

Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council



February 20, 2024

Agenda

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Introductions
- IV. Election of Chair
- V. Consideration of an update report regarding the meeting held November 15, 2023
- VI. Consideration of proposed revisions to Bulletin 137, *Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations* regarding policy alignment, definitions, and technical edits
- VII. Consideration of proposed revisions to Bulletin 139, *Louisiana Child Care and Development Fund Programs* time and attendance, required trainings, and B-3 contracted seats
- VIII. Consideration of Louisiana's Child Care and Development Fund State Plan
- IX. Consideration of an update report regarding Louisiana's Early Learning Center Emergency Plan
- X. Consideration of an update report regarding the 2023 Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council Quarterly Report - Quarter 4



I. Call to Order



II. Roll Call



III. Introductions



IV. Election of Chair



V. Consideration of an update report regarding the meeting held November 15, 2023



VI. Consideration of proposed revisions to *Bulletin 137, Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations* regarding policy alignment, definitions, and technical edits



Proposed Revisions to Bulletin 137

The proposed changes are summarized below:

- Updates and revisions to several definitions
- Clarification regarding early learning programs operating at the same address located on LEA property
- Establishing that a current license holder must be in compliance with licensing rules and regulations prior to changing the location or ownership of a center
- Clarification on how to report critical incidents
- Clarification of monitoring policy for provisionally-employed staff members
- Correction of child to staff ratio for two-year-old children
- Clarification of qualifications for in-person trainer requirements to conduct health and safety and medication trainings
- Clarification of use of prohibited substances
- Addition of a requirement that the administration of supplements will require prior written parental authorization



VII. Consideration of proposed revisions to *Bulletin 139, Louisiana Child Care and Development Fund Programs* regarding time and attendance, required trainings, and B-3 contracted seats



Proposed Revisions to Bulletin 139

The proposed changes are summarized below:

- Updates to definitions regarding Automated Child Care Time and Attendance, Back Scans, and Finger Imaging and to requirements for secondary phone numbers for providers, due to implementation of new systems
- Deletion of “Child Care Health Consultant” (CCHC) definition
- Clarification of qualifications for in-person trainer requirements to conduct health and safety and medication trainings
- Addition of a definition for “Supplement”
- Addition of a requirement that the administration of supplements will require prior written parental authorization
- Clarification regarding potential suspension of payments
- Additions of definitions for contracted and voucher seats and updating of Child Care Assistance Program definition
- Addition of methods for making payments on CCAP contracted seats



VIII. Consideration of Louisiana’s Child Care and Development Fund State Plan



CCDF State Plan

As Lead Agency for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) grant, the LDOE seeks input in developing the 2025-2027 CCDF State Plan:

- CCDF overview
- Background on the CCDF State Plan
- Areas covered by the CCDF State Plan
- Next steps



CCDF Overview

The CCDF grant is a block grant of federal monies that are distributed by the states.

The CCDF grant:

- provides resources to enable low-income parents to work or pursue education and training so that they can better support their families while at the same time promote the learning and development of their children;
- provides funding to enhance the quality of child care for all children and increases access to families; and
- improves the health and safety of children in child care.



CCDF Overview

What does the CCDF cover in Louisiana?

- Licensing
- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- Child Care Criminal Background Checks (CCCBCs)
- Workforce investments
- Quality improvements
- Access improvements



CCDF and the Path To Kindergarten Readiness

CCDF funds have played an integral part in preparing Louisiana children for Kindergarten:

CCDF Investment	What is Funded
CCAP	Seats in quality-rated early learning centers and family child care/in-home sites
Licensing	Health and safety monitoring of early learning centers and CCAP providers
Unified Rating and Quality Improvement System	CLASS® observations, ratings, and informational metrics to drive quality improvement
Enrollment	Supports communities to coordinate enrollment
Ready Start Networks	Funding to support community-level efforts to drive faster rates of access expansion locally
Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) Scholarship	Tuition for child care teachers to attend BESE-approved ECAC programs
Pathways Registry	Registry for teachers, directors, and trainers



CCDF and the Path To Kindergarten Readiness

CCDF funds have played an integral part in preparing Louisiana children for Kindergarten:

CCDF Investment	What is Funded
Coaching and Technical Assistance	Coaching and technical assistance provided by regional CCR&R agencies
Training/PD	Delivery and follow-up professional development provided by regional CCR&R agencies
Mental Health Consultation	Intensive coaching for programs/teachers
Curriculum Initiative	Funding and support for implementing high-quality curriculum
Bonus Payments and School Readiness Tax Credits	Owners, directors, and teachers receive payments or credits for performance or credentials
Early Childhood Assessment System	Individual child portfolios are provided for publicly-funded children through Teaching Strategies GOLD® assessment



Background on the CCDF State Plan

What is a CCDF State Plan?

- A standard document that a state uses to demonstrate how the state Lead Agency complies with all the federal regulations of CCDF
- Every state or territory is currently completing a State Plan, which must be submitted to the Office of Child Care by July 1, 2024

What time period does the State Plan cover?

- The document will include the state’s plan for child care for the next 3 years (10/1/24-9/30/27).
- The document does **not** lock the state in as revisions can be made at any time and states often make revisions as circumstances or policies change.



Areas Covered in the CCDF State Plan

The sections below are broken down in the State Plan:

1. CCDF Program Administration
2. Child and Family Eligibility and Enrollment and Continuity of Care
3. Child Care Affordability
4. Parental Choice, Equal Access, Payment Rates, and Payment Practices
5. Health and Safety of Child Care Settings
6. Support for a Skilled, Qualified, and Compensated Child Care Workforce
7. Quality Improvement Activities
8. Lead Agency Coordination and Partnerships to Support Service Delivery
9. Family Outreach and Consumer Education
10. Program Integrity and Accountability



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CCDF State Plan Section One

Section One defines the administration of the program and describes the development of the State Plan, including:

- the CCDF Lead Agency and its leadership (including the leadership of the CCDF program)
- entities and individuals who will participate in the implementation of the CCDF programs (e.g., resource and referral agencies)
- partners who were consulted in the development of the plan



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CCDF State Plan Section Two

Section Two describes how the Lead Agency defines eligible children and families and works to improve access for them, including by identifying how the Lead Agency:

- works to reduce barriers to family enrollment and redetermination
- prioritizes services for vulnerable children and families
- conducts outreach to families experiencing homelessness, families with limited English proficiency, and persons with disabilities
- promotes continuity of care

Some Louisiana-specific highlights include:

- Louisiana CCAP eligibility criteria includes access for those who are actively seeking employment, for a 90-day period.
- Louisiana has increased eligibility income from 65% of the state median income to 85%, allowing more families in need to qualify for CCAP.
- The Department is working to modernize the CCAP application system, for easier use.



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CCDF State Plan Section Three

Section Three describes how stable child care assistance is provided to families. This section identifies:

- determining eligible families' contributions to payments
- how to make contributions to payments affordable for families
- how access is improved for vulnerable children and families

Highlights

- Louisiana families at 64% or lower SMI have no state co-payment requirement.
- In Louisiana copays are waived for children in foster care and families in the STEP (Strategies to Empower People) Program.



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CCDF State Plan Section Four

Section Four highlights how providing access to a full range of providers helps ensure that families can choose a child care provider that meets their family's needs. This section identifies:

- provider participation in the program, to ensure that parental choice is maximized
- how market rates are assessed and the cost of child care is analyzed
- how adequate program payment rates to providers are established
- how payment practices to providers are implemented and timeliness of payments is ensured
- how supply building mechanisms are implemented

Some Louisiana-specific highlights include:

- raising the CCAP rates to at least the 75th percentile to encourage more participating providers
- providing quarterly CCAP bonus payments to child care centers based on their quality rating and CCAP payments, to support the cost of quality
- work of Ready Start Networks to develop and implement strategies to support the expansion of child care supply and access



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CCDF State Plan Section Five

Section Five describes standards and monitoring practices that ensure that children attending child care are healthy and safe. This section identifies:

- licensing requirements
- standards for ratios, group sizes, and qualifications for CCDF providers
- health and safety standards for CCDF providers
- pre-service or orientation training on the health and safety standards for CCDF providers
- ongoing training and professional development requirements
- monitoring and enforcement policies and practices for Licensing and health and safety requirements
- comprehensive background check
- exemptions for relative providers

Highlights

- In Louisiana staff:child ratio for all types of centers are aligned.
- The Department holds monthly webinars with providers to identify and provide guidance on health and safety areas of concern.



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CCDF State Plan Section Six

Section Six describes efforts to support a skilled, qualified, and compensated child care workforce. This section identifies:

- activities related to strengthening workforce recruitment and retention
- a professional development framework for caregivers, teachers, and directors
- early learning and developmental guidelines describing what children should know and be able to do at different ages

Some Louisiana-specific highlights include:

- School Readiness Tax Credits, largely unique to Louisiana, used to incentivize and encourage teacher and leader retention in the field
- a [PD Vendor Guide](#) inclusive of early childhood education vendors



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CCDF State Plan Section Seven

Section Seven describes the use of quality funds for quality improvement activities in place to support all children in care, including:

- training and professional development of the workforce
- implementing early learning and developmental guidelines
- the quality rating and improvement system
- improving supply and quality of child care services for infants and toddlers
- child care resource and referral services
- program standards and facilitating compliance with safety standards
- evaluating and assessing the quality and effectiveness of child care programs
- accreditation supports
- developing additional high-quality standards

The average CLASS® score has improved 15% from 4.73 in 2015-2016 to 5.42 in 2022-2023.



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CCDF State Plan Section Eight

Section Eight describes the Lead Agency’s coordination and partnerships, including:

- with whom the agency collaborates to provide services
- how match and maintenance-of-effort funds are used
- coordination with child care resource and referral (CCR&R) systems
- efforts for disaster preparedness and response plans to support continuity of operations in response to emergencies

Highlights

- Louisiana community network lead agencies and Child Care Resource and Referral agencies partner at LDOE Collaboratives and throughout the year to analyze local data and develop collaborative efforts to meet mutual goals.
- Louisiana supports child care with emergency preparedness planning through resources and tools.



CCDF State Plan Section Nine

Section Nine describes consumer education practices. This includes:

- details about the agency’s child care consumer education website
- the process for collecting and maintaining a record of parental complaints

KinderCare O'neal + Add to Compare

<p>Early Childhood Performance Rating High Proficient</p> <p>Star Rating ★★★★★</p> <p>View Maps 1188 O'neal Lane Baton Rouge, LA 70816</p> <p>225-272-4210 gdrummer@kindercare.com</p>	<p>About Academic Performance</p> <p>Overview</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Ages / Grades Served Infant (Under 1)-PK (ages 3-4)</td> <td>Director / Principal Ms. Genita Nelson</td> </tr> <tr> <td>District / Parish East Baton Rouge Parish</td> <td>Transportation Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>School Type Licensed Center</td> <td>Takes Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>License Type III</td> <td>Inspection Visit Information Click here to view inspection visit information</td> </tr> </table>	Ages / Grades Served Infant (Under 1)-PK (ages 3-4)	Director / Principal Ms. Genita Nelson	District / Parish East Baton Rouge Parish	Transportation Yes	School Type Licensed Center	Takes Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Yes	License Type III	Inspection Visit Information Click here to view inspection visit information
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CCDF State Plan Section Ten

Section Ten describes strategies for program integrity, including internal controls and accountability measures. This includes reducing fraud, waste, and abuse, including program violations and administrative errors.



Some Louisiana-specific highlights include:

- a fraud and recovery unit to investigate fraud and recover funds as needed
- a contract with Postlethwaite and Netterville for auditing of stabilization grant funds



Next Steps

Anticipated Date	Activity
March - May 2024	Consultation on the development of the CCDF State Plan begins
April 2024	Draft of State Plan becomes public and consultation continues
May 2024	Draft State Plan presented during public meeting
June 30, 2024	State Plan will be submitted to the federal level for review
October 1, 2024	2025-2027 CCDF State Plan becomes effective



IX. Consideration of an update report regarding Louisiana’s Early Learning Center Emergency Plan



Early Learning Center Emergency Plan

Louisiana’s Early Learning Center Emergency Plan strives to ensure continuity of care, parental support, and provider support in the event of an emergency situation:

Continuity of Care	Parental Support	Provider Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a stable environment during an alarming situation • Ensure CCAP cases remain funded and case deadlines are extended • Assist families in placing children in other high-quality early childhood learning sites if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support families who need care for children during a stressful situation • Allow parents to return to work or school and maintain normalcy • Inform parents of resources to cope with the disaster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in reopening their business to serve children • Prioritize assessing damage • Facilitate temporary or emergency child care • Provide information about available resources during and after a disaster

Licensed providers with questions contact your [licensing consultant](#).

Home providers with questions, contact providercertification@la.gov.



Emergency Plan Provider Requirements

Providers must develop, practice and train on, and follow a written emergency preparedness disaster plan. [Louisiana's Early Learning Center Emergency Plan](#) provides resources and guidance to support providers in development of their individual Emergency Preparedness Plan.

Each provider's individual plan must include at a minimum:

- procedures for evacuation; relocation; shelter-in-place; lock-down; communication and reunification with families; continuity of operations; and accommodations of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions
- procedures for all adults living or working in the residence where care is provided or working on the property where care is provided
- posting in a visibly-acceptable area all appropriate emergency phone numbers, such as fire department, police department, hospitals, and Louisiana Poison Control

Licensed providers with questions contact your [licensing consultant](#).

Home providers with questions, contact providercertification@la.gov.



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Communication

Communication is a key aspect of Louisiana's Early Learning Center Emergency Plan:

- Child care providers and parents are advised annually of the need for emergency preparedness and where to obtain additional information.
- In the event of a possible emergency, such as a named storm in the Gulf of Mexico, the Department notifies providers and supplies guidance.
- In the event of a disaster declaration, Department staff meet to determine whether the disaster is severe enough to suspend provider licenses in the disaster-declared area.
- Once a decision has been made by Department staff, the Licensing Section will issue a required [Reopening Form](#) and may suspend licenses as appropriate.
- Department staff will work with providers in the affected areas to reopen as soon as it is safe to do so.

Licensed providers with questions contact your [licensing consultant](#).

Home providers with questions, contact providercertification@la.gov.



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Resources

The [Louisiana Early Learning Center Emergency Plan](#), notifications, reopening forms, and the Child Care Facility Tool Kit can be found on [Louisiana Believes](#).

The Child Care Facility Tool Kit includes:

- [Early Learning Center Basic Emergency Plan](#) (template)
- [Early Learning Center Emergency Checklists](#)
- [CCAP Provider Emergency Plan](#)



X. Consideration of the 2023 Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council Quarterly Report - Quarter 4



Key Activities in Quarter 4

The Department and Community Network Lead Agencies (CNLAs) worked together on the following first semester TS GOLD® activities for 2023-2024:

- Sites completed the Teaching Strategies GOLD® Fall Checkpoint.
- The Department hosted Teaching Strategies GOLD® extended office hours to provide technical support to all networks in need of support.
- The Fall Checkpoint data showed that 93% of networks met the fall checkpoint criteria.
- The next Teaching Strategies GOLD® Checkpoint is February 28, 2024.

Early Childhood Community Networks



Key Activities in Quarter 4

The Department facilitated collaboration with Community Network Lead Agencies (CNLAs) and sites to complete the following:

- Connected with early learning sites to complete the October 1 Child Count, counting every publicly-funded child enrolled at each site within the network.
- Ensured that all sites and classrooms scheduled in the Early Childhood CLASS® portal and completed Fall 2023 observations.

Early Childhood Accountability System



Key Activities in Quarter 4

Community Networks coordinated with program partners to observe all sites for the Fall 2023 observation period:

- Observations were conducted at 1,808 sites during the Fall 2023 semester.
- Community Network Lead Agencies coordinated more than 6,929 observations, observing more than 520,000 minutes of early childhood instruction.
- Community Network Lead Agencies conducted nearly 1,200 Infant CLASS® observations, 2,200 Toddler CLASS® observations, and 3,500 Pre-K CLASS® observations.
- The Department processed 13 classroom-level waiver requests where, despite lead agencies' best efforts, classrooms could not be observed.

Early Childhood Accountability System



Key Activities in Quarter 4

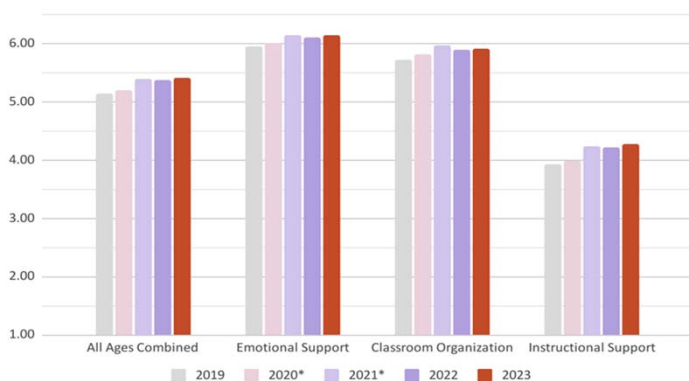
The Department released 2022-2023 Performance Profiles in November 2023. The 2022-2023 Performance Profile scores are the highest scores ever for all site types, with the most growth occurring in child care.

- “Instructional Support” and “Engaged Support for Learning” scores increased to a record high.
- More sites have earned an “Excellent” rating, even as the number of early learning sites participating in the accountability and quality improvement system in Louisiana has increased by 13%.
- There are 264 “Excellent Honor Roll” sites and 493 “Birth to Three Honor Roll” sites.

Early Childhood Accountability System



Key Activities in Quarter 4

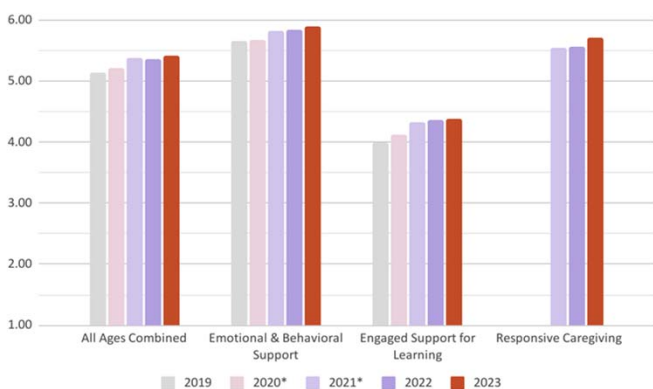


- Improvements across all domains from 2021-2022
- “Instructional Support” increased 9% compared to pre-pandemic levels
- Exceeding pre-pandemic levels of quality in all areas



2022-2023 Early Childhood Performance Profile Highlights - Pre-K Domain Performance

Key Activities in Quarter 4

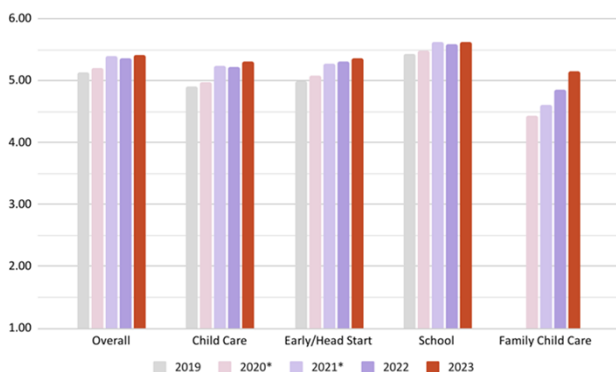


- All domains improved compared to prior year
- “Engaged Support for Learning” increased 10% from pre-pandemic levels
- Trend of steady improvement continues



2022-2023 Early Childhood Performance Profile Highlights - Toddler and Infant Domain Performance

Key Activities in Quarter 4

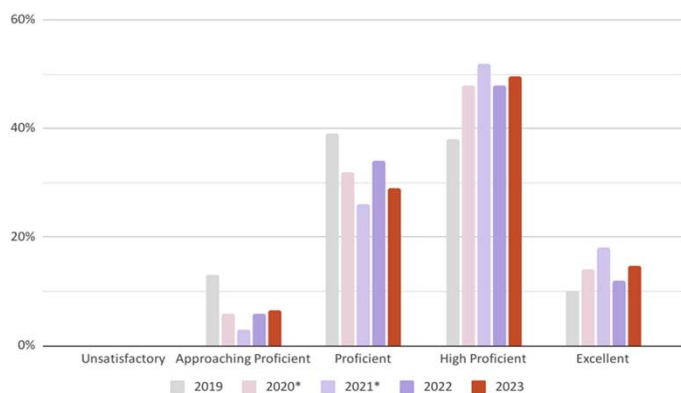


- Gap in scores between the average child care center and the average school is narrowing
- Centers improved more than the state overall
- Increase of 0.72 in family child care sites from initial pilot year to 2023

2022-2023 Early Childhood Performance Profile Highlights - Performance Scores by Site Type



Key Activities in Quarter 4



- 93% of children are served at a high-quality site compared, to 87% in 2019
- For the second year in a row, there are no “Unsatisfactory” sites statewide

2022-2023 Early Childhood Performance Profile Highlights - Performance Ratings Over Time



Key Activities in Quarter 4

In the 2023 legislative session the Louisiana Legislature invested more than ever in early childhood care and education, enabling the Department to allocate funding for the 2023-2024 CCAP B-3 Seats Pilot program:

- In Quarter 4 the Department continued work to prepare for the codification of the CCAP B-3 Seats Pilot program into policy and formally incorporate it into Louisiana’s CCDF State Plan.
- Seats were allocated to 42 Community Network Lead Agencies, and 38 of those networks have proceeded with enrollment thus far.
- At the end of Quarter 4, 4,081 children were enrolled in CCAP B-3 Seats: 992 three-year-olds, 2,206 toddlers, and 883 infants make up the total.

Early Childhood Community Networks



Key Activities in Quarter 4

The Department accepted applications for anticipated funding to be matched for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. 15 networks anticipated raising qualifying funds.

Networks New to ECE Fund	Anticipated Funding Amount
Assumption	\$18,000
Calcasieu	\$60,000
East Baton Rouge	\$500,000
Grant	\$120,000
Natchitoches	\$660,000
Plaquemines	\$12,000
Rapides	\$2,430,000
Tangipahoa	\$10,000
Webster	\$12,000

Networks Continuing to Participate in ECE Fund	Anticipated Funding Amount
Ascension	\$1,000,000
Bossier	\$67,047
Caddo	\$3,060,000
Jefferson	\$500,000
Orleans	\$23,000,000
Pointe Coupee	\$1,664

Early Childhood Education Fund



Key Activities in Quarter 4

Ready Start Networks were tasked with a review of local landscape data analysis to develop updated blueprint goals and strategies that leverage resources to improve birth to three access for families and children.



READY START NETWORKS

- COHORT 1
- COHORT 2
- COHORT 3
- COHORT 4
- COHORT 5

Ready Start Networks



Key Activities in Quarter 4

Ready Start Networks continue to commit to a unified effort to promote high-quality early childhood care and education access at the local level, which requires a focus on recruitment and retention of a quality EC workforce.

- The five Workforce Planning Grantees continued in-field data collection and focus group meetings to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the unique challenges and issues facing the EC workforce.
- Key information included in a formal report from each network will be shared in the next quarter.

Ready Start Networks



Key Activities in Quarter 4

Family Engagement and Leadership Planning RSN Grantees continued to promote quality family engagement practices at the local level.

- The five Family Engagement and Leadership Planning Grantees completed strategic planning documentation and final reports regarding family engagement strategies and practices analyzed and initiated during this grant period.
- The five grantees met for a collaboration meeting at the Department on December 13, 2023, to share findings, celebrate successes, and initiate ongoing practices that will occur as a result of this grant period.



Ready Start Networks



Key Activities in Quarter 4

The Department continued to provide professional development opportunities for child care teachers across the state.

- 20 BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) Programs provided course content and support focused on preparing teachers for successful classroom interactions during this period.
- CCR&R agencies provided a total of 4,510 hours of coaching and 307 hours of training.
 - These agencies also provided 378 hours of coaching to 97 Family Child Care sites across the state that have opted into Academic Approval.
- The Tulane TIKES Mental Health Consultants conducted 225 hours of training for providers and families focused on preventing challenging behaviors and providing treatment tailored to individual children's needs.

Supporting Teachers to be Successful



Key Activities in Quarter 4

The Department held three Early Childhood Fall Collaboratives to provide Community Network Lead Agencies (CNLAs) and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies an opportunity to partner and develop plans to address the current needs of early childhood teachers.

The CNLAs and CCR&Rs worked towards gaining an understanding of:

- the Department's overarching goals and strategies related to EC workforce
- key areas where each agency can contribute to these goals
- key components of support plans for the EC Workforce
- each agency's role in providing support for EC sites related to workforce

CNLAs and CCR&Rs worked together to create shared network-level goals and strategies to support and understand the EC Workforce in their community.

Supporting Teachers to be Successful



Key Activities in Quarter 4

The Department provided sites' leaders and teachers with opportunities and information related to professional recognition, leadership, business practices, and benefits through the following activities:

- Release of the Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Award applications (October 11)
- Continuation of Cohort 5 of the [Louisiana Early Leaders Academy](#), providing participants with leadership development, systems thinking training, and collaboration with peers to strengthen their business practices
- Continued connection of child care site leaders and staff members with information from the *Healthy Navigators for Louisiana* Program of the Southwest Louisiana Area Health Education Center, to assist directors in offering benefits packages to their employees or connecting employees with health insurance options.

Supporting Directors to be Successful



Key Activities in Quarter 4

- The Department worked to finalize contacting families certified to the Waitlist from October 1, 2022-June 30, 2023.
- As Waitlist Verification Forms have been returned, those eligible families have been certified for services.
- As slots become available, additional eligible applicants from July 1, 2023, and on will be removed from the Waitlist, based on the date of the application.

CCAP Children Served in Quarter 4	
October 2023	17,899
November 2023	17,727
December 2023	17,735

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
CCAP Children Served



Key Activities in Quarter 4

The Department has continued to mail CCAP Waitlist Verification Forms to families determined eligible for CCAP.

- Families certified to the Waitlist from October 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023, were mailed a Waitlist Verification Form.
- Families were instructed to review the form and note changes, if any, since submitting their original application. Changes may include income, provider choice, or Education and Training (E&T) hours.

CCAP Cases Removed from the Waitlist in Quarter 4	
Families Certified for Services	644
Children Certified for Services	890

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)



Key Activities of Quarter 4

Site Type:					
Month	Type I	Type II	Type III	FCC	In-Home
October 2023	206	165	1187	242	3
November 2023	206	164	1176	242	3
December 2023	203	164	1189	282	3

Star Rating:						
	0 Stars	1 Star	2 Star	3 Star	4 Star	5 Star
2023	7*	7	78	408	448	51
2024	1*	9	79	326	420	98

*This does not include new, unrated sites.

Publicly-Funded Early Learning Sites



Upcoming Activities



Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council

2024 Meetings
February 20, 2024
May 8, 2024
July 17, 2024
September 18, 2024
November 20, 2024



Adjournment

