



NEWSLETTER

News for Early Childhood Educators

April 9, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Last week, Gov. John Bel Edwards extended the state's stay-at-home order, and with it the closure of school facilities, until at least April 30.

As we continue to navigate these unprecedented and uncertain times, the Louisiana Department of Education stands committed to supporting our early childhood care and education system leaders to make decisions based on the unique needs of their communities.

In line with that commitment, the Department has:

- Continued to secure regulatory flexibilities from the state and federal levels, with the latest request for an extension of key federal education funding sent to the U.S. Department of Education on April 6;
- Maintained weekly meetings with early childhood care and education providers and publicly posted meeting materials to the COVID-19 page on its [website](#), along with other key resources and updated information;
- The LDOE is working with CCR&Rs and providers around the state to support the child care needs of essential workers who must continue working during the COVID-19 outbreak, by [expanding Emergency CCAP](#), and establishing contracts with CCR&R to provide respite care.
- Equipped providers and school systems with information and resources to help them start or continue to make academic and workforce decisions, including a [toolkit](#) of sample distance education models and schedules, [instructional materials](#), and [guidance related to staffing needs](#); and
- Released guidance related to [continuous education specifically for students with disabilities](#), including information about remotely [providing direct student services](#), like occupational therapy or counseling, and [instructions](#) on how to ensure compliance with special education timelines and requirements.

The Department will also conduct a COVID-19 Update webinar next Thursday discussing updated guidance relevant to all early childhood providers. Please follow the instructions below:

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Thursday, April 16 at 2:00 p.m.

- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/194281422>
- **Phone Number:** 1-346-248-7799
- **Meeting ID#:** 194 281 422

Thank you for all you do for our children—now and always.

In service,

Beth Scioneaux
Acting State Superintendent
Twitter @La_Believes

In This Issue

- [Updates for Teaching and Learning](#)
- [Updates for Funding and Enrollment](#)
- [Updates for Licensed Centers](#)
- [Updates for Child Care Criminal Background Checks](#)
- [Updates for Directors](#)
- [Updates for Lead Agencies](#)
- [Other](#)
- [Early Childhood in the News](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Upcoming Events

- [LDOE COVID-19 Update Webinar](#): *Thursday, April 16 at 2:00 p.m.*

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.
- [Academic Approval for Type III Centers](#)- *due May 1*

More Important Dates

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

Updates for Teaching and Learning

Teacher Leader Summit

In light of ongoing COVID-19 health concerns and at the direction of local and national authorities, the in-person, 2020 Teacher Leader Summit will not occur this May, as scheduled. This was a difficult decision but the health and safety of educators, presenters, staff, and the community as a whole are paramount. The Department urges everyone to follow the guidelines and protocols put forth by public health officials.

In keeping with the Department's commitment to supporting educators, **the Department will shift to a virtual session presentation platform for as many sessions as possible.** Additional details, including the list and schedule of these sessions, will be announced soon.

All registrants will automatically be unregistered from the event. Participants who paid for a ticket will automatically receive a refund, minus processing fees, by the end of April to the card on file. Reach out to LDOEEvents@la.gov for assistance. Confirmation of the cancellation will be sent to the purchaser's email address (e.g. If a principal purchased tickets for school faculty, the principal will receive the confirmation of cancellation and refund).

The Department will cancel all hotel rooming blocks listed in the [Overview Document](#). However, individuals should contact the hotel directly if they require proof of cancellation. Some school systems may have chosen to contract their own hotel blocks. Those school systems should contact the hotel directly to arrange cancellation of their contracts.

Thank you for the continued support and patience. The Department looks forward to being in touch regarding virtual session offerings and to seeing Louisiana's educators at next year's event!

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.

Additionally, Teaching Strategies has created new, free educator resources. "[Classroom Connect](#)," is a library for early childhood educators that provides free content, encouragement, information and tips to customize support for children and families to extend learning at home.

This [library of resources](#), designed specifically for educators, will help you individualize your strategy and curate content including Mighty Minutes®, LearningGames®, and at-home activities. This library is being updated regularly, so be sure to check back often.

Ongoing Professional Development

Teachstone now is offering CLASS Foundations for Teachers, a new online training that helps teachers learn about teacher-child interactions, the CLASS domains and dimensions, and more. This collection of courses is ideal for new teachers or those looking to strengthen their understanding of specific areas of CLASS.

Each of the courses features a Teachstone Specialist who guides the lessons and encourages learners to reflect on their classroom practice. The online courses allow teachers to train on their own time, at their own pace, and on any device.

CLASS Foundations for Teachers is available as a complete set or in any combination of these 4 courses:

- A Pre-K CLASS Primer for Teachers
- Emotional Support for Pre-K Teachers
- Classroom Organization for Pre-K Teachers
- Instructional Support for Pre-K Teachers

Courses [are available for preorder now](#) with release dates starting April 17.

Updated *GOLD*® ECE Guidance

On March 20, LDOE received federal approval to waive assessment requirements for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. Teaching Strategies *GOLD*® documentation for the May checkpoint will not be required.

TS *GOLD*® OSEP Administrators should follow the same process for completing intended exit assessments for any children that would have been exited as a result of a withdrawal from Early Childhood Special Education (ESCE) services or within six weeks of the child's 6th birthday.

- Administrators are encouraged to use any data collected during Winter checkpoint and input into the OSEP license to use as a final rating for this school year.
- Even if an administrator is exiting the child now, an exit assessment should include the end of the school year date and all ratings should be finalized before completing the exit assessment.

EarlySteps Updated Procedures Related to COVID-19

EarlySteps is exclusively implementing home and community-based service delivery through teletherapy, 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® and Accountability

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.

Updates for Funding and Enrollment

LA 4

- February TANF payments were issued on Thursday April 2.

Any questions regarding LA 4 can be directed to lindsey.bradford@la.gov

Child Care Assistance Program

Essential employees are presently automatically eligible for CCAP. If your center is temporarily closed but you would like to still offer care to essential employees, you may be interested in [Becoming an In-Home Child Care and Family Child Care Provider](#). If you know of families with critical personnel, please be sure to let them know [CCAP is available for critical personnel](#).

For CCAP providers, payments will be based on enrollment at this time. For questions regarding CCAP, please contact LDEccap@la.gov.

Updates for Licensed Centers

Facemask Guidance for Staff and Children in Centers

While wearing a facemask in public is at the discretion of the individual, [Louisiana Department of Health \(LDH\)](#) has released [guidance](#) for those interested in doing so.

For any child care center employee or attendee who wants to wear a facemask, the [following guidance](#) provides information on protocols as well as methods to create masks at home.

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

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.

Updates for Directors

Over the last few months, directors have had to shift their operations and response. Please see the following resources to provide guidance and information your work:

- Guidelines from the [Center for Disease Control](#)
- Information on [CCAP expansion](#) and in-home and family care [here](#).

External grants and loans

- [SBA funding](#) Overview
 - [Finding a lender for the PPP](#)
- [Learn about CARES funding for the Child Care Marketplace](#)

Updates for Lead Agencies

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 June 30. Benefits include funding for K-3 CLASS® observer training and certification, professional development, and coaching. Explore an [informative webinar](#) and [case studies](#) about the early elementary CLASS® pilot!

For more information about the early elementary CLASS® pilot can be found [online](#). Contact brandy.brunson@la.gov with questions.

Office Hours: Every Tuesday is Weekly Webinar for Lead Agencies

The Early Childhood Team provides a Weekly Webinar for lead agencies which sets aside time 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

- April 14 at 3:00 p.m. General updates and answer questions
- April 21 at 3:00 p.m. General updates and answer questions

Recent Lead Agency Resources

- Spring 2020 Collaboratives Webinar

- Engagement and Outreach Strategies
- March 30 Office Hours webinar slides

Other

Academic Approval for Type III Early Learning Centers - Due May 1

Academic Approval is required to receive or maintain a Type III child care license. 2019-2020 Academic Approval expires on June 30, 2020. In an effort to assist sites in starting the 2020-2021 school year in the best possible position, the Department wants to help expedite the Academic Assurance renewal process.

The [2020-2021 Academic Assurances](#) should be submitted by May 1 to ensure that a site's Academic Approval does not expire, and sites will receive a new certificate in advance of July 1. If sites are unable to submit by May 1, the Department will work with these sites to assist in this process.

These [assurances](#) can be signed and submitted electronically.

Email questions to ECAssurances@la.gov.

Early Childhood in the News

[Coronavirus Resources for Early Childhood Educators](#) (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)

[In Response to Extended School Closures, State Education Leaders Urge School Systems to Offer Distance Learning](#) (LDOE)



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 leadagencysupport@la.gov.

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