

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · FLORIDA STATE

# Florida School Enrollment Guide 2026

Public school enrollment rules, documents, free VPK preschool, and rights for immigrant families.

## SHORT ANSWER

Florida law (Fla. Stat. 1008.386) has school districts request a student's Social Security number at enrollment, but a student is not required to provide one as a condition of enrollment or graduation; your child is enrolled even without one. Federal constitutional law (the Plyler v. Doe decision) requires every public school to enroll children regardless of immigration status. Families complete a Home Language Survey at registration; if a language other than English is spoken at home, the school screens English proficiency within the student's first 20 days. Every Florida-resident child turning 4 by September 1 can attend free VPK preschool.

## Rules that apply statewide

- **Fla. Stat. 1008.386:** districts must request a Social Security number at enrollment, but providing one isn't a condition of enrollment or graduation; presenting the card or a copy simply satisfies the request. Districts may not use SSNs as student ID numbers.
- **Plyler v. Doe (1982)**, a federal constitutional decision, requires every public school in the country, including every Florida school, to enroll children regardless of immigration status. Florida's own state law doesn't contain a separate "immigration status can't be asked" clause the way New Jersey's does, but this federal protection applies everywhere in the state.
- **Home Language Survey.** Registration asks whether a language other than English is spoken at home; if so, the school must test the student's English proficiency within their first 20 days.
- **Kindergarten:** children who turn 5 on or before September 1 can enroll in public kindergarten that school year.
- **Typical documents** include a birth certificate or other proof of date of birth, a Florida immunization certification or exemption (Form DH 680), a physical exam completed within the past year, and proof of residence.

## Free VPK preschool

Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program offers free preschool to every Florida-resident child turning 4 by September 1. Apply for a Certificate of Eligibility through your county's Early Learning Coalition; every Florida county has its own.

## Document checklist (typical)

| DOCUMENT                                                                               | NOTES                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth certificate or passport                                 | Must show date of birth                                                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Florida immunization certification or exemption (Form DH 680) | Available from a healthcare provider in your area                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical exam form                                            | Must generally be within the last year, required for first-time enrollment        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proof of residence                                            | A lease, a utility bill, or similar; the exact number and type varies by district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security card                                          | Requested but not required; enrollment can't be denied if you don't provide one   |

### YOUR RIGHTS AS AN IMMIGRANT FAMILY

- Under Fla. Stat. 1008.386, not having a Social Security number is not a barrier to enrollment or graduation.
- Under the federal Plyler v. Doe decision, your child's enrollment can't be denied even if someone asks about immigration or citizenship status.
- If a language other than English is spoken at home, the school must test your child's English level within the first 20 days; this is meant to place them in a support program, not to penalize them.
- The Florida immunization certificate (DH 680) is issued by a Florida doctor or county health department; bring an English translation of your child's Turkish vaccination record to that visit.



### TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN FLORIDA

#### Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients across Florida, in Turkish and English. Free evaluation: [clinchlaw.com/free-evaluation](https://clinchlaw.com/free-evaluation) · +1 866-491-7669

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