

August 13, 2020



News for Early Childhood Educators

Dear Colleagues,

August has traditionally signaled a return to school in Louisiana. That's still true for many children; however, school will look a little different this year. As we move through August, the Department is here to support and guide you through reopening — whatever that looks like in your community.

Despite the unprecedented circumstances, the start of the school year is an exciting time. Each year, we strive to expand and improve the learning opportunities available for our youngest learners. We believe that every child deserves to have access to high-quality early childhood classrooms, teachers, and experiences that help prepare them to enter kindergarten ready. We commend the essential work taking place across Louisiana's communities to unify early childhood systems, implement top-tier curricula, prepare teachers, and improve family engagement and enrollment in early childhood programs.

Important initiatives worth highlighting as we start the year:

- [Guidance](#) has been shared with community networks and school systems for implementing a virtual pre-K model along with additional Strong Start 2020 resources and supports;
- Funding for the [Child Care Curriculum Initiative](#) will continue to support child care centers that seek to purchase and implement high quality curriculum through partnership with their local [Child Care Resource and Referral Centers](#);
- The Department has updated the [online library of high-quality examples of CLASS® dimensions](#) in practice to include Infant CLASS® dimensions;
- [The Louisiana Early Leaders Academy \(LELA\)](#) launched its second year, with 60 new fellows committed to increasing the instructional leadership in their Type III centers; and
- Twenty-six of the early childhood community networks in the state have signed up and been approved to be a Ready Start Network, signaling their commitment to expanding access to high-quality early childhood for families in their communities.

Thank you for continuing to lead during these uncertain times. Our children, families, and educators need us now more than ever. Together, I know we can rise to this challenge.

Dr. Cade Brumley
State Superintendent of Education

Upcoming Events

- [Teachstone Webinar: What Do High-Quality In-Classroom Interactions Look Like During COVID-19?](#): August 19 at 12 p.m.
- [Virtual Town Hall Series for Schools \(Tips for School Support Staff\)](#): August 18 at 1 p.m.

More Important Dates

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

Please click the image below to read the **Early Childhood Newsletter** in your browser.

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Updates for Teaching and Learning

New: Tips for Using Face-Coverings While Engaging with Young Children

Louisiana's [Office of Public Health Guidelines for Child Care](#) and [School Reopening Guidelines](#) require that adults inside child care and school facilities wear a face covering. Young children who are not used to seeing face coverings on adults might need additional guidance and support. [Q-CCIIT](#) (Quality of Caregiver–Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers) has published [tips on how to build warm, positive relationships with infants, toddlers, and young children while wearing a face-covering](#) to prevent the spread of COVID-19.



Strong Start 2020 Instructional Material and PD Vendor Guide Updates

In order to ensure a strong start to 2020-2021, school systems adapt academic plans for 2020-2021 to include distance learning plans provided by publishers of high-quality instructional materials. The Strong Start 2020 plan includes [Instructional Materials Guidance](#) and [Professional Development Guidance](#), and the Department continues to work with publishers and vendors to update each guide as they build and refine their supports.

Please contact classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov with questions.

New: Virtual Pre-K Toolkit

This week, the Department [released a toolkit](#) to provide guidance for how to design and implement a [virtual pre-K program](#) in the 2020-2021 school year.

The [toolkit](#) provides both requirements and recommendations for quality implementation, including:

- Requirements for virtual settings
- Synchronous and asynchronous definitions
- Sample schedules for teachers and families
- Guidance for completing assessments virtually
- Ideas for providing materials at home
- Tips for publicizing a virtual option

Questions about virtual pre-K can be directed to meredith.eckard@la.gov.

Birth-Grade 3 Assessment Guidance

The [Birth to Grade 3 Assessment Guidance 2020-2021](#) has been released. This guidance includes information about each assessment and links to the following helpful resources:

- **UPDATED:** [KEA and K-3 Literacy Screener Guidance for Various Learning Environments](#) outlines requirements and resources for administering the KEA and K-3 Literacy Screener in various learning environments; including traditional, virtual, and hybrid.
- **UPDATED:** [DRDP-K Overview 2020-2021](#) outlines requirements and resources for administering the DRDP-K.
- **UPDATED:** [GOLD® Overview 2020-2021](#) has been released for Early Childhood, OSEP, and KEA.
- **UPDATED:** [Early Childhood \(pre-K\) Assessment Guidance for Various Learning Environments](#) outlines requirements and resources for assessing children in publicly funded seats (birth-age 5) using TeachingStrategies GOLD® in various learning environments; including traditional, virtual, and hybrid.
- Birth-Grade 3 Assessments has a [suite of resources](#) available to help school systems (and early learning centers) plan assessment administration for the 2020-2021 school year.

Questions regarding assessments can be directed to meredith.eckard@la.gov or bridgette.cupstid@la.gov.

TeachingStrategies GOLD® updates

TeachingStrategies released new GOLD® features and functionality available in MyTeachingStrategies®, including:

- the [Digital Content Library](#) to The Creative Curriculum® Cloud subscribers;
- the ability for teachers to [add Mighty Minutes® directly to weekly plans](#);
- family activities associated with [Intentional Teaching Experiences](#) and [Mighty Minutes®](#) that can be printed or shared digitally with families to extend learning at home and/or to facilitate distance learning; and
- [two-way communication between teachers and family members](#).

Users can check their MyTeachingStrategies® dashboard for regular updates to stay informed of recent updates and additional upcoming releases.

Any questions regarding GOLD® can be directed to meredith.eckard@la.gov.

Reminder: NogginCares

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.

[Register](#) by August 31 for a free subscription.



Updates for Funding and Enrollment

LA 4 and NSECD

Any school systems or providers who will have a delayed school start date (after August 31) should notify [Lindsey Bradford](#) of the revised start date.

LDOE conducted a webinar on LA4 enrollment and attendance on July 24, the links and slides can be found below:

- [Recorded Webinar Part 1](#)
- [Recorded Webinar Part 2](#)
- [Slide Presentation](#)

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

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

LaCAP Relief Grant Round 3

LaCAP Grant 3 applications have been received and are being processed for distribution beginning

August 1.

Provider Payments

CCAP will extend child care payments to providers based on enrollment through September 30. Providers will continue to be paid by enrollment and not by attendance per their center's capacity.

Client Redeterminations

Presently, CCAP client redeterminations are extended as follows:

- June and March redeterminations are extended to September 2020.
- July and April redeterminations are extended to October 2020.
- August and May redeterminations are extended to November 2020.

For questions regarding CCAP, please email the Provider Ticket System at <https://provider.supportsystem.com>

Updates for Licensed Centers



Staff-in-Charge

In the event of a temporary absence of the director or director designee, including stepping out of the center on an errand or appointment, a staff-in-charge shall be appointed. The Staff-in-Charge must be at least age 21, capable and have authority to respond to emergencies, inspections, parental concerns and have access to required documents within the center.

If you have any additional questions, contact your [Licensing Consultant](#) at (225) 342-9905.

Notification of Emergency Personnel

There have been critical incidents that occur in centers, such as infants being burned by hot liquids or children almost drowning, where calls have been made to the director or parent instead of calling 9-1-1 first. We understand these incidents are very scary and can sometimes throw us off. However, to avoid a delay in seeking care for a child requiring professional medical attention, notification should first be made to emergency personnel.

[Bulletin 137 - Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations](#), §1103.

If you have any additional questions, contact your [Licensing Consultant](#) at (225) 342-9905.

Transportation Window Clings

In an effort to reduce the number of children being left alone and unsupervised in vehicles, providers who transport children will be receiving two "Look Before You Leave" window clings for center vehicles. The Department will mail these window clings to providers this month.

If you have any additional questions, contact your [Licensing Consultant](#) at (225) 342-9905.

Electronic Device Policy Waiver

With more schools offering virtual instruction as an option this school year due to COVID-19, a [waiver](#) of Bulletin 137 §1509.A.9.b. Electronic Devices Policy is being offered to early learning centers. This waiver pertains to children ages four and older for whom care is being provided at a licensed early learning center simultaneously while the children are receiving virtual instruction or completing school work from the school in which they are enrolled for the 2020-2021 school year. This waiver applies only to time spent receiving virtual instruction or completing school work that requires access to an electronic device.

The following information must be available on site:

- First and Last name of child enrolled in Virtual School
- Name of Accredited School
- Supporting documentation of enrollment in Virtual Learning

This waiver will remain in effect until May 31, 2021, unless terminated sooner by the Superintendent.

Updates for Lead Agencies



New: Teachstone Webinar: What Do High-Quality In-Classroom Interactions Look Like During COVID-19?

Teachstone is hosting a webinar focusing on high-quality in-classroom interactions during COVID-19 on August 19 at 12 p.m. CT. [Registration](#) for this webinar is currently open through Teachstone.

If you have any additional questions, contact interactions@teachstone.com.

Office Hours: Every Tuesday is Weekly Webinar for Lead Agencies

The Early Childhood Team provides a Weekly Webinar for lead agency contacts. The purpose is to provide time each week to collaborate with other colleagues, learn new ideas, review Department updates, and answer questions for lead agencies. These sessions are held on most Tuesdays at 3 p.m. and usually last a half-hour. Contact amanda.colon@la.gov with questions.

Upcoming Schedule for Weekly Webinar for Lead Agencies

- August 18 at 3 p.m. - Extended office hours for an optional collaborative breakout session
- August 25 at 3 p.m. - Extended office hours for an optional collaborative breakout session

Recent Lead Agency Resources

- [July 28 Office Hours webinar slides](#)
- [August 4 Office Hours webinar slides](#)
- [August 11 Back to School webinar slides](#) and [recorded link](#)

Other

New: Monthly Newsletter

As of today, the Early Childhood Newsletter will be issued monthly! To ensure all subscribers are current, please complete this [form](#) in order to receive our next monthly edition.

2020 Virtual Education Manager Institute: Available On-Demand

The [2020 Education Manager Institute](#) is now available on-demand. Viewers can access professional development targeted to their role as early childhood education leaders. The Institute sessions were designed to support Head Start education managers and leaders as they work with staff members, children, and families from a distance, but many topics and resources may also be useful to education leaders in child care settings.

Sessions include considerations for summer programming and supporting school readiness for all children. The On-Demand Institute is a resource-rich experience with many engaging opportunities to explore content and resources from the Office of Head Start (OHS) National Centers.

This was a live virtual event. To access this training, participants can [register](#) and watch the sessions and view the resources on-demand until September 2020.

Send questions or comments about this opportunity to the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning at ecdtdl@ecetta.info or (844)-261-3752 (toll-free).

Early Childhood in the News

[Child Care Centers Getting \\$11 Million in Federal Aid Amid Pandemic](#) (The Advocate)

[Louisiana Department of Education Providing Strong Start Resources for Students with Disabilities](#) (Louisiana Believes)

[What Are Parents Doing for Child Care? Here are 3 Options \(With Trade-offs\)](#) (NPR)

[Louisiana will provide 1 million masks for public and private schools and day care centers](#)(The Advocate)

[Louisiana Department of Education Releases Virtual Learning Guides for Families and Educators](#)
(Louisiana Believes)

Contact Us

- 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.



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