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General

Q: Where can we find general information about COVID-19, including the number of cases, symptoms and tips?

A: Contact the Louisiana 211 Network by dialing 211, or text the keyword LACOVID to 898-211 for the most current information about the outbreak as it becomes available. The [CDC COVID-19 website](#), as well as the [Louisiana Department of Health website](#), are also helpful resources.

Q: What will happen when early learning sites are not following the [Office of Public Health Child Care Guidelines](#)? A: The Department will follow up on complaints of non-compliance of the required guidelines and review during any visits. Note that BESE Bulletin 137 §1301(4) states that the Department can revoke or refuse to renew an application for licensure if one fails to take steps or actions reasonably necessary to ensure the health and safety and well-being of children in care.

Q: Can staff wear face shields as a face covering?

A: No, a face shield cannot be used as a substitute to wearing a mask.

Q: Can privately-owned child care sites set their own mask protocol?

A: All licensed child care centers must follow the [Office of Public Health Child Care Guidelines](#), including ensuring staff members take everyday precautions by washing hands often, cleaning and disinfecting

frequently-touched surfaces, avoiding close contact, covering coughs and sneezes, and covering mouth and nose with a mask.

Q: Does the LDOE have a recommended vendor for bulk purchases of PPE and disinfectant cleaners?

A: Every licensed early learning center in Louisiana is eligible to use state contracts for purchasing daily supplies and large equipment at a reduced cost. More information on the eligibility process and approved vendors is available [here](#).

Q: Should early learning sites prevent visitors from entering their site at this time?

A: Child care providers can adjust the parent drop-off and pick-up process. Please see Appendix 5 of the [Office of Public Health Guidelines for Child Care](#).

Q: What essential visitors are allowed to enter school and early learning sites?

A: Per the Guidelines approved by the Office of Public Health, essential visitors are allowed to enter schools and sites to carry out essential functions that support the implementation of state/federal law or BESE policy.

Essential visitors are individuals who must enter schools or early learning sites in order to conduct visits in accordance with Louisiana law or policy. Essential visitors include, but are not limited to, individuals who:

- conduct CLASS® observations
- observe teacher candidates as part of the teacher preparation quality rating system
- provide essential supports and services including, but not limited to, early intervention services, special education services, coaching or mental health consultation

Q: Are mothers who are breastfeeding allowed inside the early learning site?

A: Yes, mothers who are breastfeeding are allowed inside the site. They must follow the site screening procedures including hand washing and wearing a face mask while in the site. The mother should not interact with the other children or with the teacher while following proper social distancing. If possible, nursing should occur in a separate room.

Q: At what temperature should a child care site send children and/or staff members home?

A: Persons who have a fever of 100.4°F or above or other signs of illness must not be admitted to the facility. Follow the [Office of Public Health Guidelines for Child Care](#).

Q: If a fever is detected, how long before a child or staff member can return to an early learning site?

A: Persons who have a fever of 100.4°F or above or other signs of illness must not be admitted to the facility. Information about a child with a fever can be found in the [Office of Public Health Guidelines for Child Care](#). If COVID-19 has been confirmed in a child or staff member, follow [CDC Guidance](#) and [LDH Guidance](#) regarding home quarantine and isolation.

Q: How should employers ensure proper social distancing where multiple staff members are sharing an office?

A: When staff members are sharing an office, they should use social distancing precautions. Face masks should be worn, as well as partitioning the space as much as possible.

Q: Can an adult, such as a director, float between groups?

A: It is not recommended that a staff member float between groups. However, if necessary, the floater should maintain social distancing.

Q: How do you recommend maintaining social distancing with children?

A: Social distancing among young children is difficult. The Office of Public Health's response to social distancing with young children is that child care classrooms should include the same group each day, and the same child care teacher should remain with the same group each day, wherever possible. This reduces risk of infection spread.

Q: Can classroom groups merge together during the early morning and afternoon when group size is smaller?

A: It is recommended that the same child care teacher should remain with the same group each day. This reduces risk of infection spread.

Q: Are staff members allowed to leave for lunch breaks?

A: This is the center's decision. Any staff members who leave their site should repeat the screening process upon re-arrival.

Q: How high does the divider have to be between the classroom? Are there restrictions regarding hanging dividers (such as clear plastic curtains) from the ceiling?

A: The divider must be at least 6 feet high. Hanging dividers are acceptable, as long as they meet all other safety regulations.

Q: Are non-vehicular excursions and water activities allowed?

A: Yes, within the smaller, common groups, non-vehicular excursions and water activities are allowed.

Q: Are extracurricular providers, such as Tumble Time and Happy Feet Soccer, allowed to provide activities in early learning sites?

A: See Appendix 4 of the Office of Public Health Guidelines.

Q: Will early learning sites be allowed to take field trips?

A: See Appendix 3 and 4 of the [Office of Public Health Guidelines for Child Care](#).

Q: Can you clarify the guidelines about water activities (tables or sprinklers), including swimming pools. Do we have specific guidelines regarding these activities?

A: Group size and social distancing must be managed for other outdoor play activities. See Appendix 4 of the [Office of Public Health Guidelines for Child Care](#) for more information.

Q: Does the playground need to be sanitized between groups of children?

A: Stagger playground times for groups of children and sanitize the equipment between small groups.

Q: What is the proper protocol if a child or staff member has a confirmed case of COVID-19?

A: See Appendix 2 of the [Office of Public Health Guidelines](#).

Q: What is the recommended procedure for notifying families when a child or staff member has a confirmed case of COVID-19?

A: See Appendix 2 of the [Office of Public Health Guidelines](#).

Q: What is the guidance for anyone who has been in close contact with a confirmed case?

A: See Appendix 2 of the [Office of Public Health Guidelines](#) for isolation and quarantine instructions.

Q: How long does a child or employee/teacher need to quarantine if they have a positive COVID-19 case in their household?

A: See Appendix 2 of the [Office of Public Health Guidelines](#) for isolation and quarantine instructions.

Closures

Q: How do child care centers and family child care providers report closures?

A: If your site closes in response to COVID-19, please contact the Division of Licensing at ldelicensig@la.gov using the [critical incident report form](#). This is to be done for both site and classroom closures.

Q: Will there be guidelines given as to when child care sites can safely reopen, or is that determination made on an individual basis?

A: You should consult your [regional Office of Public Health](#) for assistance in determining classroom closure or provider closure. A provider must follow the [Office of Public Health Guidelines for Child Care](#).

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

Q: Will the Department pay for enrollment versus attendance?

A: Yes. BESE Bulletin 139 has been updated to continue paying certified providers based on enrollment versus attendance. While CCAP reimburses providers based on enrollment, providers must still ensure attendance is recorded with the Tracking of Time Services (TOTS) Point of Service (POS) device or Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. Parents must check their child(ren) in and out of care when child care services are rendered.

CCAP conducts a monthly review of underutilized authorizations of children who have not attended child care within the previous month. Both TOTS attendance tracking records are examined as part of the underutilization review. If a CCAP child has not attended, the family is pulled for underutilization review. The Provider Help Desk staff has been informing providers of the importance of families completing check in/out transactions when children are in attendance to maintain CCAP certification. If CCAP children are not attending, the Department will contact families to assess the need for continued child care services. If families are not reached during this period, their CCAP authorizations will be discontinued at the end of the month, and they will need to reapply for CCAP. As a reminder, **the Tracking of Time Services (TOTS) Point of Service (POS) or Interactive Voice Response (IVR) must be used for CCAP children every day they are in attendance.**

For assistance, please contact the Provider Help Desk at (225) 250-7635 or (225) 252-9543, or enter a ticket in the [Provider Ticket System](#).

Q: What are the new state maximum rates for CCAP, effective February 1?

A: The new state maximum rates are as follows:

Provider Type	Age 3 and up	Age 1-2 (Toddlers)	Age 0 (Infants)	Special Needs Age 3 and up	Special Needs Age 1-2 (Toddlers)	Special Needs Age 0 (infant)
Type III Early Learning Center	\$31.50	\$42.00	\$68.00	\$39.69	\$52.92	\$85.68
Family Child Care Provider	\$29.00	\$42.00	\$61.00	\$36.54	\$52.92	\$76.86
In-Home Providers	\$25.00	\$25.25	\$26.65	\$31.50	\$31.82	\$33.58
School Child Care Providers	\$24.00	\$24.00	\$24.00	\$30.24	\$30.24	\$30.24
Military Child Care Centers	\$30.00	\$31.05	\$35.65	\$37.80	\$39.12	\$44.92

Q: If CCAP co-pays are waived, can I still charge CCAP clients the difference between my rate and what CCAP pays?

A: Yes. CCAP co-pays being waived at the moment means that all families will be subsidized at 100 percent of the state maximum rate per age of child(ren). Providers can continue to charge the difference between the state maximum rate and the cost of their tuition but are encouraged to work with families struggling during this pandemic when possible.

Q: How long will the CCAP co-payments for families be waived?

A: The CCAP co-payments for families will be waived while stimulus funding is available.

Q: If a child's sibling has CCAP, can that child be authorized for CCAP as well?

A: Yes, siblings of an authorized case can be updated to receive CCAP. Parents must complete a [CCAP 10 Report of Changes form](#) and submit by email to LDECCAP@la.gov or fax to 225-376-6060.

Q: Can I accept children funded through CCAP that typically attend a different center?

A: Yes. Parents must complete a [CCAP 10 Report of Changes form](#) and submit by email to LDECCAP@la.gov or fax to 225-376-6060.

Q: Will the state pay for Head Start children to attend child care centers?

A: Head Start families can apply for before and after school care with the CCAP by submitting an [application](#). The Head Start center must be CCAP-certified and licensed for extended hours.

Q: When can I expect to be paid based on enrollment?

A: Payments are made two weeks after child care services are rendered by the provider.

Q: Is the requirement for CCAP parents to sign in using TOTS waived?

A: No. All center and home-based providers are required to maintain an attendance record of children attending the center or home. **The Tracking of Time Services (TOTS) Point of Service (POS) or Interactive Voice Response (IVR) must be used for CCAP children every day they are in attendance.**

Q: Are foster parents required to sign in using TOTS?

A: DCFS follows the LDOE protocol for tracking attendance. Therefore, providers should ensure foster parents are using the TOTS Point of Service device or Interactive Voice Response System to track attendance. The provider will need to manually record attendance also.

Q: What are the steps to becoming registered and certified to receive CCAP as a family child care or in-home provider?

A: **Step 1 (Registration):** Complete and submit the following to ldelicensing@la.gov:

- Signed CCAP Provider agreement for [Family Child Care Providers](#) or [In-Home Providers](#)
- Copy of a valid driver's license or government issued photo ID AND copy of social security card
- [Pre-Service Orientation](#) Certificate AND completed [Emergency Plan](#)
- CCCBC – State whether you are eligible, provisional, or in progress. If you do not have a CCCBC, you can apply at <https://ccbcldoe.la.gov/>, and many fees are waived until further notice due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- CPR & Pediatric First Aid Certificate

Step 2 (Certification): Complete and submit the following to providercertification@la.gov:

- [Provider Rate Agreement](#) - Verification of rates charged (notice to parents such as newsletter, memo, etc.)
- [Completed W-9](#), [completed direct deposit form](#), AND voided imprinted check
- Residence verification of physical address

More information is provided [here](#).

Q: How can parents receive assistance with CCAP?

A: Parents can receive assistance with CCAP by contacting the Call Center at 1-877-453-2721 or by accessing the LDOE website at

<https://www.louisianabelieves.com/early-childhood/child-care-assistance-program>

Q: How can providers receive assistance with CCAP?

A: Providers can receive assistance with CCAP by placing a ticket in the Provider Ticket System at <https://provider.supportsystem.com> or by contacting the Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543. Providers can contact Provider Certification for assistance by emailing providercertification@la.gov

Licensing

Q: Do early learning centers need to submit a change request for licensing changes?

A: Yes, early learning centers **do** need to submit a change request for changes such as age range or hours of operation changes. Early learning centers can make change requests to their [Licensing Consultant](#) via email.

Q: Can a center employ a 16- or 17-year-old if they are under the direct supervision of a current employee? Are they considered staff for the purposes of ratios?

A: Yes, BESE has approved a waiver until August 31, 2022, allowing a center to employ staff ages 16 or 17, as long as they are under the direct supervision of a current employee. Yes, they may count for the purposes of ratios.

Q: Can centers implement a procedure requiring parents to drop children at the door, allowing staff to sign children in and out?

A: Follow the current [Office of Public Health Guidelines for Child Care](#) for parent drop-off and pick-up.

Q: For curbside drop off how can the ratio be maintained? Can we have a volunteer?

A: For the health and safety of children, staff ratios must be maintained. Centers are doing this in a variety of ways depending on their physical set up. Volunteers are allowed following Bulletin 137 regulations.

Q: Can infant rooms be partitioned to hold 2 groups of infants because they are non-mobile?

A: Yes, rooms can be partitioned into two groups. The maximum number in the room must still be maintained.

Child Care Criminal Background Checks (CCCBC)

Q: Do new employees need a CCCBC prior to starting work?

A: Yes, prior to starting work a new employee must apply, be fingerprinted, and receive an eligible or provisional CCCBC determination or already have a valid CCCBC determination that can be linked to the site's roster.

Q: Can new staff still be fingerprinted or will fingerprint locations close?

A: New staff members must be fingerprinted. The Department has received notice of some fingerprint location closures, though the Department's staff will continue diligently processing CCCBC applications. If the location that generally serves your area is closed please see where the nearest [Fingerprint Location](#) is located, and contact LDECCCBCprocessing@la.gov.

Q: Can child care centers employ K-12 staff and substitutes?

A: As child care centers address workforce challenges, pre-K-12 staff and substitutes may provide some relief, particularly those that already have a CCCBC. K-12 substitute pools vary by community, so centers should contact the local K-12 substitute staffing organization directly to access. Additionally, schools may have relationships with regular substitutes whom you may be able to partner with, as well as staff from closed centers and others in your community who may be able to serve as additional staff in your center. Note that the background check approved by the school systems for K-12 purposes is not acceptable for child care security purposes. Please contact LDEcccprocessing@la.gov with additional questions.

Q: Do K-12 Essential Visitors need to obtain a CCCBC to provide related services for students that will be attending virtual learning in a child care center?

A: Yes. All K-12 essential visitors and contractors, including mental health consultants and special education service providers, must have a Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) in order to provide services at an early learning center and a registered in-home or family child care provider. The background check approved by the school systems for K-12 purposes is not acceptable for child care security purposes. Please contact LDEccbcprocessing@la.gov with additional questions.

Child Care Support Organizations

Q: How do CCR&R agencies support child care providers during this time?

A: CCR&R agencies can suspend in-person coaching, replacing it with virtual coaching methods, when risk is higher. Agencies should begin to resume in-person coaching whenever risk is lower. CCR&Rs can also move in-person group trainings and meetings to virtual formats, as possible. CCR&Rs should prioritize supporting sites that remain open, assisting parents in finding alternative child care options within centers that remain open, and referring providers to the [LDOE FAQs](#) for up-to-date guidance.

Q: Is TIKES Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (MHC) available to support sites and young children?

A: [TIKES Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#) is providing MHC services via telephone or a telehealth web-based platform for any individual affiliated with Type III centers, family child care providers, which includes staff and families. Please complete the request form at <https://tinyurl.com/TulaneTIKES>, and a consultant will contact you as soon as possible.

Q: Will Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) Program Providers continue providing services?

A: Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) Program Providers may choose to move classes to a virtual (rather than in-person) format or choose to pause instruction. Please email LDOECOVID19support@la.gov if your program moves to online instruction or chooses to pause instruction.

Q: Should Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) Program Providers continue to send tuition invoices?

A: Yes, tuition invoices should be sent out following regular timelines.

Q: Should Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) Program Providers continue job-embedded coaching?

A: Programs can suspend in-person coaching, replacing it with virtual methods, when risk is higher. Programs should begin to resume in-person coaching whenever risk is lower.

Q: Can children from public and private schools get meals from child care centers?

A: At this time, centers can only serve enrolled children and cannot serve children above their licensed capacity.

Accountability

Q: How will performance ratings be affected by COVID-19?

A: The Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved an Emergency Rule to Bulletin 140 allowing the Department to provide sites with flexibility in how Performance Scores are published for the 2020-2021 school year. Based on the Bulletin 140 Emergency Rule, the Department has updated the Performance Scores and Ratings at sites where 2020-2021 observation results were higher and extended scores at all other sites. Sites should continue working with local lead agencies and the Department's third party contractors to complete observations for the 2021-2022 school year. Classrooms that scored Proficient or higher during their Fall 2021 observation after third party replacement will not be required to receive a second observation from the community network lead agency in Spring 2022. This requirement applies only to local observations; third party observations will continue as normal.

Workforce

Q: How can child care centers and providers support their employees?

A: Taking care of your teachers and finances is key to resuming business when this pandemic has fully passed.

- For help accessing community resources, benefits, or learning more about services, call 2-1-1.
- Look to the [Louisiana Workforce Commission](#) for unemployment support. Employees can apply for unemployment [online](#) or via the call center at 866-783-5567. Additional questions can be answered [here](#).
- Head Start programs will need to demonstrate they are operating in accordance with the Governor's executive order and have planned to assist families through this crisis through family services workers and established communications. At this point, program, all staff will continue to get paid until further notice.
- Ensure that you have family and staff contact information and emergency contacts.
- All staff should have direct deposit set up, or an alternate plan for receiving pay. Share your plan for payment and sick leave policies with staff and any flexibility you will allow for pay.
- Look into resources from the [Small Business Association](#), including COVID-19 specific loans.
- Review your insurance and business interruption policies and consider filing a claim, even if there is a virus exclusion.
- Check your email regularly for updates from the Department about upcoming grant opportunities and apply for them before the deadline.

Q: What is the “benefits cliff,” and how can I help my employees avoid it?

A: A “benefits cliff” happens when household earnings increase just enough to result in an abrupt reduction or loss of critical social service benefits. This is very disruptive for families because earnings usually have not increased enough for self-sufficiency without the benefits. Sites can take several steps to ensure that efforts to improve staff wages have the greatest possible impact on their employees’ well-being, including:

- Know the annual wage you provide to your employees, your employees’ household size, and how it relates to the Federal Poverty Level and social services eligibility.
- If necessary, provide short-term increases in wages or increases to lower wages, in particular, as one-time or periodic bonuses instead of regular hourly wages. One-time stipends get "counted" differently from hourly wages for some programs, such as SNAP, which will reduce the negative impact of a wage supplement on employees' public benefits.
- Provide sufficient wage supplements and raises to cover the cost of any lost public aid.

Q: Where can I get answers to my questions regarding unemployment benefits?

A: Employees can go to www.louisianaworks.net/hire or call 866-783-5567. Employers should contact the Louisiana Workforce Commission at EmployerServices@lwc.la.gov with your unemployment insurance and benefits questions.

Be sure to provide your company’s name, a point of contact, telephone number and email address, as well as specifics on the assistance you are requesting. The Employer Call Center, 225-326-6999, is also available. You can also call 2-1-1 for assistance with local resources for unemployed persons.