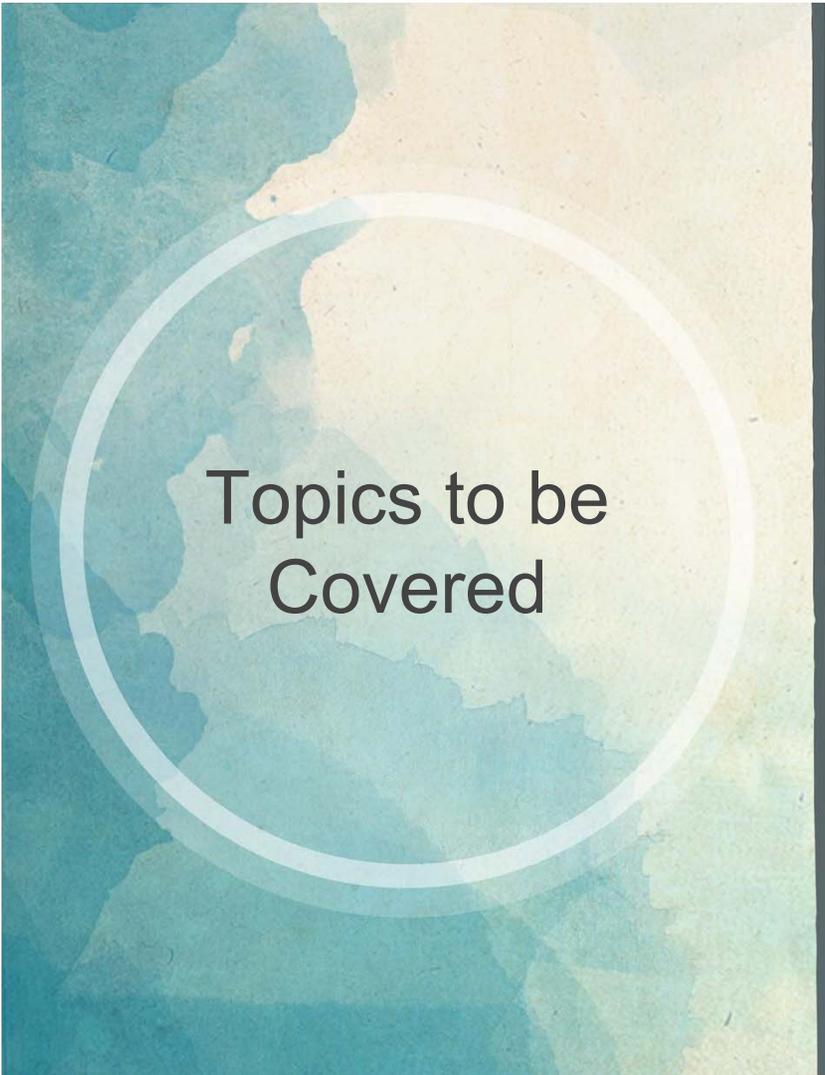


Louisiana's Early Childhood Programs

Determining Family Eligibility



Topics to be Covered

- Eligibility Criteria for LA 4 and NSECD
- Using the DirectMatch System
- Alternative Methods for Determining Child Eligibility

Coordinated Enrollment Requirements

Bulletin 140 mandates that Louisiana have locally-managed enrollment systems that:

1. Coordinate Information: Families know of all available seats
 - *Inform families about the availability of publicly-funded programs*
2. Coordinate Eligibility: Families who are economically disadvantaged easily know what programs they qualify for
 - *Ensure families are referred to available publicly-funded programs*
3. Coordinate Applications: Families apply to all programs through one application
 - *Collect family preferences regarding enrollment choices*
4. Match Based on Preference: Families enroll their child in the highest ranked preference available
 - *Enroll children based on family preference so no one occupies more than one seat*



Pre-K Program
Eligibility



Definition of “Economically Disadvantaged”

- Children in families with incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level are considered “economically disadvantaged” and are therefore eligible for one of Louisiana’s preK programs.
- Foster Children and Homeless Families are categorically eligible for publicly-funded seats.
- Special Needs and ELL children may be eligible to receive services but must still qualify to participate in publicly-funded programs. These children may be able to be served through other funding sources such as Title I, 8(g), and IDEA.

Important Eligibility Items to Remember

The only determinants of eligibility for pre-K are income and age.

- LEAs/sites should not deem a child ineligible for a pre-K seat for reasons other than income and age. This includes medical issues (including toilet training), guardianship, clothing, transportation, religion, ethnicity, cultural practices, and/or language barriers.
- Should an LEA/site consider it necessary to prevent a child from enrolling or consider disenrolling a child for any reason, they must communicate with the child's guardian what service limitations they may face, e.g. due to medical issues or language barriers, explain to the child's guardian what the site's plan is for supporting this child to receive educational services, and, in collaboration with the family, document in writing how the site will best meet the child's needs.

Pre-K Program Eligibility Overview

Program-wide Eligibility Criteria

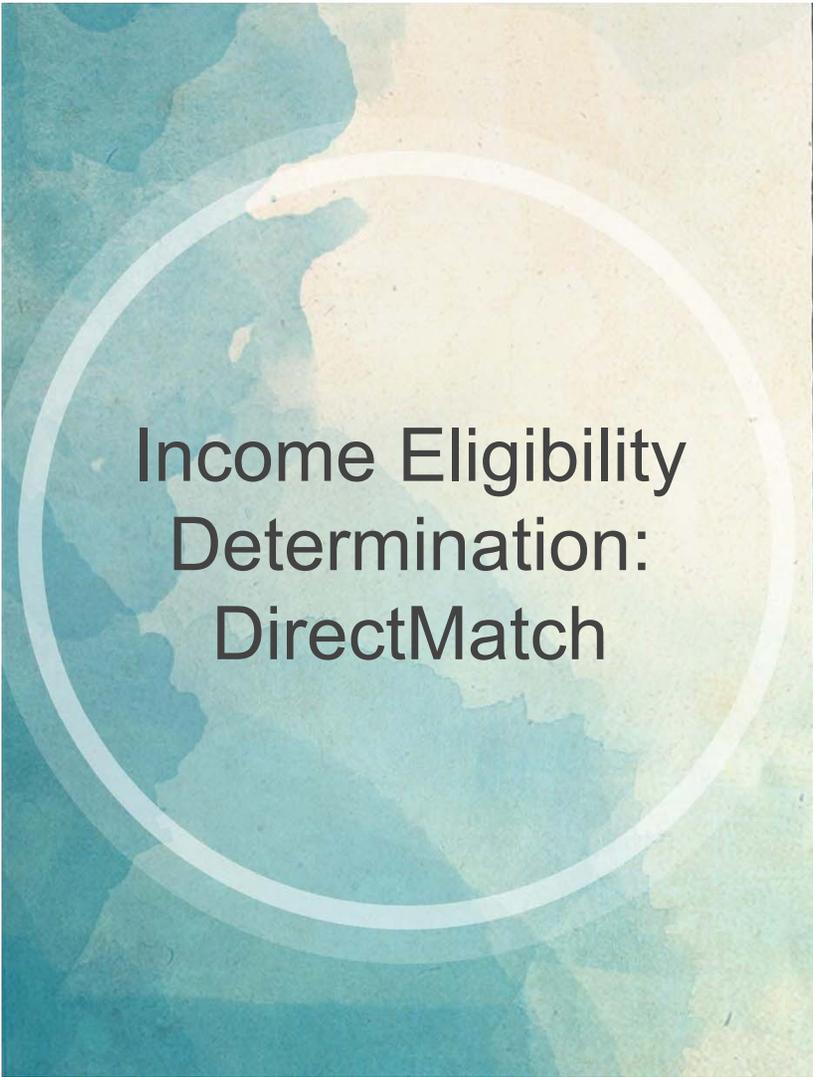
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Income
- ✓ Applicable Documentation for Immunizations

Age Requirement

Children must be 4 years old by September 30 of their prekindergarten year.

Use the child's state-issued or foreign birth certificate, or current passport or visa to:

- Verify date of birth, and
- Verify that the person completing the application is the person listed on the birth certificate; or
- Verify court-issued documentation showing permanent or temporary legal custody, such as
 - Custody Judgments
 - Child Placement Agreement from DCFS
 - Provisional Custody by Mandate
 - Military Power of Attorney
 - Non-Legal Custodian Affidavit



Income Eligibility
Determination:
DirectMatch



DirectMatch Confidentiality

Information included in eScholar is collected for the purpose of doing state and federal reporting, making data available to educators and other stakeholders, and providing services to students.

Student data are protected by state and federal laws and must be maintained in a confidential manner at all times. Unauthorized viewing, reproduction/ copying, and/or distribution of any student record or information outside the intended and approved use are strictly prohibited.

Users violating the authorized use of the system and/or data will lose access privileges to the system and/or data. Illegal access or misuse of the information will be reported to the proper authority.

eScholar DirectMatch

In 2020-2021, the Department is requiring that Lead Agencies use DirectMatch to determine if a child is eligible for services.

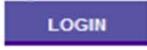
- When logging into the eScholar Direct Match, users should access the login URL <https://louisianasecureid.escholar.com> and enter login information provide by the LDOE ECE team.
- The Department has begun reaching out to networks to ensure that they have access and that it is assigned to the correct users. Each community network is allowed to identify two users.
- Once logged in, users will be able to submit student data in the system to determine if a child is eligible.

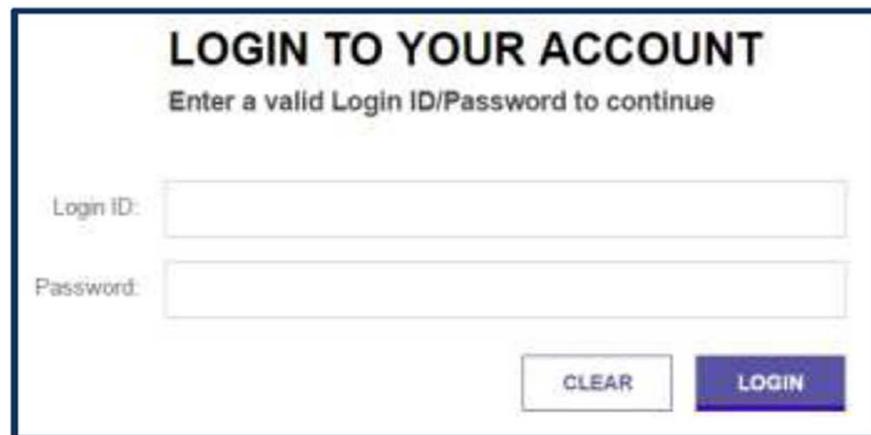
If you do not currently have credentials to access the DirectMatch system or are unsure of how to log on, please reach out to Lindsey.Bradford@la.gov.

Accessing DirectMatch

- When logging into the eScholar Direct Match, users should access the login URL <https://louisianasecureid.escholar.com> and enter login information provide by the LDOE ECE team.

Steps to login to the application:

1. Access the login URL.
2. Enter a Login ID and Password.
3. Click the  button.



LOGIN TO YOUR ACCOUNT
Enter a valid Login ID/Password to continue

Login ID:

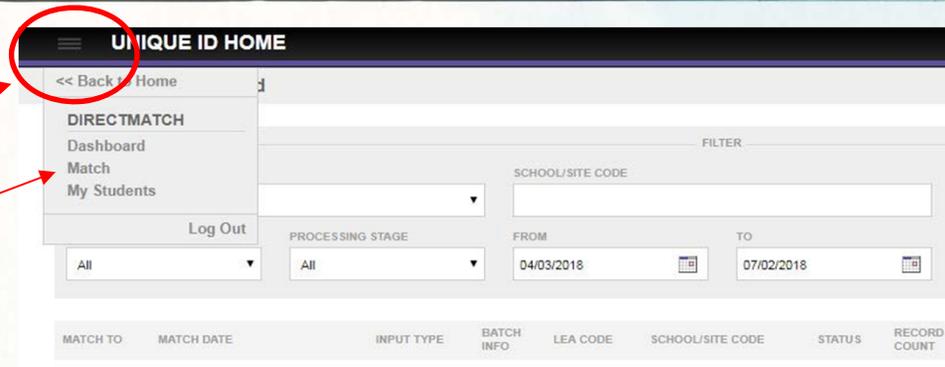
Password:

DirectMatch Student Data Submission

After logging into eScholar *DirectMatch*

1. Click Main Menu 

1. Under DirectMatch click **“Match”**



UNIQUE ID HOME

<< Back to Home

DIRECTMATCH

Dashboard

Match

My Students

Log Out

SCHOOL/SITE CODE

PROCESSING STAGE

FROM

TO

04/03/2018

07/02/2018

MATCH TO

MATCH DATE

INPUT TYPE

BATCH INFO

LEA CODE

SCHOOL/SITE CODE

STATUS

RECORD COUNT

Once in DirectMatch you must select one of the two tabs to **submit student data.**



DirectMatch - Match

UNIQUE ID

UPLOAD FILE

ENTER ONLINE

Match To* :

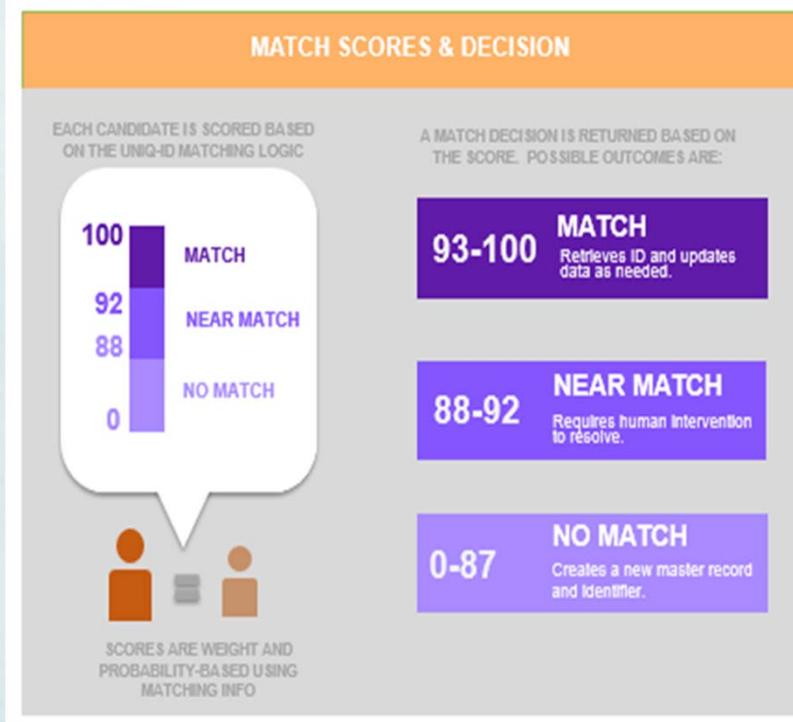
DirectMatch Individual Matching

The screenshot shows the 'DIRECTMATCH' web application interface for 'DirectMatch - Match'. The header includes the application name and the user '00000000 Jefferson School District'. The main navigation bar contains 'UNIQUE ID', 'UPLOAD FILE', and 'ENTER ONLINE' (the latter is circled in red). Below this, there are three dropdown menus: 'Match Type' (set to 'SWAP'), 'Location' (set to '0000 - Jefferson School District'), and 'Building' (set to 'All Buildings').

The form is divided into two sections: 'GENERAL INFORMATION' and 'ADDRESS INFORMATION'. The 'GENERAL INFORMATION' section includes fields for 'FIRST NAME *', 'MIDDLE NAME', 'LAST NAME *', 'ALT LAST NAME', 'SUFFIX', 'GENDER *' (with a dropdown), 'DATE OF BIRTH *' (with a date picker), 'FULL NAME', 'SSN', 'LOCAL ID', 'SOURCE SYSTEM' (set to 'Default'), 'DIRECTMATCH', and 'PERSON TYPE'. The 'ADDRESS INFORMATION' section includes 'ADDRESS 1', 'ADDRESS 2', 'CITY', 'STATE' (with a dropdown), and 'ZIP'. A red arrow points from a text box to the 'LAST NAME *' field.

A text box with a red border contains the text: 'An asterisk indicates required fields.' At the bottom of the form, there are 'CLEAR' and 'MATCH' buttons. A small note at the bottom left says '(*) Required'.

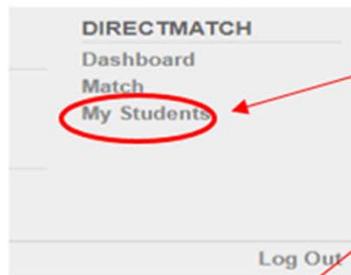
The Matching Process



During the matching phase each record is scored and there are 3 outcomes based of the information provided.

- **Match:** Used to identify a match between a potentially enrolled student record and a SNAP or Medicaid recipient record.
- **Match Probability:** The probability that a student records is a match to a SNAP or Medicaid record.

DirectMatch: My Students



STEPS:

- Home page- My students
- Match Type= SNAP
- Status=Match
- School year = "2019"
- Select School/Site Code

A screenshot of the DirectMatch 'My Students' interface. The interface includes a header 'UNIQUE ID HOME' and 'DirectMatch - My Students'. Below the header are several filter sections: 'LEA CODE' (St. Helena Parish [046]), 'SCHOOL/SITE CODE' (All School/Site Code [046-LEA]), 'MATCH TYPE' (SNAP), 'STATUS' (Match), 'GROUP BY' (Unique ID), 'ID' (empty), 'SCHOOL YEAR' (2019), and 'MATCH TYPE' (Last Name Asc). A 'FILTER' button is located to the right of the 'MATCH TYPE' dropdown. At the bottom, there is a table header with columns: UNIQUE ID, LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, DATE OF BIRTH, GENDER, LEA CODE, SCHOOL/SITE CODE, GRADE PLACEMENT, LOCAL ID, SOURCE, CASE NUMBER, GROUPED, MATCH DATE, and MATCH SCORE. Red arrows point from the 'STEPS' list to the corresponding filters: 'My Students' to the navigation menu, 'Match Type= SNAP' to the SNAP dropdown, 'Status=Match' to the Match dropdown, 'School year = "2019"' to the 2019 dropdown, and 'Select School/Site Code' to the All School/Site Code dropdown. The 'Match' dropdown is circled in red, the '2019' dropdown is circled in red, the 'All School/Site Code [046-LEA]' dropdown is circled in red, the 'SNAP' dropdown is circled in red, and the 'Last Name Asc' dropdown is circled in blue.



Alternatives to DirectMatch



Allowable Documentation for Verification of Income

During the eligibility determination process, at least one form of income verification documentation must be reviewed if the DirectMatch process is not used.

Parents must provide ONE of the following:

- Check Stubs
- SNAP/Food Stamps Documentation
- An official letter from your employer stating all of the following:
 - Where parent/guardian is employed
 - Hourly rate of pay
 - The average number of hours parent/guardian works per week.
- Unemployment Benefits – must submit a Monetary Determination letter from the Workforce Commission
- A statement from the Social Security Administration verifying that the child listed on the application is a recipient of SSI benefits, which must be accompanied by two current check stubs.

Allowable Documentation for Verification of Income

During the eligibility determination process, at least one form of income verification documentation must be reviewed if and when the DirectMatch process is not used.

Parents must provide ONE of the following:

- Current foster care placement agreement from DCFS
- Families in a temporary living arrangement due to loss of housing or economic hardship (homeless) should be substantiated using the LEA-defined procedures for verifying homeless status.
- Tax documentation is allowable only if no other form of income verification documentation exists.
- Statement of No Income
- Declaration of Employment Form

Allowable Proof of Income

Check Stubs

- ✓ Collect two (2) consecutive check stubs for the current year (within 2 months from the date they are completing the application) for each parent or caregiver in the home.
- ✓ Income verification is ONLY based on the REGULAR or BASE PAY rate.
- ✓ Eligibility is based on gross HOUSEHOLD income. Therefore, if there are 2 or more adults contributing to the financial needs of the family, all of them must provide proof of income.

Income Limits

What does 200% of the Federal Poverty Level look like?

Federal Income Limits: 200% FPL <i>(Effective January 2020 for 2020-2021 Enrollment)</i>		
Family Size	Gross Annual Income	Gross Monthly Income
2	\$34,480	\$2,873
3	\$43,440	\$3,620
4	\$52,400	\$4,367
5	\$61,360	\$5,113
6	\$70,320	\$5,860
7	\$79,820	\$6,607

Translating Income into a Monthly Figure

<u>Monthly Income Calculation Table</u>	
Pay Period	Formula
Paid hourly	(Hourly wage x 40 hours per week) x 4.33
Paid monthly, <i>same gross pay each month</i>	Use gross salary
Paid same gross amount exactly 2 times per month (e.g., 1 st and 15 th of month)	Gross salary x 2
Paid same gross amount every 2 weeks (e.g., every other Friday)	(Gross salary / 2) x 4.33
Paid weekly	Gross salary x 4.33

Calculating Monthly Income

- ✓ Income is most consistently and accurately calculated using the HOURLY RATE formula.
- ✓ Gross income must be calculated using a 40-hour week.

Example: If Mrs. Smith provides a check stub showing an hourly rate of \$25, you will calculate it as $(\$25 \times 40) \times 4.33$. Mrs. Smith's monthly income is \$4,330. She is a single mom and has one child, (family size of 2), therefore she would NOT be eligible.

- ✓ If the parent/guardian claims that they do not work 40 hours per week, they will need to get a letter from their employer indicating how many hours they regularly work. You may then recalculate their income based on that amount.

Example: You receive a letter which shows Mrs. Smith only works 20 hours per week. You may calculate her income as $(\$25 \times 20) \times 4.33$ which equals \$2,165 which makes her child eligible.

Allowable Proof of Income

SNAP Benefits

Families on SNAP are categorically eligible. Documentation must include child's name and effective dates. There are several different forms for this.

- The *SNAP Change/Closure* letter sent from DCFS. This letter will include an expiration date on the first page and a full listing of household members on the following pages.
- The *CAFÉ Case Detail* report will include current certification dates as well as a list of included family members. This report is available vis the CAFÉ portal and can be accessed on most smartphones.

The Louisiana Purchase card is not accepted as valid proof that the family is a SNAP participant.

Unallowable Proof of Income

The following list includes items that **ARE NOT** allowable for income verification:

- W-2 or 1099 forms OR tax returns as a *primary* source. These may only be used if no other form of income documentation exists.
- Medicaid Documentation
- Child Support as an independent source (UNLESS it is the sole source of income AND is court ordered. MUST provide court documents as well as a letter stating that no other income is received.

Immunization Requirements

Children must be current on all age-appropriate immunizations pursuant to R.S 17:170.

School Entry Complete-Minimum:

4-DTP, 3-Polio (last DTP and Polio after 4th birthday),

2-MMR after 1st birthday

3-Hep B

*Child Care Center: Hib also required

** Beginning Aug 2003, Varicella (chicken pox) vaccine or history of the disease is required for school and daycare entry.

•
More information can be found at <https://lalinks.org/linksweb/>.

No Shots, No School... Not True

Children may not be determined ineligible for a publicly funded pre-K program due to lack of immunizations.

- If a family cannot afford to pay for their child's shots, families can receive free immunizations through Shots for Tots.
- If a child has never been vaccinated, but parents would like for them to, they may be able to follow the [accelerated schedule for children starting immunizations late](#). They should ask their pediatrician for more information.
- If a child is unvaccinated due to medical, religious, or philosophical beliefs, parents may claim exemption from the immunization requirements by submitting the [Statement of Exemption](#) form.

Contact Information

For all questions related to pre-K programs and eligibility determination:

Lindsey Bradford

Lindsey.Bradford@la.gov