



**TRANSITION
ADVISORY
GROUP**

Welcome

Agenda

- Welcome
- Voices from the field
- Logistics
- Update from subgroups
- Review charge
- Discuss quality and evaluation, workforce, and special education
- Review recommendations to date
- Next steps
- Public comment

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Voices from the Field

**Kaylea Worm
Early Childhood Educator**

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Logistics

Meeting Norms

- Come prepared.
- Mute yourself when not speaking.
- Stay engaged (e.g., actively participate and use the chat function).
- Be mindful of how much “air time” each member receives.
- Always assume good intent.
- All ideas are valued.
- Center equity in all conversations.

Expectations

Every meeting you should expect the following:

- **Via e-mail:**
 - Agenda for meeting
 - Suggested pre-reading
- **In meeting:**
 - Subgroup updates
 - Background information
 - Focused discussion around a specific part of the universal preschool recommendations
 - Closing/next steps

TAG Meeting Schedule

Meetings will take place on Wednesdays from 3–5:30pm MST

Meeting Dates	Key Focus Areas
July 14	–Kick-off meeting: Introductions and mission/vision discussion
August 4	–Movement of programs to new department –Department structure & timeline of move
August 25	–Revisit program movement, funding & timeline –Discussion: local structures & partnerships
September 15	–Complete program review including Special Education –Governance of DEC –Local structures & partnerships –Technology and blending/braiding funds to support unification
September 22	–Revisit governance of DEC –Revisit discussion on local structures & partnerships –Revisit discussion of technology and blending/braiding funding
October 20	–Review transition plan draft –Universal, voluntary preschool preview
November 9	–Review of stakeholder feedback, discuss application & funding flow
November 17	–Discuss funding flow, local partnerships, alignment with other programs, mixed delivery, eligibility and prioritization
December 1	–Discuss quality and evaluation, workforce, and special education
December 15	– Review of draft recommendations for universal preschool

Feedback Form Responses

A reminder about the Feedback Form [responses](#):

- The responses are all shared publicly on the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) website removing all identifying information
- TAG members should review the responses in the feedback form before every meeting
- These responses are valuable input for this stakeholder engagement process

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**Universal Preschool
Recommendations: TAG Charge**

Legislative Requirements

The TWG is charged to provide recommendations for the universal preschool program and ensure they are aligned with the DEC Transition Report. These recommendations must address:

- Alignment with CPP to create one state-wide preschool program
- Alignment with other EC programs to create a streamlined experience
- Process for calculating funding rates and how the rates are designed to support quality preschool programs and the process for distributing money
- Necessary interagency agreements to define the roles and responsibilities of DEC
- Special education: alignment with federal requirements, identification, & accountability in a mixed delivery environment
- Reduction of duplicative oversight

TAG Charge on Universal Preschool

TAG will continue to convene to discuss ideas and recommendations for the new statewide, voluntary preschool program to offer the TWG. These ideas and recommendations will take into consideration the ideas and feedback from subgroups, listening sessions, town halls, and any other engagement.

Themes to be considered:

Application

Funding flow

Local partnerships

Alignment with other programs

Mixed delivery

Eligibility and prioritization for funding

Quality and Evaluation

Workforce

Special Education service delivery

Report Aims

The feedback received ranges from general principles to very specific recommendations. The legislation requires that this report provide DEC with enough guidance and direction to ensure a successful launch of the universal preschool program.

To meet the legislative charge, the report must address the following questions about the basic structure of the new preschool program:

- How should funding flow to families and providers?
- How should families enroll in the preschool program?
- How should eligibility and prioritization for additional hours of care work?

The report must also support DEC and its stakeholders to successfully establish UPK, which includes addressing the remaining implementation themes from the legislation.

To meet this charge, the report should:

- Name values, priorities, and guidance for UPK implementation
- Determine important questions and workstreams for DEC in UPK implementation
- Establish processes and deadlines for DEC to arrive at critical answers, which likely will include consulting or contracting with experts, convening stakeholders, collaborating with other departments, and updating the ECLC and the legislature.

Mission, Vision, Values

Vision

All Colorado children, families, and early childhood professionals are valued, healthy and thriving.

Mission

The Colorado Department of Early Childhood champions a comprehensive, community-informed, effective, high-quality and equitable early childhood system that supports the care, education and well-being of all Colorado's young children, their families and early childhood professionals in all settings.

Values

- We value equity across the early childhood system and are committed to utilizing an equity-focused lens to drive priorities and decision making.
- We believe formal and informal care environments can provide high-quality, developmentally appropriate care and learning.
- We respect and appreciate the diversity and strengths of all of our communities in Colorado.
- We believe accessibility to early childhood services considers affordability, cultural responsiveness, and parent choice.
- We value an innovative and expansive approach to our early childhood system.
- We value a whole-family approach.

Guiding Principles



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**Discussing Quality and
Evaluation**

Quality and Evaluation: Challenges and Feedback

Challenges

- There isn't alignment across program standards and regulations for all funding sources
- Understanding of quality varies across the state and programs
- The system of quality measures that currently exist do not cover all types of providers (ex. FFN)
- QRIS level isn't always an indicator of quality. For example there are high quality sites that choose not to invest beyond a Level 1 (e.g., montessori)

“Providers are only rated every three years, and with high teacher turnover, quality can change day to day”

“the quality of teacher-child interactions should be a key component of program evaluation”

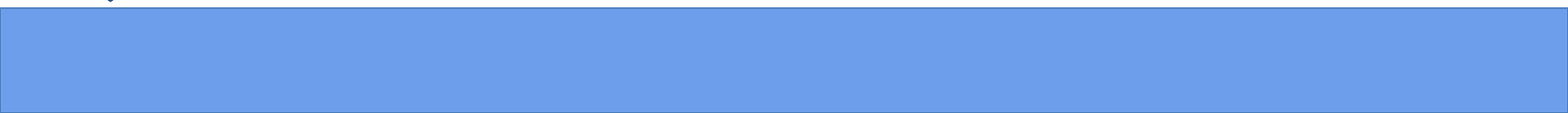
“It is hard to find qualified teachers in rural communities, AA degrees are a great start, BA degrees are even better.”

“Quality rating system should monitor/include child outcomes.”

“high quality [rating] does not always equal high outcomes for families”

“Some funding streams (ex. Head Start) have higher requirements that can be difficult for some providers to meet.”

“selecting a classroom environment tool for evaluation that has a focus on social emotional learning is essential”



Different Quality Standards across Programs

Quality Metric	National Head Start Standards	Current CPP Standards	NIEER Standards
Early learning & development standards	Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF)	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive
Curriculum supports	ELOF Implementation Toolkit	Approval process	Approval process & supports
Teacher degree required	At least an associate's or bachelor's degree in child development or early childhood education or equivalent coursework	Early Childhood Teacher Qualification	BA
Teacher specialized training		Early Childhood Teacher Qualification	Specializing in pre-K
Assistant teacher degree required	CDA credential or a state-awarded certificate	None	CDA or equivalent
Staff professional development	at a minimum 15 hours/year	at a minimum 15 hours/year	At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching
Max class size	20	16 students	20 students
Ratio	1:10, 2:20	1:8	1:10
Screening & referral	Developmental, behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional screener within 45 calendar days	None	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral
Continuous quality improvement	CLASS is used as the tool for ACF visits	Levels 1-2 monitored by District Advisory Council. Structured classroom observations by Shines for Levels 3-5.	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement

EXAMPLE Ratio/Group Size Across Programs

	HS/EHS	CPP	CCCAP	Licensed	License-Exempt
Ratio, Group Size	<p>Regular: <i>Center</i> Months Old 0-36 – 1:4, 9 Mix Maj. 36-47 – 1:9, 17* Mix Maj. 48-60 – 1:10, 20*</p> <p>FCCH** Months Old 0-36 – 1:4, 4, but no more than 2 under 18 mos. 0-60 – 1:6, 12, but no more than 2 under 24 mos. And only 1 other chx under 36 mos. If one teacher OR 4 under 24 mos. If 2 teachers.</p>	1:8, 16 ¹⁰	<p>Licensed Providers = licensing standards</p> <p>Qualified-Exempt from Licensing Related 1:any # chx directly related to provider OR 1:any # of chx directly related to provider + one sibling group unrelated to provider</p> <p>Unrelated 1: any # siblings from one family OR 1:up to 4 chx; BUT, no more than 2 under 2 yrs.¹¹</p>	<p>Center: Months Old 1.5-18 - 1:5, 10 12-24 – 1:5, 10 24-36 – 1:7, 14 30-36 – 1:8, 16 36-48 – 1:10, 20 48-60 – 1:12, 24 60+ - 1:15, 30 Mix 30-72 – 1:10, 20</p> <p>Regular FCCH*: Years Old 0-18 – 1:6, 6 or 8 (only if 2 add'l are school-aged); BUT no more than 2 under 2 yrs.</p> <p>Three under Two FCCH*: <i>Years Olds</i> 0-18 – 1:6, 6, but no more than 3 under 2 yrs., of which no more than 2 under 1 yr.</p>	<p>1:any # directly related to provider and/or siblings from one family unrelated to the provider</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>1:4 chx unrelated or related to provider, but no more than 2 under 2 yrs.^{13*}</p> <p>*Provider's own chx of any age on premises count*</p>

Please click here for the Colorado Shine Brighter Operations [matrix](#) that provides a crosswalk of all early childhood programs. Note that this does not include the most recent licensing changes that go into effect 12/1/21.

Colorado's Quality Rating System

The Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is the system that rates quality and supports the continuous quality improvement for all of Colorado's licensed early care and learning programs serving children ages 0-5.

Programs serving children birth to age 5 receive a rating with the issue of their license, entering the QRIS at a Level 1. From there programs can choose to engage in higher levels 2 through 5.

- Based on 2019-2020 data provided by CDHS-OEC's QRIS teams: Of the sites that participate in QRIS, the majority (75%) have a rating of Level 1 or Level 2.

Districts participating in CPP are required to follow the Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education Services such as CO Shines or NAEYC Accreditation.

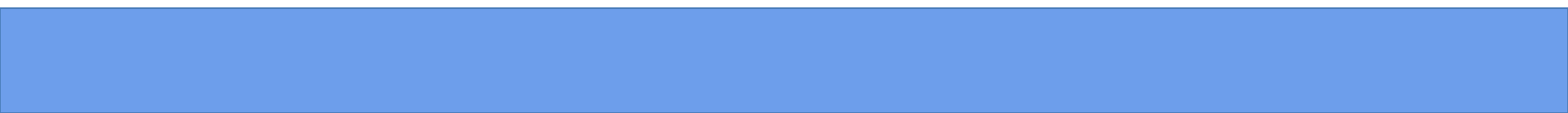
- For CPP: On top of the QRIS, CPP programs are required to use Results Matter assessments to measure child outcomes and progress.

Quality Level	Number of Sites	Percent of Sites
Level 1 (licensed)	1,824	48%
Level 2	1,018	27%
Level 3	191	5%
Level 4	675	18%
Level 5	101	3%
Total	3,809	

Recommendation: Quality and Evaluation

As Colorado scales to universality, DEC will need to review existing regulations and standards to ensure alignment across funding sources

- DEC should review standards from CPP, NIEER, HeadStart, and guidance on BBB to find opportunities to simplify and align as it designs UPK standards
- Where possible, DEC should identify where standards may limit universal access, such as ratios and licensing regulations, and look for solutions
- DEC should establish one single definition of the quality experience children should be having in classrooms regardless of funding source, and align resources and supports to help local communities achieve it
 - Due to the current constraints of the system, DEC should consider a phased approach to quality to support all communities as they seek to scale quality
- DEC should work with local communities and eligible providers to build capacity to meet quality standards
- DEC should contract with an external evaluator to measure the success of UPK, including measuring child outcomes, and provide recommendations to improve the program in future years.



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Discussing Workforce

Workforce: Challenges and Feedback

Challenges

- Colorado faced a loss of about 6.8% of the workforce from 2020 to 2021 alone.
- Although there is a minimum qualification, workforce preparation, and competency varies; agency staff are creating crosswalks for workforce credential qualifications across programs
- The implementation of universal preschool will require a larger workforce than Colorado has ever had to ensure every child gets services

“Lack of workforce/teachers and wages/benefits are not high enough or robust enough to recruit, retain, and support the workforce.”

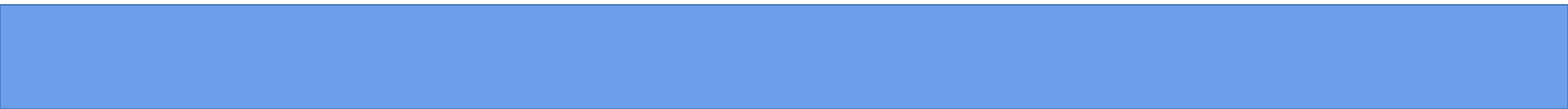
“Long-term: Compensation in all settings is aligned with the local school district pay scale. Short-term: Require a regionally-based recommended compensation target for all providers.”

“The program should include an escalator to quality, so that teachers/providers can gain the necessary trainings and supports to meet the high standards.”

“start with basic, entry-level requirements and ensure that teacher progress in developing strong skills with support and increase their qualifications along degree pathways”

“There are varying professional development requirements some of which are duplicative for teachers who have already earned their BA/MA, and professional development requirements do not guarantee increased compensation or time to complete them.”

“ECE teachers are underpaid and undertrained”



Current Supports for the Workforce

Agency	Supports/ Current Processes
CDHS – OEC	<p>With the state and federal stimulus funding CDHS is focusing efforts on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing workforce retentions grants for licensed child care providers • A new Early Care and Education (ECE) Recruitment and Retention Grant and Scholarship Program in partnership with CDE, CDHE, and CCCS • CCCAP Teacher Salary Increase Pilot • Free ECE 101 and 103 Coursework for 2 years • Establishment of an apprenticeship program in partnership with CDLE • Creating a Teacher Peer Mentorship Program • Develops a free six-hour Director Training Sequence for child care center directors through PDIS • Providing T.E.A.C.H. scholarships and CDA scholarships to provide training scholarships and navigation support • Creating additional online equity courses and translations of courses on PDIS
CDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues the Early Childhood Professional Credential and educator licenses including the early childhood and early childhood special education endorsements • Partners with CDHE to authorize the education preparation programs who offer endorsements needed for educator licenses • Oversees the Educator Effectiveness initiative whose primary goal is to provide meaningful feedback that enables educators to grow as professionals • Co-manages and staffs (with OEC) the Professional Development Information System Help Desk • Manages the Training Alignment Process • Adding an early childhood component to CDE’s existing and growing recruitment and retention work, specifically related to career navigation
CDHE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners with CDE to authorize the education preparation programs who offer endorsements needed for educator licenses • Manages the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) to make postsecondary attainment more accessible and affordable for underserved students. • Student Success and Workforce Revitalization Taskforce • Seeking opportunities to include early childhood in the Teaching Career Pathway and Teacher Recruitment, Education, and Preparation (TREP) program • Diversifying the Educator Workforce – CDE and CDHE convening a workgroup to identify barriers • Credential As You Go Initiative with Colorado, North Carolina and New York to create sub-baccalaureate credentials

Recommendation: Workforce

The Early Childhood profession must be elevated to be respected, valued and seen as integral members of the fabric of communities across the state. To do this, by the launch of UPK, DEC should:

- Find innovative ways to ensure there are enough teachers for the launch of UPK, including:
 - Giving the workforce the support they need (e.g., incentivizing providers to increase pay, providing grants that help compensate the workforce, paying signing bonus, supporting shared services and other innovations to increase availability of benefits)
 - Simplify the process for entering and remaining in the workforce through a credentialing review
- Clearly define the competencies needed by the workforce, and review regulatory barriers to promote attainment of these competencies through identified partners (including Higher Ed pathways), freely available training, and reduced bureaucracy.
- Develop strategies in conjunction with leads from CDHE, CDLE and CDE to sustainably recruit, develop, and incentivize new members of the workforce, including stackable, credit-bearing options.



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Discussing Special Education

Preschool Special Education Services in Colorado

- About 7% of the total 3-5 year old population have an IEP
- Child Find must identify children suspected to be in need of special education
- About 9,000 preschool aged children with an IEP are reported in fall pupil and December 1 Special Education counts
- Another 3,600 children are identified and placed later in the school year, including those exiting Part C at age 3 who are Part B eligible
- FAPE in Colorado for a preschool student is equivalent to 10-12 hours/wk of access to general education preschool curricula

Qualified Special Educators and Special Services Providers Serving Preschoolers

- **Licensed Early Childhood Special Educators (ECSEs)** (492 FTE) certified to provide specialized instruction to support preschoolers on IEPs
 - ECSE Rules [1 CCR 301-101 5.09](#) and ECSE Specialist Rules [1 CCR 301-101 5.05](#)
- CDE Licensed professionals who provide Speech and Language services, or related services to support special education needs are on the staff of a district or AU. **3,691 certified Special Services Providers** (PK-12 FTE)
- **523 Paraprofessionals for 3-5** Special Education
- Special Education Directors, Child Find Coordinators, evaluation team members and other business/fiscal and administrative staff

EXISTING DEC Transition Plan Recommendations

CDE, in partnership with DEC and stakeholders, should utilize the input from the Special Education Service Delivery Subgroup to develop a preschool special education implementation plan to support districts, administrative units, and other providers working in partnership to fulfill the requirements of IDEA and Colorado's ECEA. This plan will include:

- Best practices of mixed delivery currently occurring across Colorado and nationally to provide lighthouse examples;
- Optional training for 619 district coordinators on the legal obligations and opportunities related to mixed delivery for students; and
- Ongoing support for the universal preschool program rulemaking process to ensure it can be easily delivered in compliance with IDEA and in support of all students in all settings.

During the rulemaking process, DEC should collaborate with CDE to ensure that any rules are aligned with ECEA and IDEA, Part B regulations and can be easily delivered in compliance with federal law and in support of all students in all settings.

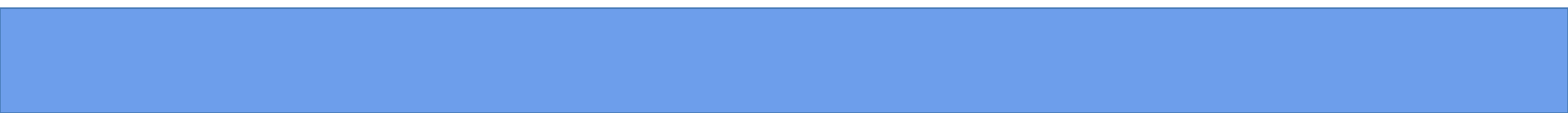
Recommendation: Special Education

This report will likely not suggest any programmatic or structural changes related to the accountability and oversight of special education, but recommends two critical steps that DEC can take to build and strengthen inclusivity and supports for children with disabilities, including:

1. Considering additional funds for children with disabilities in the UPK rate; and
2. Ensuring accountability for strong collaboration between DEC and CDE on special education services delivery and support.

In addition to the recommendations from the Transition Plan, to best support children with identified needs, DEC should:

- Establish clear expectations for supporting children from specific subgroups including children with identified needs and dual language learners, consulting with stakeholders with requisite representation and expertise
- Create an interagency agreement with CDE to ensure all federal regulations are complied with, address all legislative requirements for universal preschool, and eliminate or reduce duplicative regulations



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**Review Recommendations to
Date**

Recommendation

- The recommendations aims to provide DEC with guidance and direction to ensure a successful launch of the universal preschool program.
- These recommendations are a starting point that DEC should use as they prepare for the launch of universal preschool in the 2023–2024 school year. This work will undoubtedly necessitate continual stakeholder engagement, review and evaluation.
- The implementation of universal preschool and these recommendations will come with many challenges that state agencies, local communities, and individual providers will need to address, including workforce shortages, limitations in local capacity, and lack of existing alignment in funding, regulations.
- These recommendations articulates a vision for universal preschool, with investments in infrastructure that will support children for decades to come. While this work may not be implemented seamlessly from the first year of the universal preschool program, these recommendations aim to set a vision for the work ahead.

Recommendation

Based on the values raised in discussions, it became clear that for Colorado's infrastructure investment to best serve the diverse communities across the state it would need:

1. Local leads empowered to solve local challenges, foster partnerships, create alignment among all local entities, and allocate funding equitably in their communities.
2. A strong commitment from DEC to resource local leads and communities and to ensure that Colorado's aligned early childhood vision is executed successfully across the state.

Therefore:

Colorado should create early childhood infrastructure that establishes local leads in each community and calls on DEC to invest in local leadership and capacity including strong investments in infrastructure.

DEC should launch and support local leads as implementation partners in order to deliver a coherent community-based universal preschool program. As local leads are established DEC should fully support and resource local leads to achieve their charge and, if a community is unable, fulfill these responsibilities themselves or through another partner. DEC should work to recruit and build the capacity of a local partner within the first three years of UPK implementation.

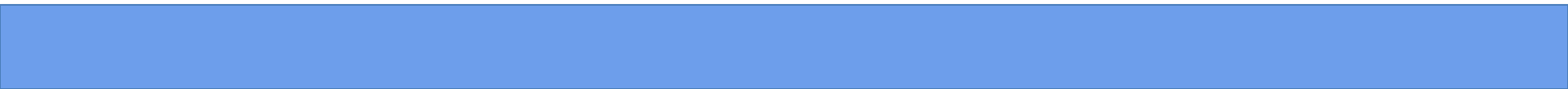
Local Lead

Local leads should be DEC’s partners in each community to help organize the local early childhood landscape and serve as the singular local level point of contact on early childhood in their community.

- The best fit entity could be any public or nonprofit organization, including but not limited to: county, school system, ECC, special taxing district, Head Start grantee, local nonprofit, etc.
- Some local leads may elect to take on larger areas, or multiple areas, while other local contexts may require different choices.

Local leads should bring community partners together -- including schools, child care, Head Start, counties, business, and philanthropy -- to build a unified, long term early childhood plan and to request state-administered early childhood dollars (e.g., Prop EE, Build Back Better) in alignment with that plan.

DEC should support these entities to achieve their purpose, by building the capability and expertise of local leads to meet community needs.



Recommendations

The funding flow model should empower local leaders, provide state flexibility to accommodate local context, and recognize that the DEC should play a strong supporting role for communities. To achieve Colorado’s vision for access to universal preschool:

Funding flow

UPK funding should flow from DEC to a local lead (e.g., county, LEA, ECC, etc.) in each community where possible. DEC should ensure, through its capacity, contracts, and partnerships, that all areas in the state have implementation coverage.

Local partnerships

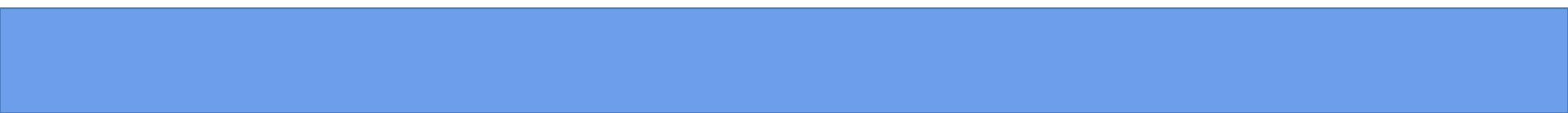
Local leads should be responsible for creating a community plan in collaboration with all local partners. These plans should, at a minimum, ensure all available funding for UPK is accounted for, define a streamlined application & enrollment process across partners, and address capacity needs to achieve UPK for all.

Alignment with other programs

DEC should establish a unified vision for early childhood experiences for children and families, supported by regulatory changes to reduce fragmentation and burdens, that enables local leads to increase alignment and coherence for families and providers.

Mixed delivery

Local plans should account for distributing funding in each community to all providers in an equitable way that matches family demand, adheres to DEC guardrails, and promotes availability of care across ages.



Recommendation: Eligibility & Prioritization of Funding

In order to define eligibility and prioritization for universal preschool funding, DEC should convene both stakeholders and experts to help DEC determine:

- Base per-child rate for UPK
- Weighting for harder to serve populations, including at-risk students, English learners, children in foster care, children experiencing homelessness, and children enrolled in special education
- Regional considerations such as economies of scale in rural areas
- Other additional incentives such as teacher qualifications, implementation of mixed delivery, care for infants and toddlers, and quality

DEC should also ensure:

- The rate does not drop below current CPP state rate for any area of the state
- The rate is kept stable or increases over time to support a stable system
- There is a plan for funding allocation in times of scarcity and excess, including how to ensure the available targeted funds are allocated to meet family needs.
 - DEC should review the current CPP risk factors, as a starting point along with national standards and the needs of the state, to ensure that students who are eligible to access additional services do not lose access.



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December 15	– Review of draft recommendations for universal preschool

A draft of the universal preschool recommendations will be released to the public next week!

TAG will have an opportunity to review these recommendations and offer feedback in the December 15th meeting.

Additional opportunities to provide feedback:

- Thurs Dec 9, 10am–12pm: Universal Preschool Subgroup
- Sat Dec 11, 10am–11:30am: Listening Session
- Mon Dec 13, 10 am–11:30am: Listening Session
- Mon Dec 13, 5:30pm–7pm: Listening Session
- Tues Dec 14, 11:30am–1pm: Listening Session

**Register for all of these sessions on the [ECLC website](#).*

There will also be a feedback form available on the ECLC website. *We ask that all feedback be provided by end of day on December 15th.*

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Public Comment