) is used to measure teachers' perceptions of students' self-regulation and social skills. Teachers complete a short rating scale that measures a child's behavior with other students and adults, as well as their engagement with materials and tasks in the classroom. The CBRS takes one to three minutes per student to complete.

Teachers report on five items that focus on students' mental health well-being. There is also an item that allows teachers to indicate whether they have concerns about a student's social-emotional well-being. These items are designed to provide standardized information about teacher perceptions of students' mental health well-being. This information can help facilitate conversations between teachers, instructional leaders, and families on how to best support students.

More information regarding VKRP, and the components of the assessments can be found on [the VKRP public website](#).

### Does VKRP have a Mid-Year assessment timepoint?

Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, VKRP will be available at a mid-year timepoint in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. Educational leaders, teachers, and families across Virginia have expressed interest in understanding how to better monitor students' progress and growth across the school year and to better align with literacy assessment practices.

After opting to participate, divisions and programs determine which classrooms or students will use VKRP at the mid-year timepoint. Publicly funded kindergarten and pre-kindergarten classrooms required to use VKRP in the fall and spring are encouraged, but not required, to use VKRP at the mid-year timepoint.

### Is the EMAS developmentally appropriate?

Yes. The EMAS is developmentally appropriate for children. The EMAS was intentionally designed to measure a wide range of young children's early mathematics skills. To best ensure developmental appropriateness for young children, VKRP partnered with early childhood mathematics experts including Virginia teachers and math specialists.

Administering the EMAS provides an opportunity for teachers to observe the extent to which the essential big ideas of mathematics were formalized through instruction and other learning experiences. This information can serve as a tool to help teachers determine what a child knows and can do mathematically, and, by extension, what instruction and experiences should come next.

## **How do we conduct assessments with English Language/Multilingual Learners (EL)?**

VKRP and the VDOE provide guidance and best assessment practice for conducting assessments with young children who are ELs. This information can be found in the VKRP Teacher Manuals. The [Virginia Literacy Partnerships \(VLP\)](#) provide guidance on using the literacy screenings (VALLS: Pre-K and VALLS: Kindergarten) with students who are ELs.

## **When can a student be exempted from participating in VKRP?**

VKRP is a statewide assessment system that Virginia uses to measure student readiness and growth; therefore, all eligible pre-kindergartners and kindergartners, including students with disabilities, should be assessed.

There are, however, limited reasons for exemptions:

- A student’s IEP specifically lists that the EMAS and/or CBRS should not be given.
- A serious illness or medical condition which prevents a student from participating during the assessment period.
- A family requests an exemption. In this case, it is important to inform families that non-participation means teachers and families will not receive information on student readiness and progress contained in the assessment score reports.

## **Can modifications be made when administering the assessments?**

For the EMAS, most students will complete the EMAS under standard administration conditions. There are allowable accommodations for students that can be made to the assessment administration that still fall under the “Standard Administration” category because they do not change the constructs being measured. However, in some cases, students will be assessed under non-standard administration conditions. Modifications made for “Non-Standard Administration” could change the constructs being measured. Examples include simplifying or altering directions. Teachers should refer to the VKRP Teacher Manual for details.

## **What if I make an error when entering information into the VKRP web portal?**

We realize that mistakes sometimes happen inputting data into the VKRP web portal. The guidance below provides information about what to do when this happens:

### **EMAS:**

- If you enter the wrong information for an item, the system allows you to go back one item.
- If you enter the wrong information for several items, you can contact the VKRP hotline who can reset the EMAS to a certain module/task number.

### **CBRS:**

- The CBRS may only be reset as a complete assessment (e.g. individual items cannot be changed).
- The CBRS cannot be reopened to enter notes once scores have been submitted.

## Preparing to Administer VKRP

### How can teachers and administrators access VKRP?

In the fall, once users have a VLP account, teachers can enter VKRP by logging into [the VLP Legacy PALS website](#) with their VLP username and password. VKRP and VLP work together to provide users with an efficient online assessment experience—one login and password to remember and one entry or upload of the class roster. Classroom information entered on the VLP website is shared with the VKRP web portal. **Any update to classroom information or user access is done on the VLP Legacy PALS website.**

### What training will teachers receive?

VKRP offers a "Train the Trainer" model with representatives from school divisions and programs being trained on VKRP and how to train others. Trainers facilitate teachers' participation in in-person or online training, which provides an overview of the different VKRP components, including the assessments, reports, and linked instructional resources. On the VKRP web portal, teachers can access the training checklist or use the "Training" tab to link to the materials to prepare for the VKRP assessments by watching the online training modules, reading the Teacher Manual, and practicing the assessments. Additionally, the VKRP team recommends teachers watch the corresponding EMAS video demonstration(s), available under the "Assessment Guides" tab on the web portal. The VKRP training team can also work with programs and divisions to design and provide tailored teacher training on VKRP. Divisions or programs should reach out to the VKRP team if interested in scheduling a separate training session 866-301-8278 or [vkpr@virginia.edu](mailto:vkpr@virginia.edu).

### What if VKRP users have a problem with technology?

Users should consult their VKRP Teacher Manual, specifically the Troubleshooting Technical Issues section. If needed, contact VKRP for support via phone (1-866-301-8278), email ([vkpr@virginia.edu](mailto:vkpr@virginia.edu)), or through the chat feature within the VKRP web portal.

### How can external professional development and technical assistance providers get access to the VKRP system?

School divisions and programs can choose to give access to external providers (e.g., Training and Technical Assistance Centers). Once the division and/or program has given access, external providers can log in via the Virginia Literacy Partnerships (VLP) Legacy PALS website, with their VLP username and password and will be able to use the VKRP tab to enter the VKRP web portal.

### Can we see the assessments in advance for planning our curriculum in the fall?

Yes. A copy of [the Child Behavior Rating Scale \(CBRS\)](#) is available on the VKRP website. VKRP can share a copy of the items included on the Early Mathematics Assessment System (EMAS) if requested.

### What if EMAS kits are missing materials?

Teachers should make sure their EMAS kits are complete before and after each assessment term and let school/program contacts know if they are missing items. The full list of EMAS materials is listed in the VKRP Teacher Manuals. School/program contacts should then let the VKRP Division/Program Contact know what needs to be ordered for future terms. VKRP sends order forms and ships materials to division/program contacts before each term.

## Data Use

### **What reports are available?**

VKRP provides detailed information at the student, classroom, program, school division, and state levels. It provides a snapshot of students' skills in the fall, mid-year (for those who participate) and spring for mathematics, self-regulation, social skills, and mental health well-being. Reports also show student growth across the year. Within the teacher reports, VKRP also includes links to specific instructional resources aligned with the areas assessed by the VKRP measures.

A separate document, *Interpreting Reports*, includes an overview of all available classroom and student-level reports and information on how to access and interpret them. This document is available on the VKRP web portal.

### **Does VKRP provide any training for using the reports and data?**

A VKRP specialist can support your team in understanding and using the VKRP reports. Teachers have reported that these data trainings are beneficial. Please reach out if you are interested in scheduling a data training [vkrrp@virginia.edu](mailto:vkrrp@virginia.edu) or 866-301-8278.

### **How can school divisions and programs share VKRP data and resources with families?**

VKRP provides a [family letter template](#) that can be used and personalized to inform families about the purpose of VKRP.

*Family Information Reports* are available on the VKRP web portal and can be downloaded for individual students or a whole class. They are available in the fall and spring (in English and Spanish) and have information about students' mathematics, self-regulation, and social skills. Teachers are encouraged to use the Family Information Report during family/teacher conferences.

Additionally, family-friendly resource documents, [Family Resource Packets](#), are available in both English and Spanish. These resources include strategies and activities for skill development in each domain that families can use at home.

The VKRP website also includes [a webpage specifically for families](#) that includes links to carefully vetted resources and websites and can also be useful to support students' school readiness skills at home.