



EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWSLETTER

December 14, 2023

Last month the Louisiana Department of Education released the 2022-2023 Early Childhood Performance Profiles for 1,811 early learning sites. The Early Childhood Performance Profiles show continued improvement from previous years, with more than 93% of sites earning a rating of Proficient or higher. The data published reflects observation results from nearly 14,000 local observations in more than 7,000 classrooms across Louisiana.

The Department also published Honor Roll designations for sites rated Excellent and for sites providing high-quality care to infants and toddlers. In total, more than 600 sites will be highlighted for the high-quality early care and education provided to children. This amounts to nearly 40% of sites in the state, including at least one site in 57 community networks.

These scores are a testament to the incredibly hard work of Louisiana's Early Childhood teachers. Thank you for the incredible work you do each and every day. Your dedication to educating our youngest learners is truly appreciated and is making a difference for our communities and our state.

The Early Childhood Care and Education team

Upcoming Deadlines

- December 15: [Green Ribbon School Application Deadline](#)
- January 11: [Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Application Deadline](#)

Upcoming Events

- January 26: [Office Hours for New Directors](#)
- February 1: [Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar](#)

More Important Dates

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

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Provider Updates

NEW: Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar

The Department hosts monthly webinars for early childhood providers. These webinars include important reminders and updates for all provider types. The next monthly Provider Update Webinar will be held February 1, 2024. Please note that there will be no webinar in January. Providers can access the upcoming February Provider Update Webinar using the information below:

Webinar Date/Time:	Thursday, February 1, at 1 p.m.
Webinar Link:	https://doe.zoom.us/j/93597745872
Phone Number:	1-312-626-6799
Meeting ID:	935 9774 5872

The December 14th presentation slides are available in the [Quality Providers Library](#) on the [Louisiana Believes](#) website.

REMINDER: 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.

UPDATES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

NEW: 2022-2023 Performance Profile Release

Performance Profiles for the 2022-2023 academic year are now available on the [LDOE website](#). Performance Profiles PDFs will be available on [Louisiana School and Center Finder](#) by January 2024.

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 [Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Applications](#) by Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 11:59 p.m.

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

UPDATES FOR FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Semi-Automated Invoice (SAI) Requests and Back Payments

As Waitlist Verification Forms are returned for cases with application dates October 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023, those families are being certified for services, if still eligible.

- As slots become available, additional eligible applicants from July 1, 2023 and on will be removed from the waitlist, based on the date of application.
- If an eligible family enrolled their child while on the waitlist, the provider will only be reimbursed from the time the family was certified for services.
 - SAIs are generated based on the date that the household was removed from the waitlist and certified for services.
- Providers must complete and sign the SAI and return it with the attendance logs for the requested dates within 10 days of the invoice date.

SAIs and attendance logs can be faxed to 225-376-6056. Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Registration Fees

Registration fees are paid approximately 60 days after the initial certification month for regular CCAP cases, if attendance is recorded. These payments are released on or after the 15th of the month.

- Registration fees for Child Welfare children are paid to providers annually, 2 months after the month of their birthday.
- Type III centers, schools, and military providers receive a \$110 maximum registration fee. In-home and Family Child Care providers receive a \$65 maximum registration fee.
- When a family changes providers during their certification period, an additional fee will not be issued to the new provider until the next annual registration fee date.
- When changes occur during a certification period, including the addition of new children, additional registration fees will not be paid until the annual date of the certification period.

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 is finalizing contacting families certified to the Child Care Assistance Program Waitlist from October 1, 2022 - June 30, 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 LDECCAP@la.gov. Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

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

To expedite the processing of [Provider Help Desk tickets](#), new streamlined submission processes are being

implemented. Please note the following changes:

1. The subject line on the ticket should state only a single concern within the ticket (i.e., if the subject line says, "remove a child," the ticket should only include the names of children who should be removed from the roster).
2. To address multiple issues, use multiple tickets. Each ticket should note an individual issue.
3. Please do not submit duplicate tickets for the same issues.
4. Please allow 30 days from date of submission for case status updates on intake or redetermination applications before initiating a ticket.
5. Use the ticket system first for assistance with an issue or concern. When emailing for additional help, the ticket number must be included in the email.
6. Client applications, provider or client verifications, semi-automated invoices, attendance logs, or Change Reports should not be submitted in the ticket system or sent to a staff email.

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 LDECCAP@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) 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: Reporting of Critical Incidents to the Department

When reporting critical incidents to the Department, please ensure the incident is being documented on the required form. The form must be submitted within 24 hours of the critical incident, or no later than the next business day if the incident occurred on a Friday or a recognized state holiday. Submit the form to Idelicensing@la.gov.

Please do not submit a critical incident form to a licensing consultant or specialist.

Contact your [licensing consultant](#) with any questions.

NEW: Required Center Policies

All early learning sites must establish in writing and prominently post or show parent's signatures of receipt of the following policies:

Child Abuse and Neglect	Non-Discrimination	Admissions	Disclosure of Information
Parental Access	Parental Involvement	Behavior Management	Electronic Devices
Programs, Movies, and Video Games	Provisionally-Employed Staff Monitoring	Complaint Policy	Computer Practices

Please ensure the above referenced policies meet Bulletin 137 requirements.

Contact your [licensing consultant](#) with any questions.

NEW: Items That Can Be Harmful to Children

Providers must ensure that items that can be harmful to children are kept in a locked cabinet or other secure place. Some examples include the following:

Medications	Poisons	Cleaning Supplies	Chemicals
Equipment	Tools	Knives	Adult Scissors
Labels that read "Keep Out of Reach of Children"	Staples and Stapler	Paper or Binder Clips	White Out

Contact your [licensing consultant](#) with any questions.

NEW: Independent Contractors

Independent contractors are individuals who are not employees of the center but render professional, therapeutic, or enrichment services within an early learning center.

The following information shall be maintained for all independent contractors:

- information form that includes the person's name, address, and phone number
- a list of duties performed while present at the center
- documentation of a CCCBC-based determination of eligibility or documentation of the adult staff member not otherwise counted in child-to-staff ratios that accompanied the contractor at all times while the contractor was at the center when children were present

Some examples of independent contractors include but are not limited to:

Dance Instructor	Gymnastic and Sports Instructors	Computer Instructor	Speech Therapist
Early Interventionist	Nurse	Local School District Staff	Nutritionist
Photographer	Contracted Bus Driver	Electrician	Plumber

Note: Therapeutic professionals such as Speech Therapists and Early Interventionists are not required to be under the supervision of center staff when providing such services but must have an eligible CCCBC.

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.

REMINDER: School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTCs)

Parent School Readiness Tax Credit (SRTC) tax forms will be mailed to Type III sites by December 20, 2023, and director and staff member tax forms will be mailed by January 2024.

As a reminder, the requirements for educators who work at a Type III or Family Child Care site with Academic Approval are 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. Educators are strongly encouraged to submit any new credentials and documentation for re-leveling immediately rather than wait until the deadline.

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

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 January 31, 2024, the renewal application must be submitted by no later than December 31, 2023
- can be started up to 90 days prior to the expiration date
- must include all required documentation

The Department is offering multiple [EdLink trainings](#) where providers will be given instructions for accessing and navigating the system. For the months of December 2023 and January 2024, trainings are scheduled for Tuesdays and Fridays only (excluding holidays). Note: In-home and Family Child Care provider sessions are only available on Tuesday evenings.

It is highly recommended that providers attend each session in the order the sessions are listed. All sessions require

[registration](#). Register early since space is limited.

- Accessing EdLink, Tuesdays and Fridays 8:30-9:30 a.m.
- Completing Type I, II, and III New and Renewal Applications, Tuesdays 10:00-11:30 a.m.
- Completing Entity Change Applications, Fridays 10:00-11:30 a.m.
- Completing In Home and Family Home Renewal Applications, Tuesdays 7:00-8:00 p.m.

For questions regarding EdLink, please submit a ticket in the [EdLink Support Ticket System](#) or visit the Department's [EdLink Training](#) 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 [EdLink Support](#) page.

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

Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCBC) applications in need of revisions will be returned for corrections. Providers will be notified by email if an application is in Corrections Requested status. The Department will return any CCCBC application that is in need of application revisions. Common correction requests are for the following reasons:

- Missing consent and disclosure form and/or driver's license
- Missing signature of applicant's parent or guardian if applicant is under 18 years of age
- Revision of an uploaded consent and disclosure form
- Alias names that have not been listed on the CCCBC application

As a reminder, applications returned for corrections should be resubmitted once the correction is completed. Providers can view the reason for a returned application by viewing the "Notifications Log" in the CCCBC System and the email received noting that a correction is needed. Once the correction is complete, providers should return the application by selecting the "next" button located at the bottom of the screen in the CCCBC System until given the option to "submit application."

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.

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 [LDOE Early 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.

Please view the list of [current fingerprinting locations](#). This list will be updated as new sites are added.

Contact the CCCBC team with any questions or for assistance by emailing LDECCBCprocessing@la.gov.

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 in December due to the holidays but will resume on January 26, 2024.

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

UPDATES FOR COMMUNITY NETWORK LEAD AGENCIES

Early Childhood Community Network Lead Agency Office Hours Webinar

The Early Childhood Strategy team hosts Early Childhood Community Network Lead Agency (CNLA) Office Hour webinars for CNLA administrators on most Tuesdays at 3 p.m. The purpose of these webinars is to provide updates to CNLAs.

Due to the upcoming holidays, the Department will pause Office Hours webinars until the new year. The next Office Hours webinar will be held on January 9.

Presentations from previous Early Childhood Community Network Lead Agency Office Hours webinars are located in the [Community Network Lead Agency Library](#). Contact earlychildhood@la.gov with any questions.

Other

REMINDER: 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.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools](#) (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.

Early Childhood in the News

[Louisiana Students Exceed Pre-Pandemic School Performance Scores](#) (louisianabelieves.com)

[Annual Roadmap Highlights State Policies to Support Infants & Toddlers](#) (First Five Years Fund, ffyf.org)

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 LDEcccbcprocessing@la.gov.
- For all other questions regarding early childhood, please contact earlychildhood@la.gov.

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