

August 2, 2018



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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

In 2012, the Legislature created [Act 3](#), a visionary step toward unifying the state's fragmented early childhood system. For the last six years, you have worked side-by-side with Head Start providers, child care centers, and nonpublic schools to implement standards of excellence, a shared observation system, and cooperative enrollment systems for families. As a result, more parents have enrolled in early education programs, and programs are seeing significant improvement in the quality of classroom care and teaching.

There remain large gaps in the system, however. As is often noted, slots are available to too few parents. Equally important, options performing at a high level are even less available. Parents of infants and toddlers have particularly low levels of access to high-performing centers.

[Act 639](#) of this year's regular legislative session builds on Act 3 in two ways. First, it creates a statewide task force that will study the state's early education progress, making recommendations for further growth this winter. Next, it creates pilots that provide opportunities for local entities to lead local networks not just in implementing CLASS or running enrollment processes, but also in supporting centers to improve. These pilots could serve as evidence that local leaders are well positioned to lead a quality agenda in their communities. When the request for applications for local pilots is released, I hope your parish or community will consider applying. I also hope you will monitor the task force and its recommendations.

Fortunately, the federal government recently made one-time funds available for child care access. Consequently, earlier this week, the Department [announced](#) a radical reduction in the waiting list. This is great news.

But it is a one-time occurrence, and the reality underneath this ray of hope is that we still cannot provide an assurance to low-income families that a high-quality option will always be available to them. I'm looking forward to all the good that can come of Act 639, in the hopes of even better news to come for the state's youngest children and their parents.

As always, thank you for all you do for our children.

John

John White
Louisiana Department of Education
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UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Lead Agency Webinar/Conference Call (*lead agencies only*) - August 7 and 14 at 3:00 p.m.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

EARLY CHILDHOOD DATA CERTIFICATION 2018

Early childhood data certification for informational metrics will take place throughout the month of August 2018. Lead agencies lead this process for each community.

Through Data Certification, programs/sites must verify for each classroom in the site:

- Ages served by the site
- Number of children assessed in each classroom using GOLD™
- Pre-K and/or Infant/Toddler curriculum used in each classroom
- Highest degree earned for one lead teacher for each classroom
- Louisiana Certification for one lead teacher for each classroom (including Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate)

These informational metrics are made public through [Louisiana School and Center Finder](#). Programs should work with their lead agency to make any corrections to their data. Please email any questions to [Taylor Dunn](#).

EARNING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD ANCILLARY CERTIFICATE: ATTENDING APPROVED PROGRAMS

As of July 1, 2018, the following credentials and training providers can be used to earn the [Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate](#):

Qualifying Credential	Requirements for Completing Qualifying Credential
1. CDA	Training for CDA credential (120 hours) must be completed at a BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Program . *Exception: Individuals who had completed more than 36 hours of CDA training prior to July 1, 2018, may complete their training at any location or program.
2. Technical diploma in early childhood	Coursework must be completed at a BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Program . *Exception: Individuals who began coursework prior to July 1, 2018, may complete their course of study.
3. Associate's degree in early childhood	Degree must be completed at a regionally accredited college or university.
4. Bachelor's degree or higher	Degree must be completed at a regionally accredited college or university.

An approved program waiver is available for teachers who cannot access a BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Program due to geographical availability.

The Department hosted a webinar discussing the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate on Friday, July 13. This webinar provided additional details regarding credentials and training for providers qualifying for the certificate. You are invited to watch our [webinar](#) or contact [Erin Carroll](#) for additional information.

GOLD® 2018-2019 TRANSITION BACK TO ONE LICENSE

On July 1, 2018, the Abbreviated Pilot licenses (AB1 and AB2) shut down and all users returned to using the original 'Comprehensive' license of Teachstone GOLD®.

- For more information about the transition to one license, review the [2018-2019 GOLD® Guidance](#) or watch the [2018-2019: Next Steps for Early Childhood GOLD® Users](#) webinar.
- If users have forgotten login credentials for the original license, they should use the 'Forgot Password' or 'Forgot Username' options on GOLD®'s website to have their password reset.
- Beginning July 1st, the Department set up sites and administration accounts for all new sites that were never in the original license. Administrators for those sites should anticipate receiving an email with instructions to set up their account.

If you have any questions about using GOLD® in 2018-2019, contact [Taylor Dunn](#).

FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

CCAP WAITING LIST REMOVAL OVERVIEW

The Louisiana Department of Education started the process of removing and serving 4,500 children from the waiting list for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) which provides financial assistance to low-income families while they are working or attending school. Families

Continuity Program (CCAP), which provides financial assistance to low-income families while they are working or attending school. Families eligible to be removed from the list will start receiving digital and mailed Waiting List Verification Forms, and the first previously waitlisted family will be able to access child care using CCAP funding in the week following Labor Day. This Waiting List Verification Form is tailored to that family and is not transferable.

The Department [established a waiting list for eligible families](#) who apply to CCAP on July 1, 2017, as the result of overwhelming demand from working parents and a shortage of funding. The waiting list currently comprises nearly 7,000 children, and that number continues to grow. A link to the number of children coming off the waiting list by parish can be found [here](#).

Please see this [link](#) to view a presentation for providers, lead agencies, resource and referral agencies, etc. concerning the CCAP waiting list, how processing will occur for families, and timelines for all involved. A video of the recorded webinar is available [here](#). For additional questions, please contact the department by phone at 1-877-453-2721 or by email at LDECCAP@la.gov.

NEW ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR PRE-K PROGRAMS

In April 2018, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in an effort to align the "at-risk" definition for Early Childhood programs to K-12's "economically disadvantaged" definition, approved a change to Bulletin 140 that increased the income limit for school-based pre-K programs to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. This change will go into effect in August 2018. In order to provide guidance on how this change should be implemented, the Department presented an updated eligibility webinar. You may view the information presented in the webinar [here](#). If you have any questions, contact [Lindsey Bradford](#).

CHILD SAFETY AND WELFARE

CCCBC ROSTERS

Providers should regularly check their CCCBC Roster to ensure all staff members are eligible. When Licensing Specialists request to review a center's records for CCCBC-based determination of eligibility, providers will be asked to pull up their CCCBC Roster. Also effective July 1, 2018, DCFS began to respond to requests sent from the Department to search the Louisiana state central registry of child abuse and neglect. This recent search may cause staff whose status was once ELIGIBLE to change to INELIGIBLE. As a reminder, a status of "In Progress" does **not** constitute as a determination of eligibility. [Bulletin 137](#)

REMINDER ABOUT WARM WEATHER AND CHILDREN IN VEHICLES

Warm weather is here and temperatures inside vehicles rise quickly. Licensed early learning centers are required to conduct visual passenger checks of all vehicles used to transport children to ensure that no child is left in the vehicle. A staff person must physically walk through the vehicle and inspect all seat surfaces, under all seats, and in all enclosed spaces and recesses in the vehicles interior.

The visual inspection should be completed for the vehicle(s) that are provided by the center, contractual arrangement, or parent provided. §2107. Motor Vehicle Passenger Checks. [Bulletin 137](#)

REMINDER: ALL EXISTING STAFF MUST APPLY FOR A CHILD CARE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK (CCCBC) PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

The deadline for existing staff to apply for the CCCBC is September 30th. Send staff as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary delays. The \$25 fee for searching the State Central Registry (SCR) will be applied to all applications submitted after September 30, 2018. A webinar was given to provide updates on how the DCFS fee for the State Central Registry will be applied. The webinar slides can be viewed [here](#).

For more information about Child Care Criminal Background Checks, visit the [website](#) or email [Valerie Black](#). To contact DCFS after receiving a notice that additional information is needed, please call DCFS at (225) 219-3461.

LEAD AGENCY SUPPORT

WEEKLY WEBINAR/CONFERENCE CALL FOR LEAD AGENCIES

The Early Childhood Team holds weekly webinar/conference call question and answer sessions for lead agencies. The sessions are held on most Tuesdays from **3:00 p.m. to 4:00 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 [Kaye Eichler](#) if you have questions.

Upcoming Schedule for Weekly Webinar/Conference Call for Lead Agencies

- August 7
- August 14

BACK-TO-SCHOOL WEBINAR FOR LEAD AGENCIES

A Back-to-School webinar will be held for Lead Agencies on August 8 at 12:00 p.m. Information from the back-to-school email will be discussed in detail and questions will be answered. All Lead Agencies should attend. Contact [Kaye Eichler](#) if you have questions.

OTHER

ACT 639 EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COMMISSION

The Early Childhood Care and Education Commission, established through [Act 639](#) of the 2018 Legislative Session, has been charged with

The Early Childhood Care and Education Commission, established through [Act 655](#) of the 2016 Legislative Session, has been charged with creating a vision and framework for the future of early childhood care and education in Louisiana. The Commission hosted its inaugural meeting on August 1 in the Thomas Jefferson room of the Claiborne Building, located at 1201 N Third Street in Baton Rouge. A live stream of the public meeting will be shared in our August 16 Early Childhood Connection [newsletter](#).

For additional information about the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission, please email earlychildhood@la.gov.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SITE LEADER SURVEY

Early Childhood Site Leaders: RAND Corporation needs your help! RAND ("Research **ANd** Development") is a nonprofit organization offering research to understand how Louisiana's education policies affect people like you, who work with early childhood teachers and children every day. Please take 15-20 minutes out of your day to complete RAND's Early Childhood Site Leader Survey. This survey is for site leaders **only**. After you complete the survey, RAND will send you an electronic link to a \$10 Amazon gift card as a thank you for your time. If you would be willing to take the survey, please click on this [link](#). Your valuable input will help RAND provide a well-rounded picture of how the state is supporting early childhood education. Make your voice heard!

REMINDER: DEPARTMENT TRANSITIONS TO ZOOM PLATFORM FOR ALL WEBINARS

Starting July 1, the Department began using [Zoom](#) for all of its webinars and will no longer use the Adobe Connect platform. Therefore, pay close attention to the new links and meeting IDs for upcoming webinars, as all previously used links for regularly scheduled meetings are no longer valid.

Participants will now be able to join the Department's webinars in three ways:

- by computer only (using the sound and audio capabilities of the computer),
- by iPhone or Android phone with the Zoom App (available in the App Stores), or
- by computer and phone.

Participants who join by computer and phone must enter the "Participant ID" displayed on their computer in order to fully participate in the webinar. In addition, participants are encouraged to logon to their first Zoom webinar 10-15 minutes early to ensure that they are able to successfully open, or if needed download, the Zoom application. Please email edtech@la.gov with questions or refer to our.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

[4,500 Children Removed from Child Care Waiting List Due to One-Time Funding](#) (*Louisiana Believes*, August 1, 2018)

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