

NEWSLETTER

News for Early Childhood Educators

January 14, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

I know last week was challenging for all of us. In addition to our normal lives, we continue to be impacted by COVID-19. Further, last week's events at the Capitol were staggering. I will see those images forever.

Let's be mindful of the courageous educators who, while still processing their own emotions, allowed room for children to do the same in safe spaces. Regardless of the world outside school and center walls, inside Louisiana classrooms teachers are rising to meet the needs of children. This, again, shows how and why our teachers are essential workers.

Earlier this month, Governor Edwards announced that early childhood centers (birth to age four) and school employees are included in Phase 2 of the state's vaccine rollout. It was welcomed news that shows the essential role our educators play to not only their schools and centers, but to our society. We are working with the Louisiana Department of Health and will share more details with you as soon as possible.

While it is more important than ever for us to continue following our mitigation efforts, know that we are entering the final chapters of the pandemic. Thank you for serving children and families during these difficult circumstances. Together, we will defeat this virus and ensure our children continue to receive high-quality early care and education.

Dr. Cade Brumley
State Superintendent of Education

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Upcoming Deadlines

- January 20 - Last day to submit responses to the Fourth [Survey](#) on the Impact of COVID-19 on Child Care Providers
- February 5 - Last day to submit a design for the 2021 Teacher Leader Summit T-Shirt Design Contest
- February 12 - 2021–2022 deadline for school systems to submit Super App
- February 12 - Last day to submit responses to the Louisiana Early Learning and Development Standards [Survey](#)
- February 28 - Deadline to submit February Child Count

Upcoming Events

- January 21 - [ECCE Commission meeting](#)
- January 22 - [Director Training Webinar](#)
- January 30 - [Webinar - Stress: What is it Good For?](#)
- February 24 - [TIKES Wellness Wednesdays](#) begin
- May 25–27 - 2021 Teacher Leader Summit

More Important Dates

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

Monthly Mental Health

Self-Care Tip for Providers

Use self-care routines throughout your day. Start and end each day with a self-care practice. For example, you might want to start your day with exercise, and end your day with deep-breathing exercises. Look for small ways to take care of yourself throughout your day.

NEW: TIKES Wellness Wednesdays

Taking care of young children is important work and it can be stressful-especially during a global health crisis! Join TIKES mental health consultants for TIKES Wellness Wednesdays beginning February 24. The sessions will be every Wednesday through April via Zoom. Each week the consultant will lead participants through various stress reduction and self-care topics tailored for early childhood educators. We look forward to seeing you there!

Webinar Date: February 24, 2021

Webinar Time: 12 p.m.

Webinar Link:

<https://tulanehipaa.zoom.us/j/99180170548?pwd=RWc1c3lWUUUs2UE50SlBnVjYkZ3BkUT09>

Webinar Phone Number: 1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID#: 99180170548

Please contact michelle.demeulenaere@la.gov with any questions.

Updates for COVID-19

NEW: COVID-19 Vaccine Updates

The LDH has provided a variety of information regarding the COVID-19 Vaccine. Early childhood centers and school employees are included in Phase 2 of the state's vaccine rollout.

[COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccine - What You Need to Know](#)

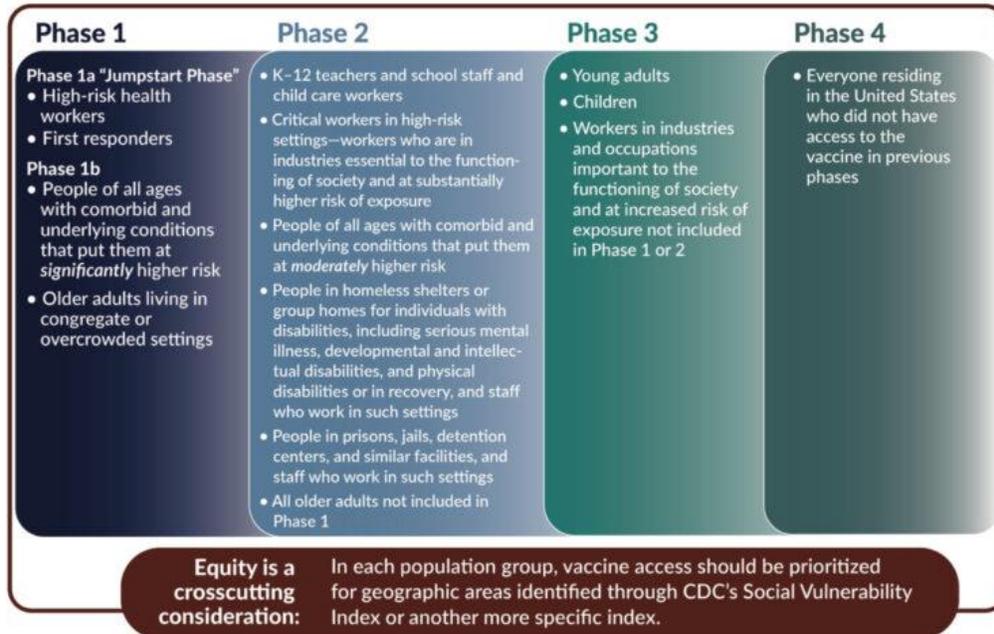


FIGURE S-2 A phased approach to vaccine allocation for COVID-19.

NEW: Notification of Temporary Center Closure Due to Exposure or Confirmed COVID-19 Case

When an early learning center receives notice that COVID-19 has been confirmed for a child or staff member, the following should take place:

- Immediate notification to the Department (Division of Licensing) using the [Critical Reportable Incident Form](#). Indicate:
 - If it is a staff member or child (include age of child)
 - Time frame of center closure, if applicable
 - Time frame of classroom closure, if applicable
- Immediate notification to all staff and parents enrolled at the center
- Refer to the [Office of Public Health Childcare Guidelines](#)

Questions can be directed to a [Licensing Consultant](#) at 225-342-9905 or ldelicensing@la.gov.

NEW: Fourth Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on Child Care Providers

The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children is conducting a fourth [survey](#) to learn how the COVID-19 outbreak is continuing to impact child care providers in Louisiana. The survey is being conducted in partnership with the United Way and resource and referral agencies across the state. Participation in the survey will help with understanding what is happening with child care in Louisiana throughout the outbreak and since the reopening of the state. Findings from the earlier surveys were instrumental in informing recovery efforts and advocating for more help for the sector.

All providers are encouraged to complete this [survey](#), answering as many questions as possible, even if they did not participate in the earlier surveys. Providers may complete the fourth survey online by visiting: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KT5DZ5F>. Responses are requested by Wednesday, January 20.

For any questions, please contact info@policyinstitutela.org.

Reminder: Webinar for Early Childhood Providers - Recording Available

On December 18, the Department hosted a [webinar](#) for early childhood providers which included general updates in addition to information about COVID-19 testing and vaccines. [Presentation slides](#) and a [recording](#) of this webinar are available on the [COVID-19 Landing Page](#) on the Louisiana Believes website.

Updates for Teaching and Learning

NEW: Updates to Observations and Coaching Visits

In response to the increased COVID-19 incidence and positivity rate across the state, the Department paused in-person observations and coaching visits conducted by external observers and coaches beginning December 7. Wherever possible, lead agencies, the ULL Picard Center, and CCR&Rs have been working with sites to conduct scheduled observations and coaching visits virtually. The Department will provide more information about resuming in-person observations and coaching visits as appropriate.

Please contact michael.bock@la.gov with any questions.

NEW: Updates on Early Childhood Performance Ratings

At the December BESE meeting, BESE approved a one-time emergency rule for the 2020–2021 academic year that allows any classroom that received a Fall score (after applicable third party replacement) of 4.50 or higher to be exempted from a local observation in the Spring semester. Classrooms eligible for an exemption from local observations may still receive a third party observation in the Spring. The Department has been collaborating with lead agencies to finalize implementation guidance which will be available no later than February 1.

Please contact michael.bock@la.gov with any questions.

NEW: Update to Eligibility for Staff School Readiness Tax Credits

At the December BESE meeting, BESE approved a one-time emergency rule that will reduce the work requirement for School Readiness Tax Credit (SRTC) eligibility from six months to 300 hours for the 2020 tax year. A center director or staff member will have to verify that they have worked at the same early learning center for at least 300 hours in the calendar year in order to meet the work requirement in 2020 to remain eligible for SRTC.

For questions regarding SRTC please contact demita.allen2@la.gov.

NEW: Early Learning and Development Standards Survey

The LDOE is eliciting feedback from early childhood professionals and stakeholders regarding the [Louisiana Early Learning and Development Standards](#), including the usability and the application of these standards. Please complete this [brief survey](#) by February 12, 2021. Responses from this survey will be used to guide conversations for a review of the current standards.

Contact leslie.doyle@la.gov with questions or concerns.

NEW: Teacher Leader Summit 2021 – Seat allocations

The 2021 Teacher Leader Summit will take place May 25–27 at the Morial Convention Center in New Orleans. Both the Department and the Convention Center are taking measures to promote the health and safety of all participants and, as a result, there is a reduced overall capacity.

Due to social distancing parameters, the Department has allocated a specific allotment of seats to each school system and each early childhood lead agency for the in-person event. Last month, the Department notified early childhood lead agencies of their total number of seats.

- To best assist lead agencies in determining to whom they should distribute their allocated seats, the Department has released a [one-pager](#) outlining which content will be delivered in-person and which content to expect to be delivered virtually.
- Participants who register for the in-person Summit will also have access to Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series, though a separate registration will be required in order to participate. Participants who register for the Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series will only have access to the virtual content. Specific information regarding how to register for the Virtual Series will be released later in the spring via normal communication channels.

Please contact ldoeevents@la.gov with questions.

NEW: Teacher Leader Summit Registration

[Registration](#) for the Teacher Leader Summit opened January 8 and will occur in three phases:

- Early bird registration via allocation (January 8 through March 1)
- Regular registration via allocation (March 2 through April 12)
- First-come, first-serve registration for any remaining tickets (opens April 13)

Note: Due to capacity constraints, there will be no onsite registration this year. All registrations must be completed in advance of arriving at the event.

During the registration process, the code sent to school systems and early childhood lead agencies must be entered. Once the code has reached its maximum number of uses, no other registrations will be accepted for that code. Should an educator register for the event and it is later determined the educator is no longer able to attend, a refund should be requested via Eventbrite.

The Department is unable to transfer tickets automatically from one educator to another. The school system or early childhood lead agency will need to reach out to the Department at ldoeevents@la.gov to determine the best next steps for registering the educator who is “taking the place” of the educator who can no longer attend, which may include increasing the number of uses on their particular registration code.

Description	1-Day Ticket	3-Day Ticket
Early Bird Registration (January 10–March 1)	\$60	\$118

Regular Registration (March 2–April 12)	\$77	\$152
First Come, First Served* (April 13–May 10)	\$77	\$152

*should any seats remain

Participants who [register](#) for the in-person Summit will also have access to Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series, though a separate registration will be required in order to participate. Participants who register for the Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series will only have access to the virtual content. General Summit information can be found in the [overview document](#) posted to the Teacher Leader Library.

Note: When registering, the access code must be entered for available tickets to populate. Without entering the access code, no tickets will show as available.

Please contact ldoeevents@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: 2021 Teacher Leader Summit T-Shirt Design Contest

The Department is seeking inspiration for the 2021 Teacher Leader Summit t-shirt design! Educators and students with an artistic flair are encouraged to submit their design for consideration by February 5 to ldoecommunications@la.gov. The winning school will receive \$1 per shirt sold.

The winning design will be announced in the March edition of the Teacher Leader newsletter. Reference the [contest rules](#) for details or contact ldoeevents@la.gov with questions.

Updates for Funding and Enrollment

NEW: Updates on 2021–2022 Enrollment Eligibility

The Federal Government has announced that updated income eligibility guidance (federal poverty guidelines) will be announced between January 18 and January 22. The Department is preparing a webinar for updated eligibility guidance to reflect these changes. Information will be shared at the Lead Agency Office Hours weekly webinar on February 2 at 3:00 p.m.

For more information about eligibility, please email lindsey.bradford@la.gov.

Reminder: LA 4 and NSECD Enrollment

Please ensure that enrollment data and attendance sheets are up to date. In January, the Department will pay for these seats based on *enrollment* as previously communicated.

Please email lindsey.bradford@la.gov with any questions.

Reminder: CCAP Provider Payments

CCAP has extended child care payments to providers based on *enrollment* through March 31, 2021. After March 31, payments to providers will be based on *attendance*.

Reminder: CCAP Attendance

While CCAP has extended payments based on *enrollment* until March 31, providers are still required to use either the Tracking of Time Services (TOTS) Point of Service (POS) device or Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system to track attendance. Failure to do so may jeopardize provider payments based on enrollment. For assistance with TOTS, please email Jackie.Droddy2@la.gov or contact Conduent at 1-888-281-0326.

For more information regarding the reminders noted above or other CCAP queries, please email the Provider Ticket System at <https://provider.supportsystem.com> or call the Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635.

Updates for Licensed Centers, Family Child Care and In-Home Providers**NEW: Critical Incidents and Required Notifications – Head Incident Due to a Fall**

Within the last few weeks, the Department has been notified of serious falling incidents involving children who have sustained head injuries. It is required, in addition to notifying the Department and parents when a child sustains a possible head injury, that providers must make immediate notification to emergency personnel. Staff should check for the following signs and symptoms (taken from American Red Cross CPR-AED for Professional Rescuers and Healthcare Professional's handbook):

- Changes in consciousness
- Severe pain or pressure in the head, neck or spine
- Loss of balance
- Partial or complete loss of movement of any body part
- Tingling or loss of sensation in the hands, fingers, feet or toes
- Persistent headache
- Unusual bumps, bruises or depressions on the head, neck or back
- Seizures
- Blood or other fluids in the ears or nose
- External bleeding of the head, neck or back
- Impaired breathing or vision as a result of the injury
- Nausea or vomiting
- Bruising of the head, especially around the eyes and behind the ears

Child care centers should ensure that proper protocols are followed after all medical emergency incidents have taken place.

Questions can be directed to a [Licensing Consultant](#) at 225-342-9905 or ldelicensing@la.gov.

NEW: Continuing Education Requirement

In July of 2020, BESE approved the waiver for §1721.A.1 of Bulletin 137: Continuing Education requirements for the period of March 1, 2020 – February 28, 2021. Starting March 1, 2021, the Department will resume observing the annual 12 continuing hours. All trainings shall be conducted by trainers approved by the Department and copies of the certificates or transcripts shall be maintained at the center and available for inspections by the department upon request.

Questions can be directed to a [Licensing Consultant](#) at 225-342-9905 or ldelicensing@la.gov.

Updates for Directors

NEW: Webinar – Stress: What is it Good For?

Tulane Mental Health is offering a new webinar. Through this presentation, TIKES mental health consultants will help teachers and directors rethink stress and how to support self-care during difficult times.

Webinar Date and Time: January 30 at 10 a.m.

Webinar Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85061559652?pwd=NXRuNndXRvcyOVRLQXVxYzJOdEIOQT09>

Webinar Phone Number: 1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID#: 850 6155 9652

Please contact michelle.demeulenaere@la.gov with any questions.

New: Director Training Webinar

The Department is hosting a webinar for directors so they can learn about Louisiana’s early learning system and meet other directors across the state. Topics include:

- Community resources
- Quality teacher-child interactions
- LDOE supports

Webinar Date and Time: January 22 at 12:30 p.m.

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97323903322>

Webinar Phone Number: 312-626-6799, 97323903322#

Meeting ID#: 973 2390 3322

Please contact emmy.odwyer@la.gov with any questions.

Updates for Lead Agencies

NEW: Coordinated Enrollment

Due to circumstances surrounding COVID-19, the Department is providing multiple options for gathering program partner signatures for the 2021-2022 Coordinated Enrollment Plan signature page.

Options for obtaining program partner signatures include:

- Option 1: Send program partners a brief survey that asks the program partner to input their name and responds to a question stating they participated in the planning process for coordinated enrollment. Survey responses should be submitted as a PDF.
- Option 2: Send an email to program partners requesting an email response stating participation in the planning process for coordinated enrollment. Email responses should be in PDF form to upload into the JotForm.

Contact amanda.colon@la.gov with questions.

NEW: Get Ready Cohort Opportunity

All community networks interested in learning more about becoming a Ready Start Network are invited to join the 2021 Get Ready Cohort. These will be a series of interactive webinars that explore the four pillars of Ready Start Networks: blueprint, coalition, governance, and fundraising. These webinars will

feature current Ready Start Network leaders and provide guidance to prepare for the Ready Start Network Cohort 4 application. Interested community networks should [sign up](#) by January 29.

Contact amy.poirier@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: Weekly Webinar

The Early Childhood Team provides Office Hours every Tuesday for lead agency contacts to provide updates and answer questions for lead agencies.

Upcoming Schedule for Weekly Webinar for Lead Agencies

- January 12 – Updates for February 1 Child Count
- January 19 – Tulane Mental Health Presentation (extended to 1 hour)
- January 26 – TS GOLD Updates
- February 2 – Updates on 2021–2022 Enrollment Eligibility
- February 9 – General Updates

Contact amanda.colon@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: 2021–2022 Super App - Improving Early Childhood Access and Quality

To prepare for the upcoming Super App submission on February 12, school systems should work with their early childhood community network lead agency to complete the early childhood components of Super App. Guidance for completing the 2021–2022 Super App is provided can be found in the [Early Childhood Super App Guidance Document](#), [informational webinar deck](#) and [webinar recording](#).

Send all questions related to school system planning and Super App to LDOE.grantshelpdesk@la.gov and include “Super App” in the subject line.

NEW: Ready Start Network Recognition

Recently, [local news media](#) recognized Ready Start Lafayette's incredible work to increase access for children birth through three through the PDG Seats Pilot. The PDG Seats Pilot aims to increase quality and access to care for the state's youngest economically disadvantaged learners. These children receive tuition-free care and participating centers receive additional supports to improve quality care and learning in their center.

The work highlighted in this news story is happening across the state in the thirteen networks distributing PDG Seats to over 500 birth through three-year-old children. Has your work received media recognition? Please email amanda.colon@la.gov with any media mentions.

Resources

NEW: Resources to Support Children in the Wake of the Violent Mob in the U.S. Capitol

The National Head Start Association (NHSA) recently published [information](#) about a variety of topics relevant to supporting children in response to current events, including the recent activities at the U.S. Capitol. Additional information includes topics such as talking to children about tragedy and self care for educators and parents. For more information about NHSA you can visit the association's [homepage](#).

Reminder: TIKES Mental Health Consultation

Tulane offers TIKES Mental Health Consultation via telephone or secure video platform to Louisiana caregivers in need during the COVID-19 crisis. Type I, II, & III child care centers, parents, respite care center caregivers, and others caring for young children can request a consultation by completing a

[request form](https://medicine.tulane.edu/departments/clinical-sciences/psychiatry/research/tikes). For more information visit: <https://medicine.tulane.edu/departments/clinical-sciences/psychiatry/research/tikes>.

Other

Early Childhood Care and Education Commission - January 21

The next meeting for the [Early Childhood Care and Education Commission](#) will take place on January 21 at 11 a.m. Participants can join the meeting via [Zoom](#). For additional information, please email leslie.doyle@la.gov.

NOTICE: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance at this meeting please contact leslie.doyle@la.gov at least three business days in advance of the meeting describing the assistance that is needed.

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Early Childhood in the News

[More than \\$1 billion earmarked for Louisiana public schools to combat pandemic](#) (The Advocate)

[OPINION: To solve the workforce crisis, America has to invest in child care](#) (The Hechinger Report)

[Need meals while New Orleans public schools are closed? Find locations, times here](#) (The Times-Picayune)



Contact

For questions regarding COVID-19, school closures, or other concerns, please contact LDOECOVID19@la.gov

For questions regarding licensing, or child health and safety, please contact LDElicensing@la.gov.

For questions regarding lead agencies, please contact leadagency-support@la.gov.

For all questions regarding child care criminal background check processing, please contact LEeccbcprocessing@la.gov.

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