



January 7, 2015



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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

This week we announced a planned increase in Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) benefits will take effect this month. This will help low-income families better afford quality early child care and raises funding levels for qualified child care centers and teachers. The increase comes as we have successfully launched the [CAFE](#) web portal for families to apply online for Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).

Starting later this month, the funding available to parents to pay publicly-funded child care centers increases by up to 250 percent, making child care more affordable for families and allowing centers to increase teacher pay and improve teacher training.

The policy changes, part of the statewide effort to unify the system of early childhood education and to prepare all children for kindergarten, also put an end to the longstanding practice of stopping child care assistance when a parent or guardian loses a job. Families will remain eligible for CCAP for at least one year regardless of changes in work or school status. No family would have their CCAP payments stop should they need to find a new job or they are on a break from school. Payments will continue through the entire year of eligibility ensuring children are able to attend for a full school year.

These changes benefit child care providers, families and, most importantly, young children. The funding recognizes and supports child care's efforts to improve quality. The extended eligibility helps ensure children have access to that quality care for at least a year. And the launch of the [CAFE](#) application portal makes it easier for families to apply. Altogether this means more Louisiana families will have easier access to quality options that help prepare their children for kindergarten.

As always, thank you for all you do for our children,

John

John White
Louisiana Department of Education
Twitter @LouisianaSupe

TEACHING AND LEARNING

QUALITY START TRANSITION

As Quality Start transitions to the new unified rating and improvement system, providers should be aware of the following important dates.

- January 31, 2016 - Pathways will mail Director and Staff Tax Credit forms to eligible staff.
- **February 1, 2016 - Final deadline for accepting Quality Start applications for 3-5 stars. Centers wanting to apply for 3-5 stars are encouraged to apply as soon as possible to ensure enough time to complete the application process.**
- March 1, 2016 - CCAP providers will receive a notice which will include their star rating, the average number of CCAP children, and the amount of their SRTC.
- March 31, 2016 - Final date for ERS assessments.
- July 1, 2016 - Final date stars will be awarded in the Quality Start program.

Please note that Child Care Expense Credit forms have already been mailed to all CCAP providers with a 2-5 star rating as of July 1, 2015. The letters describing the School Readiness Tax Credits and individual star ratings have also already mailed to all star rated providers. For additional forms, please email dss.qualitystart@la.gov with the amount needed.

Please be advised that any change in your business such as a change of ownership or a change of location may impact your star rating, SRTC, and tiered bonus payments.

For questions about Quality Start or School Readiness Tax Credits, please contact your Quality Start Specialist or email dss.qualitystart@la.gov.

REVIEW OF BIRTH TO FIVE CURRICULUM

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is reviewing curriculum programs that serve children ages birth to five. Commercial curriculum vendors are invited to submit their products for review. Many vendors have already submitted a product or plan to do so. The deadline for submission is January 29, 2016.

Products will be reviewed in the order in which they are received. Each review will be posted on the Department website upon completion. The Department plans to have all reviews completed by April 1, 2016.

The reviews will be used to determine a new metric on the practice performance profile about the quality of curriculum used by a program. Districts and program may find the reviews helpful when selecting curriculum.

More information about the process as well as copies of the Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET) Rubric for Infant/Toddler and the IMET Rubric for Three- and- Four-Year-Olds can be found on the Department's [webpage](#).

School districts or individual programs that would like LDE to review a specific commercial curriculum should email the name of the product to Jill Slack at jill.slack@la.gov. Districts or programs that have created their own curriculum and may want their materials to be considered should also email Jill Slack.

For questions, please contact: LouisianaCurriculumReview@la.gov.

FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

COORDINATED ENROLLMENT - COHORT 3

Cohort 3 Coordinated Enrollment Plan Templates were released in November and must be completed by January 15, 2016. To view a webinar on *Laying the Foundation for Coordinated Enrollment*, please click [here](#). The Department also conducted in-person technical assistance sessions with Lead Agencies and their partners. Please email any questions to nasha.patel@la.gov.

COORDINATED FUNDING FOR 2016-2017 - CHECK OUT THE NEW GUIDE

Bulletin 140 requires that each Lead Agency submit a Coordinated Funding Request on behalf of their Community Network, requesting seats for LA 4, NSECD, Pre-K Expansion Grant, and Allocated CCAP Seats. To learn more, please check out the new Coordinated Funding Information Guide [here](#). The Department also conducted a Coordinated Funding Request Webinar which may be viewed [here](#).

Coordinated Funding Requests are due by January 18, 2016.

Please email any questions to nasha.patel@la.gov.

UPDATE - A NEW PILOT FOR CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

In 2016-2017 the Department will pilot a new approach to funding Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) seats, using allocations from the state. The Department has released the [Allocated Child Care Assistance Pilot Overview](#) to provide more information to child care centers who are interested in a different way to fund CCAP seats for children birth to three-years-old. Up to 1200 seats statewide will be converted for the 2016-2017 Pilot. Please note that this represents a new way of funding existing seats. This is not new funding.

UPDATE: To focus supports for children most in need, the LDE will be limiting the Allocated Child Care Assistance Pilot to categorically eligible children and children who qualify for 100% of the state maximum rate (\$21.50/\$22.50). This includes:

- Children in poverty (children who would have previously qualified at the 80% rate and above)
- Children in families receiving FITAP who are satisfactorily participating in the STEP Program
- Children in foster care; and
- Children experiencing homelessness.

There have been a number of questions regarding the Allocated Child Care Assistance Pilot. Below are a few key points to know about the Allocated Child Care Assistance Pilot:

- Centers may continue to accept CCAP vouchers, whether or not they choose to apply for the pilot.
- Participation in the pilot is optional. No center is required to participate. If a center chooses not to participate, they do not need to provide any additional information for the Coordinated Funding Request.
- If a center is interested in participating in the pilot, they should ensure that their Lead Agency knows and includes their request for seats in the Coordinated Funding Request. The center should sign the Allocated Child Care Assistance Pilot assurances and submit them to their Lead Agency to include with the Coordinated Funding Request.

For more information, please review the [Allocated Child Care Assistance Pilot Overview](#).

Seats will be requested through the Coordinated Funding Request submitted by Lead Agencies. For more information, please review the [overview](#) or email nasha.patel@la.gov.

COORDINATED ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION WEBINAR - FEBRUARY 3RD

Bulletin 140 requires that Lead Agencies plan for a Coordinated Enrollment Process. Part of this process is Coordinated Eligibility Determination. The Department will conduct a webinar on **Wednesday, February 3, 2016**, at 12:00 p.m. to provide you with detailed eligibility requirements and answer any questions Lead Agencies may have. This webinar will be recorded.

Date: February 3, 2016

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Link: <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/eligibility/>

CHILD SAFETY AND WELFARE

LICENSING REGULATIONS (BULLETIN 137) ONLINE TRAINING - COMPLETE COURSE SERIES

In an effort to support new and existing early learning center providers, Licensing has designed a four part series of online courses that will provide an overview of Bulletin 137 - Louisiana's Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations.

All of the course have been released, and can be accessed below:

- [Course 1 \(Chapters 1-9\)](#)
- [Course 2 \(Chapters 11-15\)](#)
- [Course 3 \(Chapter 17\)](#)
- [Course 4 \(Chapter 19 and 21\)](#)

Each course includes lectures, activities and quizzes that provide information related to Bulletin 137. Participants will receive training hours for each completed course. This course is designed for all administrators, directors, teachers and other support staff that own, operate and/or work in licensed "out of home" early learning centers. For questions, please contact Licensing at 225-342-9905 or

LEAD AGENCY SUPPORT

UPCOMING SUPERVISOR AND TEACHER LEADER COLLABORATION EVENTS: SAVE THE DATE!

SAVE THE DATE for the next round of Supervisor and Teacher Leader Collaboration Events. Sessions for Lead Agency Supervisors will be held in the morning. Afternoon sessions will be dedicated to Teacher Leaders. The events will take place in the following locations:

Date	City	Location
January 20	Baton Rouge	Claiborne Building 1201 North Third Street Baton Rouge, LA
January 25	Thibodaux	Nicholls State University Exact location TBD Thibodaux, LA
January 27	Natchitoches	Louisiana School for Math Science and the Arts Exact location TBD 715 University Parkway Natchitoches, LA
January 28	Lafayette	Bayou Church 2234 Kaliste Saloom Rd. Lafayette, LA

All Lead Agencies should plan to attend the morning Supervisor sessions. Lead Agencies should collaborate with program partners to nominate two teacher representatives to attend the afternoon Teacher Leader sessions. Registration information for these events will be forwarded to Lead Agencies.

WEEKLY EARLY CHILDHOOD LEAD AGENCY OFFICE HOURS

The Early Childhood team is offering weekly Office Hours for Lead Agencies. This will be a reoccurring opportunity for Lead Agencies to call in with any questions they may have about their current work and receive additional clarification.

Office hours will take place every Tuesday, from 3:00-4:00 p.m. The focus topic for January 12 will be the Coordinated Funding Request. *Please note there will not be office hours on January 26.*

Weekly Time: Tuesdays, 3:00-4:00 PM (no office hours on January 26)
Call In: 1-800-832-0736; PIN: 9174840

OTHER

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL - CHANGE IN DATE

The next Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council meeting will take place on **Friday, January 8, at 10 a.m.** The meeting will be held in the **Claiborne Building, 1201 N. 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA**. The agenda for this meeting can be found [here](#).

This meeting is open to the public and can be live streamed. Please click [here](#) for directions on accessing live streamed meetings.

PUBLIC HEARING AND WEBINAR ON THE CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT FUND STATE PLAN

A public hearing for the draft Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan will be held on **Thursday, February 4, 2016**, at 9 a.m. at the Claiborne Building, Louisiana Purchase Room, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. A copy of the draft State Plan can be found [here](#). To provide feedback, please enter your comments at this [website](#) or by emailing earlychildhood@la.gov.

There will also be a webinar on Wednesday, January 13, 2016, at 11:30 a.m.

Date: January 13, 2016
Time: 11:30 a.m.

Link: <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/ccdfdraftstateplan/>

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