

Kindergarten Funding in Colorado: Explained

Options for State Funding FY2016-17

While the State of Colorado does not currently fund universal full-day kindergarten, many public funding streams are available to support half- and full-day kindergarten. Funding sources vary by school district. This fact sheet is intended to help school districts understand all public funding sources for kindergarten in Colorado.

Base + Supplemental Kindergarten Funding

All school districts receive an additional 0.08 FTE above and beyond the base 0.5 FTE for all eligible kindergarteners, regardless of half- or full-day status. Therefore, all eligible kindergarteners, in the absence of any other funding, receive 0.58 FTE. While the State does not currently fund universal full-day kindergarten, the additional 0.08 FTE is intended to provide an incentive for school districts to provide full-day kindergarten.

Hold Harmless Kindergarten Funding

From 1995 to 2007, Colorado school districts were permitted to use a portion of their Colorado Preschool Program slots for kindergarteners. When this allowance ceased in 2008, the General Assembly decided to hold harmless districts that were using slots for kindergarteners in the previous year. Therefore, about 30% of the districts have a permanent hold harmless kindergarten allocation in addition to the Colorado school finance formula.

In order to receive hold-harmless funding, eligible districts must use grade code 007 (not 006) in Student October count and they must also use an eligible funding code such as 80, 82, or 83. Eligible districts will receive hold harmless funding up to the number of kindergarten slots they originally used under the CPP program in 2007. For example, a district with a hold harmless kindergarten allocation of 30 will receive hold harmless funding only up to 30 children even if 35 are counted as full-day kindergarteners.

Districts who receive hold harmless funding will receive an additional 0.42 FTE to support full day kindergarten. In most cases, this amounts to 1.00 total FTE (0.42 hold harmless FTE + 0.5 base FTE + 0.08 supplemental FTE). However, hold harmless funding may be combined with ECARE slots for additional FTE. Therefore, any districts with hold harmless kindergarten funding who also use ECARE slots for kindergarten would receive 1.58 FTE for each child up to the maximum hold harmless funding allocated. After counting the maximum number of eligible children for hold harmless funding, any additional children counted with ECARE slots receive 1.08 FTE (see next section for more details).

Hold harmless funding allocations can be found at the link under “Where can I learn more?” below.



ECARE Funding

In 2013, the Colorado General Assembly expanded the Colorado Preschool Program by several thousand additional slots, otherwise known as the “Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement” (ECARE). ECARE slots, unlike traditional CPP slots, can be used flexibly by school districts to serve half-day preschoolers, full-day preschoolers, or full-day kindergarteners. Districts who use their ECARE slots for full-day kindergarten will receive 1.08 FTE per eligible child (0.5 base FTE + 0.08 supplemental + 0.5 ECARE FTE). Any districts with hold harmless kindergarten funding who also use ECARE slots for kindergarten would receive 1.58 FTE for each child up to the maximum hold harmless funding. After counting the maximum number of eligible children for hold harmless funding, any additional children counted with ECARE slots receive 1.08 FTE.

ECARE slot allocations can be found at the link under “Where can I learn more?” below.

Note: as of 2016-17 school year, ECARE slots may be used to fund children who qualify for CPP who are also on an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

READ Act Funding

As part of the READ Act, the Early Literacy Fund provides per-pupil intervention funds to help school districts meet the needs of students identified with a significant reading deficiency. Per-pupil intervention funds may be used to provide full-day kindergarten, scientifically or evidence based interventions, summer school literacy programs, and/or tutoring services. Districts interested in using per pupil intervention funds for full-day kindergarten must ensure all students identified as having significant reading deficiencies are served first before providing full-day services to other students. The purpose of per pupil intervention funds is to provide additional support services necessary for improving reading outcomes for students at risk for reading difficulty. This means districts using funds for this purpose must ensure interventions are provided to students in accordance with their individual READ plans.

Where can I learn more?

- Hold Harmless Funding Allocations: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/publicschoolfinanceactof1994-fy2016-17>
Row 317 (Hold Harmless Half-day Kindergarten Pupil Count) of District Funding Calculation Worksheet
- ECARE Slot Allocations: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cpp/allocations.htm>
- READ Act Information: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy>
- View all CDE fact sheets: www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheetsandfaqs