



**SUMMIT PRE-K PROGRAM
TUITION CREDIT GUIDELINES
SEPTEMBER 1, 2022-AUGUST 31, 2023**



The **Summit Pre-K Program (SPK)** helps to make high quality preschool possible for all Summit County 4-year olds in the year before they enter Kindergarten. Approved by voters in 2018, SPK is a Summit County taxpayer funded initiative. Early Childhood Options, a local early childhood non-profit organization, serves as the managing agency. A community advisory board provides guidance and direction in the implementation of SPK.

To offset the high cost of quality preschool, SPK provides monthly tuition credits to families who meet the criteria below. Tuition credits are given to assist families with the cost of preschool and are paid directly to the participating preschool program, child care center or family child care provider on behalf of the eligible child(ren). Tuition credits will be administered on a sliding scale.

The following policies and guidelines have been established to ensure that available funding is used in the fairest and most effective way possible. Early Childhood Options reserves the right to amend the eligibility criteria or to request additional information at any time. Any fraud or misrepresentation made by applicants, participants, or recipients is unlawful and will be punished to the full extent of the law which will include fines, restitution, and possible imprisonment. Tuition credits are subject to the availability of funds. It is the responsibility of the early childhood programs and families to inform Early Childhood Options if they feel that the stated policies and procedures herein are being violated.

****Please note – If you are applying for SPK tuition credits and your child is not currently enrolled in a preschool program, child care center or family child care provider, please call Catherine Schaaf at Early Childhood Options, 970-406-3067, for assistance finding a program.***

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Eligible children **MUST** be 5 years by October 1, 2023 and be in the last year of preschool before entering Kindergarten.
- Eligible children must be enrolled or eligible for enrollment in a participating, licensed, child care center, family child care home or preschool program in Summit County.
- Participating preschool programs, child care centers and family child care providers must have a child care license in good standing from the Colorado Department of Human Services and must have a Colorado Shines Quality rating of 2 or above. For a list of participating programs please visit earlychildhoodoptions.org.
- At least one parent or legal guardian must live and/or work in Summit County.
- Eligible children must be lawfully present in the United States.

DETERMINATION OF TUITION CREDIT AMOUNT

The amount of tuition credit is based on a sliding scale and will be determined using the following factors: gross income, preschool program/child care center/family child care provider costs, number of children in care, Colorado Shines quality rating of program, parent/legal guardian work schedule (applicable only for children whose parent(s)/legal guardian works but does not reside in Summit County), enrollment in other programs such as CCCAP, Head Start and/or Colorado Preschool Program.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are required to apply during the annual enrollment/application period. *The current deadline for applications is Friday, May 6, 2022.* Except for Qualified Permitted Changes as described below, no out of cycle applications will be considered until the next annual enrollment deadline.

Applicants will be required to complete the Summit Pre-K Tuition Credit Application at <https://eco1.smapply.org/>. For a detailed list of documents required to apply click [here](#).

ADDITIONAL GENERAL POLICIES

ASSET TESTING

The Summit Pre-K Program may require a comprehensive list of household assets and liabilities. A child may be ineligible or disqualified from the program if assets of the parent(s)/legal guardian exceed \$250,000. Some assets will be exempt, such as primary residence equity, retirement accounts, health savings and college savings accounts.

OUT OF COUNTY APPLICANTS

If a parent or legal guardian works in Summit County but the child does not reside in Summit County, at least one parent or legal guardian must be working a minimum average of 30 hours per week annually in Summit County. Self-employed applicants must maintain an average income that exceeds their business expenses and must show that his/her taxable gross income divided by the number of hours of care used for the employment activity equals at least the current Federal Minimum Wage. If, during the SPK Program year, the family member's employment in Summit County upon which tuition credit was based, is terminated for any reason, the child may remain in the program for up to eight (8) weeks without disruption to the tuition credits. If within the eight weeks the family becomes compliant with the eligibility requirements, they may remain in SPK for the duration of the program year. If after eight weeks the family is not in compliance with the eligibility requirements, tuition credits will be terminated immediately. It is the family's responsibility to report these changes in a timely manner.

QUALIFIED PERMITTED CHANGES/OUT OF CYCLE APPLICATIONS

CURRENTLY ENROLLED FAMILIES: If a current tuition credit recipient is experiencing an emergency including but not limited to birth, adoption, loss of job, or other situation that significantly impacts family income, they may be eligible for amended tuition credits. The parent(s)/legal guardian will need to contact the Summit Pre-K Program Administrator at 970-406-3067 directly to discuss options.

NEW FAMILIES: If a family becomes eligible because of residency or new employment in Summit County, they may be eligible to apply for tuition credits outside of the application window. The parent(s)/legal guardian will need to contact the Summit Pre-K Program Administrator at 970-406-3067 directly to discuss options.

COLORADO CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CCCAP)

In some instances, children may be eligible for both the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) and SPK tuition credits. In such instances, all the eligibility criteria mentioned above are applicable, as well as:

- Families must be in good standing with their local CCCAP office and must comply with all CCCAP rules and regulations.
- If during the award cycle a family becomes ineligible for CCCAP, they may submit a complete application with all the required documentation to be considered for an adjustment to their tuition credit.

An application will only be considered when the application is completed and submitted in full. Any approved credit may be prorated back to the date of the completed application.

Please note, the CCCAP Program is considered the payer of first resort. The Summit Pre-K tuition credit can be used to cover a portion or all of the difference between the CCCAP reimbursement and the actual rate of tuition. If parent(s)/legal guardian(s) apply for tuition credits and appear to be potentially eligible for CCCAP, they will be referred to the CCCAP office before the application can be further processed.

For more information about Summit County CCCAP, please call 970-668-9160.

COLORADO PRESCHOOL PROGRAM AND HEAD START

If a 4-year old is eligible for Summit School District's Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) or the Summit County Head Start Program, he or she may also be eligible for SPK tuition credits. In such instances, all the above eligibility criteria mentioned above are applicable, as well as:

- Parent(s)/legal guardian must comply with the participation requirements for CPP or Head Start.

Please note, CPP and Head Start are considered the payer of first resort. If a family applies for Summit Pre-K tuition credits and appears to be potentially eligible for CPP or Head Start, they may be referred to these programs.

For more information about CPP, please call 970-368-1022.

For more information about Head Start, please call 970-406-3069.

ATTENDANCE

It is the expectation that children participating in the SPK Program will regularly attend Pre-K based on their approved enrollment days. Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) are required to notify the preschool/child care/family child care program if the child is going to be absent and the reason for the absence when appropriate.

Consistent excused absences may result in a loss or deduction of your child's tuition credit. Pre-K programs are required to notify Early Childhood Options anytime a child's attendance falls below 75% of his/her regular schedule.

EVALUATION AND DATA TRACKING

The SPK Program will be using a variety of strategies to evaluate the overall success of the program. Short and long-term program data may be gathered through early childhood assessments, interviews, surveys, observations and small groups. Parent(s)/legal guardian will be asked to sign an information sharing release, within the guidelines of the stated confidentiality agreement.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

1. Parent/s or legal guardians are responsible for reporting to the Summit Pre-K Program Administrator, in writing or by email, any changes in their child's preschool or child care schedule, or any changes of program.
2. Every parent(s) or legal guardian applying for tuition credit will be required to sign a statement acknowledging that they do not have any outstanding debt to any licensed preschool program, child care center, and/or family child care provider or have made agreeable arrangements to pay their debt. If it is brought to Early Childhood Options' attention by any means that a participating family has an outstanding debt, an investigation will take place. If the allegations are founded, the tuition credit will be placed on-hold for a probationary period of 30 calendar days.

During the 30 days, the family must pay the balance of their debt or make arrangements for payment that are acceptable to the program. If these conditions have not been met after 30 days, there will be immediate termination of funding and additional penalties adopted by Early Childhood Options may occur.

A family may re-apply at the next annual deadline if they have an age eligible child and only after the balance is paid in full to the preschool program, child care center or family child care provider.

3. Loss of Employment must be reported immediately to the Summit Pre-K Program Administrator.
4. Applicants must sign a complete “Participant Responsibility Agreement” as well as a Verification and Acknowledgement form to attest that all the information that has been provided as part of their application is true and complete.
5. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/legal guardian to comply with the rules and regulations of the preschool program/child care center/family child care provider and SPK, including but not limited to those relating to absences. The parent must agree to notify the preschool program/child care center/family child care provider if the child is going to be absent and the reason for the absence when appropriate.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Early Childhood Options (“ECO”) respects the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of personal or sensitive information disclosed through the Summit Pre-K Program and takes reasonable measures to protect the unauthorized disclosure of such information.

ECO may disclose certain anonymous, aggregated data and provide it to early childhood programs, funding sources and governmental agencies either for market research and statistical purposes or to ensure compliance with the agreements between ECO and early childhood programs, funding sources, governmental agencies and similar organizations.

Application Process & Deadlines

Applications Available:	March 15, 2022
Applications Due:	May 6, 2022
Assistance Cycle:	September 1, 2022 – August 31, 2023

The application will be available online through Early Childhood Options website at:
<http://www.earlychildhoodoptions.org/>

Please complete and submit your application with all required documentation to Early Childhood Options by May 6, 2022. **COMPLETE applications will be processed in the order they are received.** Late applications will not be accepted or considered.

<u>Physical Address</u>	<u>Mailing Address</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>
Early Childhood Options 330 Fiedler Ave, Suite 100 Dillon, CO 80435	Early Childhood Options Attn: Child Care Program PO Box 3355 Dillon, CO 80435	Summit Pre-K Program Administrator summitprek@earlychildhoodoptions.org Phone: 970-406-3067