

CHILDREN UNLIMITED FAMILY HANDBOOK
2023-2024 TUITION POLICY
Updated and Effective September 4, 2023

Enrollment

To secure a space at Children Unlimited, please return an Application for Registration form with a non-refundable deposit in the amount of one week's tuition for each child attending per the CU Tuition Rate Schedule. This deposit will be applied to your first week's tuition; it will not be returned if you decide not to attend Children Unlimited as scheduled. If you wish to postpone your scheduled start date, you will be expected to pay 80% of your anticipated weekly tuition to hold your enrollment for the first 90 days of postponement. Postponement beyond 90 days will be charged full tuition.

Contracted Hours

Each family contracts with Children Unlimited for a set number of hours of early care and education per week, between a minimum of 20 hours per week to a maximum of 50 hours per week.* Hours and times can be different each day but must be the same from week to week (e.g., every Monday 10-2, every Tuesday 8-4, etc.). Children Unlimited contracts on the half hour (e.g., 7:30 or 8:00, not 7:45) for 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, or 50 hours/week. Once your contract is signed, weekly tuition remains unchanged, regardless of the child's attendance, sickness, holidays, weather emergencies, etc., until the contract is changed or terminated. Children Unlimited reserves the right to terminate a contract with 5 days' notice should it be determined that commitments and responsibilities on behalf of any child are not being met by the parent or guardian, or if the Director deems that, for any reason, the continuation of early care and education is not in the best interest of the child, family, or Children Unlimited.

* Families may contract with Children Unlimited for **only** the 10 publicly-funded preschool hours (Act 166).

Your contract remains in effect until your intention to change or withdraw is received in writing. Changes to contracted hours can be made only if Children Unlimited has availability based upon regulated ratios, group sizes, and staffing **and** the duration of the change period is four weeks or more. We cannot change contracted hours on a weekly basis or "trade" contracted days.

Although it may be convenient for families to take time off, particularly in the summer, we can only guarantee your space if you continue to contract and pay for a minimum of 20 hours per week. Changes in contracted hours must be for a period of four weeks or more. If you plan to reduce your number of days for the summer, CU may determine what those days are. For CU to be able to ensure compliance with mandated teacher:child ratios, CU may limit the number of children enrolled in each classroom on each day of the week. Therefore, if you are dropping days, we may not be able to accommodate your 'ideal' schedule.

We require two weeks' written notice to change your contracted hours or to leave our care. If you decide to leave our care, payment for two weeks tuition is required, regardless of attendance during those two weeks.

We plan our staffing based upon contracted hours. If you arrive early, you will be required to stay with your child until the contracted time, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Director. All children **must** be picked up by the agreed upon time in order to ensure that proper teacher:child ratios are maintained and that teachers can leave school on time. If you have an emergency and will be late for pick up, please notify Children Unlimited **immediately**. A late fee of \$5.00 for the first five minutes and \$1.00 per minute thereafter will be assessed. **Late fees are applied per child**. If you are more than 15 minutes later than your contracted pick-up time without notice, we will attempt to reach you by phone. If we cannot get in touch with you, we will call one of your emergency contacts to pick up your child.

We will attempt to accommodate any requests for additional hours or days, but due to staffing, ratios, and group size regulations and enrollment, extra time may be limited. **Requests for extra time must be made at least one**

week in advance. Any extra time requested and granted is billed at Children Unlimited's drop-in rate. Tuition for extra time is pre-paid and non-refundable.

We are happy to welcome CU 'graduates' back to our program after school and during vacations and summers, provided there is availability based upon regulated ratios, group sizes, and staffing. After-school care is provided for a minimum of five hours per week and is billed at the drop-in rate. If you would like your child to join us for school vacations, please contact the office at least two weeks in advance to enter into a CU contract for required hours. Contracted hours for school vacations will be billed per the CU Tuition Rate Schedule. Any extra time requested and not contracted in advance will be billed at drop-in rates. Tuition for extra time is non-refundable.

Tuition Rates

Based on the number of hours contracted per week, weekly tuition is calculated using the Children Unlimited Tuition Rate Schedule (attached). Children Unlimited contracts for 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, or 50 hours/week, with the exception of families who contract with CU for ONLY the 10 hours of publicly-funded preschool.

Families with more than one child attending Children Unlimited are granted a 10% discount on the older child's tuition. This discount does not apply to drop-in care.

For ease of payment, tuitions are paid electronically via Automated Clearing House (ACH) payments. Children Unlimited will initiate the ACH on Thursday for the following week's tuition and the money will be debited from the family's bank account on Monday (or Tuesday if Monday is a bank holiday). Any changes to ACH information, such as start, stop, bank and/or account numbers must be received by Children Unlimited by 5:00 pm on Wednesday in order for CU to process them by the transaction deadline on Thursday.

If your ACH transaction is returned for any reason, a \$40 processing fee will be assessed, and immediate payment of the full tuition amount is expected in cash. If this occurs twice, we must receive future tuition payments in cash.

Children Unlimited will alter the weekly ACH amount to reflect any contract changes, extra time, or any early drop-off/late pick-up or other fees due to Children Unlimited.

If you elect not to use ACH, tuition payments must be received in **cash** and must be **prepaid** (due by 5:00 pm on the Friday **before** the child arrives at school Monday morning). If tuition is received by Children Unlimited after 5:00 pm on the Friday before care is provided, a 5% late fee will be charged. Three or more late payments may be considered grounds for termination of your contract.

Act 166 Publicly-Funded Preschool

Children Unlimited is prequalified to partner with the State of Vermont to provide publicly-funded preschool under Act 166 and has entered into agreements with a number of school districts to provide publicly-funded preschool in the 2023-2024 school year. The Act provides for 10 hours of preschool education over a 35-week period for all 3, 4, and 5 year old children not yet enrolled in kindergarten. At CU, for ease of administration and accounting, publicly-funded preschool will begin on Monday, September 4, 2023 (CU is closed for Labor Day), and end on Friday, May 24, 2024 (38 weeks). The total amount paid per child to CU by the school district for 2023-2024 is \$3,764, or \$99.05/week for 38 weeks (\$99.15 for the final week). Act 166 funds are paid directly to CU by the school districts. Parents are not responsible for payment of these funds and, therefore, the amount is deducted from total tuition on the family's CU Contract. In order to access these funds for your child:

- Your child must turn 3 prior to September 1, 2023.
- Your child must be registered with the school district in which you reside.
- You must tell the school district that your child will attend CU.

Please note:

- School districts are mandated to pay only for those children residing within their boundaries and who are registered. If your family moves during the school year, both CU and the parent/guardian must notify the school district. You must register your child with the new school district in order to access Act 166 funds.
- CU is required to regularly report attendance information to the school districts. If a child is not consistently attending CU for the funded 10 hours/week, the district may discontinue funding for that child due to excessive absences.
- If Act 166 funding is discontinued for a child for any reason, the parent/guardian will be responsible for payment of all monies due to CU for services rendered.

Children Unlimited contracts for children enrolled in Act 166 preschool, once signed, are in force until May 24, 2024 or until two weeks' written notice is given. At that time, you may enter into a separate contract with CU for weeks in which Act 166 is not in effect.

Child Care Financial Assistance Program Policies (if applicable)

The Child Care Financial Assistance Program helps eligible families pay for early care and education for children from age 6 weeks up to age 13. The program is administered by the Child Development Division (CDD), Department for Children and Families, Vermont Agency of Human Services. It is funded through a combination of state and federal funds. CDD pays all or part of an established state rate directly to CU. Families are responsible for paying their family share portion directly to the providers they choose. If the provider's rate is above the CDD established state rate, the family is responsible for payment of the remainder.

Parents/guardians are responsible for preparing and submitting all paperwork to determine and maintain eligibility for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) from the State of Vermont.

- A Statement of Eligibility indicating the weekly amount afforded by CCFAP is required prior to the child's first day in attendance.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for any difference between Children Unlimited's tuition rate and the CCFAP state rate established by CDD (a co-pay).
- Family share and co-pay amounts are made either via ACH or **prepaid** (i.e., are due by 5:00 pm on the **Friday before** the child arrives at school Monday morning).
- If the family share or co-pay is received by Children Unlimited after 5:00 pm on the Friday before care is provided, a 5% late fee will be charged.
- Three or more late payments of family share or co-pay may be considered grounds for termination of your contract.
- If CCFAP eligibility changes or expires, parents/guardians are responsible for any increase in family share or co-pay or for the full tuition amount. If CCFAP funds are paid retroactively by the state, Children Unlimited will gladly credit the account.