



EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWSLETTER

February 9, 2023

Dear Colleagues:

February marks the annual celebration of Black History Month. It's an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the tremendous contributions of African-Americans to our state and country. America's ongoing quest for a more perfect union has been fueled by the courageous Black men and women who forged ahead. Their sacrifices led to cornerstone moments in our nation's history such as the abolishment of slavery and the civil rights movement.

Louisiana is a state rich in diversity. This is seen in our classrooms where around 40% of our children and 25% of our educators are African-American. Over the next month, our early learning sites will be filled with special lessons, celebrations, and programs focused on heroes of the civil rights movement in Louisiana and across the nation.

The most important role we can play as educators is to ensure every child has the same opportunity to be successful. Whether past, present, or future, education is a powerful tool that can be used to move people forward.

Dr. Cade Brumley

Upcoming Deadlines

- February 28: [TS GOLD® Winter Checkpoint Due](#)
- March 3: [Presenter Applications for 2023 Early Childhood Conference Due](#)
- March 3: [Presenter Applications for 2023 Teacher Leader Summit Due](#)
- March 9: [Early Bird Registration for 2023 Early Childhood Conference Closes](#)
- March 9: [Early Bird Registration for 2023 Teacher Leader Summit Closes](#)
- March 13: [ARPA Stabilization Grant Round 3 Closes](#)
- April 21: [Regular Registration for 2023 Early Childhood Conference Closes](#)
- April 21: [Regular Registration for 2023 Teacher Leader Summit Closes](#)

Upcoming Events

- February 16: [GOLD® Winter Checkpoint Support Webinar](#)
- February 16: [ARPA Stabilization Grant Round 3 Webinar](#)
- February 20: [ARPA Stabilization Grant Round 3 Opens](#)
- February 22: [Young Children with Disabilities \(YCWD\) Community of Practice](#)
- February 24: [New Director Webinar](#)
- March 2: [Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar](#)
- March 7: [Plain Talk Literacy and Learning Pre-Conference Day](#)
- May 30-June 1: [2023 Teacher Leader Summit: Accelerate to Success](#)
- June 2-3: [2023 Early Childhood Conference: Foundations for Success](#)

More Important Dates

Please see the [LDOE School System Support Calendar](#).

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Provider Updates

NEW: Early Childhood Provider Update Webinars

On February 2, the Department hosted a webinar for early childhood providers. [Presentation slides](#) are available in the [Quality Providers Library](#) on the Louisiana Believes website.

The next monthly provider webinar will be held March 2, 2023. Providers can access the upcoming March provider webinar using the information below:

Webinar Date/Time: Thursday, March 2 at 1 p.m.
Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93597745872>
Phone Number: 1-312-626-6799
Meeting ID: 935 9774 5872
Passcode: 641464

REMINDER: TIKES Mental Health Consultation

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) is an intervention that teams a mental health professional with early childhood professionals to improve the behavioral health of young children in early learning settings. The TIKES ECMHC provides support at no cost to Type III and registered Family Child Care sites. Onsite support and professional development is provided for teachers and other early childhood professionals by early childhood mental health specialists.

For more information visit the [TIKES](#) webpage.

UPDATES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

NEW: 2023 Early Childhood Conference for Child Care Providers and Teachers

The Louisiana Department of Education is excited to host the second annual Early Childhood Conference – *Foundations for Success!* The conference will take place from June 2-3, 2023, at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (NOENMCC).

The conference will provide opportunities for education and training for early childhood care and education (ECCE) professionals, including child care administrators, teachers, and family child care providers. The content and breakout sessions will support the following LDOE *Believe to Achieve* educational priorities to:

- Provide the highest quality teaching and learning environment
- Remove barriers and create equitable, inclusive learning experiences for all children

- Cultivate high-impact systems, structures, and partnerships
- Enhance communication and guidance for family engagement and support

[Registration](#) for this event will be on a first-come, first-served basis. As space is limited, individuals are encouraged to register early. Early Bird registration ends on March 9, 2023. Regular registration will begin on March 10, 2023, and will close on April 21, 2023, or at sellout.

NEW: 2023 Teacher Leader Summit

The Teacher Leader Summit is an annual professional development conference that brings together Louisiana birth to grade 12 educators and content experts. Educators participating in the event will share their knowledge, learn new skills, and prepare for the 2023-2024 academic year.

This year's Teacher Leader Summit will focus on educator's ability to accelerate to success every single day.

- The Teacher Leader Summit will take place from May 30-June 1, 2023, at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (NOENMCC).
- Registration for this event will be on a first-come, first-served basis. As space is limited, individuals are encouraged to register early.

More information on Teacher Leader Summit, including how to register, can be found in the [2023 Teacher Leader Summit Overview](#) document.

NEW: Teachstone® – The CLASS® Learning Community

The CLASS® Learning Community is a group of educators dedicated to helping children by measuring and improving teacher-child interactions. Join for free and browse the available resources. Resource documents, recorded webinars, discussion boards, and blog posts are available. New resources include:

- [CLASS® and Literacy: Important Connections](#) (blog)
- [3 Overlooked Opportunities for Facilitation of Learning and Development](#) (blog)

NEW: Teaching Strategies®

Teaching Strategies GOLD® is used to measure a child's growth and development. Teachers must finalize winter GOLD® checkpoint ratings by February 28.

Teaching Strategies also offers several [on-demand recorded webinars](#) for early childhood teachers and leaders. Please read the Department's updated [TS GOLD® Guidance](#) and [TS GOLD® FAQ](#) documents for helpful information.

Questions or concerns can be directed to ECAssessment@la.gov.

NEW: Teaching Strategies® GOLD Upcoming Webinars

Register for webinars supporting Teaching Strategies GOLD® implementation. Select the link to explore available dates and times or view recorded webinars:

- [GOLD® Winter Checkpoint Support](#), February 16 at 3:00 p.m.
Join for a free, live support webinar for GOLD® that walks teachers through the checkpoint process for the winter checkpoint period.
- [GOLD® Winter Reports Support \(Administrators\)](#), February 22 at 1:00 p.m.
Join for a free, live support webinar for GOLD® administrators that will walk through generating outcome reports after the winter checkpoint and offer tips for ongoing program management.

NEW: Early Childhood Young Children with Disabilities (YCWD) Community of Practice

The Early Childhood YCWD Community of Practice provides a time for Part B, Section 619 special education coordinators and coaches to receive updates and collaborate. Participants can access the YCWD Community of Practice webinar using the information below.

Webinar Topic: Pre-K Accelerate
Webinar Date/Time: Wednesday, February 22 at 2:00 p.m.
Webinar Link: <https://zoom.us/j/6920610085?>
Passcode: gyiy3F

Please contact caitlyn.robinson@la.gov with any questions or concerns.

UPDATES FOR FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

NEW: ARPA Stabilization Grant Round 3

The Department is launching an [application](#) on February 20, 2023, for a third round of ARPA Stabilization Grant funding to Louisiana child care providers. A special [webinar](#) will be held February 16 at 1:00 p.m.

To be eligible for Round 3 of the ARPA Stabilization Grant, providers must be

- open
- licensed or registered
- CCAP-certified (if a Type III center, Family Child Care or In-home provider)
- serving children by December 31, 2022 and
- compliant with all audit surveys and assessments from Postlewaite and Netterville.

If a provider owes funds for prior CCAP overpayments and has not entered into a repayment agreement, these funds will be deducted from the grant disbursement funds and may delay receipt of payment.

A separate ARPA Stabilization Grant opportunity will be provided in the near future for Head Start sites that offer before- and after-care services to CCAP children.

Office Hours for this grant will be held February 28 and March 7 from 10-11 a.m. The deadline to submit the Round 3 ARPA Grant application is March 13, 2023.

NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Eligibility Sliding Fee Scale

The new CCAP Eligibility Sliding Fee Scale is available on [Louisiana Believes](#). This scale is updated annually to meet federal requirements and to reflect current State Median Income (SMI) in Louisiana.

REMINDER: ARPA Stabilization Grant Survey (Rounds 1 & 2)

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is conducting a survey related to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Stabilization grants. LDOE has partnered with Postlethwaite and Netterville (P&N) to collect information regarding the use of ARPA Stabilization grant funds. LDOE will also use this information to direct future technical assistance.

During the week of January 10, 2023, providers that received ARPA Stabilization grant funds (Round 1 and/or 2) received an email containing a link to complete the survey from the following sender:

- Sender: P&N - LDOE Grants
- Email address: info@LDOE-pnsurvey.com
- Subject Line: LDOE ARPA Grant Survey – Rounds 1 and 2

Participation in the survey is required. The survey should have been completed by January 27, 2023; however, if you did not complete the survey by the deadline, please complete it immediately. Failure to complete this survey will impact your ability to receive future grants.

If you have questions, contact the Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543. If you require technical assistance regarding how to complete the survey, contact P&N at info@LDOE-pnsurvey.com.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Eligibility Redetermination for Families

The Department resumed the 12-month certification of CCAP cases, February 1, 2023. LDOE CCAP has resumed sending notifications of upcoming redeterminations to providers and families monthly.

Families must respond immediately with a new CCAP [redetermination application](#), check stubs, and immunization records. The case will not be extended if documents are not received according to the dates on the CCAP 11RC - Redetermination Notice (to families) and CCAP 11RCP - Provider Redetermination Notice (to providers).

Failure to submit the redetermination application and all required documents will result in the closure of the family's CCAP case. Once the case is closed, the family will need to reapply for CCAP and will be placed on the waitlist, if deemed eligible.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) KinderConnect Attendance Tracking System

The Louisiana Department of Education will be fully transitioning from TOTS to the KinderConnect attendance tracking system by March 30, 2023. The Department is hosting pilot providers in this system now and has begun general distribution of tablets to all providers for the use of this new system.

In order to connect with this new attendance tracking system and receive a tablet to initiate the system, please ensure that all of following steps are completed:

1. Register the site in the [EdLink](#) system
2. Register site leaders to become the EdLink Entities Manager for the site
3. Complete the KinderConnect registration (once registered as an Entity Manager in EdLink, instructions will be sent to all Entity Managers)

For detailed guidance and screenshots for how to register in EdLink and for access to other resources, please visit the Department's [EdLink Support](#) page. Additionally, the Department is offering multiple [EdLink trainings](#) where providers will be given instructions for accessing and navigating the system. Maximum registration for this weekly training is 99, and the last 30 minutes of each meeting will be open for questions, time permitting. To attend any of these weekly training sessions, please complete [registration](#).

KinderConnect information will be shared during office hours to help with the transition to this new mandatory attendance tracking system. Office hours are held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:30-2:30 p.m. and can be accessed using the information below.

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97565259173>

Phone Number: 1-470-381-2522

Meeting ID: 975 6525 9173

All sites must begin the use of this new attendance tracking system no later than March 15, 2023. *Note: Beginning April 2023, quarterly bonus payments will be paid on attendance tracked by this system and will no longer be paid on enrollment.*

Once the tablet for KinderConnect has been received and attendance has been transitioned from TOTS, please mail the TOTS device back to Conduent. A self-addressed mailer will be provided by calling 1-888-281-0326.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Quarterly Bonus Payments

Children who do not attend their child care program regularly do not receive the benefit of high-quality child care. During the 2020 COVID emergency, the Department suspended payments on attendance and began payments on enrollment.

Monthly CCAP payments will continue to be based on enrollment; however, all quarterly bonus payments issued for the period after April 1, 2023, will be paid based on attendance.

The Department will utilize the KinderConnect system to track attendance, so it is critical that your families utilize this system each day their child is in attendance.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Underutilized Authorizations for Families

The CCAP Eligibility Team has resumed conducting monthly reviews of underutilized authorizations of children who have not attended child care within the previous month. Attendance recorded in the site's attendance tracking system (i.e., Tracking of Time Services (TOTS) Point of Service (POS), Interactive Voice Response (IVR), or KinderConnect is examined as part of the underutilization review. Authorizations must be utilized by families at least once within a 30-day period to maintain CCAP certification.

The Provider Help Desk staff has been informing providers of the importance of families completing check in/out transactions when children are in attendance to maintain CCAP certification. If CCAP children are not attending, the Department will issue notices to families at the mailing address on file advising of non-usage of authorizations. Families that are not using CCAP will lose their CCAP authorizations, will need to reapply for CCAP, and will be placed on the waitlist if deemed eligible.

For assistance, please contact the Provider Help Desk at (225) 250-7635 or (225) 252-9543, or enter a [ticket](#) in the Provider Ticket System.

UPDATES FOR LICENSED CENTERS, FAMILY CHILD CARE, AND IN-HOME PROVIDERS

NEW: Reinstatement of Licensure Fees

Effective March 1, 2023, licensure fees will be requested upon submission of an application for early learning centers. Fees will be requested as follows:

- \$25 fee for each application for initial licensure. **NOTE:** This fee shall be applied toward the total licensure fee, which is due prior to the issuance of an initial license, if applicable.
- Annual licensure fees for each early learning center based on the licensed capacity of the center. See Section 313 of Bulletin 137 for the fee scale.
- \$25 fee for any change that requires the issuance of a new license or the reissuance of a current license outside of the regular renewal of the license. For example: changes in capacity, name, age range, and transportation.

Annual licensure fees will not be requested for Type I centers owned or operated by churches or religious organizations.

If you have questions, please contact your [licensing consultant](#).

REMINDER: EdLink is LIVE

All providers must use the EdLink system to submit new applications, renewal applications, request changes, and access our new attendance system, KinderConnect. Renewal applications

- must be submitted prior to the first day of the month in which the current license expires and
- can be started up to 90 prior to the expiration date.

For assistance with gaining access to EdLink or questions about access, the EdLink Support Team will be holding office hours every Tuesday and Thursday from 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. Please see the information below to join:

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97565259173>

Phone Number: 1-470-381-2522

Meeting ID: 975 6525 9173

REMINDER: School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTCs)

For tax filing assistance, teachers and families can call 211 to make an appointment with a VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program for your area. VITA programs offer free tax preparation for qualifying individuals. Louisiana Pathways mailed tax form R-10615 "For Child Care Director and Staff Member" in January 2023 to eligible child care staff and administrators.

Directors should also share information about the [family tax credit](#). This [one-pager](#) contains information for families regarding eligibility, amounts, and assistance with tax preparation.

For questions regarding SRTCs, please contact demita.walker@la.gov.

REMINDER: Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) 5-Year Renewal

Five-year eligibility renewals for the Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) program will begin in March 2023. Providers and applicants who were fingerprinted in 2018 upon the program's launch will be contacted via email to initiate the fingerprinting renewal process. The initial email will be sent 90 days prior to the applicant's expiration date, and the renewal process must be initiated by the provider.

Providers should ensure that site rosters are up-to-date, with all current employees listed, or your site will not receive an email notification to initiate the renewals for your employees and those CCCBCs may expire without renewing in time.

Please see the attached link from the [February Early Childhood Provider Webinar](#), which provides step-by-step instructions on how to apply and finish the renewal process:

For questions, please contact a CCCBC Analyst at (225) 342-2716 or email ldeccbcprocessing@la.gov.

NEW: FREE Computer Skills Training for Type III and CCAP-certified Family Child Care (FCC) Providers

The LDOE, with Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana (A+PEL), is offering two free three-part Pathways-approved training series to 30 participants for each series. The first three-part training series will be held at the Avoyelles Parish School Board in Marksville, LA and will begin on Saturday March 4, 2023; the final series will be held at Bossier Parish Community College, Building G, Room G205 and will begin on April 22, 2023. Participants in each training series will earn 18 hours of CEUs, build technological literacy, and build Google Suite skills (Forms, Docs, Sheets, etc.) to help improve business processes. Use [this link](#) to sign up now for the upcoming session in Marksville and [this link](#) to sign up for the following session in Bossier City. Spots are limited and will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Please contact shallan.jones@la.gov with registration questions.

REMINDER: Business Supports for Early Childhood Providers

The LDOE is continuing to support Type I, II, III centers and CCAP-certified Family Child Care providers through a wide range of business supports designed to strengthen businesses by empowering and educating early childhood administrators in business leadership. Please review this [one-pager](#) for important information on how to participate, and the eligibility requirements for these opportunities. The opportunities outlined in this document are available until June 30, 2023.

Please contact shallan.jones@la.gov with any questions.

UPDATES FOR DIRECTORS

NEW: Monthly Office Hours for New Directors

Every month, the LDOE team holds a webinar that focuses on a topic related to early childhood quality while also helping to expand directors' network of peers. Office hours are targeted towards new directors. Come learn about Type III requirements, connect with other directors, and stay up-to-date with upcoming events and deadlines. This month's topic will be an overview of Type III requirements.

Webinar Date/Time: February 24, 2023 at 12:00 p.m.

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/92700204655>

Webinar Phone Number: 1-470-381-2552

Meeting ID: 927 0020 4655

Contact tella.henderson@la.gov with any questions.

UPDATES FOR COMMUNITY NETWORK LEAD AGENCIES

NEW: Weekly Webinar for Community Network Lead Agencies

The Early Childhood team hosts Office Hours every Tuesday at 3 p.m. for Community Network Lead Agency contacts. The purpose of these webinars is to provide updates and answer questions for Community Network Lead Agencies. Presentations from previous Community Network Lead Agency Office Hours are located in the [Community Network Lead Agency Library](#).

The upcoming schedule for Weekly Webinars for Community Network Lead Agencies can be found below:

- February 14: General updates and reminders
- February 21: Canceled due to Mardi Gras holiday
- February 28: General updates and reminders
- March 7: Pre-K Eligibility

Note that topics are subject to change. Please email amanda.colon@la.gov with questions.

OTHER

NEW: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Advisory Council Upcoming Meeting, February 15, 2023

The next meeting for the ECCE Advisory Council will take place on Wednesday, February 15, at 1:00 p.m. in the Claiborne Building (Thomas Jefferson Room), located at 1201 N. Third Street in Baton Rouge. An overview of the ECCE Advisory Council and meeting materials are available [online](#). For additional information please email

brandy.morin@la.gov.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, for special assistance at this meeting please contact brandy.morin@la.gov at least three business days in advance of the meeting describing the assistance that is needed.

NEW: Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) Review Committee Meetings, March 2023

The ELDS Review Committee Meetings will take place on March 2 (Thomas Jefferson Room, [livestream](#)), and March 15, 2023 (Louisiana Purchase Room, [livestream](#)) at 11:00 a.m. in the Claiborne Building, located at 1201 N. Third Street in Baton Rouge.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, for special assistance at this meeting please contact brandy.morin@la.gov at least three business days in advance of the meeting describing the assistance that is needed

IN THE NEWS

[HHS Launches the First National Early Care and Education Workforce Center](#) (www.acf.hhs.gov)

[Second Annual Early Ed Month Focuses on Critical Needs for Investments in High-Quality Early Care and Education](#) (New Orleans Magazine)

[How can Louisiana improve early childhood education?](#) (The Daily Advertiser)

CONTACT US



- For questions regarding licensing or child health and safety, please contact LDElicensing@la.gov.
- For questions regarding community network lead agencies, please contact leadagencysupport@la.gov.
- For all questions regarding child care criminal background check processing, please contact LDEccbcprocessing@la.gov.
- For all other questions regarding early childhood, please contact earlychildhood@la.gov.

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