



EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWSLETTER

April 13, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

Now that the calendar has turned to spring, more families are making a regular habit of getting outside and being active. That's a trend I hope we all follow at early childhood sites and schools across the state.

Louisiana's children should have the opportunity to get out of their classroom setting every day and play. It may be called "play," but it comes with serious benefits. Play is a crucial component of learning and development for young children. It allows children to reinforce skills in all areas of development.

In fact, we feel so strongly about play that it's the topic of our keynote address for the 2023 Early Childhood Conference. We want to help early childhood caregivers understand that play is seriously important for a healthy life. I hope to see you at the conference where you can learn — and play — with early childhood professionals from across Louisiana.

Dr. Cade Brumley

Upcoming Deadlines

- April 14: All CCAP-certified providers should be transitioned into KinderConnect
- April 16: [Teacher Leader Advisor Application Closes](#)
- April 21: [Regular Registration for 2023 Early Childhood Conference closes](#)
- April 21: [Waitlist for 2023 Teacher Leader Summit closes - Regular Registration SOLD OUT](#)
- May 4: Final date for fingerprinting with vendor Gemalto/Thales
- June 30: Final date for free business support services

Upcoming Events

- April 12: [Bulletin 137 Three-Year Review Committee Meeting](#)
- April 18: [Child Care Criminal Background Check IDEMIA Payment Webinar #1](#)
- April 19: [Teaching Strategies® GOLD® Webinar](#)
- April 26: [Young Children with Disabilities Community of Practice](#)
- April 28: [New Director Webinar](#)
- May 4: [Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar](#)
- May 9: [Teaching Strategies® GOLD® Webinar: Support Spotlight: Spring Checkpoint](#)
- May 17: [Teaching Strategies® GOLD® Webinar: Support Spotlight: Spring Checkpoint](#)
- May 18: Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council meeting
- 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 April 6, 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 May 2, 2023. Providers can access the upcoming May provider webinar using the information below:

Webinar Date/Time:	Thursday, May 4 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: Teacher Leader Advisor Application

Teacher Leader Advisors (TLAs) are a group of exceptional educators from across Louisiana who play an influential role in raising expectations for children's outcomes and supporting the success of teachers. The TLAs will use their robust knowledge of teaching and learning to review and create the next wave of high-quality instructional materials and training tools that will be used by thousands of teachers across the state.

Any current Louisiana educator is eligible; you do not need to be a school-site Teacher Leader to apply. [Applications](#) are now open and close April 16, 2023.

For more information please visit our [website](#) or email classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov.

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:

- 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

Registered attendees will have the opportunity to earn up to 10 Louisiana Pathways-approved hours.

[Registration](#) for this event will be on a first-come, first-served basis. As space is limited, individuals are encouraged to register early. Regular registration 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 educators' 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 is currently SOLD OUT! Please use the [registration link](#) to be added to the waitlist. The waitlist will be open until April 21, 2023, and waitlisted attendees will be notified of acceptance as space becomes available, on a first-come, first-served basis.

More information on the Teacher Leader Summit can be found in the [2023 Teacher Leader Summit Overview](#).

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:

- [Are Invisible Children in Your Midst? A Look at Homelessness in Early Ed.](#) (blog)
- [Managing Behaviors with CLASS® Checklist](#) (Resource)

NEW: GOLD® Update Webinar for Community Network Lead Agencies and GOLD® Administrators

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

The April GOLD® webinar will focus on how to maintain quality documentation. The Department will provide information related to GOLD® data hygiene, archiving vs. deleting children, administrator responsibilities, and transfer requests.

Participants can access the GOLD® informational webinar using the information below:

Webinar Date/Time: Wednesday, April 19 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: 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.

Select the link to register for a free, live support webinar for GOLD® that walks teachers through the process for the spring checkpoint period: GOLD® [Support Spotlight: Spring Checkpoint](#), May 9 & 17 at 1:00 p.m.

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.

The April Community of Practice will focus on Indicator 12, regarding transition compliance. The Department will provide information related to transitioning from early intervention services to preschool services. Participants can access the YCWD Community of Practice webinar using the information below:

Webinar Date/Time: Wednesday, April 26 at 2:00 p.m.
Webinar Link: <https://zoom.us/j/6920610085?>
Phone Number 1-253-205-0468
Meeting ID: 692 061 0085
Passcode: gyiy3F

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

UPDATES FOR FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

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

The Louisiana Department of Education has transitioned to KinderConnect as its mandatory attendance tracking system. It is important that providers complete transition by April 14, 2023, from the TOTS attendance tracking to the KinderConnect system.

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 each 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 is also continuing to host webinars to help with the transition to this new mandatory attendance tracking system. More information on April KinderConnect webinars and training can be accessed [here](#).

All attendance will be tracked through KinderConnect **only** beginning April 17, 2023. Note: It is in a provider's best interest to complete the conversion to KinderConnect in a timely manner, as the April-June quarterly bonus payments will consider attendance in KinderConnect. Additionally, CCAP Underutilization will be dependent on each family's 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: ARPA Stabilization Grant Assessment (Rounds 1 & 2)

The LDOE is conducting a grant assessment related to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Stabilization grants. The 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 a site's ability to receive future grants and may impact a site's 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) 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 based on attendance and began payments based 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) Eligibility Redetermination for Families

The LDOE CCAP team sends 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, if services are still needed the family will need to reapply for CCAP and will be placed on the waitlist, if deemed eligible.

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

The CCAP Eligibility Team conducts 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 (previously the Tracking of Time Services (TOTS) Point of Service (POS) or Interactive Voice Response (IVR), now KinderConnect) is examined as part of the underutilization review. Authorizations must be utilized by families within a 30-day period to maintain CCAP certification.

The CCAP Provider Help Desk staff has been informing providers of the importance of families completing check in/out transactions when children are in attendance, in order to maintain CCAP certification. If CCAP children are not attending, the Department will issue notices to families at the mailing address on file, advising families 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 Help Desk Ticket System.

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

NEW: Tornado Drills

Tornado drills shall be conducted at least once per month in each of the following months: March, April, May, and June. These drills shall be done at various times of the day, shall include all children, and shall be documented.

For any questions, please contact the site's [licensing consultant](#).

NEW: Posting of Licensing

Each early learning center shall have the current license displayed in a prominent place in the center. The license should be visible by families and visitors. Examples of a prominent place include:

- Front drop-off area
- Front receptionist area
- Front entrance doors

For any questions, please contact the site's [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 the site's [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.

As of March 30, 2023, EdLink Office hours are no longer available. For assistance with gaining access to EdLink or questions about access, providers will now use the following link to log a support ticket:

<https://edlink.supportsystem.com/open.php>. Providers can still visit the website for [EdLink Training](#).

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

Child Care Criminal Background Check determinations began expiring in March 2023. Providers and applicants who were fingerprinted in 2018 are 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 providers will not receive an email notification to initiate the renewal application for 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.

Note that by Monday, May 8, 2023, fingerprinting for the CCCBC system will transition from fingerprint vendor Gemalto to IDEMIA: fingerprinting with Gemalto/Thales will conclude at end of day Thursday, May 4, and there will be no fingerprinting services available on Friday, May 5.

The new fingerprinting vendor, IDEMIA, offers “No Charge Authorization Codes” (NCACs), also referred to as coupon codes. This service will allow sites to establish an account that is backed by a major credit card (currently VISA, MasterCard, Discover and AMEX). The benefit of a NCAC account is that providers are only charged once their applicants are fingerprinted. By the end of this week, providers will receive an email from the Department providing detailed instructions to create No Charge Authorization Code accounts. The Department encourages providers to take the opportunity to review the documents as soon as the documents are received, as NCACs accounts may take up to a week for processing.

The Child Care Criminal Background Check team will also host a webinar to provide instructions for the IDEMIA fingerprinting and payment process, including creating a No Charge Authorization Code (NCAC) account:

Webinar Date/Time:	April 18, 2023 at 2:30 p.m.
Webinar Link:	https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/96928351289?pwd=RGhyeGd0dVdudzBwVEphTORQYU9Zdz09
Phone Number:	1-470-250-9358
Meeting ID:	969 2835 1289
Passcode:	426223

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

REMINDER: School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC)

The Provider SRTC notices for 2022, that show the site’s star rating and average number of children, were mailed last month. 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; also find VITA programs in your area by visiting the [Louisiana 211](#) website.

If you did not receive your Provider tax credit notice, to request additional family tax credit forms (R-10614) for the “Child Care Expense Credit,” or for other questions regarding School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC), please contact demita.walker@la.gov.

REMINDER: 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 a free three-part Pathways-approved training series to 30 participants. This training series will be held at Bossier Parish Community College and will begin on April 22, 2023. Individuals who participate in this training series will build technological literacy and Google Suite skills (Forms, Docs, Sheets, etc.) designed to help improve business processes. Participants who attend the full training are eligible to receive 18 hours of CEUs. Interested providers can register by filling out an [online form](#). 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 [important information](#) on how to participate, how to [sign up](#), and the eligibility requirements for these opportunities. The opportunities mentioned in this section 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 “*Licensing Updates*.” Participants will gain a better understanding of Bulletin 137 requirements.

Webinar Date/Time:	April 28, 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
Passcode:	212827

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 most Tuesdays 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:

- April 18: Preparing for SFY24: Budget Planning and Allocations
- April 25: Observation Reminders and Closeout
- May 2: Preparing for SFY24: Part II
- May 9: Data Certification: End of Year Closeout

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

OTHER

REMINDER: 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's last meeting will be held April 12, 2023, from 1-3 p.m., in the North Dakota Room ([livestream](#)) in the Claiborne Building, at 1201 N. Third Street, Baton Rouge .

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 May 11, 2023, at 2:00 p.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

[Early Childhood Advocates Look to Legislature for Funding](#) (KTBS)

[What Will It Take to Build a Sustainable Early Care and Education System in the US?](#) (EdSurge)

[Music With Children At Home: Why It Matters and 6 Fun Activities](#) (Teachstone)

[April Update: Prenatal-to-3 State Legislative Trends](#) (prenatal-to-3 policy)

[East Feliciana Parish School Board Honor Jackson Pre-K Teacher for Top Rating](#) (The Advocate)

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 LDEcccbcprocessing@la.gov.

- For all other questions regarding early childhood, please contact earlychildhood@la.gov.

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