

Print the CPP Handbook



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Colorado Preschool Program Handbook

The CPP handbook assists district advisory councils, CPP coordinators, administrators, and local school boards to meet the statutory requirements for CPP. It reflects what is required by the CPP statute, the CPP rules and regulations, and the Colorado Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education Services. The Colorado Preschool Regional Support Specialists monitor these elements of CPP implementation and are available to provide technical assistance to school districts.

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.

Overview

The Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) is a state-funded preschool program administered by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). Enacted by the Colorado General Assembly in 1988, CPP currently provides funding for up to 29,360 young children who have certain risk factors associated with later challenges in school. Since 2013, the General Assembly has expanded CPP three times through the Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement (ECARE) program totaling 9,200 CPP positions for either half- or full-day preschool. Children who are eligible for CPP attend high-quality early childhood programs. These may be located in school district settings, local child care centers, community preschools, or Head Start programs.

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 and ECARE preschool positions. 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.



Explore the CPP Handbook

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. 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. With the passage of House Bill 19-1262, which funded voluntary full-day kindergarten for all Colorado children, all ECARE positions have been devoted exclusively to preschool beginning in the 2019-20 school year for preschool access for even more 3- and 4-year-old children.

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.

CPP Governing: Statute, Rules and Standards

Jump to a Section:

- [Statute](#)
- [Rules](#)
- [Program Standards](#)
 - [Use of the CDE Quality Walkthrough Tool](#)
 - [Academic Standards](#)
- [School District Participation](#)
 - [Ability to Collaborate](#)

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 on their [Colorado Legal Resources website](#).

* If the link is broken the pathway for CPP Statute is: **Title 22. Education -> Compensatory Education -> Article 28. Colorado Preschool Program Act.**

[Return to Top](#)

Rules

The Colorado State Board of Education (SBE) is charged with developing [rules and regulations that support the implementation of the CPP Act](#).

[Return to Top](#)

Program Standards

The General Assembly placed a 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 (C.R.S. 22-28-108 (1) (A)). Programs must demonstrate their capacity to deliver high-quality, developmentally 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.

Use of the CDE Quality Walkthrough Tool

CDE preschool team staff developed the [Preschool and Kindergarten Quality Walkthrough for Classrooms Serving Children Funded by CPP/ECARE](#). The Walkthrough tool was developed initially as a quality measure in Kindergarten and is not meant as a substitute for measuring quality using other processes or data sources. The CDE developed tool may still be used as a transition into Colorado Shines or a nationally accepted standard for quality. CDE does not support the use of this tool as the only measure of quality in preschool. The walkthrough, if used, should be used as a body of evidence but nationally accepted tools or Colorado Shines should be used to demonstrate quality in preschool classrooms.

[Return to Top](#)

Academic Standards

While the Quality Standards guide programs in how to implement a high-quality preschool program, the [Colorado Academic Standards for Preschool](#) detail what preschool learners should know and be able to do by the end of their preschool experience. The 2020 standards revision incorporates the [Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines](#).

[Return to Top](#)

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 in kindergarten and the primary grades within the district
- Accreditation data and district performance data
- Demographic data

School District Participation

School district participation in the Colorado Preschool Program is voluntary. Currently, 176 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.

[Return to Top](#)

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

[Return to Top](#)

District Advisory Council and Local School Board Governance

Jump to a section:

- [Responsibilities of the Local School Board](#)
- [DAC Membership](#)
- [DAC Responsibilities](#)

Any school district that wishes to participate in CPP is required by statute to establish a preschool district advisory council (DAC) ([C.R.S. 22-28-105 \(1\)](#)). These councils are charged with the design and implementation of a high-quality program and are beholden to the local school board. The DAC ensures that decisions about the program are made locally and that community stakeholders have the opportunity for input.

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.](#))

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.

[Return to Top](#)

DAC Membership

The following membership is mandated by the CPP Act ([C.R.S. 22-28-105 \(1\)\(b\)](#)):

- 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 human or 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 a 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 ([C.R.S. 22-28-105 \(1\)\(c\)](#)).

[Return to Top](#)

DAC Responsibilities

Statute charges the DAC with the following ([C.R.S. 22-28-105 \(2\)](#)):

- 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 the 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 children eligible for CPP are enrolled at least twice per year to identify strengths and areas for growth.
- Assist the school district in the implementation of the district preschool program

Resources:

- [District Advisory Council Resources](#)

[Return to Top](#)

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 an expert in early childhood programming for the school district. The coordinator should have the responsibility to make decisions and provide oversight for CPP programming in the school district.

Recommended Qualifications of CPP Coordinators

The recommended 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 as well as whether the coordinator is supervising staff, the qualifications may vary. 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 the 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 a liaison to the 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 a liaison to the school district
 - Report to the school board, school administrators, and other personnel
 - Coordinate an accurate reporting of October Count
 - Coordinate an accurate reporting of CPP/ECARE funding
 - Coordinate the development of transition plans to kindergarten
- Facilitate the child enrollment process
 - Initiate a 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 the 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 \[PDF\] \(2021\)](#)
- [Coordinator Tool Kit](#)

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.

Jump to a Section:

- [Significant Family Risk Factors](#)
 - [Age Requirements](#)
- [Eligibility Determination Process](#)
 - [Free and Reduced-Price Lunch](#)
 - [U.S. Citizenship and CPP](#)

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 (C.R.S. 22-28-106). The factors are listed below. To learn more about documentation and the significance of the risk factor, click the links.

- [Eligibility for free or reduced-price meals](#)
- [Homelessness of the child's family](#)
- [An abusive adult residing in the home of the child](#) (present or past)
- [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, including the ability to speak English](#)
- [Receiving services from the Department of Human Services as a neglected or dependent child](#)

The DAC may expand the list of significant family risk factors in order to meet the unique needs of the community (2228-R 5.04). However, starting with the 2020-21 school year, community-specific eligibility criteria must be approved by CDE prior to district use. In August 2019, CDE disseminated a memorandum to school districts that reported utilization of community-specific expanded eligibility criteria in their Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) 2019 Annual Report. Review the [August 2019 CDE memo](#) for additional background. If your district is interested in using community-specific eligibility criteria, please review [the submission guide and application](#).

[Return to top](#)

Age Requirements

- **Three-year-olds:** Eligible three-year-olds must reach the age of three on or before the school district's kindergarten age cutoff date which can be no later than October 1 (C.R.S. 22-54-103(9.5)(I)(b)(I)).
- **Four-year-olds:** Eligible four-year-olds must be age-eligible for kindergarten the following year and reach four on or before October 1 (C.R.S. 22-54-103(9.5)(II)(b)(II)).
- **Five-Year-Olds:** Eligible five-year-olds must be age-eligible for kindergarten the following school year. CPP/ECARE positions may not be used to serve kindergarten age-eligible children in preschool.

Age requirements are documented by:

- Child's Birth Certificate (a birth certificate **is not required to be on file** in order for a child to receive CPP funding)
- Birth date from CPP application

[Return to top](#)

Eligibility Determination Process

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

Three-year-olds (child is two years away from kindergarten): must have **at least three significant family risk factors** present in order to qualify for CPP (C.R.S. 22-28-106).

Four-and Five-year-olds (child is one year away from kindergarten): must have **at least one significant family risk factor** present in order to qualify for CPP (C.R.S. 22-28-106).

- 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. 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. Community partner programs that the district contracts with to provide services should not be making eligibility determinations independently. 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 to Child Find for a special education evaluation due to a suspected disability. School districts are expected 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 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 endorsed by CDE as it is not equitable. CDE expects districts to plan to reserve 10-25% of total CPP/ECARE positions for children identified as eligible in the fall (depending on the size of the community, the number of children that typically show up in the fall, number of CPP positions, the 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 prior to enrollment, 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 children with the highest need who are two years away from kindergarten, if applicable. Depending on community needs, consider qualifying four-year-olds with at least two or more legislated risk factors in the spring.
- While a DAC has the authority to request the use of additional risk factors that are unique to their community 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 programming.

[Return to top](#)

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 Meal Resources from School Finance/Auditing](#)
 - [Family Economic Survey](#)
 - [Family Economic Survey Instructions](#)
- [CPP Eligibility Fact Sheet for File Audits](#)
- [CPP Child Eligibility Documentation Form \(2020\)](#)
- [CPP Coordinator Eligibility Tool Kit](#)

[Return to top](#)

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 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).

[Return to top](#)

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 central location ([2254-R-8.02](#)).

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 and its supporting documents:
 - Family Economic Survey or confirmation of Free and Reduced Lunch eligibility if applicable
 - Referrals from the County Department of Human Services or other agencies (exposure to domestic violence, drug use, foster child) if applicable
 - Notes or form from parent interview or home visit
 - Screening results such as ASQ, DIAL 4, etc.
 - Preschool Application containing eligibility information such as:
 - Birthdate of child*
 - Age of birth parents at the birth of child
 - Living situation (homelessness, foster child)
 - Education status of parents

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

It is recommended that each program shall retain cohort eligibility documentation and supporting documents for five years ([2254-R-8.00](#)).

Resources:

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

[Return to top](#)

Program Requirements

Jump to a section:

- [Licensing](#)
 - [School District Monitoring](#)
- [What Is A High-Quality Program?](#)
- [Staff Qualifications](#)
- [Class Size](#)
- [Service Hour](#)
- [Staff Planning Time](#)
- [Child Progress Monitoring](#)
- [Individual Learning Plans](#)
- [Transitions](#)

Licensing

Every classroom in which children receive CPP funding must have a valid child care center license from the Office of Early Childhood at the Department of Human Services ([C.R.S. 22-28-108 \(1\)\(a\)](#)). This license indicates the minimum health and safety standards have been followed. Child care centers serving CPP include the following types of facilities: large child care center, small child care center, preschool, full-day, and part-day programs ([12 CCR 2509-8 \(7.702.1\)\(B\)](#)). “The term shall not include any facility licensed as a family child care home, a foster care home, or a specialized group facility that is licensed to provide care for three or more children” ([C.R.S. 26-6-102 \(5\)](#)). 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 (e.g. 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 (CDHS) 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.

School District Monitoring

CDHS and CDE worked collaboratively with school district representatives to simplify the licensing process and identify areas where onsite monitoring by CDHS licensing staff could be expedited.

As a result, school districts have the opportunity to submit district-wide documentation to CDHS regarding compliance with specific health and safety requirements in order to streamline the individual site inspection process conducted by licensing. School districts may apply by submitting the documentation outlined in the attached form, verifying that the school district maintains standards for the operation of the facility in compliance with the standards required by CDHS licensing rules, to the appropriate CDHS licensing supervisor. [View the School District Monitoring Submission Guide.](#)

[View the list of Licensing Supervisors](#) and the [Metro Area School District Licensing Contacts](#) that includes contact information and the geographic area they supervise. CDHS licensing supervisors will review the documentation you provide. Once reviewed and accepted as evidence of compliance with the specific health and safety standards outlined, they will update the CDHS licensing tracking system showing approval. This approval will remain in place as long as the school district continues to supply the required documentation annually. [View the School District and Licensing Monitoring Document.](#)

Resources:

- [Colorado Department of Human Services Child Care Licensing](#)
- [General Rules for Child Care Facilities](#)

[Return to Top](#)

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 indicate 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 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](#)
- Early Childhood Quality Walk-Through Form (2020) [Digital Version](#) [Paper-And-Pencil Version](#)
- Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center - [Curriculum Consumer's Report](#)
- IDEA Data Center - [It Starts at Preschool: Aligning 619 Activities with the B SIMR](#)
- NAEYC - [Program Standards for Curriculum](#)

[Return to Top](#)

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, has 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 (ECE)/Child Development (CD) and at least three years of full-time teaching experience with young children, and/or a 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)
- Office of Early Childhood - [Professional Certifications](#)
- Office of Early Childhood - [Rules Regulating Child Care Centers](#)

[Return to Top](#)

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 (C.R.S. 22-18-208 1.b.ii). An adult can be a paraprofessional, a parent, a speech/language therapist, a senior citizen, or another appropriate adult figure ([2228-R 6.04\(l\)](#)). There are no waivers to override group size or ratio limits for CPP except when required by public health guidelines and safety measures. In 2020, the State Board of Education approved a rule change to [2228-R 6.04\(l\)\(a\)](#). When programs are required to limit class sizes to ten children in accordance with public health guidelines and safety measures, the adult child ratio may be increased to one to ten.

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. **A maximum group size of 16 must be maintained at all times, including when children are outside.**

[Return to Top](#)

Service Hour Requirement

The CPP Act requires 360 contact hours a year or approximately 10 hours per week (2254-R-2.06). 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 downtime to process new information between new learning experiences. They need opportunities to practice following predictable daily routines and to continue to 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 the lack of district supported transportation for preschoolers or a way to fill unused CPP positions.

The requirements when combining 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 positions or CPP and Special Education to create a full-day, should be reserved for children with the highest needs.
- Teachers must receive the 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 position may not be split between two programs or to serve a child in two part-day programs (2254-R-5.10 (2)(a)).

[Return to Top](#)

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 kindergarten 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.C.R. 2254-R-1 2.06; C.R.S. 22-28-108 (1)(b)(III)).

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 compliance with the 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 an 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.

[Return to Top](#)

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 a 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:

- 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:
 - language
 - cognition
 - gross motor

- fine motor
- social skills/self-esteem
- 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.

For more information on the ILP template in GOLD®, see the [GOLD® Appendix](#) in the [Results Matter Handbook](#)

[Return to Top](#)

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 C.R.S. 22-28-112. 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 the child's 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](#)

[Return to Top](#)

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:

- National P-3 Center - [Transition Resources](#)
- [Kindergarten Transition Resources](#)
- NAEYC - [Transitions to Kindergarten](#) (2014)
- National Early Childhood Transition Center Toolkit of Practices and Strategies - [Transition TiPs \[PDF\]](#) (2009)

[Return to Top](#)

District Comprehensive Plan

Jump to a section:

- [Quality of Program](#)
 - [Comprehensive Quality Assurances](#)
 - [Quality Monitoring](#)
 - [DAC Role in Quality Monitoring](#)
 - [The Role of Colorado Shines in the District's Quality Monitoring Efforts](#)
- [Staff Qualifications and Development](#)
- [Family Engagement and Partnering](#)
- [Family Support](#)
- [Program Evaluation](#)

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

Comprehensive Quality Assurances

District preschool programs are expected to develop and implement comprehensive and ongoing quality assurance processes. Districts participating in CPP are required to follow the Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education Services (2228-R 404.1 and 6.03). Additionally, the DAC is required to be actively involved in monitoring all programs in which children funded by CPP are served ([C.R.S. 22-28-105\(2\)\(h\)](#)). Examples of standard and reliable comprehensive approaches include [NAEYC Accreditation](#) or [Colorado Shines](#). The use of standard and reliable tools to measure the quality of classroom practices such as CLASS, ECERS, TPoT, etc. are encouraged as one component of each district's overall approach (2228-R 4.07) to sustain or improve quality (2228-R 4.08). Because NAEYC and Colorado Shines comprehensive processes are known to address the key components within the Colorado Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education Services they demonstrate that the district's program complies with CDE's requirement to follow the Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education Services.

Quality Monitoring

Programs should have a focus on continuous quality improvement. Each district's approach to monitoring the quality of the preschool classrooms in which state-funded preschoolers receive services should be tailored to the specific needs and context in which the program is operated, including the size of the district allocation, the number of classrooms, as well as other variables including the staffing model, use of community partner sites, etc. For example, a district with hundreds of preschool positions likely employs qualified staff to conduct classroom visits, complete reliable tools to measure quality, provide coaching to preschool teaching staff, and to develop and implement quality improvement plans. Districts that have only one or a few preschool classrooms generally do not have administrators dedicated solely to preschool and may rely on external evaluators to help measure quality, provide coaching and support to staff. Generally speaking, CDE expects independent raters or internal reliable raters would be the primary evaluators of classroom and program quality, using valid and reliable tools and methods.

DAC Role in Quality Monitoring

As stated above, each district's quality monitoring efforts are expected to be customized to the program's needs, size, and capacity. The role of the DAC in these efforts should be determined based on the expertise and knowledge of DAC members and is not expected to include direct classroom observations in order to evaluate quality unless other standard and reliable methods are not being utilized. Rather, DAC visits are intended to build the capacity of DAC members to be familiar with the program structure and operations in order to provide appropriate and relevant advice and oversight of the program as a whole.

The DAC is responsible to review quality data from multiple sources to make recommendations to advise the program's quality initiatives. The council will use this data to inform a continuous quality improvement process, rather than to directly verify the level of quality in classrooms.

The Role of Colorado Shines in the District's Quality Monitoring Efforts

District preschool programs participating at the required levels 1 or 2 in Colorado Shines and who elect not to move to higher levels in Colorado Shines are required to continue to ensure that the District Advisory Council complete specific quality monitoring (C.R.S. 22-28-105 (1)(h)) activities to ensure that preschoolers served in their program meet the Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education Services.

In Colorado, programs that have achieved Levels 3 through 5 in Colorado Shines have demonstrated quality in all areas of program operations and are therefore considered to be of high-quality. Colorado Shines participation in Levels 3 through 5 is not a specific mandate; however, CDE encourages movement into the higher levels as one specific approach to demonstrate that the programs meet generally accepted standards of high-quality preschool programming. Since Colorado Shines addresses the key components within the Colorado Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education Services (C.R.S. 22-28-108(1)(a)), programs that participate in Colorado Shines at levels 3 through 5 may elect to use Colorado Shines rating process rather than expect District Advisory Council members to directly conduct onsite quality monitoring of preschool classrooms.

This section of the comprehensive plan should contain a 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

[Return to Top](#)

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)

[Return to Top](#)

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 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.

Resources:

- [Sample Family Partnering Agreement](#) (DOC)
- [Family Engagement Tips and Resources](#) [PDF] (2021)

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 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

[Return to Top](#)

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 DACs 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:

- child outcomes ([Results Matter](#))
- child progress ([Results Matter](#))
- parent satisfaction

An analysis of child progress results is one component of 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 the 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 a warm and caring way.
- 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.

The Family-School-Community Partnerships at CDE has a [School-Family-Community Partnership Survey](#). The survey is designed to measure families’ and teachers’ perceptions of partnership outreach. The questions on both surveys coincide so that schools and districts can identify differences in perception of FSCP. The survey is not intended to measure the extent to which partnerships impact student achievement.

This section of the comprehensive plan should contain:

- A brief summary of:
 - Child progress results for the current year ([Results Matter](#))
 - 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

[Return to Top](#)

CPP and Community Partners

Jump to a section:

- [Mixed Delivery System](#)
- [Request for Proposals \(RFP\) to Community Providers](#)
 - [General Guidelines](#)
 - [Compensating Community Partners](#)
 - [Monitoring Community Partner Programs for Quality](#)
 - [Faith-Based Programs](#)

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.

[Return to Top](#)

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/ECARE 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/ECARE 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 sites serving CPP/ECARE, 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 governments.)
 - Students funded with CPP/ECARE or PK SPED positions should have a valid school code, either public or non-public. If your new school does not have a school code, please request a new school code from CDE.
- 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 \(DOC\)](#)
- [CDE Guidance Memo on Community Partnerships \(PDF\)](#)
- [Continuum of Partnerships: Self-Assessment Components of High-Quality Partnerships with Community-Based Providers \(PDF\)](#)
- [Community Partner Guide to CPP](#)

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
- A 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 \(updated 3/5/2018\) \(PDF\)](#)
- [Early Childhood Education Funding in Colorado \(PDF\)](#)

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 contract 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 every 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.”

[Return to Top](#)

Funding and Pupil Count

ump to a section:

- [General Funding Information](#)
- [Student October Count](#)
 - [Pupil Enrollment Count Period](#)
 - [Preschool Alternative Count Date](#)
 - [Duplicate Counts](#)
 - [What CPP Records Must Be Kept for the Early Childhood Count](#)
- [Full-Day Preschool](#)
 - [Two CPP Positions](#)
 - [Two ECARE Positions](#)
 - [One CPP Position and One ECARE Position](#)
 - [One CPP Position and One Preschool Special Education PPR](#)
- [Use of CPP Funds](#)

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/ECARE position 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:

CPP/ECARE FTE in Final Fall Pupil Count

X District PPR =

Total CPP/ECARE 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.

Districts are paid monthly, but the first five months of the school year are based on projected numbers (e.g. the reported pupil count last year). December is the first month districts receive funding based on actual, current, count data. In other words, if a district receives additional positions before (during an expansion year) or during the count (temporary additional positions granted), the initial funding a school receives for September, October, and November will be based on the allocations from last year. Beginning in December, the payment will include the new allocations based on what was reported on Count Day (traditional or alternative, whichever the district chooses to use).

[Return to Top](#)

Student October Count

Student October is meant to be a snapshot in time that gives a general overview of education in Colorado. Data collected in Student October is used to determine district funding, therefore, accuracy is paramount. CDE wants to ensure that districts receive the correct amount of funding so all student-level data reported in this data submission should reflect what was true as of the pupil enrollment count date. Therefore, children should be reported at the school they actually attend. Students funded with CPP/ECARE or PK SPED positions should have a valid school code, either public or non-public.

In order to be funded, children eligible for state-funded preschool must be at least three years old as of October 1 (or by the school district kindergarten cut-off date, whichever comes first), not kindergarten-eligible, and meet eligibility criteria in order for the school district to count these preschool children for funding. Children who do not meet the fall count requirements or who are otherwise excluded from the fall count will not be funded.

Did you know? Any child who receives CPP funding is considered a school district student, even if they are served through a community provider.

[Return to Top](#)

Pupil Enrollment Count Period

The preschool through twelfth-grade pupil count process takes place on October 1 of each year, unless that date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or major religious holiday. If the pupil enrollment count date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or major religious holiday, the pupil enrollment count date will be the following school day. Determination of the pupil enrollment count date will not be affected by a district's decision to not have school on the pupil enrollment count date, including districts with a four-day week calendar.

The 11-day pupil enrollment count period refers to the five school days before and the five school days after the pupil enrollment count date based on the district's adopted calendar. If the district allows different calendars for schools or programs, the 11-day pupil enrollment count period is tied to the district's adopted calendar unless the district requests an alternative (1) pupil enrollment count date or (2) pupil enrollment count period.

Districts are required to provide, at a minimum, attendance for each student that includes the entire 11-day count period. For districts using an alternative count date, the 11-day count period will adjust accordingly

[Return to Top](#)

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 the data pipeline prior to the collection date.

When using this alternative count date please consider the following information:

- School districts must finalize the same count date for both CPP and preschool special education.
- Districts may use either their October 1 count data or their November 1 count data, whichever is higher.
 - Even if using November 1 count date, early childhood count information should be included in the October 1 collection.
 - School districts are encouraged to track changes on a regular basis from October 1 to November 1, so changes can be made following verification of the November 1 count.
- In the final approval of the October count data submission, your district will be asked to identify whether you are using the October 1 count or the alternate count date of November 1 for early childhood.
- Any child who has left the district prior to November 1 or was counted in another district's October Count cannot be counted (see Duplicate Count for more information).
- Just like October Count:
 - Children can only be counted if they are enrolled and in attendance on or before November 1.
 - The number of hours scheduled for the Colorado Preschool Program should be no fewer than 360 hours in the course of the school year.
 - A child funded by CPP must have at least 90 hours of teacher-pupil instruction and teacher-pupil contact in the semester of the alternative count date. (2254-R-5.10 and 5.11, Rules for the Administration of the Public School Finance Act of 1994).
 - *Please note: This is a minimum number of hours of service to qualify a child for these funding sources; it is not intended to set a standard of appropriate service.*
 - Districts must still document each child's attendance five school days prior to and five school days following the alternative count date.

Can't decide which date to use?

Count for October 1 and November 1

Choose the one with the greater funding

[Return to Top](#)

Duplicate Counts

Duplicate counts were identified within the October count when CDE began assigning SASIDs (State Assigned Student ID Numbers) to students included in the October count. Each year, CDE pauses the count process prior to finalization in order to check for instances when children have been counted twice.

A number of these duplications occurred in preschool, oftentimes for two reasons:

- School districts using early childhood alternative count dates.
 - Early childhood alternate count dates of November 2 are available to all school districts.
 - School districts who use an alternative count date should not assume that children enrolling in preschool have not already been enrolled in another school district.
- Parents enrolling children concurrently in two different school districts.
 - Example 1: A child was attending A.M. preschool in one district and P.M. preschool in another district.
 - Example 2: A child attends A.M. preschool in one district and an online charter school for P.M. preschool or kindergarten.

A district that counts a child on October 1 will have priority over a district that includes a child in a later alternative count.

- School districts should also be careful when enrolling children living outside their school district.
- When a duplicate count is identified, the child’s district of residence will have first priority for including the child in their October count for funding

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 are responsible for paying tuition to one of the districts.”

[Return to Top](#)

What CPP Records Must Be Kept for the Early Childhood Count

A school district will need to have the following information available in their administrative office for CDE auditors to review:

- Attendance records for all students.
 - If the pupil is absent on the count day, additional attendance records are required to establish attendance prior to the official count date in the current school year and after the count date.
 - The pupil must resume attendance within 30 calendar days of Oct. 1 in order to be counted.
- Records must also verify each student is scheduled for at least 90 hours of pupil-teacher contact in the semester of the official count day.
- Districts that contract with Head Start or a community early childhood program must provide evidence of a purchase agreement between the district and the outside agency.

At a minimum, school districts should retain these records for five years or until they have been audited by the CDE Audit Unit.

Resources:

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

[Return to Top](#)

Full-Day Preschool

The majority of students are counted as half-day pupils (0.5 FTE). A program may create full-day preschool opportunities by combining two half-day positions, so long as the child will meet the [service hour requirements](#). The full-day opportunity must be provided in the same program. In other words, the full-day position may not be split between two programs or to serve a child in two part-day programs ([2254-R-5.10 \(2\)\(a\)](#)). As a reminder, CPP is not a

universal preschool funding source. Full-day allocations are intended to provide a more comprehensive preschool experience for the children in your program who are most at-risk. Districts should use their resources to serve as many eligible children as possible and limit the use of combined positions for children with the highest needs and no other opportunity for full-day programming. This option should not be seen as a solution for the lack of district supported transportation for preschoolers or a way to fill unused CPP position. If a school district is unable to use all of its CPP positions, there is a process for temporarily reallocating unused positions so that additional children at-risk have an opportunity for a preschool experience.

Each child that is approved to be served in a full-day preschool program will use two 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.

There are a few ways districts can utilize their positions in order to create a full-day experience:

Two CPP Positions

The Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) Act allows school districts to apply to CDE for authorization to serve a single child in preschool using two CPP positions to fund a full-day program. Districts interested in combining two CPP positions must apply to CDE in order to use this combination. The statute specifies that CPP may only serve 5% eligible preschoolers statewide in this way (C.R.S. 22-28-104(4)(b)). Please note, the 5% is equal to 1008 children statewide. Therefore, no more than 1008 children can be served with two CPP positions. If your district has ECARE positions, it may be wise to consider other combinations before combining CPP positions in order to be equitable to districts only utilizing CPP positions.

[Return to Top](#)

Two ECARE Positions

HB 19-1262 makes changes to ECARE positions that until now have been able to be used to fund half-day preschool, combined for full-day preschool, or to provide full-day kindergarten.

(C.R.S. 22-28-104.3)(b) For the 2019-20 budget year and each budget year thereafter, the Department shall not allocate to a district, and a district shall not use, a preschool program position to enroll a child in a full day of the district's full-day kindergarten educational program.

Two of the ECARE-type of CPP positions can be combined to provide a full-day opportunity for an eligible child (C.R.S. 22-28-104.3). This combination does not need CDE approval. 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.

[Return to Top](#)

One CPP Position and One ECARE Position

This combination does not require CDE approval. Beginning 2019-2020 school year, CDE will allow districts to combine a half-day CPP position and a half-day ECARE position to create a full-day opportunity. You must have ECARE in order to use this option. Please note: this combination lowers the available half-day positions in a school district's remaining CPP and ECARE allocation.

[Return to Top](#)

One CPP Position and One Preschool Special Education PPR

CPP funding is intended to provide preschool for children who are at-risk for academic failure. This funding is not intended to solely fund a district or contracted program's entire preschool or classroom. Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, CPP funding may be combined with the preschool special education PPR to support a child with disabilities for full-day preschool. CPP funding cannot be the sole funding source for a child with disabilities in a full-day program. The child on an IEP must also meet CPP eligibility requirements and be considered a child with the highest needs. This combination does not need CDE approval.

[Return to Top](#)

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 exceeds 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 money 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 carryover balances may score lower on competitive applications for additional positions during an expansion of CPP/ECARE.

Resources:

- [Finance Guidance for State-Funded Preschool \(PDF\)](#) (2018)
- [Early Childhood Education Funding in Colorado \(PDF\)](#) (2017)

- [CPP Carryover Guidance \(PDF\)](#). (2016)
- [Using CPP funding to increase preschool contact hours for children who qualify for special education\(](#)[PDF\)](#). (2016)
- [Guidance on Charging Fees to Students Funded by CPP](#)

[Return to Top](#)

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- or full-day preschool ([C.R.S. 22-28-104.3](#)).

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
- 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 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
- Second year of preschool:
 - 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/ CPP positions may not be used to serve kindergarten age-eligible children in preschool

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

◀ ECARE (Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement)

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