



Early Childhood
IMPROVING SCHOOL READINESS



2015 – 2016
Requirements and Guidelines for Public School
and Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD)
Prekindergarten Programs

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Requirements and Guidelines for Public School and Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD) Programs

Section 1: GENERAL INFORMATION	2
Section 2: GENERAL GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS	3
• Participation in Community Networks	4
• Accountability	4
• Eligibility	5
• Activities, Routines and Curriculum	6
• Attendance	7
• Class Size Limitation and Ratios	7
• Collaboration	8
• Corporal Punishment	8
• Family Involvement and Support	9
• Funding and Reimbursements	10
• Health and Safety Practices	10
• Meals and Snacks	11
• Physical Environment	11
• Reporting	12
• Schedules and Program Structure	13
• Staff Qualifications and Staff Development	14
• Transportation	15
• Program Monitoring	15
Section 3: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS	16
Appendix A: LA 4	26

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that there is a strong relationship between the quality of early childhood experiences and later academic success. Appropriate practices, trained staff, engaging activities, adequate materials, and high-quality interactions provide young children with the opportunities needed for learning and development that allow for active engagement and participation in their environment.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Implementation of developmentally appropriate practices is the cornerstone of high-quality early childhood education programs. Inherent in this philosophy is the provision of age and developmentally appropriate activities, interactions, materials/resources and assessment practices. Programs adhering to such practices are child-centered and focused on all domains of development including cognitive, social, emotional, language/literacy, creative expression, approaches to learning, and motor skills in a manner and at a pace consistent with the needs and capabilities of the individual child.

REQUIREMENTS

Publicly funded programs are those that receive state and/or federal dollars to provide early care and education services. Louisiana programs receiving such funds shall be responsible for adherence to any applicable state and federal regulations. Failure to do so will result in the withdrawal of program funds. Program-specific requirements are found in Section 3 of this document.

GUIDELINES

The guidelines provided in this document are NOT requirements, but indicate strategies for ideal practices in relation to early childhood programs. State and federal regulations supersede any guidance provided in this document.

SECTION 2: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

- **Participation in Community Networks**
- **Accountability**
- **Eligibility**
- **Activities, Routines and Curriculum**
- **Attendance**
- **Class Size Limitation and Ratios**
- **Collaboration**
- **Corporal Punishment**
- **Family Involvement and Support**
- **Funding and Reimbursements**
- **Health and Safety Practices**
- **Meals and Snacks**
- **Physical Environment**
- **Reporting**
- **Schedules and Program Structure**
- **Staff Qualifications and Staff Development**
- **Transportation**

PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY NETWORKS

Requirements

Pursuant to §307 of [Bulletin 140](#) – *Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network*, Program Partner Profile and Assurances must be signed and submitted by all network members, who are thereby agreeing to:

- membership in the community network;
- participation in the early childhood care and education accountability system; and
- participation in the coordinated enrollment process.

Any publicly-funded program that does not comply may be subject to the loss of its public funding.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Requirements - Assessment

Pursuant to §513 of [Bulletin 140](#) – *Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network*, publicly-funded sites must ensure all publicly-funded children receive completed assessments in October, February, and May using *GOLD™* by Teaching Strategies® or another state-approved assessment tool that is developmentally appropriate, valid, reliable, and culturally sensitive. Publicly-funded sites shall obtain approval from the department prior to using child assessment tools different from the assessment tool provided by the department.

Note: The Developing Skills Checklist (DSC) Assessment and ECERS-R are no longer required.

Publicly-funded sites must also ensure there is an assessment portfolio for every publicly-funded child that provides evidence of the assessment rating for that school year.

As part of requirements for reporting child progress to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), programs must continue to administer the *AEPsi (Assessment Evaluation and Programming System Interactive)* for children identified as having a disability. *AEPsi* is administered upon entry to and exit from a program. *AEPsi* is the reporting system that Louisiana uses to report preschool outcome data for children ages 3-5 to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Guidelines - Assessment

Quality programs ensure:

- Assessments are used to plan for and modify program activities, interactions and routines to the specific needs of individual children, including those with disabilities and English Language Learners;
- Documentation of children’s progress is kept up-to-date and available for review by the child’s parent/guardian;
- Assessments are conducted in the natural environment throughout the daily schedule of activities, routines, and interactions; and
- Appropriate screenings and follow-up referrals are conducted in a timely manner.

Requirements - Observation

Pursuant to §503 of [Bulletin 140](#) – *Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network*, all toddler and PreK classrooms in a publicly-funded site shall receive two CLASS observations by a CLASS-reliable observer during the school year conducted by the community network. One observation shall occur during the fall observation period (August 1 – December 15), if the classroom is in existence on October 1, and the other shall occur during the spring observation period (January 1 – May 15), if the classroom is in existence on February 1. CLASS observations conducted by third party contractors hired by the department shall not count towards this requirement.

ELIGIBILITY

Requirements

See Program-Specific Requirements in Section 3

Programs shall:

- Be made available to children who:
 - Meet applicable income requirements;
 - Reside in Louisiana and are age-eligible to enter kindergarten the following year. Children must turn four-years-old on or before September 30th of their PreK year.
 - Meet the requirements of law for immunization and documentation required for regular school enrollment;
 - Are consistently and regularly in attendance; and
 - Are not enrolled in any other governmentally funded prekindergarten programs.
- Maintain documentation of student eligibility (e.g., for free or reduced price meals, disability, etc.); and
- Not deny access, participation or funding to children on the basis of race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); gender (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Title II of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976); or disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) in education programs.

Guidelines

Quality programs ensure that:

When it is requested that children are to be dressed in uniforms, they are not denied enrollment because of a family's inability to purchase such. Families should not be required to financially support extracurricular activities or fundraisers unless they choose to do so at their cost.

ACTIVITIES, ROUTINES, AND CURRICULUM

Requirements

Programs shall provide:

Opportunities for activities and routines, curriculum, and planning that are developmentally-appropriate, and support interrelated development and address the *Louisiana's Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards* in the following domains: Approaches to Learning, Cognitive Development and General Knowledge (Creative Thinking and Expression, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies), Health and Physical Well Being and Motor Development, Language and Literacy Development, and Social and Emotional Development (*pursuant to BESE Bulletin 136*).

Guidelines

Quality programs offer:

- Activities, routines, materials, and curriculum that are well-balanced and appropriate to each child's age, background, stage of development and individual considerations, including disabilities and linguistic background;
- Age and developmentally-appropriate activities designed for active involvement by children in the learning process;
- A complete educational program directed toward the development of cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and communication skills in a manner and at a pace consistent with the needs and capabilities of the individual child;
- Activities and routines that are comprehensive, integrated, and directed toward the development of the child across all domains; activity or interest areas are provided to accommodate and facilitate developmentally appropriate activities including children with disabilities and English Language Learners;
- Plans that describe activities for children across a variety of groupings (whole group, when appropriate, small-group and individual); plans indicate appropriate adaptations/modifications necessary for children with disabilities (if enrolled) necessary to meet their (Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)/Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and for those whose who are English Language Learners; and
- Opportunities for staff to meet collaboratively for the purpose of discussing activities, routines, and curriculum and plans for individual children's needs and growth.

ATTENDANCE

Requirements

See Program-Specific Requirements in Section 3

Programs shall:

- Develop an appropriate intervention plan with parents/guardians of any child having chronic absenteeism or chronic tardiness and provide families with guidance and knowledge of available resources that will enable them to ensure that their child attends regularly; and
- Maintain child attendance records.

CLASS SIZE LIMITATION AND RATIOS

Requirements

Programs are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the child-to-adult member ratios are 1:10, and the maximum class size is limited to 20 children to ensure that staff is able to adequately meet the needs of all children, including those with disabilities, and;
- Ensuring that class size and ratios are determined by the IEP requirements of the children in the group for self-contained or reverse mainstream special education classrooms.

Guidelines

Quality programs ensure that:

- There is an appropriate number of staff to provide adequate group supervision and to provide individual attention to children in order to promote their development in all domains.

COLLABORATION

Requirements

See Program-Specific Requirements in Section 3

Programs are responsible for:

- Ensuring collaborative meetings occur to share ideas and concerns; meetings are scheduled to be accessible for all members; documentation of these meetings (agendas, sign-in sheets, etc.) is kept on file. Participation in Community Network meetings is allowable as a collaborative effort.

Guidelines

Quality programs encourage:

- Formal, written agreements that include guidelines for resolving conflicts, clearly defined decision-making processes, well-defined leadership roles, shared responsibilities, and goals for maximizing services;
- Reviewing and working to maximize existing services in the community to meet the specific needs of children in the areas of education, health, and support services; and
- Establishing collaborative agreements for professional development of prekindergarten program staff or delivery of other support services (e.g., parent involvement activities, mental health services, adult literacy services, and employment counseling) such as NSECD, Public School Programs, Head Start (or other governmentally-funded providers), private providers, regional and local community leaders and children/family development initiatives.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Requirement

Quality programs will not allow:

- Any form of demeaning language or corporal punishment (which includes but is not limited to paddling, striking, or hitting).

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT

Requirements

Programs shall provide:

- Parent conferences (at least two per year);
- Opportunities for families to volunteer or participate in program activities;
- Written information about the program including policies related to abuse/neglect, non-discrimination, complaint/grievance procedures, behavior management, etc. provided to families upon admission; and
- An orientation process that may include a tour, opportunities to meet administrators and staff, and review written material such as curricula and special events. Such orientation should occur no later than 20 working days after the program commences.
- Linkages to services such as G.E.D., adult literacy training, and referrals for medical, housing/utilities assistance, etc.

Guidelines

Quality programs promote:

- Family members' knowledge of child development and involvement with their children's educational experiences through a variety of activities;
- Opportunities for reciprocal relationships that enable program staff to share information about program activities and children's development while learning about the child's and family's interests and needs; and
- Parenting support that includes, but is not limited to:
 - Providing information on child development,
 - Information, resources, and other services that may be necessary to support healthy home environments,
 - Opportunities to enhance knowledge of child development, positive parenting, health resource information, etc.,
 - Assistance with transition activities such as locating and obtaining all necessary documentation and health-related requirements for movement to another age/grade level or from one class to the next, and
 - A process for allowing parents to provide input in the development of program policy as well as evaluations of the program.
- Coordination of the provision of support services for all enrolled prekindergarten children who would benefit from such assistance and their families. These services are intended to support maximum early education and care benefits to children so that they are well prepared for formal schooling, and therefore, more likely to experience later academic success.

FUNDING AND REIMBURSEMENTS

Requirements

See Program-Specific Requirements in Section 3

HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES

Requirements

Programs shall:

- Ensure that all children have their hearing and vision screened within 90 calendar days of entry. Exceptions will be made when documentation is available indicating that the child was provided with screenings within the previous four-month period and results found to be in normal ranges.
- Ensure that written, confidential health records are maintained for each child as part of the child's individual record. A child must have age-appropriate immunizations or a signed statement against such immunizations. A copy of the child's immunization records must be secured at the time of registration or entry into the program and must be kept on file at the child's attendance site.

Guidelines

Quality programs:

- Operate in a way that fosters healthy development and safety of children;
- Adhere to policies and regulations to ensure that the health and safety requirements of all children are met, including those with disabilities and specifically identified health needs;
- Have written procedures for protecting children against child abuse which may include providing materials and training regarding policies, procedures, and legal and professional responsibilities about reporting suspected child abuse/neglect;
- Have plans for medical emergencies and evacuation procedures. Additionally, first aid supplies should be adequate in variety and quantity, and there must be a plan to ensure such supplies do not have outdated expiration dates;
- Have a working and readily available telephone at each program site which is accessible to all staff even if the administrative office may be closed. Appropriate emergency numbers for the local fire department, police department, poison control, and local medical facility shall be prominently posted on or near the telephone; and
- Keep prescription and over-the-counter medications, poisons, cleaning supplies, harmful chemicals, equipment, tools, and any substance with a warning label stating it is harmful locked in a room or in cabinets inaccessible to children. Refrigerated medication shall be in a secure container to prevent access by children and to avoid contamination of food.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Requirements

Programs shall:

- Provide appropriate meals and snacks to every child.

Guidelines

Quality programs ensure that:

- Food is served in a clean, positive, relaxed social atmosphere that provides time for positive adult-child interactions;
- Foods that are representative of children's cultural backgrounds are served periodically;
- Children have sufficient time to eat at a reasonable rate, and children should not be forced to finish their food, nor be denied a meal or snack for any reason other than written medical direction; and
- Parents who choose to send meals/snacks for their child may do so, but programs must advise families that meals are available at no or reduced cost for children qualifying for free/reduced priced meals.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Guidelines

Quality programs:

Indoor Space

- Have sufficient classroom space for the number of children served and the activities conducted in the assigned places. There should be adequate indoor space for a variety of learning activities and centers and for children to move and play freely. Toilet facilities, hallways, lofts, storage or food preparation areas, or offices should not be considered in this space. Indoor play areas are defined clearly by spatial arrangement which include spaces for children to play alone or with a friend, protected from intrusion from other children;
- Have child-related displays to show work done by the children and relate to current activities;
- Ensure access for children with disabilities by compliance with Title 2 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The program makes reasonable accommodations and provides access to the full range of activities provided. (For Program-Specific Requirements related to children with disabilities see Appendix);
- Provide safe and sufficient materials and equipment of sufficient quantity and variety that are appropriate for the ages, sizes, and developmental levels of the children;
- Have low, open shelves, bins, or other open containers within easy reach of the children for storage of learning center materials in each learning center area. Toy chests with attached lids are prohibited. Materials are visible and readily accessible so children can remove and replace them independently or with minimal assistance;

Guidelines (*Physical Environment, cont'd*)

- Ensure that the indoor environment is safe, clean, free from hazards, and in good repair. Additionally, the space is organized for independent use and exploration as much as possible. There is satisfactory space for storage and for adult group activities (e.g. parent/teacher conferences, staff study groups, etc.). There should be individual, labeled space for each child's personal belongings;
- Have chairs and table space of a suitable size available for each child. These tables and chairs may be located in classroom learning centers and should not be positioned together as one central area of the classroom;
- Ensure that each child is provided with a cot, mat, or crib (cribs may also be necessary for children with specific disabilities) of appropriate size, height, and material, sufficient to insure his/her health and safety and meeting all safety regulations. Sleeping accommodations should be separate and assigned to children on a permanent basis. Either the school or parent should provide labeled sheets or blankets for covering both the mat/cot/crib and the child. Cots or mats should be spaced a minimum of 18 inches apart when in use with a head/toe arrangement so no two children's heads are adjacent; and
- Dedicate adequate time for rest/nap that is scheduled to meet the needs of each child and space and quiet activities for children who do not sleep.

Outdoor Space

- Ensure that there is adequate outdoor space accessible to all children in the program that allows for freedom of movement;
- Have safe and sufficient materials and equipment (portable and stationary) of sufficient quantity and variety that are appropriate for ages, sizes and developmental levels of the children; and
- Ensure that equipment is maintained and in good repair and should encourage active and/or quiet play and promote a variety of skills and skill levels. The outdoor play area is kept clean and free from hazards and provides some protection from the elements (e.g. trees, canopies, awnings, etc.).

REPORTING

Requirements

See Program-Specific Requirements in Section 3

Programs shall:

- Report data documenting the effectiveness of the program and the progress toward attaining program goals. The program must also submit a report detailing exactly how the allocated funds are spent; and
- Submit all required information records/reports, programmatic and fiscal, as required by the Department of Education and State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

SCHEDULES AND PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Requirements

Programs shall:

Offer a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate, and informal in nature with a balance of both teacher-directed and student-initiated activities. Unless specified otherwise by a child's IEP, follow the provision established in R. S. 17.154.1 in regards to the length of the school day and the school year. Pursuant to Bulletin 741, each LEA may authorize some or all of its schools to modify the total number of instructional minutes per day and instructional days per year provided that 63,720 minutes of instructional time per year are met.

Guidelines

Quality programs:

- Establish a schedule or structure that provides opportunities for activities that meet the variety of learning needs of young children;
- May stagger entrance at the beginning of the school year to allow time for assessments and for children to become familiar with the environment and materials;
- Post a full day schedule that provides the following:
 - A balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities;
 - Bathroom, meals and snack times;
 - Nap and rest time;
 - Accessibility to indoor centers/interest areas, including space for privacy that can be easily supervised;
 - Accessibility to outdoor centers, including gross motor play activities;
 - Quite/active play activities;
 - Opportunities to be part of whole and/or small groups (limited and only when appropriate to the ages and developmental stages of children);
 - Freedom of movement from one interest area to another; and
 - Prepare for transitions which occur in a timely, predictable manner to meet individual children's needs.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Requirements

See Program-Specific Requirements in Section 3

Programs shall require that:

- A minimum of eighteen (18) hours of on-going professional development relevant to early childhood is provided and based on data (child and program assessments), the instructional needs of children, and is tailored to support staff improvement;
- All staff has appropriate criminal background checks and complies with all hiring procedures required by the program prior to the first day of work. Programs shall ensure that classrooms are adequately staffed in the event of staff absence; and
- An orientation is provided for all administrators and staff before commencing the program.

Guidelines

Quality programs ensure:

- The program will be sufficiently staffed by adults who understand child development and recognize and provide for children's individual needs and differences;
- Staff is not pulled from their work with the prekindergarten programs to assume other duties at the school site;
- Staff development that includes a variety of experiences such as classroom observations, webinars, workshops, mentoring/coaching, individual consultations, technical assistance, visits to other programs, attendance at conferences, etc.; and
- Training on topics that may include but, is not limited to:
 - *Guidelines and Requirements for Public School and Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD) Programs*
 - Developmentally appropriate practices
 - Strategies for working with children with disabilities and English Language Learners
 - *Louisiana Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards*
 - CLASS Observation Tool
 - GOLD™ by Teaching Strategies®

TRANSPORTATION

Requirements

See Program-Specific Requirements in Section 3

SECTION 3 – PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

PROGRAM	ATTENDANCE
LA 4	<p>Each school system must keep daily attendance records for all children in the LA 4 Program. In order to be counted as present for attendance purposes, a student must be present a minimum of four (4) hours of the six (6) hour instructional period.</p> <p>Each month, the district will report to the department through its monthly enrollment report, the number of LA 4 funded children who were present for 74% of the scheduled school days each month. This data must be collected at the local level on a class by class basis. The monthly attendance percentage should be calculated using the following formula:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total # of school days in the month X 74% = # of days children need to attend to meet 74% attendance target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example: If there are 17 school days in the month of October, 74% of the month would be 12.58 days. Therefore, children would need to attend school for at least 12 days (do not round up) in order to meet the 74% target. <p>If districts fail to meet the monthly attendance target, they must submit a corrective action plan (<i>see Appendix A</i>) explaining the cause of the attendance target not being met and how they intend to rectify the issue. If a district fails to meet the monthly attendance target after three consecutive months, then their monthly reimbursement will be reduced using the per pupil amount times the number of children who did not meet the attendance target for the third month.</p> <p>School districts must develop a system to collect attendance data (TANF claim forms, class roll books, JPAMS, POWERSCHOOLS reports, etc.). All documentation of attendance must be maintained at the local level and does not need to be submitted to the department for the purposes of reimbursement.</p> <p>Documentation for excused absences (doctor’s notes, funeral notices, parent notes, etc.) must also be kept on file. All such documentation should be submitted as part of the desk review monitoring process. Excused absences should not be calculated against a child’s monthly attendance percentage. In other words, if a child has an approvable, documented absence, then those days are not counted as “absent.”</p> <p>A child may be dis-enrolled from the program, at the discretion of the district, if he/she fails to meet the 74% attendance requirement for two consecutive months due to unexcused absences. Suspensions or expulsions of children should be an action of last resort, and ONLY after the program has exhausted every means possible (counseling, mental health evaluation, SBLC meeting, etc.) to address challenges exhibited.</p>
NSECD	<p>In order to be counted as present, a child must be present a minimum of four (4) hours of the six-hour instructional period. Children must also attend school for at least 74% of the month. Attendance must be reported daily. Absences will not be excused for reimbursement purposes.</p>

PROGRAM	COLLABORATION
LA 4	Programs are responsible for ensuring that collaborative meetings with other agencies that provide services for young children occur on at least a quarterly basis.

PROGRAM	ELIGIBILITY, STUDENT FUNDING CRITERIA, AND VERIFICATION
LA 4	<p>Programs make 6-hour educational classes available for children in the school system’s jurisdiction. Programs are responsible for verification and maintenance of documentation of student eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Funds are available to children who meet eligibility requirements (185% or less of the Federal Poverty Level). Classes shall be provided at no cost except for the applicable lunch cost to the child or his family for any child who is eligible to receive reduced price meals. Once eligibility is determined, it is valid for a period of one year.</p> <p>Tuition may be charged, for any child who does not meet eligibility requirements (185% or less of the Federal Poverty Level). Such children may be charged for all or part of the LA 4 class, in an amount not to exceed that necessary for the system to provide the LA 4 class to the child and, in any case, no more than the average amount expended per pupil on those children from whom no tuition may be required, excluding any amount attributable to the provision of classroom space and utility costs.</p> <p>At the beginning of the year, or prior to its start, families in <u>districts NOT participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program</u> must fill out the School Food Service Form accurately and completely. These forms are then submitted to the school for determination on whether or not a child qualifies for free or reduced price meals. Once a determination is made, district coordinators must determine how this documentation can be made available to Department of Education staff for review. This may include, but not be limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual class rosters indicating LA 4 children who are coded as free/reduced or paying tuition 2. School rosters indicating LA 4 children who are coded as free/reduced or tuition paying 3. District/charter rosters indicating LA 4 children who are coded as free/reduced or paying tuition 4. Copies of approved individual School Food Service forms 5. Any other documentation provided by district School Food Service Office <p><u>For districts participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program</u>, staff will need to have parents complete the Early Childhood Programs Eligibility Survey to determine eligibility. Once surveys are completed, the LA 4 coordinator will be responsible for designating staff to review applications to determine eligibility. These surveys along with other eligibility documentation must be kept on file at the school and/or district office.</p> <p>Documenting child eligibility is the responsibility of the School Food Service Personnel, District Coordinator, and/or teaching staff.</p>

Program	Eligibility, Student Funding Criteria, and Verification (Cont'd)
NSECD	Funds are available to children who meet eligibility requirements (185% or less of the Federal Poverty Level). Once eligibility is determined it is valid for a period of one year, unless a child is dis-enrolled. Household income is verified at the time of enrollment with (2) recent pay stubs, letter from employer, or recent proof of eligibility for such services as SNAP, SSI, etc.)
8(g)	Funds are available to children who meet eligibility requirements (185% or less of the Federal Poverty Level). Classes shall be provided at no cost except for the applicable lunch cost to the child or his family for any child who is eligible to receive reduced price meals.
Title I	<p>For a Title I school operating a school wide program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reside in the attendance area of a Title I school operating a school wide program; • If a school wide program cannot serve all preschool-age children residing in the school attendance area, it must establish and apply selection criteria to ensure that • those children who are most at risk of failing to meet the State's academic achievement standards are served. In this situation, the school must use multiple, • educationally related, objective criteria, such as teacher judgment, interviews with • parents, and developmentally appropriate measures of child development, to determine those preschool children most in need who will be serviced. • The use of family income is one factor that may inform whether a preschool child is most in need, but children should not be identified for services in a Title I Preschool Program solely on the basis of family income. <p>For a Title I targeted assistance school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reside in the attendance area of a school operating a targeted assistance program who are identified as most at-risk of failing to meet the State's academic achievement standards. (With respect to prekindergarten children, this determination must be made on the basis of multiple, educationally related, objective criteria, such as teacher judgment, interviews with parents, and developmentally appropriate measures of child development.) • The use of family income as one factor in determining eligibility is allowable, but children should not be identified for a Title I Preschool Program solely on the basis of family income. • In addition, children who participated in Head Start, or a Title I preschool program at any time during the two preceding years; children who received services under Part C of Title I (migrant education) in the prior two years; homeless preschool-age children; and children who are in a local institution for neglected or delinquent children and youth or attending a community-day program for these children are automatically eligible.

PROGRAM	EXPENSES – ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE
LA 4	<p>Program services shall be administered according to an approved budget. All program expenses must be in accordance with the United States Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87, A-102, and A-133 and the approved allocation between the LEA and the Department of Education.</p> <p>Administrative Costs</p> <p>As a general rule, administrative costs should be no more than 10 percent of an entity’s total allocation. The cost of salaries and related benefits should be calculated only for the percentage of time personnel works on LA 4 Prekindergarten-funded activities.</p> <p><u>The following are considered administrative costs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General administration or coordination of program, including accounting and payroll functions; ○ Salaries associated with performing administrative functions; ○ Supplies, equipment*, travel, postage, utilities, and office space related to the administration of a program; ○ Activities related to eligibility determinations; ○ Preparation of program plan, budget and schedules; and ○ Program monitoring <p style="text-align: center;">*No equipment can be purchased with TANF Federal Funds</p> <p><u>The following are considered non-administrative costs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Direct cost of providing program services including client activities, assessment, case management, etc. ○ Salaries associated with performing service functions ○ Supplies, equipment*, travel, postage, utilities and office space related to the performing of service functions ○ Evaluations and audits of service functions ○ Technology/management information systems not related to payroll, personnel or other administrative functions ○ Stipends may be paid with state funds only <p style="text-align: center;">*No equipment can be purchased with TANF Federal Funds</p> <p><u>The following are <u>not</u> considered allowable costs, even if they are related to program operations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Purchase of vehicles ○ Renovation, construction, or purchase of building used for program operation ○ Payment of bad debts or interest payments as a result of credit arrangements ○ Medical services ○ Payment of stipends to program participants without prior authorization from DOA/DCFS ○ Payment of ongoing basic needs (cash, food, or housing) beyond four months ○ Services provided to elderly adults without minor children and single adults without children ○ Purchase of alcohol ○ Services or materials deemed inappropriate in relation to service delivery

Program	Expenses – Allowable and Unallowable (cont'd)
LA 4 Cont'd	<p>The funds provided under grants may not be expended for any sectarian purpose or activity, including sectarian worship or instruction. Any religious instruction offered at any LA 4 Prekindergarten site shall be funded with monies other than those provided through the LA 4 Prekindergarten allocation.</p> <p>TANF funds shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be used to supplement and expand existing programs, create new programs or continue service delivery of existing TANF-funded initiatives with satisfactory performance ○ Be used only for the designated purposes. Any overpayments will be offset from future payments ○ Be utilized according to the intent as specified in the legislation governing the program <p>TANF funds shall NOT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be used to supplant funds in existing programs ○ Be used to fund programs with unsatisfactory performance, unsatisfactory financial management practices or entities who are prohibited from doing business within the state of Louisiana ○ Be used as a match to draw down other federal funds ○ Be used to purchase equipment (office furniture, computers, I-Pads, playground equipment, or other non-expendable items) ○ Be used to fund stipends.
Title I	<p>Allowable expenses may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Salaries and benefits for the teacher and the aide ● Substitute pay ● Professional development activities ● Appropriate classroom materials, supplies, and equipment ● Classroom furnishings for children; TV and video equipment ● Small appliances (<\$100) for classroom cooking activities ● Computer hardware and software for classroom use ● Resource books and materials for the teacher ● Nutritious snacks for the children ● Field trips ● Parent involvement activities ● Travel expenses for teachers and paraprofessionals to participate in early childhood trainings and professional development activities ● Stipends for teachers and paraprofessionals to attend appropriate early childhood trainings ● Indirect costs <p>Non-allowable expenses may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Renovation, construction, or purchase of building used for program operation ● Developmentally inappropriate materials, such as workbooks, ditto masters, etc. ● Services or materials deemed inappropriate in relation to service delivery

<i>Program</i>	<i>Expenses – Allowable and Unallowable (cont'd)</i>
<p>Early Childhood Special Education</p>	<p>Allowable expenses may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries and benefits for the teacher and the aide • Substitute pay • Professional development activities • Appropriate classroom materials, supplies, and equipment • Classroom materials for children • Assistive computer hardware and software for classroom use • Resource books and materials for the teacher <p>Non-allowable expenses may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovation, construction, or purchase of building used for program operation • Developmentally inappropriate materials such as workbook, ditto masters, etc. • Service or materials deemed inappropriate in relation to service delivery
<p>8(g)</p>	<p>Examples of allowable expenses that may be budgeted if essential to achieving project goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries of classroom teachers and/or aides • In-service training • In-state conference fees • Supplies and equipment • Mobile Scoring Assistant (PDA) • Printing, postage, maintenance • Food for instructional purposes <p>Examples of Non-Allowable expenses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries and stipends for any employee not engaged in classroom instruction (e.g. Principals, Facilitators, Coordinators, etc.) • Stipends for teachers engaged in any activity that falls within the normal job description/duties of a classroom teacher • Administrative equipment • Out-of-state travel or training; out-of-state or in-state conference fees not directly related to early childhood • Capital improvements, permanent, capital outlay type playground equipment • Multi-year licenses and/or multi-year warranties • Indirect costs • Banquets, refreshments, articles of clothing (items used for incentive purposes) • Classroom preparation time, scoring of tests or administrative functions • Transportation and summer programs

Program	Expenses – Allowable and Unallowable (cont'd)
NSECD	<p>For the purpose of data analysis and fiscal responsibility, the Provider shall submit an accurate End-of-the-Year Report in a timely manner to the Louisiana Department of Education. The report shall include the expenditure of NSECD funds detailing the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries • Professional development costs • Field trip costs for NSECD program students • Purchases of equipment and materials in NSECD Program classrooms • Administrative costs covered by NSECD Program funds) <p>Non-Allowable Expenses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School tuition/fees for private-paying students • Before- and after-school program tuition/fees for private-paying students • Funding for students enrolled in the LA 4 prekindergarten program, BESE 8(g) program, any Department of Children & Family Services program, and Head Start program • Transportation other than student field trips • Purchase of medicine or medical equipment

PROGRAM	REIMBURSEMENT REQUIREMENTS
LA 4	<p>NOTE: The State reserves the right to conduct on-site visits to any provider prior to approval.</p> <p>The Department of Education shall provide reimbursements to the LEA for early education provided to attending eligible students based on district/charter total enrollment for children who are in attendance for 74% of the calendar month.</p> <p>Local education agencies are awarded an allocation based on the number of children they anticipate serving during the school year. The total per pupil allocation for the 2015-2016 school year shall not exceed \$4,580.00 per child for the 6-hour instructional day.</p> <p>Once final allocations are determined, districts will submit a budget to the Department of Education Office of Management and Finance through the Electronic Grants Management System (eGMS). Budget revisions will also be submitted via eGMS. After budgets have been submitted, they are reviewed and approved by the departments finance staff and department early childhood staff.</p> <p><u>Mid-Year Reallocations:</u> Based on October enrollment for the 6-hour instructional program, allocations may be amended if the program does not fill 100% of their allocated number of slots. Programs serving more than their allocated number of students may be awarded supplemental funds if funds are available.</p> <p>The total per pupil amount shall not exceed the amount allocated per child per school year. The payments required to the LEA shall be suspended at any time a determination is made that the LEA is not in compliance with state or federal regulations specified in this document or has falsified or not upheld signed assurance statements provided to the Department of Education at the time the application is submitted. Payments may be renewed upon guideline compliance being achieved and/or resolving problems related to signed assurance statements. Recovery of any payments lost during any period of suspension shall be at the discretion of the BESE pursuant to the BESE appeal system.</p>
Title I	Funding of Title I Preschool Programs is discretionary and determined by the LEA.

Program	Reimbursement Requirements (cont'd)
Early Childhood Special Education	Funding through IDEA, Part B.
8(g)	The project period must be concurrent with the current fiscal year. All goods and services shall be received and rendered within that fiscal year. 8(g) grants are awarded on a reimbursable basis only. Goods and services cannot be ordered, received or paid for until after the proposal has been approved by the BESE office.
NSECD	<p>NOTE: The State reserves the right to conduct on-site visits to any provider prior to approval.</p> <p>The department shall provide reimbursements to the provider for early education services to attending eligible students based on total enrollment for children who are in attendance for 74% of the calendar month.</p> <p>Children must be in attendance four of the six hours of the instructional period; absences will not be excused for reimbursement purposes. Failure to comply with Provider Responsibilities may result in forfeiture of NSECD reimbursements.</p>

PROGRAM	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
LA 4	Child progress; student demographic information, program evaluation information, child attendance records, support services delivered, collaboration activities, funding/budget records, teacher certification types, and other information as requested by the department or BESE. <i>(See Appendix A for additional information.)</i>
Title I	Child progress, demographic information, program evaluation information, teacher certification types, and other information as requested by the department or BESE.
Early Childhood Special Education	Child progress, demographic information, program evaluation information, teacher certification types, and other information as requested by the department or BESE.
8(g)	Child progress, demographic information, mid-year progress to date on objectives, end of year report, and other information as requested by BESE.
NSECD	Child progress, student demographic information, program evaluation information, monthly provider invoice and classroom attendance log, support services delivered, enrollment data, intervention and disenrollment documents, class rosters, vision/hearing screening, parental involvement report, staff qualifications, provider end-of-the-year-report, and other information as specified by the department or BESE.

PROGRAM	STAFF QUALIFICATIONS – LEAD TEACHER
<p>LA 4</p> <p>Title I</p> <p>8(g)</p>	<p>All lead teachers must meet at least one of the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A valid and current Louisiana teaching certificate in PK-3, Nursery School, Kindergarten, Early Interventionist Birth-5, or Noncategorical Preschool Handicapped. b) A Practitioner License in PreK-3; c) A valid and current Louisiana teaching certificate in Elementary Education and an Out-of-Field Authorization to Teach (OFAT) in PK-3, Nursery School, Kindergarten, Early Interventionist Birth-5, or Noncategorical Preschool Handicapped.; or d) An <i>uncertified teacher</i> with a baccalaureate degree and a Temporary Authority to Teach (TAT), Temporary Employment Permit (TEP), or an Out-of-State Certificate in PK-3, Nursery School, Kindergarten, Early Interventionist Birth-5, or Noncategorical Preschool Handicapped..
<p>NSECD</p>	<p>All lead teachers must meet at least one of the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A valid and current Louisiana teaching certificate in PK-3, Nursery School, Kindergarten, Early Interventionist Birth-5, or Noncategorical Preschool Handicapped.; b) A Practitioner License in PreK-3; c) A valid and current Louisiana teaching certificate in Elementary Education; d) d) An <i>uncertified teacher</i> must have, at a minimum, a bachelor’s degree and current passing scores on Praxis I. An ACT composite score of 22, an SAT combined verbal and math score of 1030, or a Master’s degree may be used in lieu of Praxis I.
<p>Early Childhood Special Education</p>	<p>A valid and current Louisiana <i>teaching certificate</i> in Early Intervention or Noncategorical Preschool Handicapped.</p>

PROGRAM	STAFF QUALIFICATIONS – PARAPROFESSIONALS/TEACHER ASSISTANTS
<p>LA 4</p> <p>Title I</p> <p>8(g)</p> <p>Early Childhood Special Education</p>	<p>All paraprofessionals/teacher assistants must meet LEA specific requirements for employment and one of the following requirements:</p> <p>a) Meet the definition of “highly qualified,” which may include passing of the ParaPro test, achievement of a CDA or AA credential;</p> <p>b) Possess a high school diploma or equivalent;</p> <p>c) Have extended experiences of assuming responsibility and care for a group of preschool age children (children younger than five years of age); or</p> <p>d) Possess proficient oral and written communication skills.</p>
<p>NSECD</p>	<p>Teacher assistants must meet the following requirements:</p> <p>a. Possess a high school diploma or equivalent; AND Have either a currently valid</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">i. Child Development Associate (CDA) credential,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">ii. Associate degree in Early Childhood Education, Care and Development of Young Children, or related field which may be approved by the NSECD Office, OR</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">iii. Bachelor’s degree in the area of Child and Family Studies, Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education,</p> <p>b. Incumbent staff may be currently enrolled in either a Child Development Associate credential program, accredited associate degree program in Early Childhood Education, accredited bachelor’s degree program in Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education,</p> <p>c. Have extended experiences of assuming responsibility and care for a group of preschool age children (children younger than five years of age),</p> <p>d. Possess proficient oral and written communication skills, and</p> <p>e. Meet all other Provider requirements for employment.</p>

PROGRAM	TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS
<p>NSECD</p>	<p>NSECD funds cannot be utilized for transportation services. However, field trips are part of the instructional program and shall not be considered as transportation costs.</p> <p>If a school or center chooses to provide transportation services, the parent is solely responsible for the cost and arrangements. The NSECD Program assumes NO responsibility for any accident or injury related to an NSECD student to and from a provider school or center.</p>



CECIL J. PICARD LA 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

APPENDIX A



2015-2016 LA 4 General Timeline

Item Due	Due Date
LA 4 2015-16 Budgets Due	June 1, 2015
<i>2015-16 Requirements and Guidelines for Public School and Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development Programs</i> and 2015-16 LA 4 Handbook posted on the department's website	August 2015
Classes begin	August/September 2015
Coordinator Contact Information Form	September 1, 2015
Staffing Information Report	September 1, 2015
Districts/charters submit reports for LA 4 programs	Monthly
Teaching Strategies GOLD Finalized Checkpoints	October 2015 February 2016 May 2016
Onsite visits by local and third-party evaluators using the CLASS assessment tool	September 2015 – May 2016
Program Review and Technical Assistance as requested by awardees	October 2015 - June 2016
2016-17 LA 4 Applications available to districts in the eGrants System	December 2015 (Tentative)
2016-17 LA 4 Applications Due (New and Renewal)	January 2016 (Tentative)
LA 4 allocations approved by BESE	March 2016 (Tentative)
Classes End	May 2016
Practice Performance Profiles generated and shared with programs	Fall 2016

CECIL J. PICARD LA 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

2015 - 2016 REPORTING TIMELINE

Staffing Information Report	Enrollment Reports		TS GOLD		Support Services Reports	
	Reporting Period:	Date Due:	Finalized Checkpoints:	Date Due:	Reporting Period:	Date Due:
September 1, 2015 Updated as new teachers are added	August	September 4, 2015	October 2015	November 6, 2015	August 2015 through December 2015	January 7, 2016
	September	October 5, 2015				
	October	November 6, 2015				
	November	December 4, 2015	February 2016	March 4, 2016		
	December	January 7, 2016				
	January	February 5, 2016				
	February	March 4, 2016	May 2016	June 6, 2016	January 2016 through May 2016	June 6, 2016
	March	April 4, 2016				
	April	May 6, 2016				
	May	June 6, 2016				
	June	July 6, 2016				

LA 4 MONTHLY REPORTING

Monthly enrollment data **must be** entered online *and submitted no later than the close of business on the date outlined in the timelines of reporting for each month.*

The following information must be recorded on the Department of Education PreK Login weblink: http://www.louisianaschools.net/data/prekdata/tanfprek_login.aspx.

Note: The user name is: **tanfprek** and the password is: **user**

Enrollment Reports (due monthly):

- The total number of children enrolled in each LA 4-funded classroom
- The total number of free/reduced LA 4 children
- The total number of free/reduced LA 4 children who were in attendance 74% of the school days in each month
- The total number of tuition-paying children
- The total number of children funded by sources other than LA 4, such as 8(g), Title I, or other funding (listed as OF)
- The total number of children with IEPs (includes those who have speech only IEPs)
- The total number of children who were assessed using *GOLD™* by Teaching Strategies®

Assessments (due based on TS GOLD Checkpoints):

Pursuant to §513 of [Bulletin 140](#) – *Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network*, publicly-funded sites must ensure all publicly-funded children receive completed assessments using *GOLD™* by Teaching Strategies® or another state-approved assessment tool that is developmentally appropriate, valid, reliable, and culturally sensitive. Publicly-funded sites shall obtain approval from the department prior to using child assessment tools different from the assessment tool provided by the department.

Reporting checkpoints are as follows:

- October 2015
- February 2016
- May 2016

Note: The Developing Skills Checklist (DSC) Assessment and ECERS-R are no longer required.

Support Services Reports (due January and June):

Programs shall provide support services, which include, but are not limited to:

- vision/hearing screening and referrals
- parental involvement activities
- linkages to services such as G.E.D., adult literacy training, and referrals for medical, housing/utilities assistance, etc.

Class/School Maintenance

Coordinators may use the class/school maintenance feature to modify or add school sites or names of teachers (**please do not use numbers in place of teacher's names**).

NOTE: District coordinators are responsible for checking the accuracy of all reports. Once they are submitted, they are not subject to change once the deadline for reporting has passed. Prior to the deadline, however, coordinators may go in to the website and make adjustments to data. Incomplete, missing or untimely submission of data may result in the withholding of funds for that month.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PROCEDURES FOR DISTRICTS/CHARTERS

WITH ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGES BELOW 74%

As per the department's contract with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for the TANF portion of our LA 4 funds, 100% of LA 4 children in a district or charter school must attend school for 74% of the scheduled school days in each month. Data from enrollment reports will be used to determine the percentage of LA 4 children in each district or charter school who met the 74% attendance target.

- If districts fail to meet the monthly attendance target, they must submit a corrective action plan explaining the cause of the attendance target not being met and how they intend to rectify the issue.
- If a district fails to meet the monthly attendance target after three consecutive months, then their monthly reimbursement will be reduced using the per pupil amount times the number of children who did not meet the attendance target for the third month.

REIMBURSEMENTS

- Claims for reimbursement cannot be paid until an up-to-date approved budget is on file with the Department's Office of Grants Management.
- Reimbursement Claims are submitted to the Office of Appropriation Control through the eGMS. Please be sure to keep a copy of each form for your records.
- It is recommended that grantees request reimbursement from the Department on a **monthly basis, but MUST submit such claims on no less than a quarterly basis** to ensure that funds are drawn down in a timely manner.

- For questions regarding reimbursement procedures, you may contact Tameca Jeanpierre at Tameca.Jeanpierre@la.gov.

Please note: If you are not the person responsible for submitting Reimbursement Claims you will need to check with your Budget Office (or other responsible party) to make certain that these forms are submitted.

AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

Districts/charters are subject to audits by, but not limited to:

- Local-District or Chartering organization
- Legislative Auditors
- Department of Education Auditors
- Any other fiscal audits deemed necessary

All documentation, including budget and reimbursement information shall be kept on file in the possession of the grantee for a period no less than three years.

PROGRAM MONITORING

Districts will be monitored annually by the department's Division of Statewide Monitoring for **student eligibility and attendance, vision and hearing screenings, and staff qualifications.**

A copy of the 2015-2016 Prekindergarten Programs Desk Review Documentation Checklist will be provided prior to monitoring.

Early Childhood Personnel Reference Guide

Staff Member	Department	Contact Information
Jenna Conway Assistant Superintendent Early Childhood	Early Childhood	Jenna.Conway@la.gov (225) 342-3647
Derek Little Deputy Director Early Childhood	Early Childhood	Derek.Little@la.gov (225) 342-3647
Lisa Brochard Chief of Staff Early Childhood	Early Childhood	Lisa.Brochard@la.gov (225) 342-3647
Lindsey Bradford Program Consultant Pre-K Program Manager	Early Childhood	Lindsey.Bradford@la.gov (225) 219-9334
LDE Early Childhood Programs Support Staff		
Julie Cutrer Budget Analyst	Office of Grants Management	Julie.Cutrer@la.gov
Todd Corbitt Webmaster	Communications (On-line Reporting)	Todd.Corbitt@la.gov (225) 342-3786
Tameca Jeanpierre Accountant	Appropriations Control (Reimbursements)	Tameca.Jeanpierre@la.gov (225) 342-3836
Barbara Foster Program Consultant	Office of Statewide Monitoring	Barbara.Foster@la.gov (225) 342-0465
Terry Simoneaux Program Consultant	Office of Statewide Monitoring	Terry.Simoneaux@la.gov (225) 342-9615
State Assessment Contacts		
GOLD™ by Teaching Strategies® Ivy Starns Ivy.Starns@la.gov	CLASS™ Assessments Anita Ashford Anita.Ashford@la.gov	