



# **Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP)**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

# Overview of VKRP and Requirements

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

VKRP is designed to provide a clear snapshot of the state's pre-kindergarten and kindergarten readiness landscape. Developed in partnership between the University of Virginia and the Virginia Department of Education, the VKRP aims to build a more comprehensive understanding of students' skills from the beginning of pre-k through the end of kindergarten. For more information 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 these four critical learning domains: literacy, mathematics, self-regulation, social skills.

According to recent VKRP data students from low-income families who attend public preschool are more likely to be categorized as ready for kindergarten, compared to their peers who do not attend preschool. 53% of preschool attenders are categorized as ready, compared to 35% of non-attenders categorized as ready.

## Who is required to participate in VKRP?

All kindergarten students must be assessed in the fall and spring ([HB30, Chapter 2, 129.H](#)).

For 2023-2024, 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 that are 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 that is supported by VPI). This includes VPI students in a community-provider setting.
- VECF Mixed Delivery Classrooms.
- Pre-K 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) may choose to use the VKRP assessments with their students, but they are not required at this time.

## When do students participate in VKRP?

VKRP and the 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's literacy assessment (Pre-K Language & Literacy Screener (VALLS: Pre-K), PALS-K, VALLS: K) 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 4 to 6 weeks of instruction to allow adequate time for teachers to observe students' skills. The VKRP assessment calendars can be found on [the VKRP public website](#).

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

No. VKRP provides training (see additional information in this document) for teachers and other personnel and provides all of 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 mathematics, literacy ([PALS-K](#), [VALLS: K](#), and [Pre-K Language & Literacy Screener \(VALLS: Pre-K\)](#)), self-regulation, and social skills.

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

VKRP measures teachers' perceptions of students' self-regulation and social skills using the Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS). Teachers complete a short rating scale that measures a teacher's perception of a student's behavior with other students and adults, as well as their engagement with materials and tasks in the classroom. The CBRS is completed in the online web portal after teachers observe students across several weeks. The CBRS takes 1–3 minutes per student to complete. Teachers also complete five items that focus on a student's mental health well-being.

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

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

The VKRP and the VDOE provide guidance and best assessment practice resources for the VKRP assessment system with young students who are ELs that can be found in the VKRP Teacher Manual. The [Virginia Literacy Partnerships \(VLP\)](#) provides guidance on using the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS-K, VALLS: K) and the Pre-K Language & Literacy Screener (VALLS: Pre-K) with students who are ELs.

### Is the EMAS developmentally appropriate for 3-year-olds?

Yes. The EMAS is appropriate for children as young as 3-years-old. The EMAS was intentionally constructed 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.

### What are the conditions for a student to receive a Non-Standard Assessment or Be Exempt from the VKRP?

VKRP is a statewide screening tool that the Commonwealth of 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 serious illness or medical condition which prevents a student from participating during the assessment period.
- A student's IEP specifically lists that the EMAS and/or CBRS should not be given.
- 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.

VKRP does not currently have an alternate assessment for students who are deaf and/or blind.

**What are the guidelines for Non-Standard Administration?**

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.

## Data Use

### What reports are available?

VKRP provides detailed information about school readiness at the student, classroom, program/school division, and state levels. It provides a snapshot of students' skills in the fall and spring for the areas of mathematics, self-regulation, social skills, mental health well-being and literacy. Reports also show student growth across the year. VKRP also includes instructional resources aligned with reporting data that are available for teachers to use.

A separate document, **Interpreting Reports**, which includes an overview of all available classroom and student reports as well as how to access and interpret these reports, is available on the VKRP assessment portal. Suggestions on how to use VKRP data to reflect on instruction are included as well as using the resources provided by VKRP.

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

Within the Administrator Toolkit section of the [public website](#), VKRP provides a **family letter** for use as a template for divisions and programs. Schools can adapt the letter to meet the needs of their families, such as including information about the division's assessment schedule or local contacts.

Family Information Reports are available at both the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten levels in English and Spanish for fall and spring. These reports contain information about children's mathematics, self-regulation, and social skills. Additionally, a family friendly resource document is available in English and Spanish that includes strategies and activities for skill development that families can use at home. Teachers are encouraged to use the Family Information Report during Family/Teacher conferences and to share the resources tailored to families.

The VKRP public website also includes [a page specifically for families](#) that includes links to resources and websites which have been carefully vetted and can be useful to support children's school readiness skills at home.

## Preparing to Administer VKRP

### How can teachers and administrators access VKRP?

In the fall, once users have created a VLP account, or one has been created by school or division personnel, teachers can enter VKRP by logging into [the VLP 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 website.

### What training will teachers receive?

VKRP offers a "Train the Trainer" model with representatives from school divisions and/or pre-k programs being trained on the 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—watching the online training modules, reading the Teacher Manual, and practicing the assessments. Additionally, the VKRP team recommends teachers watch the corresponding video demonstration(s) of the EMAS (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. VKRP recommends allowing three hours for training. Divisions or programs should reach out to the VKRP team if interested in scheduling a separate training session – 866-301-8278 x1 or [vkpr@virginia.edu](mailto:vkpr@virginia.edu).

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

Users should consult their VKRP Teacher Manual – Troubleshooting Technical Issues section. If needed, contact VKRP for support via phone (1-866-301-8278, ext.1), 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 can choose to give access to external providers (e.g., Training and Technical Assistance Centers, Virginia Commonwealth University Autism Center for Excellence). Once the division has given access, external providers can log in via the Virginia Literacy Partnerships (VLP) 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. The Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS) is a published teacher report measure of students' behaviors with peers and adults, as well as their engagement with materials and tasks in the classroom. [A copy](#) is available on the VKRP public website. For the Early Mathematics Assessment System (EMAS), VKRP can share a copy of the items used if requested.