



EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWSLETTER

September 9, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

You and your family have been in my prayers as a result of Hurricane Ida. In the coming days and weeks, our state faces another set of immense obstacles to get back on its feet — but, as always, we will persevere. Some of you have been displaced from your homes, others have property damage, and others are still lacking basic utilities such as electricity and water. It's not lost on me the challenges you're facing during this time.

I'm proud of the resiliency you have displayed over the past week, and I thank you for your ongoing dedication to those we serve. With both larger scale efforts and small acts of kindness, we will continue to support the impacted communities to the best of our abilities.

Dr. Cade Brumley
State Superintendent of Education

Upcoming Deadlines

- September 14: Reopening forms ([Licensed Centers Online Reopening Form](#) or [Family Child Care and In-Home Online Reopening Form](#)) due by 5 p.m. from providers in Hurricane Ida affected parishes
- September 30: LaCAP Surveys must be completed
- September 30: All early learning staff must have current certification in CPR and Pediatric First Aid

Upcoming Events

- September 1 - June 30: [Tax Consultation for Type III centers](#)
- September 13 - 17: [Teachstone Webinar: Back to School with Meaningful Interactions](#)
- September 15: Early Childhood Investigations Webinar - [Play and Assessment? YES! Reciprocal Partners in the Early Childhood Classroom Dance](#)
- September 16: TeachingStrategies GOLD® Webinar - [GOLD® Getting Started Support for Teachers](#)
- September 17: Early Childhood Investigations Webinar - [Coaching and Supervising Staff for Social Emotional Development Growth: Prioritizing SEL in Your Program](#)
- September 22: Early Childhood Investigations Webinar - [Pushing Past Bias and Challenging Classroom Behaviors: Changing Children's Behavior Starts With Changing Ourselves](#)

- September 24 and October 13: TeachingStrategies GOLD® Webinar - [GOLD® Getting Started Support for Administrators](#)
- October 7: [Early Childhood Provider Updates Webinar](#)

More Important Dates

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

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Monthly Mental Health

As health concerns emerge again, please remember that Tulane's [TIKES program](#) offers mental health supports for early learning centers, staff, and families.

Hurricane Ida Recovery

NEW: Hurricane Ida: Level 3 Notice - Damage Report and Reopening Form; Federal Disaster Declaration

Due to the damage caused by Hurricane Ida, a [federal disaster declaration](#) has been approved for the following Louisiana parishes as [requested](#) by Governor John Bel Edwards: *Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Martin, St. Mary, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Washington, West Baton Rouge and West Feliciana.*

Therefore, a LEVEL 3 NOTICE was issued on August 31, 2021, requiring all providers in the parishes above to submit a reopening form by **5 p.m. on Tuesday, September 14, 2021**. Failure to do so may result in suspension of the provider's license/certification.

This form can be completed online (computer or mobile device) ([Licensed Centers Online Reopening Form](#) or [Family Child Care and In-Home Online Reopening Form](#)) or completed by printing the appropriate form ([Licensed Centers PDF Reopening Form](#) or [Family Child Care and In-Home PDF Reopening Form](#)), providing the requested information, and submitting it by any of the below methods:

1. scanning and emailing to LDELicensing@la.gov;
2. faxing to 225-342-2498; or
3. mailing to:

Louisiana Department of Education – Division of Licensing

ATTN: Child Care Center Reopening
P.O. Box 4249
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3078

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

NEW: September 2021 Renewal Applications for Disaster Declared Parishes

If there is foreseen trouble for submitting the September renewal application due to being in one of the disaster-declared parishes (please see list above) and the reopening form was submitted, please notify a Licensing Consultant at 225-342-9905 or ldelicensing@la.gov.

NEW: LaCAP Grant Survey for Providers - Postponed Due to Hurricane Ida

Child care providers that received LaCAP grants received a survey to complete from Postlethwaite and Netterville (P&N). Due to the recent impacts of Hurricane Ida, the LaCAP grant survey deadline has been extended. If you are not in an impacted parish, please make every effort to complete the survey by the deadline previously communicated to you.

All providers must log in and complete the LaCAP grant survey by **Thursday, September 30, 2021**.

Providers who did not receive the survey are encouraged to check their spam/junk folder for an email from info@ldoe-pnsurvey.com with the subject "LDOE LaCAP Grant Survey-Unique Link." To have the survey resent, please email info@ldoe-pnsurvey.com and include the provider number and facility name.

NEW: ARPA Stabilization Grants - Flexibility Due to Hurricane Ida

On August 5, the Department released the ARPA Stabilization Grant Round 1 application to all qualified child care providers (including Type I, II & III licensed child care centers, as well as CCAP-certified in-home and family child care providers). The deadline to submit this application was August 19.

It was previously required that child care providers be open by September 1, 2021, to receive the ARPA Stabilization Grant. Due to the impact of Hurricane Ida on the region, those centers that applied timely but were closed on September 1, 2021, due to Hurricane Ida, will still qualify for the ARPA grant.

The grant funds will be released on the following schedule:

- Week of September 13: released in Regions 1 (Orleans), 4 (Thibodeaux), and 8 (Shreveport)
- Week of September 20: released in Regions 2 (Baton Rouge), 5 (Lafayette), and 9 (Monroe)
- Week of September 27: released in Regions 3 (Covington), 6 (Lake Charles), and 7 (Alexandria)

Please contact the Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543, email ldeccap@la.gov, or enter a [ticket](#) at the Provider Help Desk, if there are any questions or assistance is needed.

Updates for COVID-19

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

Earlier today, the Department hosted a webinar for early childhood providers that included important updates related to COVID-19, resources to support recovery after Hurricane Ida, and reminders for all provider types. [Presentation](#) slides and a [recording of this webinar](#) are available on the [COVID-19 Landing Page](#) on the Louisiana Believes website.

NEW: Upcoming Early Childhood Provider Updates Webinar (October)

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: October 7 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: Louisiana Nonprofit & Small Business Assistance Program

The Louisiana Nonprofit & Small Business Assistance Program is administered by the Louisiana Department of Revenue (LDR) and provides grant funding to eligible nonprofits and small businesses to assist in the administration of COVID-19 response and relief efforts. All applicants are required to complete a short [online eligibility quiz](#) on LDR's website prior to submitting an application. Applicants are encouraged to submit applications as soon as possible once the application window opens on August 16, 2021. The anticipated final approval or denial date for applicants is October 1, 2021. Determinations and issuing of funds will be made in two rounds. The first round of approved applicants will be on September 10, 2021, and a final round on October 1, 2021. Interested individuals are encouraged to review the [program guidelines](#).

Updates for Teaching and Learning

NEW: 2021-2022 Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year

This year, for the first time, the Louisiana Department of Education will recognize and honor Early Childhood Teachers and Leaders of the Year, in step with their K-12 counterparts. In early October, the LDOE Early Childhood Strategy Team will officially announce and launch this year's application. Throughout the application period, the Department will conduct optional technical assistance sessions, for lead agencies and applicants. These sessions will include reviewing application requirements, best practices on submission materials, and other technical advice in creating application materials, such as the teaching video. Look for more information about these webinars in the near future. Teachers, leaders, and coaches or mentors who support teacher development should attend these sessions to seek any LDOE support needed, ask questions, and participate in discussions with peers who are also applying for these awards.

Any questions about the application and the process can be directed to devon.camarota@la.gov.

NEW: Increasing Opportunities for Play

The American Academy of Pediatrics ([AAP](#)) tells us that play is vital to the development of the whole child. Research shows that play promotes all areas of development and helps build relationships between adults and children.

Learn more about promoting play in early childhood by reading the following articles from ChildCare Education Institute:

- [Play Throughout the Day](#)

- [Increasing Opportunities for Free Play](#)
- [Adaptations to Promote Free Play](#)
- [Incorporating Loose Parts](#)
- [Director's Corner - Increasing Opportunities for Employees to Play](#)

Reminder: Early Childhood Investigations Webinars

Early childhood leaders and educators can access the following free, fall webinars:

- [Play and Assessment? YES! Reciprocal Partners in the Early Childhood Classroom Dance](#), September 15 at 1 p.m.
- [Coaching and Supervising Staff for Social Emotional Development Growth: Prioritizing SEL in Your Program](#), September 17 at 1 p.m.
- [Pushing Past Bias and Challenging Classroom Behaviors: Changing Children's Behavior Starts With Changing Ourselves](#), September 22 at 1 p.m.

Applicable for teachers of infants, toddlers, or pre-K students, these sessions, also available in Spanish, will offer practical strategies to strengthen the key teacher-child interactions proven to impact child learning and development. [Registration is open](#), so interested participants should save their seat as soon as possible.

Reminder: FREE Upcoming GOLD® Webinars

In Louisiana's publicly-funded early childhood classrooms, GOLD® by Teaching Strategies is used to measure each child's growth and development for multiple purposes. The Department supports programs and educators in using assessments to strengthen the learning and development of young children. Please read the Department's updated [TS GOLD® Guidance](#) document for helpful information and resources.

Teaching Strategies offers a variety of [free webinars](#) to provide professional learning opportunities to support early childhood leaders and educators in navigating their system:

- [GOLD® Getting Started Support for Teachers](#), September 16 at 11:30 a.m.
- [GOLD® Getting Started Support for Administrators](#), September 24 at 12 p.m. and October 13 at 3 p.m.

Any questions can be directed to ECAssessment@la.gov.

Updates for Funding and Enrollment

Reminder: Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider (LaCAP) Relief Grant Audit

The Department has contracted with Postlethwaite and Netterville (P&N) to conduct random audits of LaCAP grants. As indicated in the assurance statements in the LaCAP grant applications, records of expenses must be available for the LDOE and/or authorized personnel to review. Contact will be made by the LDOE and P&N for the providers selected to be audited.

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

Reminder: Updated First Aid and CPR Requirements for Centers

Per Federal requirements, **effective September 30, 2021**, all early learning staff on the premises of a center and accessible to children shall have current certification in CPR and Pediatric First Aid (PFA).

CPR and PFA training can be completed online during the pandemic but must include a visual demonstration by the instructor, as well as a return demonstration to be observed by the instructor, that is observable via Skype, Zoom, or another live platform.

The Department has created a list of [Approved CPR and Pediatric First Aid courses](#). [Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies](#) have training calendars inclusive of the group training opportunities that are available.

Please contact a Licensing Consultant at ldlelicensing@la.gov or 225-342-9905 with additional questions.

Reminder: Motor Vehicle Passenger Checks

As temperatures rise outside, it is imperative that vehicles are adequately inspected for children before staff exit the vehicle. A staff person should physically walk through the vehicle and inspect all seat surfaces, under all seats, and all enclosed spaces and recesses of the vehicle interior. The staff member should record the time of the visual passenger check and sign the log indicating that no child was left in the vehicle.

As with the behavior management policy, please ensure staff has received proper training and repeated training if needed.

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

Updates for Directors

NEW: Tax Consultation

The LDOE has contracted with [JW Royston, E.A. and Associates, Inc.](#) to provide up to two hours of tax consultation to a limited number of Type III providers to better understand each provider's current tax situations and needs. All Type III (for-profit and nonprofit) early learning centers are eligible to participate in this opportunity.

Consultation began September 1, 2021, and will be available until June 30, 2022 (or until contract hours have been expended). Type III providers interested in this consultation can begin the process by completing this [interest form](#).

For more information on tax consultation, contact shallan.jones@la.gov.

NEW: Advanced Level Business Training

The LDOE has contracted with [First Children's Finance](#) (FCF) to develop and implement a series of business supports for Type III early learning centers (ELC's) in Louisiana to further enhance the capacity of early learning center owners in Louisiana to build and strengthen internal systems of monitoring, evaluation, and compliance.

Training topics include finance, managing enrollment, partnerships, human resources, marketing and communication, systems compliance, policies and business practices, program planning and evaluation, facility management, and professional staff development/pedagogical leadership.

Additionally, the topics of business efficiency initiatives, specifically Child Care Management Software (CCMS) and automation, will be one of the areas of focus of at least one session.

[Registration](#) is now open for these Louisiana Pathways' approved training opportunities.

For more information on these Advance Level Business Trainings, contact shallan.jones@la.gov.

NEW: New Director Webinar

New directors are encouraged to attend this opportunity to better understand Louisiana's approach to quality teaching and learning. The New Director Webinar is designed to provide an overview of early childhood quality initiatives including the role of community networks, the CLASS® observation tool, Pathways scholarships, School Readiness Tax Credits, and additional resources to help new directors better understand Louisiana's system.

Webinar Date and Time: September 17 at 12:30 p.m.

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/96379890319>

Webinar Phone Number: 1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 963 7989 0319

Questions can be directed to emmy.odwyer@la.gov.

Reminder: Employee Retention Tax Credit

Enacted March 12, 2021, the new COVID-19 economic recovery law, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), extends the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) program through December 31, 2021. The Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) passed in December 2020 offered a more generous tax credit and eliminated a previous restriction for those with a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan.

The ERTC is a refundable, advanceable tax credit of up to \$7,000 per employee, per quarter. Employers can claim the ERTC by withholding payroll taxes for the amount of qualified employee wages. Because the tax credit is refundable, if withholdings do not cover the entire tax credit, the IRS will send a check for the remaining amount.

Employers with 500 or fewer employees who have experienced a 20% or more decline of gross receipts in a quarter compared to the same quarter in 2019 OR subjected to mandatory partial or full shutdown are eligible for this tax credit.

Visit the [National Foundation of Independent Business](#) website for more information.

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 the child count

process. Information will be shared about understanding of the child count process, preparing for child count, and completing and submitting documentation.

Webinar Date and Time: September 24 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 at 3 p.m. for lead agency contacts. The purpose of the webinars is to provide updates and answer questions for lead agencies.

The following is the upcoming schedule for Weekly Webinar for Lead Agencies:

- September 14: General updates and guest speaker from LDH about ACEs training mandate
- September 21: Child Count Overview
- September 28: General updates
- October 5: 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 of support during the COVID-19 crisis. Type I, II, & III child care centers, family and in-home child care providers, parents, respite 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: ECCE Advisory Council - Upcoming Meeting, October 20

The next meeting for the Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council has been rescheduled for October 20 at 1 p.m. This meeting will take place in the Claiborne Building, located at 1201 N. Third Street in Baton Rouge. An overview of the ECCE Advisory Council and meeting materials are available [online](#). For additional information, please email leslie.doyle@la.gov.

NOTICE: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance at this meeting please contact leslie.doyle@la.gov at least three business days in advance of the meeting describing the assistance that is needed.

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Early Childhood in the News

[Federal and State Policy Recommendations to Improve Outdoor Learning in Child Care](#) (*New America*)

[LA 4 Wins Praise In Study](#) (*The Advocate*)



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 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.