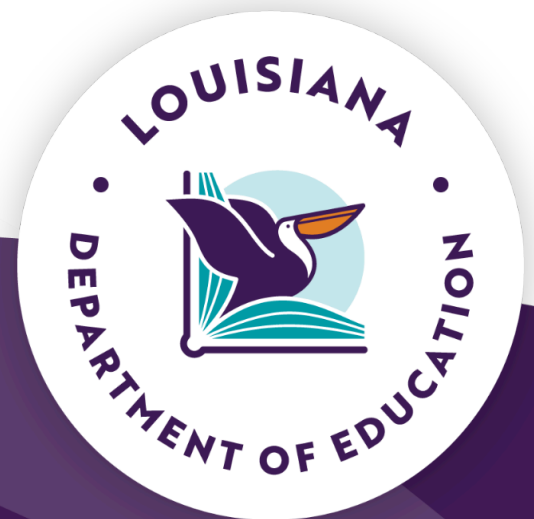


Nonpublic Schools Early Childhood Development (NSECD) Program

**2025–2026 Program Procedures and
Provider Responsibilities**



2025-2026

NSECD Program Procedures and Provider Responsibilities Review Acknowledgment Form

I _____ have received and reviewed the 2025-2026 NSECD
(Print Name)

Program Procedures and Provider Responsibilities. I understand that a copy of this guidebook is to be readily available to each NSECD classroom at all times and used as a reference guide for administration and staff. I also understand that this form is to be signed **and e-mailed** back to the Louisiana Department of Education (the Department) two (2) weeks after the start of school or two (2) weeks after a new staff member's hire date unless otherwise specified by the Department.

Name of Site

Signature of Staff

Date

Signature of Principal/Director

Date

FOR NSECD OFFICE USE ONLY



Please e-mail to:

kishia.grayson@la.gov

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Part 1: Program Definitions

As used hereinafter, the following definitions shall be in effect:

“Age-Appropriate Practice” is a framework for planning and implementing programs serving children from birth through eight that incorporates three types of information or knowledge derived from research: (1) human development and learning, (2) individual characteristics and experiences, and (3) interpersonal skills and sense of community.

“BESE” shall refer to the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

“Bulletin 136” shall refer to [Part CLIX. Bulletin 136—The Louisiana Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education Programs Serving Children Birth-Five Years \(or Louisiana’s Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards\)](#).

“Bulletin 140” shall refer to [Part CLXVII. Bulletin 140—Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network](#).

“Bulletin 741” shall refer to [Part CXV. Bulletin 741—Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators](#).

“Bulletin 741 (Nonpublic)” shall refer to [Part LXXIX. Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\)—Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#).

“Department,” “State,” and **“LDOE”** shall refer to the Louisiana Department of Education.

“Lead Teacher” shall refer to the early childhood care and education classroom teacher who meets minimum NSECD qualifications for a lead teacher, is in charge of the classroom, supervises other adults employed in the classroom, and plans the activities for the children in the classroom.

“NSECD Online Roster” shall refer to the official classroom roster from which attendance and reimbursements are calculated.

“Parent” or “Parent/Guardian” shall refer to the parent, guardian, or legal guardian of a Program Applicant.

“Provider” shall refer to NSECD-participating BESE-approved Nonpublic Schools or Type III Early Learning Centers providing services described herein.

“Provider Agent” shall refer to the administrative designee with the authorization to approve and sign monthly invoices.

“Program Applicant” shall refer to an eligible child whose parent, guardian, or other legal representative has applied to participate in the NSECD Program.

“Program Participant” shall refer to a child enrolled in the NSECD Program.

“Slot” shall refer to a slot reserved for service to one child following all current NSECD Program Provider Responsibilities and to receiving corresponding per child expenditure for that child.

“Teacher” shall refer to the person in each classroom responsible for planning and implementing the activities of the children in the classroom.

“Teacher Assistant” shall refer to the person(s) supervised by the teacher who provide(s) assistance as directed by the teacher.

Part 2: Eligibility and Enrollment Procedures

Section 1: Provider Eligibility Criteria

Prior to formal acceptance into the NSECD Program, all applicants may be subject to a site-qualification visit to observe the site environment and daily operations.

Provider eligibility is as follows:

1. Nonpublic Schools. For a nonpublic school to be eligible to participate as a Provider of the NSECD Program, the nonpublic school shall meet all requirements below:
 - a. Be BESE-approved and in compliance with requirements set forth in Louisiana State Department of Education [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\)](#).
 - b. Be certified by the Louisiana Department of Education as Brumfield-Dodd compliant.
 - c. Agree to all requirements outlined in the Program Partner Assurances.
 - d. Agree to provide high-quality, age-appropriate programs to at-risk, four-year-old children eligible to enter Kindergarten in the following year pursuant to R.S. 17:151.3, which will include an instructional setting that includes learning centers outfitted with appropriate materials and equipment that support whole, small and self-selected groupings and meet all the General Operation Requirements (Part 3, Section 1).
 - e. Agree to all requirements outlined in the Department's Pre-K Program Assurances.
 - f. Have administered pre-K, Kindergarten, and/or 1st grade instruction for a full academic year during the previous academic year and be able to present Louisiana governmental documentation to this effect.
2. Type III Early Learning Centers may be eligible to participate as Providers of the NSECD Program. The applicant must meet the criteria below:
 - a. Be a licensed Type III Early Learning Center that has participated during the previous academic year in the Early Childhood Accountability System.
 - b. Agree to provide high-quality, age-appropriate programs to at-risk, four-year-old children eligible to enter Kindergarten in the following year pursuant to R.S. 17:151.3, which will include an instructional setting that includes learning centers outfitted with appropriate materials and equipment that support whole, small and self-selected groupings and meet all the General Operation Requirements (Part 3, Section 1).
 - c. Have administered pre-K, Kindergarten, and/or 1st grade instruction for a full academic year during the previous academic year and be able to present Louisiana governmental documentation to this effect or can demonstrate the ability to provide a successful classroom environment.

Section 2: Child Eligibility Criteria

1. A child cannot be denied access, participation, or funding on the basis of race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); gender (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title II of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976); or disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) in educational programs.
2. A child shall be considered eligible to participate in the NSECD Program when documentation for the following requirements is provided by the parent/guardian* at the time of eligibility determination:
 - a. **Income: The gross household income of the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) must fall at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.** This is verified at time of eligibility determination by using the Direct Match system or with two (2) recent pay statements, letter from employer, or recent proof of eligibility for means-tested services such as SNAP.
 - i. Note: Grandparents' and other immediate relatives' incomes will be counted toward the 200% income limit, provided there is verification of the following:
 1. The parent(s) and the child reside together in the same household with the relative. *If the relative attests that they do not provide direct financial support, they should not be counted in the family size and their income should not be included.*
 2. A relative or guardian has custody through "Provisional Custody by Mandate" (Appendix C).
 3. Parent(s) are in the military and the relative or guardian has custody through "Military Power of Attorney" (Appendix C).
 - ii. Families in a temporary living arrangement due to loss of housing or economic hardship (homeless) and children in foster care are considered categorically-eligible.
 - b. **Age:**
 - i. **Pre-K 4.** Child must be age-eligible to enter Kindergarten the following year, meaning **the child must turn four years old on or before September 30 of the pre-K 4 year.** A copy of the birth certificate must be verified at the time of enrollment and a photocopy of this document must be kept on file at the site.
 - ii. **Pre-K 3.** Child must be age-eligible to enter pre-K 4 the following year, meaning **the child must turn three years old on or before September 30 of the pre-K 3 year.** A copy of the birth certificate must be verified at the time of enrollment and a photocopy of this document must be kept on file at the site.
 - c. **Residency: The child and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) must be residents of Louisiana.** Residency must be verified at the time of enrollment with a driver's license or a current utility bill with the parent/guardian's name and address.
 - d. **Immunizations: A child must have been administered all age-appropriate immunizations** or a parent/guardian must submit a signed statement against such immunizations pursuant to R.S. 17:170. A photocopy of the LINKS immunization or Statement of Exemption documentation must be secured at the time of registration or entry into pre-K and must be kept on file at the child's attendance site.

*** Providers must maintain documentation of student eligibility on file for audit purposes.**

3. An eligible child shall not be concurrently enrolled in a 6-hour instructional day program during the academic year in any other governmentally-funded education program, including but not limited to LA 4 public school pre-Kindergarten, Head Start, or the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).
4. Once the child's eligibility is determined, it is valid for a period of one year, unless the child is disenrolled following required procedures outlined in the general operation requirements section of this handbook.

Note: Any child enrolled in a provider's pre-K 3 program, with an existing balance (tuition/fees) due to the site, is not allowed to apply to the NSECD Program at that Provider's site until the balance is paid.

Section 3: Child Enrollment Procedures and Documentation

1. Providers shall ensure that the number of slots allocated to their site will be filled or inform the Early Childhood Community Network of the slots the site is relinquishing. If for any reason the number of allocated slots is not filled, these unfilled slots will be transferred back to the NSECD Program for re-allocation, in an effort to serve more eligible children.

Note: The Department may at any time revise the number of slots allocated to each site, taking into account student enrollment numbers, classroom eligibility, availability of funds, and past compliance history of the site.

2. Provider schools must maintain copies of all documentation used to verify student eligibility.

Section 4: Enrollment and Lottery Procedures

Enrollment Procedures

1. During the student enrollment period, as long as the Parent/Guardian is a resident of the State of Louisiana, they are eligible to apply for an NSECD seat in their parish.
2. The Parent/Guardian will need to submit an application through the Network's coordinated enrollment process. The student will be matched to a program and enrolled in only one program to ensure that no one occupies more than one seat.
3. Providers are responsible for maintaining documentation of information used in the determination of student eligibility and for completing intake materials as necessary for NSECD Program research purposes. Once an application has been deemed "Approved," having met all eligibility requirements, the provider must submit to the Department the following documents within **1 week of the student's start date**:
 - The completed and signed Student Information Form
 - All required verification items on file must be clearly checked or and/or marked
 - Highlighted blanks must be filled in
 - Original signature of authorized site personnel must be included
 - Original signature of parent or guardian must be included
 - To be eligible to participate in the NSECD Program, each child's parent/guardian must sign a Parental Choice Certification and Slot Confirmation document. This documentation certifies the following:
 - The parent will ensure that the child attends regularly and acknowledges that if the child does not attend classes regularly enough for the site to be reimbursed for two consecutive months, the child may be removed from the NSECD Program.

- The parent is aware that the Provider must comply with all NSECD Provider Responsibilities to be eligible to receive NSECD Program funds for services delivered to their child.
- The parent acknowledges that they are responsible to provide uniforms, materials or supply fees, field trip costs, before- and after-school enrichment program fees and any other expenses for voluntary student activities outside the 6-hour instructional day as required by the site for their child.
- The parent may choose for any reason to transfer his or her child to another NSECD site (provided space permits).
- The parent will be notified by the site and made fully aware that funds may be discontinued if the site is found to be in noncompliance with any NSECD Program guidelines.
- The parent is giving permission for the school, the Department, and any state-affiliated researchers to collect and use any child's personal identifying information and assessment data during his or her site years to evaluate the efficacy of the program, deliver support services, and for other lawful purposes.

Providers are required to sign and submit a copy of the Student Information Form, which includes the "Parental Choice Certification and Slot Confirmation," to the Department as proof of selection. We will use this document as verification for roster placement for the academic year. Students will not be added to the roster until this document has been received by the Department.

4. Providers are responsible for informing parents/guardians of their child's application status.

Lottery Procedures

1. The NSECD Program will conduct the lottery when it has been determined to be necessary based on enrollment numbers.
2. In the case of twins (or multiple births), all applications will be treated as **one applicant** for the purpose of the lottery draw. When such an applicant is drawn in the lottery process, the Provider will assign the applicant(s) program space(s) without exceeding class maximum size.
3. After Program participants have been selected, the remaining name(s) will be placed on the site's waiting list, in the order that their name(s) appeared on the lottery draw.
4. Vacated program spaces/slots shall be offered to Program applicants in the order in which they appear on the Provider's waiting list. At such time as the waiting list has been exhausted, vacancies will be filled on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

Section 5: Class Roster Procedures (See Appendix A)

1. Once a Program Participant has confirmed their acceptance to the Provider, the Provider is to submit a request to the NSECD Program to add participant(s) to a designated class roster.

NOTE: Participants cannot be added to a roster until the Provider has designated a teacher for the classroom.

2. NSECD Program Administration must approve the submitted request and inform the Provider in a timely fashion.

3. Providers may replace any students who disenroll with students on their waiting list at any time during the course of the academic year.

Section 6: Post Enrollment Requirements

1. The Provider may request but not require that parents of children served through NSECD Program fund or supply classroom materials including but not limited to glue, crayons, markers, tissues, and other typical materials.
2. The Provider may request but not require that parents of children served through the NSECD Program provide uniforms for their children as required by the selected site's uniform policy.
3. Parents of children participating in the NSECD Program may be requested to pay student fees pertaining to field trips which are conducted during the 6-hour day of Program services. Parents who choose to participate on the field trip are also responsible for their own cost(s). Students may not be penalized for lack of participation.
4. The Provider shall not request that parents of children served through NSECD Program funds supply food (breakfast, lunch, or snacks) during the 6-hour daily NSECD Program day.
 - a. Parents who choose to send meals and snacks for their child must first acknowledge that they are aware of the Provider's responsibility to serve nutritious meals and snacks to all children and to provide these meals for free, or at the income-applicable (free, reduced or full price) cost according to eligibility guidelines established for USDA Food and Nutrition Service.
 - b. The Provider may receive funds through the National School Breakfast Program or the National School Lunch Program (including payments for after-school snacks) for free or reduced-price meals and snacks served to children enrolled in the NSECD Program.
5. Parents of children participating in the NSECD Program shall not be required to financially support extracurricular activities or fundraisers. Parents who choose to participate in extracurricular activities, such as purchasing school photographs, T-shirts etc., may be charged fees for these activities. Students may not be penalized for lack of participation in site extracurricular activities or fundraisers.
6. All enrichment classes or services that are made available at the site during the 6-hour NSECD Program must be made available to NSECD-eligible children at no charge, including but not limited to art, gymnastics, and music classes.
7. Participants who have been identified as eligible for special education and/or related services shall not be excluded from participation in the NSECD Program, as specified by federal law. (Note: Nonpublic School Providers may advise the parent of the services that are available at their site and allow the parent to choose whether they would like to continue with placement in that site. If services are required that the site cannot provide, the parent will have to make arrangements to accommodate their child's needs.) The [Developmental Screening Guidebook](#) is a reference guide on how to best support healthy growth and development of children in your care throughout key developmental intervals and identify children who may benefit from specialized support.

Part 3: Provider Responsibilities

Section 1: General Operation Requirements

Curriculum and Assessment

1. To promote Kindergarten readiness and sustain lifelong learning and achievement, Louisiana early childhood classrooms should align their instruction to the Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), which provide a continuum of developmental milestones for each age level with the four-year-old standards serving as “anchor.”
2. The daily schedule shall offer a Tier 1 curriculum that is age-appropriate and aligned to Louisiana’s Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards but also meets the minimum time (330 minutes of instructional time) requirements. The following percentages, while not required, may be used as a guide for creating daily classroom schedules:

Minimum Time Recommendations for Pre-Kindergarten:	
Teacher-directed activities	25% - 35%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole group activities (no longer than 15-20 minutes at a time)• Small group activities• Outdoor planned activities	
Child-initiated activities	35% - 45%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning centers• Outdoor free play	
Snack, restroom	10%
Nap	20%
The recommended rest period is at least one hour or not more than 20% of the day, except to address the specific needs of individual children.	

NOTE: Please follow the time recommendations of a high-quality program.

3. Pursuant to §513 of *Bulletin 140 – Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network*, publicly funded sites must ensure all publicly funded children receive completed assessments using TS GOLD® or another state-approved assessment tool that is age-appropriate, valid and reliable.

Publicly funded sites shall obtain approval from the Department prior to using child assessment tools other than the assessment tool provided by the Department.

General Pre-Kindergarten Staff Requirements

1. The NSECD Provider will serve as the main point of contact for all NSECD Program-related issues, including but not limited to, NSECD enrollment status, site-related questions and/or concerns, daily classroom protocol, and all site-specific program operations.
2. All Provider personnel having contact with children enrolled in the 6-hour daily pre-Kindergarten program shall be employed by the Provider and are not employees of the State of Louisiana.
3. All Provider personnel having contact with children enrolled in the site’s NSECD Program must have had a criminal background check and must comply with all other hiring procedures required by the Provider. Documentation must be on file with the Provider.

4. At no time shall any lead teacher, teacher assistant, or enrichment activity caretaker be pulled from a pre-Kindergarten classroom to assume any other duties at the site, such as monitoring another classroom or assuming morning or afternoon bus duty requiring supervision of children other than pre-K age children.
5. The Provider shall ensure that a substitute lead teacher, a substitute teacher assistant, or a substitute enrichment program caretaker be present and working in the classroom for each day that a lead teacher, a teacher assistant, or an enrichment program caretaker is absent, whether due to illness or personal leave. NOTE: Long-term substitutes (assigned for more than 10 consecutive days) must have appropriate credentials as outlined in this document.
6. NSECD Provider Principals/Administrators/Directors *cannot* serve as the lead teacher or teacher assistant in NSECD classrooms.

Space And Facilities

The NSECD Program shall be housed in an adequate facility that meets all safety standards and regulations required for elementary schools in *Bulletin 741* or for early learning centers in *Bulletin 137*, as applicable.

NOTE: All participating sites shall ensure that individual classroom areas are sufficiently divided by walls and/or space to prevent sound and student migration, so as not to have the effect of infringing upon the NSECD teacher-to-student staffing ratio.

Class Enrollment

1. The Provider shall fully integrate children who are enrolled through NSECD Program funds with three- and/or four-year-old children served through all other funding sources at the site, including tuition payments. The Provider shall not segregate three- and/or four-year-old children by funding source by assigning children to separate classrooms according to the source of funds received for services provided to these children.
2. Providers shall respect family privacy in regard to their child's NSECD Program eligibility and participation. The teachers, teacher assistants, and before- and after-school caretakers are not required to be informed of the funding source for services delivered to individual children in the classroom.

Class Size Limitation

Each provider operating the NSECD program shall include or provide for the following: a student-to-lead teacher ratio of no more than twenty-to-one (20:1) and a student-to-adult staff member ratio of no more than ten-to-one (10:1).

Attendance

1. In order to be counted as present for attendance purposes, a student must be present a minimum of four (4) hours of the six (6)-hour instructional hour period.
2. Excused absences will not be calculated against a child's monthly attendance percentage. If a child has an excusable absence, documented with a written or e-mailed excuse, then those days are not counted as "absent" for reimbursement purposes.
3. The Provider shall comply with all NSECD Program Provider Responsibilities as to reporting classroom attendance. With parents/guardians of any child having chronic absenteeism or chronic

tardiness, an appropriate intervention plan shall be developed in accordance with the Provider's guideline/handbook.

4. If the Provider does not have an established protocol, then the Provider will utilize the NSECD guideline as follows:
 - a. Contact must be made with the parents (via text, telephone, letter, or by conference) to review the obligation agreed to in the "Parental Choice Certification and Slot Confirmation" document.
 - b. If the tardiness or chronic absenteeism persists, a meeting with the parent/guardian, pre-Kindergarten teacher, and the Provider principal or director shall determine whether extenuating circumstances or other problems resulted in the irregular attendance.
 - c. The Provider may contact the Department to request assistance in developing and implementing an appropriate intervention plan to resolve the attendance problem and assure the child receives the needed services required to allow the student to continue.
 - d. Providers may complete a "Student Disenrollment Form" for any student who has not maintained the NSECD Program's 74% attendance requirement for two (2) consecutive months. The removal of a child who has failed to meet attendance requirements is at the discretion of the site and is not required.

NOTE: Parents are NOT responsible for payments for child care on days when school is dismissed early. These days will still be counted on the attendance roster as a full day of operation submitted to the NSECD Program.

During holiday breaks (e.g., Thanksgiving, Christmas, Mardi Gras, and Easter), parents who wish to send their children to the child care that the site provides are responsible for payments. The site will not be reimbursed for NSECD students who attend the child care center while the NSECD program is closed.

Length Of School Day and Academic Year

1. The Provider shall operate full-day early education and enrichment activities programs for all children attending the site. Programs must be in accordance with *Bulletin 741 for Nonpublic Schools* which maintains the following:

§117. Instructional Time

- A. *Each school will adopt a calendar that includes 57,750 minutes of instructional time. A nonpublic school may modify the total number of instructional minutes per day and instructional days per year, provided that 57,750 minutes of instructional time per year are scheduled.*
 1. *Instructional time shall include the scheduled time within the regular school day devoted to teaching courses outlined in the program of studies. Instructional time does not include such things as recess, lunch, change of class time, and parent-teacher conferences.*
2. Sites may offer classes in excess of 175 instructional days in efforts to assist families during school holiday vacations.

NOTE: Five (5) days may be reserved for specific NSECD Program activities, such as administration of assessments or allowing children to attend the first few days of school in a small group for one of those

3-4 “stagger-start” days. This allows children to become comfortable in the classroom environment, familiar with use of materials, and familiar with new caregivers.

3. The NSECD Program does not provide funding for before- and after-school care activities. Parents are responsible for payment of these fees if they do not qualify for other available funding sources as may be provided via each individual provider. NSECD Providers may utilize CCAP funds to pay for before- and after-school care for NSECD students.

NOTE: Parents of children who are served through the NSECD Program and who either do not qualify for or who choose not to apply for CCAP funds are responsible for all before- and after-school care fees incurred. A student may be disenrolled if there is an outstanding balance for three (3) consecutive months.

Meals and Snacks

During the regular school day, the Provider shall serve nutritious meals and snacks for pre-Kindergarten children. This does not include before- and after-school care. The Provider may not request that parents provide snacks or meals. The price, the amount, and the types of the food and beverages served by the Provider to pre-Kindergarten children shall be consistent with guidelines for Kindergarten children as provided by the **USDA Food and Nutrition Service**.

Satellite subscription to the Free and Reduced Meal Program offered through the local public school system shall constitute adherence to NSECD Program meal and snack nutrition guidelines. Additionally:

1. During the regular school day, the Provider shall provide pre-Kindergarten children with a nutritious morning **or** afternoon snack (depending on the time that breakfast and lunch are served).
2. Parents of children who are served through the NSECD Program **are responsible for all cafeteria fees which they may incur. A student may be disenrolled if there is an outstanding balance for three (3) consecutive months.** The Provider is to submit intervention plan(s) to the Department during this time, before a disenrollment form is submitted.
3. Parents who choose to send meals and snacks for their child must first acknowledge that they are aware of the Provider’s responsibility to serve nutritious meals and snacks to all children and to provide these meals for free or at the income applicable cost according to eligibility guidelines established for USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Parental certification must be kept on file in the classroom.

Field Trips

1. During the regular academic year, an NSECD class is required to take a minimum of two (2) enjoyable, age-appropriate, and educational **field trips**, which are specifically related to the current curricular topic being explored (e.g., a Children's Museum visit to participate in exhibit activities related to insects while studying insects). Parents of children participating in the NSECD Program **may be required to pay fees pertaining to field trips which are conducted during the 6-hour day of program services**. Parents who choose to participate on the field trip are also responsible for their own cost(s). The Provider shall schedule at least one field trip per semester. Teachers shall plan activities before and after the field trip, so that children will be better able to benefit from the field-trip experience.
2. To adequately provide for the safety of the children during a field trip, **additional supervision of children by responsible adults shall be secured for each field trip**. NSECD Program Providers shall meet all parish or city safety standards (see RS 17:176.1) for transporting children on **field trips**. NSECD Program sites **assume responsibility for following all state and local safety standards** and shall conduct field trips with the clear understanding that **the Department assumes no responsibility for accidents or injuries related to field trips** (see R.S. 9:2798.2).
3. Inviting educational guest visitors (e.g., zoo mobile with educational staff), who engage and interact appropriately with young children, is encouraged. However, **this will be considered as a substitute activity for a field trip** if and only if all requirements are met.

Classroom Pets

The Department recognizes that classroom pets are sometimes well-integrated in the early childhood curriculum; however, pre-K classroom pets also expose sites to potential liabilities for accident or injury. **The Department assumes no responsibility for any accident or injury related to animals in the pre-K classrooms of sites.** If the administrators of a site elect to assume the responsibility incurred when allowing pre-K classroom pets, the Department suggests that sites first adopt clear policies for including pets in the classroom. References for developing school policies can be found at these sites:

- <https://www.hsolc.org/policies/childcare/animals-classroom>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5605a5.htm>
- <http://www.petsintheclassroom.org/>
- https://lvma.org/LVMA/For_Pet_Owners/Educational_Material/Classroom_Pets.aspx

Immunization Requirements

The Provider shall submit documentation for each child served through NSECD Program funds of age-appropriate immunizations or a signed statement against such immunizations as pursuant to R.S. 17:170. **All immunization records submitted are to be printed off of the LINKS website.** (A photocopy of the immunization documentation must be secured at the time of registration or entry into pre-Kindergarten and must be kept on file at the child's attendance site.) 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.

NOTE: NSECD Protocol for Incomplete Immunization Records: Due to the health and safety of the student, as well as state and federal compliance with guidelines for student immunizations, it is at the discretion of the Department to provisionally accept a student with an incomplete immunization record, and each situation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Parent Involvement

NSECD Parent Handbook is a pamphlet for parents to review their rights and responsibilities to the NSECD Program. The Provider will distribute copies of the NSECD Parent Handbook to all parents participating in the NSECD Program. Parents are required to read the handbook and sign the acknowledgement page located in the back section of the Handbook. Providers are to collect the acknowledgment page and e-mail the signed page to the Department **within 30 days** of the student's start date.

Intervention & Support Services

Providers requesting assistance from the Department for an NSECD student displaying interpersonal skills and well-being issues requiring intervention and support services should do the following:

1. Providers are required to complete an NSECD Intervention Summary on prek1a.org, providing a historical account of the student's behavior in the classroom reported by the teacher, principal, and all involved parties.
2. The NSECD Intervention Summary is to be submitted to the Department on the day that the need of an intervention is recognized, so it can be reviewed by the appropriate NSECD authorities.

Corporal Punishment Policy

The Provider shall ensure that no form of demeaning language or corporal punishment, including but not limited to paddling, striking, or hitting, shall be used with any child enrolled in a pre-Kindergarten class or an enrichment class.

Disenrollment

Disenrollment entails the removal of the child's name from the NSECD online roster, after an NSECD Student Disenrollment Form has been submitted. Future eligibility for the child's enrollment will be dependent upon the Parent/Guardian completing a new application and faithfully maintaining the obligations set forth in the "Parental Choice Certification and Slot Confirmation" document.

Disenrollment under these conditions may allow subsequent pre-Kindergarten enrollees to be placed in the vacated position and, if eligible, have services funded through NSECD Program funds.

1. Providers are to complete a Disenrollment Form for any student that has relocated to another state or parish and will no longer be participating in the NSECD Program at their site. An intervention plan is not required.
2. Providers may complete a Disenrollment Form for any student who has not transferred to another NSECD site and has not maintained the NSECD's 74% attendance requirement for two (2) consecutive months. The removal of a child who has failed to meet attendance requirements is at the discretion of the site and is not required.
3. Providers are to complete Disenrollment Form for students who are not participating in the Free and Reduced Meal Program (where applicable) and have incurred cafeteria fees. A student may be disenrolled if there is an outstanding balance for three (3) consecutive months. The removal of a child who has unpaid cafeteria fees is at the discretion of the site and is not required.
4. Providers are to complete a Disenrollment Form for any student who utilizes the before- and after-school care programs provided by the school and has incurred fees without payment for three (3) consecutive months. The removal of a child for unpaid before- and after-school care fees is at the discretion of the site and is not required.

Suspension/Expulsion

Sites/LEAs 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, and more. Should a site/LEA consider it necessary to prevent a child from enrolling or consider disenrolling a child for any reason, the site/LEA must have exhausted all possible options to keep a child enrolled. Before a child is disenrolled or expelled, there should be conversations with families to develop a plan that would help a child be successful in their educational experiences. This plan must be kept on file at the site and updated with the family at each parent-teacher conference.

Section 2: Reimbursement

1. Provider reimbursement rates shall be determined by the Department based on legislative appropriation and are payable contingent on the students attending 74% of the scheduled school calendar days in a month.
2. In order to be counted as present for attendance purposes, a student must be present a minimum of four (4) hours of the six (6)-hour instructional period.
3. Excused absences will not be calculated against a child's monthly attendance percentage. If a child has an excusable absence, documented with a signed excuse, then those days are not counted as absences for reimbursement purposes.
 - a. Students **must be marked absent** on your roster.
 - b. Once they have submitted their doctor's excuse, you will do the following:
 - i. E-mail it to kishia.grayson@la.gov
 - ii. **Request an attendance "unlock" for each of the dates that are noted on the absence**
4. Failure to comply with NSECD Program Provider Responsibilities relating to teacher qualifications or any other requirement may result in a forfeiture of NSECD Program reimbursements, at the sole discretion of the Department. When teachers are found to be out of compliance, the school will be reimbursed at the local market rate of \$31.50 per day for full-day child care services, as determined by the Department of Education, until such time as the NSECD Provider has satisfactorily proven to be in compliance and that all NSECD Program teachers are minimally qualified with verification that they are working toward achieving the required goals set forth in the "2025-2026 Nonpublic Schools Early Childhood Development Program Eligibility & Enrollment Procedures and Provider Responsibilities." A one-time waiver may be granted upon request and at the discretion of the Department.
5. **To receive payment, the Provider shall submit accurate monthly fiscal reports to the Department by the due date indicated on the "Reimbursement Submission Timeline"** (see Appendix B). Reports shall follow the electronic procedure specified by the Louisiana Department of Education. The Provider shall include in the reports any additional information that the Department deems pertinent. The Provider must accurately and completely adhere to these procedures before payments will be executed. Without prejudice to any claims, the Louisiana Department of Education may recover overpayments.

Alternate Funding Sources

1. **An eligible child shall not be concurrently enrolled in a 6-hour instructional day program during the academic year in any other governmentally-funded education program.** Prohibited payments to Providers for services to children enrolled in the NSECD Program include, but are not limited to, the following sources, with the exception of allowable before- and after-school care costs and special needs services:
 - private school tuition/fees
 - Cecil J. Picard LA 4 pre-Kindergarten program
 - BESE 8(g) Program
 - Head Start Program
 - Title I
 - IDEA
 - Louisiana Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
2. Providers **may receive funds** through the National School Breakfast Program and/or the National School Lunch Program for free or reduced price meals and snacks served to children enrolled in the NSECD Program where available.
3. Parents of NSECD program children eligible for free or reduced-price meals have the option to participate in the National School Breakfast and/or Lunch Programs. If they choose not to participate *and* do not acknowledge that the Provider will offer nutritious meals and snacks at no cost or their income-based price (free, reduced, or full price according to USDA guidelines), they may be charged the full price for separate meals and snacks, up to the USDA's maximum.

Section 3: Staffing Requirements

Pre-K 4 Teacher Qualifications

1. Newly employed or incumbent NSECD Program teachers with **current and valid** Type A, Type A* Type B, Type B*, Type C, Level I, Level II, Level II*, Level III, or Level III* **Early Childhood certification** (i.e., PK-3rd grade, Early Interventionist, Nursery School, Kindergarten, or Noncategorical Preschool Handicapped) from the Louisiana Department of Education.
2. Newly-employed or incumbent NSECD Program teachers may also include teachers with current and valid Type A, Type A* Type B, Type B*, Type C, Level I, Level II, Level II*, Level III, or Level III* **Elementary Education certification** and who are currently pursuing the add-on¹ PK-3 **certification or Early Interventionist certification**. The add-on certification must appear on the teacher's valid teaching certificate within 18 months from the original hire date in order to continue qualifying as an NSECD teacher.
3. Newly-employed NSECD Program teachers with a valid Type A, Type A* Type B, Type B*, Type C, Level I, Level II, Level II*, Level III, or Level III* certificate in **any areas other than one of the five eligible Early Childhood certifications, Grades 1-5, or Elementary Grades** and who are currently pursuing the **add-on PK-3 certification or Early Interventionist certification**. The add-on certification must appear on the teacher's valid teaching certificate within 2 years from the original

¹ See <https://www.teachlouisiana.net/Teachers.aspx?PageID=12311128> for a menu of add-on requirements, including PK-3 and Early Interventionist.

hire date in order to continue qualifying as an NSECD Program teacher.

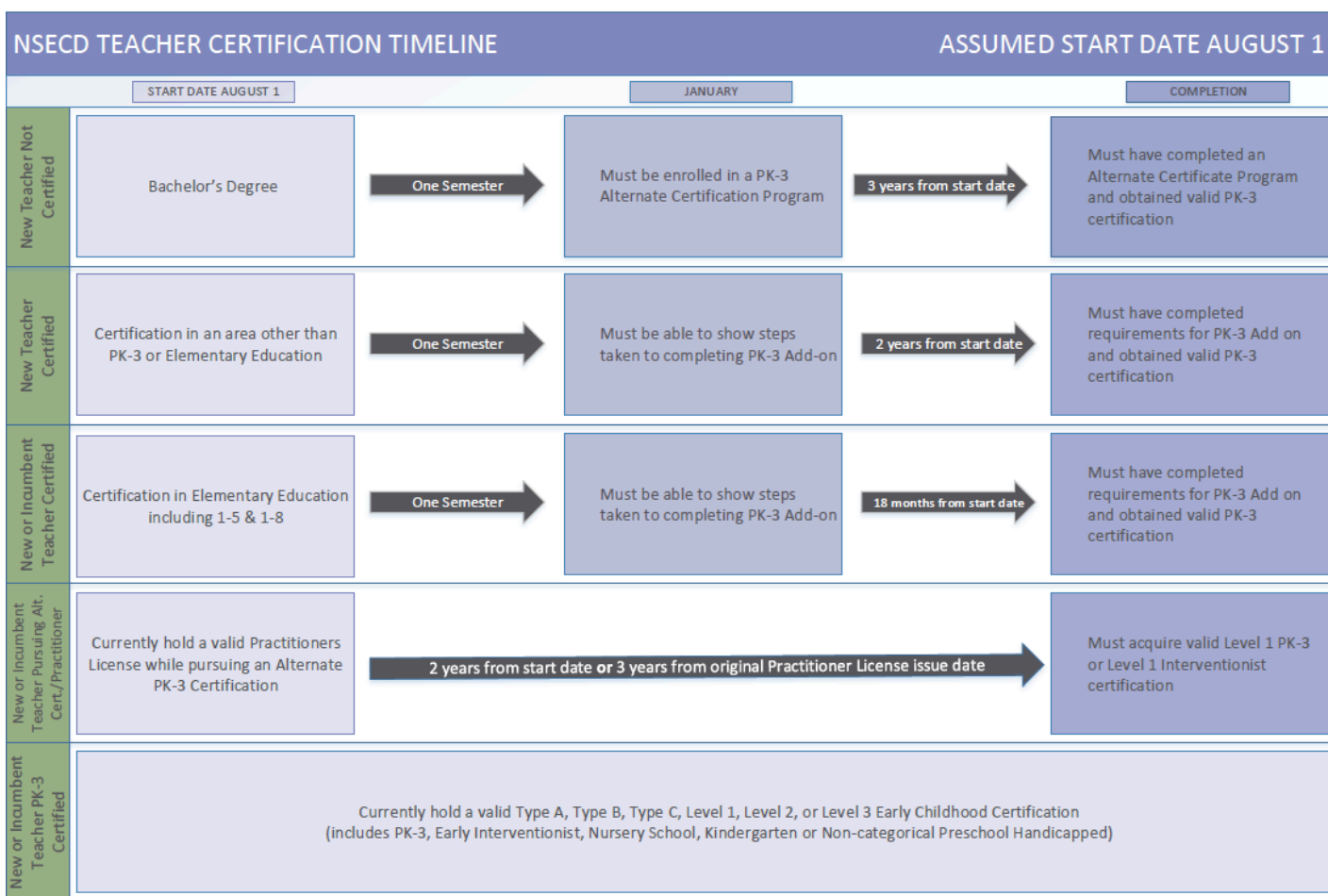
4. **Newly-employed or incumbent NSECD Program teachers** without a valid State certification must have, at a minimum, a **Bachelor's degree and must be enrolled in a PK-3rd grade Alternate Certification Program by January 2026**. These teachers must also meet all other requirements for enrollment in a state-approved PK - 3rd grade or Early Interventionist alternate certification program, be **continuously enrolled** in such program, and earn a valid Type I PK-3 or Early Interventionist teaching certificate within **3 years** from the original hire date in order to continue qualifying as an NSECD Program teacher. Providers are responsible for submitting documentation of the teacher's full eligibility and acceptance into an alternate certification program approved by the Louisiana Department of Education. Documentation of current and continuous enrollment must be **submitted to the NSECD Program Manager each semester** until valid PK-3 or Early Interventionist certification is earned.
5. In parishes of the State having no local PK-3rd grade alternate certification program **for PK- 3rd grade or Early Interventionist**, eligible NSECD teachers may be those who enter into a State-approved **Elementary Education** alternate certification program with plans to complete this program and then meet requirements for adding on PK-3rd grade or Early Interventionist certification.

The Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) does not fulfill the certification requirement for pre-K 4 NSECD Lead Teachers.

6. All **substitute teachers** assigned for more than 10 consecutive days in the pre-K classroom will be considered replacement teachers and must meet all credential requirements for NSECD teachers. The Department should be notified of this staff change prior to the 10th day of the substitute teacher's assignment.
7. All **replacement teachers** employed after the academic year start date must meet the credential requirements outlined in this document. All NSECD replacement teachers must have full-time responsibilities in the classroom and assume no other administrative or teaching duties during the 6-hour instructional period.

NSECD Providers are responsible for submitting all teaching staff credential documentation to the Department **prior to** beginning the academic year, or in the case of replacement teachers, prior to placement in the pre-K classroom. **Sites will not be eligible for reimbursements for children served by teachers who have not met NSECD Program staff requirements.** Due to the large number of student and teacher eligibility documents received, all teacher documentation **may be substantiated by NSECD Administration in an internal audit**. If subsequent inspection by NSECD Administration reveals that **required documentation has not been submitted or the documentation indicates that the teacher does not meet teacher qualifications**, the site will be held in **noncompliance** and reimbursements may be reduced, withheld, and/or refund of past reimbursements may be required, until requirements are met. A one-time waiver may be granted upon request and at the discretion of the Department.

NOTE: All alternate certification programs for PK-3rd Grade or Early Interventionist must be recognized by the Department of Education.



Pre-K 4 Teacher Assistant Qualifications

Teacher assistants must meet the following requirements:

- Possess a high school diploma or equivalent and have either a currently valid
 - Child Development Associate (CDA) credential **or**
 - Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education, Care and Development of Young Children, or related field which may be approved by the Department **or**
 - Bachelor's degree in the area of Child and Family Studies, Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education
- Currently enrolled in either a BESE-approved Child Development Associate credential program, accredited Associate's degree program in Early Childhood Education, or accredited Bachelor's degree program in Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education
- Have extended experiences of assuming responsibility and care for a group of preschool age children (children younger than five years of age)
- Meet all other Provider requirements for employment

NOTE: New Providers with existing staff must remain continuously enrolled after one semester from the NSECD start date. The Teacher Assistant must acquire CDA certification within two (2) years from the NSECD start date to continue to qualify as an NSECD Teacher Assistant. Upon starting, Providers are

responsible for submitting documentation of the Teacher Assistant's current qualifications or current enrollment in a program to meet qualifications.

Documentation of current and continuous enrollment **must be submitted to the Department each semester** until eligible Teacher Assistant credentials are earned.

Pre-K 3 Lead Teacher Qualifications

1. Possess a high school diploma or equivalent and have either a currently valid
 - a. Child Development Associate (CDA) credential **or**
 - b. Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education, Care and Development of Young Children, or related field which may be approved by the Department **or**
 - c. Bachelor's degree in the area of Child and Family Studies, Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education
2. Currently enrolled in either a BESE-approved Child Development Associate credential program, accredited Associate's degree program in Early Childhood Education, or accredited Bachelor's degree program in Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education

Professional Development

In order to maintain and support quality teaching standards, NSECD Providers shall ensure that all pre-K Lead Teachers and Teacher Assistants participate in annual professional development related to preschool-age children (ages 3- through 5-years). **Continuing education and/or professional development shall include no less than 18 clock hours annually** in the following categories:

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Interpersonal Skills and Well-Being | 7. Centers & Schedules |
| 2. Cognitive, Language & Literacy | 8. Music, Motor & Art |
| 3. Health & Safety (does not include First Aid or CPR) | 9. Play |
| 4. Math & Science | 10. Special Needs |
| 5. Parenting | 11. Portfolio |
| 6. Technology | |
1. Providers are responsible for identifying high-quality continuing education opportunities for NSECD staff and shall include documentation for all NSECD Program staff's participation in required continuing education hours in the NSECD Program Provider's End-of-Year Report.
 2. Supporting documentation shall be verified by the Department during the review of the End-of-the-Year Report. The Provider's failure to ensure that all pre-Kindergarten staff participate in the required continuing education will jeopardize the Provider's future participation in the NSECD Program.
 3. During the academic year, Providers are responsible for travel expenses such as mileage, meals or hotel accommodations related to ongoing continuing education.
 4. Reimbursement for registration fees is determined at the discretion of the Provider.

5. A maximum of 10 hours will be allowed upon verification of Lead Teacher or Teacher Assistant enrollment in a traditional college or university, taking coursework specific to Early Childhood Education or Development or enrolled in a CDA or certification program.

Continuing education is available from the Community Network, public school district, or through local and state conferences of early childhood education professional organizations, such as the LDOE Teacher Leader Summit, the LDOE Early Childhood Conference, or the Louisiana Early Childhood Association Conference. Sites are additionally encouraged to contact their local Child Care Resource and Referral agency for information on available continuing education for child care providers.

Contact information for Louisiana's regional Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies is provided on the Department's [website](#).

Section 4: Before- and After-School Enrichment Activities

Providers may charge fees to the parents of NSECD Program-eligible students for participation in any before- and after-school enrichment activities.

When a parent of a student served through NSECD Program funds has allowed the child to remain at the site beyond the established hours, the **parent is responsible for payment to the site** for any services provided before or after the established hours.

Section 5: Community Collaboration

1. NSECD Programs are responsible for ensuring the following:
 - collaborative meetings occur to share ideas and concerns
 - meetings are scheduled to be accessible for all participants
2. Participation in Community Network meetings is allowable as a collaborative effort.
3. **Collaboration meetings** are intended for the purpose of discussing common issues and establishing means to coordinate programs in such a way as to ensure that high-quality early childhood programs and enrichment activities are available to children during the academic year. Suggested collaboration activities include the following:
 - Provide a forum to ensure interagency communication and coordination, (i.e., share ideas and concerns, create solutions to meet the early education and care needs of the community)
 - Provide a forum for discussing appropriate curriculum and assessment based on age and the individual student
 - Provide cross-programmatic professional development opportunities to acquire continuing education
 - Provide family involvement and appropriate educational opportunities
 - Develop seamless transitions for children from one setting to another
4. The NSECD Provider is encouraged to enter into collaborative agreements for professional development of pre-Kindergarten program staff or delivery of other support services (e.g., parent involvement activities, mental health services, adult literacy services, and employment counseling) with Community Network Partners, including the following:

- Other participating NSECD Program sites
 - Public schools
 - Head Start or other governmentally-funded providers of early childhood education and enrichment activities
 - Privately-funded providers of early childhood education and enrichment activities
 - Regional and local community leaders
 - Child/family development initiatives
5. Documentation of community collaboration must be kept on file and used in completing the 2025-2026 NSECD Program Provider End-of-Year Report.

Section 6: Resource Coordination and Support Services

1. Documentation for support services and referrals, along with follow-up contacts, must be kept on file and used for summarizing the provision of support services in the 2025-2026 NSECD Program Provider End-of-Year Report.
2. For compliance reasons only, such confidential referral and follow-up records shall be viewed by appropriate state and federal monitors, including pre-Kindergarten staff members, in efforts to support the child's positive development.
3. The Provider shall determine whether these records should be placed in the student's confidential file or in his/her classroom portfolio.

Section 7: Reporting and Inspection of Records

All Providers **MUST** submit the following information annually upon request:

- **Pre-K Program Assurances** – must be signed and submitted before any NSECD payments can be disbursed
- **Early Childhood Program Partner Assurances** – must be signed and submitted before any NSECD payments can be disbursed
- **Teacher Credential Documentation** – must be submitted and reviewed before online classes can be created
- **NSECD Intake Form** (demographic information for children/families served) – must be entered on the NSECD website by October 1 and a copy maintained in the student's file
- **Student Health Screening** (vision, hearing, etc.) – must be completed within the first 90 days of school and entered on the NSECD website by January 15

Reimbursement

To eliminate manual errors associated with billing and reimbursements, all NSECD Providers must comply with the following:

1. Designate a Provider Agent to act on the behalf of the Provider to review, approve, and electronically submit Requests for Payment to the Louisiana Department of Education for the purpose of requesting payment of funds for services provided through the NSECD Program.
2. The Provider shall maintain accurate student attendance records for a 6-hour instructional portion of the day.

NOTE 1: The Provider is required to submit an academic calendar stating the days of operation prior to the start of school.

NOTE 2: If any changes in the calendar days of operation are made, an e-mail notification must be sent to the Department within 48 hours of the date of change.

3. In order to be credited for attending a school day, a student must attend a minimum of four (4) instructional hours on a given school day. Attendance reports shall be electronically submitted by 12:00 p.m. each service day.
4. With the exception of extenuating circumstances which may impede the timely submission of attendance, the Provider shall comply with the following procedures:
 - a. The Provider must submit an electronic request via www.prekla.org if for any reason they are unable to enter attendance online before the 12:00 p.m. deadline. Once contact is made, the Department will send e-mail confirmation that the attendance has been unlocked.
 - b. Providers' attendance will be unlocked for one hour on the same day the request is made. Any requests made after 1:00 p.m. may not be honored. Special cases and extenuating circumstances for unlocks after 1:00 p.m. may be considered as long as they are received within a reasonable amount of time on the same day.
 - c. Any requests for unlock submitted on a day other than the day for which the unlock is being requested will not be considered. Failure to enter attendance at all will result in an unexcused absence for all students on that day.
 - d. Providers that enter irregular attendance on a consistent basis may be found in noncompliance. A status of noncompliance may affect the provider's standing in the NSECD Program for the upcoming year.
5. The Provider or Provider Agent shall submit an electronic monthly invoice by the 10th of every month on the NSECD website. Signatures received after the designated deadline will be considered late and payments may be delayed.

End-of-Year Report

For the purpose of data analysis and cost/benefit correlative research, the Provider shall submit an accurate **End-of-Year Report** to the Louisiana Department of Education by June 12, 2026. Reports shall include the following information:

1. An **expenditure of 2025-2026 NSECD funds report** detailing how the reimbursement funds were spent (i.e., salaries, professional development costs, field trip costs, purchases of equipment and materials in NSECD Program classrooms, administrative costs covered by NSECD Program funds)
2. A **continuing education report** to certify that each pre-Kindergarten Lead Teacher and Teacher Assistant participated in a minimum of 18 required clock hours of continuing education relating specifically to early childhood education for children in the range of ages 3- through 5-years
3. A **collaboration activities report** summarizing participation related to education, community, and parent-based activities with other agencies and organizations
4. A **screening and support services report** of services delivered and agency referrals including follow-up reports related to health and support services

Program Audits

1. All NSECD records are subject to inspection by state and federal monitors, as well as internal audits by NSECD staff. Providers will be notified in advance of the monitoring dates and requirements for each year and will be provided with a copy of the monitoring instrument.
2. The Provider shall maintain records with all relevant supporting documentation of program participant eligibility, attendance, pre-Kindergarten staff qualifications, and instructional programming.
3. The Provider shall maintain accurate fiscal records. These records shall fully document the expenditure of all NSECD Program reimbursement payments for services to children enrolled at the site.
4. In the event that during the course of the academic year a provider is found to be out of compliance with NSECD program policies and guidelines, the Department may discontinue payments to the Provider. Following parent notification by the Provider, the Department and/or Community Network Lead Agency may advise families of alternative placement options for their children, including other NSECD Program Providers or local public schools or child care centers. The Provider will not be eligible to reapply to the NSECD Program for one full academic year.
5. In the event that reports of noncompliance are received by the Department, notification will be sent to the Provider informing them of the allegations. The Provider will have 10 business days to issue a response to the Department. Upon receipt of this response, the NSECD Program Manager will render a decision. A report of all findings will be sent to the Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Early Childhood Care and Education, at whose discretion a final decision will be made as to the future of the Provider with respect to the NSECD Program. Examples of noncompliance are the following:
 - Any act of fraud, such as the submission of false or altered documents or information, intentionally making a false or misleading statement, or misrepresenting, concealing, or withholding relevant fact
 - Persons convicted of or pleading guilty to a crime
 - Information regarding abuse
 - Failure to timely comply with any corrective action plan approved by the Department

- Failure to take steps or actions necessary to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of children in your care
- Violation of any terms of the Pre-K Program Assurances
- Violations of NSECD standards and guidelines
- Exploitation of Rules and Regulations
- Failure to timely comply with NSECD administrative requests

Section 8: Discrimination Clause

1. The Provider agrees to abide by all applicable requirements of the following: Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Opportunity Act of 1972, the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
2. The Provider agrees to render services under this contract without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, veteran status, political affiliation, or disabilities.
3. Illegal discrimination committed by Provider in violation of the above provisions, or failure to comply with these statutory obligations when applicable shall be grounds for ineligibility for participation in the NSECD Program.

Section 9: Amendments

The Provider must abide by any amendments to the 2025-2026 NSECD Program Provider Responsibilities and to the Appendices which the Department may deem necessary, in efforts to ensure the delivery of high-quality and age-appropriate early childhood programs. Amendments may be transmitted to Providers through memoranda transmitted by electronic or traditional means.

Part 4: Reference Materials

Appendix A – NSECD Income Verification Guidance

This document has been prepared to assist in eligibility determination for NSECD students only. If you have any questions or are uncertain about a particular applicant, please contact Kishia Grayson at kishia.grayson@la.gov.

The Department requires Lead Agencies to use DirectMatch to determine if a child is eligible for NSECD services. Direct Match is the best method of verifying income.

The following list includes alternatives to a confirmed match via the **eScholar DirectMatch** system that are allowable for income verification (with conditions):

1. **Two (2) consecutive pay statements** for each parent/guardian and adult included in the household number for the current year (within 2 months from the date of filling out the application). **Use tables below to calculate.**
2. **SNAP/Food Stamps benefits statement** (only when student is not found in eScholar DirectMatch) – must include the parent/guardian's name and child's name and valid effective dates. 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. The Louisiana Purchase Card is not accepted as valid proof that the family is a SNAP participant.
3. **Letter from employer:** Must be on official company letterhead and signed by a member of HR or management. Must indicate the following:
 1. Where the parent/guardian is employed
 2. The hourly rate of pay **and**
 3. The average number of hours the parent/guardian works per week
4. **Social Security Benefits:** A statement from the Social Security Administration verifying that the child listed on the application—not a sibling, cousin, grandparent, etc.—is a recipient of SSI benefits. SSI benefits for any other household member must be accompanied by other income documentation, if applicable.
5. **Unemployment Benefits:** Must provide the Monetary Determination Form from the Workforce Commission.
6. Families who claim **zero income** of any kind must submit a **Statement of No Income Form**.
7. Parents or guardians who are employed intermittently, who are self-employed, or who do not have pay statements or applicable Department of Children and Family Services printouts to verify their income must submit a **Declaration of Income for Irregular Employment Form**.
8. Families in a temporary living arrangement due to loss of housing or economic hardship (i.e., homeless) should have their status verified using the LEA-defined procedures for verifying homeless status.
9. Foster children are categorically-eligible with a current child placement agreement from DCFS.

REMINDERS:

- Eligibility is based on gross household income. Therefore, if there are 2 or more adults contributing to the financial needs of the family, **both** adults' income must be counted for the family eligibility. If the relative attests that they do not provide direct financial support, they should not be counted in the family size and their income should not be included.

It is okay to ask for more information from the parent/guardian if you are unsure.

Guidance On Verifying Student Income Eligibility Using Pay Statements:

1. Eligibility is based on **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. If the additional adult(s) do not work, they must submit either a *Statement of No Income Form* or a *Declaration of Income for Irregular Employment Form*.
2. Income verification is **only based on the regular or base pay rate**. Holiday, overtime, tips, extra pay for night shifts, housing allowances, etc. will not be considered in a family's gross income, as it is not representative of their typical average rate. (This is why the hourly rate is the most consistent method of calculating income - See #3.)
3. Income is most consistently and accurately calculated using the **hourly rate** formula. **It must be calculated using a 40-hour week**. For example, if Mrs. Smith provides a check stub showing an hourly rate of \$25, you will calculate it as $(\$25 \times 40) \times 4.33$. Your total monthly income for that person will be \$4,330. Mrs. Smith is a single mom and has a family size of 2; therefore, her child would be ineligible.
4. 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 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.
5. You should use the following charts for determining income eligibility until further notice:

Monthly Income Calculation Table: How to Translate Income into a Monthly Figure	
Pay Period	Formula
Hourly	$(\text{Hourly wage} \times 40 \text{ hours per week}) \times 4.33$
Monthly, same gross pay each month	Use gross salary
Paid same gross amount exactly 2 times per month (e.g., 1 st and 15 th of month)	Gross salary $\times 2$
Paid same gross amount every 2 weeks (e.g., every other Friday)	$(\text{Gross salary} \div 2) \times 4.33$
Weekly	Gross salary $\times 4.33$

INCOME LIMITS SHOWN ARE EFFECTIVE FOR 2025-2026 ENROLLMENT ONLY

Family Size/Gross Monthly Income	Family Size/Gross Monthly Income
2 People ~ \$3,525	3 People ~ \$4,442
4 People ~ \$5,358	5 People ~ \$6,275
6 People ~ \$7,192	7 People ~ \$8,108
8 People ~ \$9,025	9 People ~ \$9,942

Appendix B – 2025–2026 Calendar of Important Dates and Reimbursement Submission Timeline

Below is a list of forms or information required to be submitted to the Department. If not indicated below, exact dues dates will be announced at the time each item is released.

2025-2026 Calendar of Important Dates	
Task	Due Date
2025-2026 Program Partner Assurances Due	5/30/2025
2025-2026 NSECD Program Information Survey Due	7/18/2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prekla.org Contact Information 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Class Assignments 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Credential Documentation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Calendar 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official Start Date 	
NSECD 2025-2026 Onboarding Sessions	7/21 - 8/8/2025
2025-2026 Pre-K Program Assurances Due	8/8/2025
Enter Intake Form details in prekla.org	10/1/2025
First TS GOLD® Checkpoint Reporting	10/31/2025
Health Screenings Details in prekla.org	1/9/2026
Proof of Enrollment - Teacher Credentials Checkpoint	1/16/2026
Second TS Gold® Checkpoint Reporting	2/27/2026
Third TS Gold® Checkpoint Reporting	6/1/2026
2025-2026 End-of-Year Report in prekla.org	6/12/2026

REIMBURSEMENT SUBMISSION TIMELINE

The dates below indicate the deadline by which your reimbursement is due. This includes all roster issues, excuses, and electronic signatures. Any items received after the dates listed below may not be considered and may cause your payment to be delayed.

Reimbursement Submission Timeline	
Attendance Period	All Roster Issues, Excuses, and Electronic Signatures Due
August	Wednesday, September 10, 2025
September	Friday, October 10, 2025
October	Monday, November 10, 2025
November	Wednesday, December 10, 2025
December	Friday, January 9, 2026
January	Tuesday, February 10, 2026
February	Tuesday, March 10, 2026
March	Friday, April 10, 2026
April	Friday, May 8, 2026
May	Wednesday, June 10, 2026