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February 1, 2018



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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

Ensuring a prepared, professional teacher is available in every classroom is essential to preparing all Louisiana children for kindergarten. Now there are 14 programs across the state that offer high-quality preparation opportunities to child care lead teachers through their Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs.

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs are teacher preparation programs that prepare child care lead-teachers to earn coursework that qualifies them for their CDA or technical diploma, while also providing high-quality opportunities for applied practice, feedback and coaching to support teachers to grow. Child care teachers use scholarships to participate in these programs and are typically eligible for increasing tax credits upon completion. In fact, teachers who earn their certificate and stay in the sector are eligible for up to \$3,300 in tax credits each year.

Last week, the State Board approved three additional Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs that will begin offering coursework this year. This means more lead teachers will be able to access these uniquely specialized, high-quality training programs. With the addition of these programs, there are now options available in most regions of the state, including options for coursework that is primarily based online. A full list of BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs can be found [here](#).

Beginning in July 2018, all lead teachers in Type III centers that are seeking to earn their [Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate](#) through a CDA or technical diploma will be expected to attend a BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Program. Throughout the course of this spring, the Department hopes to support up to seven additional programs to receive approval from BESE, further increasing the options available to meet teachers needs.

As a reminder, all lead teachers in publicly-funded child care centers are required to have their Ancillary Certificate by July 2019. Please note there are scholarships for teachers to pursue their Ancillary Certificate and there is no fee for the credential or the renewals. More information can be found in the [Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Frequently Asked Questions](#), or by contacting [Erin Carroll](#).

And as always, thank you for all you do for our children.

John

John White
Louisiana Department of Education

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Lead Agency Office Hours- *lead agencies only* : February 6 and February 20 at 3:00 p.m.

UPCOMING DEADLINES:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD Checkpoint: February 28, 2018
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

UPCOMING CHECKPOINT- TEACHING STRATEGIES GOLD

The second GOLD checkpoint must be completed by **February 28**. Teachers and administrators should begin finalization of the winter checkpoint approximately two weeks in advance of this deadline in order to be sure documentation for every child has been entered and that objectives have been assigned a level.

SAVE THE DATE- 2018 TEACHER LEADER SUMMIT

Please save the date for the 2018 Teacher Leader Summit in New Orleans at the Morial Convention Center. The 2018 Teacher Leader Summit will take place on **May 30-June 1**. An Early Childhood track will feature interactive sessions focusing on improvement efforts at the classroom, program and/or community level.

Additional information about the Teacher Leader Summit will be shared through lead agencies and future editions of the Early Childhood Connection Newsletter.

FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE NEW APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS

The Child Care Assistance Program is committed to a continued effort to efficiently meet the needs of children, families and childcare providers in Louisiana.

A new CCAP application submission process has been developed to align both the online and paper application and to ensure the process of applying for services is as simple and convenient as possible.

The new application submission process will capture all information needed to determine eligibility in the CAFÉ portal during the initial application submission. A recorded webinar on the new application submission process can be found [here](#).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL READINESS TAX CREDITS

This week, the Department released several resources to provide additional information about the School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC). Beginning with the 2018 tax year, several revisions will be in place for the SRTCs, further aligning these valuable credits with the unified early childhood system. The Department has released a [School Readiness Tax Credit Guide](#) providing an overview of the changes. A [recorded version](#) of the SRTC Webinar, and [slides](#) from that webinar, have also been posted.

For 2017 SRTC: As a reminder, there will be no changes to how teachers, directors, providers, families or businesses qualify for their 2017 School Readiness Tax Credits (these are the tax credits claimed early in the 2018 calendar year).

As additional support in preparing to file for your 2017 SRTC, the Department has updated a set of FAQ documents for each tax credit:

- [SRTC 2017 - FAQs for Staff and Directors](#)
- [SRTC 2017 - FAQs for Businesses](#)
- [SRTC 2017 - FAQs for Parents](#)
- [SRTC 2017 - FAQs for Child Care Providers](#)

2018 TAX YEAR CHANGES TO UNIFIED CCAP BONUS

Beginning in January 2018, the quarterly child care bonuses will change. The new Unified CCAP Quarterly Bonus will be based on 2018 Tax

Year Star Ratings, which were released via www.louisianaschools.com . The Unified CCAP Quarterly Bonus is a percentage of all payments from the Department for services provided during the quarter, using the percentages below:

Star Rating	Quarterly Unified Bonus Received for each Eligible Child in 2018
5 Star	23%
4 Star	16.5%
3 Star	11%
2 Star	6%
1 Star	0%

Centers will receive one more payment based on their 2017 Tax Year Star Rating for October, November, and December 2017 in February 2018. The Unified CCAP Quarterly Bonus for January, February, and March of 2018 will be paid in May 2018. To estimate your 2018 Unified CCAP Quarterly Bonus and other School Readiness Tax Credits, use the [SRTC Calculator](#) released in March 2017.

COORDINATED ENROLLMENT PLANNING FOR COMMUNITIES

Lead agencies and community networks are in the process of working together to develop and implement robust Coordinated Enrollment Plans that embody the above four systems, across the state.

The Coordinated Enrollment Plan webinar for Lead Agencies was held on Wednesday, November 29th. You can access the recorded webinar and slides [here](#).

Upcoming Action Items:

- Submit Child Count template to your FTP folder by February 28

For further questions , contact [Dominick Robinson](#) .

CHILD SAFETY AND WELFARE

CRITICAL INCIDENTS AND REQUIRED NOTIFICATION

In the event of an emergency, an early learning center shall make **immediate** notification to emergency personnel and other appropriate agencies. When these agencies have to be contacted, the Division of Licensing should also receive **immediate** notification. The Division of Licensing shall receive written notification by email within 24 hours which must include a completed Critical Incident Report form that contains **all** of the information related to the incident. [Bulletin 137](#) §1103.A.-E.

CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTS - COMPLETING AND UPDATING REPORT

A Critical Incident Report should provide a description of an emergency incident in its entirety. It should be descriptive and provide enough information for the Division of Licensing to determine who, what, when, where, and how the incident occurred. Early learning centers must update the Critical Incident Report, as needed. In some cases, the outcome of the emergency has not been determined. It is then necessary to update the Critical Incident Report form with any additional information as it becomes available and send it to the Division of Licensing.

CHOKING HAZARD

Choking is a leading cause of injury among children, especially in children 4 years of age or younger. An early learning center shall not serve children under age 4 , foods that pose a risk for choking incidents. Examples of these foods include, but are not limited to: whole hot dogs, hot dogs sliced in rounds, raw carrot rounds, whole grapes, hard candy, nuts, seeds, raw peas, hard pretzels, chips, peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows, spoonfuls of peanut butter, and chunks of meat larger than what can be swallowed whole. [Bulletin137](#) §1919.D.2

The United States Department of Agriculture has provided an online resource that can be printed:

[Supplement A: Practice Choking Prevention](#)

TRAINING FOR THE NEW CHILD CARE CIVIL BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM WEBINAR

The Early Learning Centers are invited to attend the upcoming Child Care Civil Background Check System webinars on **Wednesday**,

February 14, 2018 at 12:00 p.m. and **Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 12:00 p.m.** These webinars will include the same information on how to login, set up an account, apply for a background check, monitor the background checks, get results, and check eligibility. Please keep in mind, the background check changes will go into effect March 1, 2018. The webinar will be recorded and posted.

Please use the following information to join the webinars:

Meeting Name: Training for the New Child Care Civil Background Check System

Date and Time:

Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at 12:00 p.m.

and

Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 12:00 p.m.

To join the meeting: <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/earlychildhood/>

CHILD CARE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK INFORMATION

There were several roadshows held in September and October that provided information on the upcoming new Child Care Criminal Background Check (Child Care CBC). For those that were unable to attend, you can view the webinar [here](#). The [presentation slides](#), [FAQs](#), and a detailed [hand-out](#) on the important changes to the child care criminal background requirements can be found on the Department's [website](#). Please keep in mind, these changes will go into effect March 1, 2018.

For more information about Child Care CBCs, please email [Valerie Black](#)

THE DEPARTMENT APPROVES A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK WAIVER EXTENSION

On December 20, 2017, the Department approved a criminal background check (CBC) waiver extension requested by the Child Care Association of Louisiana (CCAL). The waiver now terminates on February 28, 2018. This waiver allows some relief on the CBC requirements due to unexpected delays. The waiver includes several stringent requirements in order to maintain the safety and health of children. This waiver applies to anyone who has recently submitted a fingerprint-based CBC request and has not received a response.

For more information on the criminal background check waiver, [click here](#)

For questions regarding this waiver, call Andrea Burl at 225-342-9905 or email LDElicensing@la.gov.

LEAD AGENCY SUPPORT

OFFICE HOURS FOR LEAD AGENCIES

The Early Childhood Team is holding weekly webinar/conference call question and answer sessions for lead agencies. The sessions are held on **Tuesdays from 3:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.** and all lead agency staff are invited to join. The Early Childhood team will provide updates and reminders. Additional topics covered will be determined by caller questions. A meeting invitation containing the connecting information has been sent to all lead agency contacts. Contact kaye.eichler@la.gov if you have questions.

Upcoming Schedule for Office Hours

- February 6
- February 20

COORDINATED ENROLLMENT REMINDERS

Lead agencies should keep in mind several important deadlines for coordinated enrollment over the next month.

- Child Count: The February 1 Child Count is due on February 28.

OTHER

BUREAU OF FAMILY HEALTH - BIENNIAL STATEWIDE PROVIDER SURVEY

The Bureau of Family Health's (BFH) Children's Special Health Services program invites all pediatric primary care providers and those who screen children age 0-5 years to participate in the biennial Statewide Provider Survey. Results will guide activities supporting children and their health care providers.

The survey takes 5-20 minutes to complete.

Respond by Wednesday, February 10th and enter to win one of three \$50 Amazon gift cards!

Respond by Wednesday, February 21st and enter to win one of three \$25 Amazon gift cards!

[Click here for survey registration!](#)

Questions? Contact Emily Mabile at emily.mabile@la.gov.

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