



The School District of Osceola County, FL
Terry Andrews, Superintendent

Press Release (English and Spanish)

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VPK Violin Literacy Pilot Project Underway

The Osceola School District's VPK Violin Pilot Project is off to a fantastic start! Seventy-two students from Osceola County's voluntary pre-kindergarten (VPK) programs are currently participating in this exciting project funded by the Florida Department of Education. Since September, the VPK Violin Literacy Pilot Project has been providing violin instruction to four VPK classrooms in Title 1 schools, including Chambers Park, Boggy Creek Elementary, and Poinciana Academy of Fine Arts. Small groups of four-year-old students, along with their teachers and classroom aides, receive a twenty minute string lesson twice a week. The instruments are provided during the instruction, given by instructor Ms. Jonita Aadland.

The curriculum used, based on brain research and applied to prekindergarten string instruction, was developed by Judy Evans in Collier County, Florida. It is a literacy-based program directed towards the development of language, pre-reading, and kindergarten readiness skills through violin instruction. In addition to the development of violin performance skills, the curriculum focuses on the development of such competencies as attention span, focus, likenesses and differences in sounds and shapes, and crossing the visual and auditory midline.

Participating classroom teachers are reporting that the children's ability to listen and to focus, as well as their attention to the tasks at hand, have improved since starting this program. Marilyn Rodriguez, teacher at Boggy Creek Elementary, believes that the program also has had a "dramatic effect" on her students' behavior, as children are inspired in their violin classes and are excited to be in school on "Violin Days." The teachers have also been motivated to expand their high-quality music offerings on a day-to-day basis, with one teacher, Ms. Marcano at Poinciana Academy of Fine Arts, regularly playing orchestral music during the day to further acquaint her young students with their violin potential.

The Department of Education will follow this pilot closely to see if there is a correlation between kindergarten readiness skills and early violin instruction. Plans are underway for this project to link violin experiences more directly to classroom literacy learning to further expand the impact of music on children's interest and engagement in learning.