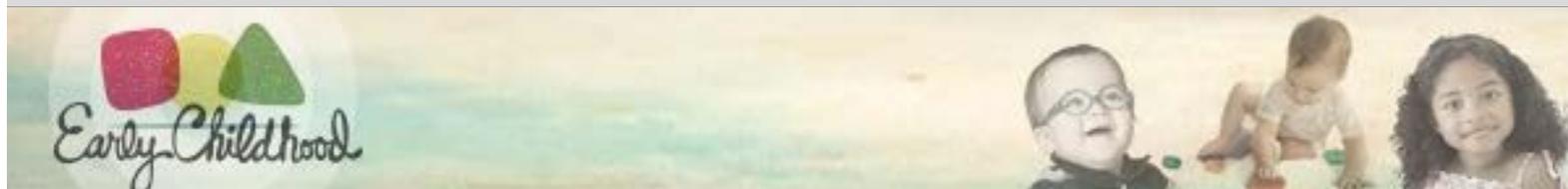


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March 1, 2018

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## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

Our shared goal is to help every child enter kindergarten ready. To do so we must understand what is happening in every early childhood classroom. In Louisiana we now have a common tool and language - the CLASS system - for observing classrooms and providing feedback. This feedback has been critical to helping teachers improve the experiences for children ages birth to five across our state.

Over the past several years, lead agencies and sites have worked together to familiarize themselves with using the CLASS online system to schedule observations and share the data collected in the classrooms all around our state for our pre-K and toddler classrooms. They have been using the data from observations to better support pre-K and toddler teachers in every publicly-funded program to improve their interactions with children and prepare them for kindergarten. However, even though high-quality infant care is a critical component of our state's birth-to-five landscape, we are currently not collecting much information about the availability or quality of infant care. It is important to consider how we can best support teachers in infant classrooms to receive the same information about what high-quality care looks like as their colleagues, while at the same time considering the unique needs and constraints involved in caring for infants.

In order to gain a better understanding of the opportunities for infant care in Louisiana and to support teachers of infant classrooms to improve, the Department is asking sites and lead agencies to work together to enter all infant classrooms in publicly-funded sites into the [Early Childhood CLASS Portal](#) by March 30.

These infant classrooms do not have to be observed and will not be included on Performance Profiles. These classrooms will not count as missing classrooms or be included in any reports. Instead, these counts will be used to help the Department gain a complete understanding of the current landscape of care for our youngest children. In some communities, site leaders and lead agencies have begun providing observations for infant classrooms to equip infant teachers with the level of feedback needed to improve. These infant observations are for pilot purposes only, and do not count towards Performance Profiles or ratings, school readiness tax credits, or lead agency responsibilities. At this time, the only requirement is to enter these classrooms in the portal so the Department can fully understand the scope of infant care, and the resources needed to provide these teachers with a pathway for improvement.

We thank you in advance for working with your community to organize around your infant classrooms, and appreciate your help in understanding the scope of infant care and the need for resources to support quality improvement.

As always, thank you for all you do for our children,

## John

John White  
Louisiana Department of Education  
Twitter @LouisianaSupe

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## UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Lead Agency Office Hours- *lead agencies only* : March 6 and March 13 at 3:00 p.m.

### UPCOMING DEADLINES:

- Lead Agencies register for March Supervisor Collaboration meetings by March 2
  - Infant classrooms in publicly-funded sites are entered into the Early Childhood CLASS Portal by March 30
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## 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.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD ANCILLARY CERTIFICATE - UPDATED APPLICATION

A [new application](#) has been added to simplify the process of applying for the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate. As a reminder, all lead teachers working in Type III child care centers must have their Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate or above by July 2019.

The [Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate](#) can be earned at no cost by presenting evidence that you have obtained one of the [qualifying degrees](#) or credentials. The Early Childhood Ancillary Certificates must be renewed every three years.

Teachers who are earn their Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate through a CDA or technical diploma are able to attend one of Louisiana's [BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs](#) . Lead teachers can attend one of these high-quality training programs at no cost through Louisiana Pathways Scholarships if they meet the qualifying criteria.

Beginning in 2018, teachers will be able to use the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate to qualify for increased [School Readiness Tax Credit](#) levels. For questions, please contact [Erin Carroll](#) .

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## 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](mailto:LDECCAP@LA.GOV) or call 1877-453-2721, your case worker, or the Provider Help Desk for assistance.

### THE CECIL J. PICARD LA4 EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Attention district coordinators for the LA4 Program, business managers and financial officials of public school districts and charter schools. The revised allocations for the FY 2017-2018 Cecil J. Picard LA4 Early Childhood Program have been released and can be found here: [LA 4 2017-2018 Revised Allocations](#)

In accordance with the agreement for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funding, local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to serve at least 95% of the number of students for which they were funded. Funding to those school systems that do not meet their target participation is reduced proportionately by the number of students for which the target was not met. To the extent possible, additional funding is provided to those districts serving more students than originally funded.

This adjustment does not affect the period of availability for these fund sources. The period of availability remains 7/1/2017-6/30/2018. Please complete and submit an amendment in [eGMS](#) to reflect your revised allocations. Please submit this revision no later than Friday, March 16, 2018.

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

### 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](mailto: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](http://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.

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## CHILD SAFETY AND WELFARE

### DIVISION OF LICENSING BULLETIN 137 PROVIDER TRAINING

A licensing training session will be held on **Wednesday, April 11 at 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.** at the Claiborne Building, in the Louisiana Purchase Room, located at 1201 N. Third Street, Baton Rouge. This training is for new directors, experienced directors, director designees and owners who need a refresher on the Bulletin 137 Licensing Regulations.

All attendees must register to attend. Please click [here](#) to register.

If you have questions, please contact Kishia Grayson at 225-342-9905 [☎](#) or email [LDELicensing](#) .

### STAFF IN CHARGE

A center shall have a staff in charge whenever a director or designee is not on the premises due to a temporary absence or during nighttime hours of operation. A temporary absence is described as an absence for running errands, attending conferences, etc. The staff in charge designated by the provider must be at least 21 years of age and must be capable of responding to emergencies, inspections, concerns from parents and must have access to all information that is required. [Bulletin 137](#) §1707.B.1-2.

### ATTENDANCE RECORDS - STAFF AND OWNERS

A center must maintain attendance records for staff and owners of a center. All staff and owners at a licensed center are required to sign their first and last name when arriving and departing from a center. This includes Directors and Director Designees. Staff and owners are also required to sign the time they arrive to the center and depart from the center which also includes any arrivals or departures during the day. The attendance record must always reflect the number of staff persons present at the center. [Bulletin 137](#) §1507.B.1-3.

### MANDATED REPORTER

Professionals who may work with children in the course of their professional duties and who consequently are required to report all suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. This includes any person who provides training or supervision of a child, such as a public or private school teacher, teacher's aide, instructional aide, school principal, school staff member, social worker, probation officer, any other child care institution staff member, licensed or unlicensed day care provider, any individual who provides such services to a child, or any other person made a mandatory reporter under *Children's Code* article 603 or other applicable law.

Early Learning Centers shall establish in writing and implement a child abuse and neglect policy. All staff and owners shall report any allegations of suspected abuse or neglect of a child to Louisiana Child Protection Statewide Hotline (855) 4LA-KIDS [(855) 452-5437 [☎](#)].

An Early Learning Center shall not delay the reporting of suspected abuse or neglect in order to conduct an internal investigation to verify the allegations of abuse or neglect.

Staff shall not be required to report suspected abuse or neglect to the center or management prior to reporting allegations of abuse or neglect. [Bulletin 137](#) §1509.A.1.a-c.

### TRAINING FOR THE NEW CHILD CARE CIVIL BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM WEBINAR

Two webinars were recently given regarding how the new Child Care Civil Background Check online system works. The training includes information on how to login, set up an account, apply for a background check, monitor the background checks, get results, and check eligibility.

The webinar recording can be viewed [here](#) . A user manual is also available on the Department's [website](#) .

### 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](#)

### 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](#).

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## 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](mailto:kaye.eichler@la.gov) if you have questions.

### Upcoming Schedule for Office Hours

- March 6
  - March 13
- 

## OTHER

### EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL - MARCH 21

The next Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 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.

### SURVEY FOR THE BUREAU OF FAMILY HEALTH

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. Please respond by March 16, 2018.

[Click here for survey registration!](#)

Questions? Contact Emily Mabile at [emily.mabile@la.gov](mailto:emily.mabile@la.gov)

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