

UPK Roundtable - February 2024



Joint Initiatives
FOR YOUTH + FAMILIES

JI/UPK Team

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Today's Agenda

- **Welcome + Introductions**
- **CDEC Updates**
- **UPK by the Numbers**
- **Year One Reminders**
- **Year Two: What's different from Year One?**
- **Year Two: Resources**
- **Questions**

Managing Questions

- **As questions come up, please type them into the chat, starting with the subject of the question.**
 - Example: Year Two priority enrollment: How can I be sure that my children who have priority will be placed with me?
- If we need more clarification on the question, we will ask you to unmute and explain the question further.
- If all questions have been answered before the time is up, we will then give providers an opportunity to raise their hands, unmute, and ask their questions.

Universal Preschool Colorado



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Topics

- Payment Support
- Grant notifications
- Metrix Enroll
- CDEC Connections
- Tax Credit Outreach
- Program Set Up forms



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Payment Support



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Provider Payment Support

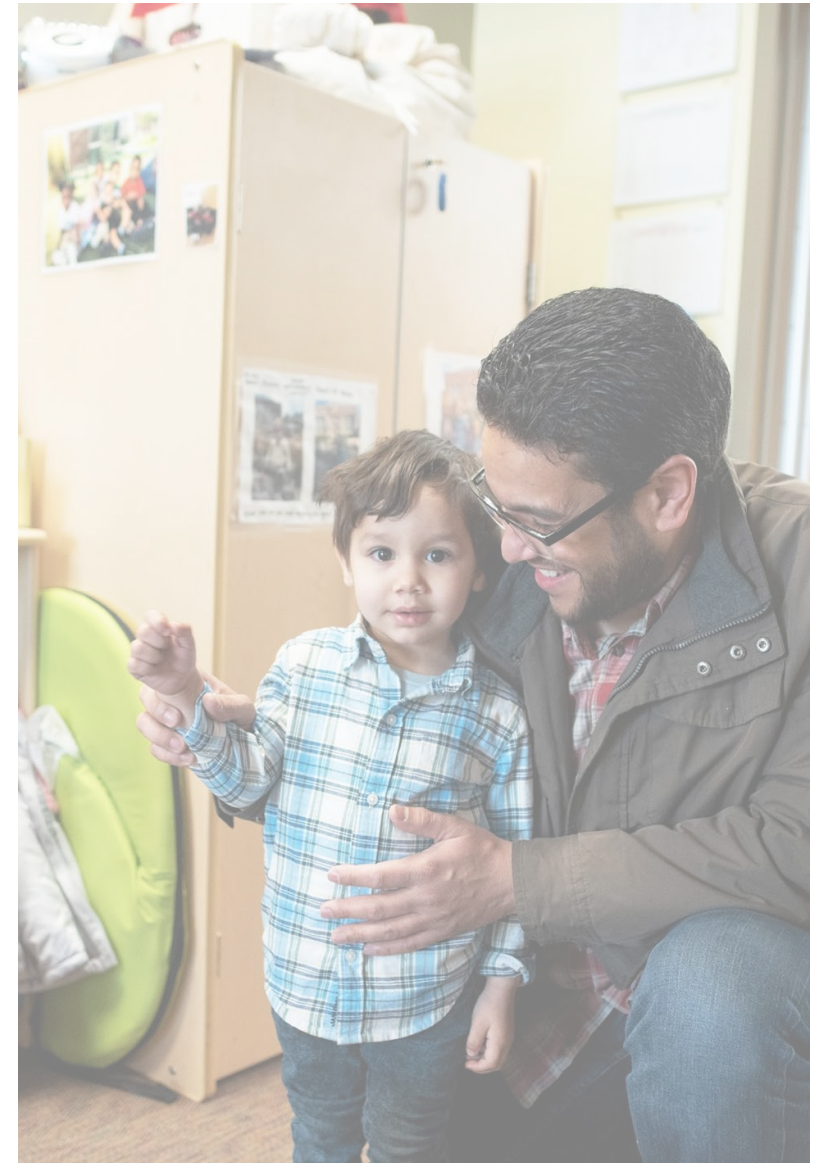
Providers are able to elevate any payment concerns directly to MetrixIQ.

- Contact: coupkpayments@metrixiq.com or [submit a ticket to the Metrix help desk](#)



Metrix Enroll for Universal Preschool Payments

- MetrixIQ is excited to kick off the second half of the school year with an improved payment report process for Universal Preschool. On January 8th, we launched Metrix Enroll for Universal Preschool Payments - a web-based portal where you will find your monthly payment reports in one place. The new system also allows us to add student names to the report, which we hope will help make the review of your payments much easier. We are also working on an End of the Year report for providers, including payments received from MetrixIQ (UPK, bonus, grants, etc.). This EOY report will be available via Metrix Enroll as well.
- Providers should have received an email from Metrix Enroll (no-reply@metrixenroll.com) and the subject line “Welcome” with your username and temporary password to activate your Metrix Enroll account. [You can see a preview of the system, how to login and download your payment reports here.](#)
- If you are having trouble logging in or have any questions, [please submit a help desk ticket](#) and we will be in touch as soon as we can.



Capacity Building Grant Updates



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Capacity Building Grant Update

- If you have not yet received notification from Metrix regarding your Capacity Building grant, you will want to ensure you are frequently checking your inbox to ensure you have not missed communication from them.
- Providers who did not need to submit additional information for review received their payments in January.
- For providers who were required to submit additional information, an email went out on 2/1/24. These requests are still being reviewed and providers will be notified via email with updates.
- The deadline to submit additional information was 1/31/2024. Please reach out to coecstimulus@metrixiq.com if you have not received information regarding your grant approval, or if you have any questions.



CDEC Connections



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Stay Connected with CDEC

- For up to date emails, news, and updates on Colorado Universal Preschool, sign up at the link provided below!

[Colorado Department of Early Childhood - Sign Up for the Colorado Universal Preschool Newsletter](#)

- [Submit your feedback:](#) We are eager to hear your ideas on how to best support you and your important work in ensuring all Colorado children can access high-quality preschool.
- Have more questions or need help with Universal Preschool Colorado? [Contact us using this short form](#) or call 303-866-5223.



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2024 TAX CREDIT OUTREACH

Community Referral to Improve Economic Mobility





TAX CREDITS AND TAX REBATES

What are tax credits?

- Tax credits are decreases in tax owed if eligible
- When the taxes are **refundable** we get that money back in a refund payment if we file taxes
- Payment can come in check or direct deposit

What are tax rebates?

- Tax rebates are refunds of taxes paid
- Most Coloradans will receive a TABOR rebate this year
- Must file a state return to receive



WHAT'S NEW FOR THE 2024 TAX SEASON?

CHILD TAX CREDIT

- Expanded federal CTC ended
- **\$2,000** per child for eligible dependents (up to \$1,600 refundable)
- Parents can use an ITIN if child has a SSN
- State CTC - **10-60% of federal** (no SSN required)
- State CTC is refundable
- State CTC is only for children under 6
- People can still claim missed tax credits back to tax year 2020.

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

- Up to **\$7,430** with dependants
- Colorado residents who claim federal EITC can also claim COEITC - **50% match this year!**
- ITIN filers can only claim state EITC
- Amount for filers without dependent children is up to \$600

TABOR Rebate:
Must file a state tax return to receive. Flat amount of **\$800** to each Coloradan over age 18. Deadline of **April 15th** for most filers.





EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR CREDIT

Credit for credentialed childcare professionals:

- Between \$850 and \$1,620
 - Refundable
 - AGI less than 75k/150k
 - **Must hold an EC Credential from CDEC**
 - Licensed or employed by an eligible program
 - Must file a state return + a tax form
- More information [here](#)

[Tax Credit Form](#)



Get
Ahead
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HOW TO REFER

What to Ask

- Have you received tax credits?
- Do you plan to file taxes?

Next Steps for Filing

- Provide materials and next steps: link to free online filing, 2-1-1, a VITA appointment and/or link to [GetAheadColorado.org](https://www.getaheadcolorado.org) for more information.
- Keep it simple! Do not give tax advice.



Provider Setup Form



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Provider Setup Form

- If you have questions regarding the Program Setup Form or changes that need to be made, you should reach out to Joint Initiatives.
- The initial deadline to complete your provider program setup form was February 16th. This will ensure that your programs are visible when the family applications open. If you have missed this deadline, contact JI.



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Current Year Troubleshooting in the Portal

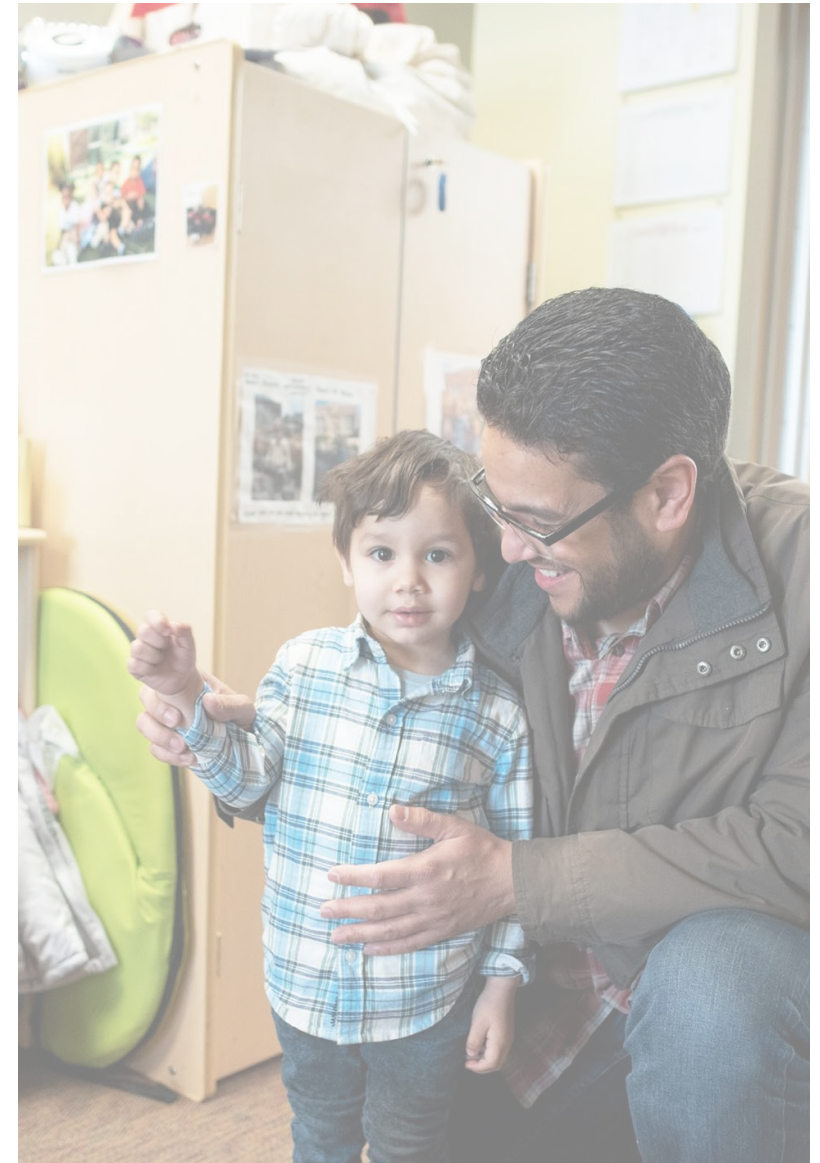


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Current Year Portal Troubleshooting

If you are experiencing difficulties with any actions in the portal such as enrollment, please first log out and back into the portal. This ensures that any updates have been refreshed.

If you are still experiencing an issue, take a screenshot and connect with Joint Initiatives.



UPK BY THE NUMBERS

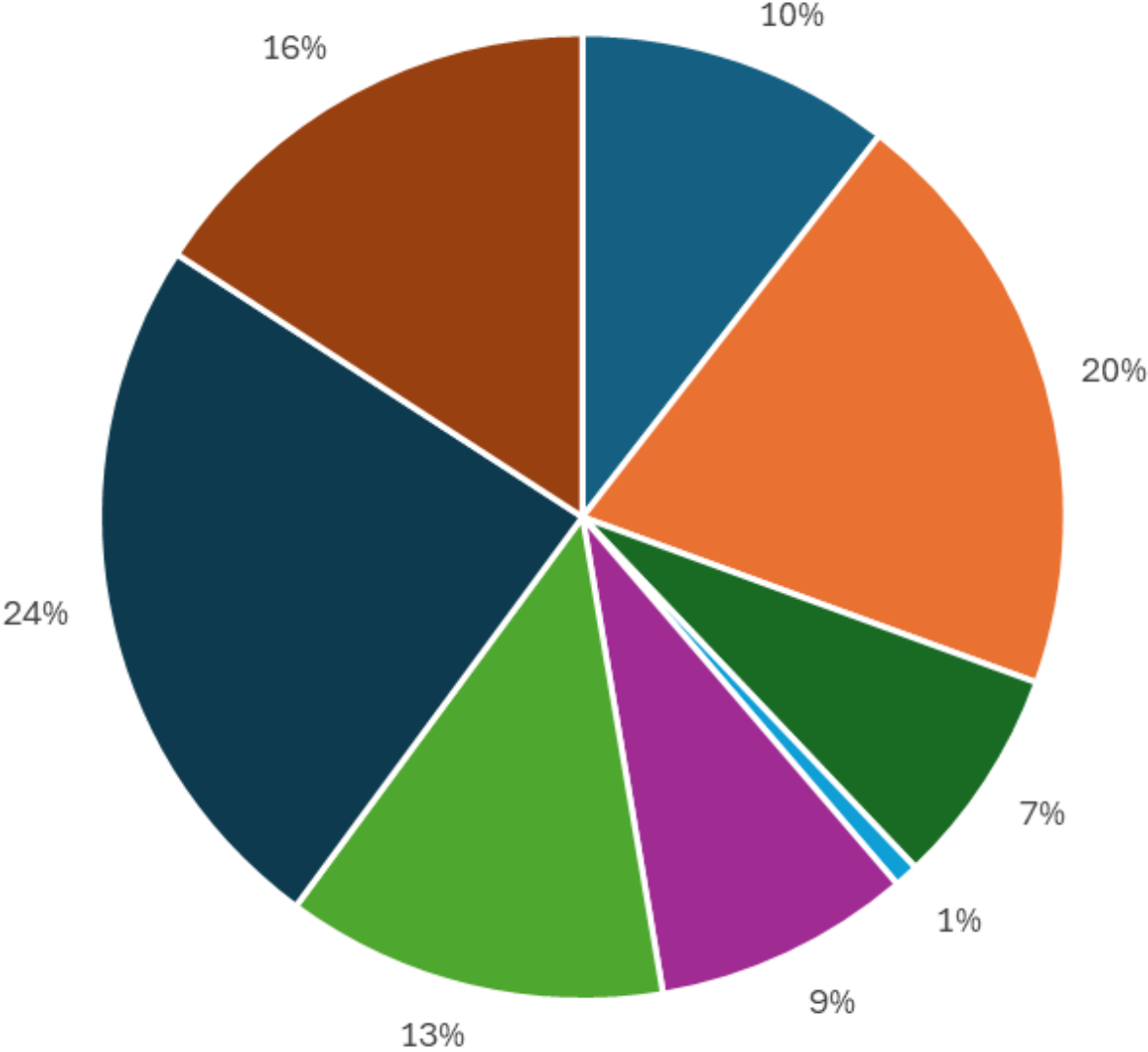
EPC UPK Year Two Provider Set-Up Summary

- A total of 201 providers have registered for Year Two.
 - 96% of providers from year one have registered for Year Two, putting El Paso County above the state target for provider retention.
 - 28 new providers have registered in El Paso County for Year Two.
 - 15 of these new providers are in high-need areas (areas with less than 70% access)
- There are 6,199 registered UPK seats for Year Two. This has increased access in El Paso County to 66%, 4% away from the benchmark of 70% for universal access. This is an increase of 11% over Year One.
- ZIP codes 80916 and 80910 have both seen increases in access, but are still below 50% on average. These ZIP codes have the highest concentrations of four-year-olds in El Paso County, large military populations, and have among the highest youth poverty in the county.

EPC UPK Year Two Seat Breakdown

- UPK seats in El Paso County are distributed as follows for year two:
 - 24% of UPK seats are IEP seats
 - 20% of UPK seats are full-day seats
 - 16% of UPK seats are other hour type seats (D49 programs are all 12 hours, around 2 dozen private providers also have hours different from 10, 15, or 30 hours)
 - 13% of UPK seats are half-day PM seats
 - 10% of UPK seats are extended-day seats
 - 9% of UPK seats are half-day AM seats
 - 7% of UPK seats are part-time AM seats
 - 1% of UPK seats are part-time PM seats

UPK Seat Breakdown in El Paso County, Year Two



■ ED Seats ■ FD Seats ■ PT AM Seats ■ PT PM Seats ■ HD AM Seats ■ HD PM Seats ■ IEP Seats ■ Other Seats

**UPK Year One
Reminders
(2023-2024)**

Year One (2023-24) Reminders

UPK Eligibility

- Only children who were 4 years old prior to October 1, 2023* (year before kindergarten) are eligible for UPK during the current year, regardless of whether they turn 4 after October 1.
- Children who are in their two years before kindergarten during the current school year can only receive UPK support from their home school district. Non-school district providers can still serve these children, but it is without UPK support.

New Applicants

- Families can still apply for the 2023-24 school year. JI is reviewing new applications weekly and sending them to the top two providers that the family chooses.
- If there are many choices, a Family Resource Navigator is reaching out to the family to help them find a placement.

Year One (2023-24) Reminders

Drops and Un-enrollments from your program

- Providers must unenroll a child within one week if the child withdraws or stops attending. Notify LCO by email of the reason for the unenrollment so we can make a note in the child's application.
- If the family stops communicating with the provider, the provider must document the attempts made to contact the family and then must unenroll within one week.
- The provider may continue enrollment for a child as long as they attend sometime during the payment month. If the family leaves for a month, the child must be unenrolled. The provider can save the seat for the child by reducing their UPK number by one and then increasing again when the child returns. To reduce or increase seats, contact JI.

Year One (2023-24) Reminders

Payment Schedule and Issues

- Payment issues should be handled by creating a ticket with MetrixIQ at coupkpayments@metrixiq.com
- The payment report is pulled at the end of the day on the 15th of each month. Students eligible for payment the following month must have a completed enrollment form with a start date that is by the 15th of the payment month.
- According to the payment schedule for the 2023-24 year, the last payment for Year One will be on May 9th for children enrolled as of April 15th and starting by May 14th. There will be a true-up in June for any providers who were not paid correctly. Any concerns or issues should be submitted to MetrixIQ.
- Once a provider's UPK calendar has ended (which should be made clear for families), enrollment over the summer months is at the complete discretion of the provider in accordance with their published rate schedule. **THERE IS NO UPK SUPPORT OVER THE SUMMER MONTHS.**

UPK Year Two (2024-2025)

Year Two (2024-25)

Version 1 of the UPK Provider Guide for the 2024-25 year has been released.

It can be found at jointinitiatives.org/upk, where you can also sign up for the UPK Newsletter.

Topics included in the guide include:

- program overview
- key terms
- key partners
- enrollment process
- funding and financing
- marketing resources

Year Two (2024-25)

Major differences between Year One and Year Two

- Priority enrollment (also known as pre-registration or Continuity of Care)
- Matching algorithm run only twice (expected to be April and July), followed by return to walk-in status in August
- Children in their two years before kindergarten without an IEP will be sent directly to the school district for placement and will not go through the UPK system.
- Children in their year before kindergarten with an IEP will be managed directly with the AU/school district for placement.
- Children in their two years before kindergarten with an IEP will submit an application through the UPK system, noting that they have an IEP. These apps will be sent to the AU/school district for placement.

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. Programs submitted after the initial deadline will be available for families at a later date.

Pre-Registration: Estimated to be 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 with a family member currently employed with a UPK Provider.

Family Matching: Estimated to begin on February 29, families will be able to visit upk.colorado.gov to browse 1000+ high-quality licensed providers and apply to be matched with 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: Estimated 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 Enrollment: Estimated to begin 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.

Management of Applications

Three buckets

Priority Apps

2/29-3/28

Directly placed with
Provider that child
has priority status

Children with IEPs

Throughout the UPK year

State works with AU for
direct placement

Gen Ed: No Priority

Beginning 2/29 and on

Algorithm in April and July
then walk-in status

Continuity of Care (Priority) Enrollment

February 29 thru March 28 only

Families with priority can enroll in one of two ways:

1. Provider sends a program-specific link to the family that will pre-populate the program where they have priority into their application as 1st choice (Link will not be available until the 2024-25 programs are verified and published)
2. Provider sends a letter to the family stating the site and program where the family has priority and asks them to register at upk.colorado.gov and put that program as their first choice and mark that they have priority

Families who state that they have priority will be sent to the provider weekly during the month to confirm that the family does have priority.

FUNDING AND 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.)

Year Two (2024-25)

Programs and rates for 2024-25 (pending approval by JBC)

- Part-Time: Between 10 and 14 hours per week, 36 weeks or a total of 360 hours (\$483.01 per month x 10 months); no charge to family permitted
- Half-Day: Between 15 and 29 hours per week, 36 weeks or a total of 540 hours (\$603.57 per month x 10 months). Fifteen (15) hours are free; families may be charged for hours between 16 and 29 per week.
- Full-Day: 30+ hours per week, 36 weeks (\$1067.92 per month x 10 months); 30 hours are free, families may be charged for hours above 30 hours.*

*This rate is ONLY for those children who qualify for 30 hours per week of UPK and are enrolled in a full- or extended-day UPK program. Otherwise, the provider will be paid for 15 hours per week, and the family will be responsible for the remaining hours of care according to the provider's published rates. For the 2024-25 year, providers MUST publish their rates in their profile so that families have that information before choosing a potential UPK provider.

MARKETING TOOLS

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!



Year Two (2024-25)

Resources:

- Bookmark the UPK page at jointinitiatives.org/upk
 - Up-to-date information
 - Provider guides
 - Other state resources
- Sign up for the UPK newsletter on the UPK page above
- Continue to attend monthly Roundtables
- Call or email UPK staff at upk@jointinitiatives.org or 719-828-1514
- Set up a consultation appointment with Noreen at nglt@mac.com
- Keep your email up to date with the state!

Thank You!



Foundations is the early childhood program of Joint Initiatives for Youth + Families.

