

Early Childhood Education Teacher and Leader of the Year Application Guidance 2023-2024 Application Year

[The Teacher and Leader of the Year Application](#)

(same application link for both awards)

The Louisiana Department of Education recognizes that great teachers and leaders are critical to the success of children. Annually, the Department honors the state's most exceptional educators and leaders through the Teacher and Leader of the Year programs. These programs provide an opportunity to acknowledge those educators and leaders who are achieving excellence in their profession by fostering a nurturing environment in their classroom and program, where children are learning and developing in a way that prepares them for kindergarten and beyond and where staff are supported and provided with growth opportunities.

An exemplary candidate for Teacher of the Year is one who:

- **Demonstrates excellence in the field, guiding children of all backgrounds and abilities to meet developmental milestones necessary for Kindergarten readiness.**
 - a. *An Early Childhood Teacher of the Year serves economically disadvantaged children, children who are in publicly funded programs, children who have disabilities, and/or children who are experiencing homelessness (Teaches in a CCAP-certified Type III Center or Head Start, Early Head Start Center, or Family Child Care (FCC)).*

- **Demonstrates leadership and innovation inside and outside of the early learning site in ways to help children learn and meet developmental milestones necessary for Kindergarten readiness.**
 - b. *An Early Childhood Teacher of the Year participates in professional development opportunities, has achieved or is working toward an Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate, and seeks opportunities to help transition children to future education levels (e.g., from infant to toddler or from pre-K to kindergarten).*
 - c. *An Early Childhood Teacher of the Year engages in opportunities for development, such as grants like LaCAP, leadership development like LELA, and engagement with CCR&Rs for professional development.*
 - d. *An Early Childhood Teacher of the Year engages families in many ways, such as engagement events, regular feedback, and parent education.*

An exemplary candidate for Leader of the Year is one who:

- **Collaborates with colleagues, children, families, and the early childhood community to foster children's success, as well as to create a site culture of growth, development and positivity.**

- e. *An Early Childhood Leader of the Year Directs a program which serves economically disadvantaged children, children who are in publicly funded programs, children who have disabilities, and/or children who are experiencing homelessness (Directs a CCAP-certified Type III Center or Head Start, Early Head Start Center, or Family Child Care (FCC). An Early Childhood Leader of the Year’s staff earn exemplary CLASS[®] scores, especially in positive interactions with children; have classrooms where children are consistently joyful and growing; and have strong professional relationships among the community.*
 - f. *An Early Childhood Leader of the Year hires and leads staff of diverse backgrounds, with strong community connections, who are highly qualified to educate and care for children.*
 - g. *An Early Childhood Leader of the Year engages families in many ways, such as engagement events, regular feedback, and parent education.*
- **May be involved in or may lead work, in or beyond the site walls, that is relevant and impactful based on the current educational landscape in Louisiana and nationwide.**
 - h. *An Early Childhood Leader of the Year seeks opportunities to be a leader in the community and field through engagement with the lead agency and other stakeholders.*
 - i. *An Early Childhood Leader of the Year participates in leadership development programs.*
 - j. *An Early Childhood Leader of the Year has relationships with community stakeholders for the benefit of the children in care at their site.*
 - **Is inspiring, compelling, and professional and has the ability to connect with stakeholders and represent the state as a model for Early Childhood Education.**
 - k. *An Early Childhood Leader of the Year is a person with a compelling commitment to the work, who is able to clearly articulate their “why” for supporting our youngest children and their belief in the value of Early Childhood Education for our state and our country.*

Applicant’s Personal Information	
This information is collected so that the LDOE staff reviewing applications can contact applicants as needed, verify their place of employment, and get to know the applicant a little bit better.	
Headshot: Required	<p>All applicants will be asked to submit a “headshot” which will be used in public-facing outreach if the applicant is moved on to any of the finalist rounds. This headshot will be used in posters at Teacher Leader Summit, social media posts, displayed on the LDOE website, and more!</p> <p>Type of Camera to Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● professional-grade digital camera (preferred) ● iPhone 6 or higher <p>Photo Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Headshot photos:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take vertically from the waist up ○ Select a solid background (such as a wall) ○ Select business professional/professional attire ○ See sample headshot photo ○ All photos: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Photo must be the original, untouched version. DO NOT crop, apply a filter or alter the original photo in any way as this will degrade its quality. ■ Photos must be at least 2MB in file size (information can be found under “Properties” if you right click on a photo file). <p>Prior to Taking Photo:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If using a digital camera, set it to the highest resolution possible. An iPhone will automatically be set to the highest resolution ● Clean camera lens <p>While Taking Photo:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Avoid digital zoom. This feature only makes the picture larger digitally, it does not actually zoom into the subject, thus it can cause distortion of the image. The Department will crop the photo to fix the poster requirements. ● If using a phone, only use the rear facing camera. ● Try to take photos in natural light, outside is preferred or near a large window. ● Use autofocus to ensure a clear image. <p>After Taking the Photo:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When sending a photo from a mobile device to your computer, please select “actual size” on sending options. ● Save the photo as a jpeg file. Label photo “First Name Last Name Headshot” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ex: “Shallan Jones Head Shot”
<p>Personal Information</p>	<p>Along with typical personal information, the LDOE asks that you share your place of employment, center type, and the name and contact of your nominator. Please ensure that all information is correct before submitting your application.</p> <p>Additionally, you will be asked to share a quote that embodies your philosophy or vision as an educator. This quote may be used in social media blasts if you are moved on to finalist round(s).</p> <p>Lastly, you will be asked to share a brief statement on what you think</p>

is your most pressing mission as an educator. Think of this as your “platform” if you were to be selected for the award. This would be the main topic of your speeches, activities, and mission as the 2022-2023 Early Childhood Leader of the Year.

Examples of this “mission” could be:

- *Building connections between families and educators*
- *Expanding access and awareness for children with special needs*
- *Creating leadership opportunities for educators within your site to build longevity in the field*

Think about what matters **most** to you as an educator, what you are most passionate about. You will have time to refine that idea throughout the months of the application process, but this will inform the LDOE reviewers on your general ideas.

Professional History

This section of the application will share with the LDOE your professional background, education and credentials, and years in the early childhood education field.

You will also be asked to provide a brief description of what makes you an excellent early childhood leader. Share your accomplishments, your wins, and obstacles you may have overcome to get where you are today. Please also proof-read before submitting so that the LDOE reviewers can clearly understand your story.

It is recommended that you type this in a Microsoft Word document **first** so that you can easily read, edit, and re-read your writing. Then, copy and paste your words into the actual application.

Essay Responses

You will be asked to respond to three out of four options so that the LDOE reviewers can understand who you are as an educator and leader. It is recommended that you type this in a Microsoft Word document **first** so that you can easily read, edit, and re-read your writing. Then, copy and paste your words into the actual application.

You must answer at least three of the essay questions to be considered for the award. If you would like to answer all four questions, you may.

Essay Response Checklist	
Length	There is no length minimum or maximum for these essay questions. However, you are encouraged to ensure that you have fully answered all

	parts of the question prior to submitting.
Grammar	Simple grammar mistakes will not detract from an applicant’s ability to move forward into the finalist rounds, however it is always best to ensure your writing is error-free. This allows the LDOE review team to fully understand your writing, your story, and your meaning.
Clarity	Rereading your work is critical in making sure that your audience can fully understand what you mean. Sometimes something makes sense in <i>your</i> mind, but when you read it back, you find there were some ideas that didn’t quite make it from your brain to the page. Ensuring your writing is clear will give you the best chance to ensure your message is fully understood by all readers.
Content	This is the LDOE review team’s first chance to get to know you as an educator and leader. You have the opportunity to share your experiences, and do not hesitate to dive deeply into a story or anecdote that provides evidence that supports your response. As mentioned previously, there is no length requirement, however the LDOE encourages you to give a robust response.

Application Uploads and Supplemental Information	
<i>All application documents should be prepared prior to starting the online application.</i>	
<p>Video: Required All Leader of the Year (LOY) Applicants must submit a video by uploading the video to Youtube first, then sharing the URL link to the video.</p>	<p>All Leader of the Year (LOY) must submit a ten minute (maximum) video of leading professional development, conducting a staff meeting, or teaching a lesson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Professional development session examples are anything where the Leader guides teachers in a specific teaching skill or domain that directly impacts child development and learning goals</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Ex: Practicing strategies to improve Positive Climate in classroom</i> ● <i>Staff meeting examples are anything where the Leader guides teachers and staff in operational or logistical changes that impact the function of the center</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Ex: Reviewing staff roles and duties at pick-up and drop off and practicing routines for smooth and safe transition of children from classroom to parent</i> ● <i>Technical assistance for this can be offered through CCR&R, lead agency, or the LDOE. Contact shallan.jones@la.gov if you need assistance.</i> <p>Video Tips:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Videos can be taken on <i>any</i> kind of camera, whether it's a computer camera, phone camera, or video recorder. ● Videos should be a maximum of ten minutes in length, and can be shorter ● Videos should be easy to see and hear the leader ● Having a colleague, friend, or coach video is recommended. Cameras can also be propped in a static space in the room, as long as the leader can be seen or heard ● Videos should be uploaded to Youtube first, and you can do this by making a free account ● When the video is uploaded, copy and paste the URL into the designated space on the application ● It is recommended that you watch your video prior to submitting, to make sure that you are presenting exactly what you'd like the LDOE to see, that your voice is clearly heard, and there are no other technical issues. <p><i>There are multiple spaces to enter a Youtube link. Only one is required, however there are three spaces in case you choose to upload additional videos to supplement your application.</i></p>
<p>Submission Materials All LOY Applicants must submit <i>at least one of these options.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> An updated resume <input type="checkbox"/> A teacher's lesson plan with the Leader's feedback <input type="checkbox"/> The scores from at least three teachers, employed by the Leader's center, from a recent coaching/CLASS[®] observation and session (from 2021-2022 or 2022-2023 school year) <input type="checkbox"/> Plan and materials for a professional development session led by the Leader (<i>guidance in appendix</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Plan and materials from a staff meeting led by the Leader (<i>guidance in appendix</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Up to three letters of recommendation from colleagues, families, or children
<p>Optional Submission Materials All LOY Applicants can submit these additional materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Additional teaching video of a different day/lesson/skill from any teacher in the center, with Leader's support in the room <input type="checkbox"/> Video tour of center, professional development session, or staff meeting (<i>guidance in appendix</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Video interviews of at least one child or family (<i>questions in appendix</i>)

	<input type="checkbox"/> Family letter of recommendation (<i>letter should answer interview questions in appendix</i>)
Teaching Data All LOY Applicants will be evaluated on the materials listed here.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Up to 3 years of CLASS[®] scores for the site, as available (the LDOE will gather this data on behalf of the applicant) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>If the Leader has been at the site for less than 3 years, that will be taken into consideration</i> ● Interrater reliability in Teaching Strategies Gold[®] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>If applicable, submit a copy of your certificate.</i>

Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Application Appendix

The tools in this appendix are for guidance and support only. Unless the appendix specifically states “must have,” the applicant can modify their submission in any way of their choosing, so long as the information given is clear and legible to the reviewing team. If you have any questions about your submission materials, please contact shallan.jones@la.gov.

Appendix A: Center Video Must Haves - Leading professional development (PD), a staff meeting, or teaching in a classroom. Accompany video submission with LDOE-created consent forms signed by all [families of children](#) or [staff members](#) in the video.

- Record up to 10 continuous minutes of instruction, leading PD, or a meeting
- Clearly state at the beginning of the video, or in the submission description, the type of leadership being demonstrated (PD, staff meeting, or teaching), the topic of the meeting/PD or the lesson objective, and a description of the people in the room (i.e., teachers, community members, family members, toddlers, and how many)
- Demonstrate leadership and instructional skills reflective of what you provide to your staff or children for their growth and development
- Ensure that audio of teacher and children is clearly heard throughout the video

Videos should be an authentic capture of your normal classroom day, professional development session, or staff meeting. Please do not feel compelled to create a “perfect” video. The LDOE wants to see how your children or staff experience your leadership every day.

Appendix B: Family and Child Interview Guidance

- Accompany video submission with LDOE-created consent forms signed by all families/children in the video
- Interviewees should be sitting still in one place
- Video length should not exceed 10 minutes
- Questions for children can include:
 - How do you feel about [Leader name]?

- How do you feel about school?
- What does [Leader name] help you with?
- What does [Leader name] teach you?
- How does [Leader name] make you feel?
- Questions for family members can and should include:
 - What growth or development have you seen from your child since being in [Leader]'s site?
 - What makes [Leader name] an excellent leader or teacher?
 - Would you recommend other parents to place their children in [Leader]'s site? Why?
 - How does your child feel about school?
 - How does your child feel about [Leader name]?
 - What would you like to say to [Leader name] about their impact on your child(ren)?
 - How has [Leader name] helped your child(ren)?

Appendix C: Resumé Guidance

Leader Resumés should Include:

- Education history
 - High school or GED program or degrees, ECAC program or certificates, higher education program or degrees (Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, etc.), dates of attendance or completion, or estimated date of completion
 - Grade point average, special honors or recognition, class rank, or additional certificates as applicable
 - Location or institution where program was completed
- Work History
 - All current or recent employers
 - Title of job at each employer
 - Contact number for each employer
 - Brief description of responsibilities at each employer
 - Start and end date of employment at each employer (if still employed, indicate "[start date] - present")
- Other Skills
 - List of other skills, talents, extra curricular activities, or experiences
 - *Anything that the Leader does outside of the classroom; recreational sports teams, musical instrument skills, participation in local community events, volunteer work, hobbies, etc.*

Appendix D: Resume Template

This template is optional for applicants. If you have an already established resume with a different format, do not feel obligated to remake in this format. This is a guidance tool for those who may need additional assistance.

Directions: Delete and replace all *italicized* entries for those that apply to the teacher candidate for Teacher of the Year.

Name

Address

Phone Number

Email

Education History

Institution or Program	Dates Attended	Degree, Scores, Special Honors
<i>Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge</i>	<i>August 2016 - June 2018</i>	<i>Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education, 3.6 GPA, Dean's List</i>
<i>Baton Rouge Magnet High School</i>	<i>August 2012-June 2016</i>	<i>High School Diploma, 4.0 GPA, National Honors Society</i>

Work History

Employer	Job Title and Responsibilities	Dates Employed
<i>Magical Unicorn Child Care Center, Baton Rouge, 225-555-0111</i>	<i>Infant Classroom Teacher</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide care to a classroom of 4 infants, such as feed, change diapers, clean infants and spaces as needed</i> • <i>Provide education such as talking to infants, introducing infants to new words, and building trust with smiles and eye contact</i> 	<i>July 2016-Present</i>

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Special Skills

Skill	Description of experience and relevant dates
Running	<i>I have run three marathons after getting into road running in 2013. I regularly train and compete in races from 5k distance to marathons to stay healthy.</i>
Singing	<i>I sing every Sunday in my house of worship's choir. I have led the Winter pageant, including leading rehearsals and directing the performance, in 2017, 2018, and 2019.</i>

Appendix E: Center Video Tour Guidance

Videos should not exceed ten minutes in length and can and should include:

- Locations where children spend most of their time, such as classrooms, eating spaces, and playground or outdoor spaces
- Teachers interacting with children (ensure you have both the [family](#) and [teacher](#) consent forms for participating in videos)
- Spaces where any specialized education instruction are held, i.e., speech therapy
- Places where teachers complete any preparation for classes
- Children interacting with each other and their spaces
- Spaces where parents interact with teachers and staff
- Any spaces that are unique and special to the center that make it extraordinary
 - Ex: *“And this is my ukulele that I learned to play when I was in high school. I use it to help the children transition from the carpet to the table. Here’s the song I sing...”*

Appendix F: Letter of Recommendation for Past and Present Employers, Co-workers, or Family of Children Served

Using this template is not mandatory. This is a guiding tool for anyone who may need or want additional assistance.

Name of Recommender	Relationship and Place of Professional Relationship	Dates of Professional Relationship
<p>Date of Letter: Letter of Recommendation (should be no more than 1,000 words)</p>		

Signature:

If a staff member or employee is writing a recommendation letter for their employee, please consider answering the following questions:

- *What makes this leader an excellent person to work with/for?*
- *What specific moments can you recall that demonstrate this leader's ability?*
- *How does this leader cultivate a culture of learning, growth, and development for children?*
- *How does this leader develop you as a teacher/staff member, and make you better at your profession?*

Appendix F: Professional Development or Staff Meeting Plan and Materials

The strongest leaders prepare for any and all meetings. They identify the desired outcome of the meeting or professional development session, have all materials for participants thoughtfully prepared ahead of time, and incorporate intentionally-structured strategies for engagement throughout the meeting to get participants to the desired outcome.

Materials to show this work could include:

- Written plans (ex: modeled like a lesson plan)
- Agenda with time stamps for activity(ies)
 - Exs: 5 min review agenda, 10 min “Do now” question, 15 min discussion, etc.
- Activity(ies) description, directions, and goals of each activity
- Directions/Script for Leader to give to participants for activity(ies)
 - Ex: “*In today’s meeting we will... because... First we will...*”
- Listed materials needed/used
 - Ex: “*the session needed chart paper, chart markers, printed copies of the center’s schedule, and class rosters*”
- Intended outcome description and description of why the outcome is needed
 - Ex: “*The goal of this meeting is to... because ...*”
- Exemplar responses from participants
 - Ex: how teachers should greet parents at pick-up, what teachers should say to children during meals, what teachers should say when calling parents to update them on child’s developmental milestones
- Photo examples of work done in meeting or professional development
 - Ex: teachers practicing skills taught, copy of brainstorming documents or notes from participants, chart paper with teacher take-aways

