



EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWSLETTER

March 9, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

We know the role quality early childhood care and education plays in the success of our children and our state. Our agency is committed to supporting the industry.

One of the ways our state elevates early childhood is by investing in the professionals who serve our children and families. Our second annual Early Childhood Conference will take place June 2-3 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans. The theme of this year's event is *Foundations for Success*. Whether you are a director, teacher, staff member, or supporter, I encourage you to join us for this opportunity to grow together in the profession. [You can register or find more information online.](#)

The work you do is meaningful and appreciated. I look forward to gathering with early childhood professionals from across the state in June.

Dr. Cade Brumley

Upcoming Deadlines

- 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](#)
- March 14: [LPIC Child Care Program Waitlist Survey closes](#)
- April 21: [Regular Registration for 2023 Early Childhood Conference closes](#)
- April 21: [Regular Registration for 2023 Teacher Leader Summit closes](#)

Upcoming Events

- March 15: [ELDS Review Committee Meeting](#)
- March 15: [Bulletin 137 Three-Year Review Committee Meeting](#)
- March 30: [Bulletin 137 Three-Year Review Committee Meeting](#)
- March 31: [New Director Webinar](#)
- April 6: [Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar](#)
- 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 March 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 April 6, 2023. Providers can access the upcoming April provider webinar using the information below:

Webinar Date/Time:	Thursday, April 6 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.

NEW: Brief Survey on Child Care Site Waitlists

The Department is partnering with the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children (LPIC) to administer a brief, [three-minute survey](#) about the current waitlist for enrollment at individual child care program sites. The deadline to complete the survey is Tuesday, March 14, 2023. Your participation will help with understanding the current size of child care business waitlists across the state and making the case for more support.

Please contact info@policyinstitutela.org with any questions.

UPDATES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

REMINDER: 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.

REMINDER: 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:

- [4 Reasons to check out the CLASS® Observation Supports Series](#) (blog)
- [3 Steps to Building CLASS® as a Culture](#) (blog)

NEW: Teaching Strategies® GOLD® Upcoming Webinars

Teaching Strategies 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.

Register for webinars supporting Teaching Strategies® GOLD® implementation. Select the link to join a free, live support webinar for GOLD® that walks teachers through the Assess area of the Teaching Strategies platform.

GOLD® [Support Spotlight: Assess Area](#), March 16 at 3:00 p.m.

NEW: GOLD® Update Webinar for Community Network Lead Agencies, GOLD® Admins, and CCR&Rs

The Department hosts monthly GOLD® update webinars for site and network leaders and site support agencies such as CCR&Rs.

The March GOLD® webinar will focus on how to create quality documentation. The Department will provide

information related to strategies that teachers, networks, and support agencies can use to increase the quality of documentation gathered, ensuring that it reflects children's development and learning. Examples of quality documentation will also be shared and used to facilitate group discussions during the webinar. Participants can access the GOLD® informational webinar using the information below.

Webinar Date/Time: Wednesday, March 15 at 1:00 p.m.
Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us>
Phone Number: 1-312-626-6799
Meeting ID: 974 0485 0210
Passcode: 980775

Please contact ECAssessment@la.gov with any questions.

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: OSEP Guidance for Reporting: Making Data Connections
Webinar Date/Time: Wednesday, March 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.

NEW: Louisiana Early Leaders Academy (LELA) 2023 Cohort Application Release

The Department released applications for the 2023 cohort of the Louisiana Early Leaders Academy (LELA) on Friday, March 3, 2023.

The 2023 LELA cohort is a 5-month, executive-level program for directors of publicly-funded early learning centers that aims to strengthen existing leaders in the field. Participating educators, known as Fellows, are selected through a competitive application process for directors aiming for excellence in their daily leadership of their early learning centers.

- Please allow 45-60 minutes to complete a thoughtful and thorough application. This application is the first step in the competitive process of applying to be a Louisiana Early Leaders Academy (LELA) Fellow.
- If you are interested in learning more about the Louisiana Early Leaders Academy, you can review the previous years' information by accessing the [LELA page](#) on the Louisiana Believes website.
- Stakeholders who know a potential applicant may [nominate applicants](#) through a Google Form.

[LELA applications](#), also available via a Google Form, went live on Friday March 3. Interested directors must complete the application by March 24, 2023, to be considered for this opportunity.

There will be an optional informational webinar for interested applicants. Though this webinar is optional, interested applicants are highly encouraged to attend as the webinar will provide additional information about the LELA program, highlight best practices for creating a compelling application, and include a Q&A opportunity with LELA program administrators. The same webinar content will be presented at each of the following sessions:

Webinar Date/Time: Tuesday, March 14 at 2:00 p.m.
Webinar Link: <https://anlar.zoom.us/j/84189417947?pwd>
Meeting ID: 84189417947
Passcode: 463867

Webinar Date/Time: Thursday, March 16 at 2:00 p.m.
Webinar Link: <https://anlar.zoom.us/j/85080542653?pwd>
Meeting ID: 85080542653
Passcode: 026898

UPDATES FOR FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

REMINDER: ARPA Stabilization Grant Round 3

The Department launched the ARPA Stabilization Grant Round 3 [application](#) on February 20, 2023, for Louisiana child care providers.

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.

The deadline to submit the Round 3 ARPA Grant application is March 13, 2023.

REMINDER: 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 Assessment (Rounds 1 & 2)

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is conducting a grant assessment 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.

Participation in the assessment, just like the survey that preceded the assessment, is required. Failure to comply with Postlewaite and Netterville requests during any part of the assessment process, will impact your ability to receive future grants and may impact your ability to receive CCAP payments.

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 any requests for documents from P&N, contact them 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 please ensure that all of the following steps are completed:

1. Directors/Owners must complete the [EdLink registration](#) and request the [KinderConnect Role](#).
2. Your site's attendance tracking tablet from KinderConnect is being shipped to the address where care is provided.
3. Once your site's tablet arrives, you should review the [KinderConnect training](#).

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: The April-June quarterly bonus payments will be dependent on provider participation in KinderConnect attendance tracking. Additionally, CCAP Underutilization will be dependent on families' and provider's participation in KinderConnect.* 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, moving forward quarterly bonus payments 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: Revised Bulletin 137 Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations

A revised version of Bulletin 137 Licensing Regulations was posted to [Louisiana Believes](#).

This version of [Bulletin 137](#) includes the following requirement:

§1723 F. Within 60 calendar days from the date of hire and prior to assuming sole responsibility for any children, each staff member shall have current certification in pediatric first aid and CPR. During this period, caregivers and teachers who provide direct care for children must be supervised until training is completed.

For any questions, please contact a [licensing consultant](#).

REMINDER: Reinstatement of Licensure Fees

Effective March 1, 2023, licensure fees were requested upon submission of an application for early learning centers. Fees will continue to 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.
- \$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 for each early learning center based on the licensed capacity of the center. See Section 313 of Bulletin 137 for the fee scale.

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

For any questions, please contact a [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 (SRTC)

Type III licensed providers will receive their Provider Tax Credit letter this month. This letter shows the average number of CCAP children and an amount for the children enrolled at your center in 2022. This letter will be mailed to your center.

Teachers and directors should have received tax form R-10615 “For Child Care Director and Staff Member” from Louisiana Pathways.

In order to claim your SRTC, you must file your 2022 taxes. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to lower-income individuals who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. This assistance is provided by IRS-certified volunteers and provides free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals. Please contact 2-1-1 for more information or to make an appointment for assistance in filing your tax return.

For VITA programs in your area, visit the [Louisiana 211](#) website.

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

To request an email notice for your Provider tax credit, additional family tax credit forms (R-10614) for “Child Care Expense Credit,” or additional School Readiness Tax Credit questions or for other questions regarding SRTCs, please contact demita.walker@la.gov.

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

Child Care Criminal Background Check determinations will begin expiring March 2023. Providers and applicants who were fingerprinted in 2018 will be contacted via email to initiate the fingerprinting renewal process within 90 days of the CCCBC determination expiration date. The renewal process must be initiated by the provider.

Providers should ensure rosters are up-to-date, with all current employees listed, or you will not receive an email notification to initiate the renewal application for your employees. CCCBC determinations will expire if they are not renewed 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 ldcccbbcprocessing@la.gov.

The Child Care Criminal Background Check section will host a webinar to focus on the CCCBC five-year renewal process:

Webinar Date/Time: March 22, 2023 at 12:00 p.m.
Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/98287192638?pwd>
Phone Number: 1-470-381-2552
Meeting ID: 982 8719 2638

Please contact kayla.batiste@la.gov with any questions.

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

En The LDOE, with Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana (A+PEL), is offering a free three-part Pathways-approved training series to 30 participants. This training series will be held at Bossier Parish Community College, Building G, Room G205 and will begin on April 22, 2023. Participants in the 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 for this amazing learning opportunity. 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 assist Type I, II, and 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 is *"Learn the Signs, Act Early: Monitoring Child Development in Early Childhood."*

Webinar Date/Time: March 31, 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:

- March 14: Quality Documentation in TS Gold®
- March 21: CNLA/CCR&R Collaboration Check-In
- March 28: Closing Out the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year
- April 4: Planning for 2023-2024 Budgets

Note that topics are subject to change. Please email devon.camarota@la.gov with questions.

OTHER

NEW: Bulletin 137 Three-Year Review Committee Meetings

Louisiana [R.S.17:407.40](#) requires a comprehensive review of Bulletin 137, *Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations*, every three years. The review committee will meet March 15, 2023, and March 30, 2023, to discuss proposed updates.

Meetings will take place as follows:

- March 15, 2023, 1-3 p.m., Claiborne Building, (1-155 North Dakota Room), 1201 N. Third Street, Baton Rouge ([livestream](#))
- March 30, 2023, 1-3 p.m., Claiborne Building, (Thomas Jefferson Room), 1201 N. Third Street, Baton Rouge ([livestream](#))

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

REMINDER: Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) Review Committee Meeting

An ELDS Review Committee meeting will take place on March 15, 2023, at 11:00 a.m., in the Thomas Jefferson Room ([livestream](#)) 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

[Who's Looking Out for the Mental Health of Infants and Toddlers?](#) (EdSurge)

[At Least 5,000 Early Childhood Spots for Low Income New Orleans Families Next Year](#) (NOLA.com)

[National database shows childcare cost in NW Louisiana comparable to college tuition](#) (WGNO)

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

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 leadagency-support@la.gov.
- For all questions regarding child care criminal background check processing, please contact LDEccbc-processing@la.gov.
- For all other questions regarding early childhood, please contact earlychildhood@la.gov.

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