

August 16, 2018



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## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back to school! I know this is a busy time. Best of luck to you during these first few weeks and this year.

The start of the school year is an exciting time. And, each year, we strive to continue to expand and improve the learning opportunities available for our youngest learners. We believe that every child can learn and every child deserves 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 enrollment.

Some particular, important initiatives are worth highlighting as we start the year:

- The Department will release Early Childhood Performance Profiles for all publicly-funded programs later this fall through [Louisiana School and Center Finder](#);
- Funding for the [Child Care Curriculum Initiative](#) will continue to support early learning centers that seek to purchase and implement a high-quality curriculum through partnership with their local [Child Care Resource and Referral Centers](#);
- Child care teachers around the state are now able to access [BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs](#) and prepare for the July 2019 requirement that all lead teachers in Type III centers have an Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate as a minimum expectation;
- Early childhood sites around the state will strategically plan for improvement, implementing strategies to support effective interactions and learning in early childhood classrooms;
- The Department is [transitioning all Teaching Strategies GOLD users onto one license](#), which will feature a default list of 70% of all items and will provide a streamlined and abbreviated experience for teachers.
- The Department 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. Additional details can be found below.

Each year the Department produces a back-to-school guide that includes a set of key resources for teachers, principals, site leaders, and school system leaders. Click [here](#) for this resource. A [Parent Back-to-School Guide](#) was also released for our Pre-K through 2nd grade children.

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

John

John White  
Louisiana Department of Education

Twitter [@LouisianaSupe](#)

# UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Lead Agency Webinar/Conference Call (*lead agencies only*) - August 21 and 28 at 3:00 p.m
- Deadline for Data Certification - August 31, 2018

# 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](#).

Please note that the deadline for Data Certification is August 31, 2018.

## 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 <a href="#">BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Program</a> . *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 <a href="#">BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Program</a> . *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 TS GOLD for the 2018-2019 school year.

- 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](#).

### USING CLASS FOR COMPASS IN 2018-2019

Local Education Agencies and Charter Organizations are encouraged to use CLASS™ as the rubric for evaluating professional practice of public school pre-K teachers in all or some of their schools. For more information please see the [Compass Choices for Early Childhood Networks 2018-2019](#). LEAs that choose to use CLASS™ as the Teacher Professional Practice Rubric for public school pre-K teachers for 2018-2019 must complete the waiver and return to [Compass@la.gov](mailto:Compass@la.gov) by September 30, 2018.

### THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER (Coming Soon)

"The Director's Corner" will be a new feature of the Department's *Early Childhood Connections Newsletter*. Here, we will present stories, best practices, and tips from early childhood education leaders in the field. Consider this a continuation of the inspiring child care director's panel from this summer's [2018 Teacher Leader Summit](#). We look forward to continuing the conversation about instructional leadership in your program. Do you have an idea for a topic that you would like to learn more about? Email [Emmy O'Dwyer](mailto:Emmy.O'Dwyer).

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## 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 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](#) and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet is available [here](#). For additional questions, please contact the Department by phone at 1-877-453-2721 or by email at [LDECCAP@la.gov](mailto:LDECCAP@la.gov).

### CCAP APPLICATION SMART DEVICE FUNCTION

The Louisiana Department of Education has been working to improve the Child Care Assistance Program application process. The Department partnered up with several providers across the state to test implementation of the "Smart Device Upload Feature" within [CAFE](#). This feature allows applicants to upload verification documents with their application using a smart device such as a tablet, mobile phone, etc. Applicants may now utilize this Smart Device Upload Feature to ensure a more streamlined application submission process.

### 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](#).

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## 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: ALL STAFF MUST SUBMIT A CHILD CARE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK BY 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.

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

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## 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 21
- August 28

## OTHER

### 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!

### 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 creating a vision and framework for the future of early childhood care and education in Louisiana. The Commission hosted its inaugural meeting on Wednesday, August 1 in the Thomas Jefferson room of the Claiborne Building, located in Baton Rouge. You can view the livestream from this public meeting [here](#). The [Commission Overview](#) and [presentation slides](#) can be found in the [Early Childhood Policy and Guidance Library](#). For additional information about the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission, please email [earlychildhood@la.gov](mailto:earlychildhood@la.gov).

### IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

[Baby Steps? Big Changes? One Way Louisiana is Strengthening its ECE Workforce](#) (*New America*, August 6, 2018)

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