



EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWSLETTER

June 10, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

I'm very proud we came together to do what is best for children this year despite unprecedented challenges. So much was unknown this time last year. We had to trust each other.

Trust that our mitigation efforts would keep children safe.

Trust that last summer's planning would successfully translate into the classroom.

Trust that when we made mistakes, we would learn and grow stronger.

Trust that we could rise to the challenge for our kids, our families and our state.

On May 26, a new proclamation went into effect lifting the mask mandate for all early childhood centers and schools in Louisiana. School systems and centers are now given the authority to begin implementing their own face mask policies. After a statewide effort that served its purpose, I applaud the Governor for now returning this decision to our local communities. You know your children best. Just as they have since the pandemic began, I know site and system leaders will continue to work with parish medical experts as they navigate what we all hope is the final chapter of this pandemic.

The traditional 2020-21 school year has ended and all signs point to us being in the final chapters of the pandemic. We know, however, that our journey is just beginning.

Dr. Cade Brumley
State Superintendent of Education

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Upcoming Deadlines

- June 10: [Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider \(LaCAP\) Relief Grant for CCAP Certified Providers - Round 6 application](#) due
- June 12: [2021-2022 Teacher Leader Advisors application](#) due
- June 20: [Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider \(LaCAP\) Relief Grant for Non-Certified Providers - Round 2 application](#) due

Upcoming Events

- June 12: CCAP Families First Engagement Forum - Hammond, LA
- June 14: [Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider \(LaCAP\) Relief Grant for Non-Certified Providers - Round 2 application](#) period begins
- June 14: Accountability Participation Grant application period begins
- June 16: [TIKES Mental Health Wellness Wednesdays - Guided Imagery](#)
- June 18: CCAP Families First Engagement Forum - Lafayette, LA
- June 23: [TIKES Mental Health Wellness Wednesdays - Self-Care for the Busy Caregiver](#)
- June 25: CCAP Families First Engagement Forum - New Orleans, LA
- June 25: CCAP Families First Engagement Forum - Baton Rouge, LA
- June 25: [Monthly Office Hours for New Directors](#)
- July 1: [Early Childhood Provider Updates Webinar](#)
- July 1: Change in Child-to-Staff Ratio for Type I Centers goes into effect
- July 1: Early Childhood Teacher Support Grant application period begins

More Important Dates

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

Monthly Mental Health

"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty." - Maya Angelou

Updates for COVID-19

NEW: Upcoming Early Childhood Provider Updates Webinar (July)

The Department will be hosting monthly webinars for early childhood providers. These webinars will include important updates related to COVID-19 and reminders for all provider types.

Providers can access the next provider webinar using the information below:

Webinar Date and Time: July 1 at 1 p.m.

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93597745872>

Phone Number: 1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 935 9774 5872

Passcode: 641464

NEW: Recording for Early Childhood Provider Updates Webinar (June)

On June 3, the Department hosted a webinar for early childhood providers which included important updates related to COVID-19 and reminders for all provider types. [Presentation slides](#) of this webinar are available on the [COVID-19 Landing Page](#) on the Louisiana Believes website.

Updates for Teaching and Learning

NEW: 2021 Teacher Leader Summit

Last month, the Louisiana Department of Education hosted thousands of educators for the annual Teacher Leader Summit. Individuals who were unable to join the opening session can watch it on the [LDOE YouTube channel](#). Session materials will soon be available in the [2021 Teacher Leader Summit library](#). The [Virtual Teacher Leader Summit Series](#) began last week and will be running until June 11.

For more information contact LDOEEvents@la.gov.

NEW: STEMIE Inclusion Video Series

The U.S. Department of Education-funded [STEM Innovation for Inclusion in Early Education \(STEMIE\)](#) promotes STEM learning for young children with disabilities. The STEMIE team recently released a [series of three videos](#) on why inclusion is important. Closed captioning is currently available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. (Vietnamese captions and sign language translation were produced in collaboration with UNICEF Vietnam.)

For more information contact stemie@unc.edu.

Reminder: 2021-2022 Teacher Leader Advisors

The Department is now accepting applications for [2021-2022 Teacher Leader Advisors](#). Teacher Leader Advisors work closely with Department staff throughout the year to make sure school systems and early childhood networks across the state have access to high-quality instructional materials. All interested birth through grade 12 Louisiana educators should complete the application by 5 p.m. June 12.

Please contact LouisianaTeacherLeaders@la.gov or leslie.doyle@la.gov with questions.

Updates for Funding and Enrollment

NEW: Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider (LaCAP) Relief Grant for CCAP Certified Providers - Round 6

[The LaCAP Relief Grant Round 6 application](#) for certified Type III, Family Child Care, and In-Home providers is now available. Final grant application submissions are due Thursday, June 10.

Eligible providers: All Type III, Family Child Care, and In-Home certified providers open by July 1 are eligible to apply.

Grant award amount: Payment will be \$900.00 per child, based on the licensed capacity. As an incentive to enroll CCAP children, including those that may have an outstanding out-of-pocket balance incurred after March 16, 2020, a supplemental \$150.00 per CCAP-authorized child enrolled on or before July 1, 2021, will also be paid.

Note: Grant payments for providers who have not signed and returned their 2021 Provider Agreement will be delayed.

Any questions can be directed to Jackie.Droddy2@la.gov or LDECCAP@la.gov.

NEW: Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider (LaCAP) Relief Grant for Non-Certified Providers - Round 2

Type I and II centers, as well as non-CCAP certified registered Family Child Care and In-Home providers, will be able to complete an [application](#) for round 2 of the Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider (LaCAP) Relief Grant for Non-Certified Providers. This application will open on June 14 and is due June 20.

Any questions can be directed to Jackie.Droddy2@la.gov or LDECCAP@la.gov.

NEW: Pre-K Program Payment Update: LA 4/NSECD

During the spring semester, LA 4 and NSECD payments continued based on enrollment rather than attendance.

- The final LA 4 State General Fund payment (QTR 1) is expected to be issued in June.
- March TANF payments were issued on March 31. April TANF payments were issued on June 8.
- April NSECD payments were issued on May 27. May payment requests were submitted to the Office of State Finance on June 9 and are anticipated to post before the end of the fiscal year.

At this time it is anticipated that payment based on attendance will resume for the 2021-2022 school year.

Any questions regarding LA 4 or NSECD can be directed to pheriche.perkins@la.gov.

NEW: Additional Grant Opportunities

Type III centers can apply for two additional grants this summer to support child care recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Accountability Participation Grant: Type III centers that fully participate in CLASS® observations this year (local and Picard) will be eligible to apply for a grant to offset additional costs and administrative burdens of participating in the accountability system this year. The grant application will be available on the Louisiana Believes website and the grant application period is 6/14/2021 – 6/21/2021; payments are anticipated to occur in July.
- Early Childhood Teacher Support Grant: This grant will provide funding for open child care providers to provide financial support to child care teachers in the form of stipends, bonuses, or wage supplements. This grant will be provided directly to open CCAP child care providers based on the number of open classrooms within the center. Acceptable expenses might include hiring bonuses, retention stipends, or wage supplements to staff working full-time (at least 30 hours per week) with children. The grant application period is 7/1/2021-7/9/2021; payments are anticipated to occur in August.

Questions can be directed to earlychildhood@la.gov.

Reminder: Child Care Assistance Payments and Attendance Tracking

While CCAP has extended payments based on enrollment until December 31, providers are still required to use either the Tracking of Time Services (TOTS) Point of Service (POS) device or Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system to track attendance.

Failure to properly track child care attendance may jeopardize provider payments based on enrollment. As future grants become available, providers failing to use TOTS or IVR will not be considered for the grants.

Any questions can be directed to Jackie.Droddy2@la.gov or LDECCAP@la.gov.

Reminder: Underutilized Authorizations

On June 1, CCAP began conducting an underutilization review of children who have not attended child care for the months of March, April, and May 2021. The Tracking of Time Services (TOTS) Point of Service (POS) and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) attendance for March, April, and May are examined as a part of the underutilization review. If CCAP children are not attending, the Department will contact families to assess the need for continued child care services. If families are not reached during this period, their CCAP authorizations will be discontinued June 30, 2021, and they will need to reapply for CCAP.

Questions can be directed to the [Provider Ticket System](#) or the Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543.

Reminder: CCAP on the Road

In early April, CCAP began a series of forums designed to aid families in reaching their goals and to support providers as they strengthen quality services to families. The Families First Engagement Forums began in early April. The following forums are the final sessions scheduled:

June 12, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Tangipahoa Parish School System Professional Development Center
711 West Coleman Avenue
Hammond, LA 70403

June 18, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Vermilion Conference Center
326 Gauthier Road
Lafayette, LA 70501

June 25, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Mahalia Jackson Family Resource Center
2405 Jackson Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70113

June 25, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Louisiana Department of Education
Claiborne Building, Thomas Jefferson Room
1201 North 3rd Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70801

For additional information, please contact the Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 or via the [Provider Ticket System](#).

Updates for Licensed Centers, Family Child Care, and In-Home Providers
NEW: Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (OHSEP) Contacts

All providers must ensure the parish in which their child care center or home is located has the emergency plan. To find your parish contact, review [Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness \(OHSEP\) Contacts](#).

Questions can be directed to a Licensing Consultant at 225-342-9905 or ldelicensing@la.gov.

NEW: Inappropriate Discipline

The Division of Licensing continues to recognize an increase in reports of inappropriate discipline. At no time should an owner, director, classroom teacher, or a parent subject a child to any prohibited methods of discipline. See Bulletin 137 §15098.a.b Behavior Management Policy for some examples. If any of the above occurrences are observed or there is an allegation, a critical incident report must be completed within 24 hours or the next business day. The Department of Child Family Services (DCFS)-Child Welfare division must also be notified within 24 hours or the next business day. If center staff use inappropriate discipline, the parent must be notified immediately. Depending on the severity of the inappropriate discipline, law enforcement may need to be notified.

If your child care center would like to receive additional support and training in this area, Tulane offers TIKES Mental Health Consultation via telephone or secure video platform to Louisiana caregivers; parents; Type I, II, and III child care centers; Family Child Care and In-Home providers; respite care center caregivers; and others caring for young children. Requests are typically answered within hours and scheduled for the next day.

Providers can complete the [request form](#) to request services.

Questions can be directed to a Licensing Consultant at 225-342-9905 or ldelicensing@la.gov.

NEW: Electronics Policy Waiver- EXPIRED

The waiver that allowed for electronic device activities, found in Bulletin 137 Section 1509A.9.b, to be waived for children ages four and older for whom care was being provided at a licensed early learning center simultaneously while the children were receiving virtual instruction or completing school work from the school in which they were enrolled in for the 2020-2021 school year has expired.

Questions can be directed to a Licensing Consultant at 225-342-9905 or ldelicensing@la.gov

NEW: Transportation Supervision

Hot weather is here, and the temperatures inside of vehicles can rise quickly! It is imperative that children are not left in hot vehicles for any length of time!

Licensed early learning centers that provide transportation shall:

- ensure that no child is left in the vehicle,
- conduct visual passenger checks of all vehicles used to transport children,
- have a staff person physically walk through the vehicle and inspect all seat surfaces, under all seats, and in all enclosed spaces and recesses in the vehicle's interior.

NOTE: A visual inspection is required for vehicles used to transport children if the vehicle is provided by you, via a contractual arrangement, or is parent-provided.

If a child is left in the center's vehicle for any amount of time, it is a critical/reportable incident and the parent, the Department, and Child Welfare should be notified immediately. Centers can utilize the [Critical/Reportable Incident Form](#) as well as the [Supplemental Critical/Reportable Incident Form](#).

Questions can be directed to a Licensing Consultant at 225-342-9905 or ldelicensing@la.gov.

NEW: Change in Child-to-Staff Ratio for Type I Centers

In accordance with Bulletin 137, effective July 1, 2021, the minimum child-to-staff ratios for children ages two and under for Type I centers will be the same as that for Type II and Type III Centers. Please review the chart below advising the changes.

Minimum Child-to-Staff Ratios Type I Centers Effective until July 1, 2021		Minimum Child-to-Staff Ratios For All Type Centers Effective July 1, 2021	
Ages of Children	Ratio	Ages of Children	Ratio
Infants under 1 year	6:1	Infants under 1 year	5:1
1 year	8:1	1 year	7:1
2 years	12:1	2 years	11:1
3 years	13:1	3 years	13:1
4 years	15:1	4 years	15:1
5 years	19:1	5 years	19:1
6 years and up	23:1	6 years and up	23:1

Questions can be directed to a Licensing Consultant at 225-342-9905 or ldelicensing@la.gov.

Reminder: Level One Notice

With the beginning of hurricane season, the Department would like to remind providers to be prepared if a hurricane or other disaster occurs in their area or parish.

If an emergency covers a large geographical area such as a parish or region of the state, the Department will closely monitor conditions out of concern for the safety of staff, children, and families. Should a disaster occur and the center or location is in a parish or area that the LDOE determines as impacted by the disaster, the provider’s license or certification may be suspended until post-disaster approvals are obtained and the required Reopening Request is submitted to the LDOE.

In the event of a potential disaster, take the following steps to prepare:

- Stay up-to-date with the status of any storm or other potential natural disaster and its impact on the provider’s area.
- Ensure that LDOE has a current cell phone number and email address.
- Review and update evacuation and safety plans.
- Practice evacuation and reunification plans.
- Let families know how communications will be made if the provider is unable to reopen following a disaster.

- Review the Frequently Asked Questions below and be ready if a disaster declaration is made for the provider's parish:
 - [Child Care Assistance Program \(CCAP\) – Before, During and After a Disaster](#)
 - [Reinstatement of a Child Care Center License Following a Disaster](#)
- Pay close attention to the messages from local officials.
- Obtain the appropriate parish's [Emergency Preparedness Contact](#) phone number.
- Review the useful links below:
 - [Get A Game Plan](#)
 - [Emergency Louisiana](#)
- Be Safe.

Questions can be directed to earlychildhood@la.gov.

Reminder: Back by Popular Demand: TIKES Mental Health Wellness Wednesdays

In response to demand, the TIKES Mental Health Wellness Wednesdays are returning. Upcoming topics include:

- Guided Imagery - June 16
- Self-Care for the Busy Caregiver - June 23
- Finding Relaxation through Guided Meditation - June 30

Webinars will be held every Wednesday from 12:00-12:30 p.m. through June 30, 2021.

Webinar Link: <https://tulanehipaa.zoom.us/j/99180170548>

Webinar Phone Number: 1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 991 8017 0548

Passcode: 968036

All sessions are recorded and can be viewed on the [TIKES YouTube channel](#).

Questions can be directed to michelle.demeulenaere@la.gov.

Updates for Directors

NEW: Recruiting and Hiring Staff

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new and highlighted many existing early childhood workforce challenges, specifically challenges related to recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff. As the state begins to recover, [The Early Childhood Workforce: Recruiting & Hiring Toolkit](#) can help to provide support for early learning center directors to recruit, interview, hire, and onboard new staff members.

For more information, please contact Shallan.Jones@la.gov.

NEW: Early Childhood Substitute Directory

The Department is launching the Substitute Directory on a monthly basis by [region](#), based on the number of early learning centers within each community. This directory will connect early learning providers with individuals interested in working as a substitute in early learning centers within each [region](#).

CCR&R and Regions	Target Month for Directory Launch
Agenda for Children - Regions 1, 3, & 4	June
Volunteers of America - Regions 5, 6 & 7	July
Northwestern State University - Regions 7 & 8	August
Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana - Region 9	September
Volunteers of America - Regions 2 & 3 On Track by 5 Alliance - Region 10 Pointe Coupee Early Childhood Coalition - Region 11	October

The launch of this pilot involves three key activities in each region:

- Recruiting substitutes who are interested in working in early learning centers
- Re-engaging former teachers who are interested in working in early learning centers as substitutes
- Training child care directors to utilize the Substitute Directory

The Substitute Directory will launch in the [regions](#) served by Agenda for Children this month. The LDOE staff will present at Agenda’s next Director’s Meeting.

If a local [CCR&R or region](#) is not listed, refer to the regional Child Care Resource and Referral Agency communications over the next few months for information about training opportunities on how to use the Substitute Directory.

Webinar Title: Overview of the Substitute Directory

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/94355716183>

Webinar Phone Number: 1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 943 5571 6183

Passcode: 414099

For more information, contact Cheryl Russell at ECSubstitutes@la.gov.

Reminder: Monthly Office Hours for New Directors

Every month, the LDOE team will hold a webinar that focuses on a topic related to early childhood quality, while also helping to expand directors’ network of peers. Office hours are targeted towards new directors. Come learn about Type III requirements, connect with other directors, and stay up-to-date

with upcoming events and deadlines. This month's topic will be an overview of Louisiana Pathways and functions of the database system, professional development, and the availability of scholarships.

Webinar Date and Time: June 25 at 10 a.m.

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/99928176003>

Webinar Phone Number: 1-346-248-7799

Meeting ID: 999 2817 6003

Please contact tella.henderson@la.gov with any questions.

Updates for Lead Agencies

Reminder: Weekly Webinar for Lead Agencies

The Early Childhood Team holds Office Hours every Tuesday for lead agency contacts. The purpose of the webinars is to provide updates and answer questions for lead agencies.

Upcoming Schedule for Weekly Webinar for Lead Agencies:

- June 15 - Data Certification
- June 22 - General Updates and Guest - Lindsey Weixler from Education Research Alliance for New Orleans
- June 29 - General Updates

Contact amanda.colon@la.gov with questions.

Resources

TIKES Mental Health Consultation

Tulane offers TIKES Mental Health Consultation via telephone or secure video platform to Louisiana caregivers in need during the COVID-19 crisis. Type I, II, & III child care centers, parents, respite care center caregivers, and others caring for young children can request a consultation by completing a [request form](#).

For more information visit the [TIKES](#) webpage.

Other

NEW: The State of Early Childhood in Louisiana

During Louisiana's annual Teacher Leader Summit, the Department delivered an assessment of Louisiana's progress toward improving learning opportunities for young children. The session, titled [The State of Early Childhood in Louisiana](#), included:

- An overview of the current landscape of early childhood in Louisiana;
- Louisiana's Key Early Childhood Priorities; and
- An update on COVID-19 Impacts on Early Childhood.

Please contact earlychildhood@la.gov with questions about this presentation.

NEW: Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council - Meeting Recap, May 19

The Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council met on May 19. [Presentation slides](#) and a [recording](#) of this meeting can be found online.

For additional information regarding the [ECCE Advisory Council](#), please email leslie.doyle@la.gov.

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Early Childhood in the News

[Lawmakers Decide Kindergarten will be Mandatory in Louisiana](#)
(Associated Press)

[Louisiana Department of Education Announces Finalists for 2022 Louisiana Teacher and Principal of the Year](#)
(Louisiana Department of Education)

[Louisiana Early Childhood Educators Advocate for Passing of Senate Bill](#)
(WDSU)



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 questions regarding child care criminal background check processing, please contact LDEccbcprocessing@la.gov.

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