

Early Childhood

Family Child Care (FCC) Academic Approval

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

Academic Approval Family Child Care Terms

Please review and become familiar with the terms bulleted below.

- **Academic Approval** - verification by the LDOE that the site is meeting the required performance and academic standards; allows sites to qualify for valuable resources
- **Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)** - Federal program administered by the Louisiana Department of Education that makes payments to child care providers for child care services provided to eligible families.
- **Child Count** - Each publicly-funded provider in a community network reports the number of publicly-funded children at the site twice per academic year
- **Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®)** — a classroom observation-based system used to assess and rate classroom quality across multiple areas using a scale of one to seven
- **Community Networks** - Every Early Childhood Community Network has a lead agency that facilitates coordinated leadership functions for the community. Lead Agencies coordinate local CLASS® observations for publicly-funded sites, facilitate the coordinated enrollment process, conduct community meetings, and distribute communication from the Department.
- **Coordinated Enrollment** - Coordinated enrollment is the process developed and implemented by a community network to coordinate enrollment for infant, toddler, and Pre-K children in the community network whose families want to enroll them in a publicly-funded program in the community network.
- **Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate** - a credential for teachers who are working in early learning sites. This certificate enables early childhood teachers to be recognized for the professional training they have completed, as well as provide access to valuable resources such as the School Readiness Tax Credits.
- **Site Improvement Planning** - a process required for publicly-funded sites rated below 3.75 in which the site must work to develop and implement a plan for improvement in consultation with the LDOE and their local CCR&R.
- **Unified Quality Rating System** - using the CLASS® tool, an evaluation of the performance of publicly-funded early childhood care and education sites and community networks in preparing children for kindergarten and to assign a performance profile to each site and community network.

Application Process for Academic Approval

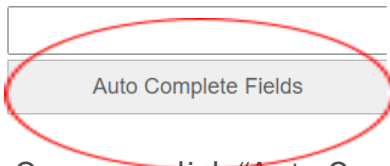
1. How do I apply for Academic Approval?

To apply for Academic Approval, you must submit to the Department the Program Partner Assurances by no later than June 17.

2. What information do I need to complete the online form for Academic Approval?

You will need your CCAP Provider Number, a working email address, and your phone number.

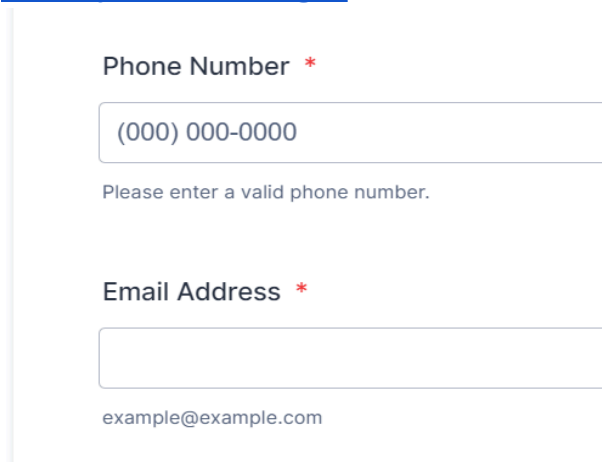
Please enter your CCAP Provider Number and click "auto complete fields." Ex: 020XXXXXXX *



The image shows a screenshot of a web form. At the top, there is a text input field. Below it is a button labeled "Auto Complete Fields". This button is circled in red. To the right of the form, there is a vertical line.

Once you click "Auto Complete Fields" most of the Program Partner information section of the online form will be filled in. You will only need to enter your phone number and email address before you will be able to click to view the next page.

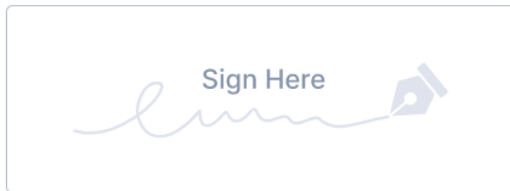
*If you are unable to proceed, please email your provider number and full name to felicia.jackson3@la.gov.



The image shows a screenshot of a web form with two input fields. The first field is labeled "Phone Number *" and contains the placeholder text "(000) 000-0000". Below this field is the text "Please enter a valid phone number." The second field is labeled "Email Address *" and is empty. Below this field is the placeholder text "example@example.com".

3. How do I sign the online form?

You should sign it using your computer mouse if using a computer or using a finger when you are using a touchscreen or mobile device.



4. I have completed the online form, but I am not ready to submit it. Can I save my online form to keep from starting over?

Yes, you can click the “Save” button and enter your email address. A link to the form will be sent to that email address so that you can use that link to resume your application later.



Academic Approval Certificate for FCCs

How long is my Academic Approval certificate valid?

The Academic Approval certificate is valid for one year, from July 1 - June 30. Providers interested in participating in Academic Approval reapply each spring.

Does the validity period change based on when the current Program Partner Assurances are signed?

The current Academic Approval certificate will be valid until June 30 even if the current Program Partner Assurances are signed after July 1. It is important to note, however, that you will not be eligible for School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTCs) unless you have applied for Academic Approval by June 17.

If I move to another home, will I need to complete another online form (Program Assurances) for Academic Approval?

Yes, if you move, a new Program Assurances online form will need to be submitted with your new registration (license) number. You will receive a new Academic Approval certificate as well.

How will I receive a copy of my Academic Approval certificate?

Academic Approval certificates will be automatically generated following the successful submission of the Assurances and will be emailed to the email address you provided in the online form.

What should I do with my Academic Approval certificate?

You should print a copy and post the certificate in a visible location in your site.

Can I get a copy of my signed Program Partner Assurances for the current academic year?

Following the successful submission of the Assurances, a pdf copy of your signed Program Partner Assurances will be emailed to the email address you provided in the online form. A signed copy of your Program Partner Assurances is not the same thing as an Academic Approval certificate.

What should I do if I made a mistake on the online form that I submitted?

Contact Kishia Grayson at kishia.grayson@la.gov.

What should I do if my Academic Approval Certificate is displaying incorrect information?

Contact Kishia Grayson at kishia.grayson@la.gov.

What should I do if I submitted the online form and have not received my current Academic Approval certificate or a copy of my signed Program Partner Assurances?

Within two minutes or less of submitting your online form, you should automatically receive a copy of your signed assurances and your certificate. If not, contact Kishia Grayson at kishia.grayson@la.gov.

School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC's)

Is my star rating based off of my local CCR&R observation score or Picard's observation score?

The star rating is based on both your local observation, which will be conducted by an observer selected by your early childhood community network lead agency, and third-party Picard observations. The observer selected by your early childhood community network lead agency may not be someone from your local CCR&R.

Third-party observations are compared to local observations for the same classroom within the same semester (fall or spring). If the third-party observation differs by more than 1 point to the comparable local observation, then the local observation dimension scores within that domain are replaced by the third-party observation dimension scores.

Do I need CCAP children enrolled or just be CCAP-certified to receive the benefits of School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC's)?

You must be CCAP-certified, but you do not need CCAP children currently enrolled at your site in order to receive the Family Child Care Staff SRTC.

If you have CCAP children enrolled but choose not to opt into Academic Approval, are you still eligible for financial incentives?

No, in order to receive financial incentives, you must opt into Academic Approval.

Can I maintain my Teacher/Director Level once the newly proposed FCC Ladder goes into effect?

No, all providers seeking an SRTC for a given year must be leveled on the track that matches their child care setting and role in that given year, which means that a CCAP-certified Family Child Care provider can only use the Family Child Care Staff track. The LDOE is in the process of proposing the new FCC Track for BESE approval. Once approved, FCC Providers will follow the FCC Ladder and progress based on desired level requirements.

CCAP Bonus Payments

Do I need CCAP children enrolled or just be CCAP-certified to receive the benefits of CCAP bonus payments?

To be eligible for CCAP bonus payments you must have CCAP children enrolled in your site and have a star rating of 3 stars or higher. FCCs with Academic Approval and a star rating of 3 stars or higher who are serving CCAP children will receive quarterly payments based on a percentage of the rate for each child on CCAP served.

Star Rating	Quarterly unified bonus received for each eligible child in 2021 and beyond
5 Stars	23% of the rate for each child on CCAP
4 Stars	16.5% of the rate for each child on CCAP
3 Stars	11% of the rate for each child on CCAP

Overall Performance Score	Site Performance Rating	Star Rating of Site
6.00 - 7.00	Excellent	5 stars
5.25 - 5.99	High Proficient	4 stars
4.50 - 5.24	Proficient	3 stars
3.75 - 4.49	Approaching Proficient	2 stars
3.00 - 3.74	Approaching Proficient	1 star
1.00 - 2.99	Unsatisfactory	0 stars

Will my third party observation be scheduled?

The Picard Center contacts each site by phone or email prior to the month they will be observed in order to verify site level information. Physical letters are mailed to notify you of the month window in which the observation(s) will occur. The letter states, “If you have scheduled events during this time that preclude our observations, please contact the Picard Center by email no later than 1 week before the scheduled timeframe of the observation.”

How long are the observations?

CLASS[®] observations are conducted in four observation cycles. Each cycle is approximately 15-20 minutes. The total time to conduct the observation is approximately two hours.

How are third party observations used to calculate Performance Ratings?

If third party observation domain scores differ by more than 1 point from local observations for comparable classrooms, third party scores replace local scores for that domain. For more information on Performance Ratings and Performance Profiles, please consult the [Performance Profile FAQs](#) or reach out to your community network lead agency.

Academic Approval Support

If I opt into Academic Approval, will I have the same support as Type III centers?

Yes, your site will be eligible for and receive the same support services as those provided to Type III centers, including:

- Coaching: helps your site improve teacher-child interactions and helps your site increase its rating on the Performance Profile
- Training: tailored to meet the needs of the FCC site
- Technical Assistance: short visits that address your custom needs, such as assistance with environment set-up or completing paperwork
- Mental Health consultation: MHCs support Family Child Care providers in improving the social, emotional, and behavioral health of children in their sites
- Financial support for a high-quality curriculum: To improve the quality of learning and

Kindergarten readiness, the Department supports providers by reimbursing the majority of the cost for [High Quality Early Childhood Curriculum](#).

Do resources and support begin immediately once you sign up for Academic Approval?

Once you have submitted your online form, you will be issued a certificate of approval for the academic year. Support will begin as soon as July 1.

General Questions

Will Family Child Care providers applying for Academic Approval also be able to participate in the Child and Adult Food Program for child care (CACFP) through a sponsor?

Yes, you are encouraged to continue participating in the food program! This is a great incentive to decrease (by reimbursement) costs to your business. If you do not already participate in the [Child and Adult Food Program](#), please email childnutritionprograms@la.gov for more information.

Is Academic Approval required for Family Child Care sites?

No, Academic Approval is an option for Family Child Care providers. However, it is encouraged that FCC providers opt in, not only to reap the financial benefits but also to gain ongoing support from the Louisiana Department of Education and community partners to provide quality care to the children and families in your community.

Is there a deadline to opt into Academic Approval?

While an application for Academic Approval can be completed year-round, for Family Child Care Providers to opt into Academic Approval so that they may be eligible for School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC), they must complete their online application by June 17.

If I already have my CDA but it is not for a Family Child Care setting, can I use my current CDA to qualify for my Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate?

Please contact FamilyChildCare@la.gov to share more details regarding when you received your CDA and whether you received your CDA through a BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate program.

Will my site receive a Performance Profile?

All publicly-funded sites, including family childcare centers in the current school year and later, that were open on October 1 and February 1 receive a Performance Profile for that school year. Performance Profiles measure the quality of publicly-funded early childhood sites serving at-risk children ages birth-five for each academic year. These profiles are required by Act 3 (2012), and include a rating at the top (Excellent, High Proficient, Proficient, Approaching Proficient, Unsatisfactory) and a set of informational metrics at the bottom. These profiles are shared with families to help them make informed choices for their children and support providers to improve the quality of early childhood care and education. For more information on Performance Profiles, please consult the [Performance Profile FAQs](#) or reach out to your community network lead agency.

Who should I contact for time & attendance concerns with KinderConnect?

Please reach out to supportLA@kindersystems.com for any follow up questions for TOTs questions.

Are Family Child Care sites required to select a state-approved curriculum?

Child care centers/sites in Louisiana can choose any curricula they prefer. However, as part of the Child Care Curriculum Initiative grant, early learning centers are only eligible to receive reimbursement for the purchase and implementation of the Tier I curriculum through a state

contract. These resources are highly recommended because they meet all criteria and indicators of quality, and they support interactions and effective instruction.