

**CHILDREN UNLIMITED FAMILY HANDBOOK**  
**2024-2025 TUITION POLICY**  
**Effective September 2, 2024**

**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 per the CU Tuition Rate Schedule for each child attending. This deposit will be applied to your first tuition payment; 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. We recommend you routinely arrive 5 minutes before your contracted time ends so you have time to check in with your child's teacher and gather your things **PRIOR TO** the end of your contracted time and to avoid late fees. Note that the Children Unlimited day ends promptly at 5:00. All children must have left the program by 5:00.

Early drop-off or late pick-up fees are assessed if and when children are in Children Unlimited care before or after their contracted time. The fee of \$5.00 for the first five minutes and \$1.00 per minute thereafter will be assessed. Fees are applied per child. If you have an emergency and will be late for pick up, please notify Children Unlimited immediately. 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 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, 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. 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 automatically paid electronically via Brightwheel, the early childhood management system. Brightwheel invoices are sent to families on Friday, and tuition amounts are debited from the family's bank account on Monday (or Tuesday if Monday is a bank holiday). Children Unlimited will generate invoices via Brightwheel to reflect any contract changes, extra time, or any early drop-off/late pick-up or other fees due to Children Unlimited. If your tuition transaction is returned for any reason, immediate payment of the full tuition amount is expected.

Children Unlimited encourages all families to apply for the [Child Care Financial Assistance Program \(CCFAP\)](#). CCFAP is an entitlement program designed to support eligible families in paying for early care and education for children ages 6 weeks up to 13 years. The program is administered by the Child Development Division (CDD), Department for Children and Families, Vermont Agency of Human Services. Families complete and submit an application to CDD. CDD then verifies the family's eligibility and, based on income guidelines, determines the weekly share of a state-established tuition rate that the family will be responsible to pay (the family share). CDD pays the remainder of the state-established tuition rate directly to CU.

CU's full tuition rate is the CCFAP state-established tuition rate. We realize, however, that families have differing abilities to pay and, therefore, CU offers CU scholarships to all families not eligible for CCFAP. The MAXIMUM scholarship amount offered per weekly contracted hours is listed on the CU Tuition Rate Schedule. Each family can self-determine if a scholarship would be helpful to them and, if so, can determine the amount of the scholarship that works for them, up to and including the maximum scholarship amount. This scholarship system reflects CU's commitment to providing excellent early education to all families while also striving to provide livable compensation and benefits for our community of professionals. Any unused scholarship funds can be repurposed toward team wages and benefits. In this way, we can work together to provide a strong community of families and educators.

## **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 2024-2025 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.

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 the family's tuition for those 35 weeks. The 2024-2025 school year will begin on Tuesday, September 3, 2024, and end on Friday, June 6, 2025. The total amount paid per child directly to CU by the school district for 2024-2025 is \$3,884, or \$110.97/week for the 35 weeks of the public school year. **Families are responsible for payment of the full weekly family tuition payment or the full CCFAP family share, less any applicable sibling discount, any time there is no Act 166 funding, including public school vacation weeks (the 5 weeks of 11/25-11/29/2024, 12/23-12/27/2024, 12/30/2024-1/3/2025, 2/24-2/28/2025, and 4/21-4/25/2025).**

In order to access Act 166 funds for your child:

- Your child must turn 3 prior to September 1, 2024.
- Your child must be registered with the school district in which you reside.

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. The district may discontinue funding for a 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 June 6, 2025 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)**

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

- Parents/guardians are responsible for paying the family share amount to Children Unlimited.
- Family share amounts are automatically paid electronically via Brightwheel, the early childhood management system. Brightwheel invoices are sent to families on Friday, and tuition amounts are debited from the family's bank account on Monday (or Tuesday if Monday is a bank holiday).
- If CCFAP eligibility changes or expires, parents/guardians are responsible for any increase in family share or for the full tuition amount. If CCFAP funds are paid retroactively by the state, Children Unlimited will gladly credit the account.
- If, for any reason, the CCFAP family share is greater than CU's rates, the family will be eligible for CU scholarships.
- Act 166 funds are deducted from the CCFAP family share amount. If, for any reason, family share less Act 166 is less than zero, the family share amount will be zero. There are no credits or refunds.