



COLORADO

Department of Early Childhood

Free Universal Preschool for Fall 2023

Apply Now!

Universal Preschool (UPK) Colorado will pay for **every four-year-old child** in the year before they are eligible for Kindergarten to attend a minimum of a half-day of preschool for the 2023 - 2024 school year. **Some three-year-olds** will also qualify for free part-time preschool.

Who is eligible?

1. If your child is in their **year before they are eligible for Kindergarten** (will be at least four-years-old by 10/1/2023), they will qualify for up to a half-day (15 hours per week) of preschool. If your child also has at least one qualifying factor (listed on the back), you may be eligible for additional hours.
2. If your child is **three-years-old** (will be at least three-years-old by 10/1/2023) and meets at least one of the qualifying factors, they may also be eligible for part-time (10 hours per week) preschool funding.

How do I find a preschool provider?

Go to upk.colorado.gov and you will be able to search what providers are available based on where you live and where you work. During the application you will be able to select your top five providers and rank them. All types of providers will be in the system from school districts to child-care centers to licensed home facilities. You will be asked if your child is already enrolled at a provider, has a sibling in a provider's care or if a parent is employed by the provider - if any of these are true, you will receive priority to match with that provider.

When do I need to apply?

The application opens on January 17th and will continue to be accepted throughout the year. All of the families that apply before February 14th will be a part of the first batch of applications to be matched with their chosen providers. You do not need to apply on January 17th to be "first in line." This will allow for a more equal opportunity for families to match with providers of their choice. **In order to have the best chance of being matched with your preferred provider you should apply before February 14th.** Applications will continue to be accepted after February 14th and matched with providers on a rolling basis throughout the year.

What happens after I apply?

Starting on February 15th the system will work to match families with their preferred providers and shortly thereafter you will receive an offer from the provider you matched with which will guarantee your child a spot.

There is limited funding for additional hours for four-year-olds with qualifying factors and three-year-old spots so apply before February 14th for the best chance of securing these dollars.

Apply Now! upk.colorado.gov

What if I need more than 15 hours per week of preschool but don't meet the qualifying factors?

You will still be able to enroll in a program of your choosing and the first 15 hours per week will be free and then you can pay for the additional hours or often the program can work with you to see if you might qualify for other programs to help subsidize the cost. You will be able to review the costs of each program on their page in the application program and decide which program is best for your family.

What are the qualifying factors?

- A household income of less than 270% of the 2023 Federal Poverty Guidelines, when you go to apply, the application will walk you through your household size and tell you what 270% means for your family in terms of dollars. As an example, for a family of four it will be \$74,925.
 - If your income is lower than 270% you will need to provide proof of your family's income, there are many ways you will be able to do this and a list is provided below.
- Your child has an Individualized Education Plan also known as an IEP
- Your child is a dual language learner and the primary language spoken in the home is not English
- Your child is currently in the custody of a state supervised and county administered foster care home or in non-certified kinship care
- Your child identifies as homeless or lacking an adequate nighttime residence

What can I use to prove my income?

You will only need to show proof if your family income is less than 270% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. At the end of the application you will need to upload proof of your income. If you don't have it when you first apply you will be able to log back in and add it to your application.

- If you have a job(s): Paycheck stub or pay envelope that shows the amount and how often pay is received; letter from employer stating gross wages and how often you are paid; or, if you work for yourself, business or farming papers, such as ledger or tax books.
- If you receive Social Security, Pensions, or Retirement: Social Security retirement benefit letter, statement of benefits received, or pension award notice.
- If you receive Unemployment, Disability, or Worker's Compensation: Notice of eligibility from State employment security office, check stub, or letter from the Worker's Compensation office.
- If you receive TANF Payments: Benefit letter from Colorado Human Services office.
- If you receive: Child Support or Alimony: Court decree, agreement, or copies of checks received.
- Military Housing Privatization Initiative: Letter or rental contract showing that your housing is part of the Military Privatized Housing Initiative.
- For All Other Income (Such as Rental Income): Information that shows the amount of the income, name of the person who received the income, the date it was received, and how often it was received.
- If you do not have income, you can include a brief note explaining how you provide food, clothing, and housing for your household, and when you expect an income.

What if my child has a disability?

All children are eligible to receive universal preschool services. If your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), partnering with your local school district is essential in ensuring aligned resources. School districts have responsibility for ensuring a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in accordance with IDEA and ECEA. If your child does not have an IEP, and you have concern of a potential developmental delay, go to www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/childfinddirectory for information on next steps.

Need Help? Contact your Local Coordinating Organization
<https://cdec.colorado.gov/colorado-universal-preschool/find-my-lco>