Bright Stars

CHILD CARE & PRESCHOOL

HELP PAYING FOR CARE

UPK, DPP, CCCAP, and CACFP explained simply, and how we help you apply

Bright Stars Child Care & Preschool

1155 S Havana St, Aurora, CO 80012 | (303) 369-8880

info@brightstars.us | brightstars.us

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We complete these applications with families every week, in Arabic, Urdu, Somali, Spanish, and English. There is no charge for this help.

START HERE

You May Be Paying More Than You Have To

Colorado has real programs that pay for a large part of child care and preschool. Most families who qualify never apply, usually for three reasons: nobody told them the program existed, the paperwork looked intimidating, or the forms were not in their language.

We fix all three. Bright Stars accepts every major program, and we will sit down with you and complete the applications together, in Arabic, Urdu, Somali, Spanish, or English. We do not charge for this. It is part of what you get by enrolling here.

The one thing to do after reading this

Ask the director for a funding check. It takes about fifteen minutes. We look at your child's age, where you live, your household size, and your work or school schedule, and we tell you honestly which programs you can use. If the answer is none, we will tell you that too.

Call (303) 369-8880 or ask at the front desk.

The four programs at a glance

Program	Who it helps	What it does
UPK	Every Colorado 4-year-old, any income	Free preschool hours each week
DPP	Families who **live in Denver** with a 4-year-old	A monthly credit toward tuition, stacks on top of UPK
CCCAP	Income-eligible working or studying families	County help with child care costs
CACFP	Every child enrolled here	Meals and snacks included at no extra cost

> *Amounts change every year and depend on your income, household size, and hours. That is why you will not find dollar figures in this guide. Ask us and we will pull the current numbers for your family rather than guess.*

SECTION 1

UPK: Free Preschool Hours

Universal Preschool Colorado. The biggest and easiest win for most families with a 4-year-old.

Who qualifies

- **Every** Colorado child who turns 4 by October 1 of that school year. There is no income limit.
- Some children qualify for additional hours, including families with lower incomes, children learning English, children with an IEP, children in foster care, and families experiencing homelessness.
- Some 3-year-olds qualify too, depending on the year and their circumstances. Ask us.

What you get

A set number of free preschool hours every week at a participating provider. Bright Stars is a participating UPK provider, so those hours can be used right here in our Yellow Room, with the teachers your child already knows. You pay only for care beyond the funded hours.

How to apply

1. Applications open in the winter for the following school year, and you can also enroll during the year if space allows.
2. Apply at **UPK.Colorado.Gov**. It works on a phone, which is how most families do it.
3. Choose Bright Stars Child Care & Preschool as your provider.
4. Bring us your confirmation and we take it from there.

Do not do this alone if it feels like a lot

Bring your phone to the front desk and we will do the application with you, right there, in your language. It usually takes about twenty minutes. Families do this with us every week.

Deadlines matter

The main matching rounds happen in late winter and early spring. Applying early gets you the best chance at the schedule you want. If you have missed the round, apply anyway, because we can often still enroll as space allows.

SECTION 2

DPP: For Families Who Live in Denver

The Denver Preschool Program. This is the one almost nobody on Havana Street tells families about.

Yes, it works at our Aurora address

DPP follows where your child lives, not where the preschool sits. If your family lives in Denver, your 4-year-old can use DPP at Bright Stars even though we are in Aurora.

Bright Stars is a participating DPP provider. If you live on the Denver side, the Dayton Street area and nearby, this is real money you may be leaving unclaimed.

How it works

- Funded by a Denver sales tax that voters made permanent in 2023. It is not going away.
- **Every Denver 4-year-old qualifies**, regardless of family income or immigration status.
- The credit is paid monthly toward your tuition. The amount depends on your household income and on the quality rating of the preschool.
- **Bright Stars is rated Colorado Shines Level 4**, which is the top credit tier. Choosing a higher-rated provider means a larger credit for your family.
- DPP covers more than 15 hours a week and continues through the summer, which UPK does not.

It stacks with UPK

This is the part families miss. A Denver-resident 4-year-old can use **UPK free hours and a DPP credit at the same time**. Together they can cover a large share of a full-time preschool bill. Come talk to us and we will show you what it looks like for your family with the current published numbers.

How to apply

1. Confirm you live within the City and County of Denver.
2. Apply through the Denver Preschool Program and select Bright Stars as your provider.
3. Bring us your paperwork and we will help finish it and coordinate with DPP.

SECTION 3

CCCAP: County Child Care Assistance

The Colorado Child Care Assistance Program helps income-eligible families who are working, in school, or in training. We want to be straight with you about how this one stands right now.

Honest status

Arapahoe County paused new CCCAP enrollments and is running a wait list. This is a county funding issue, not a Bright Stars decision, and it affects centers across the state.

This does not mean you should do nothing. Read the two paths below, because one of them applies to a lot of families.

If you already have a CCCAP voucher

You can bring it to us. Families with an active voucher may change providers. Many centers stopped accepting CCCAP over payment and paperwork problems, so families with vouchers often have very few good options. We accept CCCAP, we are rated Level 4, and we handle the county billing. If you have a voucher and you want your child here, come talk to us.

If you do not have a voucher yet

1. Ask the county to put you on the **enrollment freeze wait list**. Being on the list is what makes you reachable when funding opens.
2. Contact **Arapahoe County Human Services at (303) 636-1750**, and tell us so we can help with the forms.
3. Meanwhile, check whether UPK or DPP fits your family, because neither of those is frozen. For a 4-year-old, UPK alone can change your monthly bill significantly.

If you have CCCAP now, protect it

- **Redetermination happens about every 12 months.** Missing it can mean losing your benefit, and during a freeze you may not be able to get it back.
- We track redetermination dates for our CCCAP families and remind you well ahead of time. If you get a letter from the county and it worries you, bring it to us.
- **Swipe your card.** If it is not swiped and we cannot bill the county, those days become your bill. This is the single most common way families get an unexpected charge.

SECTION 4

CACFP: Meals Are Already Included

Bright Stars participates in the **Child and Adult Care Food Program**, a federal nutrition program. Full-day children receive a hot lunch and two snacks every day, planned to meet federal nutrition standards, prepared here, and eaten with their teachers.

- There is **no extra charge** for meals. It is included in your tuition.
- Menus are planned at least a week ahead and posted where you can read them.
- Special diets and allergies are accommodated with a written note from your child's health care provider.
- You do not need to pack lunches or snacks.

For families managing a tight grocery budget, this matters more than the brochure language suggests. Two snacks and a hot lunch, five days a week, is real food off your bill.

SECTION 5

How We Help, and What to Bring

What we actually do for you

- Sit with you and complete applications, on our computer or your phone.
- Translate and explain, in Arabic, Urdu, Somali, or Spanish. For other languages we bring in an interpreter at no cost to you.
- Explain the letters you get from the county or the state, in plain language.
- Track your renewal and redetermination dates and remind you before they expire.
- Handle the billing and paperwork on our end so you do not have to chase it.

Bring what you have

Do not wait until you have gathered everything. Come with what you have and we will work out the rest together. Programs vary, but these are commonly needed:

- ☐ Photo ID for the parent or guardian
- ☐ Your child's birth certificate or proof of age
- ☐ Proof of address (a lease, or a utility bill)
- ☐ Proof of income (recent pay stubs), or proof of school or training enrollment
- ☐ Your child's immunization record

Common worries, answered plainly

Will applying affect my immigration status?

UPK and DPP are available regardless of immigration status. Programs like these are not public charge benefits. If you have questions specific to your situation, we can connect you with a community organization that gives free, qualified guidance. We will never ask you for documentation you are not required to provide.

My English is not strong.

Then let us do it in your language. This is normal here, not a special accommodation.

I applied before and got denied.

Rules and income limits change year to year, and so do family circumstances. It is worth checking again, and it costs you fifteen minutes.

Is my child too old or too young?

Ask anyway. UPK is for 4-year-olds and sometimes 3-year-olds. CCCAP covers a wider age range including school-age care. There is often something available even when the obvious program does not fit.

Ready when you are

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Walk in and ask for the director. Bring your phone and whatever paperwork you have.