



NEWSLETTER

News for Early Childhood Educators

March 12, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The Louisiana Department of Education recognizes that the continued spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is impacting our communities, our schools, and our early childhood centers.

To ensure our education leaders are equipped with the most important, up-to-date information and resources, the Department has created a dedicated page on its website focused on preventing and responding to COVID-19 in schools and early learning centers. All information and resources, including the FAQ documents shared last week, will be continually updated.

Access the [Department's COVID-19 webpage](#) and [ECE Guidance](#).

Key Guidance

Closures

- Louisiana Department of Health has recommended the first step in determining to close a school or early childhood center is to [identify the Office of Public Health Regional Contacts and consult with these local health officials](#) when there are concerns of COVID-19.
- When school and center closures are necessary, notify LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov and note the school/center name, site code, location, and details of the closure.

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

- Absences related to COVID-19 above the 5 days are allowable. Contact the Louisiana Department of Education at LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov to report the outbreak and a CCAP representative will contact you.
- Please document expenses related to COVID-19 in the event that any grants or funding become available.

LA 4

- Absences related to COVID-19 will be excused absences.
- LA 4 payments will continue and will be based on enrollment.

Federal Child Nutrition Feeding Programs

- USDA has not provided any additional guidance on the Child and Adult Care Food Program at this time. Child cares can contact the LDOE Division of Nutrition Support childnutritionprogams@la.gov about options to serve children should a center close. Also, it is possible for any children 18 and under to receive meals at schools operating open food programs during this period.

ECE Accountability

- As with past events, such as hurricanes and floods, the Department of Education will address potential accountability issues on a case-by-case basis and will make accommodations, as appropriate.

Events

- Out of an abundance of caution, the following events or convenings will be canceled:
 - Early Childhood March Collaboratives- (3/17- Bossier City; 3/20- Lafayette)
 - Collaborative will be conducted virtually as one [webinar](#) on Friday, March 20 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. For those lead agency representatives unable to attend, please let us know and a recording will be provided.
- The 2020 Teacher Leader Summit is scheduled for May 27-29 and will continue as planned at this time. We are closely monitoring the situation in collaboration with state health officials and will re-evaluate these plans should the situation change. In the meantime, we recommend those with plans to attend the event refrain from making non-refundable travel arrangements. The Department will ensure prompt updates should the status of the event change.

Thank you,

Beth Scioneaux
Acting State Superintendent

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Upcoming Events

- **Census Day-** *April 1*

Upcoming Deadlines

- 2020 Louisiana Market Rate Survey for Type I, Type II, and Type III centers closes April 3, 2020. Survey available at <http://bit.ly/ldoemrs>.

More Important Dates

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

Updates for Teaching and Learning

GOLD® Maintenance

Over the past several months, Teaching Strategies has been working to enhance the technology behind the Teach area that houses The Creative Curriculum®, Digital Resources in MyTeachingStrategies®. The goal of this enhancement is to prepare the platform for new features to be released later this year that will make weekly planning an easier and more intuitive process.

During the release of this enhancement, the Teach area in *MyTeachingStrategies®* will be temporarily unavailable from 10:00pm ET on March 20th, 2020, to 10:00pm ET on March 22nd, 2020. March 27th – 29th, 2020, has also been reserved as a backup maintenance window. Please check the [Teaching Strategies Performance Status Page](#) for more information.

For questions regarding *GOLD®*, please contact meredith.eckard@la.gov.

Upcoming CLASS® Webinars and Resources

Teachstone is offering a webinar and other resources to reflect on how to increase inclusivity and improve interactions in the course of this important work.

Webinar: *CLASS® and Equity for Coaches*

Learn how coaches can use CLASS as a tool to build equity in their coaching practices. Explore ways to address bias during coaching conversations and more.

More information regarding [this webinar](#) is available.

Date: March 24

Time: 1:00 p.m. (CST)

Registration link: https://info.teachstone.com/webinar/coaches-class-equity?utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=83710492&hsenc=p2ANqtz-vglAHskBmNq3UZT59Ls4nPA5qF8PTkbF4N0zRotuWals7h1gNCfiPixsGYLIHdQ2mlph-hP-AKybndTNTPPWam2PREQ&hsmi=83711744

CLASS® Spanish Suite

Every student deserves high-quality teacher-student interactions. To help fulfil this need, Teachstone is committed to training teachers who serve Spanish-speaking communities. To explore these resources, visit [the Spanish Suite](#).

Teacher Leader Summit Registration

The 2020 Teacher Leader Summit will take place May 27–29 at the Morial Convention Center in New Orleans. [Regular registration](#) is now open.

Important Information to Know:

- A Summit [Overview Document](#) has been published to answer the most frequently asked questions.
- School systems can start booking hotel rooms with the hotels listed in the [Overview Document](#).
- The Department will release a full session list publicly on April 8.
- Participants will be required to pre-select their sessions in the Summit Sched app prior to attending the event. This is the same process as last year.
- Registration closes on May 11.

Updates for Funding and Enrollment

DirectMatch Webinar

Eligibility determination is a major component of the Coordinated Enrollment process. As part of this process, the Department is requiring that all lead agencies access and begin utilizing the DirectMatch system as part of your eligibility determination process. To assist Lead Agencies and interested partner providers, the Department conducted an informational webinar on the DirectMatch process on March 11. A recording of this webinar can be found [here](#).

Contact Lindsey.Bradford@la.gov with any questions.

Child Care Assistance Program

Program integrity within the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is guided by federal, state, and local mandates. Provider and Participant Address Matches are not allowed within the CCAP program. A child

care owner or provider cannot receive CCAP funding to care for their own child(ren). Additionally, a CCAP owner or provider cannot have the same physical address as the CCAP participant or household designee(s).

Any questions regarding CCAP can be directed to melinda.george@la.gov.

Updates for Licensed Centers

Tornado Drill Reminder

Tornado drills must be conducted at least once per month during the months of March, April, May, and June. Set reminders now! Make sure they are completed at various times throughout the day.

Tornado Drill documentation shall include:

- Date and time of the drill
- Number of both children and staff present
- Number of minutes it took to complete the evacuation
- Any problems during the drill and if so list corrective measures, and
- Signatures of staff present

A sample form can be found in the [Licensed Center Library](#).

How to report a change in information for licenses

This is the time of year that many child care centers are preparing for summer care. Make sure the services you plan to provide, align with the services on your license. For example: If you plan on conducting field trips and providing transportation, your center must be licensed for field trip transportation **prior** to the field trip. Also, the services and ages you are licensed to provide care for, are listed on your license. Check your license! If a change is required, please go to the Department's CAFÉ portal to begin the process.

Planning Non-vehicular excursions this Spring?

Providers must plan and properly prepare. In accordance with Bulletin 137, a non-vehicular excursion is any activity that takes place outside of the licensed area that is within a safe, reasonable, walking distance, and that does not require transportation in a motor vehicle; not including walking with children to and from schools. Be sure to:

1. Meet the minimum child to staff ratio, plus one additional adult;
2. Obtain valid written parental notification and authorization; and
3. Keep your documentation of the non-vehicular activity on file in the center. Make sure the documentation lists the type of activity, date, times, list of children and staff, and any other adults who attended.

For any questions regarding Bulletin 137 requirements, please contact the licensing consultant assigned to your center.

2020 Market Rate Survey

LDOE is currently gathering feedback from all licensed early learning centers and family and in-home providers for its 2020 Market Rate Survey, which is conducted every three years to understand child care prices throughout the state. These data will be used to assist us in setting our child care assistance program (CCAP) rates and to better understand provider costs associated with offering quality early child care and education in Louisiana.

If you have not done so already, please [complete this confidential survey](#) before **April 3, 2020**.

The survey is confidential, and your individual answers will not be reported publicly. The survey should take no more than 20 minutes to complete, and responses will be sent to Emergent Method, the consulting firm we have engaged to assist us throughout this process. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Robyn Stiles at robyn.stiles@emergentmethod.com. Thank you in advance for your participation in this important survey.



"Providers like me are braiding funding to pay teachers well and to provide the highest of quality to Louisiana's children"- Kristi Givens

Updates for Lead Agencies

Ready Start Network Cohort 3 application

The Department has released the [Request for Applications](#) for Ready Start Network Cohort 3. All currently established early childhood community networks are eligible [to apply](#) through their lead agency. All networks intending to apply are encouraged to submit a voluntary Notice of Intent to Apply to lizzie.cosse@la.gov.

Please reach out to lizzie.cosse@la.gov with any questions.

Updating TOTS Information

It is time to update information for the TOTS finger scanning machine for the 2020-2021 school year. Lead agencies are required to complete the TOTS Information 2020-2021 Form, which includes all users, current address, hours of operation, holidays, and lead agency signature.

This form is due by April 20 to jackie.droddy2@la.gov. Please remember one form is needed for each facility hosting a TOTS finger scanning machine.

Any questions can be directed to jackie.droddy2@la.gov.

Early Childhood March Collaboration Meetings-canceled

Out of an abundance of caution, the following Early Childhood March Collaborative meetings have been canceled:

- March 17 -Bossier City
- March 20- Lafayette

Collaborative will be conducted virtually as one webinar on **Friday, March 20 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.** For those lead agency representatives unable to attend, please let us know and a recording will be provided.

Webinar Date: March 20;

Webinar Time:9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Webinar link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/543885259>

Meeting ID: 543 885 259

Weekly Webinar/Conference Call for Lead Agencies

The Early Childhood Team holds a weekly webinar/conference call question and answer session for lead agencies. The half-hour sessions are held on most **Tuesdays at 3:00 p.m.** The Early Childhood Team will provide updates and reminders. Additional topics will be determined by caller questions. A meeting invitation containing the connecting information to the new Zoom webinar account has been sent to all lead agency contacts.

Contact amanda.colon@la.gov with questions.

Upcoming Schedule for Weekly Webinar/Conference Call for Lead Agencies

- March 16 at 3:00 p.m. General topics
- March 23 at 3:00 p.m. General topics

Bi-weekly Community of Practice Webinar/Conference Call for Ready Start Network Lead Agencies

Every other Tuesday at 2:30 p.m., Ready Start Network Lead Agencies convene to discuss their progress and solve problems. Lead agency contacts who are interested in “listening in” to learn more about what Ready Start Networks are doing, please email lizzie.cosse@la.gov to receive the information to connect to the webinar.

Customizable Resources for Lead Agencies

Learn the Signs. Act Early. is a federally funded program through the CDC that provides free resources and materials to support the early identification and screening process for children birth to five.

The LDOE is partnering with the Department of Health to provide customized and co-branded materials. Brochures and milestone posters can be edited to include Early Steps and Child Find contact numbers. A visual logo can also be included.



If interested in obtaining customized materials, please reach out to brittany.braun@la.gov.

Visit [Learn the Signs. Act Early.](https://www.cdc.gov/actearly/) to learn more about the suite of free materials and resources that are available to you!

Other

2020 Census Toolkit

New LDOE Staff

Please help welcome our newest staff member!

Sydney Anderson is joining the Early Childhood team after spending the past six months in Fiscal Operations as a Budget Analyst and is excited to deepen her knowledge of the Department. As a Govern for America fellow and recent Brown University graduate, where she majored in Urban Studies, Sydney looks forward to learning more about the innovation and leadership happening in Louisiana’s Office of Early Childhood Strategy. Her main role will be supporting the accountability system and the field. She’s excited to assist Lead Agencies with the CLASS Portal - Sydney will be available to assist with errors, appeals, and any technical difficulties regarding the portal.

Originally from Seattle, Washington, Sydney is living in Louisiana for the first time and is enjoying the sunny skies and crawfish season!

Early Childhood in the News

[Building Early Education Leaders: A Closer Look at How States and Districts are Equipping Principals to Support Young Learners](#) (New America)

[What We Learned About the Challenges and Commitments of Early Childhood Educators](#) (EdSurge)

[LDOE: Early ed is about helping kids, families succeed](#) (News Star)

[Inside a Preschool that Treats the Youngest Victims of the Opioid Crisis](#) (EdSurge)



Contact

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

For questions regarding lead agencies, please contact leadagencysupport@la.gov.

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