

# Colorado Preschool Program Handbook

Note: This handbook relies on active links to documents and web-based resources. It is updated on a regular basis. You are encouraged to use the online version so that you are accessing the most up-to-date version and can benefit from active content.

Updated September 2018



The purpose of this handbook is to assist district advisory council members, CPP coordinators, administrators, and local school boards in meeting statutory requirements for CPP implementation and to provide high-quality services to young children and their families.

This handbook reflects what is required by CPP statute, the CPP rules and regulations and the Colorado Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education Services. CDE Regional Preschool Specialists monitor these elements of CPP participation and are available to provide technical assistance for school districts.

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## Overview

The Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) is a state-funded early childhood education program administered by the Colorado Department of Education. CPP provides the opportunity for eligible children to attend half-day or full-day preschool or full-day kindergarten (through the Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement positions). Children who are eligible for CPP are expected to be placed in high-quality early childhood programs. These programs may be located in school district settings, local child care centers, community preschools or Head Start programs including early childhood programs located on tribal lands.

Local school districts and their preschool district advisory councils manage CPP. Each participating school district is given a predetermined number of half-day positions to serve eligible children. Two types of positions can be allocated to districts: CPP positions which can be used to serve eligible preschoolers and ECARE positions which can be used to serve preschoolers or to provide full-day opportunities for eligible kindergarteners. Two half-day positions can be combined to create full-day opportunities for preschool children with very high needs.

Children are determined eligible for CPP based on significant family risk factors present in their lives. These risk factors have been shown to be associated with later challenges in school. School district staff members engage with families to gather information about children's development and learning. They also ask families about challenges they and their child may have experienced. If a child is found eligible and the school district program has positions available, the staff will work with the family to arrange a program location and start date.

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## History of the Colorado Preschool Program

CPP began as the Colorado Preschool Project in 1988 when it was authorized by the Colorado General Assembly to serve 2,000 four and five-year-olds in need of language development. The General Assembly created this program in recognition of the need to adequately prepare children who are at risk for future academic failure. Supporting these children at an early age has the potential to result in lower dropout rates, less dependence on public assistance and less involvement in criminal activities. Funding was provided to establish quality early childhood education programs in the year before attending kindergarten and to implement activities and supports to strengthen families and support them as participants in their child's education.

In 1992 the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 92-189, which resulted in the continuation of the Colorado Preschool Program as a permanent program. This bill also expanded the target population to not only include children in need of language development, but also children

“who lack overall learning readiness due to significant family risk factors” and children being served by Human Services as neglected or dependent children.

The number of children and school districts participating has increased significantly since the program began. In 2013 the Colorado legislature created a new kind of CPP position. The Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement (ECARE) positions allow districts the flexibility to provide half-day preschool, full-day preschool or full-day kindergarten. In 2013 and 2014, 7,200 ECARE positions were added by the General Assembly. In 2018, an additional 1,000 positions expanded the program, bringing the total possible number of children who could be served in the program to 29,360.

The number of children who can be served in the Colorado Preschool Program is capped at a level set by the State Legislature. When the Legislature funds an expansion of CPP, school districts wishing to participate must submit an application to the Colorado Department of Education. A review panel evaluates each district’s need and application quality and then makes a decision on whether districts qualify for CPP and how many positions they will receive.

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## CPP Governing Documents: Statute, Rules and Standards

### Statute

The Colorado Preschool Program Act (22-28-101 through 22-28-110) is the law that guides the implementation of the Colorado Preschool Program. The Act is published annually in bound volumes, called the Session Laws of Colorado. It is also compiled, edited and published online by [LexisNexis in their Colorado Legal Resources website](#).

### Rules

The Colorado State Board of Education (SBE) is charged with developing rules and regulations that support implementation of the CPP Act. Board Rules and Regulations for the Colorado Preschool Program are posted here:

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cpp/download/cppdocs/bdregs\\_301-32.pdf](http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cpp/download/cppdocs/bdregs_301-32.pdf)

### Program Standards

The General Assembly placed strong emphasis on the quality of early childhood programs and services and the role of high-quality programming in giving children a greater chance of success in school. The CPP Act required the Colorado Department of Education to develop program standards for CPP (22-28-108 91) (A)(C.R.S.) Programs must demonstrate their capacity to deliver high-quality, developmental appropriate services as measured by these standards, which are defined in the [Colorado Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education Services](#).

The Quality Standards are based on well-established national guidance on high-quality programming such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Accreditation Criteria and Procedures of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, and the Head Start Performance Standards.

The Quality Standards are meant to be comprehensive in scope and cover the full range of components essential to a high-quality program. They address elements such as environment, curriculum, staffing patterns, interaction among staff and children, health and safety, nutrition and family/staff partnership. These Quality Standards are meant to be commonly applied across all programs receiving state funds. It is important that the preschool district advisory council and all providers of CPP implement the Quality Standards and be familiar with the available supporting resources.

The Quality Standards were developed as a working document and self-assessment tool to help school districts implement quality programs. They should be used by coordinators, teachers and council members. CDE preschool team staff developed the Preschool and Kindergarten Quality Walkthrough for Classrooms Serving Children Funded by CPP/ECARE. It is a condensed version of the Quality Standards that district councils are encouraged to use for classroom observations.

**Resources:**

- [Colorado Quality Standards](#)
- [Preschool and Kindergarten Quality Walkthrough for Classrooms Serving Children Funded by CPP/ECARE](#)

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## Academic Standards

While the Quality Standards guide programs in how to implement a high-quality preschool program, the Colorado Academic Standards detail what preschool learners should know and be able to do by the end of their preschool experience. The 2018 standards revision incorporates the [Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines](#).

**Resources:**

[Link to 2020 CDE Academic Standards](#)

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## School District Participation

School district participation in the Colorado Preschool Program is voluntary. Currently 175 of the 179 Colorado school districts and the Charter School Institute participate. Interested districts who are not currently participating in CPP must submit an application to the Colorado Department of Education. Applications are distributed to school districts when an expansion of the Colorado Preschool Program is authorized by the General Assembly. When there is an

expansion of CPP, priority is given in the allocation process to those districts not currently participating in the program.

### Criteria for Selecting School Districts for Participation in CPP

CPP serves children who are at risk for educational failure. When considering which districts are eligible to participate in CPP, the department is directed in statute to review:

- Dropout rates and graduation rates within the district
- Numbers of qualifying, un-served children
- Test scores of children kindergarten and the primary grades within the district
- Accreditation data and district performance data
- Demographic data

### Ability to Collaborate

It is also the intent of the Colorado General Assembly to fund those districts that demonstrate collaboration within the community in order to assure effective use of resources in the program. Priority is given in the selection process to those districts that can:

- Create a full day, quality care and education program through existing resources such as Head Start and private preschool businesses located in the community.
- Coordinate district preschool programs with family support services
- Develop a quality, comprehensive plan for partnering with families
- Provide families with additional options that meet their needs
- Collaborate with public and private child care agencies located in the school district
- Demonstrate a high degree of community involvement

Per CDE guidance, community partnerships once formed should be maintained whenever possible. Pulling allocations from partner preschools to supplement district program enrollment is not an appropriate action.

#### Resources:

- [CDE Guidance Memo on Community Partnerships](#)

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## District Advisory Council (DAC) and Local School Board Governance

Each school district is required by statute to establish a preschool district advisory council (DAC). These councils are charged with the design and implementation of a high-quality program. The DAC ensures that decisions about the program are made locally and that community stakeholders have opportunity for input.

The DAC is charged with running the district CPP and is beholden to the local school board.



The local school board has final responsibility for the CPP Annual Report, applications to expand CPP when available, and for operation and maintenance of CPP within the school district. No action taken by the council is final until approved by the school board. 22-28-105 C.R.S.

## Other Responsibilities of the Local School Board

In conjunction with the DAC, the local school board will:

- Approve the initial school district plan, created by the DAC, for identifying children in the school district that are eligible for participation in the Colorado Preschool Program.
- Approve the plan, created by the DAC, for operating the Colorado Preschool Program, including where children should be served, such as a district preschool program, Head Start, private preschool program and/or a combination of programs. (Children who are served with CPP funding, in contracted preschool sites, are considered school district students.)
- Through the request for proposal process, approve the specific community preschool program(s) that the school district will contract with to provide preschool programming for children who qualify for CPP funding. These programs complete an application and are recommended by the DAC.
- Approve the contract for services between the school district and community preschool provider.
- Approve the plan, created by the DAC, for coordinating the district's Colorado Preschool Program with:
  - extended day services.
  - family support services.
  - parent education program.
- Approve the plan, created by the DAC, for the annual evaluation of the preschool program.
- Assure that monies are spent in accordance with statute and state board rules.
- Assure that any fees charged to families receiving CPP funding, are considered and carefully approved.
- Appoint a CPP Coordinator as a representative of the school district in administering the CPP.

The CPP DAC advises the local school board in the implementation of the program, and as they do this, decisions about how the program operates reflect the unique needs and priorities of the community.

## DAC Membership

The following membership is mandated by the CPP Act:

- Two parents of children who qualify for CPP currently attending the district preschool program
- Two members of the business community
- Representatives from the following:
  - County or district health department

- Department of social services
- County agency involved in job services and training
- Publicly funded early childhood education agency located in the school district
- Privately funded child care center located in the school district
- Charter school located in district that has a preschool program

Members of the district preschool advisory council are appointed by the superintendent for two-year terms and may be reappointed by the superintendent. The district preschool advisory council should meet a minimum of six times per year. Each council should elect a chairperson who will serve a one-year term and may be re-elected for a second year.

## DAC Responsibilities

Statute charges the DAC with the following:

- Studying and assessing the need for CPP within the district
- Advising in the development of a plan for identifying eligible children.
- Recommending to the local school board whether the program should be provided by the district, by publicly or privately funded providers, or a combination
- At least every two years, developing and distributing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to local publicly funded early childhood education agencies and privately funded centers to determine who will provide program services and recommend qualified providers to the local school board.
- Participating in the development of proposals for expansion requests.
- Identifying and recommending community-specific eligibility factors that are not duplicative of the legislated factors. These must be documented by current, peer-reviewed research.
- Providing information and data to CDE for reports on the program.
- Developing a comprehensive plan for delivery of services addressing the areas of program quality, staff development, family involvement, family support services, and program evaluation as a part of the Annual Report process.
- Visiting all settings in which CPP eligible children are enrolled at least twice per year, to monitor the quality of the program based on national and state quality standards and to identify strengths and areas for growth.
- Developing written policies to document and reflect the decisions made by the council.

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## CPP Coordinators

School districts need to identify a coordinator to administer CPP. According to D-2 of the Quality Standards, an early childhood educator should be employed to direct the educational program of children birth through eight. This person is seen as the expert of early childhood programming for the school district. The coordinator should have responsibility to make decisions and provide oversight for CPP programming in the school district, including kindergarten ECARE where applicable.

## Qualifications of CPP Coordinators

The qualifications of an early childhood educator designated as the CPP coordinator are a baccalaureate degree in Early Childhood Education/ Child Development and at least three years of full-time teaching experience with young children and/or a graduate degree in ECE/CD. Depending on the size and needs of the district, this individual may be the classroom teacher, early childhood coordinator, building principal with early childhood background and experience, or center director. The CPP coordinator is generally an employee of the school district and represents the school district in overseeing implementation of CPP in district and community partner sites.

## Responsibilities of CPP Coordinators

CPP Coordinator roles should be filled not only by a qualified early childhood professional, but the role must be filled by an individual with the time to perform the many duties that are expected.

The responsibilities of CPP Coordinators include the following:

- Act as liaison to Colorado Department of Education
  - Submit Annual Report and Re-Application in the Spring
  - Attend pertinent CDE Preschool Meetings
  - Coordinate technical assistance and monitoring visits from CDE
  - Respond to requests for information from CDE
  - Implement program improvements per the CDE monitoring and technical assistance
- Act as liaison to the school district
  - Report to school board, school administrators and other personnel
  - Coordinate an accurate reporting of October Count
  - Coordinate an accurate reporting of CPP/ECARE (including kindergarten, where appropriate) funding
  - Coordinate the development of transition plans to kindergarten
- Facilitate the child enrollment process
  - Initiate process to inform families of the availability of the program
  - Coordinate enrollment process with Child Find personnel
  - Organize and implement the CPP/ECARE enrollment process
  - Verify children's eligibility for the program
  - Maintain files that meet CDHS licensing
  - Maintain records documenting children's eligibility for CPP/ECARE
- Facilitate the work of the DAC
  - Support the superintendent in recruiting members for the district preschool advisory council
  - Establish regular meeting times and locations

- Oversee process for monitoring quality in classrooms where children funded by CPP/ECARE are served
- Support the district preschool advisory council in facilitating an RFP process to identify community partner sites at least once every two years
- Support the Classrooms where CPP/ECARE funds are spent
  - Ensure a high-quality preschool program by assisting programs in implementation of the Colorado Quality Standards
  - Identify training needs of staff
  - Address staff training needs
  - Ensure preschool classrooms meet the appropriate licensing requirements of the Colorado Department of Human Services (Note that this requirement does not exclude early childhood programs located on tribal lands from participating in CPP. These programs will be licensed as required by their respective tribal governments.)
  - Ensure that Individual Learning Plans are developed for each child funded by CPP in accordance with the description for School Readiness Plans in CAP4K legislation
- Ensure family partnering and support
  - Ensure families sign family partnering agreement
  - Identify family support services
  - Facilitate family partnering and support activities
- Study, document and report program effectiveness:
  - Support valid and reliable Results Matter implementation in all classrooms serving children funded by CPP/ECARE by making sure teachers have current inter-rater reliability, reviewing checkpoint completion and developing a process for ongoing review of data
  - Initiate means to track child outcomes data for CPP graduates through elementary school
  - Support the district preschool advisory council in administering parent satisfaction surveys

**Resources:**

- [CPP Calendar of Coordinator Responsibilities by Month](#)
- [Coordinator Tool Kit](#)

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## Child Eligibility for Participation

The number of children who can be served in the CPP is capped at a level set by the General Assembly. It is the responsibility of the local preschool DAC to establish a clear policy for the determination of child eligibility. Because CPP is capped, it is important to have a well-planned process to ensure that the program serves children with the highest need.

Section 22-28-106 of the Colorado Revised Statutes defines the eligibility criteria for children who may be served in CPP. These guidelines include:

- Children must be three, four, or five years old and have eligibility factor(s) present in their lives.
  - If a child is served as a four or five year old, the child must be eligible for kindergarten the next year and have one eligibility factor present in their lives.
  - They may only participate in CPP for one year.
- If a child is served as a three year old and is two years away from kindergarten, the child must have three significant family risk factors in their life (listed below) that put him or her at risk of school failure.
- A child may participate in CPP for a second year if he or she continues to have risk factors present in his or her life.
- Children funded by CPP must be three, four, or five by October 1 of the school year.
- Four or five year olds must be eligible for kindergarten the following year and are not eligible for participation in the program for more than one year.

### Significant Family Risk Factors

The CPP Act calls out required significant family risk factors that must be in place for a child to be considered eligible for CPP funding. These factors are:

- Eligibility for free or reduced price meals
- Homelessness of the child's family
- An abusive adult residing in the home of the child
- Drug or alcohol abuse in the child's family (present or past)
- Either parent of the child was less than eighteen years of age and unmarried at the time of the birth of the child
- The child's parent or guardian has not successfully completed a high school education or its equivalent
- Frequent relocation by the child's family to new residences
- Poor social skills of the child
- Child in need of language development
- Receiving services from the Department of Human Services as a neglected or dependent child

The DAC may expand the list of eligibility factors in their community, but children still must qualify with the appropriate number of significant family risk factors defined in CPP statute (listed above). The DAC must be able to clearly demonstrate how the additional risk factors affect a child's ability to be successful in school. Current, peer-reviewed research

demonstrating the connection of the additional risk factor to school failure must be documented as part of the district's CPP Annual Report.

## Eligibility Determination Process

It is important to note the following requirements related to eligibility determination:

- Documentation of eligibility criteria must be on file for all children funded through CPP.
- The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must enter into an agreement with the program regarding their involvement in their child's education.
- A child who qualifies under IDEA as a child with a disability and thus eligible for a half day of preschool general education may be funded for an additional half day of programming if they meet the eligibility criteria of CPP. This additional CPP funding must be used to increase the hours of programming for the child.

Eligibility determination for participation in CPP is the responsibility of the school district, through the process developed by the DAC. Community partner programs whom the district contracts with to provide services should not be making eligibility determinations independently. Multiple methods should be used to determine a child's eligibility, and personnel trained in both district enrollment policy and in administering screening tools should conduct all aspects of the eligibility determination process. The process should be comprehensive and include a combination of approaches that may include:

- Family interviews
- Observations of children in natural settings
- Collection of demographic data
- Standardized developmental screenings, conducted prior to children's participation in preschool
- Vision and hearing screenings, preferably conducted prior to children's participation in preschool

Children should be determined eligible and families notified prior to attendance in the program. Many communities use the same screening tools for all children as part of a comprehensive developmental screening/application process. The results are used to determine eligibility for a variety of programs, such as CPP, Title I, and Head Start. A good screening process will also identify children who should be referred for a special education evaluation through Child Find due to a suspected disability. School districts are encouraged to conduct developmental, hearing and vision screening prior to children's attendance in preschool so that children, no matter what their funding source, with any needs requiring further intervention can be identified as quickly as possible. When hearing and vision screening cannot be conducted prior to enrollment it should be completed within a short time (e.g. up to 30 days) of enrollment.

The intent of CPP is for the children with the highest needs to receive services. Oftentimes, families in the most need are not proactively looking for preschool when registration begins in the spring, and may only think about the opportunity for preschool once school starts and older siblings return. Therefore, a "first come, first served" system for preschool enrollment is not

recommended by CDE as it is not equitable. Plan to reserve 10-25% of total CPP/ECARE positions for children identified as eligible in the fall (depending on size of community, number of children that typically show up in the fall, number of CPP positions, typical amount of children that move over the summer, etc.)

Here are some general requirements and recommendations around eligibility that should be discussed with the DAC to incorporate into your district's plan:

- All children should have a developmental screening completed, as well as intake paperwork, which includes documentation of the risk factors that make the child eligible.
- This information must include a completed Family Economic Survey or confirmation of Free and Reduced Lunch paperwork on file.
- Qualify children one year away from kindergarten in the spring first, along with highest need children who are two years away from kindergarten, if applicable. Depending on community need, consider qualifying four year-olds with at least two or more legislated risk factors in the spring.
- Children one year away from kindergarten must have at least one of the legislated significant family risk factors in order to qualify. Children who are two years away from kindergarten must have at least three of the legislated significant family risk factors in order to qualify. These risk factors must be documented.
- While a DAC has the power to add additional risk factors to qualify children, the required legislated significant family risk factors must also be in place.
- Children who are age eligible for kindergarten cannot receive CPP funding if they are attending preschool programming.
- Keep families informed of how your district's process works. If families do not qualify in spring, let them know that there will be another round to qualify children in the fall by an established deadline. This may make it difficult for families to plan, but because of the limited number of positions and the requirement that the most at-risk children are served, it is important to save positions for fall so that the children who are most at-risk for academic failure have access to CPP funding.

### **Free and Reduced Price Lunch:**

Each year the CPP office at CDE is asked to provide information to the Department of Human Services and the Governor's Office, regarding how many children funded in CPP are eligible for free and reduced price lunch. Per CDE memo, all programs should collect Free and Reduced Lunch eligibility data for each child, even if the child is not qualifying under this factor. The Family Economic Survey may be used in place of the free and reduced lunch form.

Documentation with income eligibility (or evidence of verification of the Free and Reduced Lunch form) should be kept in a central district location accessible by the CPP coordinator and available to CDE regional preschool specialists for audit during on-site visits.

When verifying children’s eligibility for free and reduced price meals, CPP coordinators should ensure that this information is also recorded in the school district’s October count.

**Resources:**

- [Free and Reduced Meal Resources from Nutrition Unit](#)
- [Free and Reduced Resources from School Finance/Auditing](#)
- [CDE Memo: Family Economic Data Survey for FY 2009-2010 Pupil Registration](#)
- [2018/19 Family Economic Survey](#)
- [Family Economic Survey Instructions](#)
- [CPP Eligibility Fact Sheet for File Audits](#)
- [CPP Child Eligibility Documentation Form](#)
- [CPP Coordinator Eligibility Tool Kit](#)

## U.S. Citizenship and CPP

The Supreme Court ruled in Plyler v. Doe that local school districts cannot deny admission to students who are not legally admitted into the United States. The court noted that such actions would impose a “lifetime of hardship on a discrete class of children not accountable for their disabling status. The stigma of illiteracy will mark them for the rest of their lives. By denying those children a basic education, we deny them the ability to live within the structure of our civic institutions, and foreclose any realistic possibility that they will contribute in even the smallest way to the progress of our Nation (457 U.S. 202)(1982)”

Students who are residents of a Colorado school district may not be denied admission to the public schools based on their lawful or unlawful immigration status. “Determination of legality of a student’s immigration status is not a duty of the local school district nor is it necessary in determining the residency of a child. Undocumented children have the same right to attend public schools as to U.S. citizens and permanent residents.” (Letter from the Commissioner of Education to Superintendents of Schools, Directors of BOCES, School Principals, and Other Interested Persons, January 1999).

**Resources:**

[Fact Sheet on Plyler v. Doe](#)

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## Documentation of Eligibility

Significant family risk factors may be documented the following ways:

Child must be 3,4, or 5 years of age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Child’s birth Certificate*</li><li>● Birth date from CPP application</li></ul>
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<p>Eligibility for free or reduced lunch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualifies for free and reduced meals program as verified by main district office or the Family Economic Survey (this documentation should be collected for all children whether or not they qualify under this criteria.)</li> <li>• Eligible for Head Start based on documented income.</li> </ul>
<p>Homelessness of the child’s family. (22-28-106 (1) (II) C.R.S.)</p> <p>According to the <a href="#">McKinney-Vento Act</a>, a homeless individual is one who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence which includes children and families who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share housing with friends or other families due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason</li> <li>• Live in motels, hotels, or campgrounds because they have no permanent housing</li> <li>• Live in emergency or transitional shelters like safe houses</li> <li>• Live on the streets, in parks, in abandoned buildings, or other accommodation unfit for habitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School District Homeless Liaison verification</li> <li>• Social Services or other agency reports</li> <li>• Family reports living situation (shared home due to housing loss or economic hardship, hotel/motel, shelter, campground) as documented by family interview or application</li> </ul> <p>If you need assistance with determining homelessness, contact your school district’s homelessness coordinator. A statewide index is located here:  <a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/homeless_liaisons">http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/homeless_liaisons</a></p>
<p><a href="#">An abusive adult</a> residing in the home of the child</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family reports abuse in the home as documented from family interview or application</li> <li>• Department of Human Services (DHS), school district or other agency report</li> <li>• Police/Court documentation of abusive adult in the home</li> <li>• Medical record points to abusive adult in the home</li> </ul>
<p>Drug or alcohol abuse in the child’s family (22-28-106 (1) (a.5) (IV) C.R.S)</p> <p>Abuse may be present or past.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family reports drug or alcohol abuse in the family as documented by family interview or application</li> <li>• DHS, school district or other agency report</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Police or Court report documents drug or alcohol abuse in family</li> </ul>
Either parent of the child was less than eighteen years of age and unmarried at the time of the birth of the child. (22-28-106 (1) (a.5) (V) C.R.S.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Family interview reveals parents were less than 18 and unmarried as documented by family interview or application</li> <li>● Birth certificate verification (a birth certificate is not required to be on file in order for a child to receive CPP funding)</li> <li>● DHS or other agency report</li> </ul>
The child’s parent or guardian has not successfully completed a high school education or its equivalent. (22-28-106 (1) (a.5) (VI) C.R.S.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Family interview revealed a parent or guardian did not complete high school or equivalent as documented by family interview or application</li> <li>● School District verification</li> </ul>
Frequent relocation by the child’s family to new residences (22-28-106 (1) (a.5) (VII) C.R.S.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parent has reported frequent relocations</li> <li>● DHS or School District have verified frequent relocations</li> <li>● Please note: the district advisory council should define “frequent” in accordance with their community.</li> </ul>
Poor social skills of the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Developmental screening results for social emotional document borderline or low social skills</li> <li>● Referred by physician or DHS for social skill concerns</li> <li>● Excluded from previous preschool or child care programs as documented by family interview or application</li> </ul>
In need of language development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Child is a Dual Language Learner as documented by district Home Language Survey</li> <li>● Developmental screening for language was borderline or below age expectations</li> </ul>
Receiving services from the department of human services pursuant to article 5 or title 26, C.R.S., as a neglected or dependent child (i.e. a child in foster care). (22-28-106 (1) (a) (II) C.R.S.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● DHS reports neglected or dependent status</li> <li>● Background Information and/or Documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Child was referred to CPP by DHS or another agency</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

This factor refers to children who are receiving “Child Welfare Services” from the Department of Human Services. These services include the provision of necessary shelter, sustenance, and guidance to or for child who are or who, if such services are not provided, are likely to become neglected or dependent.

- Child lives in a foster care situation or with guardian as documented by family interview or application

## Eligibility Documentation and Record Keeping

State regulations require that districts be able to verify that children participating in CPP are eligible. Each district will need to develop a method of record keeping that is appropriate based on the number of CPP children served, whether or not the children are served at one site or at multiple sites. It is important to keep in mind that information regarding children’s eligibility for participation in CPP is sensitive and should be kept confidential. Many school districts do not store these records in their CPP classroom files but instead keep eligibility documentation filed by cohort year in a secure location. This information should be readily available for auditing by your CDE Regional Preschool Specialist during a site visit.

Required items per child funded by CPP:

- Eligibility documentation form from [CPP Toolkit](#)
- Family Economic Survey or confirmation of Free and Reduced Lunch eligibility
- Screening results such as ASQ, DIAL 4, etc.
- Preschool Application containing eligibility information such as:
  - Birth date of child
  - Age of parents at birth of child
  - Living situation (homelessness, foster child)
  - Education status of parents
- Notes or form from parent interview or home visit
- Referrals from the County Department of Human Services or other agencies (exposure to domestic violence, drug use, foster child)

\*Note that it is not necessary to collect copies of birth certificates or children’s social security numbers for children to receive CPP funding.

### Resources:

- [CPP Eligibility Fact Sheet for File Audits](#)
- [Family Economic Survey](#)
- [Using CPP funding to increase preschool contact hours for children who qualify for special education](#)

## Program Requirements

### Licensing

Every classroom in which children receive CPP funding must have a valid child care site license from the Division of Child Care at the Department of Human Services (22-28-108 (1) (a) C.R.S). This license indicates the minimum health and safety standards have been followed. A license is required for any space where CPP services are delivered, including public school classrooms. If a school changes the location of its CPP, the new classroom space must also be licensed. If a school decides to open a preschool with the hopes of serving state-funded preschoolers, please be sure to submit your license number with the school code request. The Division of Child Care has staff available to work with you throughout this process at 1-800-799-5876 or 303-866-5948.

Preschool programs providing full day preschool programs (children are in attendance for more than five hours) need to have a “Child Care” license type. The “Preschool” license type is allowed for programs where children are in attendance for five hours or less per day.

The requirement for child care licensing by the Colorado Department of Human Services does not exclude early childhood programs located on tribal lands from participating in CPP. Tribal lands are sovereign nations and follow child care licensing rules as determined by their local tribal government.

**Resource:**

[Colorado Department of Human Services Child Care Licensing](#)

### What Is A High-Quality Program?

According to the U.S. Department of Education, a high-quality early childhood program provides a safe and nurturing environment while promoting the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children. High-quality early learning programs are crucial for helping children prepare for kindergarten and success later in school. Colorado Shines, the state Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), is a rating system in which quality early learning programs are determined. Colorado Shines rates basic health and safety at levels 1 and 2 of licensing. Levels 3-5 in Colorado Shines ratings indicates that a program has achieved a high-quality environment.

Additionally the state expectation for all classrooms funded by CPP/ECARE is that these classrooms are inclusive, meaning that children are not segregated by funding or perceived ability but instead are in classrooms that are as diverse as possible.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Data Center identifies Essential Indicators of Quality Preschool. They include:

- Positive relationships between teachers and children
- Sufficient materials and toys
- Communication - mutual listening, talking and responding, encouragement to use reasoning and problem-solving
- Daily opportunities for art, music & movement, science, math, block play, sand & water, and dramatic play
- Materials and activities that promote diversity
- Engaged families
- Group sizes are small and ratios are low
- Teachers and staff are qualified and compensated accordingly
- All staff are supervised and evaluated, and have opportunities for professional growth

While CDE does not endorse specific curricula, we do encourage districts to implement to fidelity a research-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum to close the achievement gap that may already exist when children with significant family risk factors begin preschool. Any curriculum choices should follow national standards and the Colorado Quality Standards.

#### Resources:

- [The Colorado Quality Standards for Early Care and Education](#)
- [Colorado Shines Licensing Information](#)
- [Preschool and Kindergarten Classroom Quality Walk-through Form](#) (PDF)
- IDEA Data Center: [It Starts at Preschool: Aligning 619 Activities with the B SIMR](#)
- [National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning Preschool Curriculum Consumer's Report](#)
- [NAEYC Program Standards for Curriculum](#)
- [Making High-Quality Environments Visible](#) (PDF)

#### Staff Qualifications

Preschool teachers are not required to hold a CDE educator license (C.R.S. 22-29-208 (3)). However preschool staff members who serve children funded by CPP must meet the Colorado Department of Human Services requirements for center-based staff or minimum qualifications established by tribal government licensing for early childhood programs located on tribal lands. In addition, the CPP Act requires that “teachers must be able to show that they have received education credits in the field of early childhood.” This can be done through a portfolio that demonstrates knowledge in:

- Early childhood development;
- Applying developmentally appropriate practice in the classroom as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children;
- Knowledge of cultural competence;
- Understanding family partnerships.

The CPP rules further indicate that if the teacher cannot demonstrate skills in the above areas, they must be supervised by someone who can, and they must be making progress in the areas of need as part of their staff development. (2228-R 6.06.07 C.C.R)

Early childhood programs participating in the Colorado Preschool Program must also demonstrate the capacity to deliver high-quality developmentally appropriate services as defined by the Colorado Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education Services. An important goal in the Quality Standards is that programs are staffed by adults who understand child development and who recognize and provide for children's needs. The Quality Standards in Section D states that:

- Staff who are in charge of a group of children should have at least a Child Care Professional Credential, Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) or an associate degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development.
- In cases where staff members do not meet the specified qualifications, a training plan and timeline, both individualized and program-wide, have been developed and is being implemented for those staff members.
- An early childhood educator is employed to direct the educational program of children birth through eight. The qualifications of an early childhood educator are a baccalaureate degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development and at least three years of full-time teaching experience with young children, and/or graduate degree in ECE/CD. This individual may be the classroom teacher, early childhood coordinator, building principal or center director. Please see the resource links below for more information.

**Resources:**

- [Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System](#) (PDIS)
- [CDHS Professional Certifications](#)
- [CDHS Rules Regulating Child Care Centers](#)

## Class Size

Preschool classrooms serving children eligible for CPP must limit class size to a maximum of 16 children with an adult-child ratio of one to eight (22-18-208 1.b.ii). One of the primary determinants of quality in early childhood programs is the quality of interactions between children and adults. This is particularly true when the program focuses on children whose early life experiences place them at risk for challenges in school and beyond. Responsive teaching and caregiving are only possible when staff members have sufficient time to interact meaningfully with each child in their care and to plan and carry out high-quality learning opportunities. When numbers are too high, adults are stretched too thin to be responsive to the individual needs of the children in their care.

## Service Hour Requirement

The CPP Act requires 360 contact hours a year or approximately 10 hours per week. (22-32-109 C.R.S) Classes are to be held for four half days, or the equivalent per week. The fifth half day or equivalent should be used for home visits, staff development or planning. (22-28-108 C.R.S.) It

is not appropriate to have children attend a single day per week for an extended-day schedule of 10 hours or more in order to meet the contact hour requirement for CPP. Children need down time to process new information between new learning experiences. They need opportunities to practice following predictable daily routines and to continue play schemes across multiple days. A more appropriate schedule would provide for 2 ½ to 3 hours of programming four days per week – Monday through Thursday or Tuesday through Friday. Offering a 3 ½ hour program on Monday, Wednesday and Friday would also offer young children consistency in their early learning program.

The CPP Act allows school districts to apply to CDE for authorization to serve a single child in preschool using two CPP half-day positions to fund a full-day program. The statute specifies that only 5% of the preschool children in CPP statewide may be funded in this way. As a result, there is a formal process for these requests and rounds of award in the spring and early fall. Full-day preschool opportunities should be reserved for those children who are most at risk for future academic failure.

Districts should use their CPP resources to serve as many eligible children as possible and ensure that the use of combined positions for children is limited to those with the highest needs and no other opportunity for full-day programming. This option should not be seen as a solution for lack of district supported transportation for preschoolers or a way to fill unused CPP positions.

The requirements when combining CPP positions to create a full day include:

- A minimum of 720 preschool contact hours must be provided per school year for an average of 20 hours per week
- An appropriate full day schedule that includes lunch, rest time, additional choice time (at least 30% of the day) and outdoor time.
- Combining of two CPP positions or CPP and Special Education to create a full day, should be reserved for children with the highest needs.
- Teachers must receive required planning time, which is an average of five hours per week.
- The full-day opportunity must be provided in the same program – the full-day slot may not be split between two programs or to serve a child in two part day programs

## Staff Planning Time

In each school district, the funding levels for CPP preschool are one-half of what is provided for a child in grades first through twelfth grades. While the preschool program must offer teacher-pupil contact time at a minimum of 360 hours per year, half-day kindergarten must operate a minimum of 450 hours per year. The 90 hour difference in the program requirements is to enable preschool teachers to attend staff training, provide home visits, assess children and do child planning based on those assessments. (C.R.S. 22-28-108 (1)(b)(III); C.C.R. 2254-R-1 2.06))

These requirements are also spelled out in State Board Rule 2228-R 6.04-Frequency of contact. Classes are to be held for four half days per week or the equivalent. The remaining one-half day is to be used for home visits, staff development, or planning. Funded non-pupil contact time was written into law to ensure that teachers have the time necessary to implement a quality program. Additionally, the requirement that children funded by CPP and early childhood special education be assessed for child outcomes reporting requires specific time for planning and teaming related to the data collection and use of data which adds a time burden on preschool teachers (SB 08-212).

Scheduling routine non-pupil planning time for preschool teachers is challenging. However, it is a necessary component of a high-quality preschool program, as well as required for compliance with CPP statute. The challenge of providing preschool teachers with adequate planning time increases when school districts transition to a four day school week. Finding planning time can also be challenging when preschools offer full day programming, five days a week. CPP District Advisory Councils and school district administration must work together to strategize solutions to meet this planning time requirement for both district and community partner programs.

Programs that receive CPP funding are required to keep a ratio of one adult for every eight children (2228-R 6.04). Each adult in the classroom is considered a teacher and has impact on children's learning and development. As such, it is recommended that teaching teams have funded non-pupil time together to support the needs of children in the classroom. Rest time does not count as funded non-pupil time, since some children may not sleep and must still be supervised by an adult in the classroom. Since teachers also need time and space to sanitize the classroom furnishings and materials, rotate classroom materials and set up the environment for learning on an ongoing, weekly basis, funded non-pupil time is the only solution to provide the basic foundations for high-quality preschool programming.

Preschool teachers have many responsibilities that increase their need for planning time beyond that of other teachers. Preschool teachers are often the CPP Coordinator and childcare director for their program and must follow and implement Colorado Child Care Licensing requirements, including handling enrollment documentation, meeting annual training requirements for health and safety, and supervision of assistant teaching staff. Preschool teachers are also required to receive 15 hours of training in early childhood education annually.

Preschool programs that receive CPP funding also have additional requirements beyond the 360 hours of per pupil contact time. The CPP Act requires that programs address quality, staff development, family involvement and family support services. Funded non-pupil time supports the staff's ability to implement all elements of a high-quality preschool program.

### **Individual Learning Plans**

Children enrolled in state-funded preschool are expected to have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that is informed by ongoing assessment of developmental and academic progress as well as input from families. The ILP sets desired outcomes or next steps for the child, specific



strategies or supports that the child may need and may also include transition strategies for children who will be moving on to kindergarten.

ILPs should be created through collaboration between teachers (general education and when appropriate, special education), families, and caregivers. Learning plans should address the preschool standards, as appropriate, and the knowledge and skill areas in which a student needs assistance to make progress. Automated ILP forms are included in the Results Matter assessment systems to help streamline this requirement and assure that the plan is connected to assessment results.

Please note, it is not recommended that goals for the ILP be simply chosen from a list of Results Matter assessment objectives as it is important to customize the plan to each child's strengths and needs. It is better to develop the goals first, and then align them to the assessment objectives as appropriate.

The ILP requirement is set out in two different state laws:

1. The CPP statute requires that an individual teaching plan is developed for each child. (22-28-108 (1) (b) (IV) C.R.S. and C.C.R.6.04) The plan shall include identification of the child's needs in the following areas:
  - (a) language
  - (b) cognition
  - (c) gross motor
  - (d) fine motor
  - (e) social skills/self-esteem
2. The more recent Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (Senate Bill 212 CAP4K) requires that each child in a publicly funded preschool and kindergarten program have an Individual School Readiness (ISR) plan that is informed by ongoing assessment of a child's progress in developmental and academic domains. The Individual School Readiness plan is the same as an ILP.

**Resource:**

[Individual Learning Plan Fact Sheet](#)

### Child Progress Monitoring

Child progress monitoring occurs through required participation in the Results Matter program's ongoing assessment tools, *GOLD*® by Teaching Strategies or the COR Advantage by HighScope. Full implementation of a Results Matter assessment tool meets multiple CPP requirements:

- Meets the requirement for multi-domain ongoing assessment to inform individual learning plans required by the CPP Act and CAP4K
- Helps inform individualized instructional planning

- Provides aggregate data to inform the annual CPP Legislative Report provided for in 22-28-112 C.R.S. which authorizes CDE to request from districts the information and data necessary to report to the Legislature the results of the CPP program
- Informs program evaluation and continuous improvement efforts

The data obtained through Results Matter is used to describe child progress and school readiness across specific developmental and academic domains including Social-Emotional, Language, Literacy, Math, Science, Creative Arts, Physical Development and Approaches to Learning .

**Resources:**

[Results Matter Website](#)

Results Matter Handbook (link upcoming)

## Transitions

The Quality Standards (Section E-15) identify transition plans as an important part of quality services. The process of transitioning to a new classroom or program should be planned based on the individual needs of each child. The planning should begin at least six to nine months prior to the placement of the child in the new setting and should involve families as well as the current and future teaching teams. Written transition plans are expected to be embedded in the Individual Learning Plan.

**Resources:**

- [Are You Ready? A Family's Guide to Starting Kindergarten](#) (PDF)
- [Transition Best Practices](#) (PDF)
- [Transition TiPs](#) - National Early Childhood Transition Center Toolkit of Practices and Strategies

## District Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan components are embedded within the Annual Report and address the following components as defined in the CPP Act:

1. Quality of Program
2. Staff Qualifications and Development
3. Family Engagement and Partnering
4. Family Support
5. Program Evaluation

While the plan is an incorporated component of the CPP Annual Report, CDE advises that a council-written document be maintained since the comprehensive plan is meant to be a functional framework that drives local CPP implementation.

Please note that comprehensive plans should contain complete information for any site, whether district or community partner, in which children receive CPP/ECARE funding.

### Quality of Program

Programs should have a focus on continuous quality improvement. This section of the comprehensive plan should contain description of how you measure the quality of your preschool program. These could include:

- A description of how the Quality Standards are used to monitor and enhance the quality of classrooms and ongoing planning for the preschool program
- A description of the program's implementation of the Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines/Colorado Academic Standards
- A description of the process and results for the twice yearly classroom visits by district preschool advisory council members to monitor overall program compliance and status of recommendations for needed improved improvements
- Average scores and noteworthy remarks from the attainment of Colorado Shines levels 3-5, CLASS observations, T-POT, ECERS rating or NAEYC accreditation review that occurred during the current school year
- Oversight and support provided by the CPP district preschool advisory council and the school district

### Staff Qualifications and Development

Teacher qualifications are a critical component of a high-quality program. This section of the district comprehensive plan should contain:

- A summary of program staff qualifications and credentials
- A description of the school district/program policy for staff education levels and backgrounds
- An update on the current year's ongoing training of staff (e.g. workshops attended, course work completed)
- A description of the mentoring/coaching model used by the program
- Awards and recognition that staff have received (from the school, board, community)

### Family Engagement and Partnering

Family involvement is a foundation of the Colorado Preschool Program. Partnerships with families form the foundation for family involvement through the school years. Providers must have in writing a plan that addresses family involvement (C.R.S. 22-28-107 (III) (f-4)) and a plan for coordinating the district preschool and kindergarten program with a parenting program (C.R.S. 22-28-107 (III) (f-7)).

Families of young children are their first and most important teachers. Programs can best meet the needs of children when they also recognize important family roles and develop strategies to work effectively with families, actively engaging them in all levels of the program.

Family partnering in CPP is addressed in both CPP statute and rules. It is clear that the legislative intent is for families to become involved in the education of their preschool children through high impact activities, such as home visits and parent education opportunities. Although many early childhood programs offer opportunities for families to visit and volunteer in classrooms, programs are strongly encouraged to create opportunities for families to become more deeply involved in their child's education through activities such as home visits, family conferences, special learning opportunities and leadership opportunities such as council or committee participation. High-quality programs provide educational materials for families to use at home with their children including developmentally appropriate literacy and/or math backpacks and toy lending libraries.

CPP rules require that families shall enter into an agreement about their responsibilities to the educational program of their child with the program that is providing the services. Children cannot participate unless such an agreement is made. The agreement may be formal or informal. The DAC should assess the needs specific to the families they serve when creating a written family partnering agreement and the signed agreement should be kept in the child's file.

The section of the comprehensive plan addressing family partnering should contain:

- A description of the roles and expectations of families in your program
- An example of the family involvement agreement
- A list and description of family events held during the current school year and a description of how they enhance home-school connections and child outcomes
- A description of how families contribute to your program (not limited to in-class volunteering)
- A description of the process for home visits and family conferences
- A description of families' involvement and contributions to the CPP DAC
- A description of opportunities supporting educational partnering including events and/or materials provided for families to use at home with their children.

**Resource:**

[Sample Family Partnering Agreement](#)

## Family Support

Family support includes those services available to families that contribute to the health and well-being of their children. District preschool advisory councils should periodically assess the specific needs of the families with young children in their community including basic needs for food, clothing and shelter, access to health care (including immunizations), mental health services and dental care. Some school districts are able to provide onsite family support services such as school-based health and dental clinics or mental health services. At a minimum, programs should provide information and help connect families to resources

available in their community. Councils should consider how they might partner with other early care and education programs to provide necessary services.

This section of the comprehensive plan should contain a description of the specific support services available to families including descriptions of how families access:

- Special education services
- Information on nutrition, including food banks
- Immunizations
- Health, dental and mental health care and services
- Social services
- Recreation opportunities

### Program Evaluation:

Through program evaluation, a program can gain insight into its efforts to prepare children for success in school and to support families. School districts and their CPP councils are required to design, implement and report on program evaluation activities as defined in the CPP rules:

4.05 Program Evaluation. This section addresses the design for this program evaluation including:

- (1) child outcomes
- (2) child progress
- (3) parent satisfaction

An analysis of child progress results is one component of a comprehensive program evaluation and should inform continuous quality improvement planning. Ongoing preschool assessment results and K-12 assessment results for CPP graduates should be analyzed in order to understand trends and underlying needs of the program.

Family satisfaction is generally measured through the use of a satisfaction survey, but can also be informed through interviews and focus groups. Satisfaction survey items should inform families about what quality looks like and ask about their experiences with these quality indicators. Survey items should be rooted in the Quality Standards and, at a minimum, should ask families to rate items such as:

- Our program asks for my opinions and observations about my child's progress.
- Our program helps me know how to support my child's development and learning.
- Our program offers opportunities for me to get involved in my child's education.
- Our program includes me in decision making about my child's education.

Adults in our program respond to children in warm and caring ways.

My child looks forward to going to “school”.

Adults in our program are positive and supportive as they guide child behavior.

My child’s classroom is well supplied with age appropriate toys and materials that encourage children to read, pretend, explore, experiment, solve problems and create things.

My child’s program encourages healthy habits such as healthy eating, exercise, brushing teeth and washing hands.

This section of the comprehensive plan should contain:

- A brief summary of:
  - Child progress results for the current year
  - Plans that were made due to that data analysis
  - Description of longitudinal child outcomes of children who graduated from CPP and progressed into higher grades within the district.
  - Results of the family satisfaction survey and any other available family input
- An overall analysis of the trends, strengths and needs identified by analyzing the results from the four evaluation components and a detailed improvement plan for addressing any identified program improvement needs

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## CPP and Community Partners

### **Emphasis on a Mixed Delivery System**

School districts may provide CPP services in three ways:

1. The district may provide all services in school district operated preschools (e.g. typically district early childhood centers, or existing elementary schools.) Special education, CPP, Title I funds, private tuition, etc., can be used in coordination to operate these services.
2. The district may contract out its entire program to community providers (e.g. Head Start or private child care facilities) with proper support and monitoring.
3. The district may use a combination of district and community providers.

CDE is authorized to give funding priority to those districts that place children funded by CPP/ECARE in high-quality community sites including Head Start programs. The CPP Act places significant emphasis on using existing and established Head Start and community early

childhood programs, where available, when deciding where to serve children funded by CPP/ECARE (22-28-109 C.R.S.).

Participation in CPP has often served as a catalyst for bringing public and private programs together to offer parents more and better choices. For example, working parents may need the wrap around child care services a private child care center can provide or the convenience of being able to drop off infants and toddlers at the same time as preschool aged children in a center located in their neighborhood. Having this option to serve the child in one location without transitioning to another program supports continuity of care for young children who are at-risk. It also permits broader participation in quality improvement activities such as professional development offered through the CPP program.

School districts and their DACs have the freedom to decide locally who is best qualified to deliver CPP services. It is important that local councils use available quality data such as Colorado Shines, as well as the Quality Standards when making decisions about a program's ability to provide high-quality CPP services.

As the DAC designs a process for identifying, choosing and partnering with contracted providers, it is important to utilize the experience and expertise of existing early childhood programs in the community to the maximum extent possible. Involvement in CPP can be viewed as a way to enhance the quality of services for all children by expanding the use of Quality Standards. Every effort should be made to make all current community providers aware of CPP and the possibility of their participation. Current licensed providers often have achieved high ratings in Colorado Shines or through professional accrediting organizations such as NAEYC, indicating that they invest a great deal of time and effort into developing high-quality services.

### **Request for Proposals (RFP) to Community Providers**

A major responsibility of the district preschool advisory council is to develop a process that allows community early childhood programs to apply for the opportunity to deliver CPP services. One step in this process is to develop and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to the community (4.09 CCR). School districts are required to send out RFPs at least once every two years to assess how alternative community providers may meet their standards for delivering high-quality services.

RFPs should be issued in the late winter or early spring to allow for a process that is accessible to existing programs. Applicants should have at least 45 days from the date the RFP was released in order to prepare and submit a proposal. The DAC reviews proposals and makes funding recommendations to the local school board. The school board then makes the final decision on who will provide CPP services (4.10 CCR). The intention of the law is to establish a fair, competitive process in which decisions are made at the local level.

General guidelines for the RFP process:

- A process for delivering the RFP announcement to providers within the geographical boundaries of the district.
- A public announcement method should be established to notify the community of the potential for partnership.
- Providers in contracted sites need sufficient lead time in order to plan with confidence. Ideally, District Advisory Councils would make their decisions and notify contractors before the end of the previous school year
- When allocating CPP positions to participating sites, DACs should consider the total number of positions available, the number of families selecting certain sites or types of programs and the quality and individual needs of community partner programs
- All CPP sites, including public school preschool sites, must be licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services (Note that this does not exclude early childhood programs located on tribal lands from participation in CPP. Such programs follow child care licensing guidelines as required by local tribal government.)
- DACs should make every effort to identify sites that are able to provide full-day, full-year services to meet the needs of working parents
- Families should be provided with updated information regarding the number and location of contracted sites each year and should be provided opportunities to visit the program prior to selection

**Resources:**

- [Sample Request for Proposal to Provide CPP Services](#)
- [CDE Guidance Memo on Community Partnerships](#)
- [Community provider handbook](#)

### **Compensating Community Partners**

Each district that contracts with community providers for program services is responsible for negotiating the rates that it will pay to the providers and ensuring that money provided for the Colorado Preschool Program is used for services connected to CPP. CDE advises that at least 85% of the per pupil funds for the number of children to be served by the partner site should be flowed to the provider to help offset the costs of providing a quality program as defined by CPP and the Quality Standards. Differences from this proportion of per pupil funds flowed to partner programs must be documented and justified by the actual costs of providing the comprehensive services expected, including costs in addition to the actual tuition for activities such as developmental screening, materials, professional learning, family support, etc. Information considered to set contracted rates should include actual costs data, tuition charged to non CPP families, market rate data, administrative costs incurred by the district (if any).

In addition to the contracted rate paid to providers for day-to-day programming, many districts also provide funding to providers for the following direct program services:

- Child identification/Assessment or developmental screenings
- Home language/Literacy materials
- Professional development opportunities/Conference registrations/In-service training
- Parent liaison/family support services/service coordination for children and families



- Monthly newsletter to families to extend learning activities and parenting ideas into the home
- Classroom equipment and materials

**Resources**

- [Finance Guidance for State-Funded Preschool](#) (updated 3/5/2018)
- Quick Guide - [Early Childhood Education Funding in Colorado](#)

**Monitoring Community Partner Programs for Quality**

School districts should monitor community partner sites using the same method that is used to monitor school district preschool classrooms. CPP statute requires a minimum of two classroom visits to be conducted by district preschool advisory council members each year.

**Faith-Based Programs**

School districts should consult with their in-house legal counsel regarding Sections 7 and 8 of Article IX of the Constitution of the State of Colorado as it applies to contracting district services out to a community partner program.

Section 7 states:

*“Neither the general assembly, nor any county, city, town, township, school district or other public corporation, shall ever make any appropriation, or pay from any public fund or monies whatsoever, anything in aid of any church or sectarian society, or for any sectarian purpose, or to help support or sustain any school, academy, seminary, college, university or other literary or scientific institution, controlled by any church or sectarian denomination whatsoever; nor shall any grant or donation of land, money or other personal property ever be made by the state, or any such public corporation to any church for any sectarian purpose.”*

Section 8 states:

*“No sectarian tenets or doctrines shall ever be taught in the public school.”*

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**Funding and Pupil Counts**

**General Funding Information**

The General Assembly authorizes funding for CPP as part of the Public School Finance Act at an individual district rate determined through the school finance formula. Each half-day CPP position (including ECARE positions) allocated to the district is funded at 0.5 FTE of each district’s per pupil revenue rate. Total district CPP funding is calculated as:

$$\text{CPP FTE in Final Fall Pupil Count} \times \text{District PPR} = \text{Total CPP Funding}$$

Per pupil funding to school districts varies across the state. The variances in funding are based on the school finance formula which recognizes (a) costs of living, (b) personnel costs and (c) size factors. CPP funding is provided to school districts as part of the K-12 funding.

### **Fall Pupil Count**

In order to be funded, children eligible for CPP must be counted by their school district during the fall pupil count. Children who do not meet the fall count requirements or who are otherwise excluded from the fall count will not be funded.

The preschool through twelfth grade pupil count process takes place each October. Children funded by CPP are counted during this period. State-funded preschool students must be at least three years old as of October 1 and meet eligibility criteria in order for the school district to count these preschool children for funding.

### **Preschool Alternative Count Date**

Programs are also strongly encouraged to use the preschool alternative count date of November 1 (or the nearest school day). They can choose to finalize whichever count provides higher funding by recreating their snapshot in the data pipeline. The General Assembly made this option possible to ensure that early childhood programs are able to access maximum funding. It can be difficult to have a complete count in early October due to the extra time it often takes to determine eligibility for the program and to back-fill CPP positions that may have been vacated. Historically, this resulted in districts serving a large number of children without funding. Using the November count gives the district the option of finalizing the highest count. Please be sure to indicate which date you will be using in data pipeline prior to the collection date.

### **Duplicate Counts**

Each year, CDE pauses the count process prior to finalization in order to check for instances when children have been counted twice. These duplications may represent children who are concurrently enrolled in two different school districts or children counted in the November count who were previously enrolled in another district and reported on that district's October count. In the latter case, a district that counts a child on October 1 will have priority over a district that includes the child in the preschool alternative count date.

To help reduce duplicate counts resulting from dual enrollment, districts may want to indicate in their preschool enrollment information the following statement:

“If a family enrolls a child in preschool in two different school districts at the same time they made be responsible for paying tuition to one of the districts.”

#### **Resources:**

- [CPP Funding and October Count](#)
- [Pupil Count Resource Guides](#)
- [EC Guide to the Fall Pupil Count](#)

## Full Day Preschool

Two of the ECARE-type of CPP positions can be combined to provide a full-day opportunity for an eligible child. No permission is needed from CDE to combine two ECARE positions to provide a full day of preschool for a child. The school district should notify CDE if there are changes in their planned usage of ECARE positions prior to submitting their final student census on either October 1 or November 1. A CPP Act provision allows school districts to apply to CDE for authorization to serve a single child in preschool using two of the traditional CPP positions to fund a full-day program. Statute specifies that only 5% of the children that CPP is authorized to serve statewide in Preschool may be funded in this way.

If a school district determines that a child has a significant need for full-day services and there is no other funding available (Child Care Assistance Program, tuition, private grants or scholarships, etc.) that district may apply to CDE for the flexibility to serve a child/children in a full-day program. Each child that is approved to be served in a full-day preschool program will use two CPP preschool positions out of the school district's total preschool allocation. Under no circumstances will a school district be allowed to exceed their preschool allocation, and CDE will not authorize more than 5% of the total positions to be served using two positions.

In identifying children who may qualify for full-day funding by using two CPP positions or two ECARE positions, it is important to consider children with the most significant need for the intensity of a full-day program. And, care must be taken to assure that an appropriate full-day schedule is developed to meet the special needs of this identified group.

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## Use of CPP Funds

Funding provided to school districts for CPP shall only be used to meet the costs of providing preschool services directly to children enrolled in each school district's program (22-28-108 (5.5) C.R.S.). Allowable expenses for the program include:

- Teacher and paraprofessional salaries and benefits
- Supplies and materials
- Expenses associated with home visits
- The entire cost of any preschool program contracted services
- Services provided by a district to children enrolled in CPP or their families
- Associated professional development activities
- Costs that a district would not have incurred without the services provided in conjunction with the preschool program
- A reasonable allocation of district overhead costs, which should not exceed five percent (5%) of the total CPP funding provided to the district.

In determining overhead costs, districts may use their restricted indirect cost rate as long as it does not exceed 5%. Any overhead costs, OBJ code 0868, claimed by a district that exceed CDE's calculation of restricted indirect cost rates for local education agencies (LEAs) must be verifiable.

Expenditures of CPP funds shall only include costs that a district would not have incurred without the services provided in conjunction with the preschool program. (22-28-108 5.5 C.R.S.) Districts must be able to document that CPP expenditures are a direct cost of the Colorado Preschool Program. For instance, if transportation expenses are paid for with CPP funds, districts must be able to document that bus routes were added or extended to serve children funded by CPP.

Districts receiving CPP funding must track the use of those funds. Districts can use Grant code 3141 in Fund 10 to identify the revenues and expenditures for the preschool program funded through the Colorado Preschool Program. Fund 19 will also be available to a district to identify the CPP revenues and expenditures.

The majority of CPP funds are expected to be expended each year to provide a high-quality early childhood program. If all of the money provided for CPP is not expended by the end of the school year, districts must carry over any remaining moneys to the next fiscal year. Account 6724 has been established in the Chart of Accounts to identify Colorado Preschool Program Reserve funds. CDE recommends that districts carrying over more than 15% of the CPP funds provide a detailed plan for spend-down. In addition, districts with large carry over balances may score lower on competitive applications for additional slots during an expansion of CPP/ECARE.

#### **Resources**

- [Finance Guidance for State-Funded Preschool](#) (updated 3/5/2018)
- Quick Guide - [Early Childhood Education Funding in Colorado](#)
- [CPP Carryover Guidance](#)
- [Reporting on CPP Revenues and Expenditures](#)
- [Guidance on Charging Fees to Students Funded by CPP](#)
- [Using CPP funding to increase preschool contact hours for children who qualify for special education](#)

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### **ECARE (Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement)**

In addition to the 20,160 traditional CPP positions, the General Assembly has authorized funding for 9,200 ECARE positions that may be used to fund half-day preschool, combined for full-day preschool or to provide full-day kindergarten.

## Preschool ECARE Requirements:

- Programs using ECARE positions to fund preschool children must meet all the requirements noted for CPP
- Children funded with ECARE positions must have the appropriate number of significant family risk factors documented
- Two ECARE positions may be combined to create a full-day preschool opportunity for an eligible child
- ECARE positions may not be combined with CPP positions to create a full-day opportunity. This is because of the 5% statewide cap on full time CPP placements.
- A child who qualifies under IDEA as a child with a disability and thus eligible for a half day of preschool or kindergarten general education may be funded for an additional half day of programming if they meet the eligibility criteria of ECARE, creating a full day opportunity. This combination of funding must be used to increase the hours of programming for a child from a half day to a full day program
- ECARE positions may be used to fund a second year of preschool for eligible children served with CPP funds as three-year-olds in the prior school year
- ECARE positions may not be used to fund a second year of preschool for children served with CPP funds as four-year-olds
- ECARE positions may not be used to serve kindergarten age eligible children in preschool

## Kindergarten ECARE Requirements:

Programs serving kindergarten children funded by the Colorado Preschool Program must:

- Follow the Colorado Academic Standards
- Meet all School Readiness requirements as required by Senate Bill 212, the Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K)
- Demonstrate how funds are being used to enhance quality in their kindergarten programs.
- Use the Colorado Quality Standards for Early Childhood Programs to measure quality and ensure best practices are in place.
- Kindergarteners who are funded with ECARE positions must be counted during the October pupil count period

The CDE is responsible for establishing basic program standards using nationally accepted standards (C.C.R. 22-28-108(1) (a)). Thus the guidelines for kindergarten classrooms shall include:

- a. A kindergarten class size limit of 24 children with a ratio of one adult to every 12 children.
- b. Kindergarten classrooms should be inclusive, which means that classroom populations are not segregated according to funding source. Classrooms include children at-risk for academic failure and children with disabilities, along with children who are typically developing.

- c. Opportunities for teachers to have professional development specifically related to early childhood (birth to eight) development and learning.
- d. Kindergarten classrooms should include high-quality, hands on learning materials which are utilized frequently to support children’s learning.
- e. Ongoing authentic observational assessment should be used to inform differentiation of individual instruction along with overall program improvement.
- f. A balance between child-directed and teacher-directed activities throughout the day.
- g. Daily opportunities for extended child-directed time (i.e. free choice time, during which children have access to intentional play through learning centers).
- h. Several opportunities for outdoor play are scheduled throughout the day.
- i. All areas of development are supported in the classroom, including cognitive, language gross and fine motor, and social emotional. There is not a focus on paper and pencil work.
- j. Interventions that could be funded through other streams such as Title I for literacy, should be considered before using ECARE funding.

District requirements for using ECARE funding in Kindergarten include:

- The oversight of and monitoring of kindergarten classrooms funded through ECARE is the responsibility of the CPP District Advisory Council. (C.C.R. 22-28-205 (a)). If a functioning council is not in place, then funds may not be allocated to the district.
- A written plan to support family engagement and support services (C.C.R. 22-28-107).
- Submission to CDE of an approved annual report and application including a comprehensive plan for services.

The purpose of ECARE funding is to provide an enhanced program for children at-risk for academic failure. Funding should not be used to supplant existing funding; rather, funds should be used to enhance the district’s existing full day kindergarten program. Some areas to consider should include:

- Reduction of class size to 24 or fewer children.
- Increasing the adult/child ratio to 1 adult per 12 children.
- Enhancement of the learning environment to include developmentally appropriate learning centers.
- Early Childhood specific professional development for kindergarten teachers, assistant teachers and principals supervising kindergarten classrooms.
- High impact family engagement strategies.
- Home visits
- External measurements and/or coachind of teacher/environmental quality (i.e. CLASS observations).
- Support towards the full implementation of School Readiness Assessments.
- Local designed and implemented quality initiatives for kindergarten classrooms.

**Resources:**

- [Resources for Kindergarten Teachers and School Leaders](#)

- [Colorado Kindergarten School Readiness Guide to Implementation and Best Practices](#)
- [Colorado Quality Standards](#)

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For assistance with Colorado Preschool Program questions, [please contact your regional CDE Preschool Specialist](#).