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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. 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. If a store does not accept the authorized letter, email LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov providing the store's name and location. A Department staff member will work with our contacts to help to see if the store can accept the letter.

Reopening Louisiana

Q: Will the requirements found in the [Office of Public Health Child Care Guidelines](#) be the same for Phase Two and Phase Three of Reopening Louisiana?

A: Yes, the [Office of Public Health Child Care Guidelines](#) will be the same for Phase II and Phase III of Reopening Louisiana with the exception of the requirements for group size and child to staff ratios. Group size has increased during Phases Two and Three. Please note that group size is different from [ratios](#). The LDOE and OPH will work together to determine what additional guidance is needed for Phase Three of Reopening Louisiana.

Q: What will happen when centers 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. Effective August 1, 2020, the Louisiana Department of Education will begin posting a list of centers that are not following the OPH Guidelines to allow families to make informed decisions for the health, safety, and well-being of their children and families. 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: Are there times during the day that staff members are permitted to remove their face covering?

A: When staff members are in an indoor space within 6 feet of children or other staff members, they must wear a face covering. However, if a staff member is physically distanced (6 feet or greater) from children and/or other staff members, they can remove the mask or face covering. Appropriate physical distancing may occur during nap time or outdoor play as long as supervision is maintained. Transmission is more likely to occur indoors than in outdoor spaces, based on [current understanding](#). Therefore, face coverings are important to be worn indoors.

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 or cloth face covering.

Q: Can privately owned child care centers 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 cloth face mask or face covering.

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 centers prevent visitors from entering their site at this time?

A: Child care providers must change parent drop-off and pick-up process to have curbside drop off and pick up to limit direct contact between parents and staff members. Additional information may be found in the [Office of Public Health Guidelines for Child Care](#).

Q: What essential visitors are allowed to enter school and center facilities?

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

	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
Essential Visitors to School and Center Facilities	<p>Essential visitors are individuals who must enter schools or early learning centers in order to conduct visits in accordance with Louisiana law or policy. Essential visitors include, but are not limited to, individuals who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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: How do centers provide tours for prospective families?

A: Child care centers can provide virtual tours for prospective families during Phases I and II. In person touring will be considered during Phase III of Reopening Louisiana.

Q: Are mothers who are breastfeeding allowed inside the center?

A: Yes, mothers who are breastfeeding are allowed inside the center. They must follow the center screening procedures including hand washing and wearing a face covering while in the center. 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: How should a child care center check the temperature of children and staff members?

A: See the [Office of Public Health Guidelines for Child Care](#) for examples including screening questions.

Q: At what temperature should a child care center 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 a center?

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 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. Masks or face coverings must 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 classes 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 a center's decision. Any staff members who leave their site must 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 child care centers?

A: No, these activities should not be allowed as they break the static group.

Q: Will centers be allowed to take field trips?

A. No, field trips are not allowed during Phase I, II or III.

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

A: The [Office of Public Health Child Care Guidelines](#) states that in swimming pools, groups must be separated by lane lines or ropes. Group size and social distancing must be managed for other outdoor play activities.

Q: Does the playground need to be sanitized between classes?

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: As restrictions from the governor's Stay at Home order are lifted, it is likely that child care centers will have confirmed cases of COVID-19 within their children, families, and staff members. COVID-19 can be cleaned away with the standard [environmental cleaning](#) found in the Office of Public Health Child Care Guidelines. If it is found that a child or a staff member tests positive for COVID-19, Louisiana is setting up an extensive case identification and close contact protocol. If a test for a child or staff member comes back positive for COVID-19, very quickly, the system of Louisiana will contact that individual and identify their close contacts. The child care center will be contacted and individuals who are in the same group as the infected individual, depending on the level of contact, may be asked to self-isolate for 14 days.

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

A: Providers can use the Sample Letter Notifying Families About Exposure to COVID-19 that went out on July 2, 2020, via email to Providers.

Q: What should a center do when they are informed that a child or staff member has a confirmed case of COVID-19 in their household?

A: The contact tracking group of the state will be contacting those who have been in physical contact with the infected individual. The infected individual will be asked to isolate until they are well and those having close contact with the individual will be asked to stay home for 14 days and watch for signs of illness.

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

- A close contact is any individual who has been within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes during their infectious period, which includes the 48 hours before the day the person became sick (or the 48 hours before specimen collection if asymptomatic) until the person was isolated. Close contact is also if you had direct contact with the COVID-19 case (touched, hugged, or kissed them), you shared eating or drinking utensils, or they sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.
- If a close contact in quarantine becomes symptomatic, they would be considered a case as of the day their symptoms begin and need to follow the end of self-isolation criteria above to return to school/center.
- If a close contact in quarantine tests positive but does not develop symptoms, they would be considered a case as of the day their test was collected and need to follow the end of isolation criteria above to return to school/center.
- If someone in their quarantine period tests negative, they should remain in quarantine for the duration of the 14 days and monitor for the development of symptoms at any time during the quarantine period.
- Contacts of contacts do not need to quarantine.
- A symptomatic person who tests negative for COVID-19 should wait until at least 24-hours after their symptoms resolve to return to school (in consultation with their physician).
- See [LDH's Isolation/Quarantine Recommendations](#).

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

A: The child/employee/teacher would need to quarantine for 14 days past their last exposure to the household member. This may be 14 days starting from when the case has ended their isolation period if they are not able to safely isolate from the positive household member.

Closures

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

A: If your center closes in response to COVID-19, please contact the Louisiana Department of Education at LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov with the center name, license number, location, closure date and anticipated re-opening date. Communicate clearly to staff and families regarding your plan for handling tuition and payroll during any closure.

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: A decision tree for [Re\(Opening\)](#) is provided. A provider must follow the [Office of Public Health Guidelines for Child Care](#).

Q: Where can families access a list of open child care providers in my area?

A: The Department is maintaining a list of all open child care providers (Type I, II, and III centers, as well as family child care and in-home providers) on the Department's website. The [parish-level list](#) of open child care providers includes:

- License number
- Facility/provider name
- Contact information and hours of operation
- License type (note: only Type III, in-home, and family child care providers are available to enroll kids through CCAP)
- Age range
- If a center's information is incorrect, please contact LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov

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 until September 30, 2020)
- Waive copayments for families until September 30, 2020
- Extend redetermination periods for families:
 - March and June are extended to September 30

- April and July are extended to October 31
- May and August is extended to November 30
- 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: Will CCAP pay for school aged children for full-day care?

A: Due to many hybrid school schedules, school age children who are normally part-time will remain full-time through January 2021. For questions regarding CCAP, please email the Provider Ticket System at <https://provider.supportsystem.com>.

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 but are encouraged to work with families struggling during this epidemic when possible.

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 September 2020.

Q: If a center temporarily 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 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: 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: No. These families can apply for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) by submitting an [application](#).

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

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

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

A: All centers are required to maintain an attendance record for all children attending the center. The use of TOTS finger imaging is not required during the COVID-19 Emergency. Beginning October 2020, an alternate method of obtaining attendance electronically will be in place.

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: If a child care center is documenting CCAP attendance manually, how are records submitted to the Department for reimbursement?

A: At this time, CCAP is being reimbursed based on enrollment, not attendance. Sites must retain all attendance logs for their records. If attendance logs are needed, the logs will be requested by CCAP.

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 September 2020. 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

Q: What are the steps to becoming registered and certified to receive CCAP as a 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://cccblcdoe.la.gov/> and many fees are waived.
- CPR & Pediatric First Aid Certificate. Certificate can be obtained [online](#) (\$14.95)

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 are newly qualified CCAP families being set up to receive finger imaging from TOTS?

A: All centers are required to maintain an attendance record for all children attending the center. The provider will need to manually record attendance. If finger imaging sites are open families should proceed to get finger imaging for future usage after COVID-19.

Licensing

Q: Will license renewals be extended?

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

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

- June renewals will be extended to September.
- July renewals will be extended to October.

Delays of annual inspections by the Office of State Fire Marshal and the Office of Public Health will not negatively affect license renewals.

Q: Will centers be required to complete continuing education hours at this time?

A: A [waiver](#) was issued July 1, 2020, extending the period of time clock hours could be obtained. For the period between March 1, 2020 and February 28, 2021, the minimum of 12 annual clock hours has been waived. However, providers must obtain and provide records of the required 12 annual clock hours starting March 2021.

Training still required include the following:

- 3 hours of training by a child care health consultant on health and safety;
- Medication Management Training; and
- CPR and Pediatric First Aid

Q: Will child care sites follow the same screen time regulations for school-aged children?

A: With more schools offering virtual instruction as an option this school year due to COVID-19, a [waiver](#) of Bulletin 137 §1509.A.9.b. Electronic Devices Policy is being offered to early learning centers. This waiver pertains to children ages four and older for whom care is being provided at a licensed early learning center simultaneously while the children are receiving virtual instruction or completing school work from the school in which they are enrolled for the 2020-2021 school year. This waiver applies only to time spent receiving virtual instruction or completing school work that requires access to an electronic device. The following information must be available on site:

- First and last name of child enrolled in virtual school
- Name of accredited school
- Supporting documentation of enrollment in virtual learning

This waiver will remain in effect until May 31, 2021, unless terminated sooner by the Superintendent. If you have any additional questions, contact your Licensing Consultant at (225) 342-9905.

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 to accommodate 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 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, renewal, change of ownership (CHOW), or change of location (CHOL) license. Please complete the [application](#) and contact the Licensing Consultant assigned to your center. For any questions call 225-342-9905 or email ldelicensing@la.gov.

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, 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 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.

Q: Do child care centers who have been closed need to re-register with the fire marshal?

A: At this time, Licensing is not aware of such a requirement. Please contact the Fire Marshal's office to confirm.

Q: Can providers take online CPR/PFA for renewals?

A: Due to the onset of COVID-19, online CPR/PFA training is acceptable at this time.

Child Care Criminal Background Checks (CCCBC)

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

A: No. The requirement to show documentation of having a CCCBC was waived until April 30, 2020. *It has not been extended.* The person must still apply, be fingerprinted, and receive an eligible or provisional CCCBC determination prior to starting work.

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 center'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 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.

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 home provider. The background checks approved by the school systems for K-12 purposes is not acceptable for child care security purposes. Please contact LDEcccdbcprocessing@la.gov with additional questions.

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: 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. 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: In-person job-embedded coaching should be suspended for the time being. However, coaching may occur virtually.

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 childnutritionprograms@la.gov.

Q: What food service options are available for early learning centers and children?

A: Various food service options are available for early learning centers and children.

New waivers increase CACFP flexibility, allowing child care programs to opt into waivers on:

- Meal Service Time Flexibility
- Non-Congregate Feeding
- Delivery of Meals (only if you intend to deliver meals)
- Meal Pattern Flexibility (on a meal by meal basis)

For institutions operating CACFP only use this [form](#). For more information on federal CACFP guidance, visit the [CACFP COVID-19 resources page](#).

In addition, the [School Meal Sites Interactive Map](#) and schoolmealfinder.hoonuit.com provides the most current listing of schools providing meals for children 18 years of age and younger during the closure.

For questions related to food and nutrition programs, contact childnutritionprograms@la.gov.

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: 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: What resources are available to support continuous learning in the event of school or center closure?

A: The Department [posted](#) continuous home learning supports for educators, students, and caregivers including [Academic resources](#) for math, ELA, social studies, science, and early childhood. The Department also released a [toolkit](#) to help families have a better understanding of how to support a child's development and learning. It provides practical activities that can be used throughout the day to work with a child at home. These activities are only suggestions should families not have other resources available from their school system

In addition, the Department has partnered with [Noggin](#), Nickelodeon's learning service for children age 2 and above, to offer a free, three-month subscription to families. The app is loaded with read-aloud e-books, learning games, songs, and other engaging content. It also provides ideas for off-screen family activities, and it provides special content to help young children cope during this time.

Q: What professional development opportunities are available from Teachstone?

- **Teachstone** is offering free courses with learning resources from the my Teachstone CLASS® professional development platform to support educators in a variety of roles.
 - **Teachers** - See exemplar videos of real classroom footage featuring high-quality interactions from each CLASS® domain.
 - **Coaches** - Find tools to support distance coaching and digital learning. Feel free to share access to these resources with teachers.
 - **Parents** - Watch exceptional classroom interactions and reflect on how you might try out some of what you're seeing at home.
- **To Access the Content:** Go to <https://dashboard.teachstone.com/>, click the Activate a Product Key button, and enter: **5LMQ6ZQV23FNM56S**

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 performance ratings be affected after COVID-19 ratings?

A: [Bulletin 140](#) policy provides BESE with flexibility in how performance ratings are issued after an emergency or disaster.

- Based on Bulletin 140 policy, all sites **can opt into** receiving a 2019-2020 Performance Rating, in order to be eligible for CCAP Bonus Payments and School Readiness Tax Credits in 2021.
- The Department will compare each site's Performance Score based on 2019-2020 observations with the 2018-2019 Performance Score, and **will use the higher of the two**.

Q: How will schools and centers complete *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® documentation and checkpoints?

A: The Department released a suite of guidance documents to help school systems and early learning centers plan assessment administration for *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® for the 2020-2021 school year.

- [Early Childhood \(pre-K\) Assessment Guidance for Various Learning Environments](#) outlines requirements and resources for assessing publicly funded children (ages 3-5) using TeachingStrategies GOLD® in various learning environments; including traditional, virtual, and hybrid.
- [2020-2021 TeachingStrategies GOLD® Guidance](#) has been released for Early Childhood, OSEP, and KEA.

Questions regarding assessments can be directed to meredith.eckard@la.gov or bridgette.cupstid@la.gov

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 loses 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: EarlySteps transitioned home and community-based service delivery to the exclusive use of teletherapy, effective March 24, 2020 and will continue as long as necessary, to ensure the health and safety of early interventionists and families. The process for use of teletherapy also applies to SPOE (System Point of Entry) and evaluators. Family support coordinators will continue with monthly phone calls and quarterly team meetings.

- If a family refuses teletherapy/telephone sessions while home visits are suspended, the early interventionist will remain in periodic contact with the enrolled families, updating them on the status of resuming services and communicating with other team members, including the family services coordinator.
- IFSP, SPOE intake, developmental screening, and eligibility determination meetings will be conducted via teletherapy.
- If a child cannot undergo evaluation using teletherapy, 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 documented.
- To relieve the financial burden to families with significant economic impact from the COVID-19 event, EarlySteps has suspended family cost participation, on a case by case basis. To qualify for the suspension, the family should notify Intake Coordinators or Family Service Coordinators (IC/FSC) of their changed employment status or reduction of income. The request should be submitted to the SPOE using the [Application for Income Adjustment-FCP Suspension](#).

Q: What resources are available for special education?

A: The Department [posted](#) continuous home learning supports for educators, students, and caregivers.

- The [Direct Services](#) guide helps school systems develop and implement plans for continuous learning that address direct services (e.g. specialized instruction, speech and language therapy, counseling/social work, occupational therapy) in students' IEPs.

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 support. 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.

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: What if an employee doesn't want to work, quits, or is fired for outrageous behavior. Does the 8 weeks employment apply?

A: Contact the Louisiana Workforce Commission at EmployerServices@lwc.la.gov with your unemployment insurance 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.

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.

Q: What supports are available for child care centers through the CARES Act?

A: The \$2T CARES Act includes relief and assistance for child care businesses, families, and communities, with EIDL funds available now.

- [SBA funding for Emergency Economic Injury Disaster Grants \(EIDL\)](#): Loan applicants may request that SBA provide an advance on the loan of up to \$10,000, distributed within three days. First come, first serve. Per SBA, if you previously applied for the EIDL and did not request the \$10,000 advance, you should reapply.
- [Learn about CARES funding for the Child Care Marketplace](#): Funding is being added to other federal sources to support respite care, Head Start, and expanded CCAP eligibility, as well as small business supports.
- [List of CARES funding supports available to centers](#): A list that reflects funding opportunities as of March 26, 2020.
- [Unemployment Benefits](#): Unemployment funding is available for those who have lost work or have reduced hours as a result of COVID-19.
- [CARES and Unemployment Insurance](#): An additional \$600/week in temporary Pandemic Unemployment compensation will be added to an individual's weekly benefit amount. Pandemic Unemployment also covers those not eligible for existing state programs, including self-employed individuals.

Q: Are Lead Agencies working with the LEA in the CARES Act planning? Or do we have a separate process?

A: The Department released a [request for applications](#) for COVID-19 Community Child Care Recovery Grants for lead agencies to apply to support the recovery of the child care sector in their communities. This funding can be used for a variety of activities to support child care, including:

- Providing workforce incentive bonuses for teachers returning to work in child care
- Awarding subgrants to child care providers
- Purchasing additional PPE and/or supplies for child care centers

- Providing other community-level supports focused on recovery
- Final applications will be due on June 12, and funding will begin July 1.

Q: What supports are available for child care centers through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)?

A: The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) requires certain employers with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons. This may not apply to small businesses with less than 50 employees.

Generally, [the Act](#) provides that employees of covered employers are eligible for COVID-related absence:

- Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at the employee's regular rate of pay where the employee is unable to work because of quarantine and/or COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis; or
- Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay because the employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine, or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19, and/or the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition; and
- Up to an additional 10 weeks of paid expanded family and medical leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay where an employee, who has been employed for at least 30 calendar days, is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care is closed or unavailable due to COVID-19.

Q: What grant opportunities are available from the Department to offset some of the financial burdens experienced by child care providers as a result of COVID-19?

A: Child Care Assistance Providers, including family child care and in-home providers, were able to apply for [Louisiana Child Care Provider \(LaCAP\) relief grants](#), Round 1. These payments have already been issued.

The Department released a second round of the [Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider \(LaCAP\) relief grants](#) for eligible child care providers.

- LaCap Relief Grants Round 2: Child care assistance providers (Type III centers and certified home-based providers) who were operational by June 1, 2020 are eligible to receive \$187.50 per child in licensed capacity. Grant funds are expected to release by the second week in June.
- LaCap Relief Grants Round 3: Child care assistance providers (Type III centers and certified home-based providers) who become operational later in summer 2020 may be eligible to receive a later grant.

Q: What are the commitment requirements for type I and II centers who want to become type III to get help for a [LaCAP Relief Grant](#)?

A: For this second round of grants, Type I or Type II centers who apply to become a Type III must remain a Type III center until December 31, 2020 in order to receive funding. The requirement to remain a Type III center until December 31, 2020 only applies to the second round of grants.