



The Colorado Universal Preschool Program (UPK) Fact Sheet

The Colorado Universal Preschool Program launches in the 2023-24 school year! As the new Colorado Department of Early Childhood moves quickly to stand up the new program, this fact sheet will help the media understand what we know now and what will be determined in the future.

HERE IS WHAT WE DO KNOW

Every child in the state of Colorado will have access to a minimum of ten hours of preschool in the year before they are eligible to enter kindergarten

- ❖ UPK is voluntary - while we encourage universal participation, parents know what is best for their children and can decide whether to participate, as can preschool providers
- ❖ In general, the part-day preschool programming funded by the state will move families toward half or full-day care, or assist in meeting the hours of care that are needed by a family
- ❖ UPK will be available only during the school year
- ❖ Providers do not need to adjust their hours of care to participate in UPK
- ❖ [Local Coordinating Organizations \(LCOs\)](#) will coordinate UPK at the local level

UPK is a mixed-delivery system, empowering families to choose the best setting for their child

- ❖ Parents and guardians will have the opportunity to choose the preschool setting for their child from the participating preschool providers
- ❖ Any licensed child care provider can participate in Universal Preschool. This includes school-based, community-based, employer-based, or home-based care settings that are licensed by the State
- ❖ There will not be a single required curriculum, but rather a resource library of curricula, which has been approved by the Department
- ❖ Providers will be able to submit curriculum products that they have been, or would like to use, for approval and inclusion in the resource library.
- ❖ Quality standards will be phased in, allowing providers to participate in UPK while they work to meet those standards
- ❖ Licensed faith-based preschools can participate in UPK, with the condition that approved curricula will be utilized and state funds cannot be applied during hours of religious programming

Children three years of age, or younger than three in a school district with a waiver to serve children younger than three, will be eligible for UPK if they meet at least one qualifying factor below.

Additional hours will be also available to four-year-old children who meet at least one of the following qualifying factors:

- ❖ A child who lives in a low-income household (270% of the 2023 Federal Poverty Guidelines)
- ❖ A child who is a dual language learner and the native language spoken in the child's home is a language other than English, or the child's native language is not English
- ❖ A child with an Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- ❖ A child who is currently in a foster care home or in non-certified kinship care
- ❖ A child who is identified as homeless

A multi-lingual UPK application, available online and in-print, will launch in January 2023

- ❖ While the application will be limited to UPK in year-one, additional early childhood services will be added thereafter
- ❖ The application will remain open throughout the year.
- ❖ Families will be able to input basic information, determine eligibility for additional hours, and get matched to a preschool provider with slots available, in the geographic region of their choice

As of July 1, 2023, the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) will become unified with the Universal Preschool Program

- ❖ This means CPP, as it is currently known, will cease to exist at that time
- ❖ Parents of three- and four- year olds who would have qualified for CPP assistance are expected to qualify for comparable or increased assistance through the Universal Preschool Program



- ❖ There is a one year “hold harmless” funding provision for school districts and charter schools: CDEC will pay the difference if school districts receive total preschool funding in the 2023-24 school year that is less than funding received in the 2022-23 school year

HERE IS WHAT HAS YET TO BE DETERMINED

The formula which determines the per-child funding rate that providers will receive from the state

- ❖ This will be determined through the rulemaking process, under the guidance of the Rules Advisory Council (RAC) and other stakeholders, and CDEC’s partners at Brodsky Research and Consulting
- ❖ The virtual RAC meeting to discuss the rule to establish rates will take place on November 10 at 1pm. [Click here](#) to join the meeting
- ❖ The rulemaking hearing in which the rule will be promulgated will take place on November 21 at 9am. [Click here](#) to join the meeting

The number of additional hours a child who meets the aforementioned qualifying factors will receive, and the related funding formula

- ❖ This rule will be addressed at the November 10 RAC meeting and November 21 public hearing

Which providers are choosing to opt in to participate in UPK

- ❖ Local Coordinating Organizations (LCOs) are currently working with providers in their communities to collect this information
- ❖ By the launch of the UPK application in January 2023, information on participating providers will be public
- ❖ Using the application, families will be able to search for participating providers

UPK quality standards that providers must meet

- ❖ The rulemaking process for quality standards will take place during the first half of 2023 - the exact timing has not been determined
- ❖ Quality standards will be phased in, meaning licensed providers will be able to participate in UPK in year-one while they are working to meet the quality standards

The timeline for an expanded, universal application for all early childhood services

- ❖ After the launch of the UPK application, CDEC will begin the process of unifying applications for other early childhood and family strengthening services with the UPK application
- ❖ Families can think of this as their “one-stop-shop” for state-funded early childhood services
- ❖ CDEC does not currently have a timeline for this work, but is expecting the transition to begin taking place during the 2023-24 fiscal year

For more information, please visit our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document