



2023 - 2024 pre-K Programs

Determining Family Eligibility

Topics to be Covered

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

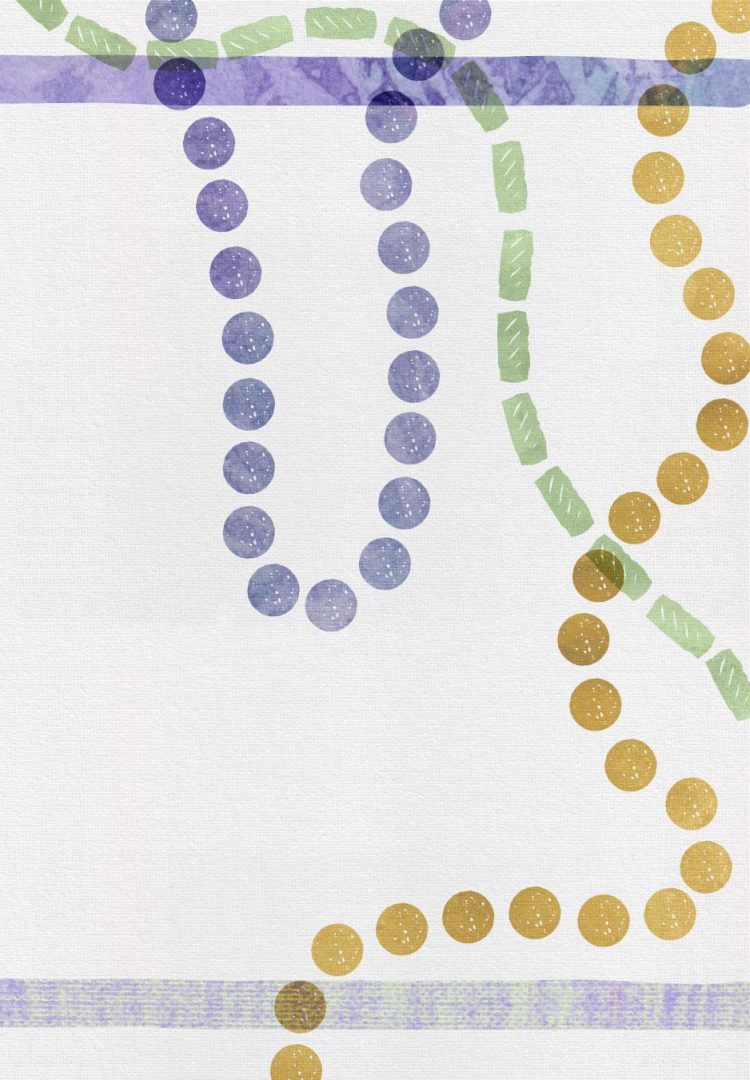


Coordinated Enrollment Requirements

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

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

pre-K Program Eligibility



pre-K Program Eligibility Overview

pre-K programs serve children who meet certain eligibility criteria:

- Age
- Income
- Applicable documentation for immunizations



Definition of “Economically Disadvantaged”

Children in Louisiana are eligible for public pre-K programs if they live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, are in foster care, and/or are experiencing homelessness.

- Children in families with incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level are considered “economically disadvantaged” and are therefore eligible for one of Louisiana’s pre-K programs.
- Children in foster care and children experiencing homelessness are *categorically eligible* for publicly-funded seats.
- Children with special needs and children whose home language is not English may be eligible to receive services *but must still qualify* to participate in publicly-funded programs. These children may be able to be served through other funding sources such as Title I, 8(g), and IDEA.

Important Eligibility Reminders

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

- LEAs/sites should not deem a child ineligible for a pre-K seat for reasons other than income and age. This includes medical issues (including toilet training), guardianship, clothing, transportation, religion, ethnicity, cultural practices, and/or language barriers.
- LA 4 seats are awarded to serve children residing within the jurisdiction of a participating public school system.

Important Eligibility Reminders

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

- Should an LEA/site consider it necessary to prevent a child from enrolling or consider disenrolling a child for any reason, they must communicate with the child's guardian what service limitations they may face, e.g. due to medical issues or language barriers, explain to the child's guardian what the site's plan is for supporting this child to receive educational services, and, in collaboration with the family, document in writing how the site will best meet the child's needs.

Age Requirement

Children must be 4-years-old by September 30 of their pre-kindergarten year.

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

- Verify date of birth, **and**
- Verify that the person completing the application is the person listed on the birth certificate; **or**

Verify court-issued documentation showing permanent or temporary legal custody, such as:

- Custody Judgments
- Child Placement Agreement from DCFS
- Non-Legal Custodian Affidavit
- Notarized Provisional Custody by Mandate
- Notarized Military Power of Attorney

Birthdates	Age
10/1/2018 - 9/30/2019	Four Years Old

**Income Eligibility Determination:
DirectMatch**



DirectMatch Confidentiality

- Information included in eScholar is collected for state and federal reporting, making data available to educators and other stakeholders, and providing services to students.
- Student data are protected by state and federal laws and must be maintained in a confidential manner at all times. Unauthorized viewing, reproduction/copying, and/or distribution of any student record or information outside the intended and approved use are strictly prohibited.
- Users violating the authorized use of the system and/or data will lose access privileges to the system and/or data. Illegal access or misuse of the information will be reported to the proper authority.

eScholar DirectMatch

The Department requires Lead Agencies to use DirectMatch to determine if a child is eligible for LA 4 and NSECD services.

- When logging into the eScholar DirectMatch, users should access the login URL <https://secureid.l DOE .la.gov/uid/login> and enter login information provided by the LDOE ECE team.
- Once logged in, users will be able to submit student data in the system to determine if a child is eligible.
- If you do not currently have credentials to access the DirectMatch system or are unsure of how to log on, please reach out to kishia.grayson@la.gov.

A watercolor illustration of a tree on the left side of the page. The tree has a thick, light green trunk and several branches with dark green, textured leaves. At the base of the tree, there is a small purple flower. The ground is a textured green field. The background is a plain, light green color.

Alternatives to DirectMatch

Allowable Proof of Income

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

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must provide **one** of the following:

- Current Child Placement Agreement from DCFS
- Families in a temporary living arrangement due to loss of housing or economic hardship (homeless) should be substantiated using the LEA-defined procedures (the McKinney-Vento Liaison) for verifying homeless status
- SNAP/Food Stamps Documentation
- A letter from the Social Security Administration verifying that the child listed on the application is a recipient of SSI benefits
 - SSI benefits for any other household member must be accompanied by other income documentation, if applicable

Allowable Proof of Income

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

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must provide **one** of the following:

- Two (2) consecutive pay statements that show gross income per statement
- An official letter from the employer stating all of the following:
 - where parent/guardian is employed
 - hourly rate of pay
 - the average number of hours parent/guardian works per week.
- Unemployment Benefits – must submit a Monetary Determination letter from the Workforce Commission

Allowable Proof of Income

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

If parent(s)/guardian(s) are unable to provide the aforementioned proof(s) of income, parents must provide **one** of the following:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and adults included in the household number who claim zero income of any kind must each submit a **Statement of No Income Form**.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) who are employed intermittently, 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**.

Allowable Proof of Income - SNAP Benefits

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

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

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

Allowable Proof of Income - Pay Statements

- Collect two (2) consecutive pay statements for the current year (within 2 months from the date they are completing the application) for each parent or guardian in the home.
- Income verification is only based on the regular or base pay rate.
 - E.g., holiday, overtime, or other bonus pay will not be considered in a family's gross income, as it is not representative of their typical average rate.
- Eligibility is based on gross household income. Therefore, if there are 2 or more adults contributing to the financial needs of the family, **both** adult's 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.

2023-2024 Income Limits

Federal Income Limits: 200% FPL
(Effective January 2023 for 2023-2024 Enrollment)

Family Size	Gross Annual Income	Gross Maximum Monthly Income
2	\$39,440	\$3,287
3	\$49,720	\$4,143
4	\$60,000	\$5,000
5	\$70,280	\$5,857
6	\$80,560	\$6,713
7	\$90,840	\$7,570

Translating Income Into a Monthly Figure

Monthly Income Calculation Table

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., 1st and 15th 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

Calculating Monthly Income

- Income is most consistently and accurately calculated using the hourly rate formula.
- Gross income must be calculated using a 40-hour week unless parent indicates they work less than that

Example 1: If Mrs. Smith provides a check stub showing an hourly rate of \$25, you will calculate it as $(\$25 \times 40) \times 4.33$ to find her **average monthly income**. Mrs. Smith's monthly income is \$4,330. She is a single mom and has one child, (family size of 2), therefore she would NOT be eligible.

Federal Income Limits: 200% FPL <i>(Effective January 2022 for 2022-2023 Enrollment)</i>		
Family Size	Gross Annual Income	Gross Maximum Monthly Income
2	\$39,440	\$3,287

Calculating Monthly Income

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

Example 2: 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 for her **average monthly income** which makes her child eligible.

Federal Income Limits: 200% FPL <i>(Effective January 2022 for 2022-2023 Enrollment)</i>		
Family Size	Gross Annual Income	Gross Monthly Income
2	\$39,440	\$3,287

Unallowable Proof of Income

The following list includes items that are not allowable for income verification:

- ✘ W-2 or 1099 forms OR tax returns as a primary source. W-2s may only be used if no other form of income documentation exists and they were issued within 2 months from the date they are completing the application.
- ✘ Medicaid Documentation
- ✘ Child Support as an independent source (Unless it is the sole source of income and is court ordered. Parent/guardian must provide court documents as well as a letter stating that no other income is received.)

Immunization Requirements

Louisiana Daycare/Early Learning Center Immunization Entry Requirements*

Vaccine type	Requirement
Diphtheria Tetanus Acellular Pertussis vaccine (DTaP)	Child must be up-to-date on vaccinations for their age according to a valid State of Louisiana Universal Certificate of Immunizations.
Haemophilus influenza type b (Hib)	
Hepatitis A vaccine (HepA)	
Hepatitis B vaccine (HepB)	
Influenza (Flu)	
Measles, Mumps, Rubella vaccine (MMR)	
Pneumococcal (PCV)	
Poliovirus vaccine (IPV)	
Rotavirus (RV)	
Varicella vaccine (VAR)	

*Requirements are in accordance with Louisiana Revised Statute 17:170 and Louisiana Administrative Code, Title 51, Section I-701.

No Shots, No School... Not True

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

- If a family cannot afford to pay for their child's immunizations, families can receive free immunizations through [Shots for Tots](#).
- If a child is unvaccinated due to medical, religious, or philosophical beliefs, parents may claim exemption from the immunization requirements by submitting the [Statement of Exemption](#) form.

Contact Information



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

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