



# EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWSLETTER

July 13, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you enjoyed the 4th of July holiday and found time to recharge with friends and family.

Last month, we hosted our second annual Louisiana School Safety Summit. This statewide event brings together educators and first responders around best practices for keeping children and teachers safe. If you missed the event or would like to review some of the materials, [resources will soon be shared online](#). We had nearly 1,000 attendees register this year, and I encourage you to consider joining us again next year.

Whether you operate as part of a school or as an early childhood site, safety has to be a way of life. One of the biggest benefits from our annual safety summit is the relationships that are formed between education professionals, local law enforcement, and first responders. Take time to cultivate those relationships and modernize your emergency plans now. You could even contact your local [Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness](#) to review your emergency preparedness plan. It will be too late to familiarize yourself with them in the unfortunate event that a crisis strikes.

Thank you for serving Louisiana children and families,  
Dr. Cade Brumley

## Upcoming Deadlines

- July 17: [Round 4 ARPA Stabilization Grant Applications Due](#)

## Upcoming Events

- July 22: 17th Annual Cecil J. Picard Educator Excellence Awards Gala - Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Announced
- July 27: [Young Children with Disabilities Webinar: Promoting Inclusion in Early Childhood Settings](#)
- July 28: [New Director Webinar](#)
- August 10: [Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar](#)

## More Important Dates

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

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## Provider Updates

### REMINDER: Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar

The next monthly provider webinar will be held August 10, 2023. Providers can access the upcoming August provider webinar using the information below:

<b>Webinar Date/Time:</b>	Thursday, August 10 at 1 p.m.
<b>Webinar Link:</b>	<a href="https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93597745872">https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93597745872</a>
<b>Phone Number:</b>	1-312-626-6799
<b>Meeting ID:</b>	935 9774 5872
<b>Passcode:</b>	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 Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)-certified Family Child Care sites that have opted into or are interested in opting into Academic Approval. Onsite support and professional development is provided for teachers and other early childhood professionals by early childhood mental health specialists.

Visit the [TIKES](#) webpage for more information.

### NEW: Medicaid Post-COVID-19

Louisiana Medicaid currently provides health insurance coverage to just over two million individuals throughout the state. Due to the continuous coverage requirement of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, Medicaid has not ended coverage for most members since March 2020.

The Act authorizing continuous coverage is now ending, however. In late April 2023, Medicaid began sending letters and renewal packets to members where more information is needed to determine whether a member is still eligible. This process will occur over a 12-month time period.

For approximately half of Medicaid members, eligibility redeterminations require action from the member. Medicaid will send a letter requesting additional information from the member so the Louisiana Department of Health can properly redetermine members' eligibility. Members who have elected to use the self-service portal and receive email communication will receive an email.

For full details about Medicaid information, please review the [Medicaid Renewal Toolkit](#), email [mymedicaid@la.gov](mailto:mymedicaid@la.gov), or call 1-888-342-6207.

If unsure of whether or not teachers or providers have any kind of health insurance coverage, email [navigators@swlahec.com](mailto:navigators@swlahec.com), visit [www.GetCoveredLA.org](http://www.GetCoveredLA.org), or call 1-800-435-2432.

### REMINDER: Louisiana Healthcare Navigators—Connecting Early Childhood Care and Education Staff to Healthcare Options

The Louisiana Department of Education is partnering with the Southwest Louisiana Area Health Education Center (SWLAHEC) to connect early childhood educators with healthcare options. Early Childhood Healthcare Navigators for

a Healthy Louisiana are providing free one-on-one assistance to early childhood educators, checking eligibility for, applying for, and updating existing account information for Medicaid, LaCHIP, and/or Marketplace Insurance Plans.

Early Childhood Healthcare Navigators, serving every parish, will provide the following:

- Education on health insurance options
- Information on how to utilize health coverage
- Information on how to locate health care providers
- Information on how to access preventive care
- Flexible meeting times and locations
- Help to consumers to keep their information up-to-date
- Help to navigate the Health Insurance Marketplace
- Access to the Navigator Newsletter

To find out more about this free one-on-one assistance



- Scan the QR code and fill out the short online form or complete the [sign up form](#) using this link
- Email [navigators@swlahec.com](mailto:navigators@swlahec.com)
- Visit [www.GetCoveredLA.org](http://www.GetCoveredLA.org) or call 1-800-435-2432

Contact [shallan.jones@la.gov](mailto:shallan.jones@la.gov) with any questions about this opportunity.

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## UPDATES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

### **NEW: All 2024 Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year finalists will be honored at the 17th Annual Cecil J. Picard Educator Excellence Awards Gala**

Ten teachers and leaders representing early childhood care and education sites across the state will be recognized as finalists for the 2024 Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year awards. This is the second year the LDOE has presented these awards, which are designed to honor the early education teachers and administrators who care for and educate infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Winners of these awards will be announced on July 22 at the 17th Annual Cecil J. Picard Educator Excellence Awards Gala in New Orleans.

More information about the Teacher and Leader of the Year Finalists can be found in this [press release](#).

For more information about the Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year awards, contact [shallan.jones@la.gov](mailto:shallan.jones@la.gov).

### **REMINDER: 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 on-demand resources include:

- [The Magic of Music in the Classroom](#) (blog)
- [How to Build Better Relationships with Students](#) (blog)
- [Concept Development During Science and Beyond](#) (blog)
- [Building a Culture of CLASS®](#) (podcast)

Visit [teachstone.com](https://teachstone.com) for more information about the Learning Community.

**NEW: Teaching Strategies GOLD® Webinars and Resources**

The new Teaching Strategies Teacher App (Beta) is now available. The teacher mobile app offers an easy, efficient way to quickly complete essential daily tasks whether online or offline.

With the Teaching Strategies Teacher app, teachers can:

- make the most of every moment with all Mighty Minutes at their fingertips
- effectively and efficiently engage and communicate with families
- capture observations in the moment

The app can be downloaded from the [Apple App Store](#) and the [Google Play Store](#).

Teaching Strategies also offers several [on-demand recorded webinars](#) for early childhood teachers and leaders. Visit the [Learning in Action Library](#) for tips and classroom support.

**NEW: Young Children with Disabilities (YCWD) Community of Practice Webinar**

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 July Community of Practice will focus on “Promoting Inclusion in Early Childhood settings” by providing information related to inclusive practices. Participants can access the YCWD Community of Practice webinar using the information below:

<b>Webinar Date/Time:</b>	Thursday, July 27 at 2:00 p.m.
<b>Webinar Link:</b>	<a href="https://zoom.us/j/6920610085?">https://zoom.us/j/6920610085?</a>
<b>Phone Number:</b>	1-312-626-6799
<b>Meeting ID:</b>	692 061 0085
<b>Passcode:</b>	gyiy3F

Contact [caitlyn.robinson@la.gov](mailto:caitlyn.robinson@la.gov) with any questions.

**UPDATES FOR FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT**

**NEW: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Stabilization Grant Round 4**

The Department launched an [application](#) on July 6, 2023, for a fourth and final round of ARPA Stabilization Grants for open Type I, II, and III licensed early learning centers and Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)-Certified Family Child Care providers and In-Home providers.

To be eligible for Round 4 of the ARPA Stabilization Grant, providers must be:

- licensed or registered and operational;
- serving CCAP children by May 31, 2023; and
- in compliance with all prior grant surveys and audit requests from Postlewaite & Netterville (P&N).

Additionally, data as of May 31, 2023, will be used to determine grant amounts. Please note:

- 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.
- Since this is the last round of grants and federal deadlines must be adhered to, the Department will **NOT** be able to follow up on incomplete applications as was done in the past.
- Please ensure all assurances are signed. If a Type I, Type II, family child care, or in-home provider's registration as a vendor through the Louisiana Division of Administration is incomplete, the Department will not follow up on the incomplete applications.

The deadline to submit the Round 4 ARPA Grant application is July 17, 2023.

Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

**NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Household Redeterminations**

The Department is currently experiencing a large influx of redetermination applications, change reports, email inquiries, and Provider Help Desk tickets. The teams are working to process tasks as quickly as possible.

Please note that cases are being processed in order of receipt. All cases will be processed and notices will be sent to the client and the provider upon determining eligibility and making submitted changes.

For applications or verifications completed more than 30 days ago, send an email to [ldccap@la.gov](mailto:ldccap@la.gov) for confirmation of receipt. The Department is working to increase efficiencies in responding to provider queries more promptly.

Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

**REMINDER: ARPA Stabilization Grant Assessment (Rounds 1 & 2)**

The LDOE is conducting a grant assessment related to the ARPA Stabilization grants and has partnered with Postlethwaite and Netterville (P&N) to collect information regarding the use of these funds.

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.

Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions. For technical assistance with completing requests for documents from P&N, contact P&N at [info@LDOE-pnsurvey.com](mailto:info@LDOE-pnsurvey.com).

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

The LDOE CCAP team sends notifications of upcoming redeterminations to providers and families monthly.

As the Department works to streamline its processes, it is still critically important that families 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) or if the case is deemed ineligible.

The Department appreciates providers' assistance in ensuring families submit the redetermination application and all required documents to prevent 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. As a reminder, if the

application is not received by the 15th of the redetermination month, the client and the provider will receive a Notice of Terminated Services effective for the last day of the month.

Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

**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, KinderConnect, is examined as part of the underutilization review. Authorizations must be utilized by families within a 30-day period to maintain CCAP certification.

If CCAP children are not attending, the Department will issue a first notice to families at the mailing address on file, advising families of non-usage of authorizations. If CCAP children appear on the report a second time, families will lose their CCAP authorizations. The family’s case will be placed in “pend close” status, and the provider and family will receive a Notice of Termination of Service for the end of the current month. Families will need to reapply for CCAP and will be placed on the waitlist, if deemed eligible.

Contact the Provider Help Desk at (225) 250-7635 or (225) 252-9543 or enter a [ticket](#) in the Provider Help Desk Ticket System with any questions.

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

The Louisiana Department of Education has transitioned to KinderConnect as the mandatory attendance tracking system for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

KinderConnect is continuing to host webinars to help with the transition to this new system. A list of available KinderConnect webinars and training have been updated on the [EdLink Support](#) page.

For KinderConnect time and attendance system questions call 1-888-829-9258 or email [supportLA@kindersystems.com](mailto:supportLA@kindersystems.com). Support staff at KinderSystems are available Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

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

**NEW: Office of Public Health Child Care Guidelines**

With the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Office of Public Health has decided to no longer update the Louisiana-specific guidance. Child care providers should refer to the [Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning](#) posted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention instead.

Contact the local [Office of Public Health](#) with any questions.

**NEW: Waiver Extended for 16- Year-Olds as Staff Members**

In September 2022, the LDOE granted a waiver of the provisions in 1707.D. of [Bulletin 137- Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations](#), which provides as follows:

**1707. Required Staff**

#### D. Staff

1. Staff shall be aged 18 or older.
2. A person age 17 may be included in the child-to-staff ratio if the person works under the supervision of an adult staff member.

The waiver was granted to all child care providers in order to address staff shortages by adjusting the minimum age requirement for all staff members in Bulletin 137, 1701.D.1. Under this waiver, a center may allow a person age 16 to be included in the child-to-staff ratio if the person works under the direct supervision of an adult staff member. This waiver will continue to be in effect until December 31, 2023.

Contact the site's [licensing consultant](#) with any questions.

#### **NEW: Water Activities Clarification**

With the summer underway, Licensing has been receiving requests for clarification about the difference in “water activities” vs. “water play activities.” A “water activity” is a water-related activity in which children are in, on, near and accessible to, or immersed in, a body of water, including but not limited to a swimming pool, wading pool, water park, river, lake, or beach.

- Children under age 3 shall not engage in water activities due to the risk of contamination and disease.

A “water play activity” is a water-related activity in which there is no standing water, including but not limited to fountains, sprinklers, water slip-and-slides and water tables. Prior to activities, written parental authorization for any water activities or water play activities must be obtained.

Contact the site's [licensing consultant](#) with any questions.

#### **REMINDER: Motor Vehicle Passenger Checks**

As a reminder, the negative consequences of extreme heat are so significant that Louisiana has a [law](#) prohibiting leaving children unattended in a vehicle.

- A first offense for leaving a child under the age of six unattended or unsupervised in a car will net a fine of up to \$500 or imprisonment up to six months or both.
- Each subsequent offense will result in felony imprisonment for no less than one year and a fine of no less than \$1,000.

As required in [Bulletin 137](#) §2017, Motor Vehicle Passenger Checks, it is imperative that vehicles are adequately inspected for children before staff exit the vehicle, especially with outside temperatures: **Children can die in a hot vehicle in a matter of minutes.**

Each vehicle shall have a vehicle passenger check and a face-to-name count conducted at each of the following times:

- prior to leaving center for destination
- upon arrival at each destination
- prior to departure from each destination and
- upon return to center

A staff person shall

- physically walk through the vehicle and inspect all seat surfaces, under all seats, and in all enclosed spaces and recesses of the interior of the vehicle
- record the time of the visual passenger check and sign the log, indicating that no child was left in the vehicle

Contact the site's [licensing consultant](#) with any questions.

### **REMINDER: EdLink Licensing System and Training Opportunities**

All providers must use the EdLink system to submit new Licensing applications, renewal Licensing applications, Licensing request changes, and to access the Department's new attendance system, KinderConnect.

Please note:

Renewal applications

- must be submitted prior to the first day of the month in which the current license expires in order to ensure that there is no interruption of service and authorizations are not dropped
  - For example, if the center's license expires September 1, 2023, the renewal application must be submitted by August 31, 2023.
- can be started up to 90 days prior to the expiration date
- must include all required documentation

The Department is offering multiple [EdLink trainings](#) where providers will be given instructions for accessing and navigating the system. For the month of July, training is scheduled for Mondays only. It is highly recommended that providers attend each session in the order in which they are listed. All sessions do require pre-registration, through the links below, so please register early, and note that space is limited.

- Accessing EdLink, 12:00-1:00 p.m.  
[https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUtcOyhqDlrG9LjFxCt\\_RBvBnA5s2-xVt](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUtcOyhqDlrG9LjFxCt_RBvBnA5s2-xVt)
- Completing Type I, II, and III New and Renewal Applications, 2:00-3:30 p.m.  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUvd-uqqTktHdBwg7WD49LP6q-jy5lwXQg->
- Completing In Home and Family Home Renewal Applications, 6:00-7:30 p.m.  
[https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsd-msrzovHdVLyHzqvout1isT\\_fMlx79P](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsd-msrzovHdVLyHzqvout1isT_fMlx79P)

For questions regarding EdLink, please submit a ticket in the [EdLink Support Ticket System](#) or visit the Department's [EdLink Training](#) page to access training videos and training manuals at any time. For detailed guidance and screenshots on how to register in EdLink and for access to other resources, please visit the Department's [EdLink Support](#) page.

### **REMINDER: Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) 5-Year Renewal and Fingerprint Vendor Transition**

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, through the LDOE CCCBC system.

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 not renewed in time. As a reminder, fingerprint resubmission is required for renewal applications. A hard identification card, such as a state-issued driver's license or state identification card, is required to submit fingerprints; LA Wallet or a digital driver's license is not acceptable.

In addition to providers monitoring all staff members' expiration dates to ensure timely renewal, please also remind therapists, contractors, and other recurring visitors to renew CCCBCs in a timely manner in order to provide continued services and notify visitors about the new fingerprinting vendor and new fingerprinting sites.



To prevent delays in the processing of Child Care Criminal Background applications, please follow the steps below, in the following order:

1. Create a new hire or renewal application in the [CCCBC System](#)
2. Verify the applicant's email address is correct and matches the email used for the CCCBC application
3. Upload
  - a. a current [initial consent and disclosure form](#) and
  - b. valid driver's license in the CCCBC System
4. The applicant will then receive an email containing a link from IDEMIA to pre-enroll and schedule a fingerprinting appointment.

The provider and applicant can view status updates in the CCCBC System. Note that CCCBCs cannot be processed until applications are submitted into the CCCBC System and fingerprints are submitted.

Note that on Monday, May 8, 2023, fingerprinting for the CCCBC system transitioned from fingerprint vendor Gemalto to IDEMIA. The new fingerprinting vendor, IDEMIA, offers two payment options: payment at the time of service by credit card, business check, or money order made payable to IDEMIA, or "No Charge Authorization Codes" (NCACs), also referred to as coupon codes. Please note that NCACs will no longer be entered when scheduling appointments online. Instead, applicants using NCACs are now required to bring their codes with them to their fingerprinting appointment.

Please view the [detailed instructions](#) to create a No Charge Authorization Code account. NCAC account setup may take up to a week for processing. Completed Authorization forms should be faxed to 952-945-3326 or e-mailed to [LAUEPACCOUNTS@US.IDEMIA.com](mailto:LAUEPACCOUNTS@US.IDEMIA.com). Cash is **not** an acceptable payment option.

Please view a list of [current fingerprinting locations](#); this list will be updated as new sites are added. The following additional fingerprint sites have gone, or are scheduled to go, live in recent and coming weeks:

- Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff (Amite) – June 30
- East Feliciana Parish Sheriff (Clinton), Franklinton, Iberville Parish Sheriff (Plaquemine) – week of July 10
- Bossier Parish Sheriff (Benton), Franklin Parish Sheriff (Winnsboro), St. James Parish Sheriff (Convent), Ouachita Parish Sheriff (Monroe), Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff (Hammond) – week of July 17
- St. Helena, Vernon, Webster – late July (tentative)
- Geismar – week of July 24
- Lincoln, St. Martin, Vermillion, Jackson, and Rapides–tentative dates will be available soon

Fees for fingerprinting services going forward are as follows:

- State and Federal Livescan: \$55.75 (\$60.75 if the site selected for appointment is a Sheriff's Office)
- State and Federal Hard Version Fingerprint Card for former Louisiana Residents: \$55.00
- Former Louisiana Residents Livescan: Same as above, with an additional \$39.99 convenience fee

Contact the CCCBC team with any questions or for assistance by emailing [LDECCCBCprocessing@la.gov](mailto:LDECCCBCprocessing@la.gov). For IDEMIA finance and NCAC questions, contact 877-512-6962, or for UEID and scheduling assistance, contact 844-539-5543.

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## 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 "What is TIKES Mental Health Consultation and What Can It Do for My Program?" Participants will gain a better understanding of how to improve the approaches to learning in early learning settings.

**Webinar Date/Time:** July 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](mailto:tella.henderson@la.gov) with any questions.

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## 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:

- July 18: Teachstone 2nd Edition Transition
- July 25: SFY24 Budgets and eGMS Reminders  
*Community Network Lead Agencies should include business office staff, anyone who interacts with eGMS, and/or fiscal office staff at the local level to this webinar.*
- August 1: TS Gold Updates for 2023-2024
- August 8: Early Childhood Updates

Note that topics are subject to change. Contact [devon.camarota@la.gov](mailto:devon.camarota@la.gov) with any questions.

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## IN THE NEWS

[CHNOLA Receives \\$1M from Agenda for Children](#) (Biz New Orleans)

[Frog Street Forms Advisory Council of Early Childhood Leaders](#) (PRNewswire)

[La. Lawmakers Approve Millions in Funding to Help Low-Income Families Afford Proper Childcare](#) (WAFB.com)

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## CONTACT US



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

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