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February 15, 2018



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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,


Keeping Louisiana children safe is our most important mission. To ensure the safety of our most vulnerable children, the Department will be implementing new federal requirements for child care criminal background checks (CCCBCs) starting March 1, 2018. These new background checks will be required for individuals to work or assist in a child care setting.

The new background check will be more comprehensive than the current requirements. The new law:

- Affects all existing and new staff, volunteers and contractors;
- Requires a 5-point check that expires every 5 years; and
- Aims to ensure children are not exposed to sex offenders, child predators, an individual with a history of child abuse and neglect, or certain criminal offenses.

As of March 1, all new employees must have the new CCCBC. Following this, there will be a transition period for all existing staff and independent contractors to apply for a CCCBC by September 30, 2018.

Starting March 1, there will be a new online system to allow early learning centers to submit background check applications. The system will aid in the Department's goal of efficiently and accurately processing the CCCBCs.

As a reminder, the new background requirements apply to all new and existing staff, as well as those that provide services in early learning centers. More information can be found by viewing the [Early Childhood Criminal Background Check Webinar](#), or by contacting [Valerie Black](#) at (225) 342-5311 .

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

John

John White
Louisiana Department of Education
Twitter @LouisianaSupe

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Lead Agency Office Hours- *lead agencies only* : February 20 and February 27 at 3:00 p.m.

UPCOMING DEADLINES:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD Checkpoint: February 28, 2018

TEACHING AND LEARNING

ACTION ITEM- INFANT CLASSROOMS

To assist the Department with better understanding opportunities for infant care in order to support quality improvement, the Department is asking that lead agencies and sites work together to enter all infant classrooms in publicly-funded sites into the Early Childhood CLASS Portal by March 30.

These classrooms do not have to be observed, will not be included on Performance Profiles, and will not count as missing classrooms or be included in reports. By entering these classrooms, you will be supporting the Department to fully understand the scope of infant care and the need for resources to support quality improvement.

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](#). If you are having difficulty using this new submissions process, please contact LDECCAP at LDECCAP@LA.GOV or call 1877-453-2721, your case worker, or the Provider Help Desk for assistance.

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION AND CCAP COMPLETE APPLICATION WEBINAR

Eligibility Determination is a major component of the Coordinated Enrollment process. To assist Lead Agencies and interested partner providers, the Department is providing a recorded Eligibility Determination informational webinar.

This webinar features eligibility requirements for different programs, allowable documentation, and detailed instructions on how to make an accurate eligibility determination. It also includes important information on the new CCAP Complete Application Process. Lead Agencies and

other interested participants are welcome to use the information in this webinar for training purposes. The recorded webinar can be found here: <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/p9m0xtrn29eq/>

For questions, please contact [Lindsey Bradford](#)

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](#)

Questions should be sent to earlychildhood@la.gov.

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

CPR AND FIRST AID CERTIFICATIONS

As a child care provider, taking a training class and educating yourself in CPR and First Aid could be one of the most important things you can do. CPR and First Aid are life-saving techniques that can be used to respond to emergencies until paramedics arrive with more advanced care.

All Early Learning Centers shall have documentation of current certification in infant/child/adult CPR and Pediatric First Aid (PFA) for at least 50% or 4 staff members on the premises of a center and accessible to children [Bulletin 137](#) §1723 A.B.C. Copies of the certifications for each staff member shall be on-site at all times [Bulletin 137](#) §1723 D.

Pediatric first aid and infant/child/adult CPR training may count as continuing education in the anniversary year it was taken [Bulletin 137](#) §1721.F .

The continuing education may count up to no more than 4 hours for both CPR and PFA. Documentation may consist of the training attendance log that includes the date and time of the training and the name of the trainer. In class, hands on training provides an optimal learning experience.

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 [Bulletin 137](#) §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 webinar on Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 12:00 p.m. This webinar will include 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 in future newsletters.

Please use the following information to join the webinars:

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

Date and Time: 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.

LOUISIANA EARLY LEARNING CENTER EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

The Department would like to remind centers to be prepared for hurricanes and other regional disasters. Providers shall follow a written multi-hazard emergency and evacuation plan to protect children in the event of an emergency. The [Child Care Facility Toolkit](#) is a new resource to assist programs develop and enhance their Emergency plan. Early Learning Centers are encouraged to visit our Emergency Preparedness website to review templates of the Early Learning Center Basic Emergency Plan as well as the Early Learning Center Emergency Checklists. Early Learning centers will also find helpful information on how to engage families in disaster planning as well as resources to share with families in our [Louisiana Early Learning Center Emergency Plan](#).

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 20
- February 27

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

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL - FEBRUARY 21


The next Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 21 at 1 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Claiborne Building, 1201 N. 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA.

This meeting is open to the public and can be live streamed. Please click [here](#) for directions on accessing live streamed meetings.

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LDOE Contacts

John White
State Superintendent of Education
(toll-free) 877.453.2721 
Twitter @LouisianaSupe

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