Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council

May 26, 2020

Early Childhood
IMPROVING SCHOOL READINESS

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION
Louisiana Believes

Agenda

- Proposed Revisions to Bulletin 139
- Legislative Updates
- Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant Overview
- Quarter 1 Updates

Proposed Revisions to Bulletin 139, *Louisiana Child Care and Development Fund Programs*

Proposed Revisions to Bulletin 139

Louisiana Child Care and Development Fund Programs

As of April 2020, the unemployment rate in Louisiana was over 14%. In addition, child care is critical in economic recovery; therefore, CCAP is seeking to include job search as an eligibility criteria for CCAP.

Bulletin 139 §509 - The proposed changes would allow families to qualify for CCAP while seeking employment or enrolling in school.

- The changes address a gap in support that the program presently does not address.
- The need for this change is exacerbated by COVID-19 due to the drastic increase in unemployment.

Currently 20 states allow job search as an eligibility criteria including Georgia, Kentucky, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia. Many states are considering changes to include job search due to high unemployment rates related to COVID-19.

Proposed Revisions to Bulletin 139
§509. Certification Requirements

The following changes are proposed in order to support households that meet the income requirements and are seeking employment or enrolling in school.

§509. Certification Requirements for Non-Categorically Eligible Households

* * * *

5. training or employment activities.

* * * *

e. Exception. The employment and training activity requirements provided in this Paragraph may be waived for up to 90 days if the head of household is actively seeking employment and/or training.

(i) to establish eligibility, submit initial certification that employment and/or training is being actively sought.

(ii) eligibility ends pursuant to this exception at the end of 90 days; however eligibility may continue pursuant to Paragraphs 5.a.i, 5.a.ii or 5.a.iii of this Section, if documentation of compliance with said Paragraphs is submitted within the 90 day period of eligibility.

(iii) subsequent applications for eligibility pursuant to this exception may be denied until 24 months have passed from the expiration of a previous period of eligibility pursuant this exception.

f. The department shall conduct analysis of the impact of training and employment requirements on child care participation and workforce participation and shall produce a report with policy recommendations no later than August 2019.

Legislative Updates

Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) Legislation

HB602 is pending legislation that would allow for ongoing records of arrests and prosecutions (RAP Back) to be sent to the Department for CCCBC applicants.

- By receiving RAP Back for CCCBCs there would be a presumed increase in child safety, because there would no longer be a five year gap in time without receiving notice of new convictions.
- Providers will not need to pay for new fingerprints once the applicant is fingerprinted and enrolled in the program.
- The program is not retroactive, and will only apply to applicants that are fingerprinted after the program is implemented.
- It is anticipated that RAP Back will eventually save the child care workforce $1.1 million a year.

Early Child Care and Education Commission Legislation

HB251 extends the term of the Early Child Care and Education Commission to July 2022 and for the subsequent responsibility of the ECCE Advisory Council to evaluate and provide recommendations to support the implementation of the Commission's plan.

Amendments Proposed by the House Committee on Education to the original bill will:

1. Increase commission membership by adding two members: a BESE board member and and an early childhood development specialist.
2. Additionally require the commission to:
   - Establish a task force to identify and recommend alternative state and local funding strategies.
   - Make recommendations relative to the incorporation of family child care providers into the early childhood care and education network.

Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant Overview

Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD)
Grant Overview

- A competitive federal literacy grant that provides funds for states to use **evidence-based strategies** that improve outcomes for disadvantaged children, birth to grade 12.
- 4-8 state grants will be awarded; $84 million total is available for all awards.
- 95% of funds are flowed through to school systems.
- Louisiana's current SRCL and CLSD grants target high-needs sites (e.g., CIR/UIR schools) and focus on high-quality curriculum and PD.
- This grant will support schools and centers with an emphasis on disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities to become high-performing models of excellence using evidence-based strategies.

Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council

Quarter 1 - 2020

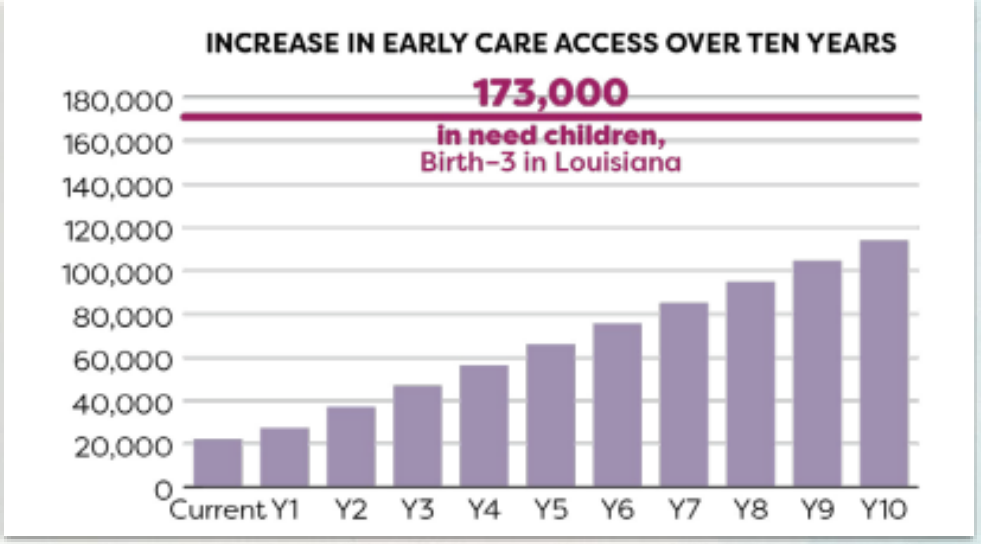
Key Activities in Quarter 1

Louisiana's Early Childhood Care and Education Commission

Significant investments in early childhood have the potential to transform the state in one generation.

In 2019, the Commission recommended that BESE and the Legislature fund its LA B to 3 comprehensive state plan with an investment of $85.8 million and an increase of nearly that amount annually over the next decade. These funds will provide both affordable seats for families in need, and supports for all families, regardless of need.

In January, the 38-member Commission released an addendum urging again their year one recommendation for a ten-year plan to increase access to quality early care and education. State investment should launch this effort with expanded, combined funding (local, state, federal, philanthropy) thereafter.



Key Activities in Quarter 1

Early Childhood Community Networks, Super App

For the first time, communities submitted additional information related to early childhood through the Super App process. The early childhood application contained 3 areas of focus.

AREAS OF FOCUS	INDICATORS
Long Term Early Childhood Vision	The school system, in partnership with its lead agency, shares a long-term vision via a Community Network Blueprint.
Expanding Early Childhood Access	The school system increases access to child care centers and pre-kindergarten classrooms for children ages birth to five years old using a variety of strategies.
Improving Early Childhood Quality	Teachers and staff of birth to five-year-old children have access to and implement high-quality curriculum, receive orientation to curriculum training and ongoing support during the school year, and use high-quality curriculum-embedded and/or high quality assessments to plan for individual needs of students.

Key Activities in Quarter 1

Early Childhood Community Networks, Super App

Funding for improving early childhood quality was provided by the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant and the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant.

- Over $3.5M was awarded to 39 school districts/lead agencies to support birth through 5 early childhood quality.
- 55 school districts/lead agencies requested a total of $3,916,799.
- Prioritization was given to networks with a strong early childhood blueprint.

Tier 1 Curriculum	Curriculum Professional Development	Assessment Professional Development
$1,731,202	$1,507,554	$514,827

Key Activities in Quarter 1

Early Childhood Community Networks, Super App

Community networks submitted bold, ambitious seat requests developed in partnership with program partners, district leadership, and community leaders.

- In Super App, early childhood community networks requested funding for **nearly 5,000 additional seats** based on an analysis of their community's need and capacity.
- Of the 65 early childhood community networks in the state, 50 (or 77%) requested these additional birth through three-year-old seats.
  - Minimum seat request: 12 seats
  - Maximum seat request: 611 seats
  - Average seat request: 98 seats
- With PDG funding alone, the Department anticipates being able to fund only ~13% of the total seat requests.
- The requests indicate that, were funding available, there would be the need and capacity for nearly 5,000 additional birth through three-year-old seats located in early childhood sites rated Proficient or above.

Key Activities in Quarter 1

Early Childhood Community Networks

The Department and Community Networks have continued to support local sites to implement the early childhood accountability system and to coordinate enrollment.

Supporting the Early Childhood Accountability System:

- Lead agencies scheduled and began completing spring *CLASS* observations.
- 78% of classrooms were observed in the Spring semester by local observers before the Governor's proclamation to close schools on March 13.

Early Childhood Accountability for 2019-2020:

- Bulletin 140 provides flexibility in how Performance Ratings are issued for "severe impact sites," including those impacted by extended closures and reductions in group size and attendance.
- 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.

Key Activities in Quarter 1

Early Childhood Community Networks

The Department and Community Networks have continued to support local sites to implement the early childhood accountability system and to coordinate enrollment.

Working Together to Coordinate Enrollment:

- Lead agencies worked with sites to complete the February Child Count.
- Communities collaborated on developing their Coordinated Enrollment Plans and made eligibility determinations.
- Communities developed creative approaches to coordinated enrollment such as:
  - Transitioning to virtual pre-K roundup to enroll children;
  - Scheduling phone appointments with teachers and staff to complete enrollment applications;
  - Using DirectMatch as a contact-free method of determining income eligibility; and
  - Preparing for a potential increase in demand and/or eligibility for pre-K this fall.

Key Activities in Quarter 1

Early Childhood Ready Start Networks

Now more than ever, Ready Start Networks continue to bring together partners to improve the quality of and access to early childhood opportunities in their community.

- Ready Start Networks in Cohorts 1 and 2 continued developing the four pillars: blueprint, coalition, governance, and fundraising.
- Ready Start Networks are meaningfully engaged in conversations about how to best address the recovery efforts due to COVID-19, particularly considering how to leverage their positions as RSNs.
- The Department received 13 applicants for Cohort 3 and will make recommendations for Cohort 3 to BESE in June.
- The Department is working to develop policy recommendations for Ready Start Networks, which will be brought to the Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council prior to recommendation to BESE.

Key Activities in Quarter 1

Supporting Teachers to be Successful

Teachers and directors across the state are able to access trainings that leverage local and national expertise to expand consistent, quality opportunities statewide through Key Training Modules.

What are Louisiana Early Childhood Key Training Modules?

Louisiana Early Childhood Key Training Modules are a set of accessible, high-quality trainings designed by experts on best practices in the field of early childhood and shared with key professional development vendors across the state to be used for redelivery. You can access a catalog of these training sessions.

Focus Training Area
Early Childhood Tools and Standards
Effective Adult-Child Interactions
Management and Leadership

Key Activities in Quarter 1

Supporting Teachers to be Successful

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate programs continue to support teachers during the pandemic.

- **ECAC Accountability**
  - Two programs, Children's First and ELL, participated in a pilot on-site review process with a new rubric for on-site review.
  - Two additional pilots are rescheduled for Fall 2020 due to COVID-19.
- **ECAC Programs**
  - All ECAC programs suspended in-person coaching in March 2020 due to COVID-19.
  - All programs have moved to virtual instruction/coaching and are exploring other approaches to support teachers (e.g., printed packets, phone calls, etc.)
  - The LDOE held a webinar for all ECAC programs to disseminate best practices after pandemic closures.

Key Activities in Quarter 1

Supporting Directors to be Successful

The Department is undertaking new activities to support child care directors in meeting standards for high quality learning and leadership.

Shared Services efforts to support greater efficiency in workforce and business operations.

- Two substitute teaching pool pilots;
- Training and technical assistance pilots on business practices;
- Technical assistance pilots on the CACFP food program; and
- The launch of the Directors Support Toolbox.

The Louisiana Early Leaders Academy continued to offer in-person training and coaching, with plans to launch year two later this spring.

Key Activities in Quarter 1

Supporting Child Care Centers (Site Improvement Planning)

67 sites identified as low-performing based upon 2019 Performance Profile results participated in Early Childhood Site Improvement Planning (SIP).

January 2020	• Field Support Consultants (FSCs) conducted director interview gaining insight into the struggles of managing a low-performing center. • Sites were provided with improvement data based on Fall 2019 *CLASS* scores. • Each CCR&R participated in a Case Study reviewing fall data with the Department identifying struggles and successes of the SIP process.
February 2020	• Improvement plans were reviewed and modified as needed. • Sites continued to receive prioritized resources, including coaching and technical assistance.
March 2020	• FSCs have maintained communication during the Stay at Home order and assisted in providing resources and support.

Key Activities in Quarter 1

Supporting Family Child Care (FCC) Providers

The Department has continued to re-engage, learn, and support family child care providers by reconvening stakeholders and continuing work with the family child care pilot.

Supporting Family Child Care Providers:

- The Family Child Care Workgroup reconvened in January and were given updates on pilot progress, LSU research, and the development of a long term strategy for family child care.
- Volunteers of America and Children's Coalition continued offering one-on-one coaching, group trainings, and network meetings to FCC pilot participants.

Family Child Care Provider Updates:

- All pilot participants remained opened during COVID-19.
- Pilot participants continued to participate in the pilot by receiving coaching and attending network and training meetings virtually.

Key Activities in Quarter 1

Supporting Child Care Centers (Licensing)

The Department has supported child care centers through sharing information about licensed center requirements.

Supporting Centers:

- The Department released new guidance regarding emergency preparedness, including an updated toolkit with an Early Learning Center Emergency Plan and Emergency Checklists.
- Due to COVID19:
  - All fees were waived for March, April, May, and June; and
  - For the same time period, licensed centers and family child care and in home provider expiration dates were extended for 90 days.

Key Activities in Quarter 1

Supporting Child Care Centers (CCAP)

The Department has supported child care providers and families through CCAP.

The Department has agreed to:

- Pay all authorized children the full weekly amount (the state maximum rate) regardless of the number of days or hours they attended.
- 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 has not adversely affected their eligibility. They will continue to be eligible through their redetermination period.

Key Activities in Quarter 1

Supporting Child Care Centers (CCAP)

The Department has supported families of essential critical infrastructure workers through CCAP.

1. **Emergency CCAP expansion**: Families of "essential critical infrastructure workers" working in response to the COVID-19 outbreak became eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). For more information, please click here.
2. **Certifying new family home and in-home providers**: The LDOE expedited the approval of new in-home and family child care providers certified to care for children of essential workers through CCAP. For more information, please click here.
3. **Certifying new Type III providers:** The LDOE expedited the process to become a Type III center allowing more providers serve CCAP families.
4. **CCR&R contracts for respite care**: The LDOE worked with CCR&Rs around the state to establish hospital/child care center partnerships in cases where a large number of hospital staff require child care.

Key Activities in Quarter 1

CCDF State Plan Amendment

The Department submitted a CCDF state plan amendment to timely address the changes needed in response to COVID-19.

Louisiana's CCDF State Plan Changes included:

1. Updating the Statewide Disaster Plan to include a public health emergency and the ability in such situations to waive CCAP copayments, pay CCAP on enrollment, adjust group sizes and ratios.
2. Expanding the definition of children in protective services to include those involved in response and recovery of the natural, man-made or public health disasters/emergencies.
3. Updating the Sliding Fee Scale - not related to COVID-19 but included in the amendment.

Publicly-Funded Licensed Early Learning Centers

Monitoring Change Over Time

Provider Type

	Type I	Type II	Type III
January 2020	265	222	976
February 2020	264	223	975
March 2020	263	221	978

67% of early learning centers are type III licensed centers providing care and education for publicly funded children.

Star Ratings:

	0 Star	1 Star	2 Star	3 Star	4 Star	5 Star
2020	8	19	197	604	582	110
2019	8	51	272	579	519	88

2020 star ratings are based on 2018-2019 performance profile ratings for centers.