

# Summit County Tuition Assistance



A Summit County Strong Future Initiative Annual Report for the 2024/2025 School Year



**Dear Friends and Partners,**

Our Tuition Assistance program ran smooth this year with a few exciting projects that were completed. We are grateful for our sponsors: Summit County Government, Town of Blue River, Town of Breckenridge, Town of Dillon, Town of Keystone, and the Town of Silverthorne for their continued support in our program. It is truly remarkable to see a collaborative approach to providing this infrastructure for your youngest community members and their families.

We had two major accomplishments for this program year:

- Open Arms located at Farmer’s Korner was able to achieve a Level 5 Quality Rating for their program. Level 5 is the highest award given to programs through our state rating system of Colorado Shines. Achieving this rating took an immense amount of dedication from their staff and families, we here at ECO are extremely proud of their efforts that it took to receive this Level 5 rating.
- Timberline Learning Center, located in Breckenridge, was able to expand their enrollment with the addition of a toddler classroom with the help from the Town of Breckenridge. This site was able to offer 12 families additional child care with this expansion that had an official ribbon cutting in February 2025.

We had a record number of applications and awards going out to families this year, making sure to utilize all assistance dollars possible. It takes a lot of work to ensure this program runs smoothly for the families. These efforts behind the scenes do not go unnoticed. Thank you to all our staff and partners for their dedicated collaboration to make it all happen.

Next year we will be working to campaign for reauthorization for Strong Future Funding, as of now we are funded through 2028. Be on the lookout for more impact briefs from the past years of programming.

We look forward to continuing our mission of improving the quality, affordability, and accessibility of early childhood education in Summit County.



Catherine Schaaf  
Executive Director, Early Childhood Options



# Summit County by the Numbers



## 11 Years

The average numbers of years First Steps & SPK families have lived in Summit County.

## 51% First Steps & 55% Summit PreK

The average percentage of credits families qualified for which ranges from 5% to 100%.

## 706 children or 55% of this age group

The number of Summit County early learners (ages 0-4) enrolled in school or child care. 74% of these children are fully or partially funded by Summit County Tuition Assistance and/or in combination with funding the funding sources below.

**Head Start:** a federally funded program that provides early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and families. Head Start programs are available at no cost to eligible families.

- **Head Start** (ages 3-5): 22 children enrolled at 4 Summit School District schools and 13 children enrolled at 4 Community Based Child Care Centers: Lake Dillon Preschool (3), Carriage House (4), Wildflower Nature School (2) and Summit County Preschool (4).
- **Early Head Start** (ages 0-3): 14 children enrolled at 4 Community Based Child Care Centers: Lake Dillon Preschool (2), Carriage House (4), Wildflower Nature School (2) and Summit County Preschool (6).
- **Early Head Start & Clayton Early Learning:** As an Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) grantee, Clayton Early Learning partners with child care programs in Denver, San Luis Valley/Alamosa, Eagle and Summit Counties to provide resources and support the delivery of comprehensive services for families and children ages birth to 3 years. Summit County has 11 children enrolled in this program at 2 Community Based Child Care Centers: Lake Dillon Preschool (6) & Summit County Preschool (5).

### **Colorado Universal Preschool (UPK):**

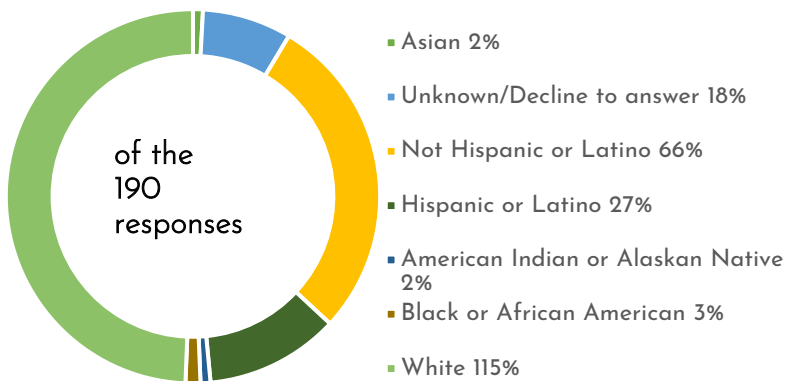
- Locally managed by **Early Childhood Options** & the Summit County Government
- Total 23-24 payments: \$1,341,603.74\*
- Total Children Served: 236\*

\*Please note this is for PY 23-24, awaiting 24-25 data

**The Summit County Child Care Assistance Program:** provides financial assistance to eligible families for child care costs. From September 2024 - August 2025 Summit County CCCAP served an average of 56 children a month for a total of \$750,234 for the 12-month period: an average of \$62,519 per month. Please note: this data is for all children Summit County CCCAP serves, in home and centers, as breaking out 0-5-year-olds is not available.

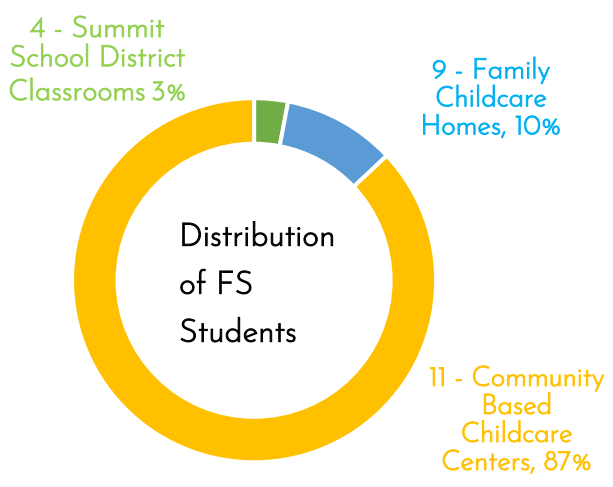
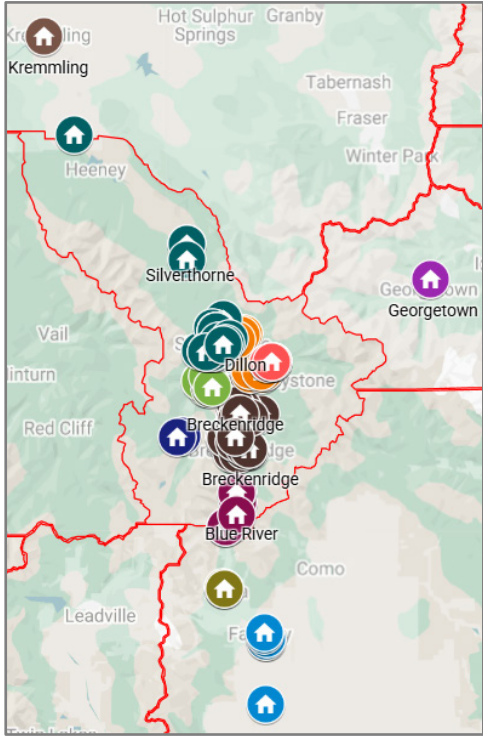
# First Steps WHO WE SERVE

## Race & Ethnicity of First Steps Students



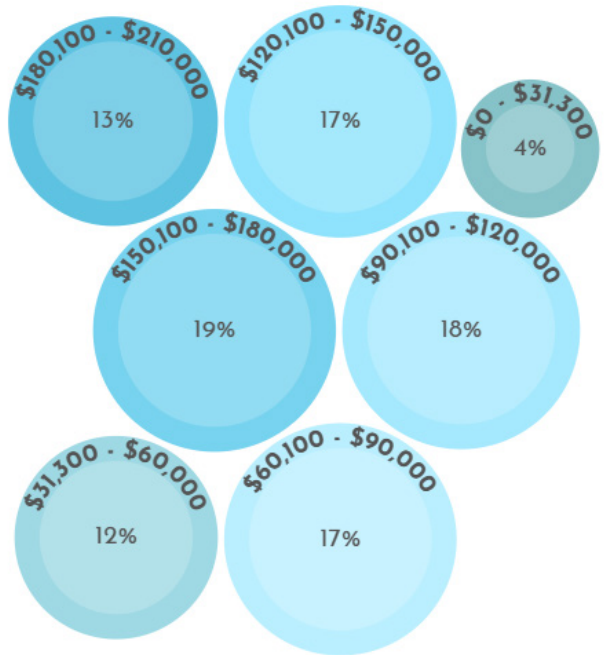
## Where First Steps Families Live

- Breckenridge - 32%
- Silverthorne - 30%
- Dillon - 16%
- Frisco - 7.2%
- Blue River - 4.6%
- Fairplay - 3.6%
- Keystone - 3.1%
- Alma - 1.5%
- Copper Mountain - 1%
- Georgetown - 0.5%
- Kremmling - 0.5%



## First Steps Families Annual Salary Range Based on Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Percentages

In 2024, the minimum sufficient income for a family of 4 was \$31,200 according to federal governmental standards

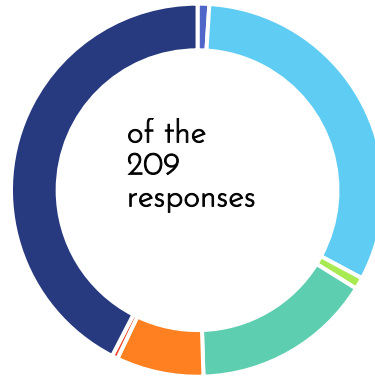


“Early environments play a large role in shaping later outcomes. Skill begets skill and learning begets more learning. Early advantages accumulate; so do early disadvantages. Later remediation of early deficits is costly, and often prohibitively so.”

-- *Dr. James Heckman, 2000 Nobel Laureate in Economics & Director of the Center for the Economics of Human Development at the University of Chicago.*

# Summit Pre-K WHO WE SERVE

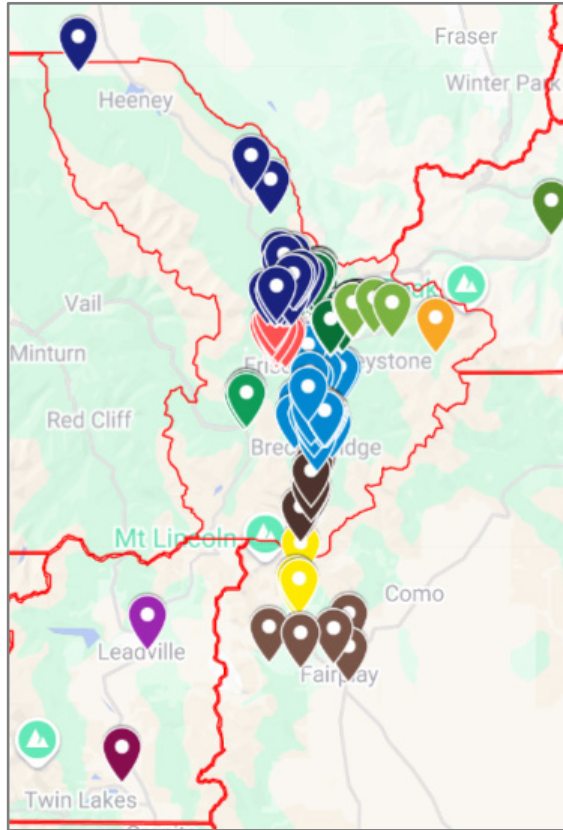
## Race & Ethnicity of Summit Pre-K Students



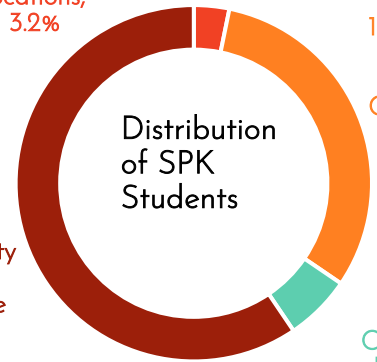
- Asian - 2%
- Not Hispanic or Latino - 63%
- Black or African American - 2%
- Hispanic or Latino - 31%
- Unknown/Decline to answer - 15%
- American Indian or Alaskan Native - 1%
- White - 84%

## Where Summit Pre-K Families

- Silverthorne - 29%
- Breckenridge - 26.1%
- Dillon - 20.5%
- Frisco - 8%
- Keystone - 6%
- Blue River - 3.2%
- Copper Mountain - 2%
- Fairplay - 2%
- Alma - 1.6%
- Georgetown - 0.4%
- Leadville - 0.4%
- Montezuma - 0.4%
- Twin Lakes - 0.4%



2 or more locations, 3.2%



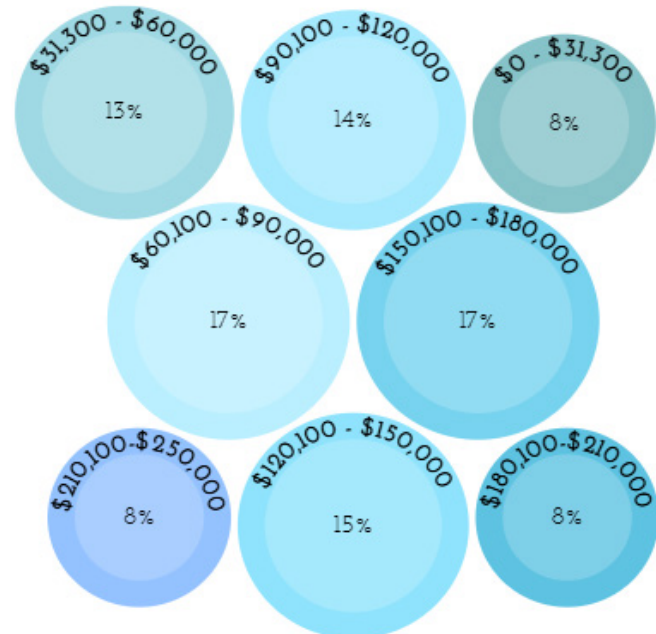
12 - Summit School District Classrooms, 31.3%

10 - Community Based Childcare Centers, 59.5%

6 - Family Childcare Homes, 6.0%

## Summit Pre-K Families Annual Salary Range Based on Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Percentages

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# PROGRAM GOALS & HIGHLIGHTS

- \* CLASS® assessments 2 times a year & TS Gold assessments 3 times a year in participating centers.
- \* Professional Development through Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS). A one-stop online resource for training related to early care and learning. PDIS offers a broad array of e-learning courses addressing all aspects of child development, health and safety, and quality instruction. PDIS is designed to support a variety of early childhood professionals at all levels of experience and education.
- \* Provide education of local programs to hard-to-reach populations.
- \* The Village at Breckenridge child care expanded enrollment to local residents. In previous years, families were required to work for Vail Resorts or Breckenridge Grand Vacations.
- \* Summit School District opened a 2<sup>nd</sup> preschool classroom in Frisco Elementary School bringing the program total to 12 classrooms at 5 elementary schools serving up to 180 students.
- \* The 24-25 Menu of Quality Services & 24/25 Menu of Quality Services Annual Report a series of training opportunities offered by Early Childhood Options (ECO) for local Early Childhood Education Professionals.

## CONGRATULATIONS to OPEN ARMS for achieving a Level 5 rating from Colorado Shines!!

Jennifer Lofton, Director of Open Arms Childcare and Preschool reflects on the accomplishment:

When raising a child a common quote is "It takes a village to raise a child". The same can be true when working towards an L5 Colorado Shines Rating. The members of the village expand way past the walls of our school. The families of our students, putting in time to answer survey questions. Distinct community members in their respected fields, working with our students on a weekly basis, to the Early Childhood staff members (Jessee Blumentritt) putting in about 100 hours over several months helping us get ready. Of course, the incredible staff and board members putting in several years learning and then training to put into practice, high-quality environments, and high-quality learning. The total amount of hours that each of these members has contributed to our program should not be measured in time, but the success of our students, both now and in the future.

We feel that this Level 5 is not only something that can be celebrated within our walls but celebrated with the entire village.

This recognition reflects our village's commitment to creating a nurturing, engaging, and high-quality learning environment for every child and their families.



The Town of Breckenridge continues to prioritize and support the needs of local families by investing in high-quality early childhood education. The recent \$1.3 million expansion of *Timberline Learning Center* is a key example of this commitment. This project added new classroom space and facilities designed to enhance the care and learning

environment for infants and toddlers ages 12 to 36 months.

As a direct result of this expansion, Timberline Learning Center is now able to provide full-time care for an additional 12 families. This increase in child care capacity significantly benefits working families in the community and supports the Town's strategic goals of retaining local workforce and strengthening family stability.

This investment reflects the Town's continued dedication to improving quality of life and long-term community sustainability through accessible child care resources.

*-- Jon Dorr, CPRP Assistant Director of Recreation  
Town of Breckenridge*



# TS GOLD DATA

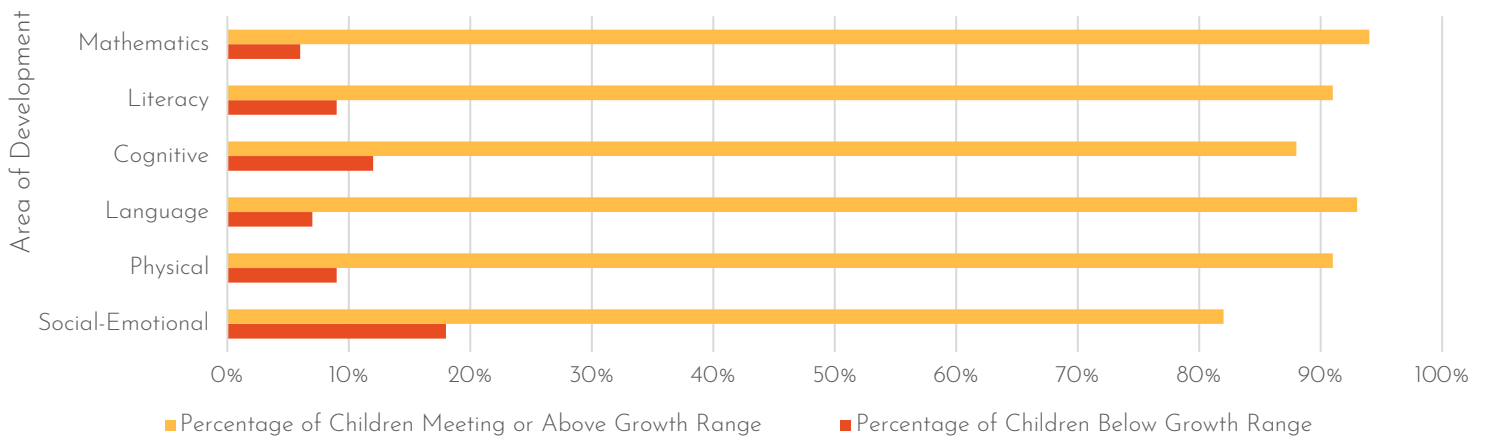
The assessment model used in *Teaching Strategies GOLD* follows widely held expectations for children from birth through third grade and enables a whole-child approach to assessment. \*

\*Understand Each Child's Needs Based on Developmentally Appropriate Milestones (n.d.) Retrieved from <https://teachingstrategies.com/product/gold/>

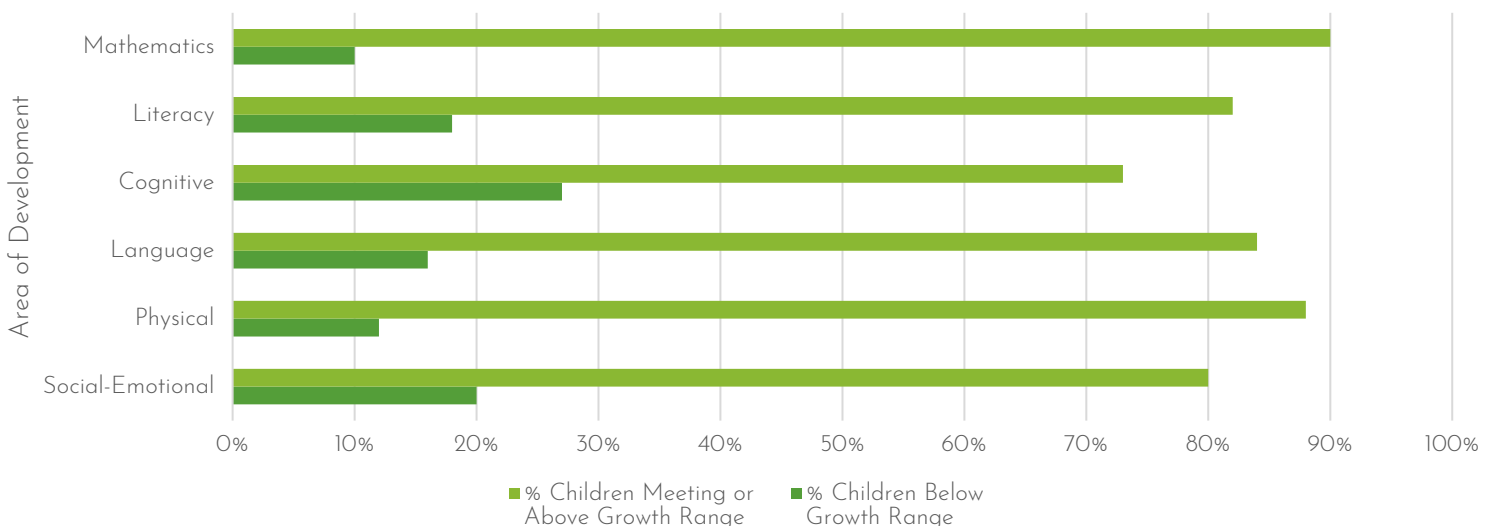
Growth Data looks at the movement of *GOLD* checkpoint ratings across the progression of development and learning that typically takes place over the course of a school year. **All children's knowledge, skills, and abilities may not meet widely held expectations by the end of the school year, but all children should make progress toward their next developmental milestone.** Because growth expectations are based on a full school year, not on a checkpoint period, the Growth (Birth through Third Grade) Report was generated at the end of the school year to evaluate the growth that took place throughout the year. \*

\*<https://teachingstrategies.my.site.com/portal/s/article/How-do-I-interpret-the-Growth-Birth-Through-Third-Grade-Report-in-MyTeachingStrategies?r=0&ui-knowledge-alo-ha-components-aura-components->

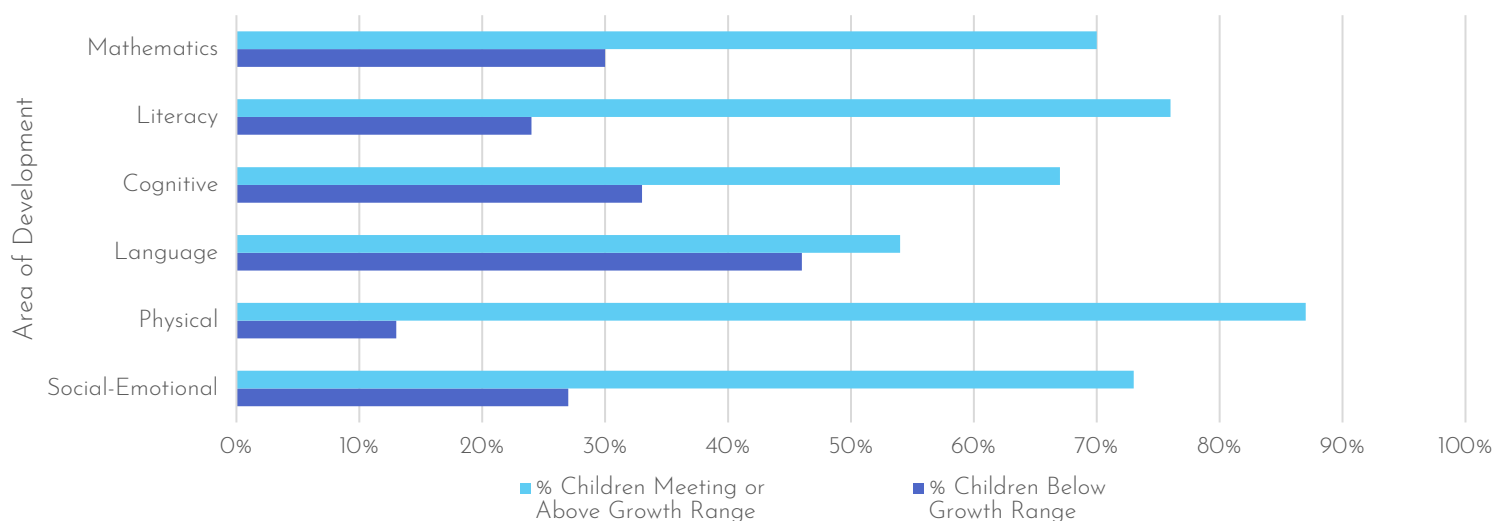
## Countywide First Steps 0-2 Year-Old Growth Summary from Fall 24 to Spring 25



## Countywide Summit Pre-K 3 Year-Old Growth Summary from Fall 24 to Spring 25



## Countywide Summit Pre-K 4 Year-Old Growth Summary from Fall 24 to Spring 25



### The SCTA Team Includes:

Catherine Schaaf, Executive Director | Early Childhood Options

Michelle Mahoney, Tuition Assistance Manager | Early Childhood Options

Kimberly Theller, PhD, Operations Director | Early Childhood Options

Jessee Blumentritt, Quality Improvement Manager | Early Childhood Options

Kim Guarino, Early Childhood Registrar | Summit School District



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