



COLORADO
Department of Early Childhood



PROVIDER HANDBOOK

SCHOOL YEAR

2024 - 2025



**UNIVERSAL
PRESCHOOL**

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PROVIDER HANDBOOK WELCOME LETTER



Hello and welcome! Whether you're a seasoned partner or considering joining us as a provider, we're thrilled to have you on board. At Colorado Universal Preschool, we're building a brighter future for Colorado's children - and dedicated providers are at the heart of this vital mission.

This program isn't just about education, it's about impact.

For children, Colorado Universal Preschool paves the way for stronger academic, social-emotional, and health outcomes, setting them on a path to lifelong success. In 2023-24, 62% of eligible 4-year-olds in Colorado experienced the transformative power of high-quality preschool!

For Colorado families, preschool is often one of the largest household expenses. Colorado Universal Preschool helps families save an average of \$600 a month. Beyond cost, our mixed delivery model offers greater choice and flexibility to meet a family's unique needs.

For providers, Colorado Universal Preschool offers financial stability and operational support, fostering the growth of over 1,900 diverse providers across the state. You're part of an innovative network that strengthens communities and ensures families have access to quality care throughout our state.

This year, we've worked to ensure provider experience and participation throughout the program is as seamless as possible.

Through ongoing feedback, we're building on last year's successes with exciting improvements focused on:

- Smoother enrollment processes, and clearer reporting features.
- A streamlined IEP process, thanks to empowered Administrative Units.
- Expanded qualifying factors, and earlier funding notices for families.
- Easier applications for families and providers, with program details readily available.
- A public dashboard and website resources.
- Enhanced provider support through a centralized call center, and dedicated local partners.
- New quality standards to grow your business.

Together, let's build a brighter future for Colorado's children. We're confident that with your continued partnership, the Colorado Universal Preschool Program will continue to grow and empower families, communities, and early education providers throughout our state for generations to come.

Thank you for your dedication to Colorado's youngest learners. We look forward to a successful and rewarding school year together!

Sincerely,

Dawn Odean

Dawn Odean
Director of Colorado Universal Preschool

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In the 2022 Legislative Session, HB22-1295 established the Colorado Universal Preschool Program to offer voluntary, high-quality universal preschool to every Colorado child in the year before kindergarten. The Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) is charged with operating the program to enable families to choose from a mixed-delivery system of high-quality preschool settings, including licensed community-based programs, school-based programs, and licensed home providers. High-quality preschool has demonstrated positive outcomes for children and families in the short and long-term.



COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Children in Colorado can register for up to 15 hours per week of free, high-quality preschool in their year before kindergarten through Colorado's Universal Preschool Program, also known as Universal Pre-K (UPK).

- Families may qualify for more free hours based on a number of qualifying factors, per available funding.
- Depending on the provider, families have the option of paying for additional hours if desired.
- This school year, school districts will resume primary registration for 3-year-olds through their targeted 3-year-old program. If your child is more than one year away from being eligible for kindergarten, please reach out to your school district for potential preschool services.
- Special Education Administrative Units (AUs) and school districts will place preschool aged children eligible for special education according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP) throughout the school year.



ALL COLORADO CHILDREN
in the year before they start kindergarten
are eligible for up to 15 hours per week!

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

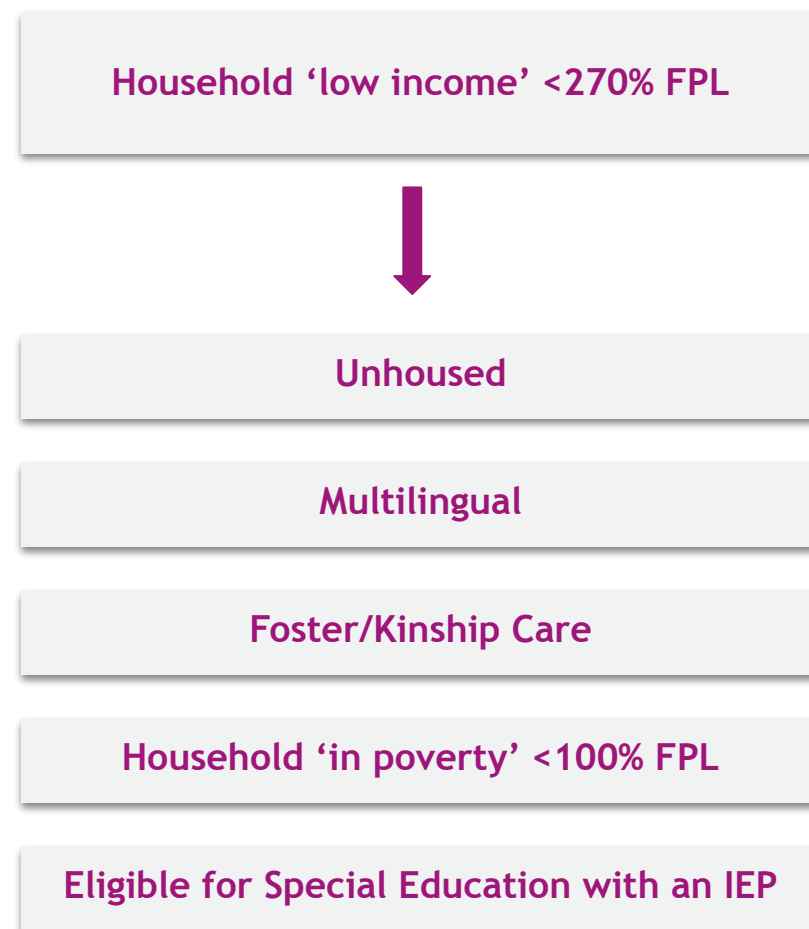
ADDITIONAL HOURS

Dependent upon available funding, additional hours may be available for children who are “low-income” (defined as household income at or below 270% of the federal poverty guidelines) and have a “qualifying factor” listed below.

These qualifying factors include:

- Child is identified as homeless and/or unhoused.
- Child is a multilingual, meaning a child who is learning two or more languages at the same time, or a child who is learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language.
- Child is eligible for special education with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Child is “in poverty,” defined as household income less than 100% of the federal poverty guidelines.
- Child is currently in the custody of a state supervised and county administered foster care home or in non-certified kinship care, meaning a child is being cared for by a relative or kin pursuant to [19-1-103\(102\), C.R.S.](#), who has a significant relationship with the child in circumstances when there is a safety concern by a county department of human or social services and where the relative or kin has not met the foster care certification requirements for a kinship foster care home or has chosen not to pursue that certification process.

To find out more information on qualifying factors, federal poverty guidelines, and more bit.ly/QualifyingFactors.



COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

ADDITIONAL HOURS INCOME ELIGIBILITY

Dependent upon available funding, age eligible children may qualify for additional hours if they are low income and have at least one qualifying factor. Low income is defined as the annual household income at or below 270% federal poverty. The low income eligibility qualifications described below.

- Annual household income is defined as:
 - the total combined pre-tax income received by all members of a household within a 12 month period.
 - this includes pre-tax wages, salaries, self-employment earnings, Social Security benefits, pensions, retirement income welfare payments, and income from other sources.
- Household size is defined as:
 - the number of people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence.
 - For example, if you are a household with 2 adults and 1 child, your household size is "3." If your household consists of 3 adults and 3 children, please enter "6".

Low-Income Vs. In Poverty

- To be considered ‘low-income’ for a qualifying factor, a child’s parent or guardian’s gross monthly income must not exceed 270% of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG), and based on the household size as illustrated in the table below.
- To be considered ‘in poverty’ for a qualifying factor, a child’s parent or guardian’s gross monthly income must not exceed 100% of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG), and based on the household size as illustrated in the table below.

FAMILY SIZE	100% FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINE (FPG) MONTHLY INCOME	270% FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINE (FPG) MONTHLY INCOME
1	\$1,215.00	\$3,280.50
2	\$1,643.33	\$4,437.00
3	\$2,071.67	\$5,593.50
4	\$2,500.00	\$6,750.00
5	\$2,928.33	\$7,906.50
6	\$3,356.67	\$9,063.00
7	\$3,785.00	\$10,219.50
8	\$4,213.33	\$11,376.00
EACH ADDITIONAL PERSON	\$428.33	\$1,156.60

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL KEY TERMS

CONTINUITY OF CARE

When enrolling, a family can elect to pre-register with a provider if they meet the following circumstances:

- Children who attended the same provider the prior year and want to continue in the same program
- Children of the provider's employees
- Children who have a sibling already enrolled at the provider

PROVIDER PROGRAM & DURATION

A provider can offer multiple durations of preschool programming for families to choose from.

“Duration” is the number of hours per week a program offers. Program types include:

- **PART-TIME** 10-15 hrs/wk, AM or PM
- **HALF-DAY** 15-30 hrs/wk, AM or PM
- **FULL-DAY** 30-40 hrs/wk
- **EXTENDED DAY** 41+ hrs/wk
- **OTHER** - If a location offers weekly hours that do not fit into these categories, a program duration may begin with “Other.”

PROGRAM LANGUAGES

Providers may offer programs in multiple languages of instruction and will identify this in their profile. While there may be special offerings in your area, most providers offer one or more of the below:

- **ENGLISH (ONLY)** - English Language Instruction
- **NATIVE SPANISH (ONLY)** - Spanish Language Instruction
- **DUAL LANGUAGE** - Instruction in English and another language
- **OTHER NATIVE LANGUAGE (ONLY)** - Instruction in a language other than English or Spanish

SEAT

Availability for a child within a provider location and program.



COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL KEY PARTNERS

LCOs

Local Coordinating Organization (LCOs) that connect providers and families.

AUs & School Districts

Special Education Administrative Units (AUs) and school districts ensure each child eligible for special education is placed with a provider that can implement the student's IEP.



Providers

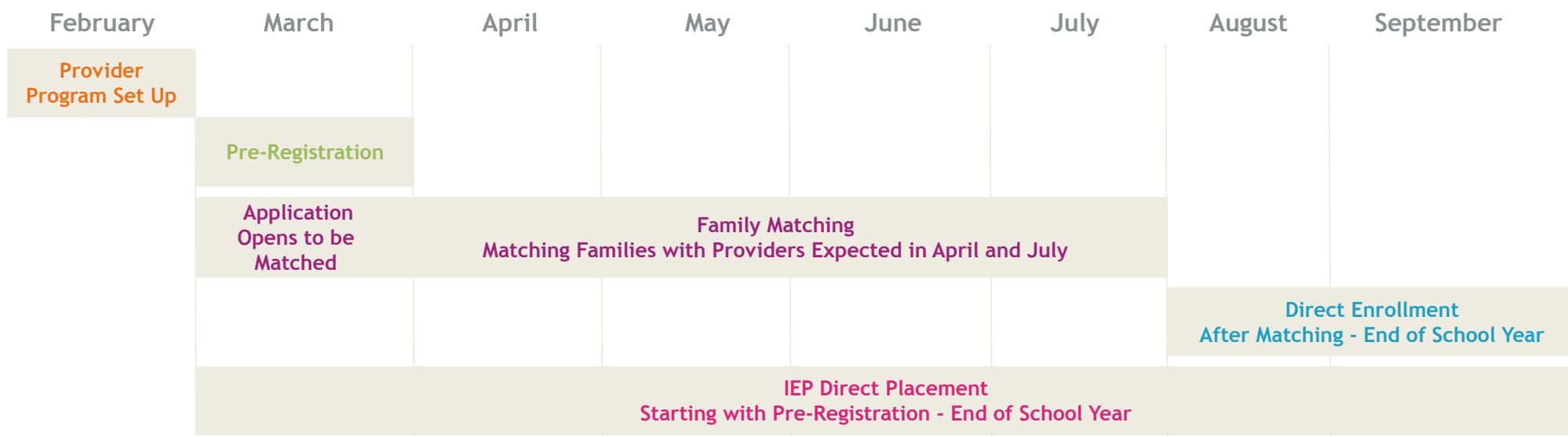
Licensed, mixed-delivery preschool program providers.

Families

All children in Colorado are eligible for up to 15 hours of quality care in their year before kindergarten.

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT PROCESS

ESTIMATED ENROLLMENT TIMELINE FOR 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR



Provider Program Set Up: Providers licensed to educate preschool-aged children can elect to be a UPK Provider by completing the Program Set Up Form at provider.upk.colorado.gov by February 16 to be made public when registration opens on February 29. Programs submitted after the initial deadline will be available for families at a later date.

Pre-Registration: From February 29 through March 28, families can pre-register with their known provider to continue care for a child currently enrolled, with a sibling currently enrolled, or has a parent or guardian currently employed with a UPK Provider.

Family Matching: Beginning on February 29, families will be able to visit upk.colorado.gov to browse 2000+ high-quality licensed providers and register to be matched with one of their top choices during matching rounds expected in April and July. After the match is complete families will work directly with their new provider to finish the enrollment process.

Direct Enrollment: In July, after the matching rounds end, families can work directly with a UPK Provider to enroll, if space is available, through the end of the school year.

IEP Direct Placement: Beginning on February 29, Special Education Administrative Units (AUs) and school districts may request placement of students with IEPs. Students with an IEP will be placed according to their IEP throughout the school year.

Provider Guide: Provider Program Set Up

Providers licensed to educate preschool-aged children can elect to participate in the Colorado Universal Preschool program by completing the Program Set Up Form through the Program Portal. Programs submitted by 2/16 will be made public when family registration begins on February 29, 2024.

Step 1: Check License

Ensure you are a currently licensed provider in the state of Colorado.

Step 2: Register Online

at provider.upk.colorado.gov to begin the process.

Step 3: Set Up Your Pre-K Programs

After creating an account, proceed through the Colorado Universal Preschool Portal for Program Set Up.

- See the [Provider Program Set Up Form Guide](#) on Page 1.

Step 4: Sign Your Provider Agreement

After submitting your Provider Program Set Up Form, your LCO will review and verify the program details. From there, CDEC will send the Provider Agreement to the Authorized Signer indicated on the set up form to be signed.

Step 5: Set Up Your Provider Profile

Promote your unique program(s) to new families looking for preschool providers. Please Note: Changes made to your provider profile will be visible immediately so be sure to note which changes will be available for families in each school year

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT PROCESS

WHY FOCUS ON YOUR PROFILE?

To promote your locations and program offerings, creating and maintaining a robust Profile in our Program Portal is key.

When a family looks for a provider, the Program Portal scans your profile for keywords and content. Your profile serves as your advertisement, showcasing your unique services, staff, and programs.

We encourage you to build or expand upon your profile to excite families in selecting you as one of their preferred providers.

If you do not have content such as program or contact information, a family may not identify you as a provider they are interested in partnering with.

Your profile is surfaced in two ways when a family is searching either on the CDEC website or directly through the portal application:

1. Summary View
2. Detailed View

Summary View

Mile High Early Learning At Westwood

980 S Lowell Blvd, Denver, 80219 | 12 minutes total travel time

[View profile](#)

About this program

Our Mission and Vision for Equity
Mile High Early Learning ensures all children thrive by cultivating every child's potential, engaging families, and championing our early learning workforce.
Mile High Early Learning's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is deeply embedded in our work. Our vision through all of our programming is that children, families, and staff of all racial, cultural, economic, and social backgrounds are joyfully welcomed into a learning community that prioritizes equity and finds strength in diversity.

Notes | This is a Head Start grantee and families may need to meet additional factors to enroll.


Contact information | Cheryl Cardenas
(303) 922-1123
kathyb@milehighearlylearning.org
<http://www.milehighearlylearning.org>

Licensing & accreditations | License # 46082
Center Based

Detailed View

Catholic Charities Early Childhood Programs @ Kentucky

852 S Knox Ct, Denver, CO 80219 | Center Based



Contact information

852 S Knox Ct, Denver
4804628956
sfender@ccdenver.org
<http://www.ccdenvver.org>

Primary contact

Rebekah Trejo
720-256-7597
SFender@ccdenver.org

[Request a tour](#)

About this program

No description available.

Hours of operation

Hours not available.

Financial programs

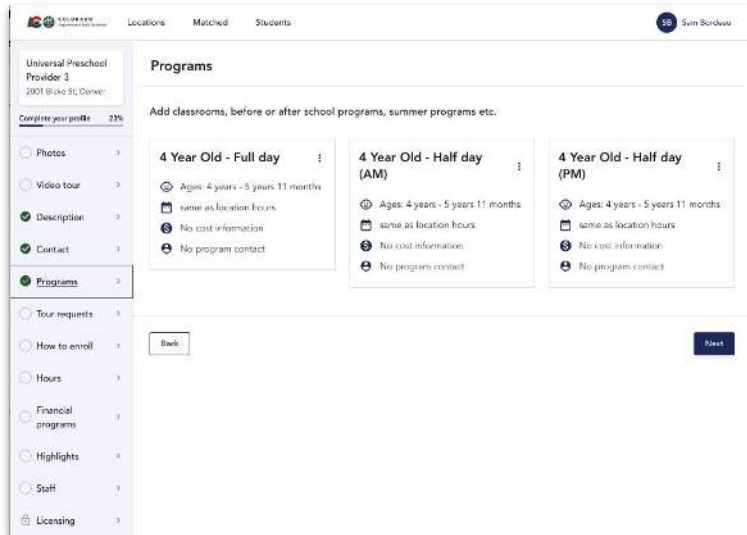
- Financial assistance options available
Colorado Child Care Assistance Program
Head Start
- Discounts
Fees are not charged for the services provided at this location - families need to income qualify.

Highlights

- Language Immersion
Not available
- Languages Spoken
Spanish, English, Spanish, ASL
- Meals
Breakfast, Morning Snack, Lunch, Afternoon Snack, USDA Food Program
- Toilet learning
Not available
- Instructional Approach
Not available
- Additional ages served
Not available
- Specialized Support
Not available

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT PROCESS

To update your profile details, navigate to your profile in the Program Portal and click Edit Profile. Along the left hand side, you will have a list of all key program details to review and update.



DESCRIPTION

Detail your mission, education philosophy, and other key information about you.

PROGRAMS

Share the age, dates, types, and descriptions of the programs you offer. Information like cut-off dates, head start status, or additional specifications can be provided to inform families on program qualifications and partnership needed directly with you.

HOURS

Update closure status in case your location should no longer appear in family searches.

STAFF

Add information and photos of your staff.

PHOTOS

Upload high-quality photos or a virtual tour of your classroom and facilities.

VIDEO TOUR

Upload a virtual tour of your classroom and facilities.

TOUR REQUESTS

Share availability for families to come visit your location.

CONTACTS

Enter key details like location name, email, websites, etc.

HOW TO ENROLL

Outline key nuances in enrolling and partnering with you.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Indicate payment methods or additional financial assistance offered.

HIGHLIGHTS

Showcase amenities, curriculum, language and support options at your location.

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Provider Guide: Pre-Registration

An option for families to directly enroll with their known provider to continue care for a child currently enrolled, with siblings currently enrolled, or with a family member currently employed by a participating provider.

Step 1: Instruct families to complete the Family Registration at upk.colorado.gov OR send families program specific link to register.

- To find a program specific link, navigate to the provider portal “matched” tab, and view the “invite” button. This button will generate a “program link”.
- The pre-registration window will match families to their current provider as a first choice if they meet the pre-registration eligibility criteria. Families do not have to register through the link to be eligible for pre-registration, but do need to qualify and register within the pre-registration time, beginning February 29 through March 28.

Step 2: Manage match accept and declines within the pre-registration window, using the appropriate decline reasons, detailed later in the handbook.

Provider Guide: Family Matching

For families new to the program, or looking for a new preschool provider, the Family Matching process connects families with a preferred provider during matching rounds expected in April and July. Families begin the process when registration opens on February 29th to browse providers, select their top ten preferred providers, review eligibility for the program and additional hours, and submit their registration via upk.colorado.gov.

Step 1: Respond to families who research and contact providers

Step 2: Manage match accept and declines after the matching rounds run in April and July, using the appropriate decline reasons

Step 3: Update seat counts as needed during the appropriate seat adjustment window

Provider Guide: Direct Enrollment

After the family matching deadline, families can work directly with a provider to submit their registration and enroll with a program of choice, through the end of the school year, as space allows.

Step 1: Respond to families who research and contact providers; provide information for seat availability

Step 2: Create direct enrollment applications for families who are interested during the direct enrollment window

Step 3: Manage remaining matches and enrollments

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Provider Guide: Program Link

Providers have the option to send a "program link" directly to families to help families register with a specific provider and preschool program. Providers can access this link in the Universal Preschool Provider Portal at provider.upk.colorado.gov.

What is a program link?

- A "program link" is a website address, or URL, directing families directly to the providers profile and program(s).
- By using this specific "program link" families will be first taken to upk.colorado.gov login page. From there, families will find the "program link" shows this provider is pre-selected and ranked as the first choice under the "select programs and providers" section of the application.

What should a provider and family understand about how the program link functions?

The family still has all of the functionality as everyone else to search, select, remove, and rank programs, and are encouraged to select and rank 5 - 10 programs. In order for pre-registration to function accurately, a family must have two things be true:

1. The family must rank their current provider and desired preschool program number one in their preferences.
2. The family must identify that same provider when answering at least one of the continuity of care questions (identifying as either an existing student, family member, or sibling)

When is a program link created?

A program link will be available when the family application opens on February 29, 2024.

How do I access and send the program link?

1. To access the program link, navigate to the Universal Preschool Provider Portal, and navigate to the "Matched" tab
2. From the "Matched" tab, select the "Invite" button, which opens a pop-up
3. The pop-up will show a list of programs as well as a link for each program
4. Copy the program link, and send this to the family.

Note that if the family does not have an account, they will be prompted to create one. Please see a step-by-step guide with screenshots in the following pages.

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Provider Guide: Program Link - How do I access and send the program link?

1a. To access the program link, navigate to the CO UPK Provider Portal, and navigate to the "Matched" tab.

1b. Ensure you are looking at the correct year selector at the top of the page.

2. From the "Matched" tab, select the "Invite" button, which opens a pop-up

1a. Navigate to the "Matched" tab

1b. Select the 2024-2025 UPK Colorado Program

2. Select the "Invite" button to open the pop up

Locations **Matched** Students

2023-2024 UPK Colorado

Search interested families and children by name or child ID

Select all Location Status **Invite**

Displaying first 1 results, out of 1 total results.

<input type="checkbox"/> Child	DOB	Home	Location	Program	Status
<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday Addams	NEW 2020-04-05	15 Main st Denver	A Busy Child Preschool	4 Year Old - Extended day	Placed

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT PROCESS

3. The pop-up will allow providers with multiple locations to select one location in the “select a location” drop down. Please select a location to see the program links for each program.

4. Copy the program link, and send this to the family. If they family does not have an account, they will be prompted to create one.



Locations

Matched

Students

TS

2023-2024 UPK Colorado

Matched

Search interested families and children by name

Select all

Displaying first 1 results, out of 1 total results.

Child

Wednesday Addams

Invite a child

Use this referral link to invite a child to apply to your program.

Select a location: / 3. "Select a location" drop down

A Busy Child Preschool

4 Year Old - Extended day

https://co.test.getbridgcare.com/provider_referral?subsidyProgramId

4 Year Old - Full day

https://co.test.getbridgcare.com/provider_referral?subsidyProgramId

Done

4. Copy the program link and send this link to families

Invite

Program

Status

4 Year Old - Extended day

Placed

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT PROCESS

As the family application and enrollment process begins, you will see the following statuses within the Program Portal:

STATUS	DESCRIPTION
Placed	Placement is shared with provider for the provider review period. Family is not yet notified.
Matched	Family notified of the match. Provider can contact family to share program information and answer questions.
Accepted	Family accepts the match. Provider should contact family with instructions for enrolling.
Enrolled	All enrollment documents are completed, including Colorado Universal Preschool's enrollment form.

Note: If a family declines their match at your location, the child's record will be removed from your Provider Portal.

A FAMILY MATCHED WITH MY PROGRAM: WHAT NEXT?

- The family must now complete the registration and enrollment process – including paperwork – with you.
- Families are provided your information, and are instructed to contact you for next steps.
- You are also encouraged to reach out to the family and assist them through your enrollment process.
- Families must be enrolled in the UPK system, with eligibility verified, for accurate payments.

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT PROCESS

CONFIRMING & DECLINING MATCHES

The Colorado Universal Preschool Program Set Up Form provides an approved list of reasons a provider may decline a match with a family made within the online application system.

We also recognize that certain providers may have specific requirements of families in order to participate in their program that are not outlined in the Provider Program Set Up Form.

UPK providers may submit a request for a [CDEC Programmatic Preferences](#) if the decline reasons listed in the Provider Program Set Up Form do not provide the flexibility needed for a provider to meet their organizational requirements, or other unique situations.

CDEC will **approve** the following types of programmatic preferences:

- Faith-based providers granting preference to members of their congregation
- Cooperative preschool providers requiring participation in the cooperative
- School districts maintaining enrollment consistent with their established boundaries
- Participating preschool providers reserving placements **for** a student(s) with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to ensure conformity with obligations incurred pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. section 1400 (2004), or the Exceptional Children's Education Act, Article 20 of Title 22, C.R.S.
- Head Start programs adhering to any applicable federal law requirements including eligibility requirements
- Participating preschool providers granting preference to an eligible child of one of their employees
- Participating preschool providers granting preference to an eligible child in order to ensure continuity of care for that child
- Participating preschool providers granting preference to an eligible child in order to keep siblings similarly located
- Participating preschool providers granting preference to an eligible child who is multilingual in order to ensure the proper delivery of services to that child

CDEC will **deny** the following types of programmatic preferences

- Preference submitted that has already been built into the program.
(e.g. maintaining proper ratios of children with and without special needs)
- Preference was not the intent of the program.
(e.g. wanting to honor a private waitlist, child not yet potty trained, tour of school, preference for Montessori model)

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL FUNDING & FINANCING

ELIGIBILITY & PROGRAM DURATION

Providers often offer multiple options when it comes to how many hours per day a child can be in attendance at your preschool. For the purposes of UPK funding, recognized programs include options for part time (10-15 hrs/wk) half day (15-30 hrs/wk), full day (30-40 hrs/wk), and extended day (40+ hrs/week).

PROGRAM TYPE	STANDARD RATE	ADDITIONAL HOURS RATE (Children who meet 100% FPL* low income or 270% FPL low income + one other factor) <small>*Federal Poverty Level Guidelines</small>
Part Time (10-15 hours/wk)	10 hours	Does not apply
Half Day (15-30 hours/wk)	15 hours	Does not apply
Full Day (30-40 hours/wk)	15 hours	30 hours
Extended Day (41+ hours/wk)	15 hours	30 hours

Please Note:

- A 10-15 hour program is paid for any hours offered up to 15 hours, to include 10, 14, 14.5 hours etc.
- A 15-30 hour program is paid for any hours offered at 15 hours and up to 30 hours, to include 15, 29, 29.5 hours etc.
- A student can only be funded for 10, 15, or 30 hours.

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL FUNDING & FINANCING

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- Colorado Universal Preschool funding will be paid monthly per enrolled child, based on the published rates by LCO and the individual child's eligibility.
- You can find Colorado Universal Preschool rates by LCO and funding level for FY 2023-24 [here](#), listed as the monthly payment and school year total amounts.
- Monthly payments will not be prorated based on attendance. Payments will be based on enrollment status.
- You can review your monthly payment reports through our payment partner's account, MetrixIQ. To activate your account and for instructions on logging in, click [here](#).
- "Eligible funding" is defined as how many program hours the state will fund for a child, depending on the child's award.
 - This could be some, or all of the program's hours that families have elected to participate in.
 - A child's funding award will vary based on the hours they are scheduled to attend preschool each week (i.e., their Colorado Universal Preschool program) and if they qualify for additional funding hours beyond the standard rate.

HOW TO CALCULATE PRIVATE PAY TUITION

- Providers set the amount they will charge families for care. To ensure a sustainable business, your private pay rate must be enough to cover your operational costs. You should consider these costs and any profit you wish to make, to then work backward to set the price you must charge per child.
- Provider budget projections will need to take into account how different children will generate varying amounts of revenue. For example, children who use private pay will generate a different amount of income than those children who qualify for subsidy programs, due to differences in what services are covered by the subsidy. This is why budget projections for both expenses and revenue are important for setting private pay rates.

When determining your tuition rates, consider the following:

- Tuition cannot be collected for Colorado Universal Preschool funded hours.
- How many weeks do you collect tuition in a given year?
- What are your different sources of income? (different age groups, Child and Adult Care Food Program, grants, etc.)
- What are your expenses? (insurance, staff wages, rent, supplies, etc.)

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL FUNDING & FINANCING

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD BUSINESS GUIDE FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS

The [CDEC Business Guide for Child Care Centers](#) offers guidance to child care centers and similar operations in planning their financial future.

The [CDEC Business Guide for Family Child Care Homes](#) offers guidance to Family Child Care Homes to do the same. They are also available in Spanish:

- [Guia de Negocios para Centros de Cuidado Infantil](#)
- [Guia de Negocios para Hogares de Cuidado Infantil Familiar](#)

USING MULTIPLE FUNDING STREAMS TO SUPPORT YOUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Colorado Universal Preschool providers may use multiple sources of funding to support the total cost of their program. There are different strategies providers may implement to strategically and effectively use multiple funding sources.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human services, as well as the New York Council on Children and Families, have published two key guides to blending and braiding funds. They can be found here:

- [“How to Guide” Blending and Braiding to support Early Childhood and Education Programs](#)
- [Early Childhood Braiding Funds Toolkit](#)



COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL FUNDING & FINANCING

WHAT DO THE DIFFERENT FUNDING TERMS & TYPES MEAN?

BLENDING

This means that funds from two or more funding sources are wrapped together to fund a specific part of the program or initiative. In blending, costs are not necessarily allocated and tracked by individual funding sources.

BRAIDING

This is when two or more funding sources are coordinated to support the total cost of a service. Revenues are allocated and expenditures are tracked by different categories of funding sources. In braiding, cost-allocation methods are required to ensure that there is no duplicate funding of service costs and that each funding source is charged its fair share across the partners.

STACKING

This is when different funds are used to support the costs of a common goal; for example, Colorado Universal Preschool funding would be considered a foundational layer. Then additional sources would be layered or stacked on top of the Universal Preschool funding to support additional services. An advantage of this approach is that one layer of funding can be removed without affecting the delivery of services covered by other funding sources.

Note: If providers blend and braid program funding, they should consider child and family eligibility reporting requirements for programs. For many funding streams, there are rules and fiscal constraints that determine the use of funds. See the toolkits on the previous page for help understanding these rules.



SERVING FAMILIES WITH DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

CDEC recognizes the opportunity for preschool providers to provide high-quality care and education for the increasing number of children who are likely to be linguistically and culturally diverse. Diversity is even more pronounced among children younger than age 6, where approximately more than one in five children live in households in which languages other than English are spoken.

CDEC recognizes the importance of cultural diversity in all settings. Cultural diversity benefits not only individual students, but entire classrooms, and leads to greater learning outcomes for all.

To help providers support children of all backgrounds, CDEC has collected a number of resources below.

- [NAEYC Diversity, Equity, and Cultural Competence](#)
- [Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance Justice, Equity, and Belonging Resources](#)
- [Center of Excellence for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Equity Toolkit](#)

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL MARKETING RESOURCES

Marketing is crucial to recruiting families into your program. This section provides information on suggested best practices in marketing your preschool services. It also includes ready-to-use marketing materials for your programs.

USEFUL BEST PRACTICES

When planning how to market your programming, consider the following:

- Establish Your Brand Identity
- Define Business Goals
- Define what sets you apart from other
- Know Your Audience
- Know Your Competition
- Maintain Your Website
- Plan for Success

The following pages will walk you through these best practices and how to take action.

ESTABLISH BRAND IDENTITY & DRIVE BRAND IMAGE

Brand identity, in simplest terms, refers to how your brand looks and feels to its audience. It includes visual elements like colors, logos, and designs, as well as the overall personality and values associated with the brand. Consistent marketing are key... (or you can move this sentence down to the marketing toolkit section as an introduction.

DEFINE BUSINESS GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Are you looking to fill open slots? Add capacity and grow your business? Or maybe you simply want to become better known in your community? Regardless, take the time to define your goals and objectives. Once you've done this, align your marketing with your goals. Don't be afraid to tell your community exactly what you're doing!

MARKETING TOOL KIT

Check out the following pages for pre produced marketing graphics and materials to help you promote and grow your program!



COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL MARKETING TOOL KIT

MARKETING TOOL KIT

We have ready-to-use marketing graphics and materials to help you promote and grow your program. Get started by sending your banners, posters and flyers to your personal or professional printer. Some of the materials even allow you to customize them by adding your contact information. We've added some additional tips below so you can maximize your efforts.

PROVIDER SEAL

This can be added to your website, social media accounts, all family communications and more. You can also print the seal as a sticker or window cling for placement at your front door.


 Provider Seal ([Download Link](#))

DIGITAL BANNERS

Add these to the top of your e-newsletter and your website to capture your viewers' attention. Further, share these digital banners with fellow business owners, partner organizations, etc. and ask them to include them in their own communications and ensure your contact information is also shared.

 Digital Banners ([Download Link](#))

HALF-PAGE FLYERS

These can be printed on copy paper and cut in half to distribute to families and community members. You do not need to wait for a formal opportunity to pass these out. Some examples for easy distribution include: storytimes at your local library, church mailboxes (specifically for families with young children or as a take-home for young Sunday School classes), playgrounds, block parties, family entertainment venues or events, etc.  Half Page Flyers ([Download Link](#))



COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL MARKETING TOOL KIT

ONE-PAGER

You can print this or send them to your favorite printer, and distribute them the same way you do the half-page flyers. The one-pager contains more information, but it costs more to print; be intentional with your choice of materials to use. Look for local businesses that have bulletin boards – make sure you have the right format and size so you get maximum exposure.

[🔗 8.5x11 PDF Poster \(Download Link\)](#)

POSTER

Determine where you would like to place these (libraries, churches, event centers, retail stores, community health clinics, etc.) and ask permission to hang. Pro tip: make sure to use the right tape or glue dots to avoid any potential damage to other's property. [🔗 11x17 PDF Poster \(Download Link\)](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS WITH SUGGESTED CAPTIONS

Post them on your Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn pages to share these messages with families and the community. Extend your reach by asking local friends, family and trusted partners to share and reshare your posts.

[🔗 Social Media Assets \(Download Link\)](#)

VINYL BANNER

Give your banner the most exposure possible by being intentional with placement. If your building faces a street, find the location to hang your banner that will be seen the most. If you are near a stoplight or intersection, place your banner in that area so drivers have more time to read when stopped or yielding.

[🔗 2'x4' Banner \(Download Link\)](#)



COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL MARKETING TOOL KIT



SUGGESTED CAPTION

Don't underestimate the power of play! In preschool, children engage in hands-on experiences that build important skills like teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving.

Contact us to learn how you can get free half days of preschool.
#COUniversalPreschool

SUGGESTED CAPTION

We are a Colorado Universal Preschool provider! This means our families can receive free half days of preschool.

Contact us today to learn more about how to enroll your child in our program. #COUniversalPreschool

SUGGESTED CAPTION

Did you know Colorado Universal Preschool provides free half days of preschool to all children in the year before kindergarten?

Contact us to learn more. We can help you register!
#COUniversalPreschool

SUGGESTED CAPTION

Did you know Colorado Universal Preschool provides free half days of preschool to all children in the year before kindergarten?

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COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL MARKETING STRATEGIES



COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL MARKETING STRATEGIES

PLAN FOR SUCCESS

After you have worked through the above best-practice sections, it's time to build your communications and marketing plan. Having a plan and calendar will help you inform your families about what's happening, any updates and upcoming opportunities. This not only will keep everyone on the same page but also prepares them for upcoming events.

Consider both existing and prospective families as you contemplate why, when and how you will reach these groups with important communications, updates and more.

Create a calendar and plan ahead. Include things like: social media posts, events, pre-event marketing, existing family communications, prospective family follow-up and more. The goal is to have all of your ideas and plans organized in one place.

Things may change along the way. Regularly go back and review your programs and plan to see if any modifications need to be made. Consider your most recent activities to determine what is helping and what is hindering, then refine your plan to better align with your goals.

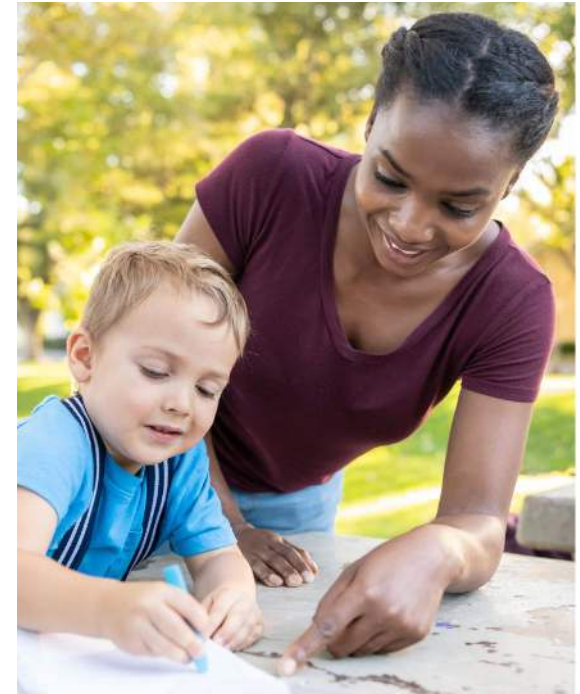
TALKING POINTS

Whether it is small talk or a formal speaking engagement, the quality of your message should be consistent. These talking points should align with your brand image and help build your brand value.

When building talking points, consider key qualities and attributes you want associated with your program. Consider awards, recognitions, years in business, or honors you've received. Keep talking points brief – one or two sentences each.

COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Partner with community organizations, libraries and local businesses to promote your early childhood education program. They may be willing to display flyers or share information with their clientele.



COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL MARKETING STRATEGIES

WORD OF MOUTH

Your existing families are the best starting point for referrals. Send an email about your open slots, or your enrollment calendar, and ask them to share it with their local friends and family. Depending on your capacity and typical family turnover, you could also consider a formal referral program. Incentives could include financial rewards (e.g. a discount voucher) but you could also focus on the value of family recognition, student celebration or shared success stories (e.g. family or student of the month).

Once you have begun asking for referrals from your families, do the same with your friends, fellow business owners or other members of your community.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Leverage popular social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to share announcements, success stories, and key information. Use engaging visuals and relevant hashtags to reach a wider audience.

Stop the scrolling by using eye-catching classroom photos or videos, showing the playful side of your program (outside or indoor activity photos or videos), creating videos specifically to add to reels, highlighting parent/family testimonials and more. Don't forget to have proper release/authorization on file first.

Have fun with your content and make sure it is fully aligned with your brand, goals and objectives.

OPEN HOUSES & COMMUNITY EVENTS

The most valuable experience you can provide is the authentic offering of your program. Make sure you are ready with printed flyers or other informational materials about deadlines, tuition, etc. Have your staff attend, and encourage them to speak with parents. The goal is to be transparent with prospective families, so their decision to join your program feels like an informed one.

The availability and type of community events will vary by location. Consider things like parades, fairs, exhibits, school or church events, etc. — if your target audience is there then you should be, too.

NETWORKING

Identify potential partners who interact with your audience, and participate with them as much as you can. This could include online conversations, as much as it could be conversation during half-time of a local high school game, small talk at the post office, or stopping by a local church to get to know the Sunday School Director.



COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL MARKETING STRATEGIES

DIRECTORIES & RESOURCES

Many families still use traditional directories – especially those without social media.

Examples of useful directories to advertise your services include the following:

Colorado Universal Preschool Provider Directory

As an enrolled early childhood education provider with Colorado Universal Preschool, your business will be listed on the state’s website and will be viewable to all families seeking an early childhood education provider match.

Beyond the standard information about your preschool, be sure to include the attributes that are the core of your business. This may include things like your backstory, awards or certifications, unique program offerings, staff education and experience levels, your learning philosophy, the learning environment, etc. You supply the content – don’t miss your opportunity to shine!

Online & Offline Business Directories

There are numerous online business listings that will present you as a preferred preschool to your target audience. These listings will not only direct your audience to you, but some may also allow for inclusion beyond contact information, such as enrollment guidelines, location details, photos and more.

Some examples include: your local Better Business Bureau, Google, Yelp, local social media groups, and traditional print directories (phone books, church directories, other local printed materials, etc.).

Understanding your community and identifying the resources your target audience uses will help you choose which options to pursue.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are upcoming Provider deadlines?

- **March 7, 2024:** you will be able to sign in and begin reviewing your “known student” continuity of care enrollments. You will be able to accept or decline each enrollment.
- **March 6, 2024:** applications from “known students” (Continuity of Care applications) will be processed in a batch each night.
- **March 28, 2024 at 5:00 PM:** pre-registration will close. The final nightly batch will process the evening of March 28.
- **Mid April:** Following the matching round, you will be able to begin processing “new family” registrations. No provider steps are necessary for the Family Matching phase, until after the first matching round in April.

How do families pre-register for my program for continuity of care?

4 Steps:

1. Families should login to upk.colorado.gov or create an account if following your unique “provider link”.
2. Families should complete the first registration questions.
3. Families should find your provider profile, or if using your “provider link”, ensure your program is pre-selected and is ranked as their first choice.
4. Families need to affirm that one of the following is true for your program as their first choice:
 - Your child is currently enrolled.
 - Your child has a sibling enrolled with the provider.
 - Your child has a parent or guardian employed with the provider.

Provider Resources:

- 📺 [Watch This Short How To Video for Families](#)
- 📄 [Make a Copy of This Example Letter to Send to Families](#)

Is my child eligible based on their birthday?

- Look up your child’s birthday and school district to see if they are eligible for Colorado Universal Preschool on [this new UPK Age Eligibility Lookup Tool](#). You can also search for your school district based on your county and zip-code.

Should my 3 year old register for UPK?

- Not this year. Please use your child’s birthday and school district to see if verify eligibility dates with [UPK Age Eligibility Lookup Tool](#).
- If you find your child’s birthday is “ineligible”, please reach out to your LCO to find other preschool services that may be available in your school district or by other providers through bit.ly/FindMyLCO.
- *Note: Preschool aged children with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) are eligible for universal preschool funding and will be placed by their Special Education Administrative Unit (AU) or school district.*



FREE HALF-DAY PRESCHOOL FOR ALL COLORADO KIDS IN THE YEAR BEFORE KINDERGARTEN!

Enroll your child in preschool and help them be kindergarten ready!



COLORADO
Department of Early Childhood