

# 2024-2025 Pre-K Programs

Determining Family Eligibility



# Agenda

- I. Overview
- II. Eligibility Criteria for LA 4 and NSECD
- III. Using the eScholar DirectMatch System
- IV. Alternative Methods for Determining Child Eligibility
- V. Unallowable Income Verification Documentation
- VI. Calculating Monthly Income
- VII. Eligibility Determination Best Practices



# Overview



# Purpose and Objectives

Purpose: The purpose of this presentation is to assist Community Network Lead Agencies (CNLAs) with making pre-K program eligibility determinations.

Objectives:

- identify which documentation is needed to make an eligibility determination
- identify acceptable for income verification documentation
- calculate household income



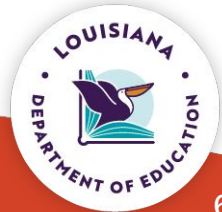
# Eligibility Criteria for LA 4 and NSECD



# Pre-K Program Eligibility Overview

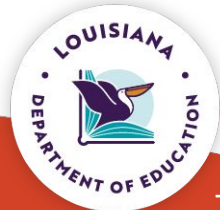
LA 4 and NSECD public pre-K programs serve children who meet certain eligibility criteria:

- Age
- Income
- Applicable documentation for immunizations



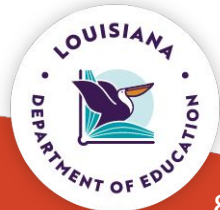
# Definition of “Economically Disadvantaged”

- 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

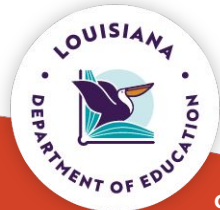
- CNLAs/sites should not deem a child ineligible for a pre-K seat for reasons other than income and age.
  - This includes medical issues (including toilet training), guardianship, clothing, transportation, religion, ethnicity, cultural practices, and/or language barriers.
- LA 4 seats are awarded to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





# Important Eligibility Reminders

- 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.

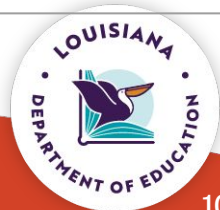
The CNLA must use the child's state-issued or foreign birth certificate, or current passport or visa to:

- 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
10/1/2019 - 9/30/2020	Four Years Old



# Income Requirement

Children in Louisiana are eligible for public pre-K programs if they are:

- matched in eScholar DirectMatch,
- in a family that receives Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits,
- in a family with a household income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level,
- in foster care,
- and/or experiencing homelessness.



# Documentation for Immunizations

A vaccinated child must be up to date on vaccinations for their age according to a valid immunization record.

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 the [Vaccines for Children \(VFC\) program](#).
- 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.



# Immunizations Requirement

Louisiana Daycare/Early Learning Center Immunization Entry Requirements	
Vaccinations	Requirement
Diphtheria Tetanus Acellular Pertussis vaccine (DTaP)	<b>Child must be up to date on vaccinations for their age according to a valid immunization record.</b>
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)	

For more information visit: [Louisiana 2023 Child/Adolescent Immunization Schedule and Daycare/School Entry Requirements](#)



# eScholar DirectMatch



# eScholar DirectMatch Confidentiality

eScholar DirectMatch is a system that CNLAs are required to use to verify SNAP and Medicaid benefits.

- Information included in eScholar DirectMatch is collected for state and federal reporting, making data available to educators and other stakeholders, and providing services to students.
- Child 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 Community Network Lead Agencies to use eScholar 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.ldoe.la.gov/uid/login>.
- Once logged in, eScholar users will be able to submit child data in the system to determine if a child is eligible.
- If the eligibility determination team does not currently have credentials to access the eScholar DirectMatch system or are unsure of how to log on, please reach out to [kishia.grayson@la.gov](mailto:kishia.grayson@la.gov).





# Income Verification Documentation Requirements

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 eScholar DirectMatch process is not used.

## Allowable Income Documentation

eScholar DirectMatch Match Report	Current foster care placement agreement from DCFS
Homeless status verification by the McKinney-Vento Liaison	SNAP Benefits Statement
Letter from the Social Security Administration verifying the child listed on the application is a recipient of SSI benefits	Two consecutive pay statements (within 2 months prior to the date of application)
An official letter from the employer	Statement of No Income Form
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 prior to 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, all of the adults' incomes 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.

# Unallowable Proof of Income

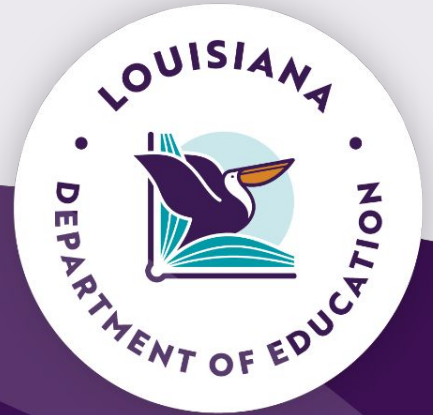


# Unallowable Proof of Income

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.)

# Calculating Household Monthly Income



# 2024-2025 Income Limits

CNLAs should use the following income limits to determine if the household income falls at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

**Federal Income Limits: 200% FPL**  
*(Effective January 2024 for 2024-2025 Enrollment)*

<b>Family Size</b>	<b>Gross Annual Income</b>	<b>Gross Maximum Monthly Income</b>
<b>2</b>	\$40,880	\$3,407
<b>3</b>	\$51,640	\$4,303
<b>4</b>	\$62,400	\$5,200
<b>5</b>	\$73,160	\$6,097
<b>6</b>	\$83,920	\$6,993
<b>7</b>	\$94,680	\$7,890





# Translating Income Into a Monthly Figure

CNLAs should use the following calculation table to determine monthly income.

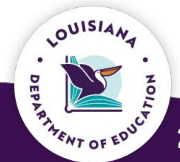
Monthly Income Calculation Table	
Pay Period	Formula
Hourly	$(\text{Hourly wage} \times 40 \text{ hours per week}) \times 4.33$
Monthly, same gross pay each month	Use gross salary
Paid same gross amount exactly 2 times per month (e.g., 1st and 15th of month)	Gross salary $\times$ 2
Paid same gross amount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

# 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.

<b>Federal Income Limits: 200% FPL</b> <i>(Effective January 2024 for 2024-2025 Enrollment)</i>		
<b>Family Size</b>	<b>Gross Annual Income</b>	<b>Gross Maximum Monthly Income</b>
<b>2</b>	\$40,880	\$3,407



# 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 (Effective January 2024 for 2024-2025 Enrollment)		
Family Size	Gross Annual Income	Gross Maximum Monthly Income
2	\$40,880	\$3,407

# Eligibility Determination Best Practices

Avoid Common Procedural Errors



# Eligibility Determination Best Practices

In order to avoid errors in eligibility determination, it is recommended to:

- obtain a coordinated network application for each pre-K (LA 4 and NSECD) program applicant;
- complete the 2024-2025 LA 4 and NSECD Eligibility Worksheet for each pre-K (LA 4 and NSECD) program applicant;
- use DirectMatch to determine eligibility;
- print the dated eScholar DirectMatch Report;
- obtain accurate household size information;
- obtain two pay statements dated within two months prior to the application date; and/or
- obtain income documentation for all adults in the household.

# Eligibility Determination Best Practices

Additional best practices to avoid errors in eligibility determination include:

- ensure that all forms are completed in their entirety as eligibility determinations cannot be accurately made with incomplete information
- use the correct formula to calculate monthly income
- obtain all supporting documentation including:
  - Custody Judgments
  - Child Placement Agreement from DCFS
  - Non-Legal Custodian Affidavit
  - Notarized Provisional Custody by Mandate
  - Notarized Military Power of Attorney
- ensure that NSECD providers have access to the completed network application along with all supporting documents that were utilized in making the eligibility determination

# Contact Information



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

Kishia Grayson  
[kishia.grayson@la.gov](mailto:kishia.grayson@la.gov)

