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All new/updated information is highlighted throughout this FAQ.

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All new/updated information is highlighted throughout this FAQ.

General

- The LDOE has created a [dedicated page](#) on its website focused on preventing and responding to COVID-19 in schools and early learning centers.
- All information and resources, including FAQ documents, are continually updated.
- Child care centers are not included in the governor's executive order. Sites should make closure decisions, and if needed, consult with [local public health contact](#).

- The [Louisiana Department of Health](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) websites maintain updated information about COVID-19, prevention, and occurrences.
- For education-specific information, contact the LDOE at LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov.

Q: How will we know if there are any additional confirmed cases in Louisiana?

A: The Louisiana Department of Health posts twice-daily updated case numbers online at <http://ldh.la.gov/Coronavirus/>.

Q: What symptoms are associated with COVID-19?

A: The most commonly-known symptoms associated with COVID-19 include: fever (83-98 percent), cough (76-82 percent), and shortness of breath/difficulty breathing (11-44 percent). Less commonly-exhibited symptoms include nausea, diarrhea, and sputum production.

Q: Can an individual showing potential symptoms of COVID-19 be tested in Louisiana?

A: Yes. Healthcare providers, such as hospitals, have the capacity to determine individuals in need of testing. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Louisiana Department of Health [recommend calling your health care provider](#). Your doctor will determine if you have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and whether you should be tested. Older patients and individuals who have severe underlying medical conditions or are immunocompromised should contact their healthcare provider early, even if their illness is mild. If you have severe symptoms, such as persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, or bluish lips of face, contact your healthcare provider or emergency room and seek care immediately.

Q: What preventative actions can Louisiana residents take?

A: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Louisiana Department of Health recommend protecting yourself and children in your care by taking some [basic precautions](#):

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and sanitize frequently touched objects and surfaces at least twice daily, ideally every 30 minutes.
- If you think you are sick, consult your healthcare provider.
- Take temperatures daily using a no-touch thermometer.

For child care providers, this means following hand hygiene and keeping a close eye on children and staff who are showing signs of illness. [Daily observations](#) of children are a great way of noticing illnesses/symptoms.

Additionally, centers should take all mitigating precautions when serving children, including:

- Take the temperature of staff and children, and check for illness when children arrive
- Limit group size to 10 or fewer children in activities
- Consider having children eat in individual classrooms, when possible
- Accommodate older or medically at-risk employees
- When possible, have children eat in individual classrooms

If you think a child is showing symptoms, report it to the parent immediately. If the parent thinks the child is sick, you should encourage them to contact their doctor as soon as possible.

Q: Can centers require that parents sign waivers to ensure centers are not held responsible if a child comes into contact with COVID-19 at the center?

A: Centers should consult their attorneys in consideration of any waivers.

Q: What preventative actions can staff take within centers?

A: Staff are encouraged to implement cleaning/sanitizing practices of the following areas:

- Door handles, crash bars, doorknobs
- Entry windows
- Office counters and surfaces
- Handrails
- Sinks and drinking fountains
- Dispensers
- Desks, tables
- Bathrooms
- Anything else that is handled frequently by multiple children and staff.

Q: What do I do to clean/sanitize my center if the location has been exposed to COVID-19?

A: You should work with your [local health unit](#) for guidance.

Q: Where can we find more information about COVID-19?

A: If you have questions about coronavirus, please contact the Louisiana 211 Network by dialing 211. Or, you can 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: How should centers respond to COVID-19?

A: Centers should be prepared for COVID-19 outbreaks in local communities and for individual exposure events to occur within facilities, regardless of the level of community transmission. [Reference the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's decision tree](#) to help determine which set of mitigation strategies may be most appropriate for your current situation.

Q: Can the LDOE help centers get more hand soap and sanitizer?

A: There is a nationwide shortage of supplies, including cleaning solutions. Centers should follow [CDC guidance on cleaning and hygiene](#). Please track expenditures and keep all receipts related to COVID-19 in the event funds become available to support these costs.

Q. Can early learning centers provide an authorized letter enabling the purchase of essential supplies (e.g., food, cleaning supplies, and paper products) that might exceed what stores allow individuals to purchase?

A: The Department has provided an [authorized letter](#) requesting Louisiana retailers to consider allowing early learning centers to purchase basic supplies that exceed the rationed amounts. To verify the role of early learning centers, purchasers may be asked, in addition to the letter, to provide a copy of their state license from the LDOE and a copy of a Louisiana's driver's license.

Q: Should centers prevent visitors from entering their site at this time?

A: Centers should determine their protocol for visitors by consulting the local health unit and CDC guidance.

Q: How should a child care center check the temperature of children and staff members?

A: Child care centers should use a thermometer that does not touch skin to check the temperature of children and staff members. If a center does not have and cannot access one, the center may use underarm thermometers, ear, or other thermometers and sanitize between uses.

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

A: A temperature of 100.4 typically indicates a fever, but this can vary for young children. Follow your center protocol.

Q: If a fever is detected, how long before a child or staff member can return to a center?

A: Louisiana Department of Health officials recommend that if using a symptom-based strategy, meaning there is no testing to confirm a diagnosis, children and staff should be excluded from centers until at least 7 days after the illness begins, or at least 3 days after the resolution of fever, whichever is longer, **AND** resolution or improvement in respiratory symptoms. Please consult your local health unit for further clarification or additional instructions.

Q: If a child care center has families or staff members that have traveled, or have people in their home that are sick, can a center require them to stay home?

A: Please consult your local health unit for guidance on these specific situations.

Q. What is required if a center receives a confirmed case of COVID-19?

A: You should work with your [local health unit](#) for guidance.

Closures

Q: The Governor issued [Proclamation JBE 2020-27](#) on March 13, 2020. Does it include child care centers?

A: No. Child care centers are not included in the governor's executive order. Sites should make closure decisions in coordination with local public health contact. [A map of these contacts is available.](#) If providers have questions regarding school or center closures, they can consult with their local public health contact, but are not required to call.

Q: What should determine if a center or provider should close?

A: Louisiana Department of Health has recommended the first step in determining to close an early childhood center is to [identify the Office of Public Health Regional Contact and talk with local health officials](#) when there are concerns of COVID-19.

Q: To whom should we report child care center closures?

A: If your center closes in response to an outbreak, please contact the Louisiana Department of Education at LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov with the center name, license number, location, and details of the closure. Communicate clearly to staff and families regarding your plan for handling tuition and payroll during any closure.

Q: What is the guidance for family child care and in-home providers in terms of closure?

A: Family child care providers and in-home providers should follow the same process as child care centers, and make these decisions in consultation with their local health units.

Q: What is the guidance for Head Start programs in terms of closure?

A: 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 staff will continue to get paid until further notice.

Q: Why are child care facilities still permitted to remain open, while public schools are required to close?

A: The current requirements around closure only apply to public schools. Child care centers are private businesses and are not subject to the same closure requirements.

Q: If the Federal government has recommended gatherings of ten or fewer to prevent COVID-19 spread, why are child care centers allowed to remain open?

A: Child care centers are remaining open in order to provide care for first responders and critical services personnel. Parents are being asked to not take their children to a child care center if they don't have to. Owners and directors are encouraged to make decisions based on the needs of the families, the children attending their centers, and the center's staff. Centers are also being asked to contact local health offices to help them make the decision on whether to remain open or not.

Q: Will child care centers be able to continue staying open if the COVID-19 cases increase? Will child care centers eventually be mandated to close?

A: The Department will follow the Governor's orders on this topic.

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

A: Child care centers should work with the [local health unit](#) for guidance.

Q: If a child care center closes, is it obligated to remain closed for the duration of the stay-at-home rule?

A: At this time, you are not obligated to stay closed.

Q: If a center closes, are we given a list of respite care centers to give to families?

A: Refer families to the local Child Care Resource & Referral agency, as this is changing daily.

Licensing

Q: What guidance should licensed centers follow to prepare them to operate in these conditions?

A: In light of the [Governor's Stay-At-Home order](#), the Louisiana Office of Public Health has updated [guidance](#) to private early learning centers. Given the risk for transmission of the virus causing COVID-19 in group or congregate settings, centers must follow the below guidance in order to remain in operation:

- Strongly encourage all children that can stay home to do so.

- Early learning center and daycare services should prioritize support for health care workers and essential workers.
- **Children and staff group sizes should be limited to 10 or less. Group sizes for infants should be limited to 5 or less.**
- Outdoor groups should be separated from each other, and also follow the <10 staff/children guidance.
- Practice frequent environmental cleaning (cleaning high touch surfaces hourly) and wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Alcohol based sanitizers are appropriate when soap and water are not readily available.
- Actively monitor children and staff for any symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath or sore throat throughout the day. Any child with these symptoms should not participate in these programs for the duration of the illness. Only well children should attend.
- Staff members in high-risk (elderly, those with medical conditions) should be encouraged to stay home.

For information regarding coronavirus 2019/COVID 19, please visit the LDH website and CDC website: <https://www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus> and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. You can also call 211 for general information regarding coronavirus 2019.

Q: Will license renewals be extended?

A: Yes. Licenses will be extended for 90 days for providers whose licenses expire in March, April, and May 2020.

- March renewals will be extended to June.
- April renewals will be extended to July.
- May renewals will be extended to August.

Annual inspections will be postponed or delayed with a focus on complaints and incidents. Delays of annual inspections by the Office of State Fire Marshal and the Office of Public Health will not negatively affect license renewals.

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

A: Early learning centers **do not** need to submit a change request in [Cafe](#) to accommodate out of school children or additional children. Early learning centers can make change requests to their [Licensing Consultant](#) via email for the following:

- Age range
- Hours of operation

Q: Can Type I or Type II centers receive CCAP funds to accept children?

A: No, they cannot. Type I and Type II centers can change their license to become a Type III to accept CCAP funds. To become a Type III center, contact the Division of Licensing by phone at 225-342-9905 or by email at ldelicensing@la.gov. These changes can go into effect the same day as the request.

Q: Can centers still make license changes or apply for a new license?

A: Yes. With recent events surrounding the onset of COVID-19, prospective and licensed center owners are not required to submit an application in CAFÉ for an initial, change of ownership (CHOW), or change of location (CHOL) license.

Please complete the [paper application](#) and contact the Licensing Consultant assigned to your center.

Initial, CHOW, and CHOL fees will be waived until April 30, 2020.

March, April, and May 2020 renewals have been extended 90 days for each month noted (Example: new expiration for March 2020 renewals is now June 30, 2020).

For any questions call 225-342-9905 or email ldelicensing@la.gov.

Q: Will there be additional allowances in order to accept additional children due to school closures and other center closures?

A: Yes. Louisiana will:

- Extend time for approval of license renewals from the Office of State Fire Marshal and Office of Public Health from 90 days of the date of the license expiration to 120 days from the date of the license expiration.
- Decrease the staff age requirement from 18 years or older to include 16 and 17-year-olds to be included in the child-to-staff ratio if the person works under the direct supervision of an adult staff member.
- Waive continuing education requirements (i.e. clock hours) and proof of documentation requirements.

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 June 30, 2020, 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 the children of child care center staff be onsite?

A: Yes, but they must be included in the center's enrollment.

Q: Will there be additional allowances in order to reduce costs to small businesses providing an important service to working families?

A: Yes. The Department will:

- waive the initial licensing fee.
- waive fees for change requests (\$25.00).
- waive the fee for changes in location and approve temporary changes in location to allow licensed centers to move into new spaces as an emergency situation may require.
- waive the \$15.00 Department fee for background checks and \$15.00 fee for out of state applicants.
- waive the \$25.00 DCFS fee.

Q: What is the licensed capacity for family child care and in-home providers?

A: Providers offering in-home or family child care services are allowed to serve 6 or fewer unrelated children. Due to the Governor's Proclamation on March 22, 2020, the group must not exceed 10 people, including the child care providers.

Q. If a child care center has a large open space, must they follow the 10 or fewer persons max capacity?

A. LDH has advised that child care centers can divide open-spaced rooms with dividers, ensuring adequate distance between groups. These divisions must ensure that there is a large room size for each group. If adequate distance is established, each individual space must follow the 10 or fewer persons max capacity.

Q: Should child care centers limit group size to 10 or fewer persons during outdoor/playground play?

A: LDH has advised that outdoor/playground groups should be limited to 10 or fewer persons and separated from each other.

Q: Can I establish a temporary child care center in a church or other building?

A: Expanded care should only be created to support emergency or critical response personnel, or employees who support necessary services. If emergency care is needed to support response to COVID-19, providers can establish a temporary child care center in a church or other buildings and the LDOE will work with you to license this space.

Note that providers should keep in mind the recommendations regarding social distancing and take all mitigating precautions. Please contact the Division of Licensing by phone at 225-342-9905 or by email at ldelicensing@la.gov to assist with licensing the location.

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

A: Yes. The center must have staff members signing the children in and out and adequate staff escorting children to their classrooms.

Child Care Criminal Background Checks (CCCBC)

Q: Are the Child Care Criminal Background Checks (CCCBCs) temporarily waived?

A: There has been a partial waiver of the background requirement. The person must still apply and be fingerprinted. The requirement to show documentation of having a CCCBC has been waived. The Department has also waived the \$15.00 administrative fee and the \$15.00 fee for out-of-state checks.

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

A: Prior to starting work a new employee must apply and be fingerprinted for a CCCBC. The requirements to provide proof to the Division of Licensing has been waived until April 30, 2020.

Q: Will community volunteers be required to have a CCCBC to assist Type III centers?

A: The child care provider should apply for a CCCBC for the volunteer through the [CCCBC System](#). If there are any hurdles in applying for the CCCBC contact valerie.black@la.gov.

Q: Will CCCBC staff continue to process background checks and provide updates of fingerprint services as the situation requires?

A: Yes. However, BESE has temporarily waived the following:

- Requirement of documentation of CCCBC eligibility determinations
- The LDOE \$15.00 CCCBC admin fee
- The LDOE \$15.00 out of state fee

Importantly, those individuals that have previously been determined ineligible or for whom you receive notice of ineligibility are prohibited from being on the premises.

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

A: Yes. The Department has not received any notice of fingerprint location closures, and the Department's staff will be diligently processing CCCBC applications. If a fingerprint location has closed in your area, please notify valerie.black@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. 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 who 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.

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

Q: Will the Department pay for enrollment versus attendance, and provide flexibility for families regarding redetermination periods and reporting requirements?

A: Yes. The Department will:

- Pay all authorized children the full weekly amount (the state maximum rate) regardless of the number of days or hours they attended. (Full-Time will receive 22 units monthly, Part-Time will receive 20 hours weekly).
- Waive copayments for families.
- Extend family redeterminations for 3 months.
- Extend reporting deadlines for eligibility determinations.

A CCAP child's inability to attend a center/provider during this time **will not** adversely affect their eligibility. They will continue to be eligible through their redetermination period.

Q: What are the state maximum rates for CCAP?

A: The state maximum rates can be found [here](#).

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 means that all families will be subsidized at 100 percent of the state maximum rate, which can be found [here](#). Providers can continue to charge the difference between the state maximum rate and the cost of their tuition.

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

A: The CCAP co-payments for families will be waived starting March 16 and will continue until the end of April. We will continue to assess the situation to see if it should be extended beyond that date.

Q: If a center closes, will CCAP payments continue in order for centers to continue to pay staff?

A: Yes, CCAP payments will continue to support centers to continue to pay staff. Payments will be based on enrollment, meaning centers will be paid for CCAP authorized children the full weekly amount regardless of the number of days or hours they attended. This means that full-time children will be paid for 22 days or units monthly, and part-time will be paid for 20 hours weekly.

Q: Can children authorized for part-time CCAP subsidy be changed to full-time CCAP subsidy while schools are closed?

A: Yes. As of March 16, all children will be authorized as full-time for CCAP subsidy. Child care centers and providers can begin serving these children as full-time immediately. Any questions can be emailed to LDECCAP@la.gov.

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](#), or they can email LDECCAP@la.gov or call 877-453-2721 with the request.

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](#), or they can email LDECCAP@la.gov or call 1-877-453-2721 with the request.

Q: If children were not on a center roll prior to this emergency, but due to school closures are requesting services at a child care center, can they be added to the role during this time?

A: Yes. Children can be added, dropped, and transferred to another facility. Contact the Provider Help Desk for assistance at 225-342-1879 or 225-342-7414 or email LDECCAP@la.gov.

Q: Can children who typically attend school apply and be certified for CCAP?

A: Yes. Families can apply for CCAP through by submitting an [application](#). We are expediting all applications.

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

A: No. These families can apply for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) by submitting an [application](#).

Q: Should centers still bill tuition-paying parents, even if their children are encouraged to stay home?

A: This is a center's decision.

Q: Will there be any financial help for centers with limited children funded through CCAP?

A: The LDOE is exploring grants to support child care centers. Please track all expenditures and losses related to COVID-19.

The LDOE is collecting data on centers' interruption insurance to inform emergency funding that may become available, and asking all early learning centers to notify us regarding business interruption insurance by completing this quick [form](#).

Additionally, the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, in partnership with the United Way of Southeast Louisiana, Louisiana Association of United Ways, Child Care Association of Louisiana, and Resource and Referral Agencies across Louisiana, is conducting a survey of to learn how the COVID-19 outbreak is impacting child care providers in the state. Participation in the survey will help with understanding what is happening with child care in Louisiana during the outbreak. Findings from the survey will be used to both inform recovery efforts and make the case for more help for the sector.

[Providers may complete the online survey.](#)

Providers within the Agenda for Children regions may complete the survey online here:
<https://www.surveymzmo.com/s3/5504799/COVID-19-and-child-care>

Responses are requested by Friday, March 20.

For any questions, please contact info@policyinstitutela.org.

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

A: Payments are made two weeks in advance. The payment based off of enrollments will begin the week of March 16. That payment will be made the week of March 30. The Department is working on correspondence for each provider with estimations of payments to be made based on the new enrollment process.

Q: Will provider applications and family applications for CCAP still be accepted and processed?

A: Yes. Applications are still being accepted and processed.

Q: Will Academic Approval Certificates continue to be processed?

A: Yes. Academic Approval Certificates will be processed in a timely manner.

Q: If a Head of Household or household designee is unable to find an open Tracking of Time Service (TOTS) location to receive a finger-image, what should be done?

A: If a lead agency closes a building where TOTS machines are located, they must inform the LDOE by email at LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov.

- The LDOE will keep the [TOTS locations](#) document updated in the event Heads of Household are looking for a TOTS location.
- **If a family is not able to access a location in their area, the Provider must keep manual attendance records until the TOTS location is open again.**
- Contact the Provider Help Desk (225-342-1879 or 225-342-7414) or Call Center (877-453-2721) for individual questions.

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

A: All centers are required to maintain a attendance record for all children attending the center. The use of TOTS finger imaging is encouraged to continue to the extent possible, but not required during the COVID-19 Emergency.

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

A: DCFS is following the LDOE protocol for this situation. Therefore, foster parents are not required to sign in using TOTs at this time. The provider will need to manually record attendance.

Q: [CCAP is now serving essential critical infrastructure personnel](#). Who are considered essential critical infrastructure workers?

A: Essential critical infrastructure workers belong to the following industries:

- HealthCare/Public Health
- Law Enforcement, Public Safety, First Responders
- Food and Agriculture
- Energy (electrical industry, petroleum, natural and propane gas workers)
- Waste and Wastewater
- Transportation and Logistics
- Public Works
- Communications and Information Technology
- Other Community-Based Government
- Critical Manufacturing
- Hazardous Materials
- Financial Services
- Chemical
- Defense Industrial Base

Q: How is the Department assisting essential critical infrastructure workers?

A: Families of essential critical infrastructure workers are eligible for CCAP, and their [applications](#) will be

expedited.

Q: Will there be income requirements for essential critical infrastructure workers to be eligible for CCAP?

A: No, there are no income requirements for this group. Please prioritize those who cannot afford or cannot keep children at home, as there are limited federal funds available.

Q: Are child care workers eligible for the CCAP funds as essential critical infrastructure workers?

A: Yes, they are included.

Q: If a family needs overnight care, what documents are needed?

A: Please keep attendance records which include time in and time out.

Q: If the spread of COVID-19 worsens, will respite care centers close?

A: Respite care centers will be evaluated based on need and funding available while monitoring the health and safety of our community.

Q: What is the current subsidy rate for providers receiving CCAP?

A: During this time, family child care providers and in-home providers will receive the same subsidy funding per child as type III centers. All providers will be funded at the same rate through April with the possibility of extension if feasible and necessary. See table below.

Provider Type	Age 3 and up	Age 1-2 (Toddler)	Age 0 (Infant)	Special Needs Age 3 and up	Special Needs Age 1-2 (Toddlers)	Special Needs Age 0 (Infant)
Type III Center	\$22.00	\$23.75	\$25.00	\$27.72	\$29.93	\$31.50
Family Child Care Provider	\$22.00	\$23.75	\$25.00	\$27.72	\$29.93	\$31.50
In-Home Child Care	\$22.00	\$23.75	\$25.00	\$27.72	\$29.93	\$31.50

Child Care Support Organizations

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

A: CCR&R agencies can suspend in-person coaching and switch to virtual coaching methods. They can also move in-person group trainings and meetings to virtual formats, as possible. CCR&Rs should prioritize supporting centers that remain open, assist parents in finding alternative childcare options within centers that remain open, and refer center directors to the [LDOE FAQs](#) for up-to-date guidance.

Q: Will CCR&R agencies be asked to provide respite care services?

A: CCR&Rs have been requested to provide respite care services in needed locations, including hospitals. These agencies should begin thinking about possible partnerships, and reach out to the LDOE regarding opportunities in their community. If respite care is provided, CCR&Rs will be paid.

Q: How do centers let the state know that space has been freed up to provide respite care?

A: Please contact your local [Resource and Referral agency](#) and email LDOECOVID19support@la.gov. You can find the contact information for your local CCR&R in the [Early Childhood Map for Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies](#).

Q: Is TIKES Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation available to support centers 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, individuals working in respite child care centers, and other individuals that have children in their care. 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 Program Providers continue providing services?

A: Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate 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 Program Providers continue to send tuition invoices?

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

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

A: Job-embedded coaching should be suspended until April 13, 2020.

LA 4 and NSECD

Q: Does the attendance requirement still apply for LA 4 and NSECD payments?

A: During school closure from March 16–April 13, LA-4 and NSECD payments will continue based on enrollment, rather than attendance. LA-4 and NSECD attendance tracking should mark the school closures in the same manner used for normal school closures for weather, holiday, etc. When schools reopen, additional COVID19 related absences are considered excused absences.

- TANF school systems should submit attendance up to March 13 ASAP using their google attendance sheets.
- TANF school systems will be contacted via email by Lindsey Bradford to confirm attendance/closure submission.

Please contact lindsey.bradford@la.gov with questions.

Q: What happens to LA 4 and NSECD monthly payments if a school closes?

A: LA 4 payments will continue and will be based on enrollment.

Q: How are LA 4 and NSECD payments invoiced at this time?

A: LA 4 and NSECD invoices should be sent out by the 10th of each month to ensure prompt payment. If teams are unable to submit invoices for LA 4 and NSECD due to COVID19 hardships, please email lindsey.bradford@la.gov.

Q: How will this affect monitoring compliance documents?

A: For school systems and Type 3 childcare centers that have March 20, 2020, as the due date for uploading compliance monitoring documents to the LDOE, an automatic extension of the due date/deadline until April 30 will be instituted as needed.

Federal Child Nutrition Feeding Programs

Q: Has the U.S. Department of Agriculture provided any guidance on the Child and Adult Care Food Program?

A: USDA has not provided any additional guidance on the Child and Adult Care Food Program at this time. However, the Families First bill, if passed by Congress, would provide for non-congregate feeding. LDOE will continue to monitor USDA guidance and will provide updates as they are available.

USDA allows K-12 schools to continue to provide meals to students during the extended closure. These programs have waivers to operate open feeding programs that can provide meals for any child 18 years of age and under.

Please check the [School Meal Sites During COVID-19 Closures Interactive Map](#) for the most current listing of schools providing meals for children. For questions related to food and nutrition programs and options to serve children meals should a center close, contact the LDOE Division of Nutrition Support childnutritionprogams@la.gov.

Q: Is there assistance available in the event of food shortages?

A: The Department will maintain a [list of schools](#) providing open feeding programs for children 18 years of age and younger during the closure. If a center closes, it should refer families to programs on this list.

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.

Q: Are schools that provide meals required to provide to childcare centers, to help alleviate logistical and cost burdens?

A: Child care centers that are open, should continue to provide services, including food, to children through their normal means of operation. Centers **may** be able to work with schools that are operating open feeding sites to make arrangements for food delivery or pickup. If a child care center closes, it should refer families to local open feeding sites.

Q: Can centers be prioritized at grocery stores to ensure access to food for children?

A: Centers can work with their local grocery stores to see if they can gain priority access. At this time, there are no food shortages in Louisiana. In addition, the Department has provided an [authorized letter](#) requesting Louisiana retailers to consider allowing early learning centers to purchase basic supplies that exceed the rationed amounts.

Q: Can school systems bring food to our centers or let us pick food up?

A: Centers should contact their local school systems to make meal service arrangements.

Q: How will students eat if my Head Start center closes?

A: You can and should use USDA Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services funds that you receive to provide meals and snacks for enrolled children. Any allowable costs that are not covered by the USDA Food and Nutrition Services can be covered by Head Start Funds. Information on FNS allowable costs related to child nutrition can be found [here](#).

Q: Do I still have to serve meals in a group setting if my center has closed and I still want to serve meals to children?

A: No, the USDA has waived group meal requirements in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Food can be consumed off-site.

Q: My center is closing. How should we dispose of unused food paid for by CACFP?

A: In the event of an extended closure, perishable food should be disposed of in a way that minimizes waste. If the unused food available is safe for human consumption, you may donate the food to a local food bank or distribute the food to enrolled families.

Q: I operate a Head Start Program and want to provide meals to children. Is that something I can do?

A: Yes. A Head Start Program or an Early Head Start Program can provide meals and snacks to enrolled children during a closure.

Possible strategies for providing food to children during center closures include the following:

- Programs could drop off bags of food (including infant formula) at enrolled families' homes. Families could come out to collect the bags or they could be delivered to the door.
- Families could pick up pre-assembled bags of food at a center or other location. Care should be taken to avoid large groups and prevent anyone who is sick from coming to collect food. This could include a "drive-through" station in areas where families have cars.
- Programs could check with local schools, churches, or other community organizations to see if there are partnership opportunities to increase the efficiency of food distribution.

Note: Sites must ensure that documentation is maintained regarding parental consent and details of meals served (number of meals, type of meals, etc.).

Academic Resources

Q: In the event of school or center closure, are there resources families may find helpful in facilitating learning at home?

A: Yes. The following learning resources are available to families.

Standards and Development

- [Louisiana's Birth to Five Early Learning & Development Standards \(ELDS\)](#) describes the particular skills and abilities that children need to develop to be successful and provide ideas for fostering their development.

- [The National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#) offers research-based resources, tips, and ideas for families—from child development to reading, writing, music, math, and more!

Text Services

Several programs are available to offer tips and resources for families that support early learning through text messages. Message and data rates apply.

- [Bright by Text](#) provides quality information and trusted resources to families of children prenatal to age eight partnering with LPB. Text: LPB to 274448.
- [Vroom](#) offers free, easy-to-use learning tips for children 5 and under, delivered daily directly to your phone. Sign up for free at <https://www.vroom.org/>.
- [Ready4K](#) is an evidence-based family engagement curriculum delivered via text messages. Text: Readyby4th to 70138.

Online Learning

- **Frog Street's** partner, Education technology provider Age of Learning, is offering families at schools and centers affected by closure free at-home access to research-proven learning resources.
 - [ABCmouse.com® Early Learning Academy](#) is a comprehensive, research-validated curriculum for children 2-8. Visit www.ABCmouse.com/redeem and redeem your access code: **SCHOOL3673** to sign up. Questions can be sent to support@aofl.com.
 - [ReadingIQ®](#) is a digital library and literacy platform for children 2-12 designed by reading experts to improve literacy skills. Visit www.ReadingIQ.com/redeem and redeem your access code. **SCHOOL3673** to sign up. Questions can be sent to support@aofl.com.
- **Teachstone**, creator of CLASS®, has [resources](#) for early childhood educators and families to promote interactions and support child learning during COVID-19. Blog posts, webinars, and downloadable resources are available for families and educators to learn about the importance of interactions, plan activities for children, and incorporate CLASS® concepts into daily routines. [The CLASS® at Home](#) is another great resource for families explaining what domain interactions look like at home and the importance of each.
- **Teaching Strategies** developed a free toolkit for supporting families impacted by COVID-19. The [Healthy at Home](#) toolkit offers a free selection of resources from *The Creative Curriculum®* and *ReadyRosie™* providing families with information and resources for supporting the children in their care.
- The Department [posted](#) distance and home learning supports for educators, students, and caregivers including:

- [Academic resources](#) for math, ELA, social studies, science, and early childhood including increased access to digital content and virtual lessons.
- Resources to teach young children about COVID-19.
- Also, the Department is working with Louisiana Public Broadcasting (LPB) to do the following:
 - Ensure their “[At-Home Learning](#)” website includes links to Department-produced guidance.
 - Assist them in choosing educational programming that is most closely connected to Louisiana student standards, whenever possible. Access the [LBP broadcasting schedule](#).

The Department will announce the availability of these resources through all upcoming planning calls and newsletters.

Q: How can families provide guidance during this time?

A: Closures will result in changes in routine and some anxiety for children. Share these resources with families to support their conversations with young children.

- [Parent and Caretaker guide for helping families cope with COVID-19](#)
- [Just For Kids: A Comic Exploring The New Coronavirus](#)
- [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) - A Parent Resource \(English Resource\)](#)
- [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) - A Parent Resource \(Spanish Resource\)](#)

Accountability

Q: How will school and center closures, quarantines, or illnesses affect the early childhood accountability system?

A: The Department will:

- suspend all local and third-party CLASS® observations until April 13 and extend the deadline for the spring observation period until May 31, 2020, through a BESE waiver.
- If observations are unable to occur in centers and schools by this deadline, the Department will work with programs and lead agencies to determine how to calculate performance ratings.
- The Department will work with BESE to request a Bulletin 140 waiver to extend performance profiles for severely impacted sites.
 - Note: 85 percent of sites have already received all required observations for their 2019-2020 school year and will receive their performance profiles and star ratings without interruption.

Q: How will school and center closures, quarantines, or illness affect *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® documentation and checkpoints?

A: The Department is currently monitoring the situation with COVID-19 and understands the potential issues of not being able to complete the final *GOLD*[®] checkpoint. The Department will release more information regarding the last checkpoint in the coming days.

The health and wellbeing of our students and faculty are of the utmost importance. We invite you to share a hyperlink to the [GOLD[®] toolkit](#) that offers a free selection of resources from *The Creative Curriculum*[®] and *ReadyRosie*[™] with your families while they may be at home.

Special Education

Q: How will school and center closures, quarantines, or illnesses affect children with special needs?

When the school closure causes educational services for all students to pause within a school or school system, then the school/school system is generally not required to provide services to children with disabilities during the closure. This includes children with disabilities ages 3, 4, and 5 who have an IEP.

After an extended closure, school systems are responsible for reviewing how the closure impacted the delivery of special education and related services on each child. If the child lost progress, teams will need to reassess services and determine whether the child requires compensatory education.

[The U.S. Department of Education Q&A on special education](#) has additional information, including information on Early Steps/IDEA Part C for infants and toddlers, and distance education.

Q: Will there be an extension allowed for evaluations for children turning 3 and transitioning from IDEA part C to Part B?

A: Federal and state law and state policy define specific timelines for the provision of special education and related services. BESE approved initial waivers for a number of educational policies, including initial evaluation policies that impact students with disabilities. See the [BESE Emergency Waiver Memo](#) for the list of specific educational policies that impact students with disabilities. Federal regulations govern additional special education compliance timelines including but not limited to Part C to B transition, initial IEP development (30 days from determination of special education and related services), and reevaluation timelines. At this time, there is no guidance from the U. S. Department of Education regarding the waiver of federal timelines related to these elements of special education compliance. School systems should develop a plan to support maintaining timelines and to document clearly if a delay occurs, the nature and extent of the delay and the plan to move as quickly as possible to prevent any further delay.

Q: Will conferences for children transitioning from Part C to Part B be postponed?

A: No. Family Service Coordinators will continue to schedule transition conferences for Part C to Part B eligibility determination according to the required timelines and provide notification to the LEA contact(s) for the school system.

- If the LEA representative is unavailable, all documentation will be sent to the LEA representative following the transition conference.

Q: Will children still receive early intervention services and home visiting support?

A: Yes. Early Steps will continue to prioritize providing early intervention support to children birth to three years old in natural environments as determined by the IFSP process, with added consideration to health and safety of families and early interventionists.

- A telephone screening process for home visits has been developed to support limiting visitors in child care centers.
- If onsite services at the child care center are not an option, alternate locations for services and teletherapy will be considered.
- If a child cannot undergo evaluation using teletherapy or alternate locations, an interim IFSP can be developed using presumptive eligibility, then re-determined after the COVID-19 event ends, or eligibility determination can be postponed with parent consent and documentation.

BESE Waivers

Q: Have any waivers been issued by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education?

A: Yes, the current list of emergency waivers granted can be found [here](#).

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 has passed.

- The [Governor's proclamation](#) offers flexibility around unemployment, which may be relevant to you.
- Look to the [Louisiana Workforce Commission](#) for unemployment supports. Employees can apply for unemployment [online](#) or via the call center at 866-783-5567. The call center is currently open from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., and claims are being processed within 3-5 days. 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.
- Consider developing a list of work-from-home tasks that your staff can engage in to continue moving your work forward.
- 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.
- The LDOE is collecting data on centers' interruption insurance to inform emergency funding that may become available, and asking all early learning centers to notify us regarding business interruption insurance by completing this quick [form](#).
- Complete this [survey](#) from the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children to report on financial issues child care centers are facing due to COVID-19, in order to partner with organizations to provide support.

Q: Must centers require elderly staff to stay at home?

A: Centers and concerned staff should follow CDC guidelines and take necessary precautions.

Q: What is the difference with unemployment benefits if an employee is given "leave without pay" vs laying off?

A: *Leave without pay* is usually a leave from employment initiated by the employee. *Laying off* is usually an action taken by the employer. Please contact the Louisiana Workforce Commission to discuss the specifics of your situation. You can file a claim or share the status of your business at www.louisianaworks.net/hire or by calling the Claim Center at 866-783-5567. For faster self-service options, please visit [their website](#).

Q: What is the email to contact Louisiana Workforce Commission to let them know of mass lay off?

A: Rapid Response is a pre-layoff program designed to help companies and their employees experiencing a layoff or closing. The LWC Rapid Response Unit is available for assistance concerning temporary or permanent layoffs due to COVID-19. Email André France at afrance@lwc.la.gov.

Q: How is eligibility for unemployment due to COVID-19 determined?

A. The LWC reviews each case separately. Workers may be eligible if they can answer 'yes' to any of the following:

- Your work hours have been reduced because of lack of work due to coronavirus
- Your workplace closes temporarily, and you are not being compensated
- You have been instructed not to go to work, and you are not being paid while at home

- If your work hours have been reduced, partial benefits could be available to you up to a maximum of \$247 a week.

Important Note: As per the Governor's proclamation, for individuals whose employment has been impacted due to COVID-19:

- work search requirements are waived.
- week of waiting is waived.

Q: What are the current guidelines for receiving unemployment benefits?

A: The following guidelines should be included in your financial planning:

- The maximum number of weeks that unemployment benefits can be paid per claim is 26 weeks in a 12-month period.
- Wages and vacation pay (received or will receive) **must** be reported when you file your unemployment claim. Sick leave and PTO do not need to be reported.
- You must report any earnings for the week that you work, even if you've not yet been paid. Report the gross amount before deductions. These earnings would be factored into the amount of unemployment benefits paid to you for that week

Q: Unemployment is usually determined by the prior quarter. For COVID-19, if a site closes or has to send workers home that have only been working for 3 months or less, can they receive unemployment if they were not previously employed (from Louisiana Workforce Commission)?

A: Monetary entitlement is based on wages reported for that employee in the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters. This is called their "base period." Unfortunately, if no wages were reported for the employee during that time, they would likely be ineligible for benefits. It is still recommended for everyone to file. Each application will receive a monetary determination from LWC. Rejected applications may need this denial letter to apply for other future assistance that may become available to them.

Q: Providers have struggled to apply for Small Business Association (SBA) loans. What is the problem?

A: [Louisiana became eligible](#) for SBA loans on March 19, 2020. Attempting to apply before that date may have resulted in this challenge, but this should be resolved by now. There is a high volume of traffic on the [application site](#).

Q: Are there resources or supports available for Type I or Type II centers?

A: Type I and II centers should apply for federal support through the [Small Business Association](#) loans referenced above.

Events

Q: What is the status of the 2020 Teacher Leader Summit?

A: In light of ongoing COVID-19 health concerns and at the direction of local and national authorities, the 2020 Teacher Leader Summit will not occur this May, as scheduled. The Department will shift to a virtual session presentation platform for as many sessions as possible. Additional details, including the list and schedule of these sessions, will be announced in the coming weeks via upcoming newsletters.

All registrants will automatically be unregistered from the event. Those who paid for a ticket will automatically receive a refund by the end of April to the card on file. Confirmation of the cancellation will be sent to the purchaser's email address. The Department will cancel all hotel rooming blocks listed in the [Overview Document](#). However, individuals should contact the hotel directly if they require proof of cancellation. Please contact ldoeevents@la.gov with questions.

Q: Have any events or meetings been postponed or canceled?

A: Out of an abundance of caution, the following events or convenings will be postponed or canceled:

- EL Community of Practice Series Meetings (Canceled)
- Early Literacy Commission (March 23; new date TBA)
- Special Education Advisory Panel (March meeting canceled)
- Student of the Year events (Postponed; more information about virtual interviews will be sent to participants)
- April School System Planning Call (Canceled; presentation will be posted to the [School Improvement Library](#) on April 8)
- Spring 2020 Counselor Institutes (April; rescheduled as virtual institutes)
- 2020 Teacher Leader Summit (May, in-person convening canceled; virtual session offerings will be shared in coming weeks)