
MEMORANDUM

TO: Public and Private Prequalified Programs, Families, School Administrators, and UPK Coordinators

FROM: Early Education Team

SUBJECT: UPK Enrollment Tuition Invoicing Memo

DATE: January 2, 2025

Purpose

To ensure equal access to publicly funded prekindergarten education for each and every child who is 3, 4 or 5 years of age and not enrolled in kindergarten. For each child that is enrolled in a UPK prequalified program, the school district of residence is obligated to pay tuition at the [current UPK state tuition rate](#) per academic year per child. All UPK tuition received by a UPK prequalified program is to **fully cover the cost of the 10 hours a week for 35 weeks per school district academic year.**

UPK Enrollment

UPK tuition is funded through school district budgets and families are required to enroll their child at their school district of residence to participate in UPK education at a public school, private center-based program, or family child care home (FCCH) provider. At the time of enrollment families will be asked to identify the UPK prequalified program they would like the UPK tuition payments to be sent to. School districts enter into partnership agreements (contracts) with UPK prequalified programs to distribute UPK education tuition.

- Every UPK enrolled 3-, 4- and 5-year-old child (not enrolled in kindergarten) is entitled to participate in a minimum of 10 hours of FREE prekindergarten education a week for 35 weeks per school district academic year operated in a prequalified public school or private program at no cost to the family.
- UPK tuition is portable and follows the child even outside of the family's district of residence (except for UPK approved Regional School Districts).
- UPK prequalification program status and family (child) participation are both voluntary.



State Board of Education Rule 2606. Tuition (excerpt)

(5) Tuition paid by a district to a public or private prequalified prekindergarten education program shall:

- a. Be paid in accordance with a schedule that allows the prequalified prekindergarten education program to maintain financial stability.
- b. Not inhibit the ability of a parent or guardian to enroll a prekindergarten child in the public or private prequalified prekindergarten education program.
- c. Be made pursuant to an agreement complying with Section 2607 of these rules and requiring quality assurance, transition and other matters deemed necessary by the district, and an agreement by the program to notify the district when the child is no longer enrolled.
- d. Be made in accordance with federal statutes and rules regarding the requirement that Title I funds shall supplement and not supplant the state and local funds expended on prekindergarten education in the state (20 U.S.C. §6321(b)).
- e. Be used by the program to fully cover the cost of ten hours per week for 35 weeks annually of prekindergarten education. If the tuition received by the program exceeds the actual cost of ten hours per week for 35 weeks annually of prekindergarten education, then the excess shall be applied to additional hours the child attends the prekindergarten program. A parent or guardian may only be charged for any hours that exceed ten hours per week for 35 weeks annually and that exceed the cost covered by the annual tuition received.

(7) Prequalified public or private prekindergarten providers may receive additional payment directly from the parent or guardian for prekindergarten education in excess of the hours paid for by the district or for childcare services, or both. Prequalified private programs are not bound by the statewide rate in determining rates they will charge parents or guardians in excess of ten hours per week for 35 weeks annually.

Reference: [Vermont State Board of Education Rule Series 2600 Prekindergarten Education](#)

UPK Program Tuition Compliance

The Agency of Education (AOE) and Agency of Human Services (AHS) Child Development Division have received complaints from families regarding the application of publicly funded PreK education dollars toward their costs for children attending private prequalified PreK education programs.

Families should receive the full amount of public PreK [education dollars](#) paid on behalf of their child by their respective school district. Private prequalified prekindergarten education programs must ensure they are in compliance with the law by providing ten hours of publicly funded prekindergarten education at no cost to families and by deducting the full amount of UPK public education dollars received from school districts from childcare program rates.

For families who qualify, or do not qualify for child care subsidies, it is required that UPK tuition (not a subsidy) be clearly deducted from child care rates on family invoices. For families enrolled in UPK, and who are receiving full child care state subsidies (100%), school districts are required to send UPK tuition payments to private programs for UPK enrolled children.

To be in compliance with Rule 2606. Tuition, UPK private prequalified programs should review their current family billing practices to align with the information outlined below.

1. Each private prequalified PreK program must apply all public education dollars received from school district/s toward tuition to cover Universal PreK for each resident child enrolled.
2. Families should never be charged for the ten hours of publicly funded PreK education for 35 weeks during the school year.
3. Publicly funded PreK dollars are intended for use during the academic school calendar year only. Funds may not be stretched out over 52 weeks a year.
4. If a child attends a prequalified PreK education program for only 10 hours per week over 35 weeks of the school calendar year, no tuition may be charged.
5. If a child attends the program for additional hours and weeks, the full annual UPK tuition must be applied to the family's costs. Publicly funded PreK dollars must offset a family's tuition cost and must be transparent on the family's invoice.

Additional UPK Program PreK or Child Care Hours

Per Rule 2606 (7) private UPK prequalified programs are permitted to charge families for additional PreK hours of instruction and/or childcare. However, this must be made clear to families that their children are **receiving additional prekindergarten education instructional hours beyond the publicly paid 10 hours per week**. To avoid confusion for families, additional weekly hours of PreK education instruction should be listed in family handbooks, on tuition notifications and family invoices.

Family Handbooks

It is highly recommended that family handbooks include UPK information including 10 hours of UPK instruction for 35 weeks, the use of the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS), program curriculum including unit themes, Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) assessment data and how it is used to track developmental growth for each and every child in the program. Family handbooks should also include the required two-family conferences during the 35 weeks of UPK education.

For questions or concerns, please contact the Early Education team at AOE.UPK@vermont.gov.