

Early Childhood COVID-19 Updates

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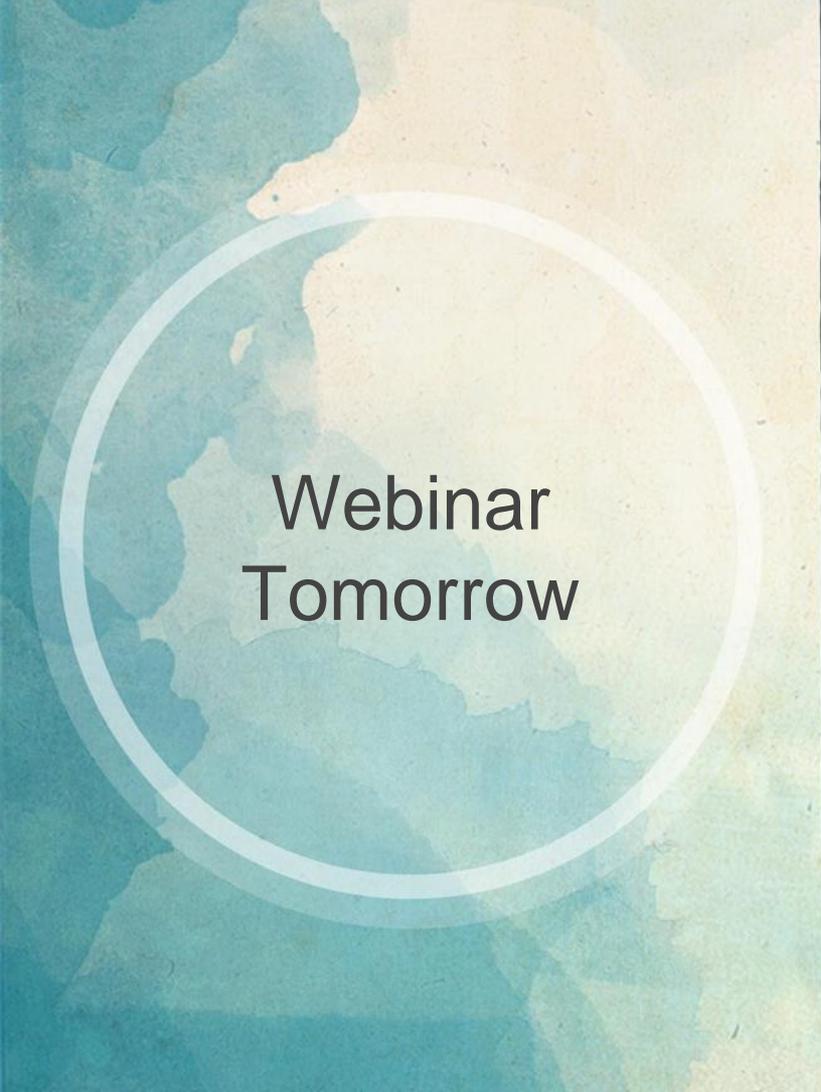
Academic Resources

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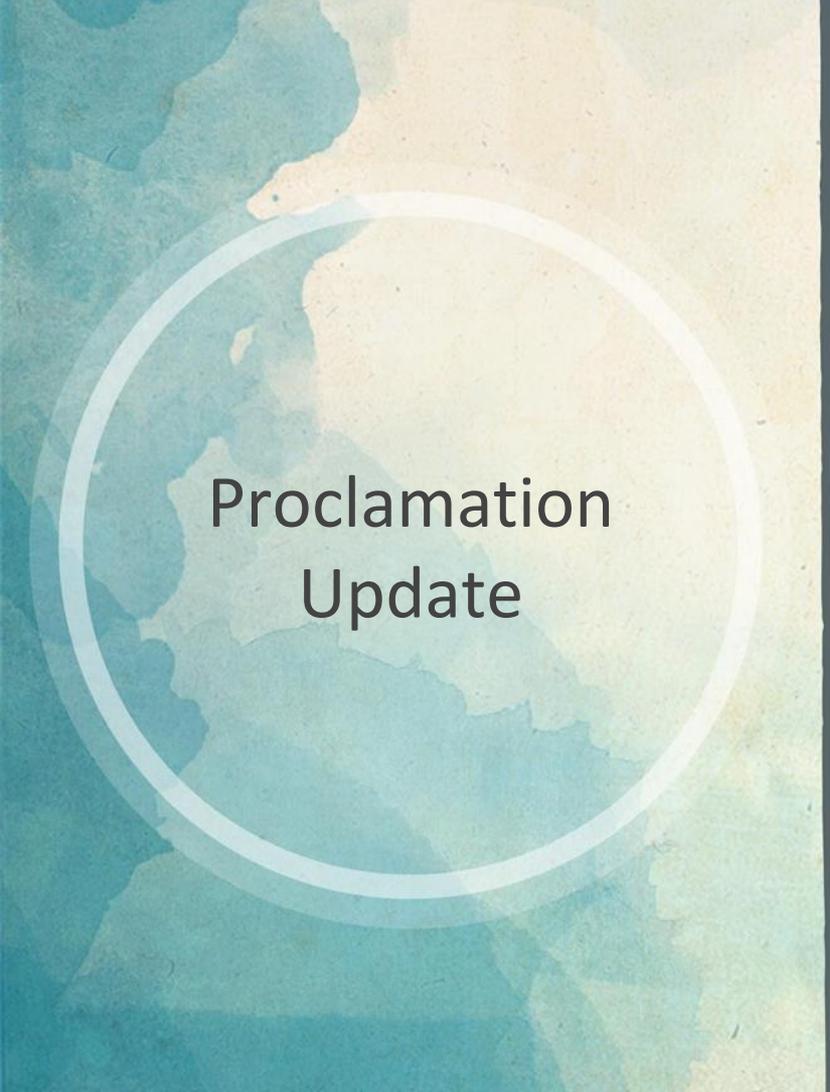
Next Steps



Webinar Tomorrow

The Department will conduct another webinar tomorrow at the same time to walk through updated guidance from the CDC specifically on child care :

- **Webinar Date and Time:** March 15 at 1:30 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/468491752>
- **Phone Bridge:** 1 301 715 8592
- **Meeting ID#:** 468-491-752

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Proclamation Update

The Governor issued [Proclamation JBE 2020-27](#) on March 13, 2020.

- All public schools in the State of Louisiana shall close facilities to students until April 13, 2020.
- Schools may offer complete distance learning, as capabilities exist.
- With appropriate social distancing measures, schools shall, if able, continue to provide meals or other essential services with applicable staff.
- Instructional minute requirements shall be temporarily suspended for distance education courses and for curriculum delivery.
- The required 63,720 instructional minute requirement per year shall also be suspended.

Louisiana's Response

COVID-19

The Louisiana Department of Education continues to closely monitor the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak. This webinar contains a collection of information about COVID-19, as well as resources for educators and families. All resources will be updated on an ongoing basis.

- 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 the [FAQ](#) documents, will be continually updated.
- Child care centers are **not** included in the governor's executive order. Sites should make closure decisions in coordination with [local public health contact](#).
- The [Louisiana Department of Health](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) websites also maintain updated information about COVID-19, prevention, and occurrences.
- For education-specific information, contact the LDOE at LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov.

Closures

Closures

Decision-making

Early learning centers make individual decisions about whether or not to close their businesses, in consultation with local health officials.

- Louisiana Department of Health has recommended the first step in determining to close an early childhood center is to consult [the Office of Public Health Regional Contacts](#).
- When center closures are necessary, notify LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov and note the center name, license number, location, and details of the closure.
- When planning to reopen, notify LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov and note the center name, license number, location, and date of reopening.
- Review the [LDOE's webpage on COVID-19](#).
- Communicate clearly to staff and families regarding your plan for handling tuition and payroll during any closure.

Licensing Updates

Licensing Updates

Deciding to Stay Open

Should you decide to stay open, there is guidance to prepare you to operate in these conditions.

[The Center for Disease Control](#) has guidelines for businesses to consider:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and teach children to do the same.
- Emphasize staying home when sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, and then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

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
- Consider activities that mitigate large groups
- Accommodate older or medically at-risk employees
- When possible, have children eat in individual classrooms

Licensing Updates

License Renewals

March, April, and May license renewals will be extended.

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.

Licensing Updates

Change Requests

Change requests to accommodate out of school children or additional children.

- 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

Licensing Updates

Allowances to adjust for staffing

Additional allowances to provide flexibility regarding staffing.

The Department will:

- Extend time for approval for 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.
- Adjust the child-to-staff minimum ratio for ages 3 years and older to allow centers to adapt for staffing.
- 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.

Licensing Updates

Child-to-staff ratios

This is the first step in addressing child:staff ratios.

Minimum Child-to-staff Ratios for Early Learning Centers (effective March 14, 2020 through April 30, 2020, unless terminated sooner by the Superintendent.)	
Ages of Children	Ratio
3 years	16:1
4 years	18:1
5 years	24:1
6 years and up	29:1

Licensing Updates

Maximum Group Sizes

Centers should strive to maintain current group size standards or lower if possible. This narrow waiver should only be utilized for abrupt staffing changes.

Maximum Group Sizes for Early Learning Centers (effective March 14, 2020 through April 30, 2020, unless terminated sooner by the Superintendent.)	
Ages of Children	Maximum Group Size
3 years	33
4 years	37
5 years	45
6 years and up	55

Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC)

Child Care Criminal Background Checks (CCCBC)

The CCCBC staff will continue to process background checks and provide updates of fingerprint services as the situation requires.

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.

CCCBC questions should be sent directly to valerie.black@la.gov.

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

Payments and eligibility

The Department will pay for enrollment versus attendance, and provide flexibility for families regarding redetermination periods and reporting requirements.

The Department will:

- Pay all authorized children the full weekly amount 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 CCAP copayments for families
- Extend family redeterminations for 3 months
- Extend reporting deadlines for eligibility determinations

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

TOTS machines

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

- The LDOE will keep the [TOTS locations](#) list 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 (1-877-453-2721) for individual questions.

Child Care Support Organizations

Child Care Support Organizations

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies

The Department will notify CCR&Rs of closures in their areas daily.

All CCR&Rs can:

- suspend in-person coaching and switch to virtual coaching methods.
- move in-person group trainings and meetings to virtual formats as possible.

All CCR&Rs should:

- prioritize supporting centers that remain open.
- assist parents in finding alternative childcare options within centers that remain open.
- refer center directors to the [LDOE FAQs](#) for up-to-date guidance.

CCR&Rs may be requested to provide respite care services in needed locations, including hospitals. Please begin thinking about possible partnerships, and reach out to the LDOE regarding opportunities in your community. If respite care is provided, CCR&Rs will be paid.

Child Care Support Organizations

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs

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

If your program chooses to pause instruction, please communicate this to LDOECOVID19support@la.gov

Continue to send tuition invoices on regular timelines.

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

LA 4 and NSECD

LA 4 and NSECD

Payments and Reporting

- During school closures, LA-4 and NSECD payments will continue based on enrollment. When schools reopen, additional COVID19 related absences are considered excused absences.
- Please submit NSECD and LA-4 invoices by the 10th of each month to ensure prompt payment.
- LA-4 and NSECD attendance tracking should mark the school closures in the same manner used for normal school closures for weather, holiday, etc.
- If your teams are unable to submit invoices for LA-4 and NSECD due to COVID19 hardships, please lindsey.bradford@la.gov .

Food Services

Food Services

CACFP and Centers

Families with children under the age of 18 will be able to go to a designated list of school sites around the state to access free meals.

USDA has provided flexibilities to schools to provide meals to children 18 years and under during the extended closure.

USDA has not provided the same flexibility to serve additional children through CACFP.

The Department will maintain a [list of schools](#) providing feeding programs during the closure. This list will be continually updated with schools and other organizations providing open feeding programs. If a center closes, it should refer families to programs on this list.

With questions related to food and nutrition programs, please contact the LDOE Division of Nutrition Support at ChildNutritionPrograms@la.gov.

Food and Nutrition Services

K-12 Schools

- USDA allows schools to continue to provide meals to students during the extended closure. Louisiana has waivers for both non-congregant feeding and area-eligibility.
- Specific information for School Food Service operators is available on the CNP website: [Instructions for Completing the Seamless Waiver Form](#)
- LDOE will maintain a list of school locations operating feeding programs at <https://cnp.doe.louisiana.gov/SchoolSites/>

Academic Resources

Academic Resources

Standards and Development

In the event of school or center closure, families may find the following resources helpful in facilitating learning at home.

- [Louisiana's Birth to Five Early Learning & Development Standards \(ELDS\)](#) describe 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!

Academic Resources

Text Services

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

- [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: Readby4th to 70138

** Message & data rates apply.*

Academic Resources

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
- [Adventure Academy™](#), the first-of-its-kind educational massively multiplayer online game (MMO), serves children in 3rd through 8th grade with thousands of learning activities in a fun and safe virtual world.
- [ReadingIQ®](#) is a digital library and literacy platform for children 2-12 designed by reading experts to improve literacy skills.

Families can use the redeem code: **SCHOOL3673** to sign up. Questions can be sent to support@aofl.com

Academic Resources

Online Learning

In partnership with **Louisiana Public Broadcasting (LPB)**, the Department will provide distance and home learning tools for educators, students, and caregivers. This will include:

- **An online hub for distance learning supports** set to launch by March 18. It will include:
 - Department-reviewed lessons and resources for math, ELA, social studies, science and early childhood, including links to Tier 1 [curriculum resources](#).
 - Increased access to Tier 1 curriculum digital content, including virtual lessons.
 - Resources to teach young children about COVID-19.
- **Broadcasted educational programming** through LPB and YouTube Channels, which will launch within the next two weeks.

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

Academic Resources

Special Education

School closure. 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.

US 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.

Academic Resources

Family Guidance during Emergencies

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

Accountability

Local and Third Party Observations

The Department is suspending all local and third party CLASS observations until April 13.

Out of an abundance of caution, the Department is suspending CLASS® observations from taking place in schools and centers until school systems reopen on April 13, 2020.

The Department will request a [Bulletin 140](#) waiver to extend the deadline for the spring observation period until May 31, 2020.

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.

Accountability

Issuing Performance Profiles & Star Ratings

The Department will work with BESE to request a Bulletin 140 waiver to extend performance profiles for severely impacted sites.

85% 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.

The Department will request a [Bulletin 140](#) waiver to extend performance profile ratings for an additional year if any sites do not receive the required observations due to COVID-19 interruptions in order to ensure School Readiness Tax Credits for 2021 are not impacted.

Workforce

Workforce

Preparing to support your staff

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.
- 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.

A survey will soon be made available to collect information on financial issues child care centers are facing due to COVID-19, in order to partner with organizations to provide support.

Legal and Regulatory Flexibilities

Legal and Regulatory Flexibilities

- BESE has approved an initial round of waivers: [BESE Emergency Waiver Memo](#)
- Additional regulation may be requested as necessary.

Next Steps

Next Steps

Guidance and Communications

- All guidance will be linked here, including these slides:
<https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/covid-19>
- Email any questions to LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov
- Check the [ECE FAQ](#) and the [School System FAQ](#), which are updated in the afternoon each day
- Join the webinar **Sunday at 1:30 pm** to learn about updated CDC guidance specific to centers
- **Please email any closures as soon as possible to the support inbox.**