

Early Childhood Guidance for Super App
Guidance for School Systems Completing Super App

Super App provides school systems with an opportunity to demonstrate their plans to increase access to and improve the quality of early childhood programs in their communities. In order to complete the early childhood components of Super App, school systems should partner with their early childhood community network’s lead agency and other community network partners.

Early childhood questions/prompts are contained within the following LDOE priority sections of the 2023-2024 School System Planning Guide and Super App:

| LDOE Priority | Super App Section | Description of Questions | Funding Source | Page |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--|----------------|------|
| P2: Equitable Inclusive Learning | P2.1.1 - P2.1.2 | Identify strategies to increase access | NA | |
| | P.2.3.1 | Early and accurate ID | NA | |
| P.4: Effective Educator Workforce | P4.5.1 | Request funding for teacher professional development to support developmental screening. | CLSD | |
| | P4.5.2 | Request funding for professional development to support classrooms with young children with disabilities age 3-5 | IDEA 619 | |
| | P4.5.7 | Request funding for literacy foundations training | CLSD | |
| | P.4.10.6 - P.4.10.8 | Early childhood literacy coaches | CLSD | |
| P5: Systems-Structures-Partnerships | P.5.9.2 | Upload early childhood blueprint | NA | |
| | P.5.9.3 | Upload Coordinated Funding Request | NA | |

Additional **guidance on early childhood funding sources** is located in the Appendix of this document.

Instructions for early childhood lead agencies that are not school systems

Lead agencies that are not school systems, will be asked to complete these questions through a template outside of the Super App application. Please ensure collaboration with the partnering school system and be prepared to submit responses to the questions by the same deadline. Lead agencies that are not school systems must complete the Coordinated Funding Request on behalf of their community.

Instructions for school systems that are not the early childhood lead agency

In cases where the entity completing Super App is a school system that is not the early childhood lead agency for its community, there are special considerations for completing the early childhood components of Super App. These entities should work with their [lead agency](#) to complete the blueprint and Coordinated Funding Request.

| Parish or City School District | Who Completes Super App? | Who is responsible for the ECE Blueprint (P5.9.2) and Coordinated Funding Request (P5.9.3)? |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Avoyelles | LEA | Partnerships in Child Care-Acadiana, Volunteers of America Greater Baton Rouge (Avoyelles lead agency) |
| Bossier | LEA | Northwestern State University (Bossier lead agency) |
| Central | LEA | Partnerships in Child Care, Volunteers of America Greater Baton Rouge (Central lead agency) |
| City of Baker | LEA | East Baton Rouge Parish Schools (East Baton Rouge/City of Baker lead agency) |
| City of Monroe | LEA | Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana (Ouachita/City of Monroe lead agency) |
| East Carroll | LEA | Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana (East Carroll lead agency) |
| Madison | LEA | Delta Community Action Association, Inc. (Madison lead agency) |
| Morehouse | LEA | Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana (Morehouse lead agency) |
| Orleans | OPSB and CMOs | Agenda for Children (Orleans lead agency) |
| Ouachita | LEA | Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana (Ouachita/City of Monroe lead agency) |
| Richland | LEA | Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana (Richland lead agency) |
| St. Mary | LEA | St. Mary Community Action Agency, Inc. (St. Mary lead agency) |
| Tensas | LEA | Catahoula Parish Schools (Catahoula/Tensas lead agency) |

Priority 2: Equitable Inclusive Learning

Expanding Access Overview

In order for district leaders to successfully expand access to publicly-funded early childhood programs in their community, they must understand currently available funding sources and how to maximize the use of those funding sources.

General funding reminders

- Most income-limited seats are available for economically-disadvantaged children or children living in families at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- Children in foster care or experiencing homelessness are categorically eligible for most seats, including LA 4, NSECD, child care assistance, and most Head Start programs.
- Programs that do not require a request for seats are either community-level grants for seats, like Head Start, or district funding sources that can be used to fund pre-K, like Title I, REAP, or EEF.
- Diverse delivery, or placing seats in non-school settings, is embedded in the strategies below because it is one of the foundational components of providing families options for early childhood care and education.

For some funding sources, the allocation of seats is managed by the state. Communities must request this funding by submitting the early childhood community network Coordinated Funding Request (CFR). Sites and programs interested in these funding sources should work with lead agencies to develop a plan for requesting seats through the Coordinated Funding Request. School systems must consider how they use a combination of federal, state, local, and private funding to provide and expand access to early childhood in their community. The information described in the strategies on pages 6-8 may help school systems maximize the various funding sources available to them. For information about the various funding sources, see pages 16-20.

Guidance for Questions P2.1.1 - P2.1.2: Funding Strategies

As many communities in Louisiana have demonstrated, expanding access to publicly-funded early childhood seats requires creative problem-solving and the use of multiple funding strategies. The Early Childhood Access component of Super App (P2.1.1 - P2.1.2) provides school systems the opportunity to demonstrate the strategies they plan to use to expand access to early childhood programs in their community. This section of the guidance document will provide details on how to answer each question and descriptions of funding strategies that communities in Louisiana have successfully used in the past to increase the number of publicly-funded early childhood seats.

Question P2.1.1 Check all the strategies that the school system will use to maximize access to birth through three-year-old children within the community network.

When answering this question, school systems should identify all of the funding strategies they plan to use to serve birth through three year olds in the following school year. Descriptions of several birth through three-year-old funding strategies are included below. If school systems plan to use strategies not included here, they should select “Other” and provide a written description of the funding strategy(s) they plan to use.

❖ **Strategy 1: Provide more birth through three-year-old seats at child care centers.**

Applying other public funding sources (e.g., Title I) to fund seats for children birth through three provides more seats for eligible families who were previously unable to access a publicly-funded seat. This is another example of a diverse delivery strategy that increases access for children who are economically-disadvantaged.

❖ **Strategy 2: Place four-year-old seats in diverse delivery at child care centers in an effort to stabilize child care.**

Child care centers often struggle to provide care for infants and toddlers because this care is more costly than care for three and four year olds. School systems can partner with Type III child care centers in their community to locate state-funded pre-K classrooms (e.g., LA 4, Title I, 8(g), etc.) in Type III centers. This type of diverse delivery of four-year-old pre-K seats can provide stability to child care centers, allowing them to potentially create more birth through three-year-old seats and/or classrooms.

❖ **Strategy 3: Convert Head Start seats to Early Head Start seats.**

School systems have found that they can serve more four year olds through state and local funding, and some have worked with their Head Start partners to convert existing four-year-old Head Start seats into Early Head Start seats to serve children ages birth through two. Grantees can request to convert Head Start seats to Early Head Start seats through the re-funding application process or as a separate grant amendment at any time.

Resource: [Conversion of Enrollment Slots from Head Start Children to Early Head Start Children](#)

❖ **Strategy 4: Develop agreements with Head Start to serve more three year olds.**

When a Head Start operates in a service area where eligible four-year-old children can enroll in a high-quality publicly funded pre-K program, the Head Start regulations state that the program must prioritize younger children in their selection criteria. This strategy allows Head Start dollars to be used to serve more three-year-old children.

Resource: [Head Start Selection Process](#)

❖ **Strategy 5: Use IDEA dollars to expand delivery of special education and related services in child care centers (children with disabilities age three and older).**

Delivering special education services, in the form of fully-funded seats or consultative or related services depending on the need of the child, in child care centers may have two positive effects. First, this strategy expands options for families with three and four-year-old children who benefit from special education services and allows children to receive services in a mainstream and inclusive setting. Second, this strategy expands inclusive service options for three year olds with disabilities when there are not three-year-old class options at a school system level.

❖ **Strategy 6: Secure new funding to serve more children birth to five.**

Communities may seek federal, local, or philanthropic grants to serve additional children in need. For example, the federal government periodically makes available Early Head Start grants for communities.

❖ **Strategy 7: Raise local funding to be matched by the Early Childhood Education Fund.**

Communities can raise local funding from qualifying funders, and if reported to the LDOE can earn up to a dollar for dollar match on those local funds. Communities can receive funds from any of the following sources, as non-federal and non-state funders:

- local municipalities
- city governments
- philanthropic organizations,
- businesses, and
- individual donors

ECE Fund applications for the 2023-2024 academic year should have been submitted by community network lead agencies by September 30, 2022.

❖ **Strategy 8: Use ESSER funds to serve more birth through three year olds.**

School systems may choose to partner with Type III child care providers to offer additional seats for birth through age three who qualify for early childhood programs under Title I. This is an allowable use of ESSER funds.

Resource: [Expanding Early Childhood Care in your Community](#)

Question P2.1.2 Check all the strategies that the school system will use to maximize access for four-year-olds within the community network.

When answering this question, school systems should identify all of the funding strategies they plan to use to serve or expand service for four year olds in the following school year. Descriptions of several four-year-old funding strategies are included below. If school systems plan to use strategies not included here, they should select “Other” and provide a written description of the funding strategy(s) they plan to use.

❖ **Strategy 1: Target seats for four year olds beyond those funded by LA 4.**

School systems can create a plan to provide targeted preschool to vulnerable populations of four year olds who are not economically-disadvantaged. These children may belong to certain student groups struggling at UIR schools, be English learners, children with disabilities, or be low-income four year olds who are above 200% FPL (e.g., 350% FPL).

❖ **Strategy 2: Place school-based pre-K classrooms in zip codes of high need.**

Moving pre-K classrooms strategically in certain zip codes, where young children in need live but no pre-K schools are able to serve them, provides equitable access to families in the community (e.g., rural community).

Communities can place these classrooms in schools that do not typically serve pre-K or centers located in communities with no schools. Locating classrooms in schools can also help provide stability to child care centers and provide families with before and after care.

❖ **Strategy 3: Maximize eligibility criteria for pre-K funding.**

Many community networks have incorporated developmental screenings upon entry into their registration procedures. Districts can use the results of the screening to make decisions regarding the use of 8(g) funds in their pre-K programs. The benefit of using the screening results as eligibility criteria for 8(g) is that it allows districts to serve their economically-disadvantaged children with LA 4, while using 8(g) to serve children who may be over income but meet the “developmentally unprepared” criteria.

Resource: [8\(g\) Grants Program](#) and [LDOE Developmental Screenings Guidebook](#)

❖ **Strategy 4: Collaborate with Head Start to serve the maximum number of four year olds across each funding source.**

As part of their Title I funding, school systems are required to collaborate with Head Start programs in their community. As part of this collaboration, programs may develop agreements to work together to ensure funding sources for four year olds are fully maximized. This may include addressing the flexibility Head Start has to serve children over their typical income limits, the higher income eligibility requirement for LA 4, the flexibility to use 8(g) to serve academically at-risk children, or all of the flexibilities available to serve four year olds in Title I schools. Examining all incoming unified applications for eligibility and placement is conducted through a collaborative effort with lead agencies, Head Start directors, and child care directors.

❖ **Strategy 5: Offer full-day pre-K to children with IEPs regardless of income eligibility.**

School systems may choose to braid multiple funding sources along with IDEA 619 funds to serve children with disabilities ages 3-5 in a full-day program regardless of income eligibility.

- ❖ **Strategy 6: Offer pre-K for all four-year-olds in the school system regardless of income eligibility,**
Several school districts have identified strategies for integrating multiple funding sources, including but not limited to local funds, LA 4, 8(g), Title I, and tuition to successfully offer universal pre-K to their four-year-old population, regardless of income.
- ❖ **Strategy 7: Use ESSER funds to serve more four year olds.**
School systems may choose to use ESSER funds to expand pre-K for four year olds who qualify under Title I.
Resource: [Expanding Early Childhood Care in your Community](#)
- ❖ **Strategy 8: Use Title I funds to support pre-K.**
School systems may choose to use Title I funds to support early childhood education programs, expanding access for four year olds and supporting the quality of those seats.
- ❖ **Strategy 9: Place four-year-old seats in diverse delivery at child care settings.**
School systems can partner with Type III child care centers in their community to locate state-funded pre-K classrooms (e.g., LA 4, Title I, 8(g), etc.) in Type III centers.

P2.3.1 What steps will the school system take to identify early and accurately children who have disabilities? How will the school system work with the Early Childhood Lead Agency and community partners to screen children ages 3-5 for disabilities?

The school system should submit their response in narrative form. Include any of the work that is happening within your community network relating to the Developmental Screening Initiative.

Resources:

- [Strategies for Success Guidebook](#)
- [Early Childhood Developmental Screening Guidebook](#)
- [Early Childhood Developmental Screening Guidance for Lead Agencies](#)

Priority 4: Effective Educator Workforce

Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant Overview

Teachers in all early childhood classrooms need strong and coordinated professional development (PD), curricula, and assessments that advance the quality and continuity of practice across early childhood settings. Grant awards supporting early childhood quality are available through the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant. The purpose of the CLSD grant is to award competitive funding opportunities to school systems to advance literacy and pre-literacy skills for all children from birth through grade 12, with a special emphasis on disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities. The state must ensure that 15% of the sub-granted funds serve children from birth through age 5.

Questions P4.5.1, P4.5.7 and P4.10.6-P4.10.8 may be funded using CLSD Funding.

Requirements--Key Activities for School Systems Receiving CLSD Funding:

- Subgrantees must use funds under this program to supplement, and not supplant, any non-federal funds that would be used to advance literacy skills for children from birth through age 5. Subgrantees must also provide a written assurance to cooperate with a national evaluation of the CLSD program.
- Subgrantees use age-appropriate, valid, and reliable assessments (Teaching Strategies GOLD), to identify need, inform instruction, and inform progress.
- Subgrantees provide evidence-based literacy and pre-literacy practices and interventions.
- Subgrantees create and update annually a Local Comprehensive Literacy Plan, inclusive of early childhood.
- Subgrantees incorporate the use of high-quality curriculum and robust professional development strategies.
- Subgrantees implement one additional educational choice opportunity AND at least one additional evidence-based family literacy program.
- Funds cannot be used to provide duplicative payment for materials or activities within each school or child care site that were previously funded through the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant or the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant, previously referred to as the Early Childhood Literacy Fund.
- Funds will be budgeted and spent on materials and activities occurring during the award period. Subgrantees will not withhold any funds with the intention of carrying-over those funds into another fiscal year. Remaining balances will be returned to the Department for reallocation at the end of each grant year.
- Note: Each school/site receives all of the State and local funds it would have received in the absence of funds received under this grant.

P4.5.1 Identify the number of birth to five-year-old classrooms for which partner(s) will provide professional learning to support developmental screening.

- Professional development (PD) supporting developmental screening must be provided by vendors in the [LDOE PD Vendor Guide](#) or the [Supporting Early Learning & Literacy PD Guide](#).

Eligible expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- Training materials and resources provided by the PD vendor necessary to implement the training (i.e., ASQ kits)
- Teacher stipends and/or substitute pay for PD recipients
- Professional development purchases can be made for any type of early childhood classroom within the school system. This includes Type III child care, Head Start/Early Head Start, and public and non-public pre-K.

P4.5.7 How many Early Childhood teachers and leaders will participate in Literacy Foundations Training?

- Professional development (PD) supporting Literacy Foundations Training developmental screening must be provided by vendors in the [Literacy Foundations Training Approved Providers](#) or the [Supporting Early Learning & Literacy PD Guide](#).

Eligible expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- Training materials and resources provided by the PD vendor necessary to implement the training.
- Teacher stipends and/or substitute pay for PD recipients.
- Professional development purchases can be made for any type of early childhood classroom within the school system. This includes Type III child care, Head Start/Early Head Start, and public and non-public pre-K.

P4.10.6 How many Literacy Coaches will the school system request the salary and benefits for in early childhood sites or CIR/UIR-Academics schools?

P4.10.7 Name all early childhood sites or CIR/UIR-Academics schools which Literacy Coaches will support.

P4.10.8 What percentage of total time will all Literacy Coaches support each grade band in early childhood sites or CIR/UIR-Academics schools? (the total of all responses below must add up to 100%)

- Early childhood Literacy Coaches can be intended for any type of early childhood classroom within the school system. This includes Type III child care, Head Start/Early Head Start, and public and non-public pre-K.
- School systems may request a match of local funding to support the total salary and benefits of one Literacy Coach at each CIR/UIR-Academics school, or Early Childhood site, with a maximum request of \$50,000 per school. School systems should refer to the [CLSD CIR/UIR-A guidance](#) for determining the number of Literacy Coaches needed in a school system. Early childhood requests may support any school or center in the community network, whether or not it has a label.

Question P4.5.2: Identify which vendor(s) will train teachers on the use of specialized supports for children ages three to five with disabilities.

- Funding for Question P4.5.2 will be provided to school systems serving children age 3-5 with
- The [Partnerships for Success Guide](#) provides a list of partners to provide professional development to develop the capacity of educators supporting young children with disabilities.
- Organizations denoted with the Early Childhood icon provide targeted professional development opportunities for early childhood educators in delivering specialized supports to children with disabilities in the following areas: communication, assistive technology, functional skills, sensory/environment and executive functioning.
- Descriptions within each specialized support area are intended to help school systems, school systems, and vendors develop a shared understanding of the type of professional development a particular organization might provide.
- School systems are eligible to request up to \$5,000. All additional funding needs should be met with state and local funding.

Priority 5: Systems-Structures-Partnerships

P5.9.2 Please upload the community's early childhood blueprint for the upcoming school year in .PDF format. (File name format: School System Name_Blueprint)

Question P5.9.2 asks that school systems upload their community network's early childhood blueprint. School systems associated with these networks will need to upload their completed blueprint as a PDF in Question P5.9.2 of Super App. If your community network chooses not to develop an early childhood blueprint, leave this question blank. This will impact the prioritization of funds for your application for birth through three-year-old seats and resources for quality improvement

In addition to the [Blueprint Guidance](#), there is also a suggested [template](#) and a [workbook](#) to support blueprint creation and development.

Early childhood blueprints should include:

- An updated **analysis of current state**, including new data points
- Vision statement
- Mission statement
- 3-5 **goals**, with accompanying **strategies, resources, and performance metrics**

The **analysis of the current state** should introduce the community network and give an overview of your community network, including its strengths and shortcomings. The LDOE will be providing data kits for each network that include data on quality of seats, enrollment numbers, and kindergarten readiness that the network can use as evidence to support its strengths and shortcomings.

A **vision statement** is the community network's vision for its future in early childhood. In other words, if your network achieves all of its goals, what will the state of early childhood education look like in your community?

A **mission statement's** purpose is to describe the reason for the early childhood community network's existence. It should answer the questions, "What do we do? How do we do it? Whom do we do it for?" A mission statement should clarify the community network's purpose clearly to internal and external key stakeholders, including potential funders. The mission statement should define what the network is doing to achieve its vision statement.

Each community network should develop **3-5 goals** that address the shortcomings identified from analysis of your community's current state. Goals may have a 3-5 year focus.

The network should develop at least three **strategies** to support each goal. The strategies should be clearly stated, specific, and in direct support of your network's goals. Additionally, the network should identify whether achieving each goal will require existing or new **resources**, including additional funding or staff capacity. Networks should also include a **performance metric** per goal, which is a measurable gauge of progress toward the goal using specific data points (e.g., CLASS® scores; number of infants served; attendance at a coordinated enrollment event).

P5.9.3 School systems that are the Lead Agency for their early childhood community network: Please upload the completed Coordinated Funding Request template. (File name format: School System Name_CFR)

Within the Coordinated Funding Request (CFR), lead agencies are able to request that current seats be continued and new seats be added. Lead agencies can also rank sites for each funding source in order of preference to receive funding, given that not all requests may be filled. Prioritization of seat requests is not required but will be helpful for the Department to understand the community’s preferences when determining funding of seats. Ready Start Networks and other communities indicating prioritization of seat requests must have an established process for determining prioritization. Diverse delivery of seats will be considered as part of the prioritization for awarding of seats, as well as Ready Start Network status, performance profile information, and community need and demand.

- Each lead agency will submit ONE Coordinated Funding Request per community network.
- Lead agencies are required to ensure that there is an opportunity for public comment on the Coordinated Funding Request before submission.
- School systems that are not the early childhood lead agency should not complete this section of Super App.
- Lead agencies should be using family demand and enrollment data from the prior year to complete this request.

When completing the [Coordinated Funding Request](#), lead agencies will need to input the following:

1. LEA, site name, and site code
2. 2023-2024 Seat Request: For each funding source (four year olds) and age group (birth through three), you will enter the number of requested seats. This can increase, stay the same, or decrease.
3. Prioritization of requests: The prioritization column allows community networks to indicate preferences, given limited funding. This is not required but can be helpful to the decision process.
4. Local Match: Lead agencies will be asked to report any local funding that the community network or Ready Start Network has secured or anticipates securing prior to the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year to support early childhood programs.

Four-Year-Old Seats: LA 4 and NSECD

As in prior years, lead agencies will request LA 4 and NSECD seats for the following academic year through the Coordinated Funding Request.

Cecil J. Picard Early Childhood Program (LA 4): Lead agencies must request LA 4 seats at the LEA level, including seats offered through diverse delivery and charter schools.

- LA 4 is available to each public school system that applies and uses the funding for the purpose of providing a program for early childhood development and enrichment activity classes.
- School districts that receive LA 4 funding may choose to place seats in Type 1 and/or Type 3 charter schools that are authorized and governed by the school board. Type 2 and Type 5 charter schools that are authorized and governed by BESE may apply for seats as an independent LEA.
- Any LEA/school district that receives LA 4 funding may offer LA 4 seats through diverse delivery partnerships with Type III child care centers.

Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD): Lead agencies must request NSECD seats at the site level and specify whether the seats are intended for three year olds or four year olds.

- 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:
 - Be BESE-approved and in compliance with requirements set forth in Louisiana State Department of Education Bulletin 741

- Be certified by the Louisiana Department of Education as Brumfield-Dodd compliant
- Have administered a four-year-old educational program for a full year during the previous school year
- **Recommended:** Have a Proficient or higher performance profile rating for the four-year-old educational program that was administered for a full year during the previous school year
- Child Care Centers:
 - Be a Type III licensed early learning center
 - Have administered a four-year-old educational program for a full year during the previous school year
 - **Recommended:** Have a Proficient or higher performance profile rating for the four-year-old educational program that was administered for a full year during the previous school year

Note--NSECD seats for three year olds: Sites may elect to provide high-quality NSECD preschool to three year olds during the school year, as long as pre-K program requirements (such as high-quality curriculum, assessments, group size, etc.) are maintained. Teachers in NSECD 3-year-old classrooms are required to obtain, at a minimum, the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate. These three-year-old seat requests must contain a justification for the use of NSECD funding for threes instead of fours.

Birth through Three-Year-Old Seats

The Department is requesting that lead agencies provide information about the potential number of economically-disadvantaged birth through three year olds who could be served in the event funding becomes available. It is increasingly important to know and understand the network's capacity to add funded seats for this age group in local communities in order to make funding decisions that will improve access to high-quality early childhood care and education options. If awarded, Ready Start Networks or community networks will be responsible for administering these seats and determining eligibility at the local level.

In January 2019, the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission prepared a report that outlined a plan to strengthen Louisiana's early childhood care and education system for birth through three called [LA B to 3](#). Local communities must know, understand, and articulate the need for birth through three publicly-funded seats within their communities.

How many birth through three-year-old seats should be requested?

The approach to determine the number of seats for this age group will be different for each community network, as every community in Louisiana is unique. There are many rural communities that currently have few to no publicly-funded child care centers. While these families are choosing the most appropriate setting for their family's needs, they may be eligible for a publicly-funded seat and would benefit from having more publicly-funded options available in their area.

Step 1: Analyze the network's current and future capacity to serve additional children from birth through age three in existing Type III centers. To do this, identify existing vacancies, engage in candid conversations with child care centers, and encourage creative solutions.

To estimate capacity for every age birth through three, consider answering the following questions:

- What is the network's capacity at existing Type III centers to offer additional birth through three-year-old seats?
- Could the network encourage centers to establish new classrooms or serve new age groups?
- Are there unique or nontraditional partnership opportunities available to offer seats in diverse settings that meet family needs?
 - For example, if there are no Type III centers in your community, is there an opportunity to develop partnerships with registered family child care homes, or encourage family child care to participate in child care assistance?

- If there are no Type III centers in your community, can you work with Type I and Type II centers to become Type III in order to enroll children via public funds?
- How could the network engage (or initiate) with Type I or Type II sites to open discussions about the community's need?

Step 2: Understand the current family demand for birth through three-year-old seats to inform your proposed placement of new seats. Using application, enrollment, and waitlist data from the previous year, identify high-need or high-demand localities and centers.

To use family demand to plan for birth through three-year-old seats, consider asking the following questions:

- Based on family demand data, where should these seats be placed? Note that you can request individual seats at the site level; full classrooms do not need to be requested.
- Is there a particular region of the community that has a high density of economically-disadvantaged families that could benefit from increased child care options?
- Are there centers that consistently have a waitlist that may be able to expand to meet that demand?
- Are there high-quality centers that additional families would choose to send their children to if more funding became available?

Data: LDOE will be providing data kits to each community network that include individualized data on quality of seats, enrollment numbers, and kindergarten readiness. Upon request, LDOE will also provide economically-disadvantaged cohort data by zip code. This data shows the number of children in each age group that meet the eligibility requirements for LA 4 (in families at or below 200% of the FPL) by zip code.

Step 3: Enter the number of seats requested for each age group into the Coordinated Funding Request document.

- The Department recommends that community networks estimate the comprehensive number of birth through three-year-old seats needed.
- The Department recognizes that these numbers are estimates and will use these numbers to guide future decision-making. **Communities will have opportunities to revise requests once more information is released about how the funding opportunity will be structured.**
- **Note:** While recognizing that there may be concerns about community networks' capacity to *administer* seats, the Department recommends that lead agencies not let these concerns limit the number of birth through three-year-old seats requested at this time.

Local Match

In April 2020, BESE promulgated rules and regulations for the Louisiana Early Childhood Education (ECE) Fund. Funding available through the ECE Fund will be awarded annually to local entities to expand the number of publicly-funded seats in Type III early learning centers for economically-disadvantaged families. In order to be eligible for these funds, local entities must demonstrate that they have secured a non-state and non-federal funding match at a rate of at least one-to-one of the amount they are seeking from the ECE Fund. Lead agencies should use questions on the fourth tab of the Coordinated Funding Request template to preliminarily demonstrate their local match, if applicable. **If not applicable, leave blank.**

Public Comment

Chapter 709, Part B of Bulletin 140 states that "The lead agency shall provide an opportunity for each publicly-funded program in the community network and the general public in the coverage area of the community network to comment on the proposed funding request prior to submission to the department and shall include documentation of this process in the funding request."

Providing opportunity for public comment can take several forms, including but not limited to:

- Conducting a public hearing, community town hall, or school board meeting that allows for public comment to be submitted
- Distributing the Coordinated Funding Request and allowing for written comment to be submitted, mailed, emailed, faxed, or delivered
- Posting the Coordinated Funding Request in a public location or on a website and allowing for written comment to be submitted, mailed, emailed, faxed, or delivered

Any publicly-funded program may request that the Department review an enrollment decision or funding request of its lead agency. Programs must email the request to earlychildhood@la.gov no later than 30 calendar days after the due date for funding requests (requests for review must be received by February 26, 2023).

Any program or individual may submit a written complaint to the Department regarding the action or inaction of the lead agency in its community network. Complaints must be submitted to earlychildhood@la.gov within 30 calendar days of the action or inaction of the lead agency upon which the complaint is based (complaints must be received by February 26, 2023).

Appendix: Additional Resources

Early Childhood: Background Information

The information included in these sections may be helpful to reference as you are completing different parts of the Early Childhood Super App section.

The Importance of Early Childhood:

- **Early childhood programs have long-term benefits for children.** Numerous studies have found that children who participate in high-quality early childhood programs that focus on physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development have [better long-term outcomes](#) than children who do not have these experiences.
- **Despite a strong system that prepares children, Louisiana has a significant access challenge.** While 94% of economically-disadvantaged four year olds have access to publicly-funded pre-K, far fewer children from birth through age three have access to high-quality publicly-funded early childhood programs. In 2018, the Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Commission published an ambitious plan to address this challenge, called [LA B to 3](#). The Louisiana Commission published [Funding Our Future: LA B to 3 -- the Economic Imperative of Early Childhood Care and Education in Louisiana](#) in March of 2021, further calling for a significant investment in early care and education in the state.
- **There are clear benefits of early childhood education for both children who participate and their future families.** Results from [research studies](#) on the long-term impacts of early childhood education have found that both participants and their future children benefit, and that high-quality early childhood education can help break the cycle of poverty. Research shows that children who receive high-quality early childhood education are more likely to get along better with their peers, are more likely to graduate from high school, are less likely to participate in criminal activity, and are more likely to enter stable marriages. The children of adults who received a high-quality early childhood education are also more likely to complete high school and be employed full-time, demonstrating the multigenerational impact of quality early childhood education.
- **Closing Louisiana's access gap in early childhood care and education will require nuanced strategy by communities.** School and district leaders should be part of the community network's efforts to develop a plan to address early childhood access gaps and challenges of quality at the local level to meet the unique needs of their community. School system leaders are well positioned to use the Super App and district planning process to maximize funding opportunities for early childhood in their communities.

Overview of Early Childhood Seat Funding Sources

Below are descriptions for available local, state, and federal funding that can be used to support early childhood care and education. These descriptions may help school systems understand how they can maximize funding locally to serve as many children as possible within their community.

Cecil J. Picard Early Childhood Program (LA 4): This is Louisiana's primary state-funded preschool program which serves more than 16,000 children annually. LA 4 provides economically-disadvantaged children with early childhood education during a six-hour-a-day program. LA 4 is available to all districts that apply and is currently offered in most of Louisiana's parishes, several charter schools, one tribal school, and through diverse delivery partnerships with Type III child care centers. This funding source is a combination of state funds and TANF federal funds, which have specific reporting and reimbursement requirements.

- **Eligibility:** Children who are four years old by September 30 and whose household income falls at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible to attend the program.
- **How to Determine the Number of Seats to Request:** Requests should reflect family demand for seats. Seats are awarded based on the number of children the network anticipates serving during the school year and the availability of funds. Four year olds of families who meet the income requirements are eligible to attend the program. Children from families with higher incomes can attend pre-K but must be funded using locally-provided funds or by paying tuition on a sliding scale up to the cost of care.
- **Application:** Seats are requested by the lead agency of the early childhood community network via the Coordinated Funding Request. Interested school systems and centers must work with their community's lead agency to request funding.
- **Payment:** Payments are calculated based on the number of children attending 74% of the scheduled school calendar days in a month. Based on October Child Count enrollment for the 6-hour instructional program, funds may be reallocated if the program does not fill 95% of their allocated number of slots. Districts serving more than their allocated number of students may be awarded additional funds in the event funds are available.

Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD): Implemented with the goal of reimbursing preschool tuition for enrolled children from low-income families, the Nonpublic Schools Early Childhood Development (NSECD) Program provides pre-K programming to more than 1,300 four year olds from low-income families annually. Children in the NSECD program receive full day pre-K in BESE-approved nonpublic schools and child care centers.

- **Eligibility:** Children who are four years old by September 30 and whose household income falls at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible to attend the program. Eligible providers for NSECD are nonpublic schools and Type III child care centers.
- **How to Determine the Number of Seats to Request:** Requests should reflect family demand for seats. Seat allocations are awarded based on several factors including the number of children the network anticipates having the capacity to serve during the school year and community need.
- **Application:** Interested BESE-approved nonpublic schools and Type III child care centers must work with their community's lead agency to request funding.
- **Payment:** Monthly payments are calculated based on the number of children attending 74% of the scheduled school calendar days in a month.

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP): CCAP provides low-income households with access to quality, affordable child care that allows them to continue working or receiving an education. CCAP funds full day care, before care, after care, and summer or holiday care in both licensed and license-exempt settings.

- **Eligibility:** To be eligible for CCAP, children under must be under 13, or under 18 with a disability; all adults in the household must be working or attending a school or training program for at least 20 hours a week or actively

seeking employment; and household monthly gross income must fall at or below 65% of the state median income.

- **Waiting List:** Exceptions to the waiting list apply for children in families currently receiving child care assistance, children who are experiencing homelessness, children of families participating in the Strategies to Empower People Program (STEP) or Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships, children in foster care, or children requiring special needs care.
- **Application:** Families should apply online via the [CAFE' Portal](#) or families in regions where an Early Childhood Guide is available can connect with a local Guide to support those families with their applications. Please review the [EC Guide Key Initiatives Page](#) to connect with an Early Childhood Guide near you. Providers who are interested in becoming certified to accept CCAP payments should apply online via the [CAFE' Provider Portal](#).
- **Resource:** [Louisiana Child Care Assistance Program](#)

8(g) Louisiana Quality Education Support Fund: Since its inception, the 8(g) fund has assisted schools and districts statewide, enabling them to provide better educational opportunities for all of Louisiana's children. The 8(g) Block Grant Program, administered by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), provides funding for specific focus areas, including pre-K programs for at-risk four year olds. Public school districts can use these funds to offer pre-K programs to children eligible by income or developmentally-unprepared status.

- **Eligibility:** Four year olds who are at risk of being "developmentally unprepared" or at risk of being insufficiently ready for the regular school program, based on screening results, economically-disadvantaged (200% FPL or below) children, and children who are not enrolled in any other publicly-funded pre-K program.
- **How Funding is Determined:** Based on a per-pupil allocation, eligible systems and schools receive block grant funding according to enrollment figures from the previous year. BESE requests that agencies attempt to fill 8(g) program spaces with 70 percent economically-disadvantaged four year olds and 30 percent "developmentally unprepared." If the agency is already serving all economically-disadvantaged four year olds with another funding source, then 100 percent of the children served should be "developmentally unprepared."
- **Resource:** [8\(g\) Grants Program](#) and [LDOE Developmental Screenings Guidebook](#)

Title I Part A: Title I Part A funds, which are allocated directly to school systems, can be used to fund high-quality preschool programs and support children birth through five. Such a program is designed to prepare eligible children with the prerequisite skills and dispositions for learning that will enable them to benefit from later school experiences.

- **Eligibility:** All preschool age children residing in the attendance area of the school are eligible to attend the program. School systems are required to prioritize children most at-risk of failing to meet the state's academic achievement standards based on multiple, educationally-related objective criteria.
- **How to Determine the Amount of Funding to Request:** Collaboration between the LEA fiscal authority and lead agency, whether it is a part of the school district or a different agency, should determine the best way to maximize Title I dollars, which may include requesting Title I Preschool set-aside funds.
- **Application:** Districts will continue to request set-aside funds for Title I Preschool through the Super App process.
- **Resource:** [Serving Preschool Children Through Title I Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 Non-Regulatory Guidance](#)

IDEA--Individual with Disabilities Education Act: IDEA, Part B, 619 provides funding to support children with disabilities ages three to five, so they can be provided a free and appropriate public education. This includes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education. IDEA Part C, also known as the Early Disabilities Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, provides grants to states to serve infants and toddlers (birth to 36 months) who have developmental delays or have been diagnosed with a physical or mental condition that may result in developmental delays. In Louisiana, the Department of Health provides these services through [Early Steps](#).

- **Eligibility Part B 619:** Children ages three to five who have been identified with disabilities and two-year-old children who will turn three during the school year. These funds may be used only to provide services to students within the specific age constraints and who have been identified as “children with disabilities” in accordance with IDEA, Part B 619 federal requirements.
- **Eligibility Part C 619:** Infants and toddlers (ages birth to 36 months) who have developmental delays or have been diagnosed with a physical or mental condition that may result in developmental delays and have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- **How Funding is Determined:** Systems receive an allocation based on the number of IDEA-eligible children served in both self-contained and reverse mainstream classrooms.
- **Resource:** [IDEA Website](#) and [LDOE Developmental Screenings Guidebook](#)

Head Start and Early Head Start: Head Start is a federal program that supports the school readiness of children ages three through five from low-income families, through comprehensive preschool programming and specialized family services. Many Head Start agencies also provide Early Head Start, which serves children from birth through age two and pregnant women who have incomes below the federal poverty level.

- **Eligibility:** Children ages birth through five whose family income is at or below the poverty guidelines are eligible. Children from homeless families, receiving public assistance such as TANF or SSI, and children in foster care are also eligible. Also, Head Start/Early Head Start grantees use a Community Needs Assessment done every five years to establish selection criteria and recruit families. This assessment also establishes criteria for accepting over-income children consistent with the specific needs identified within each community.
- **Resource:** [Louisiana Head Start Collaboration Office](#) and [Head Start Directory](#)

Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP): The Rural Education and Achievement Program, Title VI, Part B, provides financial assistance to meet the unique needs of rural school districts and to assist them in meeting their academic achievement goals. REAP is designed to help rural districts that lack the personnel and resources to compete effectively for federal competitive grants and that often receive grant allocations in amounts that are too small to be effective in meeting their intended purposes. Applicants do not compete but rather are entitled to funds if they meet basic eligibility requirements.

- **Eligibility:** Eligibility is regulated by community population density or daily school attendance served by the LEA, and school systems must be designated rural by the U.S. Department of Education.
- **How Funding is Determined:** Funding eligibility is restricted by statute and awarded annually to eligible school systems on a formula basis.
- **Resource:** [Rural Education Achievement Program](#)

Education Excellence Fund (EEF): In 1999, the Louisiana State Legislature created the Millennium Trust to distribute the proceeds from the tobacco settlement. At the same time, the Education Excellence Fund (EEF) was created as a component of the Millennium Trust. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is responsible for providing the appropriations and oversight of this fund for the purpose of ensuring that all expenditures are used to support “excellence in educational practice.”

- **Eligibility:** The Department distributes funds to eligible local education agencies based on student enrollment:
 - 85% of the appropriation is distributed to local school systems and charter schools based on the number of students in the most recent Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) Budget Letter.
 - 15% of the appropriation is distributed to approved non-public schools based on the number of students as reported for the previous school year.
- **How Funding is Determined:** school systems will annually prepare and submit to the LDOE a prioritized plan for the expenditure of funds it expects to receive in the coming year from EEF, which may include early childhood education programs focused on enhancing the preparation of at-risk children for school. This plan will include

performance expectations that ensure accountability in the expenditures and must be approved by the Department and by the appropriate standing committees of the legislature.

- **Resource:** [Education Excellence Fund](#)

Local Taxes: Districts use local dollars like sales taxes, property taxes, and set asides to increase access to pre-K seats to families who may be over income or children who do not meet the age requirement for publicly-funded pre-K. This significantly reduces the financial burden facing families with young children and helps ensure that children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

- **Eligibility:** Eligibility of children funded with local dollars is determined by the LEA.
- **Resource:** [Systems Building Resource Guide Chapter 7: Financing Strategically](#), ACF

Private Funds: There are a variety of funding strategies that can bring in private dollars including student scholarships, social impact bond programs, family tuition, local businesses, philanthropic investors, local governing bodies, private investors, and charity organizations. Finding other potential funding sources might be the missing piece for a comprehensive funding portfolio for early childhood care and education in the community. Each community will need to conduct research to find the best fit for private funding for early childhood care and education in their community.

- **Eligibility:** The eligibility of students is typically determined by the community partnership with the funder/donor. The community network and funder will typically collaborate to create an eligibility policy using local funding sources for early childhood care and education.
- **Resource:** [Systems Building Resource Guide Chapter 7: Financing Strategically](#), ACF

LA B-3 Seats Pilot Funding: Louisiana was able to launch the LA B to 3 Seats pilot program with a combination of funding from the renewal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA). These seats will prioritize programs that provide infant care, meet teacher certification requirements, and reach minimum quality rating scores in child care centers, family child care (FCC) homes, and new three-year-old seats in diverse settings that align with Louisiana's LA 4 pre-K program.

- **Eligibility:** Children who are three years old or younger by September 30, whose household income falls at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, and whose families meet the work requirements of CCAP are eligible to attend the program.
- **How Funding is Determined:** Lead agencies are invited to apply for B-3 seat funding in their Coordinated Funding Request, and awards will be made using a competitive process. Ready Start Networks with strong blueprints will be prioritized for funding awards.