



June 23, 2016



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## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

For more than four years, we have worked together to unify Louisiana's early childhood system in order to prepare all children for kindergarten. Yesterday we took another step forward by putting the final pieces in place. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved a [set of revisions](#) to:

- Better communicate differences in quality to help parents make the best choices for their children;
- Honor quality and improvement by recognizing sites that do well or make progress;
- Ensure all programs reach a minimum bar of quality which means providing very low quality sites with time and support to improve but requiring them improve within three years to continue to receive public funding; and
- Increase local observer accuracy.

In addition, the Department has committed to operational shifts so teachers get feedback from the third party, lead agencies have better information about observer accuracy, and communities are supported to make progress in implementing coordinated enrollment.

The Board also approved more than \$10 million for supports to early childhood programs, most of which are geared towards levelling the playing field for child care providers. This included funding for resource and referral agencies, mental health consultation, Pathways, scholarships, and a brand new initiative to reimburse child care providers for purchasing high quality curriculum. In addition, the Board approved four programs across the state to offer innovative teacher preparation programs to help child care teachers obtain their Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate.

This is an exciting time for early childhood in Louisiana. For the first time in recent years, there are no dramatic changes in the field. Instead our focus is on the fundamentals - supporting our teachers to provide high-quality interactions in the classroom, making it easier for families to apply and helping all young children to learn and grow. In fact, in the next month, we will release opportunities for coaching-based professional development for classrooms that serve children with special needs, support for child care centers to purchase and implement curriculum, and the second round of Believe and Prepare: Early Childhood so as to offer more Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate preparation programs statewide. Please continue to check this newsletter for more information.

As always, thank you for all you do for our children,

**John**

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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

### 2015-2016 APPEALS PROCESS FOR CLASS<sup>®</sup> OBSERVATIONS

Communities and sites have the opportunity to complete an [Appeals Form](#) to appeal any of the following:

- Local CLASS<sup>®</sup> Observation Scores;
- Third Party CLASS<sup>®</sup> Observation Scores;
- Use of 1's in a CLASS<sup>®</sup> observation for any classroom where a local observation was not conducted.

Appeals can be submitted if there are extenuating circumstances or serious concerns about how an observation was completed. Submitting an appeal form does **not** guarantee approval.

Site Leaders may complete an appeal form, but the form **must be submitted to the Department** by the local Lead Agency.

**The 2015-2016 Appeals Process will run from June 6, 2016 - July 6, 2016.** A recorded webinar providing information on the appeals process can be found [here](#).

## UPCOMING FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT CLASSROOMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Department is working on plans to identify communities and programs serving children who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and want to implement a support system for their staff. This will be a voluntary pilot project.

Programs will choose one of three support systems aligned with the CLASS<sup>®</sup> tool for their teachers, and will apply to the state through their Community Network's Lead Agency. The Department will provide administrative allocations for Lead Agencies and stipends to coaches/instructors and teachers who complete the project. The Request For Applications (RFA) and the pilot application will be emailed to Lead Agencies and linked on the [Early Childhood Care and Education Network landing page](#) on Monday, June 27.

To provide additional information on this opportunity and application, the Department will provide a webinar:

**Date:** Wednesday, June 29

**Time:** 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

**Link:** <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/classrfa/>

For more information, email Megan Miron at [megan.miron@la.gov](mailto:megan.miron@la.gov).

## NEW CURRICULUM REVIEWS ADDED

The Department is continuing to complete Instructional Materials Reviews of birth to five curriculum. In the coming weeks, new reviews will be added to the list. To see the list of curriculum that have been rated so far, click [here](#).

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## FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

### COMING SOON - COORDINATED ENROLLMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

Last summer, the Department released the second [Coordinated Enrollment Self-Assessment](#), in which communities reflected on the state of coordinated enrollment, evaluated their progress from that year, and shared best practices with each other. The Department will conduct the third annual Coordinated Enrollment Self-Assessment in July and August of 2016. The Department will work with Lead Agencies to coordinate the self-assessment in their communities through meetings, conference calls, and paper-based surveys. More information about the Coordinated Enrollment Self-Assessment, and how providers and sites can participate in the process, will be released in the coming weeks.

### CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CCAP) PAYMENTS

Due to state end of fiscal year financial processes, there will be a delay in payments for Child Care Assistance (CCAP) for the week ending June 25, 2016. Providers should receive payment for this week by July 9, 2016.

For questions, providers should contact [LDeccap@la.gov](mailto:LDeccap@la.gov).

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## CHILD SAFETY AND WELFARE

### DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING SURVEY - COMING SOON!

All children in Louisiana should receive periodic, developmentally-appropriate, and comprehensive screenings for physical health, oral health, mental health, and developmental and psychosocial needs. The Department of Education and the Department of Health and Hospitals are collaborating to provide consumer education on developmental screenings for early learning centers.

Center directors and in-home providers will soon receive a link to a survey regarding developmental screenings. Results of the survey will be used in developing resources that will assist families and providers in using developmental screenings. The survey should take no more than 5 minutes, and all results are confidential.

### MOTOR VEHICLE PASSENGER CHECKS

According to *Bulletin 137: Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations*, a visual check of a vehicle is required after each use to ensure no child is left on a vehicle. A sample form to ensure the vehicle has been checked thoroughly is located in the licensing library, and can be found [here](#).

For more information, contact Michelle DeMeulenaere at [michelle.demeulenaere@la.gov](mailto:michelle.demeulenaere@la.gov).

### FACTS ABOUT ZIKA VIRUS

The Zika virus is primarily spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. The Zika virus can be transmitted from a pregnant mother to her fetus, causing health concerns. Most people do not know they have been infected with the virus. When symptoms do occur, the most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). For those who develop symptoms, the illness is usually mild. The best way to prevent the Zika virus is to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. For more information about the Zika Virus, contact the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

### GENERAL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Items that can be harmful to children, such as medications, poisons, cleaning supplies and chemicals, and equipment, tools, knives, and other potentially dangerous utensils, must be kept in a **locked cabinet or other secure place** that ensures they are inaccessible to children.

Please note that dangerous items can be brought into the center by children, parents, and visitors. Providers must ensure they check areas frequently for hazards and immediately remove them from the reach of children.

For more information, contact Michelle DeMeulenaere at [michelle.demeulenaere@la.gov](mailto:michelle.demeulenaere@la.gov).

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## LEAD AGENCY SUPPORT

### REMINDER - CLASS<sup>®</sup> RECERTIFICATION

All observers for the Lead Agency conducting local observations must recertify annually through [Teachstone](#) in order to be qualified to conduct observations. Lead Agencies must ensure paperwork is maintained for each observer which demonstrates their current reliability for the observations they conduct. Observers must hold current certification in the age level for which they conduct observations - for example, observers certified only in pre-K cannot conduct Toddler observations.

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## OTHER

### EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL - JULY 14 MEETING

The next Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council meeting will take place on **Thursday, July 14, at 1 p.m.** The meeting will be held in the **Claiborne Building, 1201 N. 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA.**

This meeting is open to the public and will be live streamed. Please click [here](#) for directions on accessing live streamed meetings.

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