

EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWSLETTER

November 9, 2023

Upcoming Deadlines

November 16: <u>Let's Be Healthy Grant Application Deadline</u>
December 15: <u>Green Ribbon School Application Deadline</u>

• January 11: Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Application Deadline

Upcoming Events

November 14: <u>CCAP Provider Webinar</u>
November 21: CCAP Provider Webinar

December 14: <u>Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar</u>

More Important Dates

Please see the <u>LDOE School System Support Calendar</u>.

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Provider Updates

NEW: Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar

The next monthly Provider Update Webinar will be held December 14, 2023. <u>Please note that this is a different date than the usual monthly provider webinar schedule.</u> Providers can access the upcoming December Provider Update Webinar using the information below:

Webinar Date/Time: Thursday, December 14, 2023 at 1 p.m. Webinar Link: https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93597745872

Phone Number: 312-626-6799 **Meeting ID:** 935 9774 5872

Passcode: 641464

The November 2nd presentation slides are available in the <u>Quality Providers Library</u> on the <u>Louisiana Believes</u> website.

NEW: Opportunity to Enroll in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The Division of Nutrition Support encourages all early learning sites to explore participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This important funding source is making a difference in the lives of thousands of children in Louisiana.

The CACFP is a federally-funded United States Department of Agriculture program administered by the Louisiana Department of Education's Division of Nutrition Support. The CACFP provides funding that enables child care institutions and in-home or group day enrichment homes to provide nutritious meals and snacks to their participants. These nutritious meals contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of children.

For further information, follow this link or contact childnutritionprograms@la.gov.

REMINDER: Market Rate Survey

The Louisiana Department of Education issued a survey to providers the week of October 16, 2023, to gather information for the 2023 Louisiana Child Care Market Rate Survey.

The purpose of the Child Care Market Rate Survey is to collect 2023 information about the cost of child care and various site characteristics such as classroom size and site hours, as well as to understand the provider costs associated with offering high-quality child care. The information gathered will also be used as part of the Department's Child Care and Development Fund state plan development and will help the Department compile a comprehensive profile of early care and education in Louisiana, including the cost of child care and the availability of services in specific regions.

This survey is being sent to Type I, Type II, and Type III centers as well as to CCAP-certified family child care sites, and in-home and school providers by Emergent Method, a Baton Rouge-based consulting firm that has been hired to help in these efforts. It is critical the Department receive feedback from all provider types and from as many providers as possible.

Please contact robyn.stiles@emergentmethod.com with any questions.

REMINDER: TIKES Mental Health Consultation

The Tulane Infant and Early Childhood Consultation Support and Services (TIKES) provides child-centered consultations and family support at no cost to all children in Type III sites and in Family Child Care homes with Academic Approval. The consultants combine prevention, mental health promotion, and mental health intervention by working with teachers and directors to create supportive environments and relationships for children. Recommendations can include an individualized behavior plan, overall classroom support plan, home support considerations, and community referrals for parents, among other indicated action steps. These consultations aim to build the capacity of staff, families, and programs to prevent, identify, treat,and reduce the impact of mental health challenges among children from birth to five.

Visit the TIKES webpage for more information or leave a message at 504-264-1287 for additional support.

UPDATES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

NEW: Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council Membership Application

The Department is accepting <u>2023 applications</u> for new three-year terms on the Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council.

Council positions to be filled include the following:

- Representative of a Louisiana business or community organization
- Representative of an approved nonpublic school with publicly-funded early childhood care and education program
- Representative of a Type III early learning center
- Parent of a child currently enrolled in a publicly-funded early learning center
- Representative of a Type II early learning center
- Representative of a Type I early learning center
- Representative of a Head Start program operated by a nonlocal education agency
- Representative of a Head Start program operated by a local education agency
- Representative of a Louisiana nonprofit advocacy organization having a focus on early childhood education
- Representative of an advocacy or service organization that focuses on serving children with disabilities
- Representative of a local education agency operating publicly-funded early childhood programs other than Head Start

Applications are due by November 21, 2023.

Contact claudette.jones@la.gov with any questions.

NEW: 2022-2023 Performance Profile Release

Performance Profiles for the 2022-2023 academic year will be released in alignment with K-12 school performance scores.

- The release of Performance Profile data is anticipated in November 2023.
- Performance Profiles are anticipated to be available on <u>Louisiana School and Center Finder</u> by the beginning of 2024.
- Preliminary results from last year can be calculated using the <u>performance rating calculator</u> and the Network Community CLASS[®] Calculator Roster from the <u>EC portal</u>.

Contact <u>earlychildhood@la.gov</u> with any questions.

REMINDER: Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year (TOY/LOY) Application Portal Open

Calling all excellent Early Childhood Educators! The Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Application Portal is now open. Candidates who are eligible to apply include individuals who work in Type III child care centers, Head Start centers, Early Head Start centers, and CCAP-certified Family Child Care sites. Please share the application with colleagues, friends, family members, community members, or any other educators making a positive impact on the state's youngest learners. Anyone can submit an application, even if the educator or leader was not a part of the nomination process.

Note: School-based pre-K applicants should apply for the pre-K through grade 12 Teacher and Leader of the Year awards. Please contact excellenteducators@la.gov for more information about the pre-K through grade 12 Teacher and Principal of the Year award.

Please complete <u>Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Applications</u> by Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 11:59 p.m.

For more information, reach out to earlychildhood@la.gov or excellenteducators@la.gov.

UPDATES FOR FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Annual Provider Webinar

The Department conducts annual provider training sessions for all CCAP-certified providers. The training sessions focus on CCAP requirements and processes to help certified providers in their daily practices.

Topics to be discussed will include:

- The initial and renewal application process
- Tracking attendance through KinderConnect
- Provider Certification reminders
- Calculating client copays
- Ensuring quality control through fraud prevention
- Allowable grant spending

The webinars will be held from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. and can be accessed through the links in the dates below:

- November 14, 2023
- November 21, 2023

Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

NEW: Child Care Assistance (CCAP) Provider Help Desk Ticket Submission Procedures

In order to expedite the processing of Provider Help Desk tickets, new streamlined submission steps are being implemented.

- 1. Please ensure the subject line on the ticket states only a single concern within the ticket (e.g., if the subject line says "remove a child," the ticket should only include the names of children who should be removed from the site's roster).
- 2. To address multiple issues, use multiple tickets, with each individual ticket noting an individual issue.
- 3. Do not submit duplicate tickets of the same issue already submitted via the ticket system.
- 4. Allow 30 days for case status updates before initiating a ticket.
- 5. The ticket system should be used first to receive assistance with an issue or concern. When emailing for additional help after 30 days, the ticket number must be included as a reference within the email.

Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

NEW: Let's Be Healthy Grant Opportunity

Child care centers play an important role in establishing healthy behaviors in our youngest community members. Children who have proper nutrition and physical activity from birth are better prepared for success in school. One way to do this is to nurture healthy habits by getting kids involved in growing food in an edible garden!

The "Let's Be Healthy" grant opportunity provides up to \$2,500 to child care center owners of any licensure type to purchase materials to install an edible garden in their center's outdoor learning environment. This grant opportunity is available to centers located in food deserts—areas with limited access to grocery stores or supermarkets. Grant funding may also be used to purchase small kitchen equipment required to enroll into the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Approximately 10 child care centers will be selected to participate in this grant. Note: Family Child Care sites are not eligible for this grant at this time.

The deadline to apply for this opportunity is November 16, 2023.

Applications are submitted online on the <u>Let's Be Healthy Website</u>. Please explore the <u>Well Ahead</u> website for more information about the grant, support contact information, and opportunities to provide healthy education opportunities

for children in care.

For specific questions about this grant opportunity, please contact ashlvn.dvess@la.gov.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Semi-Automated Invoices (SAIs)

In order to receive payment for the time period listed on an SAI, providers must submit attendance records along with the completed and signed SAI.

Attendance logs, in accordance with Bulletin 137, must include the following:

- The date(s) child care services were provided
- Arrival and departure times
- Child's first and last name
- First and last name of the person who signed the child into care
- First and last name of the person to whom the child is released
- Name and location of services.

SAIs and attendance logs should be faxed to 225-376-6056 or emailed to CCAPpayments@la.gov. Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Verification Request/Client Contact Letter

When receiving a Verification Request/Client Contact Letter (CCAP 14) in the mail, clients must adhere to the dates on the form. All documentation should be returned to the Department by the due date on the form. Please encourage families to reply with the requested information immediately upon receipt. Adhering to the due dates will assist the CCAP team in meeting case processing deadlines.

All verification documents can be faxed to 225-376-6060 or emailed to <u>LDECCAP@la.gov</u>. Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Waitlist Removal Notification

The Department began mailing Waitlist Verification Forms to families determined eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program with an application date of October 1, 2022 - May 31, 2023.

To ensure eligible families are still in need of child care, the Department must evaluate families' continued need for services. The Waitlist Verification Form includes five "YES" or "NO" questions. If the family answers "NO" to any question, a CCAP 10 Report of Changes Form will also be required to be submitted along with the Waitlist Verification Form. It is important that families complete and return these forms by the deadline listed in the mailouts.

Forms can be faxed to 225-376-6060 or emailed to <u>LDECCAP@la.gov</u>. Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

REMINDER: ARPA Stabilization Grant Assessment (Rounds 1 & 2)

The LDOE is conducting a grant assessment related to the ARPA Stabilization Grants and has partnered with Postlethwaite and Netterville (P&N) to collect information regarding the use of these funds.

Participation in the assessment, just like the survey that preceded the assessment, **is required**. Failure to comply with Postlewaite and Netterville requests, during any part of the assessment process, will impact a site's ability to receive future grants and may impact a site's ability to receive CCAP payments.

Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions. For technical assistance with completing requests for documents from P&N, contact P&N at info@LDOE-pnsurvey.com.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) KinderConnect Attendance Tracking System

The Louisiana Department of Education has transitioned to KinderConnect as the mandatory attendance tracking system for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

Training and resources are available on the EdLink Support page.

For KinderConnect time and attendance system questions call 1-888-829-9258 or email supportLA@kindersystems.com. Support staff at KinderSystems are available Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

UPDATES FOR LICENSED CENTERS, FAMILY CHILD CARE, AND IN-HOME PROVIDERS

NEW: Revised Bulletin 137 In Effect

A revised version of Bulletin 137 went into effect October 20, 2023. This revised version is in response to the triennial review of Bulletin 137.

The following sections of the Bulletin were revised:

- Chapter 3: Clarifies language regarding fines when operating a center without a license and clarifies where a license should be displayed
- Chapter 7: Allows an additional licensed early learning center at the same address as an existing Head Start located on LEA property
- Chapter 9: Requires LDOE notification prior to making changes that could affect the license
- Chapter 11: Clarifies reporting of critical incidents
- Chapter 13: Clarifies the timeline for appealing denied applications
- Chapter 17: Allows staff aged 16 to be counted in child-to-staff ratios and allows 90 days for completion of Pediatric First Aid and CPR; replaces child care health consultant
- Chapter 18: Establishes a CCCBC Provisional status for employees named in a deficiency for §1509 and requires the site's CCCBC roster to be maintained and provisionally-employed staff to be supervised at all times
- Chapter 19: Updates safety requirements regarding child equipment, pacifiers, food allergies, lifeguards, choking hazards, and menus

Contact your licensing consultant with any questions.

NEW: Do Not Delay Seeking Medical Attention

There have been recent incidents in which children were burned by hot water from a bottle warmer or pot. If an incident such as these occurs and medical attention is required, please do not delay seeking care while attempting to contact a parent.

As a reminder

- strings and cords must be made inaccessible to children under age four
- duties that include cooking, housekeeping or administrative functions shall not interfere with the supervision of children

Contact your licensing consultant with any questions.

NEW: Children and Staff Attendance Logs Must Be Accurate At All Times

The daily attendance log for children, staff members, and owners shall be used to document who leaves and returns to the site during the day.

Examples:

- A child leaves to go to a doctor's appointment and then returns to the site.
- A director leaves to go to the grocery store and returns to the site.

During rest time, staff members that remain on the premises and are being used to satisfy the child to staff ratio do not have to sign out on the attendance log.

Contact your licensing consultant with any questions.

REMINDER: Online Medication Administration and Health and Safety Training Coming Soon

The Department is currently developing online training support for the Medication Administration and Health and Safety training requirements to better serve child care providers by creating easier training access. Child Care Health Consultants can still be used during this time to receive the required training. Additional information will be shared when the training supports are completed and ready for implementation.

Contact your licensing consultant with any questions.

NEW: School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTCs)

Parent SRTC tax forms will be mailed to Type III sites by December 2023. Director and staff member tax forms will be mailed by January 2024.

As a reminder, the requirements for the SRTC for Type III sites and Family Child Care educators with Academic Approval is that educators must:

- enroll with Louisiana Pathways by submitting an enrollment form and employment verification form;
- work in the site for at least six months of the calendar year; and
- work at least 30 hours per week at the site.

For leveling or re-leveling with the Louisiana Pathways Career ladders, new credentials and certifications should be submitted to Louisiana Pathways by no later than December 31, 2023. Providers are strongly encouraged to submit documentation immediately rather than wait until the deadline.

Contact demita.walker@la.gov with any questions.

REMINDER: Renew Your Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) and Initiate Career Ladder Re-Leveling for Eligibility for School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTCs)

Teachers and/or directors with Early Childhood Ancillary Certificates (ECACs) that expire in November or December 2023 should submit renewal applications now through <u>Teach LA Live!</u> Complete initial or renewal applications must be submitted no later than December 1, 2023, to guarantee processing by the processing deadline of December 31, 2023. Incomplete applications or those submitted after December 1 may not be processed by the certification team before the deadline and thus may not qualify for re-leveling and a potential increase in SRTCs for tax year 2023.

Once an application is submitted, please check email regularly for replies from the Department. Applicants can verify

application submissions and check for any new messages using the "History" option on TeachLA Live!

Once an application is processed, additional feedback is provided or the certificate is issued. Case feedback is usually provided via email with instructions on how to correct the application. Certificate information can be reviewed on TeachLouisiana.net by choosing "Verify a Certificate" or "Teaching Authorization" on the right side of the page.

Any questions regarding the processing of an application should be submitted using Ask a Question within the <u>Teach</u> LA Live! Portal.

REMINDER: EdLink Licensing System and Training Opportunities

All providers must use the EdLink system to submit new Licensing applications, submit renewal Licensing applications, submit Licensing request changes, and access the Department's new attendance system, KinderConnect.

Please note:

Renewal applications

- must be submitted prior to the first day of the month in which the current license expires in order to ensure that there is no interruption of service and authorizations are not dropped
 - For example, if the center's license expires November 30, 2023, the renewal application must be submitted by no later than October 31, 2023.
- can be started up to 90 days prior to the expiration date
- must include all required documentation

The Department is offering multiple <u>EdLink trainings</u> where providers will be given instructions for accessing and navigating the system. For the month of November, training is scheduled for Thursday mornings only, and November 16 will be the last training for this month. Note: In-home and Family Child Care provider sessions are available upon request.

It is highly recommended that providers attend each session in the order the sessions are listed. All sessions require <u>registration</u>. Register early since space is limited.

- Accessing EdLink, 8:00 8:45 a.m.
- Completing Type I, II, and III New and Renewal Applications, 9:00 10:15 a.m.
- Completing Entity Change Applications, 10:20 11:00 a.m.
- Staff Management, 11:15 a.m. 12:00 p.m.

For questions regarding EdLink, please submit a ticket in the <u>EdLink Support Ticket System</u> or visit the Department's <u>EdLink Training</u> page to access training videos and training manuals at any time. For detailed guidance and screenshots on how to register in EdLink and for access to other resources, please visit the Department's <u>EdLink Support</u> page.

REMINDER: Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) 5-Year Renewal

Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) determinations began expiring in March 2023. Providers and applicants who were fingerprinted in 2018 are contacted via email to initiate the fingerprinting renewal process within 90 days of the CCCBC determination expiration date. The renewal process must be initiated by the provider, through the LDOE CCCBC system.

Providers should ensure rosters are up-to-date, as required now by Bulletin 137, with all current employees listed, or providers will not receive an email notification to initiate the renewal application for employees. CCCBC determinations will expire if not renewed in time.

As a reminder, fingerprint resubmission is required for renewal applications. A hard identification card, such as a state-issued driver's license or state identification card, is required to submit fingerprints; LA Wallet or a digital driver's license is not acceptable.

In addition to providers monitoring all staff members' expiration dates to ensure timely renewal, please also remind therapists, contractors, and other recurring visitors to renew CCCBCs in a timely manner in order to provide continued services and notify visitors about the new fingerprinting vendor and new fingerprinting sites.

To prevent delays in the processing of Child Care Criminal Background applications, please follow the steps below, in the following order:

- 1. Create a new hire or renewal application in the <u>CCCBC System</u>
- 2. Verify the applicant's email address and date of birth are entered correctly
- 3. Upload
 - a. a current initial consent and disclosure form and
 - b. a valid driver's license in the CCCBC System
- 4. The applicant will then receive an email containing a link from IDEMIA to pre-enroll and schedule a fingerprinting appointment

As a reminder, applications returned for corrections should be resubmitted once the correction is completed. Applications successfully returned from corrections status will update to "In Progress." "In Progress" status informs the CCCBC team the requested information has been added and the application is ready for review. The provider and applicant can view status updates in the CCCBC System. Note that CCCBCs cannot be processed until applications are submitted into the CCCBC System and fingerprints are submitted. CCCBC application fees are non-refundable.

Please view the list of <u>current fingerprinting locations</u>. This list will be updated as new sites are added.

Fingerprinting fees are paid at the time of service. "No Charge Authorization Codes" (NCACs), or business checks or money orders [per individual fingerprinting applicant and made payable to IDEMIA in the amount of \$55.75 (or \$60.75 at Sheriff's Office locations)], are acceptable payment options. Please note that NCACs are no longer entered when scheduling appointments online. Instead, applicants using NCACs are now required to bring their codes with them to their fingerprinting appointment.

Please view the <u>detailed instructions</u> to create a "No Charge Authorization Code" (NCAC) account. NCAC account setup may take up to a week for processing. Completed Authorization forms should be faxed to 952-945-3326 or e-mailed to <u>LAUEPACCOUNTS@US.IDEMIA.com</u>. Cash is **not** an acceptable payment option.

To prevent issues when scheduling fingerprinting appointments, please follow the steps below:

- 1. Verify the applicant's email address is correct and matches the email used for the CCCBC application.
- 2. Instruct applicants to check their junk mail for emails from no-reply@uemail.identogo.com.
- 3. In the event the applicant does not have access to the email containing the link from IDEMIA to schedule an appointment, visit: https://uenroll.identogo.com/workflows/27N4H8. Please ensure Learning Centers Service Code-27N4H8 is entered when scheduling a fingerprinting appointment.
- 4. Instruct the applicant to pre-enroll using their information exactly as it appears in the CCCBC application.

IDEMIA will not allow fingerprinting if the applicant's information in the CCCBC System does not match the applicant's driver's license or approved identification. Before submitting an application, please review the information entered to ensure accuracy. The following information must match the applicant's ID:

- 1. The spelling of the applicant's name-please omit any spaces or apostrophes in the applicant's name
- 2. The applicant's date of birth
- 3. The applicant's social security number

Contact the CCCBC team with any questions or for assistance by emailing <u>LDECCCBCprocessing@la.gov</u>.

For IDEMIA finance and NCAC questions, contact 877-512-6962; for UEID and scheduling assistance, contact 844-539-5543.

UPDATES FOR DIRECTORS

NEW: Office Hours for New Directors

The LDOE team holds webinars that focus on topics related to early childhood quality or operations while also helping to expand directors' network of peers. Office hours are targeted towards new directors. This monthly webinar will not be held during November and December 2023 due to the holidays but will resume in January 2024.

Contact tella.henderson@la.gov with any questions.

UPDATES FOR COMMUNITY NETWORK LEAD AGENCIES

NEW: Weekly Office Hours Webinar for Community Network Lead Agencies

The Early Childhood team hosts Office Hours most Tuesdays at 3 p.m. for Community Network Lead Agency contacts. The purpose of these webinars is to provide updates and answer questions for Community Network Lead Agencies. Presentations from previous Community Network Lead Agency Office Hours are located in the Community Network Lead Agency Library.

The upcoming schedule for weekly webinars for Community Network Lead Agencies can be found below:

- November 14: Early Childhood Updates
- November 21: Canceled due to Thanksgiving Holidays
- November 28: Early Childhood Updates
- December 5: Early Childhood Updates

Note that topics are subject to change. Contact <u>earlychildhood@la.gov</u> with any questions.

Other

NEW: Louisiana Business Emergency Operations Center

The Louisiana Business Emergency Operations Center (LABEOC) is the primary lead for public-private sector partnerships in the emergency management arena for the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP). The LABEOC helps businesses prepare for and recover from all types of disasters, from hurricanes and weather-related events to cyber-attacks and other manmade disasters. The LABEOC, in conjunction with the GOHSEP, provides emergency management training to help build disaster-resilient communities. When the LABEOC is not supporting GOHSEP during times of crisis, it supports the National Incident Management Systems and Advanced Technologies Institute with research into emergency management and emergency management training.

For more information, see www.labeoc.org.

REMINDER: Green Ribbon School Application

In partnership with the <u>U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools</u> (ED-GRS) program, the LDOE is excited to announce that applications for recognition as a Green Ribbon School for the 2023-2024 academic year are open. The deadline to apply is 5:00 p.m. on December 15. Eligibility requirements include that schools, systems, and early learning centers show progress in:

- reducing environmental impacts and costs;
- improving health and wellness; and
- providing effective environmental and sustainability education.

More information can be found on the Environmental Education web page.

Contact environmentaleducation@la.gov with any questions.

CONTACT US



- For questions regarding licensing or child health and safety, please contact LDElicensing@la.gov.
- For all questions regarding child care criminal background check processing, please contact <u>LDEccebcprocessing@la.gov</u>.
- For all other questions regarding early childhood, please contact earlychildhood@la.gov.

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