



EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWSLETTER

September 14, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

September is Attendance Awareness Month. Academic success starts with attendance, and Louisiana is making progress. In 2022-23, our statewide truancy rate dropped by nearly 3% as over 24,000 less students were truant. This comes one year after Louisiana was a national outlier due to a dramatic decrease in chronic absenteeism.

Every day a child is in a high-quality early learning environment is an opportunity for them to learn and grow. Something all leaders should be doing is collaborating with families to help build good attendance habits early and create a solid foundation for successful learning later in life. Let's do our part this and every month to emphasize the importance of being in class and ready to learn every day.

Dr. Cade Brumley

Upcoming Deadlines

- September 22: [Deadline to nominate Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Candidates](#)

Upcoming Events

- September 29: [New Director Webinar](#)
- October 5: [Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar](#)

More Important Dates

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

In This Issue

- [Provider Updates](#)
- [Updates for Teaching and Learning](#)
- [Updates for Funding and Enrollment](#)
- [Updates for Licensed Centers, Family Child Care, and In-Home Providers](#)
- [Updates for Directors](#)
- [Updates for Community Network Lead Agencies](#)
- [Other](#)
- [News](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Provider Updates

NEW: Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar

The next monthly provider update webinar will be held October 5, 2023. Providers can access the upcoming October provider update webinar using the information below:

Webinar Date/Time: Thursday, October 5 at 1 p.m.
Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93597745872>
Phone Number: 1-312-626-6799
Meeting ID: 935 9774 5872
Passcode: 641464

The September 7 presentation slides are available in the [Quality Providers Library](#) on the Louisiana Believes website.

REMINDER: TIKES Mental Health Consultation

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) is an intervention that teams a mental health professional with early childhood professionals to improve the behavioral health of young children in early learning settings. The TIKES ECMHC provides support at no cost to Type III and Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)-certified Family Child Care sites that have opted into or are interested in opting into Academic Approval. Onsite support and professional development is provided for teachers and other early childhood professionals by early childhood mental health specialists.

Visit the [TIKES](#) webpage for more information.

UPDATES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

NEW: 2023-2024 CCAP B-3 Seats Launched

Beginning this academic year, the LDOE is working to codify the CCAP B-3 Seats Pilot program into policy and formally incorporate it into Louisiana's CCDF State Plan. Taking these steps will make CCAP B-3 Seats a sustainable program, ensuring that access to high-quality early care and education is available for Louisiana's youngest learners.

In 2023 Community Network Lead Agencies applied for and were awarded CCAP B-3 Seats. These networks will be sending applications to providers who meet the CCAP B-3 Seats Pilot program criteria.

If interested in participating in the program, providers are encouraged to contact their [Community Network Lead Agency](#) to find out whether their network is participating in the 2023-2024 CCAP B-3 Seats Pilot program.

Additional questions can be addressed to earlychildhood@la.gov.

Reminder: Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year (TOY/LOY) Nominations Portal Open

Calling all excellent Early Childhood Educators! Eligible candidates for nomination are individuals who work in Type III child care centers, Head Start centers, Early Head Start centers, or CCAP-certified Family Child Care sites. Please nominate colleagues, friends, family members, community members, or anyone else making a positive impact on the state's youngest learners. Anyone can submit a nomination, and interested candidates are encouraged to self-nominate as well.

The nominations portal for the next year of Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year opened August 11 and will close September 22. Please use the [nomination form](#) to notify the LDOE about the excellent educators deserving of this award.

School-based pre-K applicants should apply for the pre-K through grade 12 Teacher and Leader of the Year awards.

For more information reach out to earlychildhood@la.gov or excellenteducators@la.gov.

NEW: Fall 2023 CLASS® Observation Period

Community Network Lead Agencies are currently working with sites to schedule local Fall 2023 CLASS® observations for the 2023-2024 academic year. Representatives from local Community Network Lead Agencies will be reaching out to schedule observations for each site.

Third-party observations will also be scheduled and conducted by the Picard Center. Third-party observations are designed to provide an additional level of review to ensure reliability. At least two weeks before the scheduled observations, the Picard Center will send an email providing the site with a two-week timeframe in which the observations will occur.

Questions about CLASS® observations can be directed to the local [Community Network Lead Agency](#).

NEW: Teaching Strategies GOLD® Webinars and Resources

Teaching Strategies also offers several [on-demand recorded webinars](#) for early childhood teachers and leaders. Visit the [Learning in Action Library](#) for tips and classroom support. New resources include:

- [Three Tips to Get a Jumpstart on Documentation Collection](#) (blog)
- [Tiny Habits, Big Results: What the Science of Reading Tells Us About Literacy Learning in Early Childhood](#) (blog)

Visit teachingstrategies.com for more information.

UPDATES FOR FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Semi-Automated Invoices (SAIs)

In order to receive payment for the time period listed on an SAI, providers must submit attendance records along with the completed and signed SAI.

Attendance logs, in accordance with *Bulletin 137*, must include the following:

- The date(s) child care services were provided
- Arrival and departure times
- Child's first and last name
- First and last name of the person who signed the child into care
- First and last name of the person to whom the child is released
- Name and location of services

SAIs and attendance logs may be faxed to 225-376-6056 or emailed to LDECCAP@la.gov. Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Verification Request/Client Contact Letter

When clients receive a Verification Request/Client Contact Letter (CCAP 14) in the mail, they must adhere to the dates on the form. All documentation should be returned to the Department by the due date on the form. Clients are given 10 days to return information. Please help the Department ensure that cases are processed quickly by returning the information immediately. Adhering to the due dates will assist the CCAP team in meeting case processing deadlines.

All verification documents can be faxed to 225-376-6060 or emailed to LDECCAP@la.gov. Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Waitlist Removal Notification

The Department began mailing Waitlist Verification Forms to families determined eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program with an application date of October 1 - December 31, 2022.

To ensure eligible families are still in need of child care, the Department must evaluate families' continued need for services. The Waitlist Verification Form includes five "YES" or "NO" questions. If the family answers "NO" to any question, a CCAP 10 [Report of Changes Form](#) will also be required. It is important that families complete and return these forms by the deadline listed in the mailouts.

Forms can be faxed to 225-376-6060 or emailed to LDECCAP@la.gov. Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Household Redeterminations

The Department is working to process redetermination applications, change reports, email inquiries, and Provider Help Desk tickets as quickly as possible. Please note that cases are being processed in order of receipt. All cases will be processed and notices will be sent to the client and the provider upon determining eligibility and making submitted changes.

For applications or verifications completed more than 30 days ago, send an email to ldeccap@la.gov for confirmation of receipt. The Department is working to increase efficiencies in responding to provider queries more promptly.

Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

REMINDER: ARPA Stabilization Grant Assessment (Rounds 1 & 2)

The LDOE is conducting a grant assessment related to the ARPA Stabilization Grants and has partnered with Postlethwaite and Netterville (P&N) to collect information regarding the use of these funds.

Participation in the assessment, just like the survey that preceded the assessment, **is required**. Failure to comply with Postlethwaite and Netterville requests, during any part of the assessment process, will impact a site's ability to receive future grants and may impact a site's ability to receive CCAP payments.

Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions. For technical assistance with completing requests for documents from P&N, contact P&N at info@LDOE-pnsurvey.com.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Eligibility Redetermination for Families

The LDOE CCAP team sends notifications of upcoming redeterminations to providers and families monthly.

As the Department works to streamline its processes, it is still critically important that families respond immediately with a new CCAP [redetermination application](#), check stubs, and immunization records. The case will not be extended if documents are not received according to the dates on the CCAP 11RC - Redetermination Notice (to families) and CCAP 11RCP - Provider Redetermination Notice (to providers) or if the case is deemed ineligible.

The Department appreciates providers' assistance in ensuring families submit the redetermination application and all required documents to prevent closure of the family's CCAP case. Once the case is closed, if services are still needed, the family will need to reapply for CCAP and will be placed on the waitlist, if deemed eligible. As a reminder, if the

application is not received by the 15th of the redetermination month, the client and the provider will receive a Notice of Terminated Services effective for the last day of the month.

Contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-252-9543 with any questions.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Underutilized Authorizations for Families

The CCAP Eligibility Team conducts reviews of underutilized authorizations of children who have not attended child care within the previous month. Attendance recorded in the site's attendance tracking system, KinderConnect, is examined as part of the underutilization review. Authorizations must be utilized by families within a 30-day period to maintain CCAP certification.

If CCAP children are not attending, the Department will issue a first notice to families at the mailing address on file, advising families of non-usage of authorizations. If CCAP children appear on the report a second time, families will lose their CCAP authorizations. The family's case will be placed in "pend close" status, and the provider and family will receive a Notice of Termination of Service for the end of the current month. Families will then need to reapply for CCAP and will be placed on the waitlist, if deemed eligible.

Contact the Provider Help Desk at (225) 250-7635 or (225) 252-9543 or enter a [ticket](#) in the Provider Help Desk Ticket System with any questions.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) KinderConnect Attendance Tracking System

The Louisiana Department of Education has transitioned to KinderConnect as the mandatory attendance tracking system for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

Training and resources are available on the [EdLink Support](#) page.

For KinderConnect time and attendance system questions call 1-888-829-9258 or email supportLA@kindersystems.com. Support staff at KinderSystems are available Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

UPDATES FOR LICENSED CENTERS, FAMILY CHILD CARE, AND IN-HOME PROVIDERS

NEW: Provisionally-Employed Staff Members

A staff member may be employed provisionally when all the following conditions have been met:

- Request for a CCCBC-based determination of eligibility for child care purposes
- Receipt by the Department of a satisfactory fingerprint-based Louisiana or federal criminal history information record, pending the Department's receipt of the other CCCBC results and determination of the person's eligibility for child care purposes
- Status determined Provisional in the [CCCBC System](#)

Please note: A staff member with an expired CCCBC does **not** have provisional status.

Contact the site's [licensing consultant](#) with any questions.

NEW: Upcoming Revised Bulletin 137 Zoom Training for Owners and Directors

Every three years Bulletin 137 requires a review. Earlier this year, that review took place, and several chapters of the Bulletin were revised. This revised Bulletin 137 is scheduled to take effect October 20.

To ensure providers are informed of those changes, a training will be held for owners and directors within the first two weeks of October. An email will be sent to all providers the last week of September with information on how to register one director and one owner from each center. Providers will receive two continuing education hours for attending this training. Each training will be limited to a certain number of participants.

All trainings are scheduled for 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. See below for dates of the trainings:

- October 3, 2023
- October 4, 2023
- October 5, 2023
- October 10, 2023
- October 11, 2023
- October 12, 2023

Contact the site's [licensing consultant](#) with any questions.

NEW: Renew Your Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) and Initiate Career Ladder Re-Leveling for Eligibility for School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC)

Teachers and/or directors with Early Childhood Ancillary Certificates (ECACs) that expire in October, November, or December 2023 should submit renewal applications at least four to six weeks before expiration through [Teach LA Live!](#) Complete initial or renewal applications must be submitted no later than December 1, 2023, to guarantee processing by the processing deadline of December 31, 2023. Incomplete applications or those submitted after December 1 may not be processed by the certification team before the deadline and thus may not qualify for re-leveling and a potential increase in SRTCs for tax year 2023.

Once an application is submitted, please check email regularly for replies from the Department. Applicants can verify application submissions and check for any new messages using the “History” option on [TeachLA Live!](#)

Once an application is processed, additional feedback is provided or the certificate is issued. Case feedback is usually provided via email with instructions on how to correct the application. Certificate information can be reviewed on [TeachLouisiana.net](#) by choosing “Verify a Certificate” or “Teaching Authorization” on the right side of the page.

Any questions regarding the processing of an application should be submitted using Ask a Question within the [Teach LA Live!](#) Portal.

REMINDER: Summer Sun and Playground Safety Tips

Staff members should ensure children are protected from the sun and hot surfaces between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. when there is a heat index at or above 90°F.

Staff members are strongly encouraged to closely monitor children while on the playground to ensure shoes are being worn. Some additional safety tips include:

- checking the temperature of playground equipment including the surface under and around the equipment, including
 - metal swings and slides
 - rubber and plastic material
 - concrete and pea gravel surfaces
- encouraging families to dress children in cool clothing
 - **Note:** Topicals such as sunscreen should not be applied without written authorization signed and

- dated by the parent or guardian.
- holding regularly scheduled water breaks

Please monitor the [National Weather Service](#) for weather warnings and advisories.

Contact the site's [licensing consultant](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Motor Vehicle Passenger Checks

As a reminder, the negative consequences of extreme heat are so significant that Louisiana has a [law](#) prohibiting leaving children unattended in a vehicle.

- A first offense for leaving a child under the age of six unattended or unsupervised in a car will net a fine of up to \$500 or imprisonment up to six months or both.
- Each subsequent offense will result in felony imprisonment for no less than one year and a fine of no less than \$1,000.

As required in [Bulletin 137](#) §2017, Motor Vehicle Passenger Checks, it is imperative that vehicles are adequately inspected for children before staff exit the vehicle: **Children can die in a hot vehicle in a matter of minutes.**

Each vehicle shall have a vehicle passenger check and a face-to-name count conducted at each of the following times:

- prior to leaving center for destination
- upon arrival at each destination
- prior to departure from each destination and
- upon return to center

A staff person shall

- physically walk through the vehicle and inspect all seat surfaces, under all seats, and in all enclosed spaces and recesses of the interior of the vehicle
- record the time of the visual passenger check and sign the log, indicating that no child was left in the vehicle

Contact the site's [licensing consultant](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: EdLink Licensing System and Training Opportunities

All providers must use the EdLink system to submit new Licensing applications, submit renewal Licensing applications, submit Licensing request changes, and access the Department's new attendance system, KinderConnect.

Please note:

Renewal applications

- must be submitted prior to the first day of the month in which the current license expires in order to ensure that there is no interruption of service and authorizations are not dropped
 - For example, if the center's license expires October 31, 2023, the renewal application must be submitted by no later than September 30, 2023.
- can be started up to 90 days prior to the expiration date
- must include all required documentation

The Department is offering multiple [EdLink trainings](#) where providers will be given instructions for accessing and navigating the system. For the month of September, training is scheduled for Wednesdays only. In-home and Family Child Care provider sessions are held every other Wednesday.

It is highly recommended that providers attend each session in the order in which they are listed. All sessions do require pre-registration, through the links below, so please register early, and note that space is limited.

- Accessing EdLink, 12:00-1:00 p.m.
https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUtcOyhqDirG9LjFxCt_RBevBnA5s2-xVt
- Completing Type I, II, and III New and Renewal Applications, 2:00-3:30 p.m.
<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUvd-uqgTktHdBwg7WD49LP6g-jy5lwXQg->
- Completing In Home and Family Home Renewal Applications, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsd-msrzovHdVLYHzqvout1isT_fMlx79P

For questions regarding EdLink, please submit a ticket in the [EdLink Support Ticket System](#) or visit the Department's [EdLink Training](#) page to access training videos and training manuals at any time. For detailed guidance and screenshots on how to register in EdLink and for access to other resources, please visit the Department's [EdLink Support](#) page.

REMINDER: Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) 5-Year Renewal and Fingerprint Vendor Transition

Child Care Criminal Background Check determinations began expiring in March 2023. Providers and applicants who were fingerprinted in 2018 are contacted via email to initiate the fingerprinting renewal process within 90 days of the CCCBC determination expiration date. The renewal process must be initiated by the provider, through the LDOE CCCBC system.

Providers should ensure rosters are up-to-date, with all current employees listed, or providers will not receive an email notification to initiate the renewal application for employees. CCCBC determinations will expire if not renewed in time. As a reminder, fingerprint resubmission is required for renewal applications. A hard identification card, such as a state-issued driver's license or state identification card, is required to submit fingerprints; LA Wallet or a digital driver's license is not acceptable.

In addition to providers monitoring all staff members' expiration dates to ensure timely renewal, please also remind therapists, contractors, and other recurring visitors to renew CCCBCs in a timely manner in order to provide continued services and notify visitors about the new fingerprinting vendor and new fingerprinting sites.

To prevent delays in the processing of Child Care Criminal Background applications, please follow the steps below, in the following order:

1. Create a new hire or renewal application in the [CCCBC System](#)
2. Verify the applicant's email address and date of birth are entered correctly Upload
 - a. a current [initial consent and disclosure form](#) and
 - b. valid driver's license in the CCCBC System
3. The applicant will then receive an email containing a link from IDEMIA to pre-enroll and schedule a fingerprinting appointment.

As a reminder, applications returned for corrections should be resubmitted once the correction is completed. The provider and applicant can view status updates in the CCCBC System. Note that CCCBCs cannot be processed until applications are submitted into the CCCBC System and fingerprints are submitted. CCCBC application fees are non-refundable.

Note that on Monday, May 8, 2023, fingerprinting for the CCCBC system transitioned from fingerprint vendor Gemalto to IDEMIA. Fingerprinting fees are paid at the time of service. "No Charge Authorization Codes" (NCACs), or business checks or money orders [*per individual fingerprinting applicant* and made payable to IDEMIA in the amount of \$55.75

(or \$60.75 at Sheriff's Office locations)], are acceptable payment options. *Please note that NCACs are no longer entered when scheduling appointments online. Instead, applicants using NCACs are now required to bring their codes with them to their fingerprinting appointment.*

Please view the [detailed instructions](#) to create a No Charge Authorization Code account. NCAC account setup may take up to a week for processing. Completed Authorization forms should be faxed to 952-945-3326 or e-mailed to LAUEPACCOUNTS@US.IDEMIA.com. Cash is **not** an acceptable payment option.

Please view a list of [current fingerprinting locations](#): this list will be updated as new sites are added. The following additional fingerprint sites have gone, or are scheduled to go, live in recent and coming weeks:

- West Baton Rouge Clerk of Court - West Baton Rouge Parish (Port Allen) - week of 08/21/2023
- Wilkins Insurance Inc - Grant Parish (Colfax) and Lincoln Parish Sheriff's Office - Lincoln Parish (Ruston) - week of 08/28/23
- Concordia Parish Sheriff's Office-Concordia Parish (Vidalia) and Brother's Insurance - Iberia Parish (New Iberia) Parish - week of 09/11/23
- Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office-Rapides (Alexandria), Allen Parish Sheriff's Office-Allen (Oberline), and A Grace Insurance Company-Sabine (Many) Parishes - week of 09/18/23
- St. Helena (Greensburg), St. Martin (St. Martinville), LaSalle (Jena) Parishes – tentative dates will be available soon

To prevent issues scheduling fingerprinting appointments, please follow the steps below:

1. Verify the applicant's email address is correct and matches the email used for the CCCBC application.
2. Instruct applicants to view their junk mail for emails from no-reply@uemail.identogo.com.
3. In the event the applicant does not have access to the email containing the link from IDEMIA to schedule an appointment, visit: <https://uenroll.identogo.com/workflows/27N4H8>.
4. Instruct the applicant to pre-enroll using their information exactly as it appears in the CCCBC application.

Contact the CCCBC team with any questions or for assistance by emailing LDECCBCprocessing@la.gov. For IDEMIA finance and NCAC questions, contact 877-512-6962, or for UEID and scheduling assistance, contact 844-539-5543.

UPDATES FOR DIRECTORS

NEW: Monthly Office Hours for New Directors

Every month the LDOE team holds a webinar that focuses on a topic related to early childhood quality while also helping to expand directors' network of peers. Office hours are targeted towards new directors. Come learn about Type III requirements, connect with other directors, and stay up-to-date with upcoming events and deadlines.

This month's topic is "CLASS[®] Observations: What to Expect." Participants will gain a better understanding and learn the basics of the CLASS[®] Tool and what to expect when classrooms are observed.

Webinar Date/Time:	Friday, September 29 at 12:00 p.m.
Webinar Link:	https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/92700204655
Webinar Phone Number:	1-470-381-2552
Meeting ID:	927 0020 4655
Passcode:	212827

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

UPDATES FOR COMMUNITY NETWORK LEAD AGENCIES

NEW: Weekly Office Hours Webinar for Community Network Lead Agencies

The Early Childhood team hosts Office Hours most Tuesdays at 3 p.m. for Community Network Lead Agency contacts. The purpose of these webinars is to provide updates and answer questions for Community Network Lead Agencies. Presentations from previous Community Network Lead Agency Office Hours are located in the [Community Network Lead Agency Library](#).

The upcoming schedule for weekly webinars for Community Network Lead Agencies can be found below:

- September 19: Early Childhood Updates and GOLD® Fall Checkpoint (extended time of 3 - 4 p.m.)
- September 26: Early Childhood Updates
- October 3: Navigators for a Healthy Louisiana
- October 10: Early Childhood Updates

Note that topics are subject to change. Contact earlychildhood@la.gov with any questions.

Other

NEW: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Advisory Council Upcoming Meeting, September 25, 2023

The next Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council meeting will take place on September 25, 2023, at 11:30 a.m., in the Thomas Jefferson Room ([livestream](#)) at the Claiborne Building, located at 1201 N. Third Street in Baton Rouge. An overview of the ECCE Advisory Council meeting materials are available online in the [Policy and Guidance Library](#).

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, for special assistance at this meeting please contact claudette.jones@la.gov at least three business days in advance of the meeting describing the assistance that is needed.

For additional information, please email claudette.jones@la.gov.

NEW: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Commission Upcoming Meeting, September 25, 2023

The next ECCE Commission meeting will take place on September 25, 2023 at 1 p.m. in the Thomas Jefferson Room ([livestream](#)) at the Claiborne Building, located at 1201 N. Third Street in Baton Rouge. An overview of the ECCE Commission and meeting materials are available online in the [Policy and Guidance Library](#).

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, for special assistance at this meeting please contact claudette.jones@la.gov at least three business days in advance of the meeting describing the assistance that is needed.

For additional information, please email claudette.jones@la.gov.

NEWS

[Understanding Federal COVID Child Care Relief Funds in Louisiana](#) (CLASP.org)

[On-the-Job Training. Child Care is All in One Place for Growing Hispanic Community in Jefferson Parish](#) (NOLA.com)

CONTACT US



- For questions regarding licensing or child health and safety, please contact LDElicensing@la.gov.
- For questions regarding community network lead agencies, please contact leadagencysupport@la.gov.
- For all questions regarding child care criminal background check processing, please contact LDEccbcprocessing@la.gov.
- For all other questions regarding early childhood, please contact earlychildhood@la.gov.

Subscribe to Our Monthly Newsletter by Completing this Form

The Early Childhood Newsletter is released as a monthly edition. To ensure all subscribers are current, please complete this [form](#) in order to receive our next monthly edition. Please also send this [form](#) to stakeholders who can register as new subscribers.