

Early Childhood Guidance for Super App

Super App provides school systems with an opportunity to demonstrate their plans to increase access to and improve the quality of early childhood programs in their communities. In order to complete the early childhood components of Super App, school systems should partner with their Early Childhood Community Network’s Lead Agency and other community network partners.

The following early childhood questions and prompts are contained within the following LDOE priority sections of the “2024-2025 School System Planning Guide” and Super App:

LDOE Priority	Super App Section	Description of Questions	Funding Source	Page in this document for more information
P2: Equitable Inclusive Learning	P2.1.1 - P2.1.2	Maximizing access to high-quality early childhood education for birth through three-year-old children and for four-year-old children	N/A	3-5
	P.2.3.1 - P.2.3.2	Proven, evidence-based strategies for Diverse Learners to identify early and accurately children ages 3-5 and birth through age 2 with disabilities	N/A	5-6
P.4: Effective Educator Workforce	P4.5.1	Job-embedded collaboration and professional learning to support developmental screening	IDEA 619	6
	P4.5.2	Job-embedded collaboration and professional learning on the use of specialized supports for children ages birth through two and ages three through five with disabilities	IDEA 619	6-7
	P.4.10.6 - P.4.10.8	Early childhood literacy coaches	CLSD	7-8
	P.4.10.10	Early Childhood Community Network teacher recruitment and/or retention initiatives	N/A	8
P5: Systems-Structures-Partnerships	P.5.9.2	Early Childhood Community Blueprint	N/A	8-9
	P.5.9.3	Early Childhood Community Network Coordinated Funding Request	N/A	9-12

Additional guidance on early childhood funding sources is located in the Appendix of this document, on page 13.

Instructions for early childhood lead agencies that are not school systems:

Community Network lead agencies that are not school systems will be asked to complete these questions through a template outside of the Super App application. Please ensure collaboration with the partnering school system and be prepared to submit responses to the questions by the same deadline. Lead agencies that are not school systems must also complete the Coordinated Funding Request on behalf of their community.

Instructions for school systems that are not the early childhood lead agency:

In cases where the entity completing Super App is a school system that is not the Early Childhood Care and Education Community Network lead agency for its community, there are special considerations for completing the early childhood components of Super App. These entities should work with their [lead agency](#) to complete the Blueprint and the Coordinated Funding Request.

Parish or City School District	Who Completes Super App?	Who is responsible for the ECE Blueprint (P5.9.2) and Coordinated Funding Request (P5.9.3)?
Avoyelles	LEA	Partnerships in Child Care-Acadiana, Volunteers of America Greater Baton Rouge (Avoyelles lead agency)
Bossier	LEA	Northwestern State University (Bossier lead agency)
Central	LEA	Partnerships in Child Care, Volunteers of America Greater Baton Rouge (Central lead agency)
City of Baker	LEA	East Baton Rouge Parish Schools (East Baton Rouge/City of Baker lead agency)
City of Monroe	LEA	Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana (Ouachita/City of Monroe lead agency)
East Carroll	LEA	Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana (East Carroll lead agency)
Lincoln	LEA	Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana (Lincoln lead agency)
Madison	LEA	Delta Community Action Association, Inc. (Madison lead agency)
Morehouse	LEA	Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana (Morehouse lead agency)
Orleans	OPSB and CMOs	Agenda for Children (Orleans lead agency)
Ouachita	LEA	Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana (Ouachita/City of Monroe lead agency)
Richland	LEA	Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana (Richland lead agency)
St. Mary	LEA	St. Mary Community Action Agency, Inc. (St. Mary lead agency)
Tensas	LEA	Catahoula Parish Schools (Catahoula/Tensas lead agency)

Priority 2: Equitable Inclusive Learning

Expanding Access to High-Quality Early Childhood Education: Overview

In order for system leaders to successfully expand access to publicly-funded early childhood programs in their community, they must understand currently available funding sources and how to maximize the use of those funding sources.

General Funding Reminders

- Income-limited seats are available for economically-disadvantaged children or children living in families at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or 85% State Median Income (SMI).
- Children in foster care are categorically eligible for most seats, including LA 4, NSECD, Child Care Assistance Program Voucher Seats, CCAP B-3 Seats, and Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
- Programs that do not require a request for seats are either federal grants for seats, such as Early Head Start and Head Start, or district funding sources that can be used to fund pre-K, such as Title I, REAP, or EEF.
- Diverse delivery, which can include both the placement of publicly-funded pre-K seats in child care rather than a school-based setting as well as the placement of early childhood seats that are managed and run by a licensed child care provider in school settings, is embedded in the strategies below, because it is one of the foundational components of providing families options for early childhood care and education.

For some funding sources, the allocation of seats is managed by the Department. Communities must request this funding by submitting the Early Childhood Community Network [Coordinated Funding Request](#) (CFR). Lead agencies should work with sites and programs interested in these funding sources so that lead agencies develop a plan for requesting seats through the Coordinated Funding Request that aligns with community demand. School systems must consider how they use a combination of federal, state, local, and private funding to provide and expand access to early childhood in their community. The information described in the strategies on pages 3-5 may help school systems maximize the various funding sources available. For information about the various funding sources, see pages 14-19.

Guidance for Questions P2.1.1 - P2.1.2: Funding Strategies

As many communities in Louisiana have demonstrated, expanding access to publicly-funded early childhood seats requires creative problem-solving and multiple funding strategies. The “access to high-quality early childhood education” component of Super App (P2.1.1 - P2.1.2) provides school systems the opportunity to demonstrate the strategies they plan to use to expand access to early childhood programs in their community. This section of the guidance document will provide details on how to answer each question and descriptions of funding strategies that communities in Louisiana have successfully used in the past to increase the number of publicly-funded early childhood seats.

Question P2.1.1: Check all the strategies that the school system will use to maximize access to birth through three-year-old children within the community network.

When answering this question, school systems should identify all of the funding strategies they plan to use to serve birth through three-year-olds in the following academic year. Descriptions of several birth through three-year-old funding strategies are included below. If school systems plan to use strategies not included here, they should select “Other” and provide a written description of the funding strategy(s) they plan to use.

❖ Strategy 1: Secure local funding to be matched by the Early Childhood Education Fund to serve more children birth to three at child care centers.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Fund applications for the 2024-2025 academic year were submitted by Community Network lead agencies by September 30, 2023.

❖ **Strategy 2: Place four-year-old seats in diverse delivery at child care centers in an effort to provide centers financial stabilization to offer birth through three-year-old seats in child care.**

Child care sites often struggle to provide care for infants and toddlers because this care is more costly than care for three and four year olds. School systems can partner with Type III child care sites in their community to locate state-funded pre-K classrooms (e.g., LA 4, Title I, 8(g), etc.) in Type III sites. This type of diverse delivery of four-year-old pre-K seats can provide financial stability to child care sites, allowing them to potentially create more birth through three-year-old seats and classrooms.

❖ **Strategy 3: Convert Head Start seats to Early Head Start seats.**

School systems have found that they can serve more four year olds through state and local funding, and some have worked with their Head Start partners to convert existing four-year-old Head Start seats into Early Head Start seats to serve children ages birth through two. Grantees can request to convert Head Start seats to Early Head Start seats through the re-funding application process or as a separate grant amendment at any time.

Resource: [Conversion of Enrollment Slots from Head Start Children to Early Head Start Children](#)

❖ **Strategy 4: Develop agreements with Head Start to serve more three year olds.**

When a Head Start operates in a service area where eligible four-year-old children can enroll in a high-quality publicly-funded pre-K program, the Head Start regulations state that the program must prioritize younger children in their selection criteria. This strategy allows Head Start dollars to be used to serve more three-year-old children.

Resource: [Head Start Selection Process](#)

❖ **Strategy 5: Use IDEA dollars to expand delivery of special education and related services in child care centers (children with disabilities age three and older).**

Delivering special education services in child care sites, in the form of fully-funded seats or consultative or related services depending on the child's need, may have two positive effects. First, this strategy expands options for families with three- and four-year-old children who benefit from special education services and allows children to receive services in a mainstream and inclusive setting. Second, this strategy expands inclusive service options for three-year-olds with disabilities when there are not three-year-old classroom options at a school system level.

Question P2.1.2 Check all the strategies that the school system will use to maximize access for four-year-olds within the community network.

When answering this question, school systems should identify all of the funding strategies they plan to use to serve or expand service for four year olds in the following academic year. Descriptions of several four-year-old funding strategies are included below. If school systems plan to use strategies not included here, they should select "Other" and provide a written description of the funding strategy(s) they plan to use.

❖ **Strategy 1: Place pre-K classrooms in zip codes of high need.**

Strategically moving pre-K classrooms and seats into certain zip codes, where young children in-need live, provides more proportional access to all economically-disadvantaged families in the community (including in rural communities). Communities can place these classrooms in schools that have not typically served pre-K or in child care sites located in communities with no schools. Locating child care classrooms in schools can also help provide stability to child care centers and provide families with before and after care.

❖ **Strategy 2: Place four-year-old seats in diverse delivery at child care settings.**

School systems can partner with Type III child care sites in their community to place state-funded pre-K classrooms (e.g., LA 4, Title I, 8(g), etc.).

❖ **Strategy 3: Maximize outreach efforts to fill all LA 4/NSECD funded seats.**

School systems may work with the local Community Network lead agency to determine enrollment capacity at early care and education sites and those sites' potential to serve more children in the LA 4 and NSECD programs. Using this information, along with current waiting lists, school systems can identify partners with the capacity to serve more children.

❖ **Strategy 4: Offer full-day pre-K to children with IEPs regardless of income eligibility.**

School systems may choose to braid multiple funding sources along with IDEA 619 funds to serve children with disabilities ages 3-5 in a full-day program, regardless of income eligibility.

❖ **Strategy 5: Use Title I funds to support pre-K.**

School systems may choose to use Title I funds to support early childhood education programs, expanding access for four-year-olds and supporting the quality of those seats.

❖ **Strategy 6: Offer pre-K for all four-year-olds in the school system regardless of income eligibility.**

Several school districts have identified strategies for integrating multiple funding sources, including but not limited to local funds, LA 4, 8(g), Title I, and tuition to successfully offer universal pre-K to their four-year-old population, regardless of income.

Guidance for Questions P2.3.1 - P2.3.2: Early and Accurate Identification of Young Children with Disabilities

The “proven, evidence-based strategies for diverse learners” component of Super App (P2.3.1 - P2.3.2) provides school systems the opportunity to demonstrate the strategies they plan to use to expand early and accurate identification of young children with disabilities in their community.

P2.3.1 What steps will the school system take to identify early and accurately children who have disabilities? Do you use a screener to screen children ages 3-5 for disabilities? If yes, what screener do you use?

Many early childhood programs across the state already have developmental screening processes in place for young children. These processes include screening, referral, and evaluation, and these early childhood programs include child care, public school pre-K, charter schools, and Family Child Care sites participating in Academic Approval.

When answering this question, school systems should submit their response in narrative form. The narrative should include details of any current developmental screening process as well as any new plans for the 2024-2025 academic year.

P2.3.2 How will the school system work with the Early Childhood Lead Agency and community partners to screen children ages birth through 2 for disabilities? Do you use a screener to screen children ages birth through two for disabilities? If yes, what screener do you use?

The school system should submit their response in narrative form. Include any of the work that is happening within your community network relating to the Developmental Screening Initiative as well as any new plans for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Resources: [Early Childhood Developmental Screening Guidebook](#)
[Early Childhood Developmental Screening Guidance for Lead Agencies](#)

Priority 4: Effective Educator Workforce

Guidance for Questions P4.5.1 - P4.5.2: Job-Embedded Collaboration and Professional Learning - IDEA 619 Funding

Overview

Activities through Questions P4.5.1 and P4.5.2 may be funded using Part B, Section 619 of IDEA. Teachers in all early childhood classrooms need strong and coordinated professional development (PD) that provides access to resources and materials that help them develop a strong understanding of developmental milestones, have a clear plan for what to do when children need additional support, and implement specialized and related supports for children so that all children have an opportunity to learn in the least restrictive environment.

P4.5.1 Identify the number of birth through two-year-old classrooms for which partner(s) will provide professional learning to support developmental screening.

Identify the number of three- to five-year-old classrooms for which partner(s) will provide professional learning to support developmental screening.

School systems are eligible to request up to \$9,175. Professional development (PD) supporting developmental screening can be provided by vendors in the [LDOE Professional Learning Partner Guide](#) or by other vendors that are directly related to school system developmental screeners of choice (e.g., ASQ-3 PD by Brooks Publishing).

Eligible expenditures include but are not limited to:

- Training materials and resources provided by the PD vendor necessary to implement the training (e.g., ASQ kits)
- Teacher stipends and/or substitute pay for PD recipients
- Professional development purchases can be made for any type of early childhood classroom within the school system. This includes Type III child care sites, Family Child Care sites with Academic Approval, Head Start/Early Head Start, and public and non-public pre-K.

P4.5.2 Identify which [vendor\(s\)](#) will train teachers on the use of specialized supports for children ages birth through two with disabilities.

Identify which [vendor\(s\)](#) will train teachers on the use of specialized supports for children ages three through five with disabilities.

Funding for Question P4.5.2 will be provided to school systems serving children ages 3-5. School systems are eligible to request up to \$4,000.

The [LDOE Professional Learning Partner Guide](#) provides a list of partners to provide professional development to develop the capacity of educators supporting young children with disabilities. Specialized supports can be provided by vendors in

the [LDOE Professional Learning Partner Guide](#) or by other vendors that are directly related to the use of specialized supports for children ages three through five with disabilities

- The [LDOE Professional Learning Partner Guide](#) allows users to filter by age band. Organizations listed under the Early Childhood (birth - 5) filter provide targeted professional development opportunities for early childhood educators in delivering specialized support to children with disabilities in the following areas: communication, assistive technology, functional skills, sensory/environment and executive functioning.
- Descriptions within each specialized support area are intended to help school systems and vendors develop a shared understanding of the type of professional development a particular organization might provide.

Guidance for Questions P4.10.6 - P4.10.8: Teacher Leader Opportunities - Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant Overview

Activities through Questions P4.10.6 - P4.10.8 may be funded using Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) funding. Teachers in all early childhood classrooms need strong and coordinated professional development (PD), curricula, and assessments that advance the quality and continuity of practice across early childhood settings. Grant awards supporting early childhood quality are available through the CLSD grant. The purpose of the CLSD grant is to award competitive funding opportunities to school systems to advance literacy and pre-literacy skills for all children from birth through grade 12, with a special emphasis on disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, Dual Language Learners, and young children with disabilities. The state must ensure that 15% of the sub-granted funds serve children from birth through age 5.

Requirements--Key Activities for School Systems Receiving CLSD Funding:

- Subgrantees must use funds under this program to supplement, and not supplant, any non-federal funds that would be used to advance early language and literacy development skills for children from birth through age 5. Subgrantees must also provide a written assurance to cooperate with a national evaluation of the CLSD program.
- Subgrantees use age-appropriate, valid, and reliable assessments (e.g., Teaching Strategies GOLD®) to identify need, inform instruction, and inform progress.
- Subgrantees provide evidence-based literacy and pre-literacy practices and interventions.
- Subgrantees create and update annually a Local Comprehensive Literacy Plan, inclusive of early childhood.
- Subgrantees incorporate the use of high-quality curriculum and robust professional development strategies.
- Subgrantees implement one additional educational choice opportunity and at least one additional evidence-based family literacy program.
- Funds cannot be used to provide duplicative payment for materials or activities within each school or child care site that was previously funded through the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant or the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant, previously referred to as the Early Childhood Literacy Fund.
- Funds will be budgeted and spent on materials and activities occurring during the award period. Subgrantees will not withhold any funds with the intention of carrying-over those funds into another fiscal year. Remaining balances will be returned to the Department for reallocation at the end of each grant year.
- Note: Each school/site receives all of the state and local funds it would have received in the absence of funds received under this grant.

P4.10.6 To be eligible for CLSD funds, upload your Early Childhood through High School Literacy Plan. Each grade band should be included if requesting funding for that grade band.

P4.10.7 How many literacy coaches will the school system request the salary and benefits for in early childhood sites?

P4.10.7 Name all early childhood sites or CIR/UIR-Academics schools which Literacy Coaches will support.

P4.10.8 Name all early childhood sites which literacy coaches will support, including any child care sites.

- Early Childhood Literacy Coaches can be intended for any type of early childhood classroom within the community network. This includes Type III child care sites, Family Child Care Sites with Academic Approval, Head Start/Early Head Start sites, and public and non-public pre-K sites.
- School systems may request a match of local funding to support the total salary and benefits of one Literacy Coach at each CIR/UIR-Academics school or Early Childhood site, with a maximum request of \$50,000 per school. School systems should refer to the [CLSD CIR/UIR-A guidance](#) for determining the number of Literacy Coaches needed in a school system. Early childhood requests may support any school or center in the community network, whether or not it has a label.

Guidance for Questions P4.10.10: Teacher Leader Opportunities - Early Childhood Workforce Recruitment & Retention

Louisiana, like the nation, faces challenges in recruitment and retention of effective, certified teachers across all age bands and grades. In order for children to have successful outcomes, they need well-prepared teachers who can provide high-quality classroom interactions. Teacher turnover in early childhood care and education settings has real implications for children and families, for individual sites, and for policy investments in early childhood care and education.

Question P4.10.10 Will the school system implement any specific methods to support the early childhood community network in recruitment or retention initiatives for early childhood teachers? If so, please share what initiatives are planned or being considered.

The school system should submit their response in narrative form, noting any specific methods that have been identified to support recruitment and retention of the early childhood workforce.

Priority 5: Systems-Structures-Partnerships

Guidance for Questions P5.9.2 - P5.9.3: Strategic Planning, Resource Allocation, and Alignment to Critical Goals

The Community Network Early Childhood Blueprint sets the vision and mission for the community's future by establishing goals and clear strategies to achieve those goals. Required resources should be included within the blueprint to ensure specific and attainable goals. As a benchmark, the blueprint supports system structures and allows for identifiable outcomes for children and families at the local level. Furthermore, the blueprint, which should share critical agency goals, is an effective communication tool to promote collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders that foster community engagement and elevate awareness of the importance of early care and education.

P5.9.2 Please upload the community's early childhood blueprint for the upcoming school year in PDF format. (File name format: School System Name_Blueprint)

Question P5.9.2 asks that school systems upload their Community Network's Early Childhood Blueprint. School systems associated with these networks will need to upload their completed blueprint as a PDF. If your community network chooses not to develop an early childhood blueprint, leave this question blank. This will impact the prioritization of funds for the network's application for birth through three-year-old seats and resources for quality improvement.

In addition to the [Blueprint Guidance](#), there is also a suggested [template](#) and a [workbook](#) to support blueprint creation and development.

Early childhood blueprints should include:

- An updated **analysis of the current state of early care and education within the local community network**, includes updated data points
- Vision statement
- Mission statement
- 3-5 **goals**, with accompanying **strategies, resources, and performance metrics**

The **analysis of the current state** should introduce the community network and give an overview of the community network, including its strengths and shortcomings. The LDOE will be providing data kits for each network that include data on quality of seats, enrollment numbers, and Kindergarten readiness that the network can use as evidence to support its strengths and shortcomings.

A **vision statement** is the community network’s vision for its future in early childhood. In other words, if the network achieves all of its goals, what will the state of early childhood education look like in the community?

A **mission statement**’s purpose is to describe the reason for the early childhood community network’s existence. It should answer the questions, “What do we do? How do we do it? Whom do we do it for?” A mission statement should clarify the community network’s purpose clearly, to both internal and external key stakeholders, including potential funders. The mission statement should define what the network is doing to achieve its vision statement.

Each community network should develop **3-5 goals** that address the shortcomings identified from the analysis of the community’s current state. Goals may have a 3-5 year focus.

The network should develop at least three **strategies** to support each goal. The strategies should be clearly stated, specific, and directly support your network’s goals. Additionally, the network should identify whether achieving each goal will require existing or new **resources**, including additional funding or staff capacity. Networks should also include a **performance metric** per goal, which is a measurable gauge of progress toward the goal using specific data points (e.g., CLASS® scores; number of infants served; attendance at a coordinated enrollment event).

P5.9.3 School systems that are the Lead Agency for their early childhood community network:

Please upload the completed Coordinated Funding Request template.

(File name format: School System Name_CFR)

Within the [Coordinated Funding Request](#) (CFR), Community Network lead agencies can request that current seats be continued and new seats be added. Community Network lead agencies can also rank sites for each funding source in order of preference to receive funding, given that not all requests may be filled. Prioritization of seat requests is not required but will be helpful for the Department to understand the community’s preferences when determining funding for seats. Community Network lead agencies indicating prioritization of seat requests must have an established process for determining prioritization. Diverse delivery of seats will be considered as part of the prioritization for awarding of seats, as well as Performance Profile information and community need and demand.

Please note the following:

- Each lead agency will submit ONE Coordinated Funding Request per community network.

- Lead agencies are required to ensure that there is an opportunity for public comment on the Coordinated Funding Request before submission.
- School systems that are not the early childhood Community Network lead agency **should not** complete this section of Super App.
- Community Network lead agencies should be using family demand and enrollment data from the prior year to complete this request.

When completing the [Coordinated Funding Request](#), lead agencies will need to input the following:

1. LEA, site name, and site code
2. 2024-2025 Seat Request: For each funding source, the Community Network lead agency will enter the number of requested LA 4, NSECD, and CCAP B-3 seats (by age group). This number of requested seats can increase, stay the same, or decrease as compared to your 2023-2024 Coordinated Funding Request depending on the needs of the network.
3. Prioritization of requests: The prioritization column allows community networks to indicate preferences, given limited funding. This is not required but can be helpful to the decision process.

Four-Year-Old Seats: LA 4 and NSECD

As in prior years, Community Network lead agencies will request LA 4 and NSECD seats for the following academic year through the Coordinated Funding Request.

Cecil J. Picard Early Childhood Program (LA 4): Lead agencies must request LA 4 seats at the LEA level, including seats offered through diverse delivery and charter schools.

- LA 4 is available to each public school system that applies and uses the funding for the purpose of providing a program for early childhood development and enrichment activity classes.
- School districts that receive LA 4 funding may choose to place seats in Type 1 and/or Type 3 charter schools that are authorized and governed by the school board. Type 2 and Type 5 charter schools that are authorized and governed by BESE should apply for seats through the LEA.
- Any LEA/school district that receives LA 4 funding may offer LA 4 seats through diverse delivery partnerships with Type III child care centers.

Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD): Lead agencies must request NSECD seats at the site level and specify whether the seats are intended for three year olds or four year olds.

- Nonpublic Schools: For a nonpublic school to be eligible to participate as a Provider of the NSECD Program, the nonpublic school shall meet all requirements below:
 - Be BESE-approved and in compliance with requirements set forth in the Louisiana Department of Education Bulletin 741
 - Be certified by the Louisiana Department of Education as Brumfield-Dodd compliant
 - Have administered a four-year-old educational program for a full year during the previous academic year
 - **Recommended:** Have a Proficient or higher Performance Profile rating for the four-year-old educational program that was administered for a full year during the previous academic year
- Child Care Centers:
 - Be a Type III licensed early learning center
 - Have administered a four-year-old educational program for a full year during the previous academic year
 - **Recommended:** Have a Proficient or higher Performance Profile rating for the four-year-old educational program that was administered for a full year during the previous academic year

Note--NSECD seats for three year olds: Sites may elect to provide high-quality NSECD preschool to three year olds during the academic year, as long as pre-K program requirements (such as high-quality curriculum, assessments, group size, etc.)

are maintained. Teachers in NSECD 3-year-old classrooms are required to obtain, at a minimum, the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC). Three-year-old seat requests must contain a justification for using NSECD funding for three year olds instead of four year olds.

CCAP Birth through Three-Year-Old (CCAP B-3) Seats

The Department is requesting that Community Network lead agencies provide information about the potential number of birth through three year olds, whose families are at or below 85% of State Median Income, who could be served with available funding. It is increasingly important to know and understand the network's capacity to add funded seats for this age group in local communities to make funding decisions that will improve access to high-quality early childhood care and education options. If awarded, Networks may be responsible for administering these seats and determining eligibility at the local level.

In January 2019, the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission first prepared a report (now an annual report) that outlined a plan to strengthen Louisiana's early childhood care and education system for birth through three year olds, called [LA B to 3](#). Local communities must know, understand, and articulate the need for birth through three publicly-funded seats within their communities.

How many CCAP Birth through Three-Year-Old Seats should be requested?

The approach to determine the number of seats for this age group will be different for each community network, as every community in Louisiana is unique. There are many rural communities that currently have few to no publicly-funded child care sites. While these families are choosing the most appropriate setting for their family's needs, they may be eligible for a publicly-funded seat and would benefit from having more publicly-funded options available in their area.

Step 1: Analyze the network's current and future capacity to serve additional children from birth through age three in existing or potential CCAP-certified sites. To do this, identify existing vacancies, engage in candid conversations with child care sites, and encourage creative solutions.

To estimate capacity for age birth through three seats, consider answering the following questions:

- What is the network's capacity at existing CCAP-certified sites to offer additional birth through three-year-old seats?
- Could the network encourage centers to establish new classrooms or serve new age groups?
- Are there unique or nontraditional partnership opportunities available to offer seats in diverse settings that meet family needs?
 - For example, if there are no Type III centers in your community, is there an opportunity to develop partnerships with CCAP-certified family child care homes, or to encourage family child care to participate in the Child Care Assistance Program and Academic Approval?
 - If there are no Type III centers in your community, can you work with Type I and Type II centers to become Type III in order to enroll children via public funds? How could the network engage (or initiate) with Type I or Type II sites to open discussions about the community's need, and how they may be able to fill that need?
 - How can the Community Network lead agency engage with Family Child Care sites not yet in Academic Approval to open discussions about the community's need and how they may be able to fill that need?

Step 2: Understand the current family demand for birth through three-year-old seats to inform your proposed placement of new seats. Using application, enrollment, and waitlist data from the previous year, identify high-need or high-demand localities and sites.

To use family demand to plan for birth through three-year-old seats, consider asking the following questions:

- Based on family demand data, where should these seats be placed? Note that you can request individual seats at the site level; full classrooms do not need to be requested.
- Is there a particular region of the community that has a high density of economically-disadvantaged families that could benefit from increased child care options?
- Are there sites that consistently have a waitlist that may be able to expand to meet that demand?
- Are there high-quality sites that additional families would choose to send their children to if more funding became available?

LDOE will be providing data kits to each community network that include individualized data on quality of seats, enrollment numbers, and Kindergarten readiness. Upon request, the LDOE will also provide economically-disadvantaged cohort data by zip code. This data shows the number of children in each age group that meet the eligibility requirements for LA 4 (in families at or below 200% of the FPL) by zip code.

Step 3: Enter the number of seats requested for each age group into the [Coordinated Funding Request](#) document.

- The Department recommends that Community Networks estimate the comprehensive number of birth through three-year-old seats needed.
- The Department recognizes that these numbers are estimates and will use these numbers to guide future decision-making. Communities will have opportunities to revise requests once more information is released about how the funding opportunity will be structured.
- **Note:** While recognizing that there may be concerns about the local capacity to administer seats, the Department recommends that Community Network lead agencies not let these concerns limit the number of birth through three-year-old seats requested at this time.

Public Comment

Chapter 709, Part B of Bulletin 140 states that “The lead agency shall provide an opportunity for each publicly-funded program in the community network and the general public in the coverage area of the community network to comment on the proposed funding request prior to submission to the department and shall include documentation of this process in the funding request.”

Providing an opportunity for public comment can take several forms, including but not limited to:

- Conducting a public hearing, community town hall, or school board meeting that allows for public comment to be submitted to the network lead agency
- Distributing the proposed Coordinated Funding Request and allowing for written comment to be submitted, mailed, emailed, faxed, or delivered to the Network lead agency
- Posting the Coordinated Funding Request in a public location or on a website and allowing for written comment to be submitted, mailed, emailed, faxed, or delivered to the Network lead agency

Any publicly-funded program may request that the Department review an enrollment decision or funding request of its lead agency. Programs must email the request to earlychildhood@la.gov no later than 30 calendar days after the due date for funding requests (requests for review must be received by February 29, 2024).

Any program or individual may submit a written complaint to the Department regarding the action or inaction of the lead agency in its Community Network. Complaints must be submitted to earlychildhood@la.gov within 30 calendar days of the action or inaction of the lead agency upon which the complaint is based (complaints must be received by February 29, 2024).

Appendix: Additional Resources

Early Childhood: Background Information

The information included in these sections may be helpful to reference as you are completing different parts of the Early Childhood Super App section.

The Importance of Early Childhood:

- **Early childhood programs have long-term benefits for children.** Numerous studies have found that children who participate in high-quality early childhood programs that focus on physical and cognitive development and interpersonal-skills and well being have [better long-term outcomes](#) than children who do not have these experiences.
- **Despite a strong system that prepares children, Louisiana has a significant access challenge.** While approximately 83% of economically-disadvantaged four-year-olds have access to publicly-funded pre-K, far fewer children from birth through age three have access to high-quality publicly-funded early childhood programs. In 2019, the Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Commission published an ambitious plan to address this challenge, called [LA B to 3](#). The Louisiana Commission published [Funding Our Future with LA B to 3: Sustaining and Advancing a Thriving Early Care and Education Sector](#) in February of 2023, further calling for a significant investment in early care and education in the state.
- **There are clear benefits of early childhood education for both children who participate and their future families.** Results from [research studies](#) on the long-term impacts of early childhood education have found that both participants and their future children benefit and that high-quality early childhood education can help break the cycle of poverty. Research shows that children who receive high-quality early childhood education are more likely to get along better with their peers, are more likely to graduate from high school, are less likely to participate in criminal activity, and are more likely to enter stable marriages. The children of adults who received a high-quality early childhood education are also more likely to complete high school and be employed full-time, demonstrating the multigenerational impact of quality early childhood education.
- **Closing Louisiana’s access gap in early childhood care and education will require a nuanced strategy by communities.** Site and system leaders should be part of the Community Network lead agency’s efforts to develop a plan to address early childhood access gaps and challenges of quality at the local level to meet the unique needs of their community. School system leaders are well positioned to use the Super App and district planning process to maximize funding opportunities for early childhood in their communities.

Overview of Early Childhood Seat Funding Sources

Below are descriptions of available local, state, and federal funding that can be used to support early childhood care and education. These descriptions may help LEAs understand how to maximize funding locally to serve as many children as possible within their community.

Cecil J. Picard Early Childhood Program (LA 4): This is Louisiana's primary state-funded preschool program, which serves more than 17,000 children. LA 4 provides economically-disadvantaged children with early childhood education during a six-hour-a-day program. LA 4 is available to all districts that apply and is currently offered in most of Louisiana's parishes, several charter schools, one tribal school, and through diverse delivery partnerships with Type III child care centers. This funding source is a combination of state funds and TANF federal funds, with specific reporting and reimbursement requirements.

- **Eligibility:** Children who are four years old by September 30 and whose household income falls at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible to attend the program.
- **How to Determine the Number of Seats to Request:** Requests should reflect family demand for seats. Seats are awarded based on the number of children sites anticipate serving during the academic year and the availability of funds. Four year olds of families who meet the income requirements are eligible to attend the program. Children from families with higher incomes can attend pre-K but must be funded using locally-provided funds or by paying tuition on a sliding scale up to the cost of care.
- **Application:** Seats are requested by the lead agency of the Early Childhood Community Network via the Coordinated Funding Request. Interested LEAs and centers must work with their community's lead agency to request funding.
- **Payment:** Payments are calculated based on the number of children attending 74% of the scheduled school calendar days in a month. Based on October Child Count enrollment for the 6-hour instructional program, funds may be reallocated if the program does not fill 95% of the allocated number of seats. Districts serving more than their allocated number of students may be awarded additional funds if funds are available.
- **Resource:** [2023-2024 LA 4 Reporting and Payment Requirements](#)

Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD): Implemented with the goal of reimbursing preschool tuition for enrolled children from low-income families, the Nonpublic Schools Early Childhood Development (NSECD) Program provides pre-K programming to more than 1,400 three and four year olds from economically-disadvantaged families. Children in the NSECD program receive full-day pre-K in BESE-approved nonpublic schools and child care centers.

- **Eligibility:** Children who are four years old by September 30 and whose household income falls at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible to attend the program. Eligible providers for NSECD are nonpublic schools and Type III child care centers.
- **How to Determine the Number of Seats to Request:** Requests should reflect family demand for seats. Seat allocations are awarded based on several factors, including the number of children sites anticipate having the capacity to serve during the academic year and community need.
- **Application:** Interested BESE-approved nonpublic schools and Type III child care centers must work with their community's lead agency to request funding.
- **Payment:** Monthly payments are calculated based on the number of children attending 74% of the scheduled school calendar days in a month.
- **Resource:** [2023-2024 NSECD Program Procedures and Provider Responsibilities](#)

CCAP Birth through Three-Year-Old (CCAP B-3) Seats: This funding expands access to quality child care for families at or below 85% State Median Income who have children aged birth to three years old in need of care. The seats are available in CCAP-certified child care centers and Family Child Care sites with Academic Approval that are rated Proficient or above and that offer infant care. All Community Network lead agencies that requested to serve children aged from birth to three years old were granted CCAP B-3 Seat funding for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

- **Eligibility:** To be eligible for CCAP B-3 Seats, children must be aged 3 years or younger by September 30, 2023, families' household total income must be at or below 85% State Median Income, and families must be employed for 20 hours or more per week, in school or training full time, or actively seeking employment.
- **How to Determine the Amount of Funding to Request:** Requests should be based on an analysis of the community's need and capacity.
- **Application:** Seats are requested by the lead agency of the Early Childhood Community Network via the Coordinated Funding Request.
- **Payment:** Payment may be distributed to participating centers by the Community Network lead agencies or by the Department, based upon the number of enrolled children and successful tracking of attendance each month by the partner provider.
- **Resource:** [Guidance on Administering CCAP B-3 Seats 2023-2024](#)

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP): CCAP provides low-income households access to quality, affordable child care that allows them to continue working or receiving an education. CCAP funds full-day care, before care, after care, and summer or holiday care in licensed and some license-exempt settings.

- **Eligibility:** To be eligible for CCAP, children must be under 13, or under 18 with a disability; all adults in the household must be working or attending a school or training program for at least 20 hours a week; and household monthly gross income must fall at or below 85% of the State Median Income.
- **Waitlist:** As of October 1, 2022, the Department implemented a CCAP Waitlist due to funding constraints. Exceptions to the waitlist include children in families currently receiving Child Care Assistance, children who are experiencing homelessness, children of families participating in the Strategies to Empower People Program (STEP) or Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships, children in foster care, or children requiring special needs care. The Department is rolling eligible applicants off of the waitlist as seats become available.
- **Application:** Families should apply online, currently via the [CAFE' Portal](#). Providers interested in becoming certified to accept CCAP payments should apply online via the [CAFE' Provider Portal](#).
Note: the CAFE' Portal is anticipated to be replaced in 2024.
- **Resource:** [Louisiana Child Care Assistance Program](#)

8(g) Louisiana Quality Education Support Fund: Since its inception, the 8(g) Fund has assisted schools and districts statewide, enabling them to provide better educational opportunities for all of Louisiana's children. The 8(g) Block Grant Program, administered by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, provides funding for specific focus areas, including pre-K programs for at-risk four year olds (for offering high-quality early childhood education). Public school districts can use these funds to offer pre-K programs to children eligible by income or developmentally unprepared status.

- **Eligibility:** Four-year-olds who are at risk of being "developmentally unprepared" or at risk of being insufficiently ready for the regular school program, based on screening results; economically-disadvantaged (200% Federal Poverty Level or below); and children who are not enrolled in any other publicly-funded pre-K program.
- **How Funding is Determined:** Based on a per-pupil allocation, eligible systems and schools receive block grant funding according to enrollment figures from the previous year. BESE requests that agencies attempt to fill 8(g) program spaces with 70 percent economically-disadvantaged four-year-olds and 30 percent "developmentally unprepared" children. If the agency is already serving all economically-disadvantaged four-year-olds with another funding source, then 100 percent of the children served should meet the "developmentally unprepared" definition.

- Resources: [8\(g\) Grants Program](#) and [LDOE Developmental Screenings Guidebook](#)

Title I Part A: Title I Part A funds, which are allocated directly to LEAs, can be used to fund high-quality preschool programs. Such a program is designed to prepare eligible children with the prerequisite skills and dispositions for learning that will enable them to benefit from later school experiences.

- **Eligibility:** All preschool-age children residing in the school attendance area are eligible to attend the program. LEAs are required to prioritize children most at-risk of failing to meet the state’s academic achievement standards based on multiple, educationally-related objective criteria.
- **How to Determine the Amount of Funding to Request:** Collaboration between the LEA fiscal authority and lead agency, whether the lead agency is a part of the school district or a different agency, should determine the best way to maximize Title I dollars, which may include requesting Title I Preschool set-aside funds.
- **Application:** Districts will continue to request set-aside funds for Title I Preschool through the Super App process.
- **Resource:** [Title I Improving The Academic Achievement of The Disadvantaged](#)

IDEA (Individual with Disabilities Education Act): Part B, Section 619 of IDEA provides funding to support children with disabilities aged three through five. This includes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education.

- **Eligibility Part B, Section 619 of IDEA:** These funds may be used only to provide services to children aged three through five who have been identified as children with disabilities in accordance with Part B, Section 619 of IDEA federal requirements.
- **How Funding is Determined:** Districts receive an allocation based on the number of Part B, Section 619 of IDEA-eligible children with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) served in both self-contained and reverse mainstream classrooms.
- **Resource:** [IDEA Website](#)

Head Start and Early Head Start: Head Start is a federal program that supports the school readiness of children ages three through five from low-income families through comprehensive preschool programming and specialized family services. Early Head Start serves children from birth through age two and supports pregnant women with a family income at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

- **Eligibility:** Children ages birth through five, whose family income is at or below the federal poverty guidelines, are eligible. Children from homeless families, children with special needs, children from families receiving public assistance such as TANF or SSI, and children in foster care are also eligible. Also, Head Start/Early Head Start grantees use a Community Needs Assessment completed every five years to establish selection criteria and recruit families. This assessment also establishes criteria for accepting over-income children consistent with the specific needs identified within each community.
- **Resources:** [Louisiana Head Start](#) and [Head Start Directory](#)

Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP): The Rural Education and Achievement Program, Title VI, Part B, provides financial assistance to meet the unique needs of rural school districts and to assist them in meeting their academic achievement goals. This program is designed to help rural districts use federal resources more effectively in order to address their unique needs. Applicants do not compete but are entitled to funds if they meet basic eligibility requirements.

- **Eligibility:** Eligibility is regulated by community population density or daily school attendance served by the LEA, and LEAs must be designated as “rural” by the U.S. Department of Education.
- **How Funding is Determined:** Funding eligibility is restricted by statute and awarded annually to eligible LEAs on a formula basis.
- **Resource:** [Rural Education Achievement Program](#)

Education Excellence Fund (EEF): In 1999, the Louisiana State Legislature created the Millennium Trust to distribute the proceeds from the tobacco settlement. At the same time, the Education Excellence Fund (EEF) was created as a component of the Millennium Trust. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is responsible for providing the appropriations and oversight of this fund to ensure that all expenditures are used to support “excellence in educational practice.”

- **Eligibility:** The Department distributes funds to eligible local education agencies based on student enrollment:
 - 85% of the appropriation is distributed to local school systems and charter schools based on the number of students in the most recent Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) Budget Letter.
 - 15% of the appropriation is distributed to approved non-public schools based on the number of students as reported for the previous school year.
- **How Funding is Determined:** The LEA will annually prepare and submit to the LDOE a prioritized plan for the expenditure of funds it expects to receive in the coming year from EEF, which may include early childhood education programs focused on enhancing the preparation of at-risk children for school. This plan will include performance expectations that ensure accountability in the expenditures. The plan must be approved by the Department and by the appropriate standing committees of the legislature.
- **Resource:** [Education Excellence Fund](#)

Local Taxes: Districts use local dollars like sales taxes, property taxes, and set aside to increase access to pre-K seats to families who may be over income or children who do not meet the age requirement for publicly-funded pre-K. This significantly reduces the financial burden facing families with young children and helps ensure that children enter Kindergarten ready to learn.

- **Eligibility:** Eligibility of children funded with local dollars is determined by the LEA.
- **Resource:** [Systems Building Resource Guide Chapter 7: Financing Strategically](#), ACF

Private Funds: There are a variety of funding strategies that can bring in private dollars, including child scholarships, family tuition, local (such as city or parish) governing bodies, and private investors (such as philanthropic and business investors). Finding other potential funding sources might be the missing piece for a comprehensive funding portfolio for early childhood care and education in the community. Each community must research to find the best fit for private funding for early childhood care and education.

- **Eligibility:** Children’s eligibility is typically determined by the community partnership with the funder/donor. The Community Network and funder will typically collaborate to create an eligibility policy using local funding sources for early childhood care and education.
- **Resource:** [Systems Building Resource Guide Chapter 7: Financing Strategically](#), ACF

Early Childhood Education Fund - Local: Community Network lead agencies can receive local funds from local municipalities, city governments, philanthropic organizations, businesses, and individual donors. These qualifying local funds may be matched dollar-for-dollar, up to the entire amount raised locally by the Community Network, via the Early Childhood Education Fund.

- **Eligibility:** Local funding eligibility can be partially set by the Community Network lead agency. However, there must be a minimum requirement of “economically disadvantaged.”
- **Resources:** [Early Childhood Education \(ECE\) Fund Guidance](#); “Economically disadvantaged” is defined in [Title 28, Part 1, Chapter 11 of the Louisiana Administrative Code](#)

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Fund - State Match: The Louisiana Early Childhood Education (ECE) Fund is a state matching fund that offers local entities in Louisiana up to a dollar-for-dollar match on investments made to expand access to quality early care and education for economically-disadvantaged children. To be eligible for the ECE Fund’s state matching dollars, Community Network lead agencies can receive local funds from local municipalities, city governments, philanthropic organizations, businesses, and individual donors. An award will not be made unless the local entity's

financial commitment to the project proposed for funding provides matching funds from non-state and non-federal sources at a rate of at least one-to-one. Fund awards are reserved for projects that expand the number of early childhood care and education quality seats for families eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) in Type III early learning centers with a performance rating of “Proficient” or above and at least one classroom with children 15 months or younger.

- **Eligibility:** State match funding awarded must be used to fund slots for children who are eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).
- **Resources:** [Early Childhood Education \(ECE\) Fund Guidance](#); [CCAP Eligibility Requirements](#)

The table below provides a general overview of each funding source available per age group. For a detailed description of each funding source, refer to the descriptions above.

Early Childhood Funding Sources	Infants	Ones	Twos	Threes	Fours
Cecil J. Picard Early Childhood Program (LA 4)					X
Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD) Program				X	X
CCAP Birth through Three-Year-Old Seats (B-3)	X	X	X	X	
Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)	X	X	X	X	X
8(g) Louisiana Quality Education Support Fund					X
Title I				X	X
Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA Part B 619)				X	X
Early Head Start (federal-direct)	X	X	X		
Head Start (federal-direct)				X	X
Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP)					X
Education Excellence Fund (EEF)				X	X
Local Taxes (local-direct)	X	X	X	X	X
Private Funds (local-direct)	X	X	X	X	X
Early Childhood Education Fund - Local (ECE-Local)	X	X	X	X	
Early Childhood Education Fund - State Match (ECE-State)	X	X	X	X	
Private Pay (local-direct)	X	X	X	X	X