Early Childhood State of the State
Summer 2019
In today’s session, the Louisiana Department of Education seeks to share its vision to increase access to quality service for children birth to five and solicit feedback on the plan to achieve it.

- Current Landscape
- Louisiana ECE Vision
- Local Governance: Establishing and Expanding Ready Start Networks
- Quality: Measuring and Improving Quality
- Access: Creative Solutions to Increase Service
- Technology and Operations Update
- Next Steps and Q&A
Louisiana Early Childhood Vision: Building on Unification Efforts
Louisiana has been striving to achieve the goals of Act 3 (2012), including a statewide early childhood network with a unified rating system and coordination of services and engagement across B-5 programs.

**Louisiana Believes**

- **Shared high standards for what children should learn and what excellent teaching looks like.**
- **Teachers are excellent at interacting with children and guiding learning.**
- **Expectations for health, safety, and learning are consistent with adequate funding levels for programs that serve children well.**
- **Families can easily enroll and choose the best option for their children.**
Louisiana’s Focus on ECE

With the successes of Act 3 implementation, there is an increased focus statewide on increasing awareness of and investment in local and state birth to five pathways.

- Louisiana’s legislature convened a blue ribbon Early Childhood Care and Education Commission to study and make recommendations about the next phase for the state’s early childhood system:
  - Executive Summary (LA B to 3)
  - Legislative Report (LA B to 3)
- Louisiana secured nearly $8MM to support and improve the birth to five pathway:
  - Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5)
- Louisiana launched nationally innovative Ready Start Network pilots
- Louisiana’s early childhood efforts received national, state, and local attention:
  - Early Care and Education System State-by-State Analysis, Bipartisan Policy Center
  - Lessons from the Bayou State, Three Reforms for Improving Teaching and Caregiving, New America
What’s Next: Building on Act 3 (2012) Vision

While the state has worked to implement the vision of Act 3, Louisiana’s youngest children still struggle to access the high-quality care and services they need to be ready for school and beyond.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Area</th>
<th>Vision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Governance</strong></td>
<td>Communities drive faster rates of quality improvement and expanded access.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quality</strong></td>
<td>Children participate in active learning in birth to five classrooms, led by teachers and leaders that are fully able to prepare them for kindergarten and beyond.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Access</strong></td>
<td>More young children access high-quality care through a mixed delivery system.</td>
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Local Governance:
Establishing and Expanding Ready Start Networks
Local Governance
Challenge and Approach

Challenge:
There has been improvement in quality and access statewide, but the pace needs to be faster for greater impact.

Approach:
The state will give communities authority, responsibility, and resources in the form of Ready Start Community Network Pilots to determine if increased local control can drive faster rates of improvement and expand access.

What success looks like:
Community networks add new partners, and improve quality and access using local approaches because they are best positioned for the greatest impact.
Each Ready Start will develop a strategic plan that addresses the following four pillars:

**Ready Start Blueprint**

**What are you building?**

Establish the plan for your community’s early childhood work.

Communicate clearly what will be true for your community if you successfully execute your plan.

**Ready Start Coalition**

**Who do you need to build it?**

Identify the necessary participants to achieve your plan.

Consider carefully who needs to be informed, invested, involved, and/or held accountable.

**Ready Start Governance**

**How will you make decisions?**

Determine the structures necessary to execute your plan.

Collaborate with your partners to establish how you will share responsibility.

**Ready Start Fundraising Strategy**

**How will you raise funds?**

Survey all resources available to support your strategic plan, and determine what else is needed.

Establish a plan to secure additional resources to achieve your vision.
What are you building?

Who do you need to build it?

How will you make decisions?

How will you raise funds?

To answer these questions:

1. Quality and access levels for young children within and across their community
2. Need and demand for seats and services for young children within and across their community
3. Workforce needs, demands, wages, and available supports
4. Key data points about their community’s demographics, academics, and outcomes
5. Who the key players and what the key opportunities are within their community

Ready Starts must first know and understand:
Local Governance
Ready Start Network Supports and Activities

What is offered to Ready Start Community Networks through their lead agency:

- Funding to plan and implement new strategies for access and improvement
- Priority access to seat allocations
- Professional development, technical assistance, and tools for systems thinking
- Support and technical assistance for public engagement
- Needs assessment, professional development, and technical assistance for governance
- Priority access to leadership tools and business supports for center directors and support for community business leaders

Current plans are to issue the request for applications for Ready Start Cohort 3 in fall 2019.

The Department is prioritizing every possible resource available to support communities that have stepped up to take on the work of local governance and quality and access improvement.
Quality:
Measuring and Improving Classroom Quality
Measuring and Improving Classroom Quality
Challenge and Approach

Challenge:
Too few classrooms adequately prepare children to be successful in school and beyond.

Approach:
All Louisiana teachers must:
• Receive foundational training that leads to certification;
• Use high-quality, standards-aligned instructional tools every day; and
• Be supported to have high-quality, effective interactions with children.

What success looks like:
Children participate in active learning in birth to five classrooms, led by teachers and leaders that are fully able to prepare them for kindergarten and beyond.
Early childhood leaders and teachers need scaffolded support to understand how they can achieve the vision to improve classroom quality in their sites and centers.
Preparing and Training Teachers
Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Requirements Update

All Lead Teachers in Type III early learning centers will have or will be in the process of earning the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) as of July 1. As of March 2019, 5,988 certificates have been issued.

• **ECAC Requirement**: Beginning July 1, 2019, directors are responsible for verifying that lead teachers in Type III early learning centers have the ECAC as a minimum credential within 24 months of their start date as a lead teacher. **Directors who cannot verify this must assure they have a plan to meet this requirement by July 1, 2020.**

• **Training for the ECAC**: Teachers must attend a BESE-approved ECAC program, which offer enhanced quality and practice opportunities.
  • There are 23 **BESE-Approved ECAC Programs** around the state, with current programs expanding their service areas and new programs still being approved.
  • The Early Learning Louisiana (University of Florida, Lastinger Center) online program will begin statewide implementation in July, offering programs in all areas of the state.

• **Supports for the ECAC**: Scholarships are available to attend approved training programs and for the application fee for a CDA.
Preparing and Training Teachers
Louisiana Key Training Modules - New Opportunity

Teachers and directors across the state will soon be able to access trainings that leverage local and national expertise to expand consistent, quality opportunities statewide.

What are Louisiana Early Childhood Key Training Modules?

Louisiana Early Childhood Key Training Modules are a set of accessible, high-quality trainings designed by experts on best practices in the field of early childhood and shared with key professional development vendors across the state to be used for redelivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Training Area</th>
<th>RFA Release Date</th>
<th>Trainings Available</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Tools and Standards</td>
<td>February 2019</td>
<td>August 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Adult-Child Interactions</td>
<td>May 2019</td>
<td>October 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Leadership</td>
<td>Tentative Release August 2019</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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## Focused Training Area 1: Early Childhood Tools and Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Topic</th>
<th>Contractor</th>
<th>Module Session Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1A: Standards</strong></td>
<td>Center for Development and Learning (CDL)</td>
<td>Taking a Closer Look at Early Childhood Development and Learning: A Standards-Based Approach</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Louisiana State University</td>
<td>Standards - Infants/Toddlers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Louisiana State University</td>
<td>Standards - Preschoolers (ages 3-4)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1B: Curriculum</strong></td>
<td>NSU Child and Family Network</td>
<td>The Big 3 of School Readiness: Standards, Curriculum, Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1C: Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Teaching Strategies, LLC</td>
<td>Linking Curriculum and Assessment to Support Developmental Learning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Volunteers of America, Greater Baton Rouge</td>
<td>Do You See What I See? Using Assessments to Guide Children’s Learning &amp; Development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1D: Integrated Approaches</strong></td>
<td>NSU Child and Family Network</td>
<td>Putting It All Together: Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching Strategies, LLC</td>
<td>Putting Together Best Practices for Teaching and Learning</td>
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Teachers in all early childhood settings need strong and coordinated professional development, curricula, and assessments that advance the quality and continuity of practice across early childhood settings.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Development</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Louisiana PD Vendor Guide</td>
<td>Child Care Curriculum Initiative</td>
<td>Access across program types to Teaching Strategies GOLD® including free training through the platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Teacher Leader Summit</td>
<td>Tiered rating system for curricular resources</td>
<td>Guide for principals and directors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies</td>
<td>Curriculum Implementation Observation Tool</td>
<td>Linking Tier I Curriculum to GOLD®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tulane Mental Health Consultation Program</td>
<td>Connecting CLASS® and Tier I Curriculum</td>
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Louisiana Believes
Supporting High-Quality, Effective Interactions
New: Adding Infant to the Unified Quality Rating System

Teachers in infant classrooms need high-quality feedback and support to grow. To increase the quality of infant care, Louisiana is adding Infant CLASS® into the state’s quality rating and improvement system.

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<tr>
<td>Infant CLASS® Pilot</td>
<td>Infant CLASS® Learning Year</td>
<td>Full Implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Lead agencies identified all infant classrooms and set up those classrooms in the portal</td>
<td>- All infant classrooms will be observed for a learning year</td>
<td>- Infant CLASS® is fully incorporated into the unified quality rating system</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Sites participated in year two of the Infant CLASS® Pilot</td>
<td>- Performance Profile ratings released in fall 2020 will not be impacted by Infant CLASS® results</td>
<td>- Performance Profile ratings released in fall 2021 will reflect Infant CLASS® observations</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Revisions to Bulletin 140 to include Infant CLASS® will be submitted to BESE</td>
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Louisiana Believes
The Leaders Academy addresses the need for child care directors of Proficient centers to develop and strengthen their use of tools and strategies to guide teachers to improve quality in their program.

- **Leadership Matters:** Louisiana’s center directors stay in their roles an average of 8-10 years and set the vision and standard for all that happens in early learning centers.
- **Impact:** The programs that serve many children need to improve; only eight (8) child care centers in Louisiana are rated Excellent. Small differences in interactions have big impacts child outcomes.
- **Influence:** Most of these directors’ leadership is limited to their centers. Community leaders who can expand their influence through network participation, mentorship, and policy are needed.

The pilot will take place in Orleans, Jefferson, and St. Tammany parishes and serve 30 directors in its first year.
Access:
Creative Solutions to Increase Service
Increasing Access
Challenges and Approach

Challenge:
While 90% of at-risk four-year-olds are served, fewer than 10% of in-need birth to three-year-olds can access an affordable quality seat.

Approach:
Louisiana finds creative solutions to increase access for its economically disadvantaged children ages birth through three.

What success looks like:
• **Increase Investment:** Care is largely unaffordable and unavailable to in-need families. Louisiana must invest more to raise rates and increase the number of funded birth to three seats.
• **Maximize Funding:** Achieving high levels of quality across the early childhood landscape is expensive. Louisiana must create efficiencies that maximize every available dollar so providers can serve more children in need.
• **Expand Options:** Louisiana must work with the providers who do not offer publicly-funded early childhood opportunities to opt into the state’s unified early childhood care and education system.
Increase Investment
2018-2019 Legislative Session Updates

This June the Louisiana Legislature, for the first time in a decade, increased funding in the annual state budget for early childhood education.

Per HB 105, the following efforts will be funded as we head into 2019-2020:

- $8.8 million to fill the void of an expiring federal grant that provides pre-kindergarten services to four-year-old children;
- $8.9 million to fund more than 1,400 additional seats for children birth through age 3 currently on the waitlist for Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP); and
- $2.3 million to support an important, federally-required increase in the CCAP rate.

The four-year-old seat allocations were approved at BESE, and letters have been mailed to families now eligible for a funded CCAP seat. The rate increase will take effect by September 30, 2019.
The Commission recommended a comprehensive state plan of an investment of $85.8 million and an increase of nearly that amount annually over the next decade. State investment should launch this effort with expanded, combined funding (local, state, federal, philanthropy) thereafter.

Louisiana’s Early Childhood Care and Education Commission recommended that BESE and the Legislature fund its LA B to 3 plan that would increase access to quality for children birth to three.

INCREASE IN EARLY CARE ACCESS OVER TEN YEARS

- 173,000
  in need children,
  Birth–3 in Louisiana

- Current Y1
- Y2
- Y3
- Y4
- Y5
- Y6
- Y7
- Y8
- Y9
- Y10
Increase Investment
Proposed Updates for CCAP Reimbursements

*Louisiana is considering a number of strategic changes for the CCAP reimbursement process to better support family access. Further discussion and research is needed before any policy decisions are made.*

**Raise reimbursement rates to at least 25th percentile of the Market Rate Survey:**
**Challenge:** Right now, the CCAP reimbursement rate covers the cost of care at around one in five centers, but there is also a waiting list of families seeking assistance for care now that the Department is unable to fund.
**Recommendation:** Raise the rate to ensure coverage at the federally-defined minimum level for access.

**Create an Infant Rate:**
**Challenge:** Serving infants is more expensive than serving toddlers, largely due to ratios, yet the reimbursement rate for both is the same.
**Recommendation:** Separate the infant rate from the toddler rate.

**Differentiate rates by geography:**
**Challenge:** Cost of care varies by region. For example, caring for a toddler can cost nearly 20% more in different parishes. A statewide rate does not differentiate the burden for families in different areas of the state.
**Recommendation:** Explore further how costs vary by region, and how that impacts access for families, to determine future recommendations.
Maximize Funding
Improving Efficiencies through Collaboration

The Department is exploring how to stretch early learning centers’ time and money through the sharing of resources and services.

State Contracts: The Department has simplified the process for centers to access significant cost savings through state purchasing on everything from milk to fuel and school buses. Learn more:

- **Teacher Leader Summit:** “Saving Money Through State Contracts” on Wednesday, June 26 at 4:10 pm in Room 343.
- **Webinar:** [July 25 at 12 noon](#) (see the newsletter for additional details)
- **Webpage:** A [new webpage](#) is dedicated to Early Learning Centers and State Contracts.

Substitute teaching pools: This summer, the Department will launch a targeted pilot to reduce barriers to centers sharing staff for substitute teaching pools.

Online Resources: The Department is creating a Director’s Toolkit to simplify locating the many online resources for center directors.
The Louisiana Department of Education will be hosting forums for child care providers and family homes at locations around the state. Topics to be addressed this year include:

- Child Care Assistance Program waiting list
- Provider payment calculations
- TOTS
- Provider Help Desk and Provider Certification
- Foster care provider information
- Licensing registration process

Sessions will be conducted for both Type III early learning centers and family homes in the fall. Detailed information for the forums will be provided via Early Childhood Newsletter and Provider Help Desk monthly courtesy emails.

For additional information about the forums, you may contact the Provider Help Desk at 225-342-1879 or 225-342-7414.
Expanding Options
Incorporating Family Homes

While family homes across the state serve children, these providers are not incorporated into the state’s early childhood network. LDOE will research and study family homes to inform a strategic plan.

Challenge:
• Family homes represent an important source of child care for economically disadvantaged families across the state, particularly in rural communities.
• Currently these providers can access public funds to serve children, but very few do.
• These providers also cannot access quality measurement and improvement resources at this time, and are not required to participate in community collaborations.

Department Approach:
• Louisiana is implementing a year-long pilot to engage registered family homes in a family home network designed the support collaboration and quality improvement in Southwest and Northern Louisiana.
• The Department will contract with Children’s Coalition and Volunteers of America to implement the pilot, which will include provider collaboration opportunities, job-embedded coaching, trainings, child developmental screening, and CLASS.
Expanding Options
Conversion to Type III

Challenge: Type I and Type II centers must meet minimum expectations for health and safety, but cannot access quality measurement and improvement resources or community collaborations. These centers serve children that will ultimately enter kindergarten, and may be the only option available to families in their community. There are myths and misunderstandings about Type III licensure that may prevent providers from opting to become Type III.

Department Approach:
• Conduct focus groups with Type I and Type II providers about the quality improvement information that they, their parents, and communities can access through Type III status, as well as resources and supports available.
• Consider how to structure a pilot to support expanding number of Type III centers.

What Success Looks Like: When applying for an initial license or a renewal, all providers understand the benefits and requirements of Type III licensure, which drives their decision-making process.

LDOE is in the process of engaging Type I and II centers to assist them in understanding the benefits of Type III status.
Coordinated Enrollment
Renewed Focus

The Coordinated Enrollment process in 2019-2020 will focus on supporting community networks to design an intentional plan based on the community needs with specific goals and outcomes.

Challenge:
• Only a small number of communities are fully maximizing the current funding sources available to serve as many children as possible in high-quality settings
• Many community networks face challenges coordinating information and enrollment processes across diverse settings
• There are barriers that make it difficult for the most vulnerable populations to enroll their child in early childhood programs

Department Approach:
• Release an updated Coordinated Enrollment self assessment in in late summer 2019 geared toward helping communities meaningfully identify their challenges and set goals for 2020
• Revise the Coordinated Enrollment plan template to target improvements in coordination and reductions in barriers for vulnerable populations
• Create a series of support calls, webinars, and feedback sessions for lead agencies
Technology and Operations
Problems We Need to Solve

- CAFE and the systems behind it are old and not user friendly to families and providers.
- The same data is collected in multiple applications such as Early Learning Center Licensing, Provider Certification, and Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).
- Lack of data integration across programs/systems does not allow for reports useful to families and providers.
- Reporting is cumbersome for school and early childhood systems.
- The school and provider level staff who have the most opportunities for positive impact on children often have the least amount of meaningful data available for decision making.
Objectives of the EdLink Project

• Revolutionize the way child care providers, schools, school systems, and the LDOE use data to support children, students and families. In order to do that, our team holds true to the following beliefs.
• Improve business processes and overall usability
• Consolidate multiple data systems into one system
• Connect data and programs to reduce multiple logins
• Replace paper processes with efficient electronic processes
• Build a data warehouse with meaningful visualizations and comprehensive reporting
Step 1: Build a Data Warehouse

- Data warehouses are built for speed and reporting.
- By having providers load/submit data directly into a data warehouse rather collecting data manually, data visualizations/dashboards/reports will be available.
- Data will be stored in one location rather than in multiple data silos.
- Users only need to login one time and, based on permissions, different data visualizations/dashboards/reports are accessible.
Step 2: Build a Transactional System

- Users will only need to log in one time and, based on permissions, different data, applications and information will be accessible.
- No third party software will need to be downloaded to use the new system.
- The system will be web-based, mobile accessible and data will be exportable.
- It will be easier to access all the programs you participate in including Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Tracking of Time Services (TOTS), Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC), Licensing, Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD), Coordinated Enrollment, Continuing Professional Development (Pathways), and Performance Profiles (GOLD®️ and CLASS observations).
Tentative High-Level Project Timeline

- Winter 2019 - Development work begins to create a new early learning center licensing system and sponsor/site system.
- Summer/Fall 2020 – Optional pilot for early learning centers, school systems/vendors to test uploads, dashboards, etc.
- Winter 2020/2021 - CAFE Provider Portal for licensing will be sunset and EdLink will house the early learning center licensing application.
- Future phases will include replacement of the CCAP application for families, provider certification application, Pathways, etc.
Next Steps
Q&A
Next Steps for You

1. Consider whether your community is ready to become a Ready Start Network
2. Begin preparing to observe all infant classrooms.
3. Attend the Child Care Assistance Forums in your region
4. Use the ECE Curriculum Implementation Observation tool in birth to five classrooms in your community.
5. Determine whether your center will meet the July 2019 ECAC requirements
6. Ensure you are subscribed to the Early Childhood Newsletter to stay informed about opportunities available to you.
7. Contact Jessica.Baghian@LA.gov or Nasha.Patel@LA.gov with general questions or concerns.