

I may be
little,
but I've
got
big
plans.



UPK Program Implementation Handbook

UPK: 2018-2020

Table of Contents

PLEASE NOTE: THIS HANDBOOK HAS BEEN REVISED AS OF 8/1/2018 AND IS SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT FROM EARLIER VERSIONS AND SUPERCEDES THEM.

ESSENTIAL UPK DOCUMENTS AND FORMS.....	2
Section 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION.....	3
Section 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF UPK: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	6
Section 3: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.....	8
Section 4: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT	16
Section 5: QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND SUPPORT	19
Section 6: ELIGIBILITY FOR UPK PROGRAM FUNDING AND SCHOLARSHIPS.....	20
Section 7: BILLING, PAYMENT PROCESSING AND EXPENSE REPORTING	23
Section 8: MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE	28
Section 9: PROGRAM EVALUATION.....	31
Section 10: STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	32
Section 11: GENERAL PROVISIONS	34
Section 12: MARKETING AND LOGO USAGE	35

ESSENTIAL UPK DOCUMENTS AND FORMS

The following documents are available in downloadable format on the Invest in Children website. Site Administrators are to ensure that all staff related to the UPK program are made aware of these materials and their availability on the Invest in Children website. The most reliable source for the latest versions of all UPK forms are on the Invest In Children website:

<http://investinchildren.cuyahogacounty.us/>

1. UPK Staff Contact Directory
2. Epstein Model of Family Engagement
3. Family Engagement Action Plan Forms
4. Cost Reimbursement Invoice
5. UPK Parent Scholarship Worksheet
6. Billing Adjustment Procedure
7. Parent Scholarship Worksheet for Additional Charges and Overpayments
8. Child File Document Checklist
9. Health Screening Requirement Acknowledgement Form
10. Health Screening Resources List/ UPK Scholarship Income and Residency Verification Form
11. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Notice of Privacy Practices
12. Transition to Kindergarten Summary Form
13. UPK Monthly Cost Expenditure Report
14. UPK Monthly Salaries and Fringe Benefits Worksheet
15. UPK Monthly Program Expense Report

Section 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

History and Overview of Invest in Children

In 1999, inspired by new research showing the importance of children's first five years of life, twenty-three private foundations and corporations joined with County government to redesign the face of human services for young children and their families throughout Cuyahoga County. Working together, the founders of Invest in Children, (IIC) launched a plan to make sure that all children in the County received the best possible start in life, one that allows them to grow and develop to their full potential.

Invest in Children, administered by the Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood (OEC), is nationally recognized for the quality, depth and breadth of the early childhood system of services that has been created and implemented over the past fifteen years. Since its inception, Invest in Children has provided services to thousands of children and families, documented the impact of its various services via rigorous independent evaluation, and worked toward a community ethic that understands the crucial importance of the early childhood years in the context of an individual's life trajectory.

Vision

All children in Cuyahoga County will reach their full potential, nurtured by families' sensitive to their needs and supported by a community committed to their success.

Mission

Invest in Children is a community-wide, public/private partnership that mobilizes resources and energy to:

- Ensure the well-being of all young children in Cuyahoga County;
- Provide supportive services to parents and other persons who care for these children;
- Build awareness, momentum, and advocacy in the community around children and family issues.

Beliefs

We believe that culturally sensitive and respectful services, when provided early, empower children and families to be optimistic and hopeful, help decrease the inequities that contribute to most social problems, and afford children and families the best chance for success in life.

We believe that all young children and families should have the opportunity to access quality services sensitive to their unique needs and abilities.

We believe our community is committed to the sustainability of efforts that support children and families.

We believe there is no more important effort, because if the community is to succeed, its children and families must succeed.

Goals

Goal 1: Effective Parents and Families

Goal 2: Safe and Healthy Children

Goal 3: Children Prepared for School

Goal 4: A Community Committed to Children

Additional information about Invest in Children, its programs and impact can be found at www.investinchildren.cuyahogacounty.us

History of Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) in Cuyahoga County

The Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program in Cuyahoga County was created through a community planning process that utilized state of the art standards for what constitutes high quality preschool and included a financial study of the cost of delivering that high quality program in Cuyahoga County. The goal was to build upon the existing mixed delivery system of child care, enhance quality with funding, training and technical assistance, and keep it affordable for low and moderate income families.

All UPK sites meet a series of standards, proven through research to be the hallmarks of quality that result in improved school readiness. These standards include increased teacher qualifications, lower staff to child ratios, use of approved curricula, engagement of families, and family linkages to necessary supportive services.

The program was initiated in 2007, and Cuyahoga County's UPK program is the first and still the only such program in the state of Ohio. UPK in Cuyahoga County is an excellent fit with the state's goal of making high quality early care and education more available and accessible to children, especially those from less advantaged backgrounds.

In 2016, Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish, with support from County Council, put an additional \$10 million into the county budget to expand UPK, and challenged the private funding community to match the public investment. Private funders responded with over \$12 million in support. This new public/private partnership of UPK funding allows for the doubling of the number of UPK seats from 2,000 to 4,000, as well as enhancement of the program model in the family engagement and special needs components. This funding will be available for three program years. A long-term sustainability strategy is being pursued to support the program on an ongoing basis after the current funding has been expended in 2020.

Program Evaluation

UPK has been evaluated by a team at Center for Urban Poverty and Community Development at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU). The first independent evaluation of UPK conducted by CWRU found that the UPK model was successful at improving quality in sites, as well as preparing children for kindergarten. Children who entered the program with the lowest school readiness were the ones who have benefitted the most from the UPK experience.

A subsequent study by CWRU of 5,000 children who attended UPK also showed statistically significant gains in school readiness. The results showed that, statistically significant gains were found on all five subscales of the Bracken School Readiness Assessment: colors, letters, numbers/counting, size/comparison, and shapes. Children with the lowest performance on the fall Bracken assessment show the greatest gains over the course of the school year.

In addition, the study showed that the dosage of UPK experience was positively associated with kindergarten readiness. UPK children who subsequently entered Cleveland Metropolitan School District in kindergarten showed an average level of school readiness significantly higher than the average for all children entering CMSD. (The UPK evaluation studies may be found at <http://investinchildren.cuyahogacounty.us/en-US/evaluation.aspx>).

Section 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF UPK: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The UPK Handbook is meant to serve as a useful reference tool to help Providers navigate the requirements and assist in the implementation and delivery of a high-quality preschool program that adheres to all UPK rules. Many different staff may play a role in the successful implementation of UPK in some way from completing required forms to teaching children in the classroom to planning family engagement events, and all staff at a site or in administration should fully understand programs rules and requirements.

Invest in Children/Office of Early Childhood

OEC provides program strategic direction, conducts the Request for Proposal Process, provides the funding for all aspects of UPK, contracts with Providers to implement UPK programs, monitors compliance with all UPK rules and regulations regarding program implementation, reviews and processes invoices for payment.

UPK Lead Agency: Starting Point for Early Care and Education (Starting Point)

Starting Point is designated as Cuyahoga County's child care resource and referral agency by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Starting Point also serves as Invest in Children's lead agency for preparing Children for School. In this role, Starting Point is responsible for implementing a significant number of the UPK program components including: family engagement; resource coordination; safety net scholarships; professional development and training; child outcome assessments; program quality assessments; program monitoring; and the UPK data system. Starting Point provides significant technical assistance and support to UPK sites to ensure successful implementation of the various components of UPK.

Provider Responsibilities

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS MUST READ, UNDERSTAND AND COMPLY WITH ALL TERMS OF THEIR UPK CONTRACT.

Central to program success are educational leadership and administrative oversight. Administrators are expected to provide assistance to teachers and personnel on professional development and best program practices, oversee the recruitment/outreach efforts, ensure the coordination and delivery of comprehensive services (including parent involvement), and ensure compliance with state licensing and certification rules and regulations.

In order to ensure that UPK sites are appropriately implementing the UPK model, all UPK sites are required to provide Starting Point staff and consultants with access to the classrooms and children in order to conduct the required assessment activities. In addition, UPK sites will make their administrators and staff available to representatives of Starting Point, as needed, to provide the appropriate technical assistance and training required for successful program implementation.

Lastly, Starting Point, in collaboration with Invest in Children, is tasked with convening regular UPK Director's Network meetings which are useful forums for program updates and an exchange

of ideas among providers. **UPK Providers are required to provide representation to all UPK Director's Network meetings.** In the event of illness or another extenuating circumstance which necessitates an absence from the meeting, providers must notify Starting Point in advance.

Providers who are unable to provide representation at any meeting are responsible for working with their assigned technical assistance consultant or other Starting Point staff to obtain missed information.

Section 3: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Step Up To Quality

All UPK programs must meet applicable state licensing rules and regulations. State licensing and monitoring establish the floor for quality levels, not the ceiling. UPK Programs must demonstrate levels of quality higher than what is required by licensing, and a commitment to those higher levels as defined by the Step Up To Quality Program Standards of the State of Ohio. Beginning in 2015, only programs with a 3 star or higher quality rating are part of the UPK program. The OEC requires that all UPK programs maintain a minimum rating of three (3) stars with the Step Up To Quality rating system.

A program placed on probation risks a reduction and/or loss in funding, and may potentially be terminated from the UPK Program.

Should a provider's star rating be reduced below three stars, or should the provider lose their star rating altogether, they must notify the Office of Early Childhood IMMEDIATELY (no later than two (2) business days after they receive notification.)!

Licensing

UPK sites must remain in compliance with the licensing serious-risk rules or their equivalent, of the appropriate licensing agencies. **OEC reserves the right to review a Provider's licensing records at any time during the Contract Period. Providers are required to inform OEC within two (2) business days of any licensing serious risk rule violations received during the Contract Period. Failure to provide this information to OEC may result in termination from the UPK Program.**

Class Size & Ratio

To ensure that all programs have group sizes and teacher-child ratios that permit personalized and caring interactions between students and teachers, the teacher-child ratio shall not exceed *1:10*. The group size shall not exceed 20 children.

Program Hours

Programs must provide pre-kindergarten services at least 12.5 hours a week, unless the program is a school district with a waiver from the state. Full time services are 25 or more hours a week. Part time services are 12.5-24.9 hours a week.

Program Enrollment Policy/Eligibility

Enrollment in the UPK Program will be open and nondiscriminatory. Providers must not discriminate against a child and/or his or her parent(s) on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.

Providers must develop written enrollment policies to meet the needs of children and families in the community. Enrollment policies must state that the preschool program is open and nondiscriminatory. Written enrollment policies must be kept onsite and available to parents (at their request).

The COPA Data System

The COPA (Child Outcome Planning and Assessment) system is the management information system, administered by Starting Point, that must be used by every UPK provider. It is a comprehensive web-based database used by a wide variety of early care and education providers around the country. UPK providers will use COPA for all administrative record keeping. It is also used to generate reports that you must submit with your invoice in order to be paid. In addition, an extract from COPA will be used by the program evaluators at CWRU to demonstrate the impact of the program. COPA trainers from Starting Point will conduct individualized training with your staff on use of the system. For specific COPA questions, you may **Julia Garber** (216) 575 – 0061, ext. 531 or **William Appling** at (216) 575-0061, ext. 524 at Starting Point.

Providers **MUST** adhere to the following COPA System procedures:

1. Provider must maintain accurate monthly enrollment, fiscal records, child assessments results, transition documents, and related documentation in the COPA data system. This includes entering and updating information in the COPA system.
2. Any newly enrolled children are to be enrolled into the COPA system within the first full week of enrollment. Failure to enroll a child in the COPA database during the month may result in delay of reimbursement for services rendered on behalf of that child.
3. Provider must ensure that complete student attendance data is entered into COPA WEEKLY.
4. Attending COPA training is mandatory for new UPK providers.

Child Assessment Requirements

All UPK Providers are required to assess all preschool children using the ASQ and Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), and report this information in the appropriate web-based data system provided within 60 days of a child’s enrollment. Reassessment and follow-up should be provided and reported in the web-based data system as appropriate. Invest in Children may require other tools and will notify providers accordingly.

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA P-2)

	e-DECA Requirements	Pre-Assessment	Mid-Assessment	Post-Assessment
Due Dates	Prior to entering any scores into e-DECA	October 31 st –OR- no later than 60 days of child entering program	January 31 st	May 1 st –OR- no later than 60 days of child leaving program
Procedures	Receive <i>administrator</i> username and password from Starting Point. Create classrooms, users, and children under “e-DECA management” in e-DECA system. Children’s names and birthdays should be entered with the same spellings as they appear in COPA	Both parent and teacher assessments entered into the e-DECA system for all children enrolled	Teachers ONLY (no parents) complete Mid assessments for children who have scored within the “need” range in ANY area (red on group profile) entered into the e-DECA system	Both parent and teacher assessments entered into the e-DECA system for all children enrolled There should be a Post assessment for any child who leaves the center
Technical Assistance	Each classroom will receive a minimum of 2 DECA Technical Assistance (TA) visits throughout the program year. More can be scheduled as needed. Your DECA Technical Assistant will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe the classroom and offer suggestions for social-emotional activities, classroom set-up, individual children • Assist with developing plans for your classroom and individual children • Assist in making referrals as needed for Starting Point Special Needs Child Care Technical Assistance, ECMH, Help Me Grow, or local school district 			

- To log into e-DECA enter Starting Point provided *administrator* user name and password to <http://e-deca2.org/>
- For children enrolling throughout the year, a Pre DECA must be completed by both parent and teacher after knowing the child for **30 days** and no later than **60 days** of the child’s

enrollment - **Pre DECAs can be entered at any time during the program year**, however you cannot complete a post if there is not at least **60 days** to separate the Pre and Post period.

- Post DECA assessments from both parent and teacher are required for every child as long as there is at least **60 days** in between Pre and Post DECAs. Please do not do a Mid or Post unless that child had a Pre DECA.
- If a child transitions to a new classroom during the year, best practice suggests that the new teacher complete a Pre and a Post DECA. When implementing this practice, the previous teachers (Pre) rating must be changed to (Other) because the e-DECA system will only accept one Pre and Post. This practice allows the new teacher to assess the child’s current functioning and allows for individualization based on the assessment results.
- If a child leaves your program, please complete a Post DECA, as long as there has been 60 days after the Pre DECA. If a child had a Mid assessment and leaves your program within 60 days, you can change the Mid assessment to Post assessment in e-DECA.
- It is recommended that a group profile is printed out after the Pre assessments are completed for planning.
- You must **print** the ratings from e-DECA for the child’s records.
- The Group names and spellings in e-DECA should match exactly the Classroom names and spellings in COPA. Example: “Classroom A” in COPA should be named “Classroom A” in e-DECA.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ – 3)

	ASQ Online Requirements	Assessment Requirements
Due Dates	Prior to entering any scores into ASQ online	Within 60 days of child entering program
Procedures	Receive <i>administrator</i> username and password from Starting Point. Create classrooms, users, and children profiles online www.asqonline.com/login	Teacher completes ASQ collaboratively with parent and enters into ASQ online for all children enrolled (except students with a current IEP)

- **ASQ -3 must be completed by the teacher and parent (except for students with a current IEP because they receive an annual developmental assessment).**
- ASQ-3 must be completed after knowing the child for at least 30 days and within 60 days of a child’s start in the classroom.
- If a child’s score falls below the cut-off or in the monitoring range in any developmental domain; put interventions in place and then rescreen as necessary.
- Providers must **print out** the summary page report for your child’s records.

Children with Disabilities and Special Needs

Providers offering the UPK Program will make reasonable accommodations for children identified as eligible for special education and/or related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Providers are required to include, as part of their written philosophy statement, an assurance regarding the practice of including children who have special needs alongside typically developing children in their program. Providers are expected to make use of the Special Needs Child Care (SNCC) program administered by Starting Point to ensure appropriate practices are implemented in the care and education of children with special needs. Providers should contact Starting Point directly to request services.

Appropriate special education and related services placement will be determined by the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and recommendations of the relevant school district's placement committee.

Child Suspension and Expulsion Policy

Child Suspension and Expulsion

UPK sites shall not suspend or expel a child from a site without consultation from the Manager of the Special Needs Child Care or his/her designee. When the UPK site is considering suspension or expulsion of a child the following procedure must be adhered to:

1. The UPK site must have made a referral for SNCC technical assistance or contacted one of the SNCC contracted agencies
2. The UPK site must document in writing the specific strategies that they have received and implemented
3. Once documentation has been reviewed by the Manager of the Special Needs Child Care program or his/her designee, a case conference team meeting will be convened including the Director or Administrator of the UPK site
4. The case conference meeting will occur via telephone or face-to-face depending on the specific situation or circumstance
5. The Manager of the Special Needs Child Care program will assist the UPK site in developing a plan to provide additional support and services on behalf of the child
6. In cases where it is mutually determined by the parent/caretaker, provider and Manager of the Special Needs Child Care program that the current placement may not be appropriate for the child, the Manager of the Special Needs Child Care program will assist the family in locating an appropriate setting that meets the needs of the child.

After the above procedures have been followed with consultation from the Manager of Special Needs Child Care, suspension or expulsion may be recommended for reasons such as, a child has put the physical safety of his/her peers in the classroom and/or classroom staff at risk or harm.

Each UPK site's ability to serve children with special needs, including data related to suspensions and expulsions, will be evaluated during the monitoring process. The ability of each site to provide high-quality services to all children enrolled in UPK is integral to the program's success.

Prohibition Against Charging Additional Tuition Fees

Providers are prohibited from charging parents of enrolled children any additional fees or tuition for UPK services.

Enhancement Activities

Funds may be used to provide field trips or other appropriate enhancement activities related to the UPK approved curriculum. Any enhancement activity offered as part of the UPK program must be available free of charge to families, including field trips. Field trips are part of the instructional program and must be available to all children participating in the UPK Program. Field trips must be related to curriculum and must include a lesson plan demonstrating this connection. If UPK funds are used to provide field trips, they must be free to families.

Health Screening Documentation

UPK Providers are required to distribute the UPK Health Acknowledgement Form to parents. The Health Acknowledgement Form informs parents that they have been made aware by the provider of the following health screenings:

- Dental examination
- Blood lead level
- Speech, language and hearing screening
- Vision screening
- Hematocrit and hemoglobin

The UPK

Health Screening Requirement Acknowledgement Form is to be used to document that the parent is aware of the health screenings required. **That form, signed by the parent, must be in the Child's File with the original copy being given to the parent with the Health Screening Resources List.**

Other Record Keeping

Providers must also adhere to the following student record keeping requirements:

1. The Provider will store student records and will be responsible for keeping such records for a minimum of five (5) years. Current student records should be maintained at Provider's program office or at the classroom site.
2. The Provider will maintain student records in a secure location to ensure confidentiality and to prevent unauthorized access.
3. UPK sites will maintain original copies of all forms on site for auditing and monitoring purposes.

Provider will supply copies of children's records to a child's parent(s) upon request or to a third party such as elementary school or other service provider with parental consent.

UPK Quality Improvement Plans

UPK providers must develop, with the assistance of Starting Point staff, a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan for each classroom in their UPK program following completion and receipt of the results of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale/Family Child Care Rating Scale evaluations and UPK monitoring reports. All UPK staff should be involved with the development of the plan and should receive copies of the plan. Documentation of training and/or communication with UPK staff should be on file to ensure UPK staff members are aware of the Continuous Quality Improvement Plan. The Continuous Quality Improvement Plan must be updated at least annually and more often as needed. UPK sites may use the plan developed under Step Up to Quality to meet this requirement.

Curriculum Standards

All UPK classrooms will use approved research-based curricula that promote children's physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and language development, and that align with Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards.

The UPK Curriculum will:

- Be based on a solid foundation of child development and early education research.
- Be comprehensive and address children's individual and developmental needs in the areas of physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development.
- Integrate language and literacy development, numeracy, science, social studies and the arts within activities over the day and week, using developmentally appropriate strategies.
- Foster problem solving, inquiry, discovery and creativity through the intentional use of playful and experiential approaches to learning.
- Be responsive to the cultural and language needs of families and children, and address children with disabilities and other special needs.
- Incorporate family involvement and support as an integral component of its implementation.
- Be consistent with Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards and adequately prepare children for Kindergarten content.
- Use instructional practices that are informed by ongoing formal and informal assessment. The results of the assessment should be used to plan learning activities and to inform parents about the developmental progress of their child. The curriculum must

provide an on-going process of collecting information from multiple sources about a child's needs, which may include observations, portfolios, and screenings to determine a child's strengths and weaknesses in order to accurately plan his/her educational services.

Providers are required to:

- (a) Post a formal daily schedule of indoor and outdoor activities and routines with opportunities for child-initiated and teacher-directed activities.
- (b) Post an individualized daily lesson plans that identify the Ohio Early Learning and Development Standards addressed in the lessons.
- (c) Have a written curriculum statement available for staff and parents.

Transition to Kindergarten

In an on-going effort to ensure a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten, all UPK providers are required to:

- 1) Develop and implement a plan for year-round kindergarten transition experiences for children who will be kindergarten-eligible in the following school year
- 2) Conduct a conference to complete the Transition Summary Form with families of children who are kindergarten-eligible and facilitate the transfer of a copy of the form to the child's new school.
- 3) Engage in efforts to support the March into Kindergarten campaign to raise awareness of the importance of on-time kindergarten registration.

Section 4: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parent Handbook

A Parent Handbook that includes the program's administrative policies in writing as required by Child Care Licensing rules MUST BE provided to each family. **The Parent Handbook must also include information about the UPK program and scholarships.** The UPK FAQ should be distributed to each family and may be inserted in the Parent Handbook.

Children develop in families, and UPK recognizes the critical role families play in shaping children's development. The UPK Program has adopted the research-based family engagement framework developed at Johns Hopkins University by Dr. Joyce L. Epstein and the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS). Cuyahoga County Universal Pre-Kindergarten is a member of the NNPS and, utilizing funding from Invest in Children, each UPK site is also a member of NNPS.

Through this network, and with the support of the UPK Family Engagement Coordinator, each UPK site will be expected to create a year-long Action Plan that incorporates the NNPS philosophy and family engagement opportunities for each type of involvement identified in the model. The site plan will be developed using NNPS tools that gather information from parents, staff, and administrators. The UPK Family Engagement Coordinator will assist each site in the development, implementation, and evaluation of its Action Plan. With the assistance of the UPK Family Engagement Coordinator, each UPK site will also be responsible for coordinating an Action Team for Partnerships which will include parents, staff, and administrators.

The UPK/NNPS Family Engagement Model provides a variety of activities and opportunities for families through six types of involvement as follows:

Type 1-Parenting

Help families meet their basic responsibilities of housing, health, nutrition, clothing, safety, parenting skills, and home conditions which support positive growth and development of their child (ren).

Type 2-Communicating

Ensure that schools and family child care providers regularly communicate with families through an "open door policy," regular family conferences (at least 2 per year), a parent website, memos, newsletters, phone calls, and other two-way communication interactions.

Type 3-Volunteering

This includes providing families with opportunities to be involved in and for the school, through classroom participation and attendance at site events that celebrate the children's growth and development. Volunteers may conduct activities at school, in classrooms, at home or in the community.

Type 4- Learning At Home

This includes having child and family activities that can be shared in the home and promote positive child growth and development.

Type 5-Decision Making

This includes providing opportunity for families to be involved in program decision-making through the Action Team for Partnership, where a yearly plan is developed by families and staff for program enhancement.

Type 6-Collaborating with Community

This includes activities that help families connect with community resources in order to enhance their family life.

Throughout the program year, regular trainings and meetings will be held for sites to meet and discuss their progress with their Action Plans and present examples of "Best Practices" and success stories in family engagement. Each site will be expected to send at least one member of its Action Team for Partnerships to each of these required trainings/meetings. If a Provider adopts another research-based model, the UPK Family Engagement Coordinator will assist the Provider in aligning its model with the six types of involvement.

UPK sites provide "family-centered" preschool which means that engagement with parents is viewed not only to facilitate their child's development, but also to facilitate parents' development in areas such as health and well-being, education and employment. This approach has been called the 2GEN approach as described by Ascend at the Aspen Institute. The Invest in Children Family Engagement Manager will lead the implementation of the 2GEN approach across all UPK sites

The Family Engagement Manager and Family Engagement Coaches will work closely with UPK programs to guide the development of 2GEN family engagement practices and in building pathways to educational and employment pathways. Coaches can assist interested families in areas such as GED attainment, post-secondary education or training, goal setting, developing social networks and asset building.

All sites shall receive professional development and skill building opportunities, including Ohio-Approved training and ongoing technical assistance/coaching, related to 2GEN and other effective and innovative family engagement practices. Family Engagement Coaches will support family engagement efforts in the classroom through the review of program policies and practices related to family engagement. Coaches will act as an ongoing resource to UPK program staff and teachers in building authentic partnerships with families.

UPK providers are required to implement ReadyRosie, an early education tool that leverages the power of mobile technology and video modeling to help UPK teachers enhance classroom-to-home and home-to-classroom connections and partner with parents in the education of their child. The web-based parent education program delivers short, 2 minutes videos directly to parents on their

computer, tablets or smart phones. Classroom teachers select videos that are relevant to classroom activities from the Ready Rosie library of videos and send them to parents via an email on a regular basis. Training will be provided to UPK providers on Ready Rosie implementation and evaluation.

Resource Coordination

UPK Providers are expected to support families in accessing any needed supports or services in coordination with the UPK Regional Resource **Coordinators and the “No Wrong Door” policy**. “No Wrong Door” means that families initially involved with a specific Invest in Children program or service will be linked to any additional relevant Invest in Children **and Cuyahoga County** programs or services. Each program is **REQUIRED** to have a parent resource center, a resource manual, **the UPK statement about Resource Coordination in their orientation process**, and information posted regarding **United Way’s 2-1-1 Help Center**. Providers are required to document referrals for services, as well as any follow-up, using the COPA system.

In the interest of promoting and supporting the No Wrong Door Policy, sites are expected to send representatives to Resource Information Training (RIT) Sessions organized by the UPK Regional Resource **Coordinators**. Representation should include the director or alternate administrator and/or a classroom teacher. Parents are always encouraged to attend RIT sessions.

Parent Handbook

A Parent Handbook that includes the program’s administrative policies in writing as required by Child Care Licensing rules **MUST BE** provided to each family. **The Parent Handbook must also include information about the UPK program and scholarships**. The UPK FAQ brochure and the Parent’s Guide to Family-Centered Preschool should be distributed to each family and may be inserted in the Parent Handbook.

Section 5: QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND SUPPORT

Step Up to Quality

All UPK Sites eligible and licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) or the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), must maintain at least a three-star rating in Step Up To Quality.

Technical Assistance Visits

The UPK site program administrator and appropriate staff (teachers) shall participate in monthly technical assistance visits from Starting Point. Technical assistance visits to the program will focus on the following:

- Classroom Climate
- Curriculum
- Teacher – Child Interactions
- Instructional Learning Format
- Concept Development
- Behavior Management
- Transition Planning
- Boy-Friendly Strategies

Technical assistance may be received in the form of the following:

- Observations of classrooms and feedback
- Coaching, support and resources
- Phone calls
- Emails

Technical Assistance Activities may include:

- Setting goals for meeting UPK requirements
- Developing plans for meeting professional development needs beyond SUTQ “specialized” trainings
- Reviewing results of the ECERS/FCCRS
- Reviewing child pre- and post-assessments results
- Developing strategies to address child and program assessment results
- Reviewing UPK Monitoring Benchmarks and establishing strategies to meet benchmarks not currently met

UPK sites must ensure that staff are available for classroom observation and technical assistance sessions at agreed upon appointment times.

Meetings and Attendance at UPK Events

Each Provider must have staff representation at all UPK events unless prior arrangement and notification has been made to Starting Point. Events may include:

- Resource Fair
- Training on child assessment tools or curricular approaches
- End of the year celebration

Section 6: ELIGIBILITY FOR UPK PROGRAM FUNDING AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Age Requirement

Children ages three to five years of age not yet enrolled in kindergarten are eligible for enrollment in a UPK classroom. Proof of age eligibility, based on acceptable documentation such as birth certificates, passports, official medical documents, or official documents from another country, must be on file with the Provider the day the child/children begins the UPK Program.

Only children in UPK classrooms are eligible to be included in billing for UPK Program Service dollars. Children turning three years of age during the program year are eligible for funding beginning the first day they are enrolled in the UPK preschool classroom.

Children who are age-eligible for kindergarten but whose families choose to have them remain in the preschool setting are not eligible for UPK funding. However, these children will **not** be excluded from any UPK classroom activity.

Eligibility for Scholarships

The Office of Early Childhood will provide a UPK scholarship to families residing in Cuyahoga County in the form of:

1. **Fifty percent (50%)** of parent fees to families whose **gross income** falls at or below two-hundred (200%) of the federal poverty level (FPL) based on the 2018 Federal Poverty Level Guidelines as published in the Federal Register in January 2018 and updated annually thereafter;
2. **Thirty-three percent (33%)** of parent fees to families whose **gross income** is greater than two-hundred percent (200%) of the FPL and up to three-hundred percent (300%) of the FPL;
3. **Twenty-five percent (25%)** of parent fees to families whose **gross income** is greater than three-hundred percent (300%) of the FPL and up to four-hundred percent (400%) of the FPL.

For a family to receive the scholarship and for the Provider to be reimbursed, there must be a **UPK Scholarship Income Residency Verification Form** completed by the Providers, signed by the parent and submitted to the OEC along with the required documentation of family income and residency.

Eligibility for the UPK Scholarship is based on *income information* obtained from the following:

- Two most recent check stubs **OR**
- Prior year's tax return and **W-2**
- Documentation for all unearned income (award letter and/or summary statement)
- A statement or documentation of self-employment
- A copy of the child care authorization letter for subsidized care (formerly the county voucher)

And *residency information* obtained from the following:

- A copy of the child care authorization letter for subsidized care (formerly the county voucher) OR
- A current utility bill OR
- A form of official identification with current home address.

This form and documentation must be submitted to OEC and be maintained on file at the UPK site for monitoring and auditing purposes.

Families who choose not to supply this information are NOT eligible to receive the UPK scholarship. Additionally, families whose incomes exceed four hundred percent (400%) will remain eligible for UPK services, but will receive no reduction in parent fees.

The OEC will pay the scholarship amount directly to the Provider monthly after receipt of an itemized invoice. (See Section 7). The UPK scholarship will be discontinued for a month for any family who fails to maintain the 80% attendance during the given month due to unexcused absences or, if less than 80%, for whom verified absences are not recorded in COPA.

UPK Safety Net Scholarships

UPK Safety Net Scholarships are for hardship circumstances, are reviewed on a case by case basis, and are very limited. This is considered funding “of last resort”. Families who lose eligibility for other child care subsidy programs may become eligible to receive UPK services at a reduced rate using the UPK Safety Net Scholarship Fund. All funding sources available for child care financial assistance (such as Head Start or Ohio Early Childhood Education Expansion Funding) **MUST BE** utilized prior to applying for UPK Safety Net Assistance. Application for this assistance is to be made to Starting Point.

Families who receive subsidized child care (formerly known as a child care voucher) may be eligible to receive a safety net scholarship should they lose eligibility to receive their child care assistance in certain circumstances. The Safety Net Scholarship will be equal to the subsidy that the family had been receiving and will still be required to pay the co-pay minus the UPK Scholarship.

Families who are receiving Safety Net assistance should not be listed on the UPK Parent Scholarship Worksheet that is submitted with the monthly Cost Reimbursement Invoice.

Families who lose eligibility (child care subsidy) because they failed to meet redetermination requirements in a timely manner, are NOT eligible. Families who lose eligibility because their income now exceeds the income threshold of 300% FPL (based on their gross income) are NOT eligible for Safety Net Scholarships, but may be eligible to receive a regular UPK scholarship if they meet those eligibility requirements.

UPK Safety Net scholarship dollars may be combined with other sources of subsidy available to pay the cost of care for an approved child, up to the total reimbursement rate set by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS Manual 5101:2-16-41: Payment Rates and Procedures for Providers of Publicly Funded Child Care.

Upon approval, families will receive and sign an agreement outlining scholarship requirements, policies and procedures. The UPK site will also receive a copy of the signed agreement which contains the policies and procedures. Families awarded the UPK Safety Net Scholarship must maintain 80% average attendance during each month the scholarship is awarded to maintain eligibility for funding. The UPK Safety Net attendance policy mirrors the UPK program attendance policy. Safety Net Scholarship dollars are billed directly to Starting Point.

The provider may be reimbursed for days that a child is not in attendance. However, if a child has two consecutive unexcused absences, a reason for the absences must be documented in COPA and in the child's file. Payment will be made through the last week of active attendance when a child is withdrawn from the program, regardless of notice given to the provider. However, the parent may still be liable to the center per their billing policy.

The UPK Safety Net Scholarship shall not be granted to any family whose child fails to attend the program for at least 80% of the days in a billing month with the following exception:

- Hospitalization of the child or parent without appropriate documentation.
- Illness requiring home-stay as documented by Ohio Revised Code and/or medical provider
- Death in the immediate family with appropriate documentation (i.e. obituary, death certificates)
- Court ordered visitation with appropriate documentation (i.e. court order)

In addition, any month a child is absent 100% of the days, the scholarship will not be applied, regardless of reason.

Each provider maintains sole responsibility for collecting outstanding payments from a family if a family is denied the UPK Safety Net Scholarship for any given month. A family's eligibility for the Safety Net Scholarship shall be restored during the month the child's attendance rate returns to 80%. For the provider to be reimbursed for services, a child's attendance must be entered into COPA by the 15th of the month, following the month of service.

The policies described for the UPK Safety Net Scholarship are strictly enforced and subject to change at any time. If this policy is revised, the provider will be issued a thirty (30) day notice prior to the change. The attendance policy applies to all children receiving the UPK Safety Net Scholarship.

A scholarship application should be submitted within 15 business days of benefits termination. All required documentation must be received within 30 business days.

To start the application process for a Safety Net Scholarship or if there are any additional questions about the UPK Safety Net Scholarship, please contact the **Starting Point Scholarship Program Coordinator, Shannon Viccarone at 216-575-0061.**

Section 7: BILLING, PAYMENT PROCESSING AND EXPENSE REPORTING

Contract and Program Services Period

The program year for all UPK contracts will be August 1, through July 31, 2020. In consideration of budgetary restraints and contract performance, contracts may be amended or terminated.

UPK contracts are legally binding agreements between Providers and Cuyahoga County's Office of Early Childhood. Providers promise to deliver preschool programs according to defined programmatic and fiscal expectations and OEC promises to compensate Providers for those services according to defined limits. UPK funding is dependent on the concurrent delivery by Providers of the UPK Program.

Provider Reimbursement and Contract Amounts

OEC contracts with Providers to provide UPK services to 3-5-year-old children. Contracts are cost reimbursement agreements where providers are reimbursed for actual services delivered.

Funding is provided using two primary line items: Program Services reimbursement (unit rate) and UPK Parent Scholarship for families with incomes up to 400% of the federal poverty guidelines based on their gross income. Not ALL providers will be reimbursed for both Program Services and UPK Parent Scholarships. Programs Services reimbursement will be calculated based on your unit rate and your actual monthly enrollment. UPK Parent Scholarships are determined based on the tuition you charge and the parents' gross income. It is important to understand that the amount of program funding a provider receives is entirely dependent on the number of children served. Details on preparing your monthly invoice are described below.

Your UPK Contract

Your UPK contract spells out many important provisions regarding billing and payment processing. It is essential that you read your contract in its entirety, along with all Exhibits, and be familiar with its provisions. A few of the most important of those provisions are summarized here:

Availability of Funds (Article 4, Section A): Payments for services are contingent upon the County Council's appropriating of funds designated for the UPK program. Further, by submitting an invoice, the provider warrants that they are not billing any other entity for these same services.

Billing requirements (Article 4, Section B): Providers are required to report the use of funds monthly, using the forms provided to the Provider by the county.

Such forms shall include (but may not be limited to): The UPK monthly Cost Category Expenditure Report and UPK monthly Cost Reimbursement Invoice Report.

Providers are required to submit invoices monthly, within thirty (30) days of the close of each billing month. If invoices are not submitted monthly, substantial delays in payment may result. Moreover, providers who consistently submit invoices beyond 30 days may be placed on probation.

Payment (Article 4, Section B): After reviewing your invoice for completeness and accuracy, the County will process invoices within thirty (30) calendar days. If an invoice is submitted that is incomplete and/or inaccurate, the Office of Early Childhood staff will contact you to make

corrections. Invoices are subject to adjustment by the Office of Early Childhood to correct for mathematical errors, incorrect rates, non-covered services etc.

Preparing Your Invoice

The Cost Reimbursement Invoice (CRI) form is used to submit your monthly billing. This form is available from our website as an Excel Spreadsheet. At the top of the form be sure you have completed the fields for Provider Name, Address, Telephone, Contract #, Tax I.D., Service Month, and invoice date. ALL of these items are essential. A list of all Provider contract numbers is provided in the tabbed section of this handbook.

IMPORTANT!!!! At the beginning of each program year, please download your UPK forms from the Invest in Children website here:

<http://investinchildren.cuyahogacounty.us/en-US/forms.aspx>

Please do not re-use the previous year's forms because they will be missing important updates and using them MAY DELAY PAYMENTS.

Do NOT change any of the UPK forms. Your suggestions are welcome at any time and will be taken into consideration. However, payments may be substantially delayed if changes are made to any UPK form.

The BEST and MOST RELIABLE source of current forms is the Invest in Children website.

In the first column on the CRI, enter the approved budget from your contract; most of you will enter an amount for program services and for scholarships. For program services, you will also enter an approved unit rate, also from the contract; some providers will have more than one unit rate for full- and part- time services.

To determine the amount to be billed for UPK program services, multiply the unit rate(s) by the number of Class Days Per Class from COPA report 201. Enter the result on the invoice. (COPA reports are discussed below.)

To determine the amount to be billed for Scholarships, the first step is to complete the UPK Parent Scholarship worksheet:

Here you will calculate the scholarship amount, which is 50% off the regular parent fee for families whose gross income is at or below 200% of the FPL; 33% off the regular parent fee for families whose gross income falls above 200% FPL and up to 300% of the FPL; and 25% off the regular parent fee for families whose gross income falls above 300% of the FPL and up to 400% of the FPL.

PLEASE NOTE: Scholarships are only available to parents from whom income/Cuyahoga County residency verification has been received. If the Office of Early Childhood has not received a Scholarship Income and Residency Verification Form for a given child, the Provider will be given one week to provide it. If after one week it is not received, the scholarship will not be paid.

PLEASE NOTE: The Cost Category Expenditure Report (described below) must be submitted with the Cost Category Invoice. Payment of the Cost Reimbursement Invoice will only be made for those months for which a Cost Category Expenditure Report has been received.

COPA Forms

The COPA (Child Outcome Planning and Assessment) system is the management information system, administered by Starting Point that must be used by every UPK provider. In addition to tracking enrollments and assessments, there are three reports from the COPA system that you will submit each month with your invoice. These reports are:

- i. COPA 201 Monthly Attendance Report (All Classes)
- ii. COPA 201 Monthly Attendance Report (For each individual classroom)
- iii. COPA 235 and/or 236 Absentee Reasons Report

All three reports must be submitted with your invoice. Training on how to produce these reports is included in the basic COPA training that you will receive.

Order of the Documents in your Invoice Package

Finally, to expedite processing your invoice, please submit invoice documents in the following order:

- i. Cost reimbursement invoice (CRI)
- ii. COPA 201 Monthly Attendance Report (All Classes)
- iii. COPA 201 Monthly Attendance Report (For each individual classroom)
- iv. Parent Scholarship Worksheet
- v. COPA 235 and/or 236 Absentee Reasons Report

Billing Adjustments

It sometimes happens that a provider submits an invoice only to discover that it contains an error, most often with the billing for UPK Scholarships. If you determine that an error has been made on a previously submitted invoice, do NOT make adjustments to the next month's invoice. Instead, please submit a revised Invoice that will (be added as a supplement to) replace the incorrect invoice and attach Parent Scholarship Worksheet for Additional Charges and Overpayments. Both of these forms and a Billing Adjustment Procedure are in the tabbed portion of this Handbook.

Expenditure Guidelines

UPK program funding is provided to allow the Provider to enhance program quality. At the beginning of each contract year, providers are required to submit a proposed budget for program dollars to OEC for approval. The purpose of the budget is to develop a spending plan to enhance quality and then to monitor those expenditures throughout the year. All expenditures during the contract period must conform to the approved budget unless permission has been obtained for a change to the budget.

Acceptable Uses of UPK Funds

Acceptable uses of UPK funds for program enhancement include:

1. Staff compensation – Child Care Centers Only
2. Staff fringe benefits – Child Care Centers Only
3. Equipment
4. Supplies
5. Training & Professional Development
6. Enhancement activities for children (e.g. field trips, language classes etc.)
7. Other (specified in detail and approved by OEC)

Prohibited Expenditures

UPK funds MAY NOT BE USED TO SUPPLANT other public funding sources including, but not limited to, any state or federal funding. UPK funds must be treated as restricted income and used solely to enhance the quality of, and to increase access to a Provider's preschool program. OEC prohibits the use of UPK funds to cover expenses that are not directly related to the UPK Program. Prohibited expenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Travel expenses unrelated to administration of the UPK program
2. Purchase of vehicles or other transportation equipment
3. Bad debts, including losses arising from uncollectible accounts and any related legal costs
4. Costs of amusement or entertainment that does not benefit children in the UPK Program
5. Costs of idle facilities, unless those costs are related to the UPK Program and the costs of idle facilities have been approved by OEC
6. Costs incurred after the Contract has been terminated
7. Fund raising costs
8. Investment management costs
9. Costs of organization of a nonprofit corporation such as incorporation fees or consultant fees
10. Costs of legal, consulting and accounting services incurred in prosecution
11. Compensation to the members of the board of directors, if applicable

Expenditure Reporting Requirement

Providers are required to report the use of UPK Program Funds on a monthly basis using three forms: 1) UPK Monthly Cost Category Expenditure Report, 2) UPK Monthly Salaries and Fringe Benefits Worksheet, and 3) UPK Monthly Program Expense Report. Documentation for the expenditures must be attached as instructed on the forms. Reports are due within thirty (30) days of the close of the month and must be submitted with the Cost Reimbursement Invoice.

Amounts must be consistent across forms. For example, the total salaries listed on the Expenditure Report must match the total wages amount on the Salaries and Fringe Benefits Worksheet.

It is recognized that monthly expenditures will generally not match exactly the amount the Provider is able to bill for that month, which is based upon child enrollment and days of service. Providers ARE reimbursed based SOLELY upon child enrollment. Expenditure reports document the use of UPK funding to enhance program quality as detailed in the approved program budget. Failure to provide monthly expenditure information may result in program probation or termination.

If a provider wishes to make significant changes to the approved program budget, the Program Manager at OEC should be contacted in order to obtain approval.

Records Retention

The Provider must maintain detailed financial records, including receipts, invoices and all supporting documentation to track UPK Program expenditures. All records must be retained for a minimum of three (3) years.

Audit Guidelines

The Provider will maintain, and OEC will have the right to examine and audit, the books, records, documents and accounting procedures and practices and other evidence of costs claimed to have been incurred or fees claimed to have been received under the UPK Program.

Access to Records and Other Documentation

Provider will allow access to OEC employees and OEC contracted agency representatives to all records including, but not limited to, student records of children enrolled in the UPK Program; parent applications; registers and roll books of teachers; student absence verification records (parent/doctor notes, telephone logs, and related documents); staff lists and teaching permits and/or educational qualifications; business licenses held; social security numbers; dates of hire and dates of termination; staff timesheets; non-paid staff and volunteer sign-in sheets; transportation and other related service subcontracts; school calendars; documentation relating to parent participation plan; parent handbook; liability and worker's compensation insurance policies; marketing materials; by-laws; list of current Board of Directors, if incorporated; licensing records; tuition rates; statements of income and expenses; general journals; cash receipts and disbursement books; general ledgers, invoices, and supporting documents; payroll ledgers and supporting documents; and bank statements and canceled checks from Provider's UPK account. Provider will make available to OEC all budgetary information including backup documentation for operating budgets submitted by Provider to OEC for the relevant Contract Period being audited.

Fraudulent Billing or Misuse of Funds

Fraudulent billing and/or misuse of funds will result in contract termination and the denial of future participation in the UPK Program. OEC may use information from other sources to assess Provider's fiscal status. **OEC will recover UPK funds determined to have been obtained or to have been spent fraudulently.**

- Provider will ensure that expenses charged to the UPK funding source are not concurrently charged to another program fund source.
- Provider will ensure that all UPK expenses charged are documented and adhere to the budget approved by the OEC.
- Provider will ensure that families receiving scholarship funding have required documentation of income and residency.
- Provider will ensure that NO UPK funds are used to pay penalties associated with adverse actions imposed by licensing or governmental agencies

Section 8: MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

Site Visits

OEC will conduct unannounced monitoring visits during the Contract Period to assess compliance with all UPK operating procedures and program requirements. These visits may include review of files for required UPK documents, financial documents, as well as observation of classrooms and review of all required Provider materials.

Corrective Action Planning

Following on-site monitoring visits, the Provider will receive a copy of the Monitoring Report. In the event of deficiencies, the Provider will be required to develop a Corrective Action Plan, which must be completed and submitted to OEC within two (2) weeks of the monitoring visit or receipt of the Monitoring Report whichever is later.

Provider Probation

OEC may place a Provider on probation, indicating a serious risk of contract termination. Probation warns a Provider of the possibility of funding loss due to program quality issues, financial mismanagement, or failure to follow UPK Operating Guidelines. Sites may be placed on probation for the following:

- Failure to report a decrease in Star Rating
- Failure to report a violation of a contract agreement
- Failure to follow UPK Program Requirements
- Failure to correct ongoing issues of quality
- Failure to submit timely invoices
- Failure to follow UPK scholarship guidelines
- Staff and/or teachers not meeting specified qualifications for a three (3) month period
- Failure to participate in UPK technical assistance/monitoring visits
- Failure to submit mandatory reports by due dates

Reasons for UPK Contract Termination

Reasons for contract termination include, but are not limited to:

1. The Provider's license is suspended or revoked. (OEC and/or its contracted agency representatives will immediately report a Provider to licensing/certification authorities in cases where there is belief that a serious care deficit exists, or the health and safety of children is being endangered by the Provider.)
2. The Provider is found to have committed a violation of licensing requirements, which is deemed by OEC to be a serious deficiency.
3. The Provider's teaching staff is found to have committed a violation of licensing requirements, which is deemed by OEC to be a serious deficiency.
4. A report of child abuse by Provider is substantiated.
5. OEC has received three (3) or more substantiated complaints about Provider within the contract period.

6. The Provider is repeatedly uncooperative with OEC staff and/or OEC contracted agency representatives (e.g., refuses OEC unannounced visits, quality monitoring or quality support, non-compliance with reporting requirements).
7. The Provider provides false information to OEC.
8. It has been determined that Provider has used UPK funds in a fraudulent manner.
9. Serious or repeated instances involving noncompliance with UPK Program requirements.
10. Funding no longer exists or is insufficient to pay for the UPK Program.
11. The Provider is unwilling to make changes to maintain compliance with the UPK requirements and/or in violation of OEC policies or administrative and statutory guidelines by any state, federal or local governmental agency.
12. The Provider fails to maintain its licensing status or a three-star Step Up To Quality rating.

The Provider will be informed in writing of the basis for OEC's action, and the effective date of such action.

Obligations of Terminated Provider

After receiving notice of OEC's decision to terminate the UPK contract, the Provider will submit to OEC all of the following:

1. A current inventory of equipment purchased in whole or in part with Contract funds. If practical, all equipment purchased using contract funds shall be returned to the County.
2. Monthly enrollment and attendance reports until the Contract is terminated to receive payment.
3. Any other documents determined necessary by OEC.

IMPORTANT!! The Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood expects to be promptly notified in any change of star rating. In particular, the Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood expects to be notified immediately in a decrease in star rating.

Should the provider receive a decrease in star rating below the minimum three (3) star rating and does not promptly notify The Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood, the provider is subject to immediate termination of the contract.

Should the provider promptly notify The Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood, the provider may be placed on probation at the discretion of The Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood.

Should the program be placed on probation, The Office of Early Childhood may decide to maintain the contract with the provider subject to the following conditions:

- I. The provider will work diligently to improve and resolve any issues that contributed to the star rating downgrade.
- II. At the first opportunity, the provider will apply to have its star rating (minimum three (3) stars) reinstated.
- III. The provider will promptly notify The Office of Early Childhood of the outcome of the application.

If the provider is willing to comply with these terms, they will respond in writing no later than one week after notification from The Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood that they have been placed on probation.

Please be aware that The Office of Early Childhood's decision to maintain the contract does not constitute a waiver of any of the County's rights under the contract, including, without limitation, the right to terminate the contract for any future breach or to terminate the contract between the date of the provider notification of star rating reduction and when the provider is eligible to reapply for a star rating increase.

Section 9: PROGRAM EVALUATION

UPK Notice of Privacy Practices

All UPK Sites are provided UPK Notice of Privacy Practices. This form must be completed by parent(s)/guardian(s) of child(ren) participating in the UPK Program as evidence that a family has been notified of the UPK privacy practices. Copies of the UPK Privacy Practice Notices should be managed in the following manner:

- A copy remains on file at the UPK site
- A copy to the Parent/Guardian
- A copy to Starting Point
C/O Julia Garber
Email: Julia.garber@starting-point.org

Provider Participation in Evaluation

Program evaluation has played an integral role in the planning and administration of Invest In Children programs. IIC partners with a research team at Case Western Reserve University's Poverty Center (CWRU). This team has conducted several evaluations since UPK began in 2007; these evaluations have shown that:

- The quality of early care and education at the UPK sites improved substantially as reflected in a significant increase of 18% on a standardized measure (ECERS)
- Children enrolled in UPK, who were most at-risk at baseline (below the 50th percentile), showed a significant improvement
- The magnitude of the gains for the most at-risk children exceeded the gains to be expected from a “generic” preschool experience, and compare favorably to the gains made by children in other larger-scale UPK initiatives. E.g. Oklahoma and Georgia
- Children who attended a UPK preschool were more kindergarten-ready than children who attended a high-quality non-UPK program. The impact was strongest among children who attended preschool for 18 months in the 2 years before kindergarten. They were 2.67 times more likely to be on-track for language and literacy (as measured on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, i.e., KRA). Only 44% of children in non-UPK sites were on-track, but 63% would be on-track if they had attended a UPK preschool.
- UPK children also scored 6.16 points higher on the Social Foundations dimension of the KRA compared to children in high-quality non-UPK sites.

The Provider is required to participate completely and provide full cooperation with an independent evaluation to be conducted by the Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU). This will entail data collection from children, parents and staff with the goal of assessing child outcomes, parent outcomes and satisfaction, staff perceptions and satisfaction, along with other variables. Access to relevant data collected by programs must be provided in a timely manner. Access for the evaluation team to collect data from children, staff and families is required. Results of the UPK program evaluation will be shared with UPK Providers.

Section 10: STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Each UPK site is expected to have a skilled and well-trained early childhood workforce. Cuyahoga County UPK established requirements for initial background and educational levels of teaching staff, and over time more stringent requirements will be phased in. All UPK teachers in centers and family child care home providers will meet minimum standards and will be working to advance their qualifications. UPK sites may contact the Career Development Coordinator at Starting Point to help draft individual staff professional development plans.

Staff Qualifications

Educational Requirements by Position:

Program Administrator Qualifications

The director must have a minimum of an Associate's Degree or Career Pathways Level (CPL) 3 and working toward a Bachelor's Degree, with at least 24 credit hours in early childhood education (ECE), child development, elementary education or early childhood special education, and a minimum of 2 years' classroom experience.

Teacher Requirements

Center and school-based teachers must have a minimum of an Associate's Degree or CPL 3 and be working toward a Bachelor's Degree in early childhood education or related field.

Family Child Care Home Professionals, Center-based and School-based Assistant Teachers, Teacher Aides and Substitutes Requirements

Family child care home professionals, center and school-based assistant teachers, teacher aides and substitute teachers must have a minimum of a CDA or CPL 2, and be working toward an Associate's Degree.

Long Term Substitute Teacher Employment Requirements

Long term lead teachers or teacher assistant substitutes (e.g., a teacher on maternity leave or extended leave longer than three weeks) should have qualifications equivalent to the original teaching staff.

Out-of-Country Permits and Qualifications

Providers are responsible for ensuring that teachers with permits and/or qualifications from outside the United States have had their permits and/or qualifications evaluated by a widely recognized Educational Interpreting Agency, as required by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and Ohio Department of Education.

Notification of Staff and Management Changes

Provider must document and update in COPA any material staffing and management changes, or extended leaves longer than three (3) weeks including, but not limited to, changes in lead teacher, assistant teacher, site supervisor, program director and senior management personnel. This must be completed within fourteen (14) calendar days of the change.

Professional Development

T.E.A.C.H.: Teacher Education and Compensation Helps Project (T.E.A.C.H.) provides stipends and scholarships to encourage staff to undertake early childhood education college coursework. Under UPK, T.E.A.C.H. program funding is provided to include program administrators, as well as teachers, and to help individuals move from A.A. to B.A. degrees.

Training Requirements

OEC, its lead agency, Starting Point and/or contracted representatives will provide orientation and training sessions to Providers on a range of topics. Starting Point will post announcements for upcoming trainings in the Ohio Professional Registry (OPR) for all UPK Providers to access. UPK Providers must register for trainings on the OPR system as well.

Providers are expected to engage in on-going training that meet the requirements of Step Up To Quality, Child Development Associate credentialing requirements, as well as the requirements for making continuous progress toward advanced qualifications necessary to meet UPK standards in the coming years.

Purpose of Training

Training for Providers and their staff is intended to enhance the skills and knowledge of staff already prepared to teach the UPK Program. Training is not designed or intended to prepare personnel to be UPK teachers. It is the responsibility of the Provider to ensure that all teaching staff are qualified and able to deliver quality instruction on the date the UPK Program begins or the date of hire, whichever is applicable.

Attendance Requirements

The following members of Provider's staff are required to attend UPK orientations and training sessions as appropriate:

- (a) Administrative/program director or equivalent
- (b) Staff member responsible for fiscal management; and/or
- (c) Program site supervisor

** Representation at the Resource Information Training (RIT) sessions should include the director or alternate administrator and/or a classroom teacher.

OEC and Starting Point will notify Provider in a timely manner if teaching staff or other staff members are required to attend certain training sessions throughout the Contract Period.

OEC and Starting Point will verify documentation of staff attendance at required orientations and training sessions. Failure of Provider's staff to participate in required orientations and training sessions will place the program in noncompliance and may jeopardize future funding. The Provider should keep certificates on file onsite to document attendance of these sessions.

Training Costs and Reimbursement to Staff

Provider may use UPK funds to pay for substitutes and local mileage costs associated with staff travel to all required UPK orientations, training sessions, and other UPK related- travel. Local mileage will be reimbursed at the current IRS Rate.

Section 11: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Notification of Address Change or Change in Ownership

Provider will notify OEC in writing of any change in mailing address within ten (10) days of the change. Provider will notify OEC in writing of any proposed change in operating facility address or ownership at least thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the change. Continuation in the UPK Program after change of ownership will depend on the new ownership successfully completing a due diligence review. Current owners must notify parents and any prospective buyers that continuation in the UPK Program is not guaranteed and that new owners are subject to a due diligence review upon taking possession of the facility if they wish to remain in the Program. If such change is required by an emergency, such as fire, flooding or earthquake, Provider will notify OEC of a change in operating facility address as soon as possible.

Notification of Site Closure

Provider must notify OEC at least one month in advance of a planned site closure. OEC will then terminate the Provider contract to coincide with the last day of service. All requirements related to contract termination must be followed by the Provider. See Contract Termination section.

Prohibition Against Loans

Provider will not loan or advance Contract funds to individuals, corporations, organizations, public agencies or private agencies. UPK funds may not be used as collateral for loans.

Modifications and Amendments

These UPK Operating Guidelines may be modified or amended by OEC during the Contract Period to conform to OEC policies or administrative and statutory guidelines issued by any state, federal, or local governmental agency. OEC will give the Provider fourteen (14) days notice of any changes or modifications made to the Operating Guidelines.

Continued Funding

Provider has no vested right to continued funding from OEC. Failure of Provider to operate in compliance with its UPK Contract or these Operating Guidelines may be cause for OEC to terminate the contract or modify funding. A substantial change in UPK's funding source and/or amount may also be cause for discontinued Provider funding. OEC will notify Provider as soon as practicable of any changes.

Section 12: MARKETING AND LOGO USAGE

In any publicity release or other public reference including a media release, information pamphlets, etc., on the provider's UPK program and services, the release shall clearly state that the UPK Program is funded by Invest in Children. The Provider should also send a copy of the publicity release to John Ladd prior to its release.

Providers are **strongly** encouraged to use the approved Invest in Children UPK logo on all materials used to market their UPK Program, including flyers, banners, Web site postings, and print advertisements. Providers should contact **John Ladd** at john.ladd@jfs.ohio.gov or **(216-443-6583)** for electronic versions of the UPK logo and any available support materials or marketing templates. Approval of materials displaying the UPK logo must be obtained from the Office of Early Childhood prior to distribution, *and while edits are still possible*.