

What is Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)? Which programs and providers are part of the UPK system?

Universal Pre-Kindergarten is an expansion of the state's current mixed delivery that meets the diverse early learning and care needs of children and families. It includes all existing state and federal early learning, childcare, and extended learning programs that serve children in preschool to 3rd grade, such as: transitional kindergarten (TK), state preschool, general childcare (CCTR), Extended Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P), Head Start, After School Education and Safety (ASES), Alternative Payment (AP), private pay childcare, etc. Legislation passed in 2021 ensures that families will continue to be free to choose the early learning or childcare program that best meets their needs. If you are operating a childcare program that enrolls children ages 0 to 3rd grade, you are already part of UPK.

What are the eligibility criteria for TK?

For the 2022-23 school year, all children who turn five between September 2 and February 2 are eligible to enroll in TK. In 2023-24, all children who turn 5 by April 2 are eligible for TK. In 2024-25, all children who turn 5 by June 2 are eligible for TK. In 2025-26, all children who turn 4 by September 1 will be eligible to enroll in TK. Because TK is part of the public school system, there are no family income requirements for TK.

School districts may choose to make TK available to younger 4-year-olds but will not receive funding for those children until the child turns 5.

Are families required to send their children to TK once they are age-eligible?

No. Parents can continue to choose a childcare or preschool program instead of TK, even if their child is age-eligible for TK. TK is a voluntary program. State law was passed in 2021 clarifying that eligibility for TK does not affect a child's eligibility for other programs, including public-funded preschool, childcare, or voucher-based programs.

What is ELO-P?

The Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P) requires schools to provide after-school learning and care to low-income, foster youth, and English learner ("unduplicated") pupils in TK to 6th grade. Districts are required to offer ELO-P to all unduplicated pupils and to serve at least 50% of unduplicated pupils. Enrolled children must receive a total of 9 hours of combined school time and after-school care on school days and 30 days of care during non-school days. ELO-P requirements are aligned with the existing After School Education & Safety (ASES) program and schools can contract with community-based providers to provide ELO-P.

How does my program get involved with UPK? AND How do I partner with school districts?

If you serve children ages 0 to 3rd grade, you are already part of UPK and do not need to take any additional actions to be involved. As part of their requirements to roll out UPK, school districts must create an implementation plan by June 30 and are strongly encouraged to include community-based providers in their plan development. You can partner with your school district by participating in your district's UPK community engagement and planning process. If you have the capacity and are interested, providers are also encouraged to reach out to districts regarding operation of ELO-P and extended hours for TK-age children. Contact information for school district leadership is available at

<http://publicschooldirectory.sccoe.org>.

How will my program get paid if I partner with a school district?

ELO-P funds flow to school districts from the state. Districts may operate ELO-P themselves or may contract with a community-based provider to operate their ELO-P program. If a district partners with a community-based provider for ELO-P, it would be through a subcontract. State law prohibits school districts from contracting TK to community-based providers.