

Child Count Guidance for Program Partners

Child count captures the current enrollment of publicly-funded children (infant through age four) at early learning sites on October 1 and February 1 of each academic year. Data collected during child count is critical and will be used by many different stakeholders.

This guidance document details three key steps to successfully completing child count:

Step 1: Understanding the Child Count Process

Step 2: Preparing for Child Count

Step 3: Completing and Submitting the Child Count Template to the Community Network Lead Agency

Step 1: Understanding the Child Count Process

Community network lead agencies work with each early childhood program partner in the network to count and report all publicly-funded children enrolled on October 1 and February 1 of each academic year. Providers should create an annual child count process and develop a site roster that includes every publicly-funded child enrolled on site, with age and funding source.

Identifying Publicly-Funded Children: During child count, it is extremely important to count each publicly-funded child **once**, using their primary funding source, regardless of whether or not a site braids funds. Use the list below to identify which public funding sources are available for each age group.

- Infants through Twos: CCAP, Early Head Start, Local, B-3, Early Childhood Education Fund - Local, Education Childhood Education Fund - State Match
- Threes: CCAP, Head Start, Local, B-3, NSECD, IDEA Part B 619 only, Early Childhood Education Fund - Local, Education Childhood Education Fund - State Match
- Fours: CCAP, Head Start, LA-4, 8(g), Title I, EEF, RM, Local, NSECD, IDEA Part B 619 only

Avoiding Duplicate Counts: The Early Childhood Child Count is intended to be an *unduplicated* count of every publicly-funded child in the state. To ensure that children are only counted once, use the following best practices:

- Determine what funding source is the **primary** funding source for the majority of the child’s instructional day, and count the child only once in that funding source.
- Only count publicly-funded children who are enrolled during the “regular” school day.
- Only count full-time children; do not count part-time children.

Determining Age: According to Bulletin 140, a child’s age cohort is determined by the child’s age on September 30 of the academic year, **not** the age configuration of the classroom they are in. During February child count, the child age cohort is still determined by the child’s age on September 30. Determine the child’s age using the table below.

Age Group	Children who have...	Child born between...
Infants	Not reached their first birthday before September 30, 2022	October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022
Ones	Reached their first birthday on or before September 30, 2022	October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021
Twos	Reached their second birthday on or before September 30, 2022	October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020
Threes	Reached their third birthday on or before September 30, 2022	October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019
Fours	Reached their fourth birthday on or before September 30, 2022	October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018

Gathering Demographic Information: In August 2021, a law was passed in the State legislature to ensure that early learning providers are being allocated the resources they need, and that all children and families have opportunities to access high quality child care. As a result, the Division of Early Childhood is required to provide information reported in Child Count at each annual legislative session in order for elected officials to make decisions that support communities.

Understanding needs and demographics not only helps providers, but also advocates, legislators, and community network lead agencies to better support children and families. Therefore, at the time of enrollment, it is important that providers learn about the families they serve, how families identify across demographic categories, and other possible needs.

There are two types of demographic information collected in Child Count - racial information and background demographic information. The identification of all demographic information will be most accurate when it is based on information communicated to the provider by families.

- **Racial Demographic Information**
 - All children must be counted under only one racial demographic category (American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, White, Unknown), **or**
 - If the family identifies more than one race for a child, the child should be counted under the category 'two or more races'.
- **Background Demographic Information**
 - Children may be counted under any background demographic category as it applies to the child:
 - Ethnicity: Ethnic demographic information mirrors the ethnic demographic information collected in K-12 - a child is either Hispanic/Latino or Not Hispanic/Latino.
 - Homelessness: Please refer to [this guidance](#) on identifying and supporting children experiencing homelessness.
 - Language: A Dual Language Learner is a child with at least one guardian who speaks a language other than English in the home, and can be determined by asking families for details about languages spoken at home or collected on the Home Language Survey.
 - Foster Care: Children in Foster Care should be counted under this category

Children Receiving Special Education Services: Children enrolled in a full day publicly-funded (center-, school-, or site-based) program with an IEP or IFSP should be counted under the appropriate primary fund category. Community network lead agencies will support providers in identifying the fund category as needed.

Step 2: Preparing for Child Count

Community network lead agencies will provide tools for sites to use to submit child count data. Gather the following materials and guidance:

- October/February 1 enrollment roster for the site with child date-of-birth information
- Funding source for each publicly-funded child
- Demographic information for each publicly-funded child
- Child Count Template for Program Partners ([digital](#) or [printable](#))

Step 3: Completing and Submitting Child Count

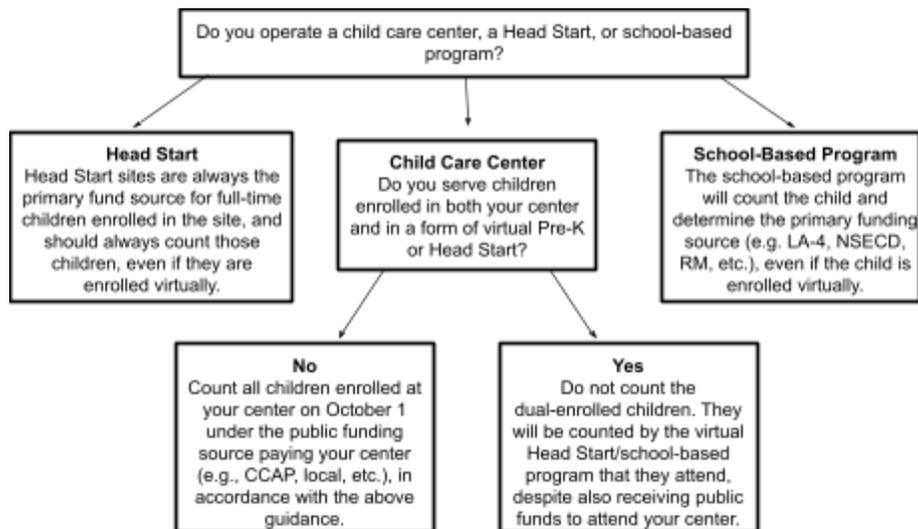
The Child Count Template should be completed using the most recent enrollment information for publicly-funded children at your early learning site as of October/February 1 of each school year. You should use the resources provided by the community network lead agency to count each publicly-funded enrolled child in the appropriate category.

- Utilize the dual enrollment decision tree at the end of this document to determine how to count children dually enrolled at a center and in a Head Start or school-based program.
- Enter the number of children enrolled into the [Digital/Paper](#) Child Count Template for Program Partners.
- Confirm the accuracy of enrolled children and check your totals or children’s names to ensure that you have not counted any children in more than one funding category or age group.
- Enter the demographic information for the children at your site using the instructions on the template.
- Submit digital or paper Child Count Templates to the lead agency based on the community network protocol.

Determining the Primary Funding Source and COVID-19: It may be more difficult to determine a child’s primary funding source for the October 1, 2022 child count given COVID-19 and the potential for more children to be dually-enrolled at child care sites and schools or Head Start centers.

Child Care Assistance Program is currently providing payments based on enrollment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Providers will count children who have active authorizations in their center. It is recommended that providers utilize their TOTS portal to verify active CCAP children.

Children enrolled in a school-based pre-K or Head Start hybrid/virtual learning environment who attend the Type III child care on their “non-school” days or to complete virtual instruction should be counted by the school or Head Start program and have their primary funding source coded by the school or Head Start program. Use the following decision tree to determine funding sources for dual enrolled children.



If you have questions or require additional support, please contact alicia.franklin@la.gov.