DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION
Louisiana Believes

Early Childhood

Child Count Guidance for Program Partners

Child count captures the current enrollment of publicly-funded children (infant through age four) at your site on October 1 and February 1 of each academic year. Data collected during child count is critical and 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 Lead Agency

Step 1: Understanding the Child Count Process

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 that <u>each publicly-funded child only be counted once</u>, 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, PDG B-3
- Threes: CCAP, Head Start, Local, PDG B-3, NSECD, IDEA Part B 619
- Fours: CCAP, Head Start, LA-4, 8(g), Title I, EEF, RM, Local, NSECD, IDEA Part B 619

Avoiding Duplicate Counts: The Early Childhood October 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 <u>primary</u> funding source for the majority of the child's instructional day, and count the child only once, using 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 school year, and <u>not</u> the age configuration of the classroom they are in. 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, 2020	October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020
Ones	Reached their first birthday on or before September 30, 2020	October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019
Twos	Reached their second birthday on or before September 30, 2020	October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018
Threes	Reached their third birthday on or before September 30, 2020	October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017
Fours	Reached their fourth birthday on or before September 30, 2020	October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016

Step 2: Preparing for Child Count
Networks will provide tools for sites to use to submit child count data. Gather the following materials and guidance:

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

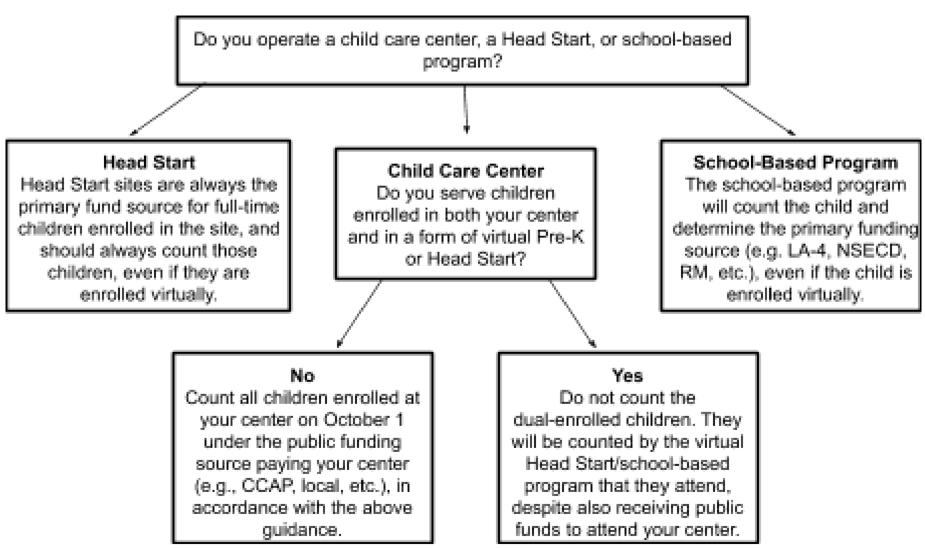
Step 3: Completing and Submitting Child Count
The Child Count Template should be completed using the most recent enrollment information for publicly-funded children at your site as of October 1 and February 1 of each school year. You should use the resources provided by the lead agency to count each 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 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, 2020 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 until October 31, 2020 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 Sydney.Anderson@la.gov.
The Department has released other resources that may be helpful for you as you complete this process:

Child Count Template for Program Partners (digital or printable)
Child Count Guidance for Lead Agencies