

**Summit County Child Care Tuition Assistance FAQ's**  
**Summit First Steps: Ages 0-3 & Summit PreK: Ages 3-5**

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**How do monthly Tuition Credit payments work?**

Tuition credits are given to assist families with the cost of preschool and are paid directly to the participating preschool program, childcare center or family child care provider on behalf of the eligible child(ren).

**We have been awarded tuition credit but need to make a change to our child care schedule. How will that impact our tuition credit?**

Changes to schedules are discouraged as they impact Child Care program's operations and staffing and may impact your amount of tuition credit; However, if your Provider does approve a change to your regular child care schedule, you are required to notify the Program Administrator by the 15th of the previous month for tuition credit adjustments to be calculated based on your new schedule. We will not make mid-month adjustments to the child care schedule.

**What age group is Summit First Steps for?**

Eligible children are ages 0-3;

Eligible Birthdate Range: Present day- October 2, 2023. You must apply during the Open Enrollment period in the Spring of 2026 for the Program Year of September 2026– August 2027. Register at <https://eco1.smapply.org/>

**What age group is SPK for?**

Eligible children MUST be 4 or 5 years old by October 1, 2026.

Eligible Birthdate Range: 10/2/2021-10/1/2023. You must apply during the Open Enrollment period in the Spring of 2026 for the Program Year of September 2026 – August 2027. Register at <https://eco1.smapply.org/>

**We are thinking of holding our child from starting Kindergarten.**

We serve children who are **not** kindergarten age eligible. Children must be three or four years old on or before October 1st of the school year you are applying for. (Example: For the 2026-27 School Year, children must be 3-4 years old by October 1, 2027).

Be sure to check with your provider for availability and their own program policies.

**[Colorado's School Readiness Description](#)**

School readiness describes both the preparedness of a child to engage in and benefit from learning experiences, and the ability of a school to meet the needs of all students enrolled in publicly funded kindergarten. School readiness is enhanced when schools, families, and community service providers

work collaboratively to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning in academic content. *State Board of Education, 2023.*

**Our child is enrolled in 2 programs, how will tuition credits work?**

Once your application is processed, you will receive an email with the percentage of tuition credit for each program you are eligible for. The email will also include the parent fee for each program.

**We are behind on our childcare payments.**

Childcare providers are required to notify us if a family has tuition debt. Families will only be eligible to continue participation in the program if they have a written payment plan agreed upon by both parties.

**We split custody of our child. How should we apply?**

There are 2 options:

**Option #1:** A parent may apply individually if they include their custody agreement in their application. The credit will be for the number of days the child is in their custody. If custody is split 50/50, each parent's tuition assistance credit will be applied to their respective half of the total monthly tuition. Each parent will be responsible for their portion of the remaining balance after their individual tuition assistance award is applied.

**Option #2:** Parents can apply together, and we will consider both incomes. We will consider all the days the child is in childcare regardless of what day either parent has custody.

**We are expecting a baby after the annual enrollment deadline, can we still apply?**

First, congratulations on your pregnancy or adoption plans! To apply for tuition assistance during the annual enrollment period, the baby's due date (or expected adoption date) must be written on the original application along with an expected start date at one of the participants licensed childcare programs for the child. You may begin receiving an award for tuition assistance once your child begins care at one of the participating programs. Please make sure to contact the Child Care Program Administrator by the 15th of the month before you expect your child to start attending childcare to confirm that your paperwork is complete.

**I'm afraid my W2s, paystubs, and taxes don't accurately reflect my income, what can I do?**

Feel free to include a letter of explanation with your application that will help us better understand your current situation. Be sure to include seasonal employment in the comment section of the application. And you can also add additional income explanation to other upload sections within your application.

**Why does the Summit County Child Care Tuition Assistance use gross income for their calculations?**

To keep the playing field fair for all households in any employment situation we use gross income. Using your net income or even your taxable gross income could provide some households with an additional benefit since they have other programs like 401ks or insurance reducing their annual taxable income.

For more information call 970-406-3060 or [summitprek@earlychildhoodoptions.org](mailto:summitprek@earlychildhoodoptions.org)