



COLORADO
Department of Education

Monthly Meeting

Implementing Special Education for Preschoolers in UPK

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August 8, 2023

Meeting Intentions



- Monthly virtual meeting - Second Tuesday of every month
- Audience: AU and LEA Special Education Directors, EC administrators, Fiscal representatives
- Facilitated by CDE with field input in agenda planning, content and feedback loop, CDEC UPK staff invited
- Meant to be responsive, proactive, needs based & solution focused
- Meeting scope: Implementing Special Education for Preschoolers within the UPK landscape



Today's Topics



1. Child Find and UPK
2. FAPE and UPK
3. Direct Placement Process to Align UPK with the IEP
 - a. Including children outside standard age range (less than 3yrs & Kinder Elig)
4. CDE Updates

Child Find & UPK



What is Child Find?

- The term Child Find means the *affirmative*, ongoing obligation of each Administrative Unit to identify, locate, and evaluate any child residing within its boundaries who is *suspected of having a disability and who may need special education and related services* to access and make progress in the general education curriculum.
- The Child Find obligation applies to children, ages 3-21, including those who:
 - attend private schools within the AU's boundaries [including private preschools]
 - are homeschooled
 - live in highly mobile families (e.g., foster care, homeless, migrant, military-connected)
 - are advancing from grade to grade
 - have dropped out or discontinued their education

34 C.F.R. § 300.111; ECEA Rule 4.02(2)



When is the AU required to act on its Child Find obligation?

- When the AU has *reason to suspect* that:
 - The child has a qualifying disability under IDEA; and
 - The disability has an educational impact such that the child needs specially designed instruction to access the general education curriculum.
- If the AU suspects the child has a disability, it must request consent from parents to conduct a special education evaluation.
- If a **parent or CDEC program** requests a special education evaluation, the AU has two choices:
 - If the AU agrees that the child may have a disability, it must request parental consent to evaluate.
 - If the AU does not have reason to suspect that the child may have a disability, it may refuse the request to evaluate.
 - In both situations, the AU must issue prior written notice explaining its decision to either evaluate or refuse to evaluate. 34 C.F.R. § 300.503; ECEA Rule 4.02(3)

Prior Written Notice Requirements

- The AU must provide parents with prior written notice (PWN) whenever it proposes or refuses to initiate a special education evaluation.
- PWN must include:
 - A description of the action it proposes or refuses to take (e.g., special education evaluation)
 - A explanation of why it proposes or refuses to take the action
 - A description of all the information (e.g., each evaluation, procedure, record, or report) it relied on as a basis to propose or refuse to take action
 - Description of other options considered and why those options were rejected
 - A description of other factors relevant to the proposal or refusal
 - A copy of the procedural safeguards notice that explains parental rights
 - Sources for parents to contact for assistance in understanding the notice

34 C.F.R. § 300.503



PWN Practice Tips

- The notice should provide sufficient detail so that parents understand precisely what the AU is proposing (or refusing) to do and why.
- The notice should provide a *thorough and detailed* description of all the information the AU relied on in making its decision.
- If the AU is refusing parent's request for evaluation, the AU should consider providing PWN in a detailed letter rather than use a model form.
- Remember: PWN must be written in language that is understandable to the "general public," including translation into parent's native language or mode of communication if appropriate. 34 C.F.R. § 503(c)



Updated Guidance on FAPE in Preschool

Free and Appropriate Public Education

FAPE means special education and related services provided to a child with a disability *at public expense and under public supervision and direction*. FAPE must be provided through an individualized education program (IEP) that is developed consistent with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and meets the educational standards of the CDE. *FAPE is provided at no cost to parents.*

34 C.F.R. § 300.17



FAPE for Preschool Special Education Students -

Updated CDE guidance coming soon

- Although the UPK Act sets funding standards for instructional hours, FAPE for each preschool child is determined by the child's IEP team and must not be defined by the amount and availability of funding provided by CDEC.
- Students with disabilities are expected to receive a preschool education commensurate with what the public system makes available to their nondisabled peers. From a practical standpoint, this means that *most preschool students* with IEPs will attend a *regular preschool classroom* for the same amount of time as their nondisabled peers.

FAPE for Preschool Special Education

Students - Updated guidance coming soon

- Because FAPE must be individually determined, a preschool student with a disability may require more or less instructional time than the standard hours offered by the local preschool program.
- The assignment of a child to a specific location (provider, building, classroom, or teacher) may be an administrative determination of the AU as long as it is consistent with ECEA requirements.
- Each preschool child's IEP team must determine what is appropriate based on the child's unique strengths and needs, not on available funding or the needs or convenience of the administrative unit or local preschool program.

Conclusion



- Start/continue services to ensure FAPE, apart from any Bridgecare or funding decisions or barriers.
- CDEC has committed to working through Bridgecare issues after the fact to ensure appropriate funding for students with IEPs, in alignment with the child's IEP.



Access to Bridgecare Reports and Direct Placements in UPK



Access to Bridgecare Report

Director of Record has access to Bridgecare report

- Reassign or add access to up to 5 others in your AU
- [AU Reassignment Request Form](#) (must be made by Director)
- Reminder: This report does not include three-year-olds

Create an account using the [UPK Colorado Admin Login Guide](#)

Use the [Training Guide](#) to access reports for your AU



Ensure Alignment between UPK Program and IEP

1. **Review the report**
2. **If changes to UPK placements are needed [submit this Google form](#)**
 - Families with questions or concerns about whether Bridgecare/UPK is aligned to their child's IEP are sent to the AU Director (or their delegate)
 - LCOs do not make or adjust UPK placements for children with IEPs
 - The LCO is using the [Find your special education director](#) to identify the appropriate Director and provides the contact information to the family

Children with IEPs

UPK Eligibility for “Additional Hours”

Children who meet the Income and IEP Qualifying factors:

- *May access up to 30 hours per week (“full day”) when a program is available where the child’s IEP can be implemented*
- Covers the program required by the IEP, *plus supplemental hours* to a full day
- To increase to full day, the AU would have to identify a program with availability where the child’s IEP can be implemented
- Not all providers offer full-day programming and not all providers can implement a student’s IEP
- Full day funding will continue to be awarded throughout the school year to children with IEPs who meet the low income factor, when the AU has placed the student in a full day program

Children who have an IEP but not Income as a Qualifying Factor:

- Families were told: If a child’s IEP requires more than 15 hours, contact the special education director to discuss placement that aligns with the student’s IEP.



Children Prior to Age 3 or Kinder Eligible Who Need to Submit a Bridgecare Application

AU will:

- Contact CDEC to initiate the application
 - Workaround is needed as these children are outside the standard eligibility age ranges
 - Exploring long-term solutions, but for now submit these requests via the [IEP placements Google form](#)
- Provide CDEC: Child first and last name, child DOB, home address, parent/guardian first and last name, email address and/or phone number and program name
- Support families in completing the application, as needed

CDEC will:

- Create the application and inform the parent/guardian and the AU when the application has been created
 - Family not required to make additional application edits unless they want to be considered for additional hours funding
- Make the placement in Bridgecare according to the AU request



AU Office Hours for UPK Placement

Please join CDEC's UPK team for AU Office Hours

Thursday, August 10 · 4:00 – 4:30 pm

Google Meet Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/btw-aoxa-zjc>

Use this email to request a change: cdec_upk-program@state.co.us



CDE Updates



Change to IEP form - Integrated Preschool

This short section provided a description of the integrated preschool education program and the hours per week that the integrated program was provided.

- It has been removed from the state recommended IEP form
- This was on the previous forms as a reference to the .5 PPR from school finance that was available in the past
- We would advise contacting the vendor who provides your online IEP to request an update by removing this section from your IEPs
- In the interim while waiting on vendors to remove the section, any new IEPs that are developed should use a brief statement in this section indicating that this section is no longer applicable as preschool funding has changed

GENERAL EDUCATION PRESCHOOL SERVICES	
Description	Hours Per Week
<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Education Program	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	

Results Matter Webinar Prep for 2023-24 school year



Webinar on August 29, 2023 from 2:30 to 3:00 pm

The CDE Early Childhood Special Education Team will be hosting a webinar with information about beginning of the year tasks for Results Matter (RM) that will improve systems for progress monitoring for OSEP Indicator 7 and Preschool Outcomes.

Administrators are encouraged to attend to understand the process of OSEP checkpoint ratings and how to ensure that every child with an IEP is properly entered into the online tools.

Register at this link - [Managing Your Preschool Outcomes OSEP Reporting Process Fall 2023 Webinar.](#)

Monthly Meeting Schedule for 23-24 School Year

**Second Tuesday of each month
from 2 - 3 p.m.**

[Zoom link \(register\)](#)

[Submit a request of a meeting topic
or question](#) prior to each meeting
date

Dates:

Aug 8, 2023
Sep 12, 2023
Oct 10, 2023
Nov 14, 2023
Dec 12, 2023
Jan 9, 2024
Feb 13, 2024
Mar 12, 2024
Apr 9, 2024
May 14, 2024
Jun 11, 2024



Thank you

