Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council

July 14, 2021

Agenda

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Approval of the Minutes of May 19, 2021

IV. Consideration of an Update on Early Childhood Legislation

V. Consideration of Louisiana's Plan to Support Families and Child Care with ARPA Funding

VI. Consideration of proposed revisions to Bulletin 137, Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations

VII. Consideration of proposed revisions to Bulletin 139, Louisiana Child Care Development and Funds Program

VIII. Consideration of the Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council Quarterly Report – Quarter 2 2021

IX. Adjournment

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Approval of the Minutes of May 19, 2021 Advisory Council Meeting

IV. Consideration of an Update on Early Childhood Legislation

READY LOUISIANA
INVEST IN EARLY EDUCATION

Ready Louisiana Coalition:

The Ready Louisiana Coalition is a bipartisan statewide coalition formed in 2018 of over 100 businesses, Chambers, advocacy organizations, and early care and education professionals seeking sufficient investment in quality, affordable early care and education in Louisiana.

We believe investing in high-quality early care and education will prepare our students for a smart start in life, enable families to be productive in the workforce, and serve as an economic engine for local communities.

2021 Session: The Final Weeks

- **The budget passed both bodies earlier than expected** to minimize chances of gubernatorial veto. The budget did not include money for early care and education, despite funds remaining unspent.
- **The taxation of medical marijuana** was transformed into a transportation bill.
- **Sports betting** passed in the final days.

Final Wins for ECE - 2021 Session

- 25% of **sports betting revenues**, capped at $20 million, committed to the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund (the Fund).
- Revenue from a **Pelicans specialty license plate** committed to the Fund.
- **“Tops for Adults”** program created, with a workgroup to look at early care and education needs for award recipients.

Areas for Future Advocacy

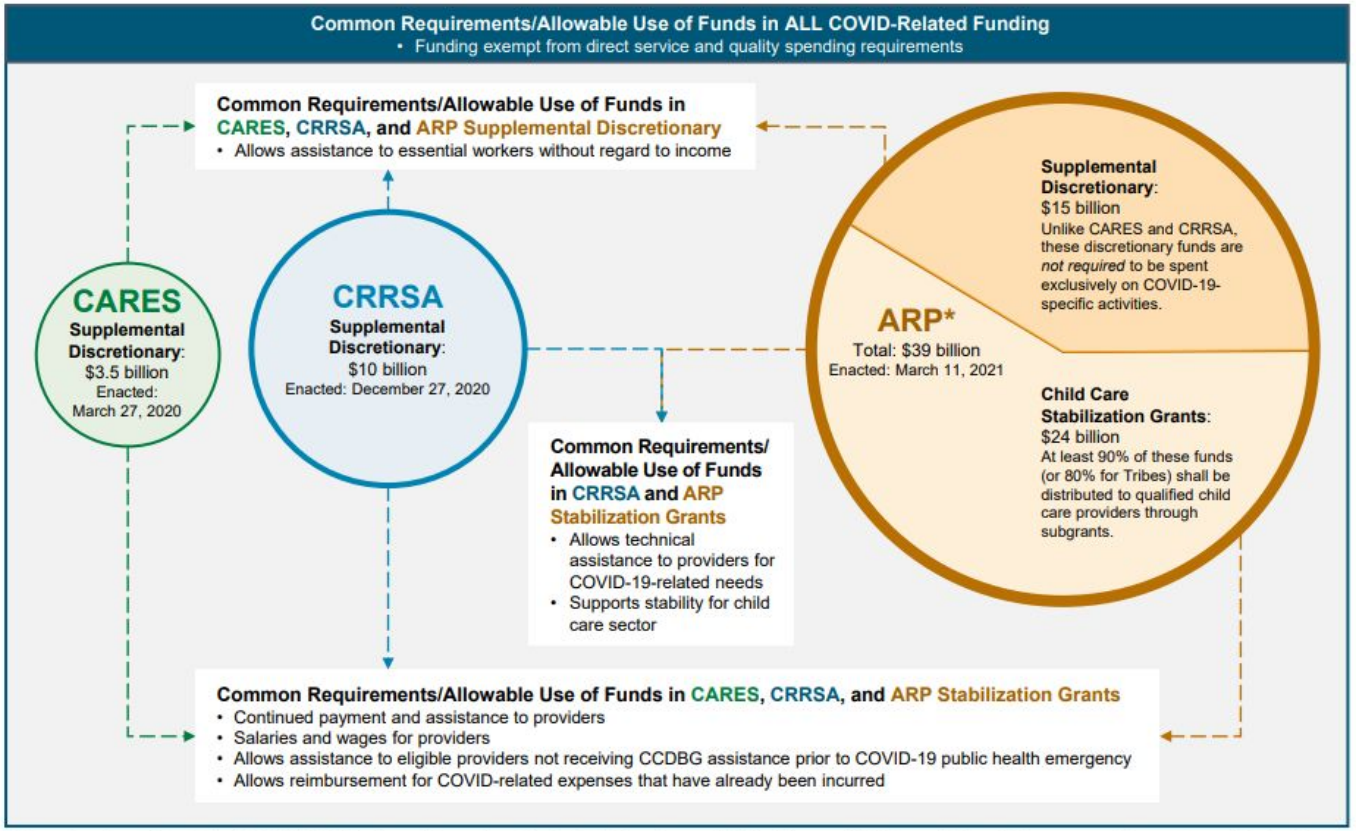
- Direct appropriations to expand access to quality child care for in-need families
- Opportunities for investment in the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund: medical marijuana taxation, recreational marijuana taxation
- Opportunities to generate local investment in early care and education: juvenile justice funds
- **We will begin circulating a draft of a Joint Statement for 2022 this fall**

Federal Advocacy

Letter to federal delegation sent out from the Coalition, advocating for federal investment in early care and education.

V. Consideration of Louisiana's Plan to Support Child Care with ARPA Funding

Overview of ARPA Funding



*The American Rescue Plan Act also included $3.55 billion in mandatory and matching CCDF funds, an increase of $633 million over FY 2020 appropriations. This is a permanent increase to an existing funding stream and did not include new program requirements.

Louisiana's Federal Stimulus Funding to Support Education

LOUISIANA'S ALLOCATIONS				
	CARES Act (April 2020)	**CRRSA 2021 (Dec 2020)**	**ARPA (March 2021)**	**TOTAL**
ESSER	$ 286,980,175	$ 1,160,119,378	$ 2,605,462,325	$ 4,052,561,878
GEER	$ 50,276,799	$ 22,985,320		$ 73,262,119
GEER non-public schools		$ 55,566,230	$ 49,073,000	$ 104,639,230
GEER Total	$ 50,276,799	$ 78,551,550	$ 49,073,000	$ 177,901,349
CCDF	**$ 67,581,166**	**$ 198,319,710**	**$ 773,153,348**	**$ 1,039,054,224**
TOTAL	$ 404,838,140	$ 1,436,990,638	$ 3,427,688,673	$ 5,269,517,451

2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
CCDBG Funds and Child Care Stabilization Funds

Louisiana has received approximately $297 million in Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds and approximately $475 million for the Child Care Stabilization fund.

Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG)

Amount: Approximately $297 million
Grant Period: Must be obligated by September 30, 2023; must be liquidated by September 30, 2024

Guidance: States should use this funding to build a better child care system and help more families afford child care over the next three years.

Allowable activities include activities permissible under the typical CCDF grant.

Link to Federal Guidance

Child Care Stabilization Fund

Amount: Approximately $475 million
Grant Period: Must be obligated by September 30, 2022; must be liquidated by September 30, 2023

Guidance: States should use this funding to provide direct financial stabilization to the child care sector and child care workforce.

Includes a 10% Administrative Set-Aside that can be used to administer grants or for activities to increase child care supply.

Link to Federal Guidance

Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback on Louisiana's ARPA Planning

2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
Listening Sessions

The Department conducted a total of 10 listening sessions with stakeholders from April 29 to June 4, 2021, and will use feedback in the development of Louisiana's ARPA plan.

Stakeholders participating in these listening sessions include:

- Child care providers
- Lead agencies
- Families
- Child Care Resource & Referral agencies
- The Mental Health Consultation program
- Early Childhood Care and Education Commission and Advisory Council members
- Other early childhood advocates and policymakers, including DCFS and LDH

Common themes heard during the listening sessions include the need for additional workforce incentives for recruitment and retention, incentives for expanding infant and toddler care, additional business supports for child care expansion, and more.

2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
Listening Sessions

Consistent themes heard during the listening sessions include the need for additional workforce incentives for recruitment and retention, incentives for expanding infant and toddler care, and additional business supports for child care stabilization and expansion.

Additional activities highlighted during the listening sessions as needs and funding priorities for providers, children, and families include:

- improving CCAP reimbursement model and rates to provide more stable/predictable funding that more closely covers costs of care
- increasing supports for family child care providers to expand supply and access to high-quality child care, particularly in underserved areas
- expanding mental health supports
- increasing developmental screening and supports
- increasing parent/guardian supports
- expanding access to non-traditional hours of child care for families

2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
Statewide Survey

The Department administered a survey from May 6 to May 28, 2021, to collect feedback and input on the state's ARPA plan, and more than 470 early childhood stakeholders responded.

This survey was promoted at a monthly webinar for providers, in the Early Childhood newsletter, at Lead Agency weekly Office Hours, and at the Teacher Leader Summit. Partners were asked to share the survey with program teachers and leaders, families, and other community stakeholders.

Survey Respondent	# (%) of Responses
Child Care Provider or Director	300 (63.4%)
Teacher	63 (13.3%)
Lead Agency Contact	40 (8.5%)
Other*	31 (6.6%)
Mental Health Consultant	21 (4.4%)
Child Care Support Personnel	12 (2.5%)
Family	6 (1.3%)

*The other category includes a variety of stakeholders including school & Head Start administrators as well as individuals who support children not otherwise noted.

“All are High Priority”

— Child Care Owner/Director

ARPA Survey Framework

The Department aligned the ARPA survey with the Believe! framework, organized around four priority areas that were also used to structure the Department's ARPA listening sessions.

The four broad priority categories for which ARPA survey feedback was collected (and the number of questions in each category) are:

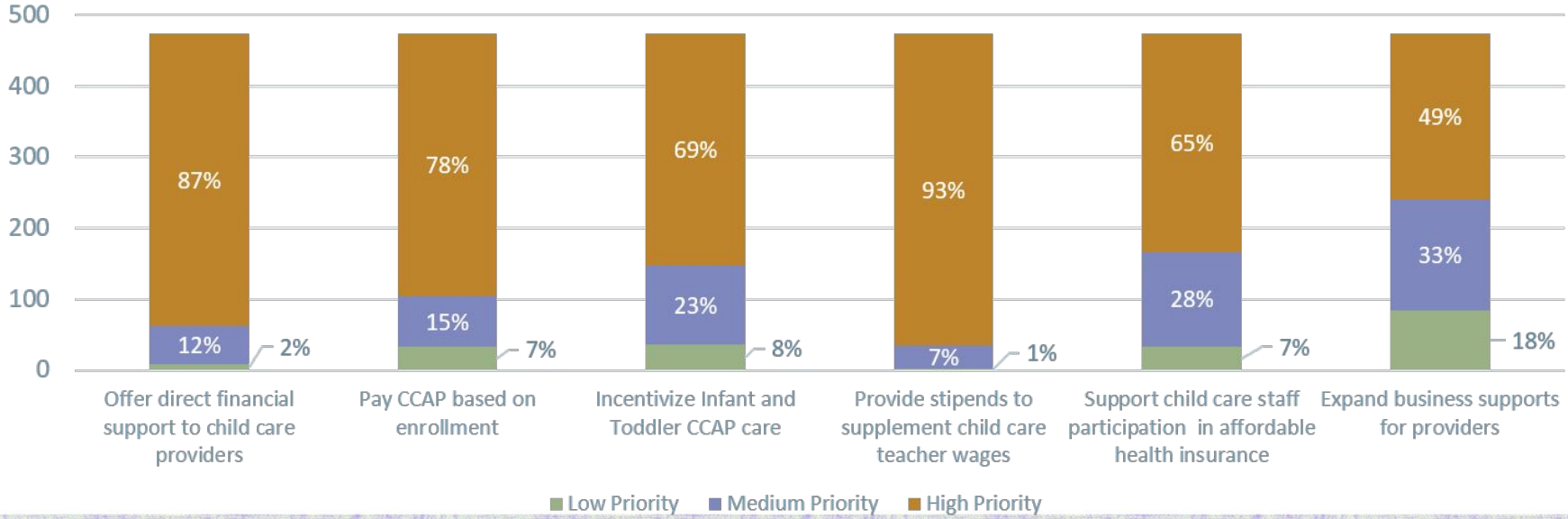
- Child Care Stabilization (6 questions)
- Expanding Access to Child Care (5 questions)
- Improving Classroom Quality (5 questions)
- Family Engagement and Support (4 questions)

ARPA Survey: Preliminary Priorities

Potential Priority	Ranked as "High Priority"
Providing stipends to supplement child care teacher wages, for workforce recruitment and retention	93%
Offering direct financial support to child care providers (e.g., LaCAP grants, etc.)	87%
Supporting efforts to recruit a qualified early childhood workforce	76%
Providing funding for instructional/quality supports	74%
Expanding CCAP eligibility for more families	72%
Providing additional assistance to families in accessing CCAP and other child care options	62%
Providing more supports for families such as mental health support, parenting classes, a resource website, etc.	58%

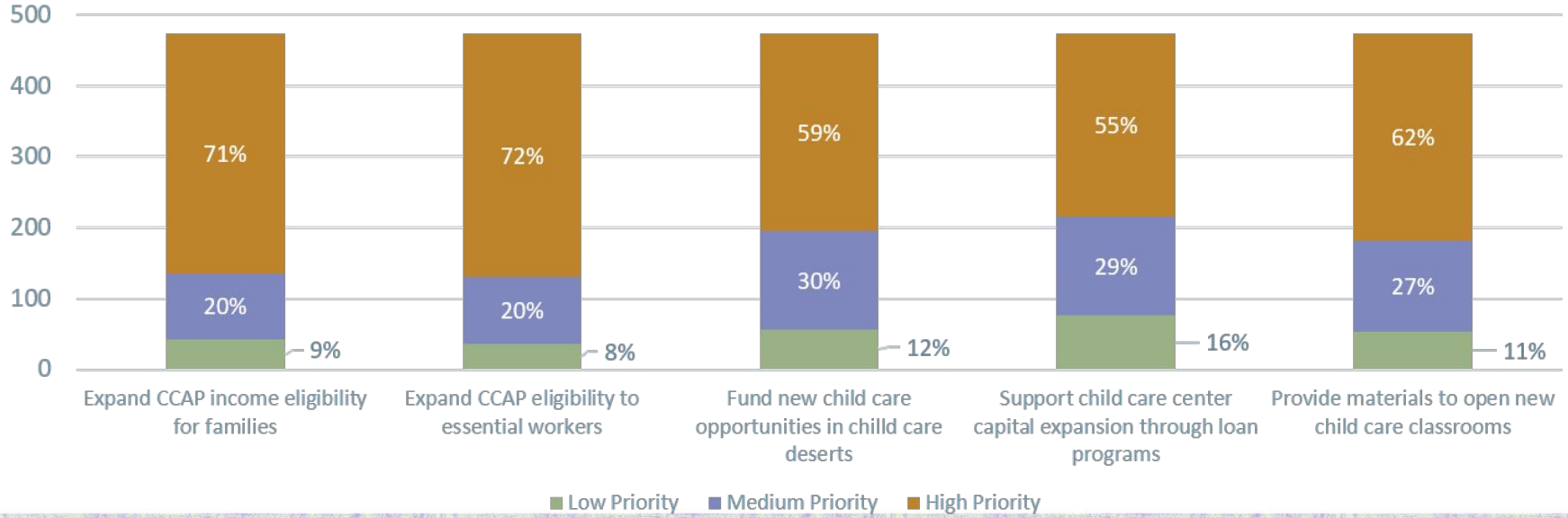
Child Care Stabilization Priorities

Stabilization activities most frequently identified as high priority were offering direct financial support to child care providers and providing stipends to supplement child care teacher wages.



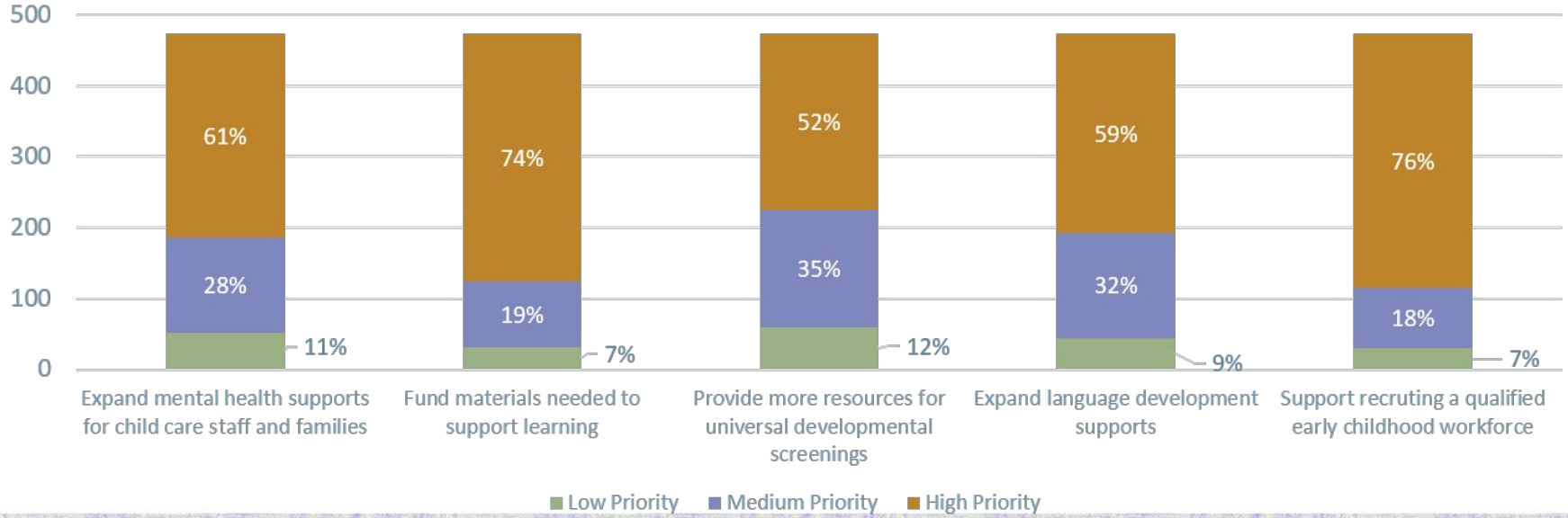
Expanding Access Priorities

Proposed activities most frequently identified as high priority were related to expanding CCAP eligibility, both broadly for families and specifically for some essential workers.



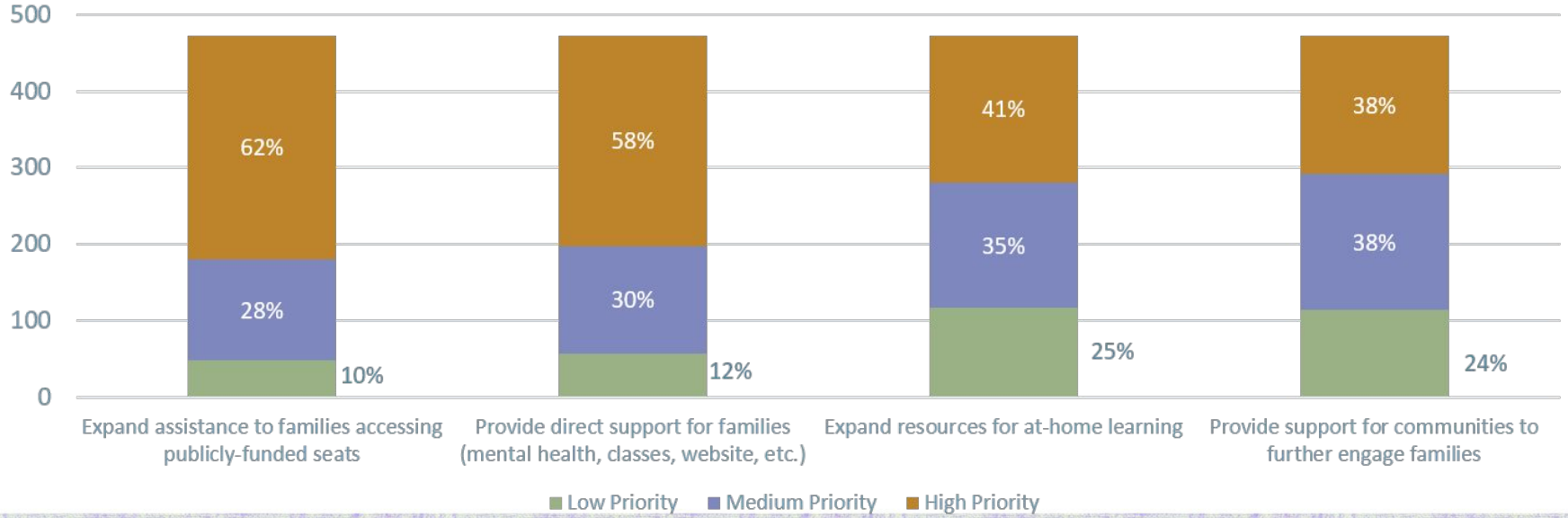
Improving Quality Priorities

Funding additional learning supports and supporting efforts to recruit a qualified early childhood workforce were most frequently identified as a high priority quality activities.



Family Engagement Priorities

Assistance for families in accessing publicly-funded child care options and more supports for families (e.g., classes, a website) were identified as the most high priority activities.



ARPA Survey Takeaways

Overall ARPA respondents, across stakeholder groups, identified several initiatives as crucial priorities for stabilization of the sector and expansion of access to high-quality early childhood experiences.

- The importance of providing immediate stabilization support was emphasized in the survey, with 87% of respondents identifying direct financial support to providers as an ongoing high priority.
- 93% of respondents identified providing stipends to supplement child care teacher wages, to support recruitment and retention of a qualified workforce, as a high priority.
- More than 70% of respondents identified expanding Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) eligibility for families as a high priority.
- 62% of respondents identified providing funding for classroom equipment (e.g., furniture, developmentally-appropriate materials) as a high priority for expanding child care access through the opening of new classrooms.

ARPA Survey Takeaways

In the ARPA survey the stakeholders who work most directly with children emphasized several priorities for funding initiatives that would improve children's experiences and outcomes.

- Providing additional resources for universal developmental screenings was identified as a high priority by 86% of mental health consultants and almost 60% of teachers and other child care support personnel.
- Providing additional language development supports was identified as a high priority by all families and approximately two thirds of lead agency contacts (68%), mental health consultants (67%), and teachers (65%).
- Providing more resources for families (such as mental health support, parenting classes, a resource website, etc.) was identified as a high priority by 81% of mental health consultants and 67% of teachers and families.

Louisiana's Plan to Support Child Care

Overview of Louisiana's Plan to Support Child Care

Based on feedback from the statewide survey and listening sessions with stakeholders, the Department plans to focus on the following priorities to support more families to access high-quality child care for their children.

- **Priority 1:** Louisiana develops and implements a long-term strategy to **build a better child care system** that meets the needs of all families and supports the stabilization of the child care sector.
- **Priority 2:** Louisiana **empowers communities to expand supply and access** to high-quality early childhood options for families and to identify opportunities to sustain that expansion long-term.
- **Priority 3:** Louisiana ensures that **teachers are prepared and supported** to lead classrooms and provide **high-quality interactions** that meet the developmental needs of children every day.
- **Priority 4:** Louisiana establishes a **statewide family engagement framework and empowers families** to access tools and resources to support their children's development.

Priority 1:
Build a Better Child Care System

Priority 1: Build a Better Child Care System
Overview

Public funding for child care has long been insufficient and has contributed to instability in the sector; the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges.

Prior to COVID-19

- The provision of high-quality early care and education relies on child care centers, which are small businesses.
- Because families struggle desperately to afford child care, child care centers operate on razor-thin margins and depend on public funding and support to serve low-income families successfully.
- CCAP reimbursement rates and models have historically failed to cover the true cost of providing high-quality care, especially for infants and toddlers.
- The result of these factors is that the child care sector is fragile, teachers earn poverty wages, and providers have been disincentivized to serve infants/toddlers and children eligible for public funding.

Since COVID-19

- Operating costs have increased and enrollment has dropped, resulting in a precipitous drop in revenue for the child care field in Louisiana:

  A survey conducted by LPIC found that from March 2020 to January 2021, the child care sector in Louisiana experienced an estimated $245 million loss (nearly $200,000/center).

The investment made in child care with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provides a once in a lifetime opportunity to build a stronger child care system that works for families and child care providers.

Priority 1: Build a Better Child Care System
Proposed Activities

Louisiana develops and implements a long-term strategy to build a better child care system that meets the needs of all families and supports the stabilization of the child care sector.

1. **Stabilize Child Care**: Offer ARPA Stabilization Grants to child care providers
2. **Strengthen Child Care Financing**: Explore key revisions to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to support the long-term stability of the child care sector and set payment rates and structures to better cover the actual cost of operating a quality child care program
3. **Recruit and Retain a Qualified Child Care Workforce**: Offer child care providers grant funding to support the early childhood workforce and explore ways of supporting the field to increase child care teacher compensation and benefits
4. **Strengthen Child Care Businesses:** Grow and strengthen business practices, including by launching an RFP for statewide child care business consultation, trainings, and loans
5. **Support Family Child Care:** Expand strategies to support the expansion of registered and certified Family Child Care and provide additional quality supports via optional Academic Approval for those providers
6. **Modernize Data Systems**: Replace outdated systems and provide greater data integration

Priority 1

Activity 1:
Stabilize Child Care

ARPA Stabilization Grants
Overview

ARPA provides Louisiana with approximately $475 million in a Child Care Stabilization Fund, 90% of which must be used on activities that will directly stabilize the child care field and the child care workforce.

The Child Care Stabilization Fund is intended to provide direct financial support to all qualified child care providers (including Type I, II, & III licensed early learning centers, as well as CCAP certified in-home and family child care providers).

Per Federal requirements of the ARP Act, to be qualified for the ARPA Stabilization Grants child care providers must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Provider meets CCDF requirements, including health and safety
2. Provider is licensed or CCAP certified
3. Provider is open and providing child care services

ARPA Stabilization Grant
Application

The Department will create and issue an ARPA Stabilization Grant application that prioritizes ease of completion and accessibility. The application will be distributed online.

The Department will provide resources for application completion and collect the following:

Provider information
- Owner/Director ethnicity, race, gender
- Services provided
- Staffing

Budget information*

**monthly, by category*

Anticipated expenditures*
- Payroll
- Personnel costs
- Facility costs
- COVID-19 equipment/supplies
- Operating materials & services (includes quality boosting measures)
- Mental health services

ARPA Stabilization Grant
Application

As encouraged by federal guidance, the Department plans to develop a formula for distributing ARPA Stabilization Grants that considers multiple cost factors and targets funds where most needed for recovery.

The proposed formula elements are designed to take into account current provider operational offerings, as well as the communities these providers serve:

Center-based Factors

- Center type
- Capacity
- CCAP authorizations
- Hours of operation
- Services offered
- Types of children served
  - Infant/toddler, special needs

Community-based Factors

- Rural/urban
- Availability of child care in proximity
- Community context
  - Social Vulnerability Index
  - Medicaid utilization

ARPA Stabilization Grants
Timeline

Time Period	Activity
August-September 2021	• The Department will release the grant application for ARPA Stabilization Grant Round 1 • The Department will release the Round 1 formula for determining grant award amounts and a provider calculator to project funding amounts
September-October 2021	• Funding released for ARPA Stabilization Grant Round 1
Spring 2022	• ARPA Stabilization Grant Round 2 (Final Round) application released and funding dispersed • The Department will release the Round 2 formula for determining grant award amounts and a provider calculator to project funding amounts

Priority 1

Activity 2:
Strengthen Child Care Financing

Strengthen Child Care Financing
Overview

Families cannot afford to pay the cost of quality care, and the current CCAP rates and reimbursement models do not cover the true cost of providing high-quality child care.

- Nationwide low payment rates and current reimbursement models for child care providers impact every aspect of the child care sector, including quality, fostering large inequities within the system. This makes it particularly difficult for families with low-incomes to have equal access to quality child care options, as required by the CCDBG Act.
- Families struggle to access affordable and high-quality child care in order to go to work to help our economy recover and to advance their careers.
- As the CCDF grantee, the Department is responsible for working to level and stabilize the financing of the child care system.
- ARPA Guidance recommends that states prioritize increasing provider payment rates so that child care providers can deliver high-quality care and prepare children for Kindergarten.

Strengthen Child Care Financing
Proposed Policy Revision to CCAP

***Proposed Revision**: Change CCAP reimbursement method to make payments for full-time CCAP children based on enrollment.*

This change would ensure that public child care funding is more predictable and consistent from month to month and would function more closely to how the private child care market and how school financing operates.

The Department would use a process to collect child attendance and ensure that children funded by CCAP were utilizing the services:

- The Department would continue to require daily attendance reporting.
- The Department would use attendance data to conduct a monthly underutilization process to assess attendance.
- If CCAP children have not attended in the previous month, the Department will contact families and providers to assess the need for continued child care services. If families have not responded during this designated outreach period or no longer need care, their CCAP authorizations will be discontinued.

Strengthen Child Care Financing
Possible Additional Policy Revisions to CCAP

The Department is also exploring the following possible policy revisions to the CCAP program with plans to bring recommendations for additional policy revisions to the Advisory Council later this fall.

1. **Rate Increase**: The Department plans to explore a CCAP rate increase that better covers the actual costs of operating a high-quality child care program.
    - The Department plans to collect new data on provider costs with the ARPA Stabilization Grant application to make recommendations for a possible rate increase.
    - The Department plans to work with an third party to study the true cost of care and propose a rate increase based on that study.

2. **Family Eligibility**: To support more families to access subsidized or no-cost child care, the Department will explore two changes to family eligibility:
    - Raise the income eligibility for CCAP from 65% of SMI to 85% of SMI, which is 258% of the Federal Poverty Level.
    - Expand eligibility for CCAP to include essential workers whose income moderately exceeds 85% of SMI for the grant period (through September 30, 2024).

Strengthen Child Care Financing
Possible Additional Policy Revisions to CCAP

3. **Bonus or Rate Enhancements**: The Department will explore implementing a bonus payment system that targets specific care that is more costly to provide. This includes
    - Exploring an infant/toddler bonus that incentivizes and rewards providers to offer infant and toddler care.
    - Exploring other potential bonuses, such as for special needs care.
4. **Copay Assistance for Families**: The Department will explore continuing temporary family co-pay assistance through the grant period.
5. **Non-Traditional Hours**: The Department will explore ways to promote, incentivize, and support the provision of non-traditional care hours.
6. **Piloting a Model for Contracted Seats**: The Department will test a model that could be scaled for CCDF-funded contracted seats, including a pilot in partnership with LCTCS to fund projects that expand access to child care for low-income parent-students in settings such as community and technical colleges. Based on learning from this pilot, the Department will explore ways of scaling and sustaining a CCDF contracted seats model.

Strengthen Child Care Financing
Proposed Supports for Diverse Delivery Pre-K

To ensure that child care providers who offer state pre-K (NSECD and LA 4) are able to offer high-quality pre-K in the child care setting while extending to full-day of service, the Department is exploring a grant for child care providers who offer full-day state pre-K.

- Overwhelmingly, child care sites that offer NSECD and LA 4 seats face substantial difficulties offering high-quality pre-K in diverse delivery at current state rates:
  - The current $458 monthly rate is lower than both the MRS monthly rate for threes and fours at the 50th percentile ($520) and the statewide average for this group ($540).
- To ensure that child care providers are able to offer a full-day of high-quality care and education (as they recover from the financial impacts of COVID-19), the Department is exploring a pre-K quality grant per LA 4 or NSECD seat offered in diverse delivery.

Priority 1

Activity 3:
Recruit and Retain a Qualified Child Care Workforce

Recruit & Retain a Quality Workforce
Overview

In Louisiana, on average child care teachers earn an annual salary of $19,785, less than the federal poverty level for a family of three.

As some of the lowest paid workers in our economy, child care workers are too often unable to make ends meet. Low wages in the sector are often cited as the cause of stress and economic insecurity among providers and the biggest reason for high turnover.

High teacher turnover rates

- disrupt stable relationships needed to support child development and wellbeing
- could erode the benefits of statewide quality improvement efforts aimed at developing teachers' skills, knowledge, and abilities
- may therefore lower children's Kindergarten readiness and
- is difficult for site leaders and impedes their ability to improve instructions and center climate

ARPA Guidance recommends that states prioritize increasing workforce compensation so that child care providers can retain a skilled workforce.

Recruit & Retain a Quality Workforce

The Landscape in Louisiana

Research has shown that 31% of teachers leave the early childhood field entirely each year and 40% of child care teachers, in particular, leave the field each year.

Year-to-Year Teacher Mobility	Overall	Child Care	Head Start	School	Toddler Classes	Preschool Classes
% At Same Program	65%	56%	65%	75%	52%	70%
% At Different Program, Same Sector	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%
% In Different Sector	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%
% Leaving Early Childhood	**31%**	**40%**	**29%**	**21%**	**44%**	**26%**

Source: Bassok, Markowitz, Bellows, & Sadowski (2021)

Recruit & Retain a Quality Workforce
Proposed Activities

The Department plans to provide child care providers grant funding to support the early childhood workforce and explore ways of supporting the field to increase child care teacher compensation and benefits in the long-term.

- The Department plans to release a series of teacher support grants so that Type III child care providers can better recruit and retain high-quality teachers:
  - July 2021: $3,200 per classroom
  - January 2022: $3,200 per classroom
  - July 2022: Award amounts will be released announced this fall
- The Department is also examining other ways to support improved teacher wages, including but not limited to the exploration of a compensation best practice for child care teacher and ways that the Department can support child care providers to pay at that level.
- The Department is exploring opportunities to support the child care workforce to access benefits such as health insurance and additional ways to support teachers as they work to earn their Early Childhood Ancillary Certificates.

Priority 1

Activity 4:
Strengthen Child Care Businesses

Strengthen Child Care Business
Overview & Proposed Activities

Child care businesses, which are typically small, need business consultation, training, and access to capital to remain viable and to expand.

Stabilizing and sustaining a financially-healthy child care sector long-term requires a comprehensive approach that includes both the finance and business needs of child care providers.

The Department will launch an RFP process to identify an organization to provide more robust and additional ongoing business supports to child care operators. These business supports may include group training, one-on-one technical assistance, and resources, such as:

- Business and financial assessments and budgeting supports
- Tax information
- Capital for expansion through a Community Development Financial Institution
- Shared Services
- Child Care Management Systems

Priority 1

Activity 5:
Support Family Child Care

Support Family Child Care
Overview

- There are an estimated 8000+ unregulated family child care providers in the state.
- Family child care can be a critical source of accessible, affordable, and often high-quality child care for families.
- Even prior to the pandemic, many Louisiana families live in child care deserts, lacking access to licensed child care centers and/or family child care homes.
- In many rural areas, the size of the population, family demand, and what families could afford to pay for care would not support the opening of a full child care center: in these communities, family child care homes often provide the best solution for supplying needed care.

ARPA Guidance strongly encourages stabilizing early care and education by building access to child care for underserved populations and those communities with an undersupply of child care.

Support Family Child Care
Overview

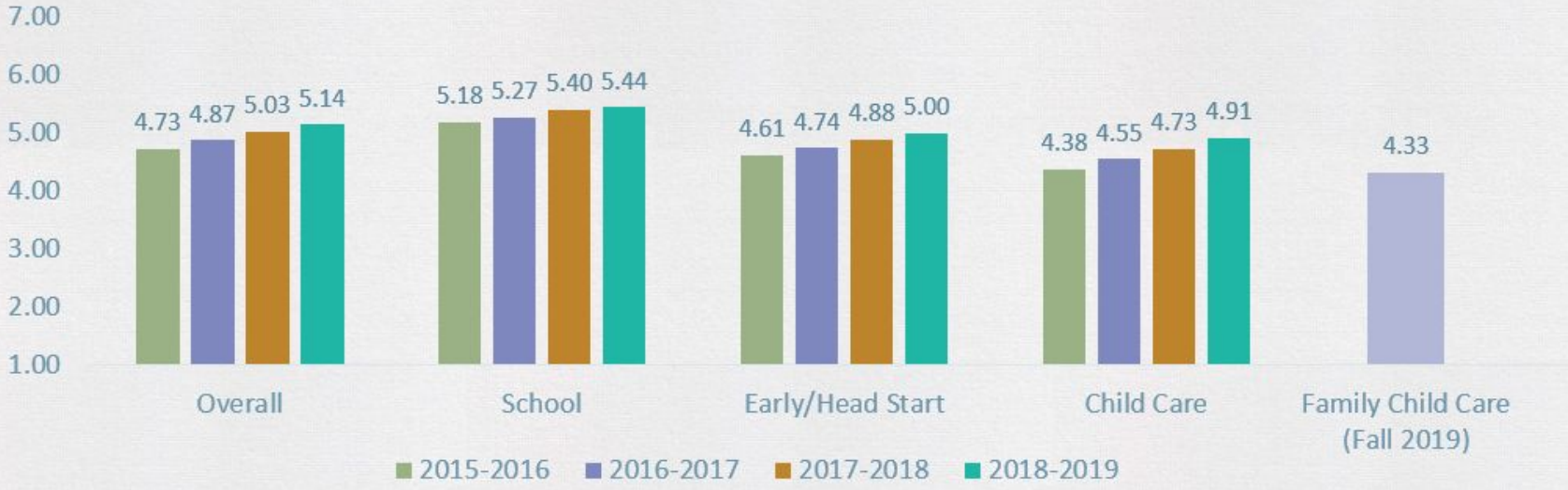
The LDOE finished its second year of conducting the family child care network pilot to learn from family child care providers and use the information collected to inform statewide strategy.

The pilot expanded in 2020-2021 to include 53 family child care providers from three regions of the state, who:

- Receive observations using CLASS® and FCCERS®
- Receive one-on-one coaching and training/technical assistance
- Receive monthly professional development and support from Tulane University Mental Health Consultants
- Attend Network meetings and training facilitated by their regional CCR&R
- Count and report the number of enrolled children

Support Family Child Care
Overview

The average CLASS score for family child care pilot participants was similar to the average CLASS score for child care in 2015-2016, the first year CLASS was used statewide in Louisiana.

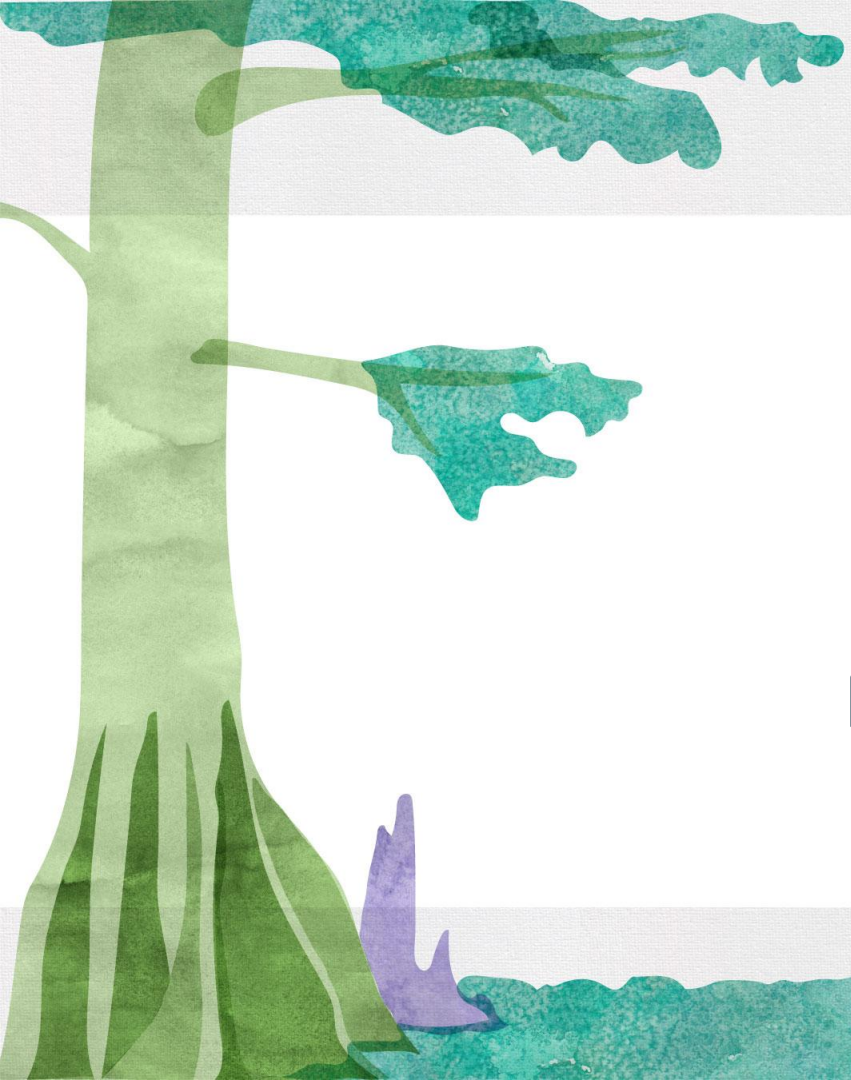


Support Family Child Care
Proposed Activities

In order to close persistent gaps in access to high-quality child care, Louisiana must include home-based family child care in its long-term strategy.

The Department plans to:

- Ensure that all Child Care Resource & Referral agencies in the state are funded to provide network supports, coaching, and training to registered family child care providers
- Propose a policy revision at the September Advisory Council meeting that would enable registered and CCAP-certified family child care providers to participate in Academic Approval and the state's unified early childhood quality rating system
- Conduct outreach to un-registered family child care providers to educate them about the benefits of registration
- Explore the establishment of licensure for family child care providers, which may enable providers to serve additional children with increased regulatory requirements



Priority 1

Activity 6:
Modernize Data Systems

Modernize Early Childhood Data Systems

Overview and Proposed Activities

Currently data is not coordinated or integrated across all early childhood programs. This situation creates barriers and inefficiencies for early care and education providers and for families seeking early childhood education and healthcare.

Policies and practices are best informed by accurate information. Currently, however, the school and facility-level staff who have the most opportunities for positive impact on children often have the least amount of meaningful data available for decision-making, because data exists in silos.

The Department is working to modernize early childhood data systems through EdLink, which will consolidate data silos, facilitate interfaces across data systems, and serve as one single platform where all users (e.g., parents, teachers, administrators) will go for all their LDOE needs, to access data based on their role.

EdLink will also allow for meaningful visualizations of data, comprehensive reporting on data, and more meaningful evaluation of the long-term effectiveness of programs, in turn directing policy changes.

Modernize Early Childhood Data Systems

Proposed Activities

The Department will update child care applications for families and providers to improve administration and assess information to drive policy-making decisions.

The funding will allow for updated technology and application entry for provider licensure, CCAP certification, family CCAP applications, and more. EdLink will first replace and modernize the following early childhood data systems:

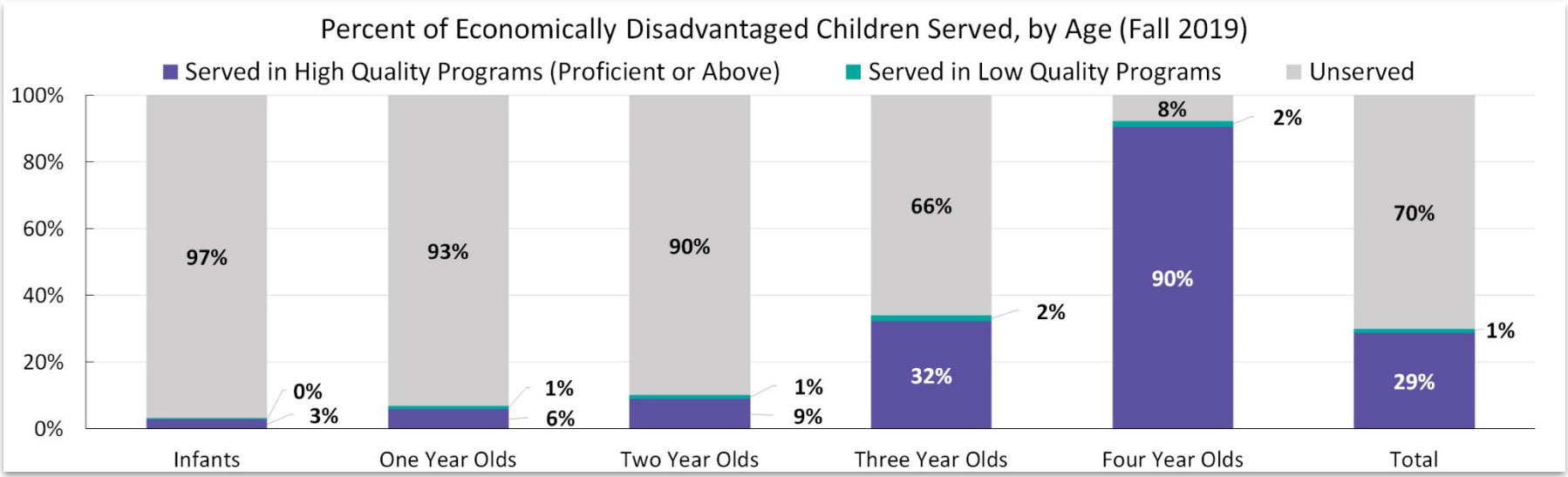
- CAFÉ for Licensing and CCAP
- CCAP family application, attendance capture, and provider payments
  - updating the attendance system
  - creating easier family applications
- Louisiana Pathways workforce registry
  - SRTC levels and teacher training & education history

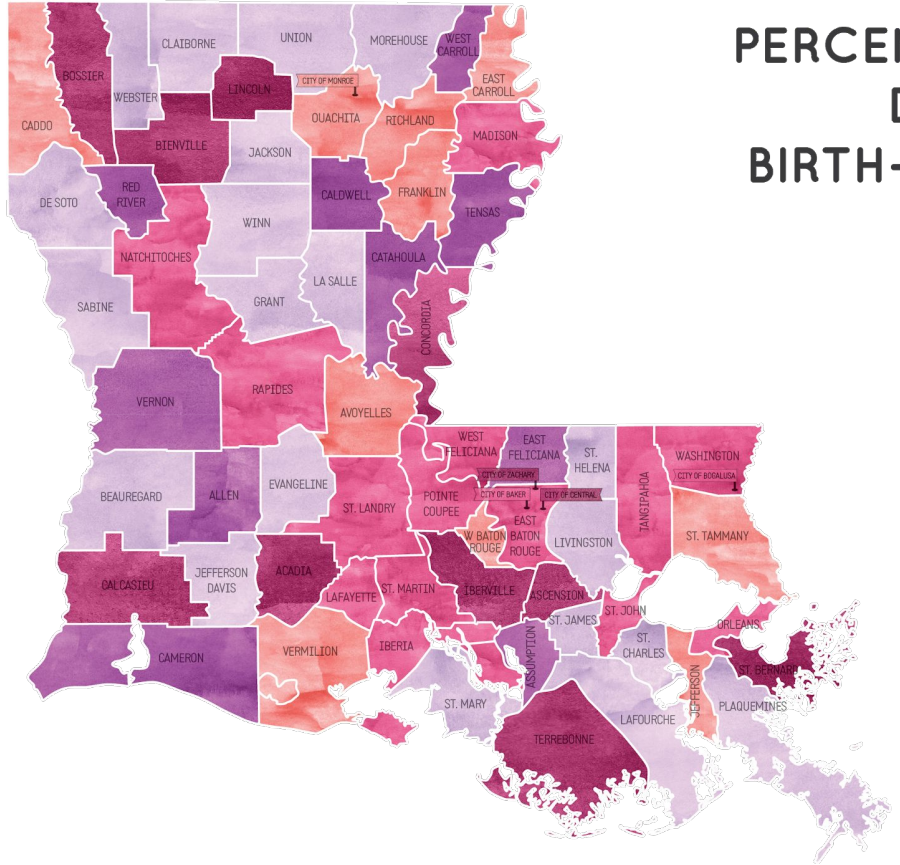
These updates will give child care providers, staff and families more transparency about the status and processing of their applications and answering of their questions.

Priority 2:
Empower Communities to Expand Supply and Access

Priority 2: Expand Supply and Access
Overview

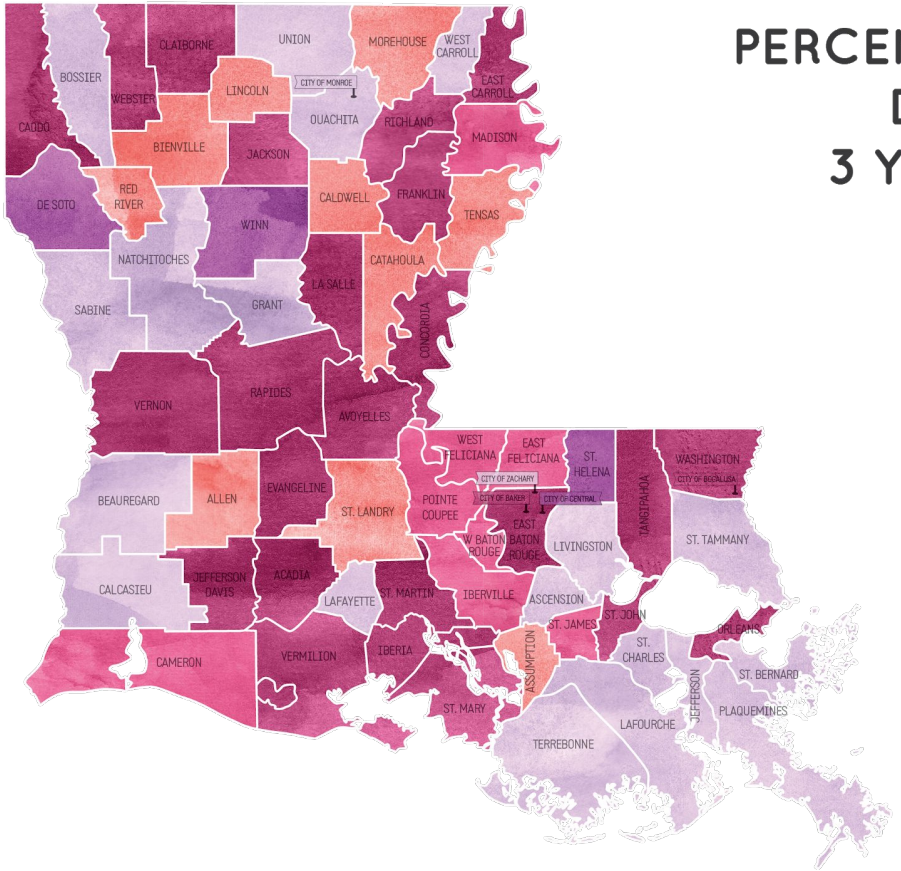
Even prior to COVID-19, fewer than 7% of economically disadvantaged children birth to two years old, and less than 33% of three year olds, had access to high-quality child care in Louisiana.





PERCENT OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED BIRTH-2 YEAR OLDS SERVED

- LESS THAN 1%
- 1-2%
- 3-5%
- 6-7%
- 8% OR MORE



PERCENT OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED 3 YEAR OLDS SERVED

- LESS THAN 10%
- 10-29%
- 30-49%
- 50-69%
- 70% OR MORE

Priority 2: Expand Supply and Access

Overview

Statewide 114,000 economically disadvantaged children continue to lack access to high-quality early childhood education programs that help prepare them for kindergarten and success in life. Part of what drives this lack of access is that many communities lack child care options and the capacity to develop new child care supply.

Louisiana needs to continue to invest in increasing access to high-quality early childhood education opportunities, including empowering local entities to pursue innovative solutions.

Priority 2: Expand Supply and Access
Overview

Louisiana proposes to empower local communities to expand supply and access to high-quality child care options for families and to identify opportunities to sustain that expansion long-term.

35 Ready Start Networks (including 9 new networks in Cohort 4) are currently pursuing innovative strategies to increase supply and access to high-quality care at the local level. These networks represent more than half the state parishes and over 70% of Louisiana's economically-disadvantaged children.

3 Ready Start Networks have already successfully secured local funding for new B-3 seat programs that they will administer in the 2021-2022 school year with a state match, and several more networks have begun developing their fundraising and revenue generation plans.

While there has been improvement in quality and access statewide, Ready Start Networks need to be supported and empowered to drive faster rates of child care supply-building at the local level.

Priority 2: Expand Supply and Access
Proposed Activities

Louisiana empowers communities to expand supply and equitable access to high-quality early childhood options for families and to sustain that expansion long-term.

1. **Launch LA B to 3:** Fund Ready Start Network grant requests to expand supply and access to high-quality child care for roughly 3,000 children birth to age three and sustain until end of grant period and ensure local networks plan for sustainability
2. **Match Local Funding for B-3 Seats:** Incentivize local investment in projects that expand access to high quality child care for B-3 seats by offering a 1:1 match for all local dollars raised until there is sufficient funding in the ECE Fund or the end of the grant period
3. **Fund Community-Level Child Care Supply Building Planning and Activities:** Fund communities to develop and implement plans to expand child care supply and access locally
4. **Ready Start Transform:** Provide exemplar Ready Start Networks the opportunity to accelerate their work and develop innovative plans to achieve equitable access to high-quality early care and education at the community-level
5. **Codify Ready Start Networks:** Define the roles, responsibilities, and guardrails for Ready Start Networks in policy

Priority 2

Activity 1:
Launch LA B to 3

Launch LA B to 3
Overview and Proposed Activities

Louisiana's Early Childhood Care and Education Commission recommended the state make a bold investment to fully fund LA B to 3, a commitment to increase supply and access to serve children age birth to three in high-quality education settings.

Using CRRSA and PDG Renewal Grant dollars and in an effort to respond to COVID-19, the state will kickstart LA B-3 in the 2021-2022 academic year to expand access and supply to high-quality early childhood options, serving close to 3,000 B-3 children in 22 Ready Start Networks. This funding allows eligible families to receive tuition-free seats if they are at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and working, attending school, or actively seeking employment.

Louisiana proposes to sustain funding for LA B to 3 with ARPA funds through the end of the grant period, as local networks work to develop plans for sustainability and the state continues to consider long-term investments in early care and education.

Priority 2

Activity 2:
Match Local Funding for B-3 Seats

Match Local Funding for B-3 Seats
Overview and Proposed Activities

Three Ready Start Networks secured over $4.5 million in local funding to expand supply and access to high-quality early childhood options for B-3 Seats for 2021-2022, with the promise of a dollar-for-dollar match.

The Louisiana Early Childhood Education (ECE) Fund makes funding available for local entities that secure local investment (e.g., parish or city general funds, a millage or other dedicated revenue source, philanthropic funding, etc.) to fund birth to three year old seats in high-quality child care.

Because insufficient funding currently exists in the ECE Fund, the Department proposes supplementing the funding from the ECE Fund using CRRSA and ARPA funding, to incentivize local investment in projects that expand supply and access to high-quality early childhood options for B-3 seats by offering a 1:1 match for all local dollars raised, until there is sufficient funding in the ECE Fund or the end of the grant period.

Match Local Funding for B-3 Seats
Overview and Proposed Activities

Ready Start Network	Local Funds Raised	ECE Match Funds	Total for ECE
Orleans	$3,250,000	$3,250,000	$6,500,000
Caddo	$1,000,000	$1,000,000	$2,000,000
Jefferson	$200,000	$200,000	$400,000

Other networks, including these, anticipate securing additional local funds in the coming months.

Use of state funding awarded from the ECE Fund:

- At least 70% of any funding awarded to the applicant will be used to fund B-3 children in Type III early learning centers rated "Proficient"
- Funding is to support children meeting Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) eligibility criteria, otherwise defined as *economically disadvantaged*
- Remaining funds can be used to administer the program, improve quality offered (e.g., professional development, curriculum, enrollment initiatives, etc.), and cover other costs

Priority 2

Activity 3:
Fund Community-Level Child Care Supply Building

Fund Community Supply Building and Access Expansion
Overview and Proposed Activities

Community networks will pursue innovative strategies to expand child care supply and access for high-quality early childhood care and education this year.

The Department released a unique grant opportunity for early childhood community networks that allow these networks to:

- Develop a plan to address gaps in access to child care through supply building, including
  - Establishing partnerships with existing child care providers to expand supply and access
  - Expanding infant and toddler child care classrooms in existing facilities
  - Leveraging community-based facilities to expand child care options
  - Building child care supply in areas with limited to no options for high-quality early childhood care and education
- Access national TA that will help communities complete a landscape and gap analysis and develop a strong implementation plan

ARPA funding will allow the Department to award funding to subsequent cohorts of communities.

Priority 2

Activity 4:
Ready Start Transform

Ready Start Transform
Overview

Ready Start Transform is an opportunity for successful Ready Start Networks to accelerate their work and develop innovative strategies to transform early care and education at the local level.

The Department proposes a competitive grant opportunity for Ready Start Networks that demonstrate a commitment to the implementation of community-level strategies that increase and sustain equitable supply and access to high-quality early care and education for all children by 2024.

Grantees will be awarded up to $1,500,000 over a three year period to explore and develop innovative solutions and implement community-level strategies.

Launch Ready Start Transform
Vision

The aim of Ready Start Transform is for communities to create a transformative vision and aligned strategy for achieving equitable supply and access to high-quality early care and education.

As part of this opportunity Ready Start Networks will be required to:

- assemble a team of high-level partners, community leaders, and stakeholders who will work with the network to develop and implement this innovative vision
- address multiple variables affecting early childhood quality supply and access including, but not limited to:
  - workforce development, recruitment, and retention
  - quality improvement
  - supports for all children and their families
  - funding and sustainability at the local level
- secure financial commitment through matching funds

Ready Start Transform
Webinar Launch

The Department will host a webinar with more details about the Ready Start Transform opportunity and application process in late August 2021.

Any interested parties should attend this webinar. Ready Start Networks are strongly encouraged to invite any community stakeholders or executive-level community leaders who may be interested in working with Ready Start Network leaders to enact this bold community vision.

Ready Start Networks will receive an invitation to this webinar.

Please contact your Ready Start Network if you are interested in attending this webinar.

Priority 2

Activity 5:
Codify Ready Start Networks

Codify Ready Start Networks (RSNs)
Overview and Proposed Activities

The Department proposes formalizing the roles, responsibilities, and a set of guardrails for Ready Start Networks in Bulletin 140.

At the September Advisory Council meeting, the Department plans to recommend revisions to Bulletin 140 to:

- Codify Ready Start Networks: Establishing the RSN Pillars and the RSN selection and approval process
- Codify RSN Guardrails: Put in place a process for terminating a network's RSN status, if necessary

Once Ready Start Network policy is in place, current Ready Start Networks will be required to re-apply for Ready Start Network status every two years.

Priority 3:
Support Classroom Quality

Priority 3: Support Classroom Quality
Proposed Activities

Louisiana empowers communities to expand equitable access to high-quality early childhood options for families and to sustain that expansion long-term.

1. **Support the Development of a Statewide Child Care Coaching Model:** Ensure that every child care teacher receiving coaching in Louisiana receives consistent support for improvement that reflects best practice in both early instruction and child care coaching
2. **Provide High-Quality Instructional Tools:** Ensure all early childhood classrooms are utilizing high-quality curriculum and receive professional development to support effective implementation of instructional tools
3. **Support Social-Emotional Learning:** Support the social and emotional wellness of children and teachers with additional mental health resources and trauma-informed supports
4. **Expand Developmental Screening:** Prepare communities and teachers to identify children in need of intervention through a universal developmental screening process and provide the supports needed to prepare children for school success
5. **Strengthen Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) Program Quality:** Develop a system for measuring and reporting the quality of BESE-approved BESE programs and align supports to promote quality improvement

Priority 3

Activity 1: Support the Development of a Statewide Child Care Coaching Model

Statewide Child Care Coaching Model
Overview and Proposed Activities

Teachers must be prepared to lead classrooms and provide high-quality interactions for children every day.

The Department will develop and provide additional coaching and training supports for teachers to include:

- A research-based coaching model that includes joint planning, reflection, and feedback from teachers
- A coaching pilot to develop professional learning communities, coaching certification, and coaching competencies
- Technology grants to assist with virtual coaching and training
- A virtual online coaching platform to provide ongoing feedback and support to teachers
- Training and supports for teachers to include focuses such as:
  - Curriculum implementation to optimize learning in the classroom
  - Trauma-related stress and the impact that it may have on classroom learning
  - Application of developmentally-appropriate practices in a classroom setting

Priority 3

Activity 2: Provide High-Quality Instructional Tools

Provide High-Quality Instructional Tools
Overview and Proposed Activities

All early childhood classrooms should utilize a high-quality curriculum and receive coaching or training to support effective implementation of instructional tools and best practices.

Children make meaningful growth when:

- They use a high-quality curriculum every day;
- Teachers have initial and ongoing professional development that helps them use that curriculum effectively; and
- Teachers use data from authentic assessments which measure how well children are meeting the outcomes of the Early Learning and Development Standards.

The Department will be granting a portion of ARPA dollars to early childhood community networks through SuperApp to enhance the quality of early childhood classrooms.

Priority 3

Activity 3: Support Social-Emotional Learning

Support Social and Emotional Development
Overview

There is an urgent need for enhanced Social Emotional Learning (SEL) instruction due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

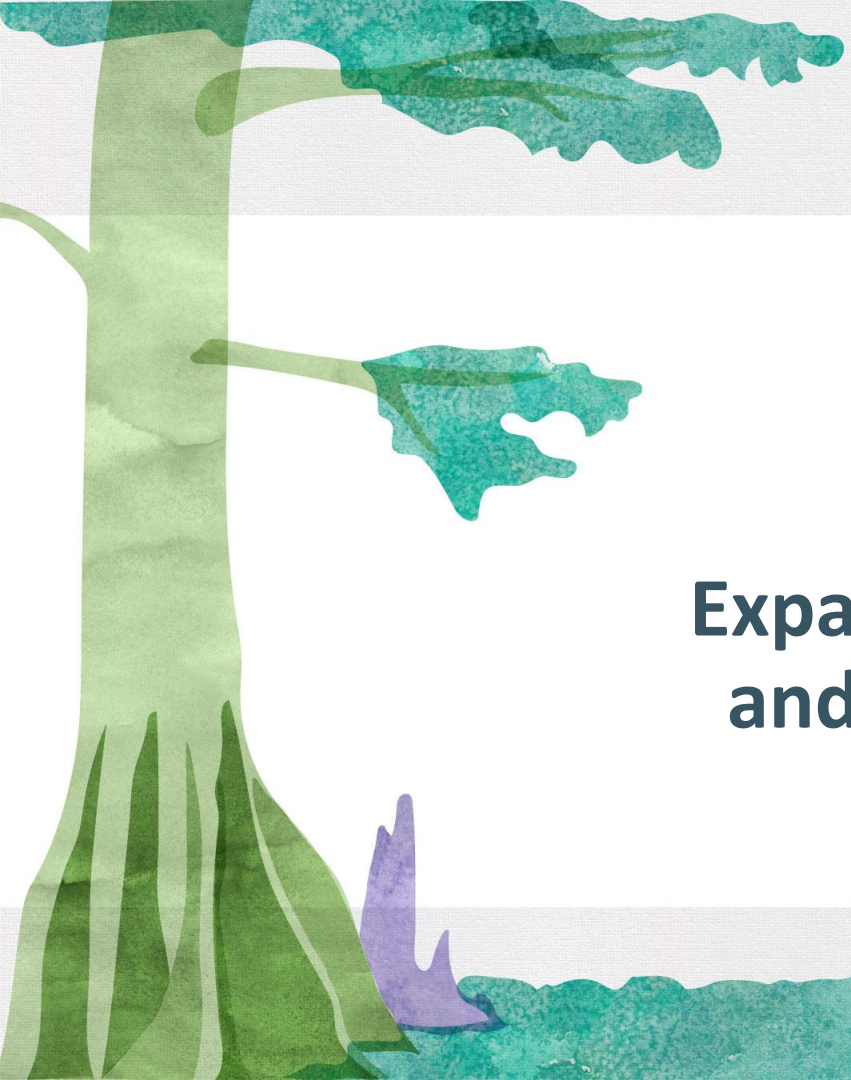
- A child's social and emotional well-being directly impacts their overall development and learning.
- SEL skills influence educational attainment, employment, and earnings as much, or more than, academic achievement measured by standardized tests (Duncan & Magnuson, 2011).
- The COVID-19 pandemic introduced new stressors and removed comforting connections and routines in the lives of children and adults.
- To reconnect children and staff and set the stage for foundational learning, SEL instruction and coaching is going to be more critical than ever.

Support Social and Emotional Development
Proposed Activities

To support further the social and emotional wellness of children and teachers, the Department will:

- Expand the **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program**:
  - Provides program- and child-centered consultation, on-site supports and professional development
  - Teams a mental health professional with early childhood professionals and families to improve the social, emotional, and behavioral health of young children in early learning settings

- Fund additional SEL supports from the **Louisiana Student Well-Being Vendor Guide**:
  - Provides community networks with a list of vendors and resources to foster positive learning environments that are responsive to children's social and emotional development



Priority 3

Activity 4:
Expand Developmental Screening and Support for Young Children with Disabilities (YCWD)

Expand Developmental Screening and Support for YCWD
Overview

Developmental screening is a process to quickly identify a child's progress in meeting developmental milestones.

- Developmental disabilities and delays can often go undetected; a universal screening of all children can lead to long-term achievement.
- When developmental and learning needs are identified **early** and **accurately** and when children receive timely, appropriate, and effective supports and interventions and specialized services aligned to their needs, learning is accelerated, skill gaps are closed, and children achieve at higher levels.
- To build a universal developmental screening process that improves child outcomes, early childhood community networks will create a consistent screening and referral process that monitors learning and development to improve outcomes for all children.

Expand Developmental Screening and Support for YCWD
Proposed Activities

Communities and school systems should be prepared to identify children in need of intervention through the implementation of universal developmental screenings.

The Department is providing the following resources to support the development of a universal developmental screening process:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire® (ASQ®) Train the Trainer for all network lead agencies and CCR&Rs to instruct educators and implement this evidence-based screening tool at the local level.
- Network Resource Finder provides digital access to co-branded and customized *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* brochures and milestone checklists, in addition to local contact information for Early Steps and Child Find.

Expand Developmental Screening and Support for YCWD
Proposed Activities

In addition to supporting early and accurate identification, the Department will support young children with disabilities through professional development opportunities for educators.

The Department partnered with six school systems to increase partnerships with vendors that can develop the capacity of educators that support children with disabilities:

- The Partnerships for Success Guide includes organizations that can provide professional development for specialized support in the areas of communication, assistive technology, functional skills, sensory environment and executive functioning.

Lead Agencies will continue to request competitive funding through Super App to identify vendors to train teachers.

Priority 3

Activity 5: Strengthen Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) Program Quality

Strengthen ECAC Program Quality
Overview

Effective early childhood teacher preparation is critical for ensuring that child care classrooms provide high-quality care and education.

- In an ECAC survey of the 29 BESE-approved programs providing CDA coursework to early childhood educators statewide, 1 in 4 indicated that only some or a few candidates successfully complete all program requirements.
- On-site program reviews indicate that more than two-thirds of those programs have “inadequate” or “needs improvement” coursework quality and that 88% of programs struggle to provide candidates with data-driven coaching.

Strengthen ECAC Program Quality
Proposed Activities

The Department will align teacher preparation accountability for early childhood programs to that of K-12 teacher preparation programs.

- ECAC accountability policy will align to K-12's teacher prep program policy and profile publications.
    - Public profiles will help teachers select programs that best fit their needs and encourage ECAC programs to meet standards and improve continuously.
- An additional year of pilot on-site reviews (in 2021-2022) and a learning year (in 2022-2023) before full-stakes accountability implementation in 2023-2024 will provide programs with sufficient runway to engage in continuous improvement efforts, with concrete Departmental guidance.

Priority 4:
Bolster Family Engagement

Priority 4: Bolster Family Engagement
Overview

Parents and families play a critical role in shaping the way children learn and view learning.

Families are children's first teachers, and the quality of parent-child relationships and interactions creates the foundation of skills that children need to be successful in school and in life.

Providing ongoing, consistent family engagement during the earliest years of a child's life

- acts as a catalyst for a child's healthy development
- creates consistency between the home and the center or school environments
- empowers parents and
- improves family well-being.

Priority 4: Bolster Family Engagement
Proposed Activities

Louisiana establishes a statewide family engagement framework and empowers families to access tools and resources to support their children's development.

1. **Develop the Statewide Family Engagement Framework:** Plan strategies, in conjunction with families and the organizations who support them most closely in communities, to engage and communicate more effectively with families
2. **Launch Family Engagement Website:** Connect families to critical resources, from a centralized and family-friendly location, to support families in meeting the developmental needs of their children
3. **Support Communities to Pilot Family Engagement Strategies:** Provide community networks with opportunities to offer at-home learning and support activities that meet the individualized needs of families
4. **Coordinate Child Developmental Support Services for Families Locally:** Link families directly with support in their community for assessing their children's development and receiving intervention services that will better prepare children for future success

Priority 4

Activity 1: Develop a Statewide Family Engagement Framework

Develop a Statewide Family Engagement Framework
Overview and Proposed Activities

The Department is engaging families and stakeholders as essential partners in framework development to ensure optimal child, family, and program outcomes.

Effective family engagement is an ongoing, interdependent process that requires intentional planning and evaluation. The framework will have three goals:

- Goal 1: Develop and implement a framework for engaging families, providers, and community members to support family well-being and the development of all children.
- Goal 2: Build a system of support for early care and education providers as they implement family engagement strategies that promote both child and family well-being using strength-based relationships, culturally-responsive approaches, and relationship-based practices.
- Goal 3: Ensure a family engagement framework promotes ongoing and consistent engagement strategies that are applicable for diverse communities and program partners.

Priority 4

Activity 2:
Launch
Family Engagement Website

Launch Family Engagement Website
Overview and Proposed Activities

The Department is creating a website designed to help families learn about school readiness, access health and safety resources, and be empowered to meet their children's needs.

The family engagement website will improve the coordination of resources to support families with children birth through five by:

- Connecting families to resources about child development, health services, parenting supports, vision/dental/hearing services, and more
- Providing families opportunities to learn about school readiness, early intervention, and developmental screening
- Promoting community-based family engagement opportunities in a centralized location to encourage families to learn, engage, and lead

Priority 4

Activity 3: Support Communities to Pilot Family Engagement Strategies

Pilot Family Engagement Strategies
Overview

Community networks should use researched-based family engagement strategies to support families in using available programs, materials, and resources.

Examples of strategies to bolster family engagement include:

- Parenting workshops
- Innovative communication methods
- Resource fairs
- Learning at Home programs
- Community learning and collaboration opportunities
- Opportunities for family leadership and advocacy

Family support strategies should be comprehensive of all families and children who reside in the community, regardless of a child's enrollment status or learning environment.

Pilot Family Engagement Strategies
Proposed Activities

The Department will partner with community networks to pilot strategies to support parent education, at-home learning, and family communication programs.

- LENA Start is an early-language program designed for scalable, effective outreach to parents of children aged birth to three. It employs a targeted early language curriculum and a cost-effective group delivery model to improve interactive talk between children and families and generate measurable results.
- Ready Rosie (from Teaching Strategies) is an early education tool for centers or schools and communities to strengthen their family engagement efforts by leveraging short videos, that model simple, quick, and fun home activities rooted in learning goals for children, along with family workshops, professional development opportunities for teachers, and mobile technology.
- FASTalk (from Family Engagement Lab) is a tool that builds partnerships between teachers and families and supports early literacy and language development. Teachers send age-appropriate learning activity tips, that reinforce classroom learning, to families via text messages in the family's home language.

Priority 4

Activity 4:

Coordinate Child Developmental Support Services for Families Locally

Coordinate Child Developmental Support for Families
Overview and Proposed Activities

Families are directly linked, at their community level, with support for monitoring their children's development and receive coordinated support services to better prepare children for future success.

The Department will work with community networks throughout the state to coordinate with family support agencies, in an effort to build local partnerships that ensure families are:

- Knowledgeable about developmental milestones and how to monitor their child's development;
- Aware of next steps to take when concerns arise and whom in their community to contact for referral, resources, and support; and
- Informed of various programs and services for children who may be at risk for developmental delays.

VI. Consideration of Proposed Revision to *Bulletin 137*

Proposed Revision to *Bulletin 137*
Overview

***Proposed Revision**: This change allows for flexibility on Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) processing fee collection.*

This change would assist with stabilizing child care providers in licensed child care by waiving the Departmental $15 processing fee while COVID-19 recovery funds are available.

Proposed Revision to *Bulletin 137*
Codifications

§1815. Fees for CCCBC-Based Determinations of Eligibility for Child Care Purposes

* * * * .

B. The department shall charge and collect a $15 processing fee when it receives a request for a CCCBC-based determination of eligibility for child care purposes.

a. This processing fee may be waived while funds to pay it are available from COVID-19 recovery funds.

VII. Consideration of Proposed Revision to *Bulletin 139*

Proposed Revision to *Bulletin 139*
Overview

***Proposed Revision**: Change CCAP reimbursement method to make payments for full-time CCAP children based on enrollment.*

This change would ensure that public child care funding is more predictable and consistent from month to month and would function more closely to how the private child care market operates.

The Department would collect child attendance and ensure that children funded by CCAP are utilizing the services:

- The Department would continue to require daily attendance reporting.
- The Department would use attendance data to conduct a monthly underutilization process to assess attendance.
- If CCAP children have not attended in the previous month, the Department will contact families and providers to assess the need for continued child care services. If families have not responded during this designated outreach period or no longer need care, CCAP authorizations will be discontinued.
    - Example: The full-time CCAP child did not attend one day in the month of January 2022. The Department contacts the family and provider in February 2022. If the family does not respond or states they no longer need CCAP, that child's CCAP authorization will end the last day of February 2022. The provider will be paid for enrollment of that child for January and February.

Proposed Revision to *Bulletin 139*
Codifications

§103. Definitions

Excessive ~~Unexplained~~ Absences —failure of a child to attend at least one day in the prior certified month. ~~six or more unexplained absences from the child care provider during any certification month~~.

Ineligibility Period for Providers—period of time following the termination or closure of a CCAP provider's certification during which the provider is ineligible for certification.

~~*Unexplained Absence* —an absence for which the head of household has not provided verbal or written notification to the provider or the department about the absence.~~

§509. Certification Requirements for Non-Categorically Eligible Households

A. To be certified as a CCAP household, households that are not categorically eligible for participation in CCAP must meet the following requirements:

* * * *

5. A child must have attended at least one day of care with a certified provider during each month in order for the household to remain certified for that child.

Proposed Revision to *Bulletin 139*
Codifications

§515. Payments Made on Behalf of Households

B. Categorically Eligible Households

1. Payments made to providers on behalf of categorically eligible households will be the state maximum daily rate for CCAP care as provided in Subsection A of this Section.

2. The number of days or hours authorized for payment is based on full-time or part-time authorizations. ~~the lesser of the following:~~

~~a. the time the child is actually in care each week;~~

~~b. the number of hours the head of household, the head of household's spouse or non-legal spouse, or MUP is working or attending a job training or educational program each week, plus one hour per day for travel to and from such activity; or~~

~~c. the time the child care is actually needed and available.~~

F. Payment will not be made to the provider for an unauthorized child.

Proposed Revision to *Bulletin 139*
Codifications

§515. Payments Made on Behalf of Households

~~F. Absences~~

~~1. Payment will not be made for absences of more than five days by a child in any calendar month or for an extended closure by a provider of more than five consecutive days in any calendar month.~~

~~2. A day of closure, on a normal operating day for the provider, is counted as an absent day for the children in the provider's care.~~

~~3. If a child authorized for full-time care attends child care less than four hours in one day, the child will be counted as a half day absent and half the daily rate will be paid to the provider.~~

~~4. No absences will be authorized for part-time care.~~

~~5. In cases of federal, state, or locally declared emergency situations or other special circumstances, the department may waive these absence requirements.~~

§519. Termination or Refusal of Renewal of Household Certification and Ineligibility Periods for Households

A. The department may terminate or refuse renewal of a household's certification and impose a period of ineligibility on the household for program violations, which include but are not limited to the following acts by a member of the household:

5. excessive ~~unexplained~~ absences;

Proposed Revision to *Bulletin 139*
Overview

***Proposed Revision**: This change allows for flexibility on Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) processing fee and CCAP family copayment collection.*

While COVID-19 recovery funds are available, these changes assist with:

- Stabilizing family home and in-home child care providers by waiving the Departmental CCCBC $15 processing fee
- Providing financial assistance to CCAP certified families by waiving the CCAP co-payment

Proposed Revision to *Bulletin 139*
Codifications

§310. Child Care Criminal Background Checks (CCCBCs) for Family Child Care Providers and In-Home Child Care Providers

F. Fees for CCCBC-Based Determinations of Eligibility for Child Care Purposes

* * * *

2. The department shall charge and collect a $15 processing fee when it receives a request for a CCCBC-based determination of eligibility for child care purposes.

a. This processing fee may be waived while funds to pay it are available from COVID-19 recovery funds.

§515. Payments Made on Behalf of Households

C. Non-Categorically Eligible Households

* * * *

2. A non-categorically eligible household shall pay a portion of its monthly child care costs in accordance with the sliding fee scale, and this portion will be referred to as a "co-payment."

a. Co-payments may be waived while funds to pay these amounts are available from COVID-19 recovery funds.

VIII. Consideration of the Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council Quarterly Report – Quarter 2 2021

Key Activities in Quarter 2
Early Childhood Community Networks

The Department and Community Networks worked together to close out the 2020-2021 school year.

Close Out of the 2020-2021 School Year:

- Teachers completed the third and final checkpoint for Teaching Strategies *GOLD*®.
- This spring lead agencies coordinated more than 2,000 local CLASS® observations while programs reviewed scores and provided debriefs to sites.
- The Department worked closely with lead agencies to provide information updates and problem-solving opportunities through the weekly lead agency webinar.

Coordinated Enrollment Activities:

- Communities conducted Coordinated Enrollment activities to fill program seats, with some communities receiving additional support through in-person meetings with Department staff to continue to improve their systems.

Key Activities in Quarter 2
Ready Start Networks

Ready Start Networks continue to work to achieve the Four Pillars in the Ready Start model: blueprint, coalition, governance, and fundraising.

- Eight new Ready Start Networks were recommended to June BESE: Ascension, Bossier, DeSoto, Jefferson Davis, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, Terrebonne, and Union.
- Three Ready Start Networks secured over $4.5 million in local funding for B-3 Seats:
  - Agenda for Children (on behalf of Orleans Parish): $3.458 million
  - Caddo Parish: $1 million
  - Jefferson Parish: $225,000
- Fifteen Ready Start Networks were awarded the opportunity to pursue innovative strategies to increase supply and access to child care at the local level through Community Supply Building and Access Expansion Grants.

Key Activities in Quarter 2
Supporting Teachers to be Successful

Teacher Leader Summit

- The in-person Teacher Leader Summit took place May 25 - 27 at the Morial Convention Center in New Orleans.
- The Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series was offered from June 1 - 11 allowing remote access.
- Both Summit events contained several early childhood sessions targeted for EC leaders, educators, and support agencies.
- Session materials will soon be available in the 2021 Teacher Leader Summit Library.

Standards Revisions:

- In April, the Department began a review of Louisiana's Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS).
- Materials from the ELDS Review Committee can be found in the LDOE Standards Review Committee library.

Key Activities in Quarter 2
Supporting Young Children with Disabilities (YCWD)

The Department is expanding support for young children with disabilities at the state and local level.

Teacher Leader Summit

- The 2021 Teacher Leader Summit included a number of sessions related to supporting early identification and young children with disabilities. Session materials will be posted for the following Department-led presentations:
  - Early Childhood Inclusion: Using Indicator 6 Data to Make Meaningful LRE Placement Decisions
  - Inclusion Pilot: Learning from the Field
  - Milestones Matter: Improving Early Identification through the *Learn the Signs. Act Early* Initiative

Universal Screening Initiative

- 79 participants across the state attended the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) Train the Trainer in May and June to build capacity to train programs in the use of a diagnostic screening tool for children birth to age five.
- 70% of participants specified interest in attending developmental screening office hours, which will begin mid-July.

Key Activities in Quarter 2
Supporting Directors to be Successful

The Department is planning a number of supports for Type III providers that will be ready in Quarter 3.

Shared Services:

- **Promoting Child Care Management Software (CCMS).** The Department is researching high-quality technology tools that will be offered at a subsidized cost for Type III centers. CCMS software enables tracking of attendance, enrollment, and tuition payment.
- **Launching the Substitute Directory.** The Department is in the final stages of developing a statewide Substitute Directory pilot to identify staff for the early childhood workforce. The region-by-region rollout will pay the costs of the Child Care Criminal Background Checks for the first 300 substitutes.

Business Supports:

- **Tax Consultancy.** The Department is finalizing contracts with tax consultants and CPAs to provide consultation to Type III early learning centers to provide guidance on tax obligations as a result of receiving grants, loans, and other COVID-19 related funding.
- **Business Training and Consultation.** The Department is continuing to work with First Children's Finance to provide business consultation and support to Type III providers.

Key Activities in Quarter 2
Supporting Struggling Centers

Centers participating in Site Improvement Planning completed the process in June of 2021.

The LDOE Field Support Consultant staff supported centers in Site Improvement Planning to:

- Review progress against articulated goals and objectives
- Complete end-of-year assessments
- Complete a survey to provide feedback to the Department

Key Activities in Quarter 2
Family Child Care Providers

The Department continues to support the quality improvement of Family Child Care educators in the second year of the pilot program.

- Spring CLASS® and FCCERS® assessments were conducted this quarter. These assessments are used to measure the quality of interactions and the learning environment.
- The family child care educator focus group continues to meet monthly to discuss ways to improve quality care and education in family child care homes and provide insight on how the Department can continue to support them.
- The Department has sponsored a group of family child care educators to attend the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) Annual Conference held in New Orleans in July.
- An internal work group, in collaboration with the state Fire Marshall and health department, continues to meet and discuss plans for family child care licensing.

Key Activities in Quarter 2
CCAP Updates

The Department continues to support CCAP families and providers through grant opportunities and statewide forums while maintaining program integrity.

- The Department offered LaCAP Relief Grant opportunities to CCAP Certified Type III Centers and Family Homes as well as Non-CCAP Certified Providers as they rebound from the impact of COVID-19.
- In early April, the CCAP team began conducting a series of statewide family engagement forums designed to aid families in reaching their goals and to support providers as they strengthen quality services to families.
- CCAP conducted an underutilization review of CCAP authorizations for the months of March, April, and May 2021. Tracking of Time Services (TOTS) attendance was reviewed and families contacted to assess the need for continued child care services. CCAP authorizations were discontinued effective June 30, 2021, for families that no longer needed the service or did not respond.
- Family copayments continued to be absorbed.

Key Activities in Quarter 2
Licensing Updates

The Department continues to support child care providers in a number of ways regarding health and safety requirements.

The Department continues to:

- Absorb fees for initial applications for licensure, license renewals, change requests, and fees for Child Care Criminal Background Checks (CCCBC)
- Streamline change requests (e.g., age ranges, capacity increase) to allow quick turnaround
- Provide BESE Waiver to allow 16 year-olds to be included in the child-to-staff ratio if the person works under the direct supervision of an adult staff member (expires 12/2021)
- Offer behavior management training via Tulane University

Key Activities in Quarter 2

Publicly-Funded Licensed Early Learning Centers

Licensing Type

	Type I	Type II	Type III	FCC	In-home
April 2021	234	180	1011	244	8
May 2021	235	179	1014	249	8
June 2021	231	173	1024	251	8

Star Ratings:

	0 Star	1 Star	2 Star	3 Star	4 Star	5 Star
2021	20	12	106	536	687	200

**This does not include new, unrated sites.*

IX. Adjournment