



COLORADO
Department of Education

Office of the Commissioner
201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203-1799

July 31, 2023

Dear Superintendents and BOCES Directors

I wanted to thank everyone I was able to connect with at CASE last week. It was great to see you all and learn together in a beautiful setting.

I also wanted to make sure that you all received this message from the Colorado Department of Early Childhood. It contains lots of important information about Universal Preschool. If you have any questions about the information, please reach out to your LCO or the UPK team directly at cdec_upkcolorado@state.co.us . You can also email me, and I will help connect you to the correct people to answer your questions.

Thank you!

Susana Córdova
Commissioner
Colorado Department of Education

July 28, 2023

Dear Universal Preschool Colorado Partners,

Thank you for your continued partnership on the implementation of Universal Preschool Colorado (UPK). **You are receiving this communication because you lead an organization or have a role in the enrollment, placement, and education of preschool students.** This group includes Superintendents, BOCES Directors, Administrative Units, Early Childhood Directors, Special Education Directors, Universal Preschool Colorado participating providers, Local Coordinating Organizations, and advocacy groups. Please forward this email and attached information to anyone else in your district or administrative unit that shares these



responsibilities and needs this information.

We are excited for the beginning of Universal Preschool this fall and know there is a lot of work to be done to prepare. Our goal is to provide more frequent information and communication about Universal Preschool in these busy weeks as school starts. To help you prepare, the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) has put together the following information:

Topics

- [Payment Process](#)
- [Future Matching Rounds](#)
- [Direct Placement of Students with and without IEPs](#)
- [Provider Process for Enrollment Verification](#)
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Payment Process

CDEC prioritizes ensuring payments to providers are accurate and timely. Providers are encouraged to reach out to their Local Coordinating Organizations (LCOs) or the UPK team directly throughout the year to answer specific questions and provide technical assistance.

Providers have received communication from MetrixIQ (the payment vendor) regarding the



provider payment process for UPK. To access an overview of the payment process and direction on who to contact, please click this link: [Payment Quick Reference](#).

On August 1, providers will receive their initial start-up payment based on their accepted matches and enrollment as of July 9. Providers will receive their first two payments based on matches made in BridgeCare before October 15. After that, monthly payments for the remainder of the school year will be based on the number of students who are enrolled and verified, as explained in the payment reference guide (linked above). Please see the payment schedule below.

Payment Schedule	
Payment Date	Includes enrollments as of...
August 1, 2023	July 9
September 8, 2023	August 15 <u>and</u> late enrollments from July 10-August 15 (full-month rate)*
October 6, 2023	September 15 <u>and</u> late enrollments from August 16-25 (half-month rate)
November 8, 2023	October 15 <u>and</u> late enrollments from September 16-25 (half-month rate)
December 8, 2023	November 15 <u>and</u> late enrollments from October 16-25 (half-month rate)
January 8, 2024	December 15
February 8, 2024	January 15
March 8, 2024	February 15
April 8, 2024	March 15
May 8, 2023	April 15

**Payments are structured to retroactively pay for students who did not enroll before the previous month's data was reported. Providers who are published for UPK between July 10*



and August 15 will be eligible for a full monthly August payment on the delayed schedule if children are in an accepted or enrolled status.

If you have questions about provider payments, please contact coupkpayments@metrixiq.com.

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Future Matching Rounds

Responsive enrollment rounds are now rolling every week to get children placed ASAP! We recognize many new families will be reaching out for back-to-school information; having access to the application in person with your direct enrollment guidance will ensure a match that week.

Each weekly round for the 2023-2024 school year starts on Monday and follows this cadence:

- Weekly Deferred Acceptance Algorithm (DAA) (a technology standard to matching solutions) run
- Matches are sent to providers
- Three-day provider review period
- Matches are sent to families
- Family review and acceptance period

The next round will start on July 31 as follows:

- July 31 - Weekly Deferred Acceptance Algorithm (DAA) run

- July 31, 8 a.m. - Matches are sent to providers
- July 31-August 2 - three-day provider review period
- August 4 - Matches are sent to families
- August 4-10 - Family review and acceptance period

The round after that will start on August 7 as follows:

- August 7 - Weekly Deferred Acceptance Algorithm (DAA) run
- August 7, 8 a.m. - Matches are sent to providers
- August 7-9 - 3-day Provider review period
- August 11 - Matches are sent to families
- August 11-17 - Family review and acceptance period

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Direct Placement of Students with and without an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Districts can make changes within a district by following these steps:

- **For students without an IEP:** Connecting with our [Local Coordinating Organization \(LCO\)](#) to align a child without an Individualized Education Program to the new program.
- **For students with an IEP:** AUs should request a placement as soon as known with CDEC securely through this [IEP Placement Request Form](#). All requests will be honored and responded to within two business days. However, the AU requesting the



placement can begin serving the student immediately, even if the request has not been responded to by CDEC. This form also can be utilized for any other requested modifications such as adding students, or correcting or updating students' information, except for personally identifiable information, which is protected. To do this, AUs should utilize the "other" field in the form.

- If your AU has not already reviewed all selections of families on your list of students with IEPs in your geographic area, please start by reviewing the program selected by the family and making any requested changes using the process described above. The UPK placement for each child with an IEP should be reviewed and verified by the AU. The AU may request a different placement that aligns with the IEP and where the IEP can be implemented. Administrative units are the final decision makers on the location of where a student with an IEP should be placed to ensure consistency with the IEP team's decision.
- We know that the placement information from AU to CDEC will be ongoing, therefore the AU reports described below include the Child ID to allow you to communicate and request a placement with CDEC securely through the [AU Reassignment Request](#) form. All requests made through the AU Reassignment Request form will be responded to within two business days.
- For children that are found eligible for an IEP and have not yet applied in the UPK system, the AU should support the family by applying in BridgeCare and selecting the provider where the child may receive their IEP services. Once the child's application is in BridgeCare, the child will then be viewable on the "Children with IEP" report. Should further placement changes be needed, the AU can use the Child ID to communicate and request a placement with CDEC securely through the AU Reassignment Request form.





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Provider Process for Enrollment Verification

Providers must complete an enrollment verification form in BridgeCare for each child, which includes confirmation of the date of birth and Colorado residency, by September 15. In response to providers, the form has been simplified for efficiency. Providers will only need to complete this once per child. This will ensure accurate payment and can be adjusted on a monthly basis based on changes to enrollment.

Providers will receive payment for all children in accepted and enrolled status for the months of August and September, even if the Enrollment Verification Form has not yet been completed. You have until September 15 to complete the Enrollment Verification Form for each child attending your program. Through September 15, payment will be made based on acceptance. After September 15, payment will be made on enrollment. CDEC will give additional time to complete the verification as needed. Please email cdec_upkcolorado@state.co.us if you need additional time to complete the Enrollment Verification Form for your student(s).

This Universal Preschool Provider Guide contains additional details on the process: [UPK Provider Guide: How to Enroll a Child 7.24.23](#). If you have any questions about the enrollment process, please contact your [Local Coordinating Organization \(LCO\)](#).

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Universal Preschool Guidebook

It is our priority to communicate as early and often as possible with you. For now, you can find helpful resources [on the CDEC provider page](#), reach out to your LCO, or contact us at cdec_upkcolorado@state.co.us. Questions, as well as feedback, are both welcome. Next month, we will share the compiled and finalized materials, based on your feedback, and will publish them into a Universal Preschool Guidebook. This guidebook will be updated regularly with new information, in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education. CDEC will also communicate with the relevant partners when updates are made.

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Ongoing BridgeCare Enhancements

The UPK team continues to work alongside BridgeCare to maximize functionality in line with current funding levels, technology capabilities, and legal obligations. CDEC is working closely with BridgeCare users to make ongoing improvements to the system in response to user experience needs. This feedback has been incredibly valuable in identifying both short- and long-term improvements. Recent enhancements include data development in the provider view, revised family application language, translation updates, seat verification, placement processes, and disaggregated communications.

Stakeholder feedback has also informed the statement of work UPK is currently building for year two (SY 2024-2025). There is exciting potential for year two in BridgeCare to ensure ongoing enhancements. Examples of these considerations include: pre-population of students with IEPs prior to matching, defined seats by program including for students with an IEP so that only those children can be matched, business level access, AU task input, more robust data dashboards, a resource library, and additional needs that may arise. We are looking



forward to our continued partnership with families and providers to develop the best system possible improvements.

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Community Engagement/Advisory Groups

CDEC is developing several advisory groups, including spaces for school districts, community providers, preschool educators, regional and state partners, and families to work directly with the UPK team. We are excited about this new structure as it allows for more direct engagement on relevant topics to the groups than previous state-wide town halls. The groups are designed to ensure regular updates are shared through various communication channels and to allow community input into the development of UPK Colorado. Advisories will meet monthly in year one with facilitation by the CDEC team. Each advisory group will include equitable representation from stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive discussion about the varying needs of preschool administrators, educators, and families from around the state. Representatives to the groups will include families, preschool providers (both community and district), caregivers and educators, school board members, superintendents, special education administrators and educators, business officials, ECE administrators, BOCES representatives, Head Start representatives, Colorado Department of Education representatives and others. Advisory representatives will help the UPK team gain new insights and advice to solve problems or explore new opportunities by stimulating robust, high-quality conversations. **CDEC will be reaching out to stakeholders in early August via email about engagement with the various advisory groups.**

In addition to the new advisory groups, CDEC will host Regional Town Halls, led by the [Local Coordinating Organizations](#) (LCO), on a monthly basis to maintain regular engagement with



local voices and ensure we are meeting the varying needs of regional communities. The Regional Town Hall agendas will align with the advisory group agendas so that all parties are receiving appropriate updates and engaging with the UPK team regularly.

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District/AU Reports and Guidance

In our work with stakeholders around Universal Preschool implementation, there was a request for access to lists of (1) more information about students whose parents identified as having an IEP who reside in the geographic boundaries of an administrative unit and (2) students that requested a district in the matching process but did not end up enrolled in the district. CDEC has collaborated with BridgeCare to create reports responsive to both these requests.

For Administrative Units: A report was requested by Administrative Units (AU) that provides names of all children residing within school district and AU boundaries who have attested to an IEP regardless of a family's location choice (including non-school district providers), along with their placement and status. This report is already available in BridgeCare to the AU Directors of Record and is designed to give real-time updates to AUs on the status of the placement process with CDEC and to support school district collaboration for program decisions. (See information [above](#) about direct placements of students with IEPs for further guidance on using this report.)

The assigned contact for each Administrative Unit will receive a separate communication on Friday, July 28 from CDEC with instructions on how to access this report from BridgeCare.



For School Districts: School districts have requested a report that lists the name of children whose parents chose the district as their first choice. This information is intended to help streamline the placement process. For ease of access, that report will be delivered to each School District UPK enrollment contact via email notification with access to a secure Google link by Friday, July 28 for immediate access that can be downloaded without needing to log in to BridgeCare. The one-time report includes matching data from February 27 through July 27. School districts may request updated reports with information after July 27 from their LCO.

Districts will also receive the [School District Report User Guide](#) on how to effectively navigate the report. The school district report and user guide will be shared in the AU folder view noted above. Details on the report will be included in the email notification.

The CDEC team is so grateful for your ongoing partnership and collaboration as we navigate the inaugural year of Universal Preschool. Together, we are providing at least 10 hours of high quality, free preschool services to 37,000 children across the state, setting children of all backgrounds up to success and saving families an average of \$600 each month! This is an incredible feat and we are so excited to continue working alongside you all to fulfill our shared mission of delivering an early childhood system that supports the care, education, and well-being of all Colorado's young children, their caregivers, and early childhood professionals.

If you have any questions about the information above please reach out to your LCO or the UPK team directly at cdec_upkcolorado@state.co.us.

