



# EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWSLETTER

February 10, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

A child's early years lay the foundation for their future development and academic success. For this reason, it is important for all teachers and caregivers of young children to understand the critical role they play in providing high-quality early learning experiences. For the past four years, Louisiana has celebrated Early Ed Week, but February 2022 kicks off the first annual Louisiana Early Ed Month.

In addition to celebrating those that support our youngest learners, classrooms across Louisiana are recognizing the contributions and achievements of African Americans as part of Black History Month. This is happening through special events, classroom lessons, daily announcements and other educational activities designed to bring honor and awareness to African American history and culture. We want to honor those in our early childhood classrooms who are focused on supporting equity, inclusion, and diversity. Your hard work and dedication to the field are essential, and appreciated.

We're thankful for so much in Louisiana. We also recognize that we must move onward in elevating the voice of every teacher and ensure every child receives the care and education they deserve. I look forward to continuing this work alongside all of you – my colleagues – as we move forward together.

Dr. Cade Brumley  
State Superintendent of Education

## Upcoming Deadlines

- February 28: GOLD® Winter Checkpoint
- February 28: Coordinated Enrollment Planning (Lead Agencies)
- March 2: Teacher Leader Summit Early Bird Registration Ends
- March 11: Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year (TOY/LOY) Application
- April 7: America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Stabilization Grant - Round 2

## Upcoming Events

- February 15: LPIC Early Ed Month [Parent Advocacy Training](#)
- February 15: [CCAP New Provider Training](#)
- February 17: ECCE Commission Meeting
- February 22: [ELDS Review Committee](#)
- February 23: [ECCE Advisory Council Meeting](#)
- February 25: [Monthly Office Hours for New Directors](#)
- March 3: [Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar](#)

## More Important Dates

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

## In This Issue

- [Updates for COVID-19](#)
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## UPDATES FOR COVID-19

### **NEW: Upcoming Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar (March)**

The Department hosts monthly webinars for early childhood providers. These webinars include important updates related to COVID-19 and other relevant information for all provider types. Providers can access the next provider webinar using the information below. Additionally, for quick answers to COVID-19 questions, please see the recently updated [FAQs for Child Care Centers and Providers](#). Presentation slides from our [February webinar](#) are available in the [Quality Providers Library](#) on the Louisiana Believes website.

**Webinar Date and Time:** March 3 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

### **REMINDER: Operation Expanded Testing**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has established [Operation Expanded Testing](#) to provide fully-funded COVID-19 PCR testing for K-12 schools, child care sites, HBCUs, congregate settings, and underserved populations. Through an agreement with HHS and the Department of Defense (DOD), Eurofins Clinical Enterprise is able to offer no-cost COVID-19 testing to states throughout the northeast and south regions as well as to D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. To register your site or school please visit the [Operation Expanded Testing website](#).

### **REMINDER: TIKES Mental Health Consultation**

Tulane offers TIKES Mental Health Consultation via telephone or secure video platform to Louisiana caregivers in need of support during the COVID-19 crisis. Type I, II, and III child care centers, family and in-home child care providers, parents, respite caregivers, and others caring for young children can request a consultation by completing a [request form](#).

For more information visit the [TIKES](#) webpage.

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## UPDATES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**UPDATED: 2021-2022 GOLD® Update**

Teaching Strategies GOLD® is used to measure a child's growth and development. Teachers must finalize winter GOLD® checkpoint ratings by February 28.

[GOLD® Winter Checkpoint Support Webinar](#): This support webinar will cover the features and functionalities teachers use to complete the GOLD® winter checkpoint in MyTeachingStrategies®.

- Friday, February 11, 2022 at 1 p.m.

Archived webinars are available on-demand:

- [GOLD® Winter Checkpoint Support for Teachers](#)
- [GOLD® Winter Checkpoint Support for Administrators](#)

Please read the Department's updated [TS GOLD® Guidance](#) and [TS GOLD® FAQ](#) documents for helpful information. Questions or concerns can be directed to [ECAssessment@la.gov](mailto:ECAssessment@la.gov).

### **REMINDER: Save the Date - Teacher Leader Summit**

The [2022 Teacher Leader Summit](#) will be held Tuesday, May 31 - Thursday, June 2 at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. The Department is celebrating both "Making a Comeback" and our 10th year for this event. [Early Bird registration](#) is now open until March 2.

Contact [LDOEvents@la.gov](mailto:LDOEvents@la.gov) with any questions.

### **REMINDER: Bulletin 140 Waiver**

On December 15, 2021, BESE approved a one-time waiver to Bulletin 140 required CLASS® observations for all publicly-funded early childhood classrooms. Classrooms that scored "Proficient" or higher during their Fall 2021 observation, after third-party replacement, will be exempt from receiving a second observation from the community network lead agency in Spring 2022. Third-party observations are unaffected by this policy change. For questions regarding CLASS® observation scheduling, please contact your [community network lead agency](#).

### **NEW: Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Applications**

The certification office only accepts online application submissions effective May 1, 2019. Paper applications and handwritten applications for the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) will not be processed. Please use [Teach LA Live!](#) to submit any applications or questions to the certification team. The [User Guide for Educators](#) is available on the main page of TeachLALive! for more instruction. To contact certification, please submit your request at <https://ldoe.force.com/s/ask-certification>.

### **NEW: 2022 Star Ratings Released**

Sites may view their updated star ratings for 2022 at [Louisiana School and Center Finder](#). Sites should utilize their [2021 star ratings](#) to file 2021 taxes.

Questions about star ratings can be sent to [demita.walker@la.gov](mailto:demita.walker@la.gov).

### **NEW: Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year (TOY/LOY) Application Period Extended to March 11**

The deadline to [apply](#) for the inaugural Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year (TOY/LOY) Awards has been extended to March 11 at 5 p.m. Any early childhood education teacher or leader who serves children enrolled in a Type III child care center, an Early Head Start or Head Start center, or a family child care site participating in the LDOE Family Child Care (FCC) pilot can apply.

There is no formal nomination process, but the Department encourages site leaders, community network lead agencies, and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies to reach out to excellent candidates and strongly encourage them to apply. The Department also asks that community partners support teachers and leaders in completing the application process.

All supporting information for the application can be found on the Louisiana Believes Awards Page under the “Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year” section. Any teachers or leaders who need technical assistance with the application can reach out to [devon.camarota@la.gov](mailto:devon.camarota@la.gov).

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## UPDATES FOR FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

### **REMINDER: LA 4 and NSECD Quality Grant Payments**

LA 4 and NSECD Quality Grant award letters were issued in January 2022. Payments were dispersed to NSECD Providers and LEAs via direct deposit on February 4. LEAs in receipt of Quality Grant funds will disperse the payments to LA 4 Providers.

Please contact [kishia.grayson@la.gov](mailto:kishia.grayson@la.gov) with questions.

### **REMINDER: CCAP Family Redetermination Extensions**

To ensure families continue to receive CCAP services, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, redetermination cases have been extended for a three-month period:

- January cases have been extended to April 30, 2022
- February cases have been extended to May 31, 2022
- March cases have been extended to June 30, 2022

For additional assistance, please contact the Provider Help Desk at (225) 250-7635 or (225) 252-9543 or via the [Provider Ticket System](#).

**REMINDER:** The deadline to submit CCAP Pandemic Protective Services Crisis applications for healthcare workers working in an acute facility with COVID patients was January 31.

### **NEW: America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Stabilization Grant - Round 2**

The Department will release the ARPA Stabilization Grant Round 2 on March 24, 2022. Applications will be accepted through April 7, 2022. The formula may be tweaked based on previous distribution of funds and in an effort to promote underserved populations. The base amount will not be any less than the first round of the grant. Payments will be released on a rolling basis beginning May 2022. Please note that for all grants, providers must keep receipts and documentation of expenditures for items or services purchased from these funds. Also, providers must complete audit documentation upon request even if the provider has closed.

The Department issued this [letter](#) in response to questions about the timeframe of use of the ARPA Stabilization Grants. Included in the letter is the list of allowable uses with additional details. Also, please be reminded that ARPA Stabilization Grant funds may not be used for construction or major renovations including land purchases.

### **REMINDER: Federal and State Taxes on LaCAP Grants and ARPA Stabilization Grants**

Grants provided through the stimulus funds (CARES, CRRSA, and ARPA) are subject to the same tax rules as regular CCDF funding. State tax rules apply. Regarding federal rules, please contact the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for guidance. In some cases, funds used to cover operating expenses may be exempt from taxation.

**NEW: CCAP Provider Payments Based on Enrollment**

CCAP will continue making payments based on enrollment indefinitely. Co-pays are waived temporarily, and the Department is reimbursing at the maximum state rate per age group. However, parents are financially responsible for any difference between a provider's weekly charge and CCAP's weekly payment. A provider can use ARPA money to cover that difference for these families.

While CCAP has extended payments based on enrollment, providers **are still required** to use either the Tracking of Time Services (TOTS) Point of Service (POS) device or Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone system to track attendance. Authorizations must be utilized by families at the time child care services are rendered.

**NEW: Increase in CCAP Reimbursement Rates**

On January 18, 2022, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved a significant increase in provider rates. [New CCAP rates](#) will be reflected in the payment issued the week of February 14th. The payment will reflect the state's maximum daily rate per age group at which the Department will reimburse providers.

For additional assistance, please contact the Provider Help Desk at (225) 250-7635 or (225) 252-9543 or via the [Provider Ticket System](#).

**NEW: State Median Income 2022 Sliding Fee Scale**

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) also approved an increase in CCAP eligibility. The [Sliding Fee Scale](#) reflects income guidelines for CCAP-eligible families per household size. Graduated Phase Out (GPO) has been discontinued, and eligible households whose income exceeds 65% but is less than 85% of the State Median Income for an initial application are now eligible for CCAP.

For additional assistance, please contact the Provider Help Desk at (225) 250-7635 or (225) 252-9543, or submit a [ticket](#) in the Provider Ticket System.

**REMINDER: Annual CCAP Provider Forum Update**

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Provider Forum will be conducted February 22, virtually via Zoom. A Forum invitation including time and Zoom access information will be emailed to providers in early February. Updates will be provided regarding CCAP regulations, Provider Payments, the new EdLink Provider Portal, a new attendance tracking system, and general support for providers.

**SAVE THE DATE: 2022 Powering Up Early Childhood Conference**

The Department will host an Early Childhood Conference, July 22 - 24, at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans. Early childhood center staff, teachers, family child care and in-home providers, parents and families are invited to attend. Session topics will support the roles of all attendees. Additional details will be shared with the early childhood community soon.

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

### **NEW: EdLink Entities Portal Updates**

The Department is hosting two webinars for early childhood providers to provide important updates related to Louisiana's new EdLink data system. Providers can access the provider webinar using the information below:

#### **Type I, II, and III Licensed Centers**

**Webinar Date and Time:** February 17 at 11 a.m.

**Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93597745872>

**Phone Number:** 1-312-626-6799

**Meeting ID:** 935 9774 5872

**Passcode:** 641464

#### **Family Child Care and In-Home Providers**

**Webinar Date and Time:** February 23 at 6 p.m.

**Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93597745872>

**Phone Number:** 1-312-626-6799

**Meeting ID:** 935 9774 5872

**Passcode:** 641464

Please email [earlychildhood@la.gov](mailto:earlychildhood@la.gov) with questions.

### **REMINDER: Annual Required Inspections by the Office of State Fire Marshal, Louisiana Department of Health, and City Fire of New Orleans**

Bulletin 137, Section 713, Renewal and Other Inspection Procedures, requires providers to obtain current approvals from the Louisiana Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM), Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), and City Fire of New Orleans, if applicable, before the expiration of an existing license and the issuance of a renewed license. Each provider must timely request and receive their annual inspections from the OSFM, LDH, and City Fire of New Orleans, if applicable.

Licenses will not be renewed if you have not received a current inspection and approval from those agencies and submitted documentation of their approvals to the Division of Licensing.

To address licensed child care renewal inspections required, please contact the following agencies:

- Louisiana OSFM by telephone at (504) 568-8506 for New Orleans/Shreveport/Monroe regions and (225) 925-4911 for the Baton Rouge/Alexandria/Lafayette/Lake Charles regions or via [region contacts](#)
- LDH may be contacted by emailing Melissa Drescher ([Melissa.Drescher@la.gov](mailto:Melissa.Drescher@la.gov)) or by telephone at (225) 342-8954
- New Orleans Fire Prevention Division by telephone at (504) 658-4700--please ensure you have paid the fee and completed the required OPEN SAFELY application on the Office of State Fire Marshal website at <http://www.lasfm.org>.

### **NEW: Critical Incidents and Required Notifications**

The Department continues to note a significant number of deficiencies cited for failing to make critical incident notifications.

Providers must make immediate notification to parents, emergency personnel, law enforcement as applicable, and other appropriate agencies within 24 hours for the following types of critical incidents involving children in care:

1. death;
2. serious injury or illness that required medical attention;
3. a child left unsupervised for any amount of time;
4. use of prohibited behavior management as described in Section 1509.A.8.b.;
5. allegations or suspicion of child abuse or neglect by center staff;
6. an accident involving the transportation of children; or
7. any other significant event relating to the health, safety, or well-being of any child, including but not limited to a lost child, an emergency situation, fire or other structural damage, or closure of the center.

If you have any questions, please contact your licensing consultant at (225) 342-9905.

**REMINDER: CPR/Pediatric First Aid (PFA) Vendors**

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) Division of Licensing is assisting licensed child care centers, family child care, and in-home providers with obtaining Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Pediatric First Aid (PFA) certification for early childhood staff. LDOE-approved CPR/PFA vendors will be authorized to be paid a rate up to \$65 per licensed child care staff member or registered and certified in-home provider. If a CPR/PFA vendor has not been approved by the LDOE and added to the LDOE Division of Licensing's roster, the CPR/PFA vendor will be unable to receive payment. Please note: under no circumstance can a vendor, who is a director or owner of a center, be paid for training the staff employed at their center.

Instructions to become eligible as a LDOE CPR/PFA vendor:

- Verify you are a registered vendor with the State of Louisiana and have a LaGov vendor number (<https://wwwcfprd.doe.louisiana.gov/OSP/LaPAC/vendor/srchven2.cfm>)
- If not registered as a vendor, register prior to entering the LaGov PO (Link to instructions: <https://www.doe.la.gov/media/gewlb4nk/lagov-vendorregistration.pdf>)
- Submit an Initial Proposal (quote) to the Louisiana Department of Education, Division of Licensing at [ldelicensing@la.gov](mailto:ldelicensing@la.gov)
- The quote should include at a minimum the vendor number, a description of the training, the names of participants, and total dollar amount for training.
- Once the official quote is approved, a detailed statement will be required for each payment. The detailed statement should include:
  - Vendor Number
  - Description of the training
  - Names of the participants (Center Name, Address, Director's Name, and Phone Number)
  - Invoice Number
  - Quantity for the training (number of individuals to whom this vendor will be providing services. Up to 300 center staff can be trained at a rate of up to \$65 per staff).
  - Total dollar amount
  - Accepted method of payment (P-card payment-credit card or check)
- Ensure you are able to provide a live demonstration and receive a live demonstration from the early childhood center staff
- Certification documentation will need to be submitted

If the trainer is having trouble obtaining a vendor number, please contact the Vendor Help Desk at (225) 342-8010.

If you have additional questions, please contact Licensing at (225) 342-9905 or [ldelicensing@la.gov](mailto:ldelicensing@la.gov).

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## UPDATES FOR DIRECTORS

### **NEW: School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTCs)**

For tax filing assistance, teachers and families can call 211 to make an appointment with a VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program for your area. VITA programs offer free tax preparation for qualifying individuals. Louisiana Pathways mailed tax form R-10615 “For Child Care Director and Staff Member” in January 2022 to eligible child care staff and administrators. To view 2021 tax credit amounts, visit [Louisiana Pathways](#).

Directors should also share information about the [family tax credit](#). This [one-pager](#) contains information for families regarding eligibility, amounts, and assistance with tax preparation.

Please contact [demita.walker@la.gov](mailto:demita.walker@la.gov) for School Readiness Tax Credit (SRTC) questions.

### **REMINDER: Child Care Management Software Initiative (CCMSi)**

The Child Care Management Software (CCMS) Initiative has now launched! If Type III and CCAP-certified family child care providers purchase a new subscription to an approved CCMS identified in the LDOE [CCMS Guidebook](#), they are eligible for a reimbursement of up to 80% (for a maximum reimbursement of \$1,000). CCMS purchases are made directly from the provider to the vendor, and reimbursements are processed through the local [CCR&R](#). This funding is only available for **NEW** CCMS annual subscriptions.

To support this launch and future initiatives, the Department asks that providers of all license types (I, II, III and FCCs) fill out this [short survey](#) regarding CCMS so we can better understand CCMS usage throughout the state.

For more information about the CCMSi, contact [shallan.jones@la.gov](mailto:shallan.jones@la.gov).

### **UPDATED: Tax Consultation**

Child care providers have experienced changing finances that directly impact their taxes. Consequently, the Department has contracted with tax professionals to provide support services to licensed early learning providers. These early childhood-trained tax professionals will provide up to two hours of tax consultation, for free, to early learning providers of all license types (I, II, III and FCCs).

Consultation can help you:

- Understand how loans and grants have impacted or can impact your taxes
- Use or better understand payroll systems and bookkeeping software such as QuickBooks
- Proactively prepare for the upcoming tax season
- Handle or develop a plan to handle any tax concerns or questions you might have

All information shared within these sessions is confidential and is not shared with the Department. Interested providers can complete this [interest form](#) to schedule their consultation. In addition, Luminary

Evaluation Group created this [Confidence in Quality Tax Prep Rubric®](#) for Child Care Providers so that a provider or partner can evaluate whether their federal tax returns are consistent with best practices for their program type. Please bring this document to your tax preparer for more information and guidance.

For more information contact [Shallan.Jones@la.gov](mailto:Shallan.Jones@la.gov).

**REMINDER: Early Learning Center Business Training**

The Department is offering business trainings through First Children's Finance through March 2022 for all licensed child care types and CCAP-certified family child care providers. Additionally, business consultation hours are available through June 2022.

These business training and consultation offerings are intended to help grow providers' businesses, help providers stay on top of finances, increase providers' earning potential, and so much more. The one-on-one consultation hours offer providers a unique and valuable opportunity to ask even more in-depth questions about their individual business. All information shared within these sessions is confidential and is not shared with the LDOE.

Based on names collected from surveys (which is the only data collected), participants have reported 100% overall satisfaction in the content knowledge received and have noted that "without a doubt this knowledge has helped" them to be "better leaders" of their programs and "better business operators."

[Registration](#) is now open for these Louisiana Pathways-approved training opportunities.

For more information on these business trainings, contact [shallan.jones@la.gov](mailto:shallan.jones@la.gov).

**REMINDER: Monthly Office Hours for New Directors**

Every month, the LDOE team will hold 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 will be an overview of Type III requirements.

**Webinar Date/Time:** February 25 at 12 p.m.

**Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/99075363953>

**Webinar Phone Number:** 1-346-248-7799

**Passcode:** 126700

**Meeting ID:** 99075363953

Please contact [tella.henderson@la.gov](mailto:tella.henderson@la.gov) with any questions.

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## UPDATES FOR LEAD AGENCIES

**REMINDER: Weekly Webinar for Lead Agencies**

The Early Childhood Team holds Office Hours every Tuesday at 3 p.m. for lead agency contacts. The purpose of the webinars is to provide updates and answer questions for lead agencies.

The upcoming schedule for Weekly Webinar for Lead Agencies can be found below:

- February 15 - General updates

- February 22 - General updates
- March 1- General updates
- March 8 - General updates
- March 15 - General updates

Please email [amanda.colon@la.gov](mailto:amanda.colon@la.gov) with questions.

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## OTHER

### **NEW: ECCE Commission - Upcoming Meeting, February 17**

The next meeting for the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Commission will take place on Thursday, February 17, at 10 a.m. in the Claiborne Building, located at 1201 N. Third Street in Baton Rouge. An overview of the ECCE Commission and meeting materials are available [online](#).

For additional information, please email [leslie.doyle@la.gov](mailto:leslie.doyle@la.gov).

### **NEW: ELDS Review Committee - Upcoming Meeting, February 22**

The next meeting for the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) Review Committee will take place on Tuesday, February 22, at 2 p.m. This meeting will be conducted virtually through [Zoom](#) in accordance with R.S. 42:17.1. Meeting materials can be found in the [Standards Review Library](#) under “Early Learning and Development Standards Review Process.”

For additional information, please email [leslie.doyle@la.gov](mailto:leslie.doyle@la.gov).

### **NEW: ECCE Advisory Council - Upcoming Meeting, February 23**

The next meeting for the Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council will take place on Wednesday, February 23, at 1 p.m. in the Claiborne Building, located at 1201 N. Third Street in Baton Rouge. An overview of the ECCE Advisory Council and meeting materials are available [online](#). For additional information, please email [leslie.doyle@la.gov](mailto:leslie.doyle@la.gov).

### **NEW: Open Meeting Accommodations**

NOTICE: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance at any of the early childhood open meetings, please contact [leslie.doyle@la.gov](mailto:leslie.doyle@la.gov) at least three business days in advance of the meeting describing the assistance that is needed.

### **REMINDER: CLASS<sup>®</sup> Observers Needed**

The Cecil J. Picard Center for Child Development & Lifelong Learning is looking for interested CLASS<sup>®</sup> observers in the Orleans and Jefferson regions. Please view and share their [posting for CLASS observers](#).

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## IN THE NEWS

[After months of turmoil, child care aid to rise and eligibility expand](#) (The Advocate)

[A Snapshot of How Louisiana Working Families Rely on Child Care](#) (Louisiana Policy Institute for Children)

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## CONTACT US



- For questions regarding COVID-19, school closures, or other concerns, please contact [LDOECOVID19@la.gov](mailto:LDOECOVID19@la.gov).
- For questions regarding licensing or child health and safety, please contact [LDFlicensing@la.gov](mailto:LDFlicensing@la.gov).
- For questions regarding lead agencies, please contact [leadagency-support@la.gov](mailto:leadagency-support@la.gov).
- For all questions regarding child care criminal background check processing, please contact [LDEcccpcbprocessing@la.gov](mailto:LDEcccpcbprocessing@la.gov).
- For all other questions regarding early childhood, please contact [earlychildhood@la.gov](mailto:earlychildhood@la.gov).

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