



NEWSLETTER

News for Early Childhood Educators

March 26, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

On Monday evening, I had the privilege of participating in a roundtable discussion at Louisiana Public Broadcasting (LPB) centered on how the state is responding to the evolving Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. During the education-focused segment of the live broadcast, which you can now view online, I answered questions alongside Gov. John Bel Edwards, Commissioner of Higher Education Dr. Kim Hunter Reed, and LPB Deputy Director Christina Melton. They offered valuable information and perspective.

Among the questions posed to the panel, we were asked how Louisiana is supporting distance learning efforts, including for children who do not have Internet access.

The Louisiana Department of Education is committed to supporting all distance learning efforts to minimize students' learning loss. The Department has identified ways students and families can access free or reduced-cost Internet packages and WiFi hotspots, as well as ways schools can ensure tracking on devices provided directly to students. That information can be found in our [Early Childhood FAQ](#) and [K-12 FAQ](#), which are continually updated.

The Department has also been researching Louisiana school systems with strong plans to provide access to learning, collaborating with experts across the nation in order to provide school systems and educators with ideas and tools, and working closely with curriculum publishers to ensure access to key materials.

Below, we've provided you all with:

- [Sample models of distance education](#), including models that require limited or no technology;
- Tools for teachers and students, such as sample schedules and communication systems, and guidance on how to utilize these tools;
- [An inventory of curricular materials](#) that are available for distance learning formats; and

We hope these resources, which are also posted to our [website](#), prove valuable as you navigate this uncertain time.

In service,

Beth Scioneaux
Acting State Superintendent

Twitter @La_Believes

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Upcoming Events

- **Census Day- April 1**

Upcoming Deadlines - Extended

- 2020 Louisiana Market Rate Survey deadline for all licensed Early Learning centers will be extended. Survey available at <http://bit.ly/ldoemrs>.
- Additionally, the MRS-related focus groups originally scheduled for April 2020 will be rescheduled for later in the year. If you have any questions about the survey or focus groups, please contact Robyn Stiles at robyn.stiles@emergentmethod.com.

More Important Dates

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

Updates for Teaching and Learning

Continuous Learning Resources

The [academic resources](#) guide is intended to help support early childhood educators and families plan for continuous learning using high-quality instructional materials and resources. Updates are made as new information from vendors is made available. The guide includes:

Curriculum/Grade Band	Guidance Information
Children's Literacy Initiative Blueprint for Early Literacy (Ages 3-4)	On April 6, Children's Literacy Initiative will launch a new edition of Blueprint for Early Learning as a free digital download . Developed for Pre-K classroom use, families are also welcome to access this new comprehensive Pre-K curriculum as a free digital download.

<p>Frog Street Press Frog Street Pre-K; Frog Street Threes; Frog, ECE (Ages 0-4)</p>	<p>Frog Street’s partner, Education technology provider Age of Learning, is offering families at schools and centers affected by closure free at-home access to research-proven learning resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ABCmouse.com® Early Learning Academy is a comprehensive, research-validated curriculum for children 2-8. Visit www.ABCmouse.com/redeem and use the access code SCHOOL3673. ● ReadingIQ® is a digital library and literacy platform for children 2-12 designed by reading experts to improve literacy skills. Visit www.ReadingIQ.com/redeem and use the access code SCHOOL3673. ● Questions can be sent to support@aofl.com.
<p>Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Big Day for Pre-K (Ages 3-4)</p>	<p>Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, has released information and resources to help teachers continue teaching and learning during school closures.</p>
<p>KinderCare Education, LLC Early Foundations Infant-Toddler (Ages 0-3)</p>	<p>KinderCare offers various resources to support families in their content hub, such as At-Home Learning Activities for Babies and Toddlers.</p>
<p>Teaching Strategies, LLC The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos, 3rd Ed.; The Creative Curriculum for Preschool (Ages 0-4)</p>	<p>Teaching Strategies developed a free toolkit for supporting families impacted by COVID-19. The Healthy at Home toolkit offers a free selection of resources from <i>The Creative Curriculum®</i> and <i>ReadyRosie™</i> providing families with information and resources for supporting the children in their care.</p>
<p>Teachstone CLASS®</p>	<p>Teachstone, creator of CLASS®, has resources for early childhood educators and families to promote interactions and support child learning during COVID-19. Blog posts, webinars, and downloadable resources are available for families and educators to learn about the importance of interactions, plan activities for children, and incorporate CLASS® concepts into daily routines. The CLASS® at Home is another resource for families explaining what domain interactions look like at home and the importance of each.</p>

Standards and Development

- [Louisiana’s Birth to Five Early Learning & Development Standards \(ELDS\)](#) describes the particular skills and abilities that children need to develop to be successful and provide ideas for fostering their development.

- [The National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#) offers research-based resources, tips, and ideas for families—from child development to reading, writing, music, math, and more!

Text Services

Several programs are available to offer tips and resources for families that support early learning through text messages. Message and data rates apply.

- [Bright by Text](#) provides quality information and trusted resources to families of children prenatal to age eight partnering with LPB. Text: LPB to 274448.
- [Vroom](#) offers free, easy-to-use learning tips for children 5 and under, delivered daily directly to your phone. Sign up for free at <https://www.vroom.org/>.
- [Ready4K](#) is an evidence-based family engagement curriculum delivered via text messages. Text: Ready4th to 70138.

GOLD[®]

The Department is currently monitoring the situation with COVID-19 and understands the potential issues of not being able to complete the final GOLD[®] checkpoint.

- The Department will release more information regarding the last checkpoint as more information is received. The health and wellbeing of our students and faculty are of the utmost importance. We invite you to share the GOLD[®] toolkit that offers a free selection of resources from The Creative Curriculum[®] and ReadyRosie[™] with your families while they may be at home.

EarlySteps Updated Procedures Related to COVID-19

EarlySteps is transitioning home and community-based service delivery to the **exclusive use of teletherapy, effective March 24, 2020** and will continue as long as necessary, to ensure the health and safety of early interventionists and families. The process for use of teletherapy also applies to SPOE (System Point of Entry) and evaluators.

Family support coordinators will continue with monthly phone calls and quarterly team meetings. The families may call in by telephone and other participants will use video technology to participate.

- If a family refuses teletherapy/telephone sessions while home visits are suspended, the early interventionist will remain in periodic contact with the enrolled families, updating them on the status of resuming services and communicating with other team members, including the family services coordinator.

IFSP, SPOE intake, developmental screening, and eligibility determination meetings will be conducted via teletherapy.

- If a child cannot undergo evaluation using teletherapy, an interim IFSP can be developed using presumptive eligibility, then re-determined after the COVID-19 event ends; or eligibility determination can be postponed with parent consent and documented.

To relieve the financial burden to families with significant economic impact from the COVID-19 event, EarlySteps will suspend family cost participation on a case by case basis. To qualify for the suspension, the family will notify Intake Coordinators or Family Service Coordinators (IC/FSC) of their changed employment status or reduction of income. The request will be submitted to the SPOE using the Application for Income Adjustment-FCP Suspension.

CLASS®

The Department will:

- suspend all local and third-party CLASS® observations until April 13 and extend the deadline for the spring observation period until May 31, 2020, through a BESE waiver
- If observations are unable to occur in centers and schools by this deadline, the Department will work with programs and lead agencies to determine how to calculate performance ratings.
- work with BESE to request a Bulletin 140 waiver to extend performance profiles for severely impacted sites.
 - ○ Note: 85 percent of sites have already received all required observations for their 2019-2020 school year and will receive their performance profiles and star ratings without interruption

Teacher Leader Summit

The [2020 Teacher Leader Summit](#) is scheduled for May 27-29 and will continue as planned at this time. Educators' health and safety is our top priority. Therefore, the Department is coordinating with State and local health officials to determine how COVID-19 will impact the Summit, and we will follow their guidance regarding large gatherings. Those who plan to attend the event should make refundable travel arrangements only. The Department will honor all refund requests from registrants and asks for patience as we determine the best process for issuing those refunds. The Department will ensure prompt updates should the status of the event change.

Updates for Funding and Enrollment

LA4

- March LA 4 State General Funds payments were issued on Friday, March 20, 2020.
- February and March TANF requests are currently under review with DCFS.

Any questions regarding LA4 can be directed to lindsey.bradford@la.gov

Child Care Assistance Program

Effective March 23, 2020, children of "Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers" working during the COVID-19 public health emergency may be eligible for child care assistance. The CCAP Pandemic Protective Services Crisis application can be accessed [here](#).

Providers can contact the Provider Help Desk Team as outlined below for COVID-19 queries and other questions.

Veronica Buckley, Provider Help Desk Supervisor Veronica.Buckley@la.gov 225-229-4147	Ticket System https://provider.supportsystem.com LDOE Call Center 1-877-453-2721
Heidi.Godchaux@la.gov Regions: 2 - Baton Rouge 3 - Covington 8 - Shreveport	Ronda.Miles@la.gov Regions: 1 – New Orleans 4 - Thibodaux
Kristie.Parker2@la.gov Regions: 5 - Lafayette 9 - Monroe	Tomeka.Tate-Clayton@la.gov Regions: 6 – Lake Charles 7 - Alexandria

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

Updates for Licensed Centers

Urgent Communications needed during COVID-19

Please let Licensing know if your center is temporarily closed. If your center is still open, please take this [survey](#). We are working hard to be sure essential employees have their child care needs covered during this unprecedented time.

Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) Updates

Due to the current public health emergency, the fingerprint vendor has extended the date from 30 days to 120 days for fingerprint submissions in order for pending fingerprint applications to remain open at this time.

The LDOE \$15.00 administrative fee, out of state fee, and the DCFS fee have been waived for the CCCBC application until April 30, 2020. Fingerprint fees must still be paid prior to being fingerprinted. Please note, many [fingerprint locations](#) are temporarily closed.

Please contact LDEchildcareCBC@la.gov with any CCCBC questions.

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](#).

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 LDOE has engaged to assist 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.

Updates for Directors



"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. Given the current state, the Department will be flexible with all applicants and work with each network regarding due dates that work for them.

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

Early Elementary CLASS® Pilot

Interest in the early elementary CLASS® pilot for the 2020-2021 school year has been amazing! For school systems that have not signed up and interested in doing so, there is still time. Simply complete this [form](#) by May 1 . Benefits include funding for K-3 CLASS® observer training and certification, professional development, and coaching.

For more information about the early elementary CLASS® pilot, see <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/teacher-support-toolbox-library/accountability-pilots>. If you have questions, contact brandy.brunson@la.gov.

Office Hours: Every Tuesday is Weekly Webinar for Lead Agencies

The Early Childhood Team invites you to attend a Weekly Webinar which is a time set aside each week to collaborate with colleagues, learn new ideas/Department updates, and answer questions for lead agencies. These sessions are held on most **Tuesdays at 3:00 p.m.** and usually last a half-hour. Contact amanda.colon@la.gov to request an invitation or if you have questions.

Upcoming Schedule for Weekly Webinar for Lead Agencies

- March 31 at 3:00 p.m. General updates and answer questions
- April 7 at 3:00 p.m. General updates and answer questions

Recent Lead Agency Resources

- Spring 2020 Collaboratives Webinar
- Engagement and Outreach Strategies

Other

2020 Census Toolkit

During this time of uncertainty, there is one thing of which we can control: being counted in the 2020 Census. Please complete the Census and continue to encourage others to also complete the Census. Families have received the letter with instructions on how to complete in 3 ways by mail, by computer, or by phone.

- The 2020 Census count impacts the federal funds that communities receive each year for programs and services that are critical for schools, students, and younger children.
- April 1, 2020 is Census Day

Early Childhood in the News

[Louisiana Opens Child Care Assistance Program to Critical Personnel Amid COVID-19 Outbreak](#) (LDOE)

[Tips for Families: Coronavirus](#) (Zero to Three)

[Stress, Resilience and the Role of Science: Responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic](#) (Center on the Developing Child)

[Coronavirus News & Resources for Child Care Professionals, Families, and Policymakers](#) (Child Care Aware of America)



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