



NEWSLETTER

News for Early Childhood Educators

April 23, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Earlier this week, the Louisiana Department of Education announced it has expanded its at-home care and learning supports for families who are home with young children as a result of the ongoing Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak.

New supports include:

- **[Guidance for Early Learning at Home](#)**: A guidance document that walks families step-by-step through the process of creating a productive daily schedule, including tips and sample schedules, along with age-appropriate, play-based learning activities to enhance that schedule. The guidance document also includes lists of academic resources for all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.
- **[Noggin Cares](#)**: The Department has partnered with Noggin, Nickelodeon's learning service for children age 2 and above, to offer a free, three-month subscription to families. The app is loaded with read-aloud e-books, learning games, songs, and other engaging content. It also provides ideas for off-screen family activities, and it provides special content to help young children cope during this time.

These new resources are the latest efforts by the Department to support the state's youngest learners and families. The Department released a Continuous Education Toolkit for School Systems that contains **[academic resources](#)** to support learning for all grade levels, including early childhood. The early childhood resources include information on child development and lists of high-quality instructional materials and services that can be accessed online and through text messaging.

In addition, the Department is awarding nearly \$10 million in federal funding to child care providers to offset the financial impacts of the ongoing COVID-19. The funding is intended to support early learning sites to stay open and provide care to the children of essential personnel or to reopen after this unprecedented time. The application deadline for the **[Child Care Assistance Program Relief Grants](#)** is today.

Finally, the Department will 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 30 at 2:30 p.m.

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/96475444579>

Phone Number: 1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID#: 964 7544 4579

For more information regarding COVID-19, please visit the [LDH website](#) and [CDC website](#). Additional information can be found on the Department's [COVID-19 Update page](#).

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

In service,

Beth Scioneaux
Acting State Superintendent
Twitter @La_Believes

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Upcoming Events

- [ECE COVID-19 Updates Webinar](#)- Thursday, April 30
- [Anlar Instructional Leadership Webinar](#)- Friday, May 1

Upcoming Deadlines

- Child Care Assistance Program Relief grant- [applications](#) due April 23
- [Academic Approval for Type III Centers](#)- due May 1

More Important Dates

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

COVID-19 Updates

Care.com Partnership

Agenda For Children, the Child Care Resource & Referral Agency for the southeast region of the state, has established a statewide partnership with Care.com for home-based providers and families.

- For the next three months, Care.com is offering its premium membership at no cost to Louisiana home-based child care providers and essential workers who are seeking child care.
- Care.com's premium membership allows families to connect with home-based child care providers directly.
- Families seeking care will still be required to pay out-of-pocket for the provider, but the premium service makes it easier for families to find and connect with providers. CCAP families can be eligible for subsidized care through Care.com if the provider is a certified CCAP provider in Louisiana.

To learn more or to sign-up for the premium membership, visit www.Care.com/Louisiana.

Market Rate Survey

Given the difficulties that the COVID-19 closures have caused for child care centers, the Early Childhood team has decided to close the Market Rate Survey. The Department is committed to considering these recent changes and plans to gather additional information about the impact on centers at a later date. Please look for more information about next steps in the coming months.

Any questions regarding the survey can be directed to robyn.stiles@emergentmethod.com.

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.

Any questions regarding Teacher Leader Summit can be directed to LDEEvents@la.gov.

Continuous Learning Resources

This week, the Department released a guidance document that walks families step-by-step through the process of creating a productive daily schedule, including tips and sample schedules, along with age-appropriate, play-based learning activities to enhance that schedule. The guidance document also includes lists of academic resources for all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.

The family guidance document accompanies the [Continuous Learning Toolkit](#), which includes the [academic resources](#) guide. The guide 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.

Recent updates to the [Academic Resources](#) document include:

- [Frog Street for Young Learners](#) offers access to over 250 electronic books, activities, and songs from their curriculum. Access to these collections is **FREE** during school closures due to COVID-19.
- All Teaching Strategies GOLD® teachers now have access to The Creative Curriculum®, [Digital Curriculum Resources](#) at no additional cost through June 30. More information can be found in Teaching Strategies' [press release](#) and [YouTube video](#).
- Teaching Strategies is supporting parents and families at home by offering access to their newest digital product, [ParentPal™](#), at no cost through June 30, 2020. [ParentPal™](#) promotes active, engagement and developmentally appropriate milestone progress from birth through age 3.

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.

Updates for Funding and Enrollment

LA 4/NSECD

During school closures, LA 4 and NSECD payments have continued based on enrollment rather than attendance.

- LA 4 State General Funds payments for April and May were issued on April 21, 2020.
- NSECD payments for March were issued on April 16, 2020. April and May payments are pending.

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

Child Care Assistance Program

Essential employees are eligible for CCAP subsidies for child care. If your center is temporarily closed, but you would like to offer care to essential employees, you may be interested in providing care as a Family Child Care or In-Home Provider. If interested, learn more [here](#). For questions regarding CCAP, please contact LDECCAP@la.gov.

Guidance for Head Start Grantees on Funding Applications

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all grantees, and as such, the Office of Head Start has released [Additional Guidance for Grantees on Funding Applications](#). This document provides additional clarifications following the publication of the [Program Instruction on Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) supplemental funding](#).

This [document](#) provides additional guidance for grantees regarding questions that may arise as they complete funding applications in response to the national emergency, including

- CARES Supplemental Summer Programs funding,
- CARES One-Time Funding,
- FY 2020 Cost-of-Living-Adjustment and Quality Improvement (COLA/QI) applications,
- other relevant guidance

For questions regarding Head Start, contact kahree.wahid@la.gov.

Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider (LaCAP) Relief Grants

To offset some of the financial burdens experienced by child care providers during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, the Louisiana Department of Education is funding two grant opportunities for publicly funded child care providers. These grants will help to ensure that the early childhood field can rehabilitate during and after this crisis and continue offering high-quality care that helps to prepare children for kindergarten.

Available [Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider \(LaCAP\) Relief Grants](#):

- 1. Emergency Child Care Relief Grant:** This grant would provide support for providers to stay open or reopen after this period in an effort to support child care access for families in need of care.
- 2. Emergency Child Care Development Fund Response Grant:** Many child care assistance providers have remained open or reopened during the Governor's Stay At Home Order to provide child care for frontline workers, and are incurring additional costs as a result. This grant would provide support to offset higher costs of operating during the pandemic.

To qualify for the grants, please complete the brief [application](#) by **today**.

Updates for Licensed Centers

License Renewal Applications for March, April, and May Providers

The CAFÉ Provider Portal is currently down, preventing the submission of CAFÉ Renewal Applications. In order to process your application, please complete the Renewal Application using the form that will be

emailed to you. Providers with March renewals who have not completed their application should do so by using the emailed form.

Please include the following with the Renewal Application form:

- Current approval from Office of Public Health,
- Current approval from Office of State Fire Marshal,
- Current approval from City Fire (if applicable),
- Current General Liability Insurance
- LDOE Office of Early Childhood Academic Approval (if Type III center)

If you have any questions, contact your Licensing Consultant at 225-342-9905 or ldelicensing@la.gov.

Health and Safety Guidance for Early Learning Centers

Last month, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) released [guidance for early learning centers](#).

Recommended measures include:

- Strongly encourage all children that can stay home to do so.
- Early learning center and daycare services should prioritize support for health care workers and essential workers.
- Children and staff group sizes should be limited to 10 or less. Group sizes for infants should be limited to 5 or less.

Read more about LDH's guidance [here](#).

In addition to the recommended LDH measures, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has provided guidance regarding childcare and cleaning/disinfecting, including:

- [Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities \(which includes child care and schools\)](#)
- [Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfection for Non-emergency Transport Vehicles](#)

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](#). The Department is working hard to be sure essential employees have their child care needs covered during this unprecedented time. Remember to report any updates regarding closures or center re-openings to LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov.

Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) Updates

Please refer to the updated list of [fingerprint locations](#) and call ahead before sending applicants to be fingerprinted. Please contact LDEchildcareCBC@la.gov with any CCCBC questions. 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.

Updates for Directors

AnLar Webinar: Instructional Leadership during a time of Crisis

AnLar, LLC is an organization that partners with Louisiana to implement the [Louisiana Early Leaders Academy](#) pilot program which will launch applications for its second year in May. AnLar LLC is leading a webinar for directors of early learning centers focused on instructional leadership during COVID-19.

Date: Friday, May 1

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: <https://zoom.us/j/92952816719>

Instructional Leadership Guidebook

For directors who are able to continue engaging staff in planning and professional development, we have added a tool to the [Directors Support Toolbox](#). The [Instructional Leadership Guidebook](#) has helpful templates and planning supports for directors to develop and sustain professional growth in their teachers.

Look for the launch of the Director's COVID-19 Guidebook next week to provide comprehensive resources that guide business and early learning supports.

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!

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

Ready Start Network Cohort 3 Application Feedback Webinar

The Early Childhood Team will host a webinar for all networks who are applying for Ready Start Networks Cohort 3 on Wednesday, April 29 at noon. Those networks applying will be contacted directly with the link to the webinar.

Request for Applications for Community Network Lead Agencies 2020

The Department is releasing the [Lead Agency Request for Application 2020](#) which designates a lead agency to each community network to coordinate essential administrative activities, observations, and enrollment.

Lead Agency RFA Timeline:

- **Release date:** April 23
- **Informational Webinar:** May 5 (Weekly Webinar)
- **Intent to Apply:** May 8
- **Final application:** May 22

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 28 at 3:00 p.m. General current events and updates
- May 5 at 3:00 p.m. Lead Agency RFA Informational Webinar

Recent Lead Agency Resources

- Spring 2020 Collaboratives Webinar
- Engagement and Outreach Strategies
- April 14 Office Hours webinar slides
- April 21 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 Approval 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

[Louisiana Children's Museum teams up with health experts for tips on child care during coronavirus](#) (The Gambit)

[New partnership formed with nanny company to help coronavirus-caused childcare crisis](#) (The Advocate)

[Louisiana to Award Nearly \\$10 Million in Federal Funding to Child Care Providers Impacted by Public Health Crisis](#) (LDOE)

[Guest Column: More than ever, quality child care critical to our lives](#) (The Advocate)

[Department Expands At-Home and Learning Supports for Families with Young Children](#) (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.