

UPK Roundtable - October 2024



Joint Initiatives
FOR YOUTH + FAMILIES



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Department of Early Childhood



PROVIDER HANDBOOK

SCHOOL YEAR

2024 - 2025

**CO UNIVERSAL
PRESCHOOL**

The Provider Guide is Your Friend!

- ❑ A link to the UPK Provider Guide can be found on JI's UPK page at www.jointinitiatives.org/upk
- ❑ The guide is updated regularly; the link on the UPK page takes you to the latest version of the guide
- ❑ Guide gives you step-by-step instructions for every process that you need as a UPK provider.
- ❑ Always check the guide for the answers to your questions. If you don't find what you need, contact the JI/UPK at upk@jointinitiatives.org.

What do I have to read and review?



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- ❑ E-mails come to you from CDEC; BridgeCare and the state's vendors or departments (such as the state Procurement Office, Metrix IQ)
- ❑ You will also receive emails from Joint Initiatives (JI staff members and consultants like Noreen). There are other departments at JI with whom you interact that will also send you emails that are important to your business.
- ❑ All formal agreements for both CDEC and JI will come through DocuSign
- ❑ CDEC and JI newsletters come through various platforms
- ❑ Please be sure that you check your junk regularly and allow these emails to come through to your inbox.
- ❑ Please at least scan the emails that do come through to your inbox!
- ❑ JI will promise that we will keep emails to a minimum and mark the "must read" so that you can prioritize those.
- ❑ Finally, please return our telephone calls!!!



Reviewing Enrollments



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- ❑ At least monthly, review your enrollments in your program(s) to be sure that the students you are reporting as being enrolled are actually attending your program.
- ❑ You must unenroll a child within one week of their last day – preferably within one day of their last day.
- ❑ If a child is moving between locations, they cannot be enrolled in the new location until they have been unenrolled from the previous location.
- ❑ If a child is moving out of state or is no longer interested in UPK, please notify JI so that we may withdraw the application.
- ❑ Check your selected list regularly so that you may reach out to families who might be interested in your program so that you can manage a wait list in case you have openings.

Viewing Hours Eligibility



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- ❑ All eligible children (age 4, but not 5, by October 1 unless SD has a different cut off date) are eligible for 15 hours per week free, regardless of the program in which they are enrolled.
- ❑ Even if the child is enrolled in a full day program, they may only be eligible for 15 hours per week; the provider will charge the family for the remaining hours.
- ❑ Some children are eligible for 30 hours per week free. See page 6 of the provider guide. To take advantage of those 30 free hours, they must be enrolled in a full or extended day program.
- ❑ Double check to be sure that you are charging the family the correct tuition for additional hours and that the tuition after UPK hours is posted on your profile.

Eligibility Announcement

- With the updated enrollment download, providers can find the child eligibility information under the Column titled “Child Eligibility: Hours Per Week (HPW)”. No matter the order of the numbers of the HPW, the child is eligible for all hours including the highest number listed in the report. These values indicate the number of hours per week the child is eligible for, such as:
 - **10 HPW** = Eligible for up to 10 hours of free preschool per week
 - **15 HPW** = Eligible for up to 15 hours of free preschool per week
 - **15 HPW, 30 HPW** = Eligible for up to 30 hours of free preschool per week
- To pull the report, go to the Student tab first (if you have a location then select the specific location), then click on the three dots to download the enrollment report. Once in the report, you can find the information in Column M.
- This information is always up to date with the most recent information from the family’s submitted application.



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Payment Issues



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- ❖ Payment issues **must** be resolved with Metrix IQ, the UPK payment vendor
- ❖ JI does not have access to payment information, and we are not permitted to submit a ticket to Metrix IQ on your behalf.
- ❖ As soon as you believe you have a payment issue, you must open a ticket at the following link: <https://upkpayments.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/requests/new> or by sending an email to coupkpayments@metrixiq.com. Please provide as much information as you can about the issue.
- ❖ Remember that it may take a few days for your bank to process the ACH deposit so plan accordingly.
- ❖ Keep your banking information up to date with MetrixIQ!

Quality Standards



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COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL QUALITY STANDARDS

OVERVIEW OF OUR UPK QUALITY STANDARDS

In line with the legislative vision set out in HB 22-1295, CDEC has published Universal Preschool Program Quality Standards. These standards will support high-quality preschool in a unique mixed delivery system through five key areas of early childhood:

1. **Basic Eligibility:** These standards must ensure all families have an equal opportunity to enroll their child at a high-quality participating provider of their choice. CCR 1404-1:4.109
2. **Teacher Quality and Workforce:** The Universal Preschool Quality Standards help educators advance high-quality instruction by supporting them to acquire skills, competencies, and advance their careers so that all children are receiving the best education possible. CCR 1404-1- 4.114
3. **Instructional Practice:** Universal preschool providers will be given access to a Resource Bank filled with tools, templates, trainings, and other information to support the identification and use of high-quality curricular materials. These standards also require the measure of a preschool provider's environmental quality at least every 3 years through on-site observations. CCR 1404-1- 4.111
4. **Healthy Development:** Through participating providers, families will have access to free, voluntary developmental screenings, referrals for children and families in need of specialised services, and translation services. CCR 1404-1- 4.112
5. **Family and Community Engagement:** As part of universal preschool, families will all be able to offer input to their providers on priorities, interests, and home routines, and the socio-cultural practices they value. CCR 1404-1 4.113

Requirements in Rules for Providers

Within each of the five key areas of early childhood identified in the Universal Preschool Quality Standards there are a set of requirements participating providers will have to meet. These requirements will not all need to be met for SY24-25. Providers will be supported by CDEC to gradually come into compliance with the approved Universal Preschool Quality Standards. Resources created by CDEC will be made available to providers through the Resource Bank. The Resource Bank is planned to launch in January 2025. The Resource Bank will be created and updated by CDEC and will include, but not be limited to, approved curriculum, educational approaches, toolkits, self-assessments, and trainings.

- [Basic Eligibility](#)
- [Teacher Quality and Workforce](#)
- [Instructional Practice](#)
- [Healthy Development](#)
- [Family Engagement](#)
- [Professional Development Requirements](#)

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL QUALITY STANDARDS

BASIC ELIGIBILITY

SY 24-25

Starting July 1, 2024

- **Meet Minimum Instruction Hours:** Provide at least 360 hours of instructional time per school year. Adjust hours based on the child's enrollment date if they join mid-year
- **Equal Enrollment Opportunity:** Ensure all children can enroll and participate regardless of: Race or Ethnicity, Religion, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Housing Situation, Income, Disability
- **Preferences and Matching Process:** Depending on the provider type, providers May set preferences within the matching process for accepting students into their program. if you are any one of the following provider types you may be eligible for utilizing a provider preference: faith-based provider, cooperative preschools, School districts, providers with IEP obligations, Head Start programs, employee child preference, continuity of care preference, sibling placement preference, multilingual services preference, community-based and other specific preferences. information on these and other approved preferences can be found in the matching section of this handbook (page 23).
- Preschool providers must notify families of the opportunity to participate in an annual survey of families experiences in regard to screening, referral, and early childhood mental health best practices to be conducted by the Department.

*PREVIEW: SY 25-26 and Beyond

By July 1, 2026

Teacher-to-Child Ratios and Group Sizes: Follow these maximum ratios in group sizes:

- By July 1, 2025: 1 teacher per 11 children, maximum group size of 22
- By July 1, 2026: 1 teacher per 10 children, maximum group size of 20
- **Exceptions** to these ratios and group sizes may be made if the preschool provider is rated four or five stars in CO Shines, or the provider has received a waiver from CDEC, or a provider has been deemed eligible to serve multiple groups in a single space without a permanent divider.

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL QUALITY STANDARDS

TEACHER QUALITY AND WORKFORCE

SY 24-25

*PREVIEW: SY 25-26 and Beyond

Starting July 1, 2024

- **Meet Qualifications for Lead Teachers:** All participating providers must ensure that all teachers, educators or other employees are qualified in accordance with licensing rules.
 - Child Care Center rules can be found here * CCR 1402-1, rule section 2.216
 - Family Child Care Homes rules can be found here 8 CCR 1402-1, rules sections 2.311 through 2.315
- **Education children with Disabilities-** all providers shall ensure compliance with “Standards for Placement of Preschoolers with IEPs”, IDEA and ECEA
- Abide by the limitations and procedures regarding **suspensions and expulsions** (22-22-106.1, C.R.S.)

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL QUALITY STANDARDS

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE

SY 24-25

During the 2024-2025 school year, eligible preschool providers should prepare for the following changes which will take effect on July 1, 2025, see right column.

*PREVIEW: SY 25-26 and Beyond

Beginning July 1, 2025

- Early Learning and Assessment Approach: Preschool providers must utilize an early learning and assessment approach approved by CDEC and included in the Resource Bank. Approved approaches included in the Resource Bank will align with Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines and Academic Standards.
- On-site observations: At least once every 3 years, providers will receive an independent on-site observation of environmental quality conducted by CDEC. The observational methods and resources to prepare for these observations will be included in the Resource Bank

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL QUALITY STANDARDS

HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

SY 24-25

During the 2024-2025 school year, eligible preschool providers should prepare for the following changes which will take effect on July 1, 2025, see right column.

*PREVIEW: SY 25-26 and Beyond

Beginning July 1, 2025

- **Voluntary Specialized Services:** Leveraging the resources CDEC offers through the Resource Bank, participating providers must make publicly available their policies and procedures for ensuring families have access to:
 - Voluntary developmental screenings services
 - Referrals for specialized services
 - Translation services
- Screening, referral, or translation services must be conducted using valid and reliable tools 4.112(4)

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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

SY 24-25

Beginning July 1, 2024

Participating providers must make publicly available their policies and procedures for ensuring they are able to:

- Communicate with families in their home language through the use of interpreters or other language resources
- Seek input from families on their priorities, interest, home routines, and cultural and social practices
- Engage families and identifying goals which inform the preschool provider interactions and instruction with children including multilingual learners
- Engage families and Community Partners in decision making regarding preschool operations
- Ensure families are directly involved in the transition of their children into and out of preschool, including transitioning into kindergarten
- Show a commitment to Quality interactions between the program and families, as well as program staff interactions
- Ensure all families are notified of the opportunity to participate in an annual survey of their experiences
- Ensure use of a variety of strategies to communicate with families and Community Partners such as semicolon newsletters, web pages, family conferences, orientation and other public events, individual conversations, etc.
- Ensure staff have professional relationships with agencies and organizations that enhance the program's capacity to meet the needs and interests of children and families

*PREVIEW: SY 25-26 and Beyond

Policies and procedures established in SY24-25 continue

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL QUALITY STANDARDS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

SY 24-25

Professional development hours must align with the following competency areas.

Competency Areas

1. Child growth and development, and learning
2. Child observation and assessment
3. Family and community partnerships
4. Social-emotional health and development promotion
5. Health, safety, and nutrition
6. Professional practice
7. Teaching practices

*PREVIEW: SY 25-26 and Beyond

Beginning July 1, 2025

Within 12 months of employment, all staff responsible for the direct care of eligible children must complete annually:

- **4 hours** of professional development in social-emotional health and development promotion, including;
 - 1 hour of training in trauma-informed practices specific to their role.
- **2 hours** of professional development in teaching practices
- **2 hours** of professional development in family and community partnerships including;
 - 1 hour of training in suspension and expulsion practices

Effective July 1, 2026

- Within 12 months of employment, instructional supervisors must complete annually:
- **3 hours** of professional development in child observation and assessment, and teaching practices, including:
 - 1 hour of training in child observation and assessment
 - 1 hour of training in teaching practices

Note: Educators required to complete both the all-staff and instructional supervisor professional development can use the same hours to fulfill both, provided all specific requirements are met.

COLORADO UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL QUALITY STANDARDS

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

It is likely providers are already meeting some of the requirements listed above and simply need to ensure they are able to align their current practices with the vision and expectations of UPK. To align practices and ensure standards are met CDEC will offer the following support

UPK Resource Bank	<p>The UPK Resource Bank is intended to act as a repository to include a collection of supports such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toolkits• Self-assessments• Templates• Training, and other resources for use by participating preschool providers• Preschool curricula and other approved educational approaches <p>The resources created as part of the Resource Bank will be useful to providers as they work to meet UPK quality standards</p>
CO Shines	<p>CO Shines offers Provider Hub where you can access resources on the state's QRIS, licensing, and professional development (PDIS), and you can update your operational status. Within CO Shines there are often grant opportunities posted to support quality improvement work that providers can utilize to work towards compliance with UPK quality standards</p>
LCOs	<p>LCOs are required to have a community plan for early childhood as part of that plan, they will include details about how they will work with providers and local entities to support the quality improvement work of all early childhood providers in their catchment area. As a result of this planning, LCOs will be knowledgeable about the local resources available for providers to meet UPK quality standards and are a great place for providers to get support and connect to resources.</p>

2025-26 Calendar Announcement



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2025-26 Calendar Announcement



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We are excited to announce our planned schedule for the 2025-26 school year. This updated system, developed in collaboration with extensive input and feedback from providers, families, and stakeholders, aims to deliver a schedule that even more closely matches the needs of our partners and families.

What you can expect for the 2025-26 school year

In reflecting on our 2024-25 school year learnings, we recognized the need to adjust our timelines to ensure we were more closely aligning to the existing schedules our partners and families expect. We also saw our three pathways for enrollment really working, allowing us to recognize and respond to the unique needs of families through pre-registration, general application, and direct enrollment processes. For the 2025-26 school year you will notice a timeline that achieves that goal and will ultimately give our partners and families more certainty earlier in the year.

2025-26 Calendar Announcement



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Provider Seat & Program Set Up Dates

- **October 15 - November 8:** Program setup forms uploaded to the Provider Portal. Forms entered anytime after November 8 will be uploaded at the beginning of the new year (January 2025).

Pre-Registration:

- **December 17 - February 3:** Pre-registration application window for families requesting Continuity of Care placements, sibling attending or child of employee.
- **December 17 - February 3:** Providers will receive matches each day for eligible family registrations, and will be able to accept or decline placements.
- **February 3 - 10:** Families must accept pre-registration matches.

Family Matching:

- **December 17 - February 5:** Registration through upk.Colorado.gov opens for families.
- **Feb 4 - Feb 9:** Providers can adjust the number of seats and program through the provider portal in preparation for matching rounds.
- **February 10:** First family-to-provider matching round runs.
- **February 12 - February 21:** Providers review and accept or decline matches.
- **February 24:** Families notified of first round matches. Families must accept or decline by March 3.
- **March 10:** Second matching round runs.
- **March 12 - March 21:** Providers review and accept or decline matches.
- **March 24:** Families notified of second round matches. Families must accept or decline by March 31.

2025-26 Calendar Announcement



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Non-IEP Direct Enrollment:

- **April 1 until the end of the 2025-26 school year:** Direct enrollment for non-IEP families directly through providers.

IEP Direct Placement:

- **March through the end of the 2025-26 school year:** Special Education Administrative Units (AUs) and school districts will request placement of students in accordance with their IEPs and CDEC will support direct upload of those identified placements. Providers will accept matches within 2 weeks of receiving a match; families will have until the start of the school year to accept matches.
- **December through the end of the 2025-26 school year:** As soon as a family submits their application and is assigned to an AU, the AU can place the student into a program using the Program ID through the AU Portal.

Next Steps

As we get closer to the release of the application and the start of the pre-registration phase, CDEC and JI will share detailed instructions about each pre-registration process and the actions required of each partner in the program. On December 17th, families can start browsing providers and review their eligibility for the program at upk.colorado.gov.

Provider Profiles



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Special Virtual Training on Profile Set up

JI will be hosting a special training with marketing experts to assist providers in setting up the best profile possible!

When: December 5 at 6:00 pm

Who: Any UPK providers who would like tips and support in setting up their profile to draw the attention of UPK parents/families!

Who is presenting? Angela McKibben, JI Communications Manager, Claire Sanderson, Marketing Manager at CPCD...giving children a head start. We will have one or two parents to let you know what they would like to see on your profile! And you can share with each other!



Provider Resources



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Provider Resources

- [2024-25 Provider Handbook](#)- Updated 9/16/2024
- [2024-25 Family Handbook](#)
- [CDEC Website](#) and the [Colorado Universal Preschool Newsletter!](#)
- Stay connected with CDEC
 - [To sign up for updates or to access your subscriber preferences, click this link](#)





JI Website: www.jointinitiatives.org/upk

JI UPK and Provider Newsletters - sign up on the JI web page

JI Roundtables held monthly

And...our wonderful people: Heather, Karla and Noreen



Questions?



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

