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January 4, 2018



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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you had time over the holidays to relax, to reflect, and to be with family. There is a lot to be accomplished in 2018, I'm looking forward to it.

First though, I want to recognize your efforts in the fall of 2017. Through the fall of 2017, lead agencies and community networks were able to complete 6,186 *CLASS* observations, providing us a detailed picture of the high-quality teacher-child classroom interactions taking place across our state. This work has made certain that every classroom across the state has information that will help leaders and teachers continue to improve the interactions and instruction that are so critical for our children. Lead agencies are now beginning the process of scheduling their spring *CLASS* observations. For questions on this, contact [Nasha Patel](#) .

As we begin this new year, we recognize that much of the important work of supporting families in selecting their best choice for care has already begun. Last fall, every lead agency submitted their October child count and their coordinated funding request, beginning the process of planning for enrollment for next year. As lead agencies and networks return to work this week they are beginning to finalize their coordinated enrollment plan, describing the activities and approaches communities will use to support enrollment this year. Coordinated enrollment plans are due from each community by February 1, for questions contact [Dominick Robinson](#) .

We are looking forward to working closely with you as we seek to prepare all of our children for kindergarten this year.

And as always, thank you for all you do for our children.

John

John White
Louisiana Department of Education
Twitter @LouisianaSupe

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Lead Agency Office Hours- *lead agencies only* : January 9 at 3:00 p.m. and January 16 at 3:00 P. M.

UPCOMING DEADLINES:

- Coordinated Enrollment Plans due February 1, 2018
- Teaching Strategies GOLD Checkpoint: February 28, 2018

TEACHING AND LEARNING

UPCOMING CHECKPOINT - TEACHING STRATEGIES GOLD

The second GOLD checkpoint must be completed by **February 28** . Teachers and administrators should begin the finalization of the winter checkpoint approximately two weeks in advance of this deadline in order to be sure documentation for every child has been entered and that objectives have been assigned a level.

FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL READINESS TAX CREDITS

This week, the Department released several resources to provide additional information about the School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC). Beginning with the 2018 tax year, several revisions will be in place for the SRTCs, further aligning these valuable credits with the unified early childhood system. The Department has released a [School Readiness Tax Credit Guide](#) providing an overview of the changes. A [recorded version](#) of the SRTC Webinar, and [slides](#) from that webinar, have also been posted.

For 2017 SRTC: As a reminder, there will be no changes to how teachers, directors, providers, families or businesses qualify for their 2017 School Readiness Tax Credits (these are the tax credits claimed early in the 2018 calendar year).

As additional support in preparing to file for your 2017 SRTC, the Department has updated a set of FAQ documents for each tax credit:

- [SRTC 2017 - FAQs for Staff and Directors](#)
- [SRTC 2017 - FAQs for Businesses](#)
- [SRTC 2017 - FAQs for Parents](#)
- [SRTC 2017 - FAQs for Child Care Providers](#)

2018 TAX YEAR CHANGES TO UNIFIED CCAP BONUS

Beginning in January 2018, the quarterly child care bonuses will change. The new Unified CCAP Quarterly Bonus will be based on 2018 Tax Year Star Ratings, which were released via www.louisianaschools.com . The Unified CCAP Quarterly Bonus is a percentage of all payments from the Department for services provided during the quarter, using the percentages below:

Star Rating	Quarterly Unified Bonus Received for each Eligible Child in 2018
5 Star	23%
4 Star	16.5%
3 Star	11%
2 Star	6%
1 Star	0%

Centers will receive one more payment based on their 2017 Tax Year Star Rating for October, November, and December 2017 in February 2018. The Unified CCAP Quarterly Bonus for January, February, and March of 2018 will be paid in May 2018. To estimate your 2018 Unified CCAP Quarterly Bonus and other School Readiness Tax Credits, use the [SRTC Calculator](#) released in March 2017.

COORDINATED ENROLLMENT PLANNING FOR COMMUNITIES

Lead agencies and community networks should begin the process of working together to develop robust Coordinated Enrollment Plans that

embody the above four systems, across the state.

The Coordinated Enrollment Plan webinar for Lead Agencies was held on Wednesday, November 29th. You can access the recorded webinar and slides [here](#).

Upcoming Action Items:

- Submit Coordinated Enrollment Plan to your FTP folder by February 1
- Submit Child Count template to your FTP folder by February 28

For further questions, contact [Dominick Robinson](#).

CHILD SAFETY AND WELFARE

CHILD CARE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK INFORMATION ON PROHIBITED CRIMES AND RECORDED WEBINAR LINK

Currently the Department requires early learning centers to obtain a satisfactory fingerprint based criminal background check (CBC) from the bureau for each volunteer, staff member, certain visitors, contractors, or employee of any kind, prior to the person being present at the center or performing services for the center. See [Bulletin 137](#), §1703.

Starting March 1, the Child Care Criminal Background Check (Child Care CBC) will be processed by the Department. Click [here](#) for more information on the upcoming changes.

All early learning centers are encouraged to view the Prohibited Crimes webinar recording [here](#).

For questions regarding prohibited crimes and Child Care CBCs, please email [Valerie Black](#).

CHILD CARE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK INFORMATION

There were several roadshows held in September and October that provided information on the upcoming new Child Care Criminal Background Check (Child Care CBC). For those that were unable to attend, you can now view the webinar [here](#). The [presentation slides](#) and a detailed [hand-out](#) on the important changes to the child care criminal background requirements can be found on the Department's [website](#). Please keep in mind, these changes will go into effect March 1, 2018.

For more information about Child Care CBCs, please email [Valerie Black](#).

THE DEPARTMENT APPROVES A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK WAIVER EXTENSION

On December 20, 2017, the Department approved a criminal background check (CBC) waiver extension requested by the Child Care Association of Louisiana (CCAL). The waiver now terminates on **February 28, 2018**. This waiver allows some relief on the CBC requirements due to unexpected delays. The waiver includes several stringent requirements in order to maintain the safety and health of children. This waiver applies to anyone who has recently submitted a fingerprint-based CBC request and has not received a response.

For more information on the criminal background check waiver, [click here](#).

For questions regarding this waiver, call Andrea Burl at 225-342-9905 [☎](#) or email LDElicensing@la.gov.

LEAD AGENCY SUPPORT

OFFICE HOURS FOR LEAD AGENCIES

The Early Childhood Team is holding weekly webinar/conference call question and answer sessions for lead agencies. The sessions are held on **Tuesdays from 3:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.** and all lead agency staff are invited to join. The Early Childhood team will provide updates and reminders. Additional topics covered will be determined by caller questions. A meeting invitation containing the connecting information has been sent to all lead agency contacts. Contact kaye.eichler@la.gov if you have questions.

Upcoming Schedule for Office Hours

- January 9
- January 16

OTHER

MARKET RATE SURVEY

The Market Rate Survey is required to be done every three years before the new CCDF state plan is due. The survey provides information that is used to determine CCAP reimbursement rates.

The Department has contracted with LSU to conduct the survey and to provide a report. All survey responses will be received by LSU and are completely confidential.

A paper version of the survey is available and will be sent later to all providers who did not complete the survey online. Providers have the option of completing the survey online or on paper.

- The online survey for child care centers can be found [here](#) .
- The survey for family homes can be found [here](#).

It is important that all providers complete the survey. The data gathered will be used to estimate the cost of care necessary to support health, safety, quality instruction, and staffing. It will also help ensure that all children have access to high quality child care.

If the providers have questions about the survey, they can contact Belinda Davis at (225)578-2129 [☎](#).

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