

Summit County Child Care Tuition Assistance FAQ's

Summit First Steps: Ages 0-3 & Summit PreK: Ages 3-5

How do tuition credits work?

To offset the high cost of quality preschool, Summit County Child Care Tuition Assistance (SCTA) provides monthly tuition credits to families who meet the eligibility criteria. Tuition credits will be administered on a sliding scale.

The percentage of credit is based on household income, quality rating of the program and whether the family has at least one younger child in care. Once the percentage is calculated, it is applied to the actual tuition – which varies by program. In most cases, parents who choose a more expensive program will get larger credits but will also pay more out-of-pocket. For example:

	Center	SSD
Household Income	\$75,000	\$75,000
Child's Pre-K Schedule	4 full days/week Year-round	4 school days/week 9 months
Program Rating (CO Shines)	4	4
SPK Billed Monthly Tuition	\$1,422	\$800
SPK Percent of Monthly Credit	90%	90%
SPK Monthly Credit	\$1,280	\$720
Monthly Out-of-Pocket Cost	\$142	\$80

	Center 2 children in Care; 1 FS 1 SPK	Center 2 children in Care 1 FS 1 SPK
Household Income	153,000	185,000
Program Rating (CO Shines)	4	4
Child's First Steps Schedule	4 days/ week ; Year Round	3 days/ week
First Steps Monthly Tuition	1664	1287
First Steps % of Monthly Credit	35%	25%
Amount of Monthly Credit	748.8	321.75
Child's SPK Schedule	4 days/ week ; Year Round	5 days/ week
Billed Monthly Tuition	1525	1972
Percent of Monthly Credit	50%	40%
Amount of Monthly Credit	915	788.8
Monthly Out-of- Pocket Cost	1664	1504.95

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, child care center or family child care provider on behalf of the eligible child(ren).

We have been awarded a 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 20th of the previous month for tuition credit adjustments to be calculated based on your new schedule. We will not do mid-month adjustments to the child care schedule.

What age group is Summit First Steps for?

Eligible children are ages 0-3; Present day- birthday on or after October 2, 2021. You must apply during the Open Enrollment period in the Spring of 2024 for the Program Year of September 2024– August 2025. Register at <https://eco1.smapply.org/>

What age group is SPK for?

Eligible children MUST be 4 or 5 years old by October 1, 2025. You must apply during the Open Enrollment period in the Spring of 2024 for the Program Year of September 2024 – August 2025. 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 2024-25 School Year, children must be 3-4 years old by October 1, 2024)

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 child care payments?

Child care 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.

Option #2: Parents can apply together, and we will consider both incomes. We will consider all the days the child is in child care regardless of what day either parent has custody. Family size will reflect two parents.

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 child care 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 20th of the month before you expect your child to start attending child care 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 section 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. To use 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