



**TRANSITION
ADVISORY
GROUP**

Welcome

Agenda

- Welcome
- Voices from the field
- Logistics
- Review draft recommendations
- Discuss feedback on recommendations
- Next steps
- Public comment

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The logo for the Transition Advisory Group features the text "TRANSITION ADVISORY GROUP" in a dark blue, sans-serif font. The text is enclosed within a light blue L-shaped graphic that forms a partial frame around the words.

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Voices from the Field

Kristina Malik, MD

**Reach Out and Read Colorado
Provider Advisory Board Member
Medical Director, KidStreet
Assistant Professor, Children's Hospital
Colorado**

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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
- Transition Advisory Group (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 Transition Working Group (TWG) is charged to provide recommendations for the universal preschool program and ensure they are aligned with the Department of Early Childhood Transition Report. These recommendations must address:

- Alignment with Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) to create one state-wide preschool program
- Alignment with other early childhood 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 the Department of Early Childhood (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 universal preschool (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 ensures the delivery of a comprehensive, community-informed, data-driven, 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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**Draft Universal Preschool
Recommendations**

Recommendation 1: Building and Strengthening Early Childhood Infrastructure

To achieve the goal of a universally available preschool program that helps to prepare all children for school and beyond, Colorado should address its infrastructure needs, including leadership, capacity, workforce, resources, and more. **Colorado should also capitalize on this opportunity for innovation and consider ways to strengthen the entire birth to 5+ system.**

In order to realize this goal, stakeholders emphasized the importance of investing in an infrastructure with:

- 1) Local leads empowered and charged to solve local challenges, foster partnerships, create alignment across all local entities, and allocate funding equitably across providers in their communities.
- 2) A demonstrated commitment from the Department of Early Childhood to provide resources to local leads and communities and to ensure that Colorado's aligned early childhood vision is executed successfully across the state.

Recommendation 1a: Local Leads

Local leads should be the Department of Early Childhood's partners in each area of the state to help organize the local early childhood landscape, **create innovative solutions to meet the needs of their communities**, and serve as the singular local level point of contact on early childhood in their community.

- Local leads should bring community partners together **and establish partnerships** to build a unified, long-term early childhood community plan and to request state-administered early childhood dollars in alignment with that plan. **Local leads should work with all local partners and adhere to DEC guidelines to ensure all voices are at the table.**
- Local leads should be selected through a rigorous application process conducted by DEC, and applications should demonstrate buy-in from other local partners **(e.g. through letters of support from community partners)**.
 - DEC should select the best fit entity to fulfill these duties and hold such entities accountable to fulfill the charge.
 - Any public agency (e.g., a county) or Colorado based nonpublic organization (e.g., an ECC) could apply, **including newly formed organizations, strategic partnerships between organizations, or other locally determined innovations.**

Recommendation 1b: Department of Early Childhood's Role

DEC should clearly define the scope of authority and expectations for local leads, collaborate with them as implementation partners, fully support them, and create an accountability mechanism with clearly delineated responsibilities for them.

- As part of overseeing local leads, DEC should provide contracts, partnerships, training, technical assistance, and resources to local leads, promote collaboration and collective learning, and elevate examples of success from Colorado and nationally.
 - DEC should support each local lead in line with their needs and resource them to achieve self-sufficiency over time.
- If a community is unable to identify an appropriate local lead, DEC should fulfill these responsibilities itself or through another partner.

DEC should also establish a statewide vision for early childhood and align all funding, initiatives, and efforts toward achieving it.

Infrastructure Feedback

- Emphasize that that the local lead must work with all local partners.
- DEC should set guardrails or requirements to make sure funds are equitably distributed in all communities without bias.
- Local lead application should be rigorous and require community buy in.
- Ensure that the local lead's role is comprehensive and defined enough that providers and families still don't have to go to multiple entities (e.g., clarifying they are responsible for birth and beyond, so families don't have to go to counties for CCCAP)
- Emphasize that existing infrastructure should be leveraged to reduce duplication of efforts
- Concern that some communities will not have sufficient resources to fulfill the role of a local lead.
- Questions about how money flows and what money the local lead is responsible for distributing.
- Consideration if multiple entities or a partnership could serve as a local lead.

Recommendation 2: Universal Preschool Application

DEC should work to develop a single, unified application for families to access universal preschool **and comprehensive early childhood services** that is equitable and streamlines the enrollment and eligibility process for both families and early childhood providers.

This application should:

- **Include all publicly-funded, comprehensive early childhood services from birth to school aged.**
- Be designed with the user experience in mind and offer families a simple and engaging interface.
- Collect only as much information from families as necessary for universal preschool enrollment.
 - Families who need additional funding should also be able to fill out information to determine eligibility for other services.
 - There should be easily integratable and interoperable technology that verifies eligibility for additional funding by checking against other programs families may already be eligible for or utilizing

DEC should develop an implementation plan with all necessary partners to ensure that at a minimum this application is functional for universal preschool by 2023.

Application Feedback

- Ensure application includes comprehensive early childhood services
- Concern about indicating a phased approach to expanding application for comprehensive service. Should set a vision and then DEC should create implementation plan.
- Make it clear that if a family just wants universal preschool, it will be easy for them to access just that.
- Ensure that it is clear to families that they can access more than just universal preschool through the application and that they understand their options.
- Local communities should be able to adapt application to fit the needs of their community or any additional programming in their region.

Recommendation 3: Eligibility and Prioritization for Funding

DEC should work with stakeholders and experts to create a base rate for universal preschool and additional adjustments or incentives to ensure access for all children that can build upon the base rate.

This rate must balance the tensions between universally funding quality for 10 hours a week and providing additional hours for Colorado's children with greatest needs.

These additional adjustments can include:

- Weighting for underserved populations, including children experiencing risk factors, dual language learners, children in foster care, children experiencing homelessness, and children receiving special education services.
- Regional considerations such as economies of scale in rural areas.
- Potential for half-day or full-day spots.
- Any other additional incentives such as teacher qualifications, implementation of mixed delivery, care for infants and toddlers, and quality.

Recommendation 3: Eligibility and Prioritization for Funding (Cont.)

In the process of determining eligibility and prioritization, DEC should also ensure:

- Current Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) funding is integrated into universal preschool funding, and, **at a minimum**, total funding for preschool does not drop below current levels, including keeping current funding for in-need three year old access consistent.
- The universal preschool rate is not tied to the school finance formula and reflects differences in risk factors, regional needs, and special education services.
- The universal preschool rate is kept stable or increases over time to support a reliable 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.

When allocating additional funding for full-day services, DEC should review the current CPP risk factors, needs of the state, and national standards as a starting point to determine eligibility to ensure students who are eligible for additional services do not lose that access.

Eligibility and Prioritization Feedback

- Need for clarification around the fact that this is eligibility and prioritization for additional hours as the universal preschool legislation guarantees every child 10 hours of preschool per week
- Desire for clarification around whether total funding for CPP wont drop or whether per-child won't drop.
- Set a floor rather than a ceiling funding—state that current level of funding should be a minimum.
- When risk factors are reviewed, the variance of need across different types of communities should be considered
- Recommendation to add incentives for programs who provide wrap around services
- Consider prioritization for single parent families

Recommendation 4: Quality and Evaluation

To support a **high-quality universal, voluntary preschool program**, DEC should:

- Review standards from CPP, National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), Head Start, and guidance on any new federal preschool funding to find opportunities to simplify and align as it designs standards for the universal preschool program (e.g., screening referrals, ratios, class size, teacher degrees)
- Contract with an external evaluator to measure the success of universal preschool, including measuring child outcomes, and provide recommendations to improve the program in future years.

To create a **quality, unified early childhood system**, DEC should:

- Establish a single set of standards for the quality experience children should be having in classrooms regardless of funding source **or setting**, and align resources and supports to help local communities achieve it;
- Consider a phased approach to quality to support all communities as they seek to scale quality, due to the current constraints of the system;
- Create free and widely accessible professional development on the early learning and development guidelines; and
- Work with local leads and eligible providers to build capacity to meet quality standards.

Throughout these processes, DEC should engage with a representative group of stakeholders, including all types of providers, to inform program standards and quality improvement.

Quality and Evaluation Feedback

- Concern that the definitions of quality will continue to not be inclusive of different types of programs
- Need for clarification on role of DEC versus local lead in quality
- Quality and evaluation methods should not be burdensome for providers.
- Desire for further stakeholder engagement as DEC takes on these processes.
- Many recommendations on tools or standards that DEC should consider as it sets the requirements for universal preschool.
 - DEC should consider recommending the implementation of a research-validated, comprehensive curriculum and its companion comprehensive child assessment tool.
 - DEC should support formal training on whatever quality system they implement
 - DEC should consider ongoing monitoring as a tool for success.
 - DEC should consider universal vision, hearing, and health screenings as a quality standard

Recommendation 5: Workforce

To successfully launch universal preschool by 2023, DEC will require a strong early childhood workforce. DEC should build on the ongoing work of the ECLC, Office of Early Childhood, Department of Higher Education (CDHE), and Department of Education (CDE), and should:

- Immediately focus funding resources on ensuring there are enough workforce members available to work on day one of universal preschool implementation and that they are appropriately compensated, while also ensuring continued access for all ages before preschool and addressing shortages across the age continuum.
- Review the current workforce qualification pathways to create a simple process for the workforce and providers to attain credentials and qualifications.
 - Ensure the process for joining the early childhood workforce is welcoming and there are minimal barriers to entry, including being thoughtful about those who speak additional languages.
 - Consider how to recruit and incentivize different populations (e.g., high school students, teachers from other countries, parents) and reduce the barriers that prevent them from joining the workforce.
 - Consider an induction model that could decrease the time it takes to get a teacher in a classroom by using an onboarding process to meet regulations and requirements.

Recommendation 5: Workforce (Continued)

- Clearly articulate the most recently revised competencies needed by the workforce, align the system of training, and review regulatory barriers to promote attainment of these competencies through identified partners, including higher education pathways.
- Develop and share evidence-based strategies in conjunction with leads from CDHE, CDE, and the Department of Labor and other organizations to sustainably recruit, compensate, develop, and incentivize new members of the workforce.
 - Align available supports for teachers across programs, contracts, and funding streams, and fund additional evidence-based supports.
 - Implement strategies to increase compensation, with a goal to reach a liveable wage (e.g., incentivizing providers to increase providing grants that help compensate the workforce, paying signing bonuses, supporting shared services, and other innovations to increase availability of benefits).
 - Create free and widely accessible professional development on the Colorado early learning and development guidelines once reviewed and adopted by DEC.
 - Increase access to professional development to attain these competencies through freely available training, reduced bureaucracy, and increased options for stackable, credit-bearing and work-based learning opportunities.

Workforce Feedback

- Strong emphasis on making sure that **all** members of the early childhood workforce are getting paid a liveable wage
- Desire to make sure that language is clear so that we don't draw people out of infant and toddler care into preschool classrooms
- Need to focus on supports for the entire workforce, not just preschool teachers
- Add in language about importance of career navigators for early childhood professionals.
- Add in language about the importance of coaching and mentoring
- Concern about equity between different types of providers' pay
- Need to balance high quality credentials for workforce with supply, so that there are enough staff for all classrooms.

Recommendation 6: Special Education

The Transition Working Group's recommendations related to special education as detailed in the Department of Early Childhood Transition Plan, including that the Colorado Department of Education should continue to administer IDEA Part B, are also relevant for the implementation of universal preschool.

While this report does not suggest any programmatic or structural changes related to accountability and oversight of special education, it does recommend two critical steps DEC can take to build and strengthen inclusivity and supports for children with disabilities, including:

1. Considering additional funding for children with disabilities in the universal preschool program rate; and
2. Ensuring strong collaboration between DEC and CDE on special education service delivery, including that both agencies support the implementation of inclusive classrooms for children with special needs.

Recommendation 6: Special Education (Continued)

To best support children with special needs, DEC should:

- Establish clear expectations for supporting children **with special needs**, consulting with stakeholders with requisite representation and expertise
- Create an interagency agreement(s) with CDE as soon as possible to:
 - Define the roles and responsibilities of the two departments, local education agencies, and all types of preschool providers;
 - Ensure data collection and sharing such that all critical data can be disaggregated;
 - Support programs and communities to provide inclusive, individualized, meaningful, culturally relevant, active and participatory learning for all children;
 - Determine how community-based programs providers will be held accountable for providing access and supports in implementing a mixed-delivery preschool program.
 - Ensure the new preschool program's requirements are integrated with the existing requirements local education agencies have for the provision of special education services;
 - Ensure all federal regulations are complied with;
 - Eliminate or reduce duplicative regulations; and
 - Ensure they are addressing all legislative requirements for universal preschool

Special Education Feedback

- Make it clear in this section that the recommendation is only about special education.
- Since the law calls for mixed delivery, DEC should ensure with CDE and other partners that all laws and regulations are complied with in all settings where children with special needs are served.
- Desire for universal developmental screening to strengthen the system around child find, referrals, and transitions.
- Desire for increased training on inclusive practices for special education service delivery so that professionals are well equipped to care for all children.

General Feedback

- Use tighter language when referring to children with special needs versus special populations
- Ensure equity across age groups. Make strong references to comprehensive services from birth to five and beyond
- Use the moment of universal preschool and these recommendations to create change for the entire early childhood system where possible
- Ensure these recommendations are compatible with potential federal investments where possible
- More clearly delineate between when recommendations relate to universal preschool versus the entire birth to 5+ system.
- Need to ensure that DEC begins planning and implementation immediately to allow communities time for ramp up before universal preschool starts

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Closing/Next Steps

What Comes Next?

- By Jan. 1, 2022, TWG must submit the completed universal preschool recommendations to the ECLC.
- By Jan. 15, the universal preschool recommendations, as approved by the ECLC, must be submitted to the Governor; the Public and Behavioral Health and Human Services Committee and the Education Committee of the House of Representatives; and the Health and Human Services Committee and the Education Committee of the Senate.



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Updates from Governor's Office

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Public Comment



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THANK YOU!