
Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Application



Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

Table of Contents:

- I. Abstract
- II. Glossary
- III. Introduction
 - A. Approach
 - B. Expected Outcomes
- IV. State Birth to Five Mixed Delivery System Description and Vision Statement
 - A. Target Population and Intended Outcomes
 - B. Current Landscape
 - C. New and Existing Opportunities
 - D. Gaps, Challenges, and Improvement Opportunities
- V. Approach: Activity 1 Early Childhood Needs Assessment
 - A. Access to Early Childhood Care and Education in Louisiana
 - B. Early Childhood Site Quality in Louisiana
 - C. Assessing Use of Best Practices
 - D. Assessing Community Needs through Collaborative Leadership Structures
 - E. Key Learnings from the Needs Assessment
 - F. PDG B-5 Activities: Strengthening Louisiana’s Early Childhood Needs Assessment
- VI. Approach: Activity 2 Birth to Five Strategic Plan
 - A. Louisiana’s Existing Strategic Plan
 - 1. Strategic Plan Component 1: Addressing Access
 - 2. Strategic Plan Component 2: Improving Quality
 - 3. Strategic Plan Component 3: Building Local Governance
 - B. PDG B-5 Activities: Supporting and Updating Louisiana’s Existing Strategic Plan
- VII. Approach: Activity 3 Maximizing Parent Knowledge and Choice
 - A. Existing Supports
 - B. Early Childhood State Collaboration Structures
 - C. PDG B-5 Activities: Enhancing Local Governance and Coordination to Support Parent Choice
- VIII. Approach: Activity 4 Sharing Best Practices
 - A. Existing Supports
 - B. PDG B-5 Activities: Strengthening Collaboration to Increase Program Quality
- IX. Approach: Activity 5 Improving Overall Quality
- X. Organizational Capacity and Management
- XI. Timeline and Dissemination Plan
- XII. Program Performance Evaluation Plan
- XIII. Logic Model
- XIV. Sustainability Plan
- XV. Budget and Budget Justification
- XVI. Appendix
 - A. Governor’s Letter
 - B. Organizational Chart
 - C. Letters of Support and Commitment

I. Abstract

Project Title: Louisiana Early Childhood Preschool Development Grant Birth-5 Application

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The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is applying for a \$10 million Preschool Development Grant B-5 award to achieve the following four project goals and objectives:

- 1. Establish local infrastructure via Ready Start networks:** LDOE will establish a local governance structure that empowers local community networks to drive improvement, incentivizes innovation, and drives quality improvement.
- 2. Incorporate Family Homes into Statewide Early Childhood Network:** LDOE will research and study family homes to inform a strategic plan to incorporate family homes in the statewide early childhood network, as described in Activities 1, 2, and 5.
- 3. Increase Alignment and Improve Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education:** LDOE will increase opportunities for teachers to be prepared, equipped, and supported to offer high-quality experiences and opportunities for children in birth-to-five classrooms.
- 4. Improve State Systems that inform the Statewide Early Childhood Network:** LDOE will conduct a validation study of the state's unified quality rating system, begin developing a comprehensive data system, and implement a shared services pilot.

Activities funded by the grant to achieve these long-term outcomes are aligned with the key purposes of the PDG B-5 grant and will result in three long-term outcomes:

- **Grant Outcome 1: Access** - More young children access high-quality care through a mixed delivery system.
- **Grant Outcome 2: Quality** - Children participate in active learning in their birth-to-five classrooms, led by teachers that are fully able to prepare them for Kindergarten and beyond.
- **Grant Outcome 3: Local Governance** - Communities drive faster rates of quality improvement and expanded access.

Historically in Louisiana, early childhood care and education programs were fragmented and not effectively preparing enough children for Kindergarten. In 2012, the Louisiana Legislature passed the Early Childhood Education Act of 2012 ([Act 3](#)), with the goal of ensuring all children in publicly-funded birth to age five programs are on track for success in school and beyond. Since the passage of Act 3, LDOE has successfully established a statewide early childhood network that relies on collaborative leadership and a unified quality rating system to support improved access to a statewide, mixed delivery system of high-quality, publicly-funded birth-to-five programs. The PDG B-5 will support the state to strengthen its mixed delivery system and improve opportunities for children, families, teachers, providers, and communities in Louisiana.

II. Glossary

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|--|--|
| Act 3 (2012) | The Early Childhood Education Act created a Statewide Early Childhood Care and Education Network to improve kindergarten readiness and unify the early childhood system. |
| Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) | The policy making body for all Louisiana early childhood programs and public elementary and secondary schools. |
| Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) | A federal program that assists low-income families to obtain child care so they can work or attend school. The LDOE is the state’s Lead Agency for the grant, and administers CCAP. |
| Child Development Associate (CDA) | A nationally-recognized credential for early childhood teachers. |
| Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) | Contracted agencies that support families in finding child care, and support child care centers through training and coaching. |
| Curriculum Review System | The LDOE reviews curricula to determine the degree of alignment with state standards. Tier 1 is the highest rating. |
| Child Count | The unduplicated count of all birth-to-five publicly-funded children by site, age, and funding source, in each community. |
| <i>CLASSroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™)</i> | An observation-based instrument that assesses teacher and child interactions, which is correlated with child outcomes. |
| Community Network | The local consortia of all publicly-funded early childhood providers with a local lead agency that serves as fiscal agent. |
| Coordinated Enrollment | Community networks collaborate on four enrollment areas to reduce burdens on families and maximize access: coordinated information campaign, coordinated eligibility determination, coordinated application, and matching based on preference. |
| Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) | The state agency currently responsible for child welfare, child support enforcement, and economic stability programs. |
| Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate | A professional credential for child care teachers, and the new minimum credential for lead teachers in Type III centers. |
| Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council (ECCE Advisory Council) | Created by Act 868 (2014) to provide input and guidance to BESE on matters related to all publicly-funded early care and education programs; the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. |

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

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|---|---|
| Economically Disadvantaged | Children in families below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL), foster or migrant children, and children experiencing homelessness, with identified needs, or dual language learners. |
| Family Home Child Care Provider | Provider of child care services for six or fewer unrelated children, in a private residence other than the child’s residence. |
| Informational Metrics | Included on each site’s Performance Profiles are metrics on use of best practices, such as curriculum and assessment. |
| LA 4 | Louisiana’s primary state-funded pre-K program. Other pre-K programs offered in mixed settings include 8(g) and Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development Program (NSECD). |
| Lead Agency | Fiscal agent that is approved by BESE to coordinate the duties and responsibilities of the community network. |
| Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDH) | State agency that leads the IDEA Part C program, as well as the MIECHV program. |
| The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) | Agency responsible for all public and nonpublic preschool, child care and Head Start, and K-12 education programs. |
| Louisiana Pathways | Contracted agency that manages a career development system for child care staff, and the Pathways Scholarship Program. |
| Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) | School districts must administer Teaching Strategies <i>GOLD</i> ® or the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). |
| Performance Profile | Each publicly-funded early childhood site receives a Performance Profile, with a rating and informational metrics. |
| Performance Profile Rating | Performance Profiles have a rating (Excellent, Proficient, Approaching Proficient, Unsatisfactory) based on <i>CLASS</i> ™ . |
| School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC) | A series of refundable tax credits for families, child care providers, staff, and businesses that support type III centers. |
| Teacher Leader/Supervisor Collaboratives | Regional quarterly professional development opportunities to lead agencies and teacher leaders |
| Teacher Leader Summit | An annual, statewide multi-day professional development summit for B-12th grade leaders, administrators, and teachers. |
| Type III Early Learning Center | An early learning center licensed to receive public funds from any source other than federal food and nutrition programs. |
| Unified Quality Rating System | All publicly-funded birth to five sites receive a Performance Profile ratings and informational metrics. |

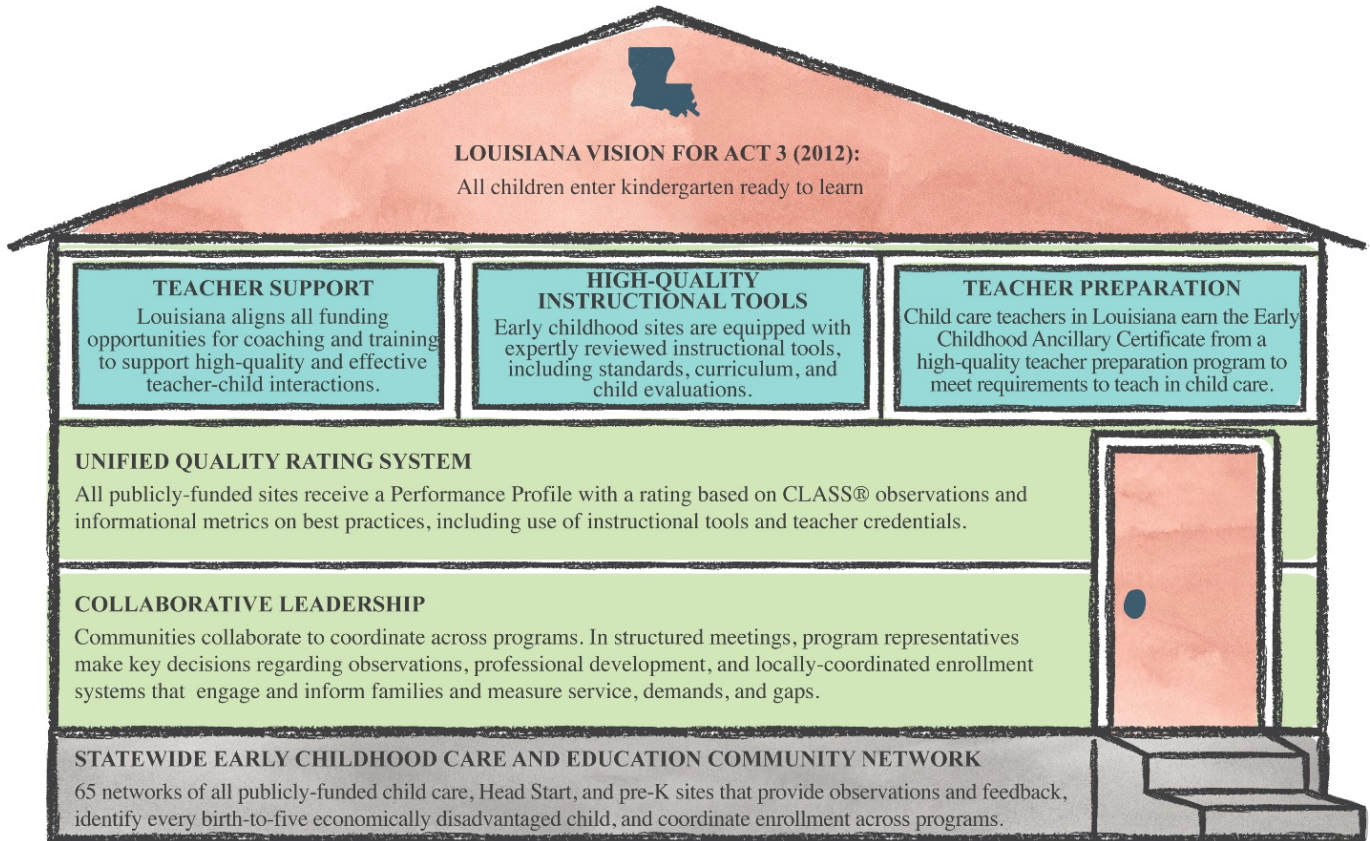
II. Introduction

To address a fragmented early childhood system that prepared only about half of its children for kindergarten, the Louisiana State Legislature unanimously enacted the Early Childhood Education Act of 2012 ([Act 3](#)). This mandated sweeping reforms to early care and education in Louisiana, seeking to have all children in publicly-funded early childhood programs on track for success in school. Through Act 3, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) was charged with unifying all publicly-funded early childhood programs into a statewide early childhood network and creating a new unified rating system, with the ultimate goal of empowering families by providing easier access to and strengthened information about the quality of early learning options for their children.

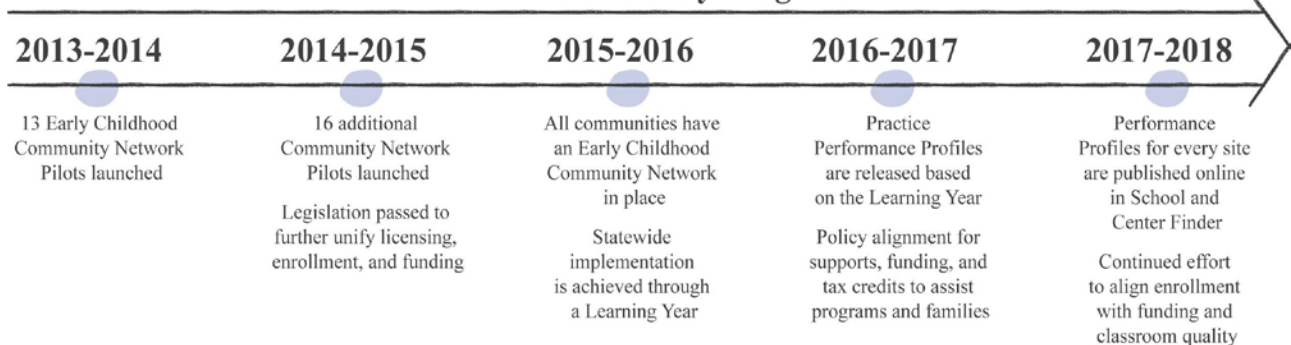
Louisiana has made substantial progress towards achieving this mandate to unify early childhood. To build on the original vision and intent of Act 3, after years of piloting the concepts of the state's original logic model, in June 2015, BESE codified the establishment of the statewide early childhood network and expectations for coordinated observations and coordinated enrollment in administrative code, known as [Bulletin 140](#): Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network. By unifying early childhood programs into local community networks that make up the statewide early childhood network, Louisiana is coordinating delivery models and funding streams so more economically disadvantaged children access high-quality opportunities. Now, Louisiana can more efficiently use existing resources, increase partnership between LEAs, Head Start programs, publicly-funded non-public preschools, and publicly-funded child care centers, and improve program quality over time.

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

By the 2017-2018 school year, Louisiana achieved the initial implementation goals of Act 3 (2012) and subsequent legislation that sought to unify the fragmented early childhood landscape in order to maximize current funding and available opportunities for children:



Timeline of Steady Progress



✓ **Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) transition and evolution:** By July 1, 2015, Louisiana had achieved the legislature’s requirement to transfer the Lead Agency authority for CCDF from Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to the LDOE, which helped

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

to unify state programs under one governing body, ensuring all programs are focused on preparing economically disadvantaged children for kindergarten. The LDOE now oversees licensing, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), and child care quality activities. In 2016 and 2017, the LDOE reduced family copayments, increased CCAP reimbursement rates, and decreased eligibility requirements to best serve low-income, working families. A waiting list was created in July 2017 that began to capture true demand for care.

- ✓ **Full implementation of the state’s unified rating system:** In fall 2017, the state released the first formal Performance Profiles for all pre-K, Head Start and publicly-funded child care programs. These profiles were publicly released to families via the state’s new [School and Center Finder](#) online tool and for the first time the performance ratings included benefits and consequences for early childhood providers.
- ✓ **Resources to support improvement aligned to state’s rating system:** Louisiana has aligned several improvement resources to the state’s rating system. This includes refocusing contracts for Child Care Resource & Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) to support strong teacher-child interactions and instruction, aligning School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC) and child care tiered bonus payments to the unified rating system results, offering opportunities to communities for professional development aligned to the rating system, and offering BESE-approved opportunities for child care teachers to attend high-quality training programs to earn credentials.

While Louisiana has made significant progress by unifying the early childhood landscape, increasing coordination across programs, and promoting the importance of early childhood quality, the state has not reached its ambitious vision of all children ready for kindergarten. Thousands of economically disadvantaged children and families are still unable to access care and education, and

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

often the seats available at the youngest ages are not at the quality needed to prepare children for kindergarten: while 86% of the state’s economically disadvantaged four-year-olds are served through public funds in sites rated Proficient or above, only 21% of three-year-olds and less than 5% of children younger than three are served through public funds in Proficient sites. Although there are collaborative structures facilitated by a lead agency in every parish of the state, the nascent local governance structures require further development to drive significant change in quality and access. Through PDG B-5, Louisiana will improve its early childhood system in order to reach the state’s goal of kindergarten readiness for all children.

A. Approach

Since 2012, as Louisiana has built its unified early childhood system and has assessed quality and access across its mixed delivery early childhood programs, the following key learnings have become clear:

| Key Learnings | | Outcome of PDG B-5 Grant: |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Access | Louisiana must find creative solutions and supports to increase access for its economically disadvantaged birth through three population. | More young children access high-quality care through a mixed delivery system. |
| Quality | Teachers must be well prepared to teach in early childhood classrooms so they can prepare children for school and beyond, which means teachers need to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be supported to have high-quality and research-based interactions with children; 2. Use expertly reviewed instructional tools every day, including standards, curriculum, and assessment; and 3. Receive foundational training that leads to certification. | Children participate in active learning in birth to five classrooms, led by teachers that are fully able to prepare them for kindergarten and beyond. |
| Local Governance | State infrastructure that empowers local communities with responsibility for resources and quality is essential, because those closest to classrooms and | Communities drive faster rates of quality improvement and |

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

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| | children are best positioned to make improvements that will impact outcomes for children | expanded access. |
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B. Expected Outcomes

These key learnings inform the state’s strategic approach to increasing access, improving quality, and strengthening state-local partnerships that will guide the planning and implementation of all grant-funded activities. The state will structure its grant-funded activities into four project goals that correspond to the expected long-term outcomes of the grant:

| Project Goals and Objectives | Grant-Funded Activities | Expected Long-Term Outcomes |
|--|--|--|
| Establish formalized local infrastructure via Ready Start networks | Fund local communities to establish Ready Start network pilots | Local Governance: Communities drive faster rates of quality improvement and expanded access |
| | Support Ready Start network pilots with professional development, technical assistance, and other resources | |
| | Create community resource grants supporting high-quality mixed delivery partnership classrooms | Access: More young children access high-quality care through a mixed delivery system |
| Incorporate Family Homes into Statewide Early Childhood Networks | Create multi-year strategy to understand the landscape of family homes and how best to increase quality offerings to all children within the state's mixed delivery system | |
| | Pilot supports to engage registered family homes in the statewide early childhood network | |
| Increase Alignment and Improve Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education | Pilot multiple quality measures in participating family homes | Quality: Children participate in active learning in birth to five classrooms, led by teachers that are fully able to prepare them for kindergarten and beyond |
| | Provide scholarships for child care teachers to attain early childhood certification | |
| | Build onsite evaluation system for child care teacher preparation programs | |
| | Fund grants for high-quality, standards-aligned birth to five instructional resources | |
| | Fund grants to provide coaching and professional development to improve teacher-child interactions | |
| Fund creation of Louisiana Key Training Modules on identified topics | | |

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

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| Improve State Systems | Contract with University of Virginia to conduct a validation study of Louisiana's unified quality rating system. | |
| | Develop birth through 12th grade data system. | Supports Local Governance, Access, and Quality outcomes |
| | Build shared services infrastructure. | Access: More young children access high-quality care through a mixed delivery system |

IV. State Birth to Five Mixed Delivery System Description and Vision Statement

As called for by Act 3, Louisiana’s vision is for all children to arrive to kindergarten ready to succeed on their first day. Through the state’s birth to five mixed delivery system, publicly-funded programs have been unified under Louisiana’s statewide early childhood network. This network requires local communities to measure classroom quality, report a count publicly-funded children served, and coordinate enrollment and family engagement processes.

A. Target Population and Intended Outcomes

Louisiana’s mixed delivery system of programs serving children birth to five targets the state’s most low-income and disadvantaged children. The state’s birth-to-twelve term for its targeted population is “Economically Disadvantaged,” which is comprised of children at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), foster children, migrant children, children experiencing homelessness, and children with identified needs or dual language learners. This target population includes children in tribal and rural communities.

B. Current Landscape

Louisiana’s current early childhood landscape is comprised of programs operated at the local, regional, and state levels. Due in part to increased coordination at the state and network level, programs often operate in conjunction with each other. For example, a child care center may accept children funded through CCDF, Head Start, and public preschool dollars; a school may

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

serve children in a licensed classroom through Head Start funding; a Head Start may partner with a school to offer a school-based classroom alongside its Head Start options. While the state has taken significant steps to maximize existing funding through coordination and unified expectations for quality, nearly 156,400 economically disadvantaged children birth to five are still unable to access publicly-funded early childhood care and education.

| Program/Funding Type | Location | Child Count |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| State pre-K: LA 4,8G, NSECD, PDG, | Public and Nonpublic Schools, Type III Early Learning Centers | 20,009 (age 4-5) |
| Head Start and Early Head Start | Public Schools and Type III Early Learning Centers | 18,301 (age 3-5) 3,370 (age 0-2) |
| Child Care Assistance in Type III Centers | Type III Early Learning Centers | 13,080 (age 0-5) |
| Child Care Assistance in Family Homes | Family Homes/In-Home Providers | 471 (age 0-5) |
| Other school-based pre-K: Title I, EEF, local funds | Public Schools | 7,794 (age 3-4) |

State Pre-K Programs: Louisiana has made significant progress in providing voluntary, high-quality preschool programs through public and nonpublic providers. In 1988, BESE began the 8(g) Model Early Childhood Program to serve at-risk four-year-olds. Louisiana created its primary state-funded preschool program, known as LA 4, in 2001. Although 8(g) and LA 4 are supported by different funding sources, the LDOE has established identical program quality requirements; thus this application typically just references LA 4. In addition to LA 4, the state provides economically disadvantaged children access to quality nonpublic school and child care classrooms through the Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD) program.

LA 4 and NSECD have a history of quality and achievement, and together, these programs serve more than 17,000 four-year-olds in high-quality preschool classrooms annually. These state pre-K programs have specific requirements, including teachers with bachelor's degree and ECE certification, ratios of 1:10 with a group size of 20, 18 hours of professional development, Tier 1

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

curriculum and assessment, and full day 6-hour programs offering comprehensive services. In addition to these state-funded pre-K programs, Louisiana was awarded an initial Preschool Development Grant - Expansion Grant. Through this grant the state expanded pre-K access for 4,600 economically disadvantaged four-year-olds in 18 communities over four years.

Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships: In Louisiana, there are 70 Head Start grants (48 Head Start grants and 22 Early Head Start grants). Of these, 46 grants are offered through Community Action Agencies or other nonprofit organizations, 18 are offered through school districts, and six are offered through other governmental organizations. Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms exist in traditional school buildings or licensed type III early learning centers. Each site is required to participate in the statewide early childhood network. The Louisiana Head Start Collaborative Office sits at the LDOE.

Through Head Start funds, Louisiana serves 7,197 four and five-year-olds and 11,104 three-year-olds. These seats are routinely offered in partnership with schools, and over the past four years, in partnership with PDG-funded sites and communities. These partnerships allow more children to access the high-quality comprehensive services and family engagement supports that are critical to the Head Start program. Through Early Head Start funds, Louisiana serves 578 infants, 980 one-year-olds, and 1,812 two-year-olds. Of those, 712 children are served through Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP), which blends EHS and CCAP funds to serve more children in high-quality settings. LDOE supports these partnerships through a support liaison, prioritization for CCAP services, and collaboration opportunities.

CCDF Program: As Louisiana's CCDF Lead Agency, the LDOE establishes all requirements, including licensing and monitoring, for programs to be authorized to accept CCAP funding. As part of the process to transition the grant to the LDOE, Louisiana enacted policies to reduce

barriers of enrollment for families, including lowering work requirements, increasing reimbursement rates, and lowering family copayments, to ensure the program was truly achieving its purpose of supporting low-income working families. As a result, the state established a waiting list in 2017 that better captured the true demand for care for economically disadvantaged children in Louisiana. Serving children on the waiting list is a high priority for the state, and the additional CCDF funding awarded to Louisiana in 2018 was used to serve 4,500 children on the CCAP waiting list. As of October 2018, the waiting list included 3,138 children and 2,167 families from across the state. The following programs are authorized for CCAP:

- **Type III Early Learning Centers:** The majority of children funded through CCAP are served in centers licensed to accept public funds, known as Type III centers. Type III centers make up 72% of all licensed centers. There are 1,020 type III early learning centers with a licensed capacity of 58,344, serving 13,080 children through CCAP. These centers must meet the requirements to earn an Academic Approval certificate for their license, which includes participation at a reasonable level of performance in the statewide early childhood network. Type III centers can access free supports through their CCR&R, SRTC, and other bonuses and incentives. Type I and type II early learning centers cannot take public funding for seats.
- **Family Homes/In-Homes:** Family homes can be authorized to accept children served through CCAP. Family homes must serve fewer than seven unrelated children in the provider's home. Currently, there are 223 providers serving 471 children through CCAP in family homes. These providers are required to be registered and certified and are monitored for minimum health and safety standards.

Other Early Childhood Care and Education Funding Sources: Other funding sources exist at the community level. Local LEAs use Title I funding to offer pre-K that is aligned to the quality

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

requirements for LA 4. As of fall 2017, Title I funding was the primary funding source for 5,856 pre-K, as reported on the unduplicated community network child count. IDEA part B is another large source of funding. Through reverse mainstreaming and other opportunities, 897 children are funded for full day seats primarily through IDEA. Other funding sources for low-income and disadvantaged include the Education Excellence Fund (EEF), which 9 local communities use to fund 382 seats. Thirty-four local communities use their local dollars to fund 1,556 seats. All sites with publicly-funded seats are required to participate in the statewide early childhood network.

C. New and Existing Opportunities

With the establishment of Louisiana's statewide early childhood network, Louisiana has created structures to gather information and trends about quality, access, and local collaboration opportunities since 2013. As such, Louisiana is uniquely poised to take advantage of new and existing opportunities to fund high-quality birth to five seats in mixed delivery settings.

Existing Opportunities

- **Aligning at-risk definitions:** In 2017, the LDOE established a K-12 definition of economically disadvantaged, which included eligibility for income-based Medicaid programs (200% Federal Poverty Level). The LDOE has now aligned the early childhood definition of at-risk, previously 185% FPL, to the K-12 definition of economically disadvantaged. This allowed for several efficiencies: children entering kindergarten and considered disadvantaged are the same children that the district is able to serve through public pre-K programs at four; communities can use direct certification for services offered by Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) and DCFS to determine child eligibility for programs; and the state can define its target population to serve across all ages birth-to-twelfth grade.

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

- **Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund:** In the 2016 legislative session, [Act 353](#) established a special treasury fund that the legislature can designate funds for early childhood services in mixed delivery settings. These funds would have a local match requirement. The legislature continues to work to identify dedicated funding, but the mechanism to direct funds to high-quality seats in mixed delivery settings and to incentivize local matching exists.
- **Local Investments:** With the establishment of Louisiana’s statewide early childhood network, local communities have been better positioned to advocate for increased investments in birth to five mixed delivery classrooms. One example is New Orleans, where the community’s outreach, through both narrative and data, has helped persuade the mayor to direct \$750,000 of local funds to offer high-quality birth through three seats through the local community network structure, with the network’s lead agency as the fiscal agent. The city’s investment is being used to leverage investments from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and is the foundation for the Orleans Parish School Board launching a community-wide collaborative effort to investigate additional funding for early care and education. Other philanthropic organizations have also leveraged the early childhood network structure to invest in quality improvements aligned to the state’s quality rating system, including the Orchard Foundation which funded access to *CLASSTM* trainings for teachers in type III early learning centers, Head Start, and public pre-K classrooms in the nine parishes that it supports. As early childhood community network structures become increasingly entrenched, there will be more opportunities for public and private partnerships.

New Opportunities

- **Louisiana’s Early Childhood Care and Education Commission:** While Louisiana has established a strong system for capturing quality and access and assessing gains and needs, the

state is still unable to reach enough of its disadvantaged birth through three year old population. Recognizing this gap of accessibility, [Act 639 \(2018\)](#), co-sponsored by 74 legislators and unanimously passed, established the Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Commission, comprised of 38 legislators, government officials, EC providers, advocates, and community representatives. The commission is charged with creating recommendations to increase access to high-quality early childhood seats and the amount of funding needed to accomplish this goal. The commission has met several times with local and national experts and will release a report prior to the start of the next legislative session. The report will provide the legislature, the Governor and the LDOE with recommendations on improving access to high-quality care and education for children in Louisiana.

D. Gaps, Challenges, and Improvement Opportunities

Several gaps and challenges still face Louisiana as it strives to increase access to high-quality early childhood programs for its disadvantaged birth to five population.

- **Low Infant/Toddler CCAP Reimbursement Rates:** Research on the cost of care for infants and toddlers, as compared to three and four-year-olds, shows that Louisiana's current reimbursement rate of an additional \$1 per day for younger ages is not enough to cover the difference in cost. As a result, families and/or providers are forced to absorb the cost, making infant care difficult to access for disadvantaged families.
- **CCDF Waiting List:** Louisiana currently has a waiting list of 3,138 children and 2,167 eligible families working or in school. This waiting list represents an opportunity for Louisiana to serve economically disadvantaged children whose families need child care to support themselves and participate productively in the state's economy.

- **Family Homes:** Currently, Louisiana’s 217 family home providers and six in-home providers (223 total providers) that serve children through CCDF are not included in the state’s early childhood network. They do not have the same access to supports for improvement, understanding of quality, or opportunities for collaboration as other publicly-funded early childhood providers. These programs represent a significant and meaningful opportunity for improvement of care for disadvantaged children.
- **Local Governance:** Innovative communities in Louisiana have moved beyond initial collaborative leadership to a stronger focus on collective improvement. Louisiana will pilot an approach that learns from their leadership and scales these lessons statewide through formal structures that drive improvement, support quality programs to sustain and increase access, and secure local investments.

V. Approach: Activity 1 Early Childhood Needs Assessment

As described in the Introduction, Louisiana established a statewide early childhood care and education network as a result of Act 3. This state-level structure and mandated activities require a yearly assessment of the early childhood birth to five landscape at the site, community, and state level. Through this structure, the LDOE collects and reviews data in the following key areas of availability and quality of existing programs annually:

- **Access:** The state collects information on the level of access and coordination of enrollment services through its statewide locally-managed coordinated enrollment system. This system results in a biannual unduplicated count of publicly-funded children, a community-level coordinated funding request for school-based pre-K in mixed delivery settings based on family demand, a community-level plan for coordinating enrollment, and a community self-assessment of coordination of enrollment processes.

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

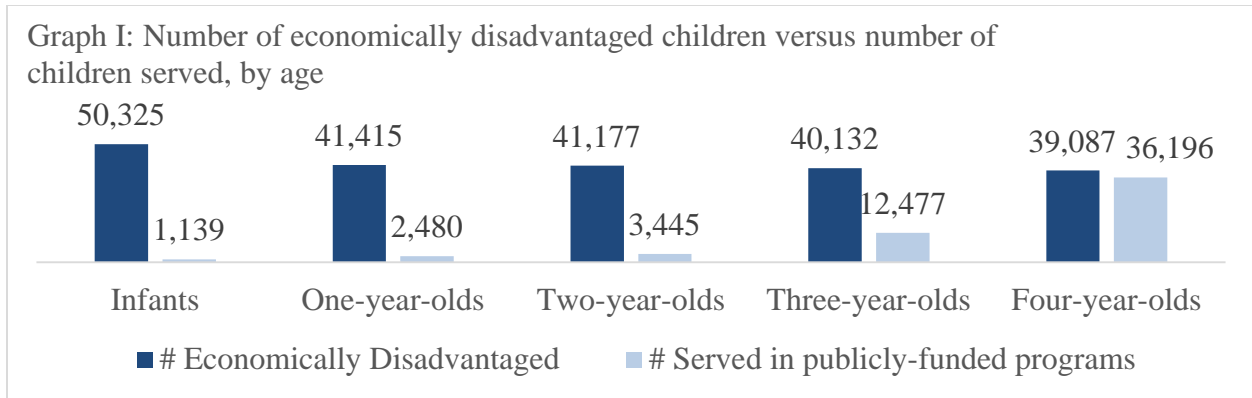
- **Quality:** The state collects information on the quality of every early childhood classroom in each publicly-funded site serving children birth to five through the state's unified quality rating system using *CLASSTM* observations and informational metrics. A Performance Profile containing the site's rating and informational metrics is published annually for every publicly-funded pre-K, Head Start, and type III early learning center.
- **Collaborative Leadership:** Through local plans that demonstrate community-level coordination of observations and enrollment, community quality and access indicators, as well as several touch points with local lead agencies, the LDOE collects information on community-level structures that inform the state's planning and supports.

By collecting data through these structures, Louisiana assesses its statewide needs and adjusts its strategic plan at multiple points each year. Additionally, the LDOE inventories currently existing state needs assessments, reports, and strategic planning efforts and aligns them to identify gaps. These reports and plans include, but are not limited to, CCDF and ESSA state plans, MIECHV, Head Start and other program reports, and other needs assessments conducted by stakeholders.

A. Access to Early Childhood Care and Education in Louisiana

Each local community network's lead agency, including all urban and rural areas across the state, is required to coordinate the enrollment process for all publicly-funded early childhood programs in its community. Each lead agency reports an unduplicated count (Child Count) of all publicly-funded children enrolled in early childhood programs by site, age, and funding source, as of October 1 and February 1 of every academic year. The child count is used to track demand, identify gaps in access, support recruitment, and analyze obstacles, including space or funding, to improve access locally, as well as determine where additional supports are required to improve access to quality service.

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five



As demonstrated by Graph I, considerably more disadvantaged four-year olds are being served in Louisiana’s publicly-funded early childhood programs than disadvantaged birth through 3-year-olds. More funding is available to serve four-year-old children, including the state’s hallmark pre-K program, LA 4, its non-public preschool program, NSECD, and the federally-funded Head Start program, which serves three and four-year-olds in Louisiana.

The LDOE publicly reports information related to access in two ways:

1. Pre-K Access: Each community network receives an “Equitable Access Rating” based on the percentage of economically disadvantaged four-year-olds served.

| Percentage of Pre-K Children Served | Rating | 2017-2018 Network Results |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 90-100% | Excellent | 33 networks (51%) |
| 80-89.99% | Proficient | 16 networks (25%) |
| 70-79.99% | Approaching Proficient | 10 networks (15%) |
| 0-69.99% | Unsatisfactory | 6 networks (9%) |

2. Birth To Three Access: The Network Performance Profiles report the percent of economically disadvantaged children birth to three enrolled as an informational metric.

| Percentage of Birth To Three Year Olds | 2017-2018 Network Results |
|--|---------------------------|
| 30-39.99% | 3 networks (5%) |
| 20-29.99% | 8 networks (12%) |
| 10-19.99% | 40 networks (62%) |
| 0-9.99% | 14 networks (22%) |

Key Learning 1 - Access: Louisiana must find creative solutions and supports to increase access for its economically disadvantaged birth to 3-year-old population.

B. Early Childhood Site Quality in Louisiana

As required by state policy, lead agencies coordinate observations of classroom quality, using the *CLASSTM* scoring system in every publicly-funded toddler and pre-K classroom across the state, in both urban and rural areas. The *CLASSTM* is a research-based, nationally regarded system of measures that assesses children's experiences and interactions within the classroom through observations. Lead agencies coordinate *CLASSTM* observations conducted by local observers, who can include contractors, employees of the school system, principals, directors, or other employees within the local early childhood network. Louisiana requires all observers for the unified quality rating system to meet and maintain the certification requirements of Teachstone, the makers of the *CLASSTM* tool, which include participating in an initial two-day intensive training and passing a reliability test each year, and to participate in additional shadow scoring and calibration activities each semester. Each toddler and pre-K classroom at every publicly-funded site receives at least one local observation per semester. With additional years of research now available, Louisiana is piloting Infant *CLASSTM* into the state's unified quality rating system, with policy in place to scale to full implementation required by 2020-2021.

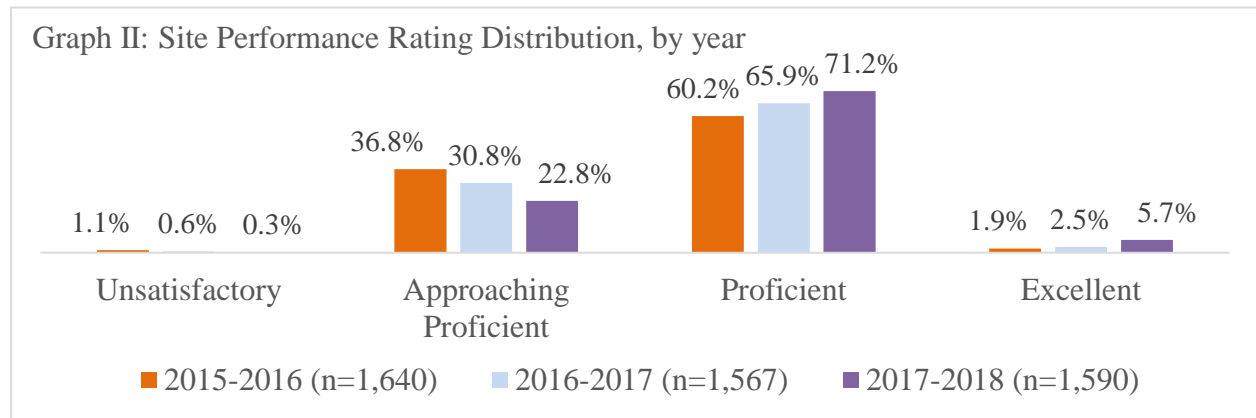
During each observation, a certified *CLASSTM* observer observes teacher-child interactions within the classroom for four 20-minute cycles, scoring each cycle on *CLASSTM* measures. Every cycle receives a set of scores, and the four sets of dimension-level scores are averaged together to create the final observation dimension scores. These final dimension scores are then used to calculate domain level scores and an overall quality score, with a range in points of 1.00-7.00. In order to audit the accuracy and objectivity of local *CLASSTM* observers, the LDOE contracts with the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Picard Center to conduct third party observations in every

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

site, observing at least 50% of classrooms at each site. Third party observations are additionally used to target any concerning data trends at the site or observer level or other reported concerns. Third party observer scores replace local scores when there are concerning differences. Once the school year concludes, the LDOE calculates a site-level score that correlates to a Performance Rating for each publicly-funded site in the state.

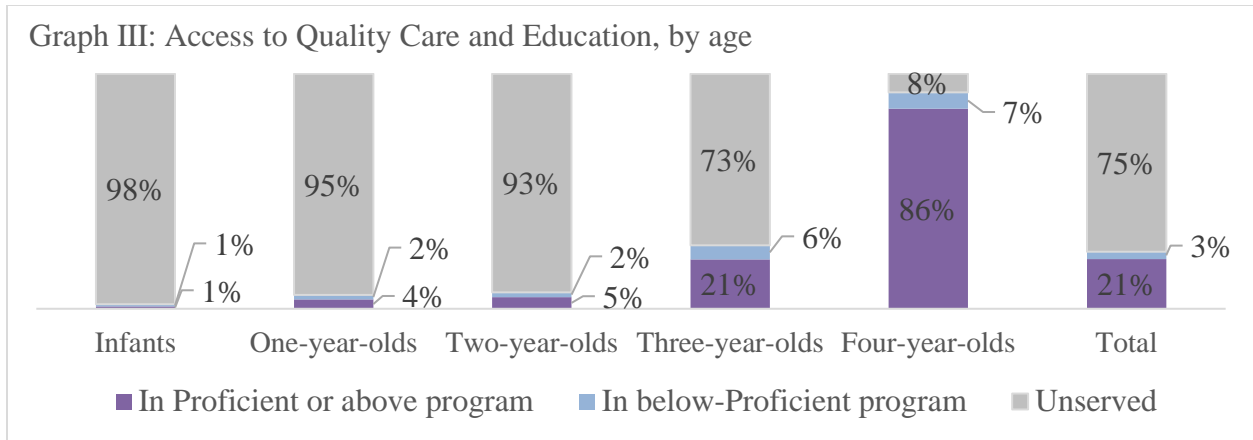
| Range | Performance Rating |
|------------|------------------------|
| 6.00-7.00 | Excellent |
| 4.50 -5.99 | Proficient |
| 3.00 -4.49 | Approaching Proficient |
| 1.00-2.99 | Unsatisfactory |

Through a unified quality rating system, Louisiana is provided ample information on the quality of early childhood sites and every community network in Louisiana. Graph II shows the distribution of Performance Ratings in the state.



The percentage of sites providing quality interactions for children has increased each year. While most publicly-funded sites are providing quality interactions for the children they serve, these high-quality sites are more likely to serve four-year-olds than younger children. Based on a 2017-2018 comparison of the state’s access and quality data, 86% of economically disadvantaged four-year-old children are being served in quality sites, while only 1% of economically disadvantaged infants are being served in quality sites.

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five



Key Learning 2.1 - Quality: Teachers must be supported to have high-quality and research-based interactions with children.

C. Assessing Use of Best Practices

In addition to measuring the quality of teacher-child interactions, Louisiana also measures sites’ and networks’ use of best practices, such as the use of assessment and high-quality curriculum. Research has shown that well-implemented, evidence-based curriculum and the use of assessments to inform and differentiate instruction both support early learning.¹

| Informational Metric | Description | How it is reported |
|----------------------|---|--------------------|
| Assessment | Are teachers measuring child progress? | ★ ★ ★ |
| Curriculum Quality | What is the quality of the curriculum in pre-K and infant/toddler classrooms? | ★ ★ ★ |

The collection of these data allows the LDOE to understand gaps across the state in best practices that support sites to achieve high-quality interactions and instruction:

| | N/A | None or Not Rated | 1 Star | 2 Stars | 3 Stars |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-------------------|--------|---------|---------|
| Assessment Rating | - | 13% | 4% | 11% | 72% |
| Pre-K Curriculum Quality | 5% | 15% | 1% | 1% | 78% |
| Infant/Toddler Curriculum Quality | 53% | 15% | 0% | 0% | 32% |
| Overall Curriculum Quality | - | 15% | 1% | 1% | 83% |

¹Phillips, D. A., Lipsey, M. W., Dodge, K. A., Haskins, R., Bassok, D., Burchinal, M. R., . . . Weiland, C. (2017). *Puzzling it out: The current state of scientific knowledge on pre-kindergarten effects. A consensus statement.* Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

The collection of statewide informational data at every publicly-funded site uniquely positions the LDOE to be able to identify several gaps in best practices across the state:

- While 90% of sites in the state are regularly assessing children to support differentiated instruction, this varies significantly by program type.
- While 78% of sites have a high-quality pre-K curriculum, only 32% of sites have a high-quality infant and/or toddler curriculum.
- The percent of sites using either a pre-K or toddler Tier 1 curriculum has improved from 48% in 2015-2016 to 83% in 2017-2018.

Key Learning 2.2 Quality: Teachers must be equipped with expertly reviewed instructional tools every day, including standards, curriculum, and assessment.

Lastly, since 2015, the LDOE has begun collecting data on the preparation and credentials of lead teachers in early childhood classrooms. Teachers are the most critical factor in achieving high-quality outcomes for children, and research shows the importance of teachers being prepared to care for young children on their future outcomes. Research has shown that the content and method of teachers' pre-service training and education has an impact on their success in the classroom.² The LDOE reports the percent of teachers at each site that have attained each degree level and the percent with traditional or ancillary teaching certification.

- In 2014, when Louisiana was in the process of unifying its early childhood system, engagement with providers and stakeholders showed that too few teachers in child care were volunteering to attain higher credentials that would prepare them for the classroom. Through

² Whitebook, M., Gomby, D., Bellm, D., Sakai, L., & Kipnis, F. (2009). *Effective teacher preparation in early care and education: Toward a comprehensive research agenda. Part II of Preparing teachers of young children: The current state of knowledge, and a blueprint for the future*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, University of California at Berkeley.

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

BESE policy, Louisiana has strived to professionalize the field of early childhood education by defining a minimum expectation for child care teachers as part of Louisiana’s Birth to Kindergarten Pathway.

- In 2017-2018, 52% of early childhood teachers in the state had a traditional teacher certification or Early Childhood Ancillary Certification. This represents an increase from 46% in 2015-2016, but shows the long way to go to ensure teachers are prepared to guide developmentally appropriate learning that promotes kindergarten readiness.

| | Child Care | Head Start | Pre-K |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Credential | None - to be a CDA by July 1, 2019 | 50% - BA Degree, Others Associate | BA Degree, ECE Certified |
| Training, Tools and Support | Varies by site with limited access to statewide resources | Training, <i>CLASSTM</i> observations and tools and assistance from program and region | Training, teacher observations and tools and assistance from district and state |
| Average Compensation | 75% earn < \$20,000/yr(\$10/hr) No benefits | ~\$26,000/year Some benefits | ~\$39,000/year Full benefits |

Key Learning 2.3 - Quality: Teachers must be prepared through foundational training that leads to certification.

D. Assessing community needs through collaborative leadership structures

Through Louisiana’s lead agency structure, the LDOE has created touchpoints with communities to share successes and issues with collaborative leadership structures. These touchpoints include weekly office hours and webinars, quarterly regional collaboratives, the annual Teacher Leader Summit, as well as regular informal communication. This structure allows routine opportunities for local community networks to surface gaps and tensions, and provide feedback to LDOE staff. The state’s B-5 needs assessment is strengthened by local context and a deep local understanding of the landscape of early childhood in communities across the state. Through these touchpoints, the LDOE has identified innovative communities in Louisiana who have moved

beyond initial collaborative leadership to a strong focus on collective improvement. These communities are driving faster rates of quality improvement and expanded access through their innovative efforts to identify investments and coordinate their work.

Key Learning 3 - Local Governance: State infrastructure that empowers local communities with responsibility for resources and quality is essential, because those closest to classrooms and children are best positioned to make improvements that will impact outcomes for children.

E. Key Learnings from the Needs Assessment

Louisiana has now collected three years of data on early childhood access, quality, use of best practices, and community-specific needs. With this data, the LDOE has conducted analyses on trends in quality and access over time, and how certain factors, such as teacher training and high-quality instructional materials, can improve classroom quality and promote kindergarten readiness. Louisiana’s B-5 Needs Assessment results in the following key learnings used to inform the development of the Logic Model and vision for the implementation of this grant.

| | |
|---|---|
| Key Learning 1: Access | Louisiana must find creative solutions and supports to increase access for its economically disadvantaged birth through 3-year-old population. |
| Key Learning 2: Quality | Teachers must be well prepared to teach in early childhood classrooms that prepare children for school and beyond, which means teachers need to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be supported to have high-quality and research-based interactions with children; 2. Use expertly reviewed instructional tools every day, including standards, curriculum, and assessment; and 3. Receive foundational training that leads to certification. |
| Key Learning 3: Local Governance | State infrastructure that empowers local communities with responsibility for resources and quality is essential, because those closest to classrooms and children are best positioned to make improvements that will impact outcomes for children |

F. PDG B-5 Activities: Strengthening Louisiana’s Early Childhood Needs Assessment

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

This funding opportunity will allow Louisiana to strengthen its early childhood needs assessment in the following ways:

1. Build a centralized data system: Louisiana will use the funds received over the grant period to create a statewide early childhood data system with K-12 integration and alignment that will serve as a single source of information for state planning, while protecting children's confidential information. This will enable the state to:

- better measure quality over time and examine what factors (classroom practices, teacher credentials, other factors) lead to improvement
- expand B-5 needs assessment to include child-level demographic information, allowing for better targeted services for children;
- improve ability to respond quickly and efficiently to changing needs;
- strengthen the alignment between early childhood and K-3rd grade, including allowing the LDOE to collect better information from development screenings and transition activities;
- assess year-round supply of early care and education in each community to increase efficiency and sustainability of programs and accommodate parental choice.

The LDOE is contracting with a vendor in an effort to develop a comprehensive birth to grade 12 data system which will include the comprehensive data system. With a data system, Louisiana will be better positioned to assess the quality of all publicly-funded early childhood programs, have real-time information needed to drive support and allocation decisions, and better partner with families and other organizations to improve services for children while ensuring the privacy of data. It is anticipated that the system will be released in three phases with the first release in 2020 and be completed in its entirety in approximately three years.

2. Perform a validation study: The grant funds will be used to contract an external validation study of Louisiana’s unified quality rating system using *CLASSTM*. This validation study will build on previous and ongoing research conducted by the University of Virginia to accomplish the following aims:

- **Aim 1:** Provide new evidence on the validity of a fully-implemented early childhood unified quality rating system that is explicitly focused on improving classroom processes.
- **Aim 2:** Assess the extent to which the quality of Louisiana’s early childhood programs have improved over a period of heightened state focus on systems-building, teacher-child interactions, and accountability.
- **Aim 3:** Explore the role of specific state and program-level malleable factors, such as professional development, curricular supports, leadership, and work environment, in promoting quality and children’s learning and development.

3. Include Family Homes in the Needs Assessment: Family homes represent an important source of child care for economically disadvantaged families across the state, particularly in rural communities. However, the LDOE does not collect information on the location, quantity, or quality of these sites, or the extent to which they close gaps in access in early childhood care and education for vulnerable families in the state. Louisiana will use the grant funds to incentivize family homes to participate in monitoring and enable the LDOE to gather key information to drive a long-term strategy and support those providers to improve.

VI. Approach: Activity 2 Birth to Five Strategic Plan

Through Louisiana’s statewide early childhood network (see Introduction), Louisiana captures information about access, quality, and community collaboration structures that inform the state’s strategic plan at each step. Louisiana is currently in the process of implementing a strategic

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

plan that addresses the key learnings identified by its needs assessment. This strategic plan is organized in three components:

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Strategic Plan Component 1 | Addressing Access |
| Strategic Plan Component 2 | Improving Quality |
| Strategic Plan Component 3 | Building Local Governance |

A. Louisiana's Existing Strategic Plan

Louisiana's existing strategic plan is built on the foundation of the vision of Act 3 (2012). This strategic plan was developed and continues to be refined in collaboration with other state agencies, the ECCE Advisory Council, state and local stakeholders, and national experts.

1. Strategic Plan Component 1: Addressing Access

Access to high-quality early childhood seats for the low-income and disadvantaged birth to three population is limited and requires creative solutions. By building local collaborative structures, Louisiana has increased professional development and improvement opportunities for programs serving Louisiana's youngest learners. Child care, Head Start, and nonpublic and public school partners work together to improve the birth to five early childhood pathway, by combining training and professional development opportunities, offering job-embedded coaching to teachers across all settings, and using community-level data to build efficiencies to increase quality.

Through these collaborative structures, Louisiana has been able to direct additional funding toward mixed delivery of seats. This includes the original Preschool Development Grant and the Early Head Start-Child Care partnership grants, both of which leveraged the relationships and collaborations created through local community networks to offer seats in partnerships with centers that support them to offer additional, higher-quality seats for birth through three children. In these mixed delivery programs, improvements to early learning center materials, spaces, and professional development benefited all children served at the center, and opened opportunities for

coaches from Head Start or school districts to extend their services into child care centers. Supporting mixed delivery partnerships for seats is a state priority; the LDOE offers technical assistance to support this from both operational and strategic perspectives and facilitates collaborative opportunities for communities and providers to learn from each other. Mixed delivery partnerships are also a priority in the state pre-K law.

In further fulfillment of this strategic priority, through the transition of CCDF to the LDOE, the state has taken additional steps to support increased access for disadvantaged birth through three-year-olds through its management of the CCDF block grant. Steps to support continual access to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) include raising the reimbursement rate to be closer to the market rate of care, reducing and simplifying the state-required copay, increasing the reimbursement for children with disabilities to more closely cover the true cost of care, lowering work eligibility requirements from 30 hours of work to 20 hours, and allowing full time student status to meet the requirements. These changes have been critical to increasing the value of state subsidy provided through CCAP, which led to the creation of a waiting list of eligible households in 2017 that is better capturing the demand for publicly-funded care of eligible families.

2. Strategic Plan Component 2: Improving Quality

Louisiana believes that teachers must be well prepared to teach in early childhood classrooms, so they can prepare children for school and beyond. This means teachers need to:

- Be trained to have high-quality and effective interactions with children;
- Use expertly reviewed instructional tools every day, including standards, curriculum, and assessment; and
- Receive foundational training that leads to certification.

Through Louisiana's unified quality rating system, Louisiana has developed a firm understanding

of the supports teaches need to lead child learning, and through strategic planning, has aligned its resources for support and improvement to these ratings and indicators of best practices.

Improving Interactions

Supporting teachers to improve the quality of their interactions with children is a key priority for Louisiana as the research-identified path to achieve kindergarten readiness.³ The state's existing strategic plan aligns funding and resources for professional development that improves the interactions of teachers with children. Examples of how this strategic priority is reflected in the state's approach to funding opportunities are included in this application:

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs): Louisiana has aligned the focus of CCR&Rs to increase provider and teacher understanding of high-quality interactions and instruction. This is reflected in the contractual emphasis on job-embedded professional development to improve interactions. CCR&Rs also offer foundational learning opportunities to build basic understanding of classroom practices that promote effective interactions.

Louisiana CLASSTM Special Learners Pilot: To support teachers in inclusive settings, the LDOE launched the Special Learners Pilot in 2016, which provided opportunities for teachers in inclusive birth to five classrooms in child care, Head Start, and public and nonpublic schools to participate in high-quality professional development aligned to CLASSTM, with a specific focus on supporting interactions and instruction for all learners. This pilot was successful in two key ways: CLASSTM scores improved, and lead agencies of local community networks used this initial state-funded opportunity for professional development as proof of success to convince districts and

³Phillips, D. A., Lipsey, M. W., Dodge, K. A., Haskins, R., Bassok, D., Burchinal, M. R., . . . Weiland, C. (2017). *Puzzling it out: The current state of scientific knowledge on pre-kindergarten effects. A consensus statement.* Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

philanthropic organizations to fund similar opportunities for other teachers in diverse settings in subsequent years.

Preschool Development Grant - Supplemental Funding: Through the supplemental funding offered in the fourth year of the initial Preschool Development Grant, the LDOE funded lead agencies participating in the grant to offer low-performing or new sites access to two high-quality professional development opportunities designed to enhance teacher-child interactions as measured by *CLASSTM*: Making the Most of Classroom Interactions (MMCI) and MyTeachingPartnerTM. This is one example of how the LDOE has aligned new funding opportunities for quality to improving teacher-child interactions across program settings.

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation: Louisiana has partnered with Tulane University since 2007 to offer an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) program. This program serves as an intervention that pairs a mental health professional with early childhood professionals to improve the social, emotional and behavioral health of young children in early learning centers. The three primary goals of the ECMHC program are 1) to promote healthy social-emotional development of young children as a component of healthy whole child development, 2) to increase teachers' skills and knowledge to effectively support social-emotional development, and 3) to refer for treatment and/or design interventions for children exhibiting challenging behaviors, developmental concerns, or mental health concerns.

Expanding Use of Expertly Reviewed Instructional Tools

Children make meaningful progress when teachers have access to a high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum; preparation and ongoing professional development that helps them use that curriculum effectively; and data from standards-aligned non-summative assessments that support

differentiated curriculum-aligned instruction. The LDOE ensures that curricula, professional development, and assessments are aligned with state standards and are high-quality.

Curriculum Reviews: LDOE provides online annotated expert reviews of infant/toddler, pre-K, and K- 12 curricula. Materials are rated with a three-tiered system: Tier 1 exemplifies quality, Tier 2 is approaching quality, and Tier 3 does not represent quality. All Tier 1 curricula receive a state contract, which makes it easier for districts and sites to procure them at a discounted rate. The [PD Vendor Guide](#) connects birth through 12th grade programs to vendors with an explicit link between their offerings and Tier 1 curricula. The LDOE has completed curriculum reviews for over 35 early childhood curricula. The instructional materials and curricula are extensively reviewed to ensure alignment with Louisiana's Birth to Kindergarten Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), which are directly aligned with Kindergarten standards. All program types are encouraged to select a Tier 1 curriculum, and many networks are using a Tier 1 curriculum community wide, promoting efficiencies around professional development.

Child Care Curriculum Initiative: For the past two years, the LDOE has offered the Child Care Curriculum Initiative, which supports every publicly-funded early learning center in the state to purchase two high-quality curriculum kits annually by reimbursing 80% of the cost at a maximum of \$4,000. Centers must participate in a Curriculum 101 training offered through local CCR&Rs and complete a curriculum implementation plan.

Teaching Strategies GOLD®: To support ongoing formative assessment of children that is aligned to Louisiana's ELDS, the state purchases *GOLD*® portfolios for every publicly-funded child in Louisiana birth to five years old. On its online platform, teachers and administrators can access free online courses, including inter-rater reliability training. Through the community network structure, Louisiana can transfer child portfolios across programs as children move,

allowing for shared understanding of child progress across their birth to five experiences.

Curriculum Observation Tool: To support the state’s focus on connecting quality evidence-based standards, curriculum, and linked assessment, the LDOE has created a [Curriculum Observation Tool](#) which assesses the degree to which sites are implementing quality, evidence-based curricula and equipping teachers with the tools to effectively use these curricula. This tool describes successful implementation of a Tier 1 curriculum that links to standards and assessment. The LDOE is piloting this tool, and is incorporating it into site-level supports.

Preparing Teachers

Teachers are the most critical factor to achieve improved outcomes for children. Yet prior to July 2019, teachers were able to work in child care with no educational or pre-service training requirement, resulting in a wide range of preparedness among early childhood teachers. In 2014, Louisiana established the new Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate. With a phased-in implementation, Louisiana established the Ancillary Certificate as the new minimum credential for child care lead teachers in publicly-funded early learning centers beginning July 2019.

This essential element of Louisiana’s strategic plan was made stronger with the expectation that, as of July 2018, teachers must complete their coursework for the Ancillary Certificate at a BESE-approved teacher preparation program. Through the requirement to complete coursework at a BESE- approved EC Ancillary Certificate Program, Louisiana ensures that all child care teachers receive high-quality training and practical experience that prepares them with the competencies required to be successful in their field. Through BESE-approved EC Ancillary Certificate Programs, child care teachers complete coursework to obtain a CDA, meeting the requirement for an Ancillary Certificate. Louisiana currently offers 22 BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs located throughout the state, with plans of a statewide online option

beginning January 2019. Through Louisiana Pathways scholarships, teachers are able to access these state approved preparation programs for free.

Louisiana is also developing a Birth to Kindergarten Pathway for new teachers. This pathway includes a bachelor and associate degree, which ultimately result in a Birth to Kindergarten Teaching Certificate. The Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate is the foundational three courses of this pathway, allowing candidates to build their credentials over time.

Site Improvement Planning Process

The state's approach to support teachers and sites improve is demonstrated in the state's strategic approach to support low-performing sites within its unified quality rating system. The state requires low-performing sites, including schools, Head Starts, and child care centers, to plan how they can leverage existing resources to better meet these three needs in order to improve their rating, and better prepare children for kindergarten and beyond. This state support is targeted to sites that earn a score below 3.75 overall rating on their performance profile, as derived from the *CLASSTM* measure. Through [improvement planning](#) efforts, sites work with LDOE staff to [self-assess](#) and reflect upon trainings and classroom practices to set attainable goals and develop a plan to bridge the gap to proficiency.

This process builds on the successful work the LDOE conducted with sites that scored Unsatisfactory in 2015-2016. As a result of the LDOE improvement intervention, 100% of sites improved from Unsatisfactory with an average score increase of 1.19 points. Through the Site Improvement Planning process, the LDOE maximizes resources by increasing awareness of struggling sites that have remained disconnected from the improvement resources connected to our unified quality rating system. This ensures that professional development, coaching, and material resources are reaching the centers who need them to achieve proficiency.

Early Childhood and Early Elementary Alignment

As a birth through 12th grade organization, the LDOE is responsible for improving quality across all grade levels. The LDOE recognizes that all teachers, no matter the grade level taught, benefit from support in improving teacher-child interactions, using expertly-reviewed instructional tools, and entering the classroom fully prepared. The LDOE has taken several steps to ensure successful transitions between early childhood programs and elementary schools:

Aligned Professional Development Resources: The PD Vendor guide identifies vendors who specialize in helping districts, schools, directors, and centers with each stage of designing and implementing a cohesive education system. The vendors provide valuable training to use curriculum and improve teacher-child interactions for classrooms birth through twelfth grade.

Emphasis on High-Quality Instructional Tools and Standards: The LDOE's extensive process for reviewing and selecting high-quality curricula is used across all grade levels. All curricula are reviewed for their ability to target Louisiana's learning standards. The ELDS and elementary learning standards have been aligned to support a cohesive learning experience for children as they transition between early childhood programs and elementary school.

Pre-K through Third Grade Guidebook: In 2017, the LDOE released [Louisiana's Pre-K through Third Grade Guidebook](#) to provide information about pre-K to grade three alignment. This guidebook provides information and guidance on creating strong plans for schools that ensure quality and continuity of proven practices across pre-K through third grade so children and families experience smooth and effective transitions, thrive in the early elementary years, and achieve mastery in reading and math in third grade and beyond.

3. Strategic Plan Component 3: Building Local Governance

State infrastructure that empowers local communities with responsibility for resources and

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

quality is essential, because those closest to classrooms are positioned to make improvements that will impact outcomes for children. Louisiana began the work of establishing collaborative leadership for the birth to five pathway through the local community networks that make up the statewide early childhood network. It began with 13 community network pilots in 2013, and reached statewide implementation in 2015. All 65 of Louisiana's current local community networks are administered by the state through designated lead agencies. All lead agencies are required to meet with program partners at least quarterly. Many lead agencies have structured leadership teams, committees and workgroups to give programs greater influence over the operational aspect of coordinated enrollment and administration of the local observation system for the state's unified quality rating system. Over the past few years, many lead agencies have taken on additional responsibility to improve program quality by pairing responsible planning and spending with thoughtful leveraging of local resources to share with program partners. However, Louisiana's needs assessment results show gaps in birth to five access and quality, and present the challenge to find effective ways to close those gaps.

As a result of the work Louisiana has seen accomplished by local leaders, the state recognizes that communities, rather than the state, are best suited to address the needs of their families and children. Communities have unique characteristics that must be considered to successfully address program access for families and improvement for programs. The state has established its next phase of supporting local responsibility for access to high-quality birth to five seats offered through a mixed delivery system: Ready Start Network Pilots. Current community networks ready to advance to the next level of expectations and support have applied for a Request For Applications, released in September, and the LDOE is currently reviewing applications to award. Applicants chosen to continue on in the selection process will receive assistance to begin

putting in place a local collaborative governing structure for shared decision-making around shared resources. The LDOE and key partners will provide guidance to pilot candidates as they improve and finalize their applications to BESE for funding.

The LDOE will support these pilots in the following ways:

- Funding and guidance to develop clear and actionable plans to increase access and improve the quality of care and education;
- Priority status for existing and innovative funding opportunities that will increase the number of economically disadvantaged children served by their community network; and
- Policy revisions that support community network pilot autonomy, including seeking waivers of any state regulations that prevent pilots from maximizing efforts and funds.

The LDOE is prepared to assist pilot communities with the development and implementation of a local collaborative governing structure for shared decision making by providing research, guidance, and consultative facilitation. Once established and operational, the state will institute policy that will support local authority to position seats. This approach demonstrates the state's strategy for establishing key changes: learn from the field, provide learnings to inform legislation, pilot and refine approach, and scale statewide. Once fully operational, the Ready Start Network Pilots will implement new strategies to increase access to and improve the quality of early childhood care and education programs and will inform the advancement of Louisiana's unified early childhood care and education system. K-12 education, health services, social services, higher education, business and industry, children's advocacy groups, charitable and private funding organizations, and local government will all be engaged to make necessary system changes and access funding to improve early childhood services.

B. PDG B-5 Activities: Supporting and Updating Existing Strategic Plan

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

Through the grant, the LDOE will both (a) support the existing strategic plan and (b) update it in ways that are aligned to the needs assessment.

Support Existing Strategic Plan: In alignment with the state’s existing strategic plan, the LDOE will use the grant to fund the following objectives within Activities 3 and 4:

| | |
|---|---|
| Establish Formalized Local Infrastructure via Ready Start Network Pilots | Fund local communities to establish Ready Start Network Pilots |
| | Support Ready Start Network Pilots with professional development, technical assistance, and other resources |
| | Create community resource grants supporting high-quality, mixed delivery partnership classrooms |
| Increase Alignment and Improve Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education | Provide scholarships for child care teachers to attain early childhood certifications |
| | Build onsite review evaluation for child care teacher preparation programs |
| | Fund grants for high-quality, standards-aligned birth to five instructional resources |
| | Fund grants to provide coaching and professional development to improve teacher-child interactions |
| | Fund creation of Louisiana Key Training Modules on identified topics |

Update Existing Plan: Louisiana will use PDG B-5 to update their strategic plan with 2 objectives:

| | |
|---|---|
| Incorporate Registered Family Homes into the Statewide Early Childhood Network | Create multi-year strategy to understand the landscape of family homes and how best to increase quality of offerings to all children within the state's mixed delivery system |
| | Pilot supports to engage registered family homes in the statewide early childhood network |
| | Pilot multiple quality measures in participating family homes |
| Improve State Systems that Inform Statewide Early Childhood Network | Build shared services infrastructure |

Family Homes: As part of the updates to the needs assessment, Louisiana will collect information about the landscape of family homes in Louisiana. Through this analysis, national expertise and technical assistance, and local and community engagement, Louisiana will develop a multi-year strategy as an update to the state’s existing strategic plan that incorporates registered family homes into the statewide early childhood network. This strategy will include plans to pilot supports that

help to engage family homes to opt into the statewide early childhood network. The LDOE will also work with key stakeholders to develop a pilot study of multiple quality measures in participating family homes. Through the grant, Louisiana will fund strategic planning that determines what this pilot will consist of, and how best to implement it over time.

Shared Services Infrastructure: Louisiana will use the grant funding to engage local and national stakeholders and technical assistance organizations to update its strategic plan to include regionalized shared services infrastructure for child care centers that reduces duplication of efforts and increases efficiency of birth to five services. Through these updates to the state's strategic plan, Louisiana will be set up to complete Activity 5.

VII. Approach: Activity 3 Maximizing Parent Knowledge and Choice

Louisiana has developed processes and tools that promote family knowledge about the choices available to them across the mixed-delivery system.

A. Existing Supports

The Louisiana School and Center Finder: In November 2017, Louisiana led the nation by releasing Early Childhood Performance Profiles and K-12 report cards on the Louisiana School and Center Finder at www.LouisianaSchools.com. The first-of-its-kind website is an interactive tool designed for families to learn about the quality and offerings of local child care and education options for their children, from birth to twelfth grade. The site, which is available in Spanish, also allows families to compare their children's program to the average performance of the other programs in their community and across the state. Along with this tool, Louisiana also released an [animated video](#) designed to help families understand School and Center Finder and what early childhood education quality looks like and how it is measured.

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

The Louisiana School and Center Finder website includes all public schools, including pre-K, all nonpublic schools accepting public funds, all licensed Head Start, Early Head Start, all child care centers, and all family homes that registered for CCAP. The Finder provides families and the public with:

- Overview of the school or center, including address and contact information
- A map browsing view showing schools and programs in a specific area;
- Performance Profiles and ratings illustrating how well sites are preparing children;
- A link to health and safety monitoring reports; and
- A comparison tool and filters to allow users to customize their search and compare sites.

Coordinated Enrollment: Each community in Louisiana is required to have a coordinated enrollment process. The goal of coordinated enrollment is to empower families with choice and easy access to high-quality options for early childhood care and education in their community, such that every child is on track for success when they enter kindergarten. The coordinated enrollment process in Louisiana communities involves four key areas:

1. Coordinated Information Campaign: Inform families about the availability of publicly-funded programs
2. Coordinated Eligibility Determination: Ensure families easily know what programs they qualify for, are referred to other programs if they are ineligible for their primary choice;
3. Coordinated Application: Use a unified application to collect family preferences regarding enrollment choices for publicly-funded programs; and
4. Matching Based on Preference: Enroll children based upon stated family preferences.

Through community coordination and streamlined applications across every provider type, families are benefiting from increased knowledge and access to their choice program.

Louisiana Early Childhood Family Survey: The LDOE contracts with Louisiana State University (LSU) to administer a family survey in the spring of each year. LSU samples 600 sites (37%) across every community network to receive paper surveys for the families of publicly-funded children enrolled in those sites. In addition, LSU also hosts an online survey available to all families that the LDOE publicizes in its newsletters. Family feedback is used to report two community level family satisfaction indicators, satisfaction with the enrollment process and satisfaction with program quality, on each network's Performance Profile.

B. Early Childhood State Collaboration Structures

ECCE Advisory Council: The ECCE Advisory Council is comprised of 30 members as described in [Act 868](#) (2014). The Council includes representatives from all early childhood site types, other state agencies, higher education representatives, parents, medical professionals, and special education advocates. This wide range of invested stakeholders provides recommendations on policies related to all publicly-funded early child care and education programs. The Council meets a minimum of four times a year and reviews all policy and reports that are provided to BESE. The Council has established several work groups which engage deeply on specific issues related to coordinated enrollment and early childhood accountability data. The Council receives five update reports from the LDOE each year that provide summaries of data and activities taking place for all early childhood programs.

State-level Program Coordination to Inform Families: In Louisiana, the Title V block grant is administered by the Bureau of Family Health (BFH), within the LDH. BFH has several early childhood initiatives including evidence-based home visiting (family coaching and support program), infant and early childhood mental health consultation, developmental screening, Partners for Family Health, and the Young Child Wellness Collaborative amongst others (see

organization chart). Through programs such as LAUNCH (*Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health*) and the Early Childhood Coordinated System (ECCS), BFH trains health care providers and child care centers on developmental screening and infant and early childhood mental health consultation as well as referrals to resources such as IDEA Part B. The LDOE, in collaboration with LDH, designed the [Early Childhood Developmental Screening Guidebook](#) as a resource guide for child care centers, programs, and families. The guidebook provides detailed information and access to resources related to: healthy development, monitoring development and developmental screening, talking with families about a child's developmental progress and areas of need, and supports when there are concerns about a child's development.

Young Child Wellness Collaborative (YCWC): The YCWC serves as the State-Level Early Childhood Advisory Team for major LDH early childhood initiatives. The role of the YCWC is to provide leadership and informed recommendations to drive shared priority setting and strategic planning across Louisiana. The YCWC includes members from the LDOE, BFH, EarlySteps, DCFS, a parent advocate, and other local and community partners.

C. PDG B-5 Activities: Enhancing Local Governance & Coordination to Support Parent Choice

Local Governance: Louisiana is strengthening the foundation of our Early Childhood Care and Education system by moving from local collaborative leadership to local governance for community networks. The state recognizes that communities, rather than the state, are best suited to address the needs of their families and children. Communities have unique characteristics that must be considered to successfully address program access for families and improvement for programs. Through increased local governance piloted via Ready Start Networks, the LDOE anticipates increased parental knowledge about choices. As local leaders are increasingly empowered to solve access and quality gaps, they are additionally tasked with using increased

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

local coordination to improve family engagement and serve more economically disadvantaged birth to five children in high-quality classrooms. Through this planning grant, the LDOE will support local communities who are in the process of planning to improve access to quality for children birth to five in mixed delivery settings through the Ready Start Network Pilots. This includes professional development to promote systems thinking, facilitators to support the pilots in establishing local governance, and start-up costs associated with innovative planning.

Supporting Parent Choice within a Mixed Delivery System: Through the two mixed delivery partnership programs the state currently works with - PDG and EHS-CC- Louisiana has learned that child care classrooms often require classroom upgrades in order to be eligible to partner with other programs to offer high-quality seats. These seat partnerships promote family choice of seats within a mixed delivery system and often assist centers to improve the quality of their programs. As part of the planning grant, Louisiana will fund classroom material upgrades to child care centers in Ready Start Network Pilots in order to support future mixed delivery of seats that increase family choice once funds are available. Louisiana will also develop and improve its data systems to provide families with more information about early childhood programs that can support their choices and inform families about available services.

Collaboration with State Partners: Through this grant, the LDOE will also strengthen collaborations with the BFH on programs including the LA ACE Educator Program, Vroom, Home Visiting, Partners for Family Health, and the Child Care Health Consultant program to ensure parents have access to the information garnered from these programs. ACEs training and VROOM are promoted to various groups including community partners, families, child care providers, and health care providers. Vroom is a free tool that offers strategies and suggestions for parents to turn everyday moments into brain building activities. Partners for Family Health offers a free website

and hotline that contains resources and information for families. The Child Care Health Consultant program trains health professionals to deliver the required health and safety education needed annually by all child care center staff. For family support and coaching, LDOE will work with BFH to send and receive referrals for eligible families and provide comprehensive, coordinated support to families enrolled in home visiting and early care and education programs. Working more closely will result in better “wrap around” support to families.

VIII. Approach: Activity 4 Sharing Best Practices

Since 2012, Louisiana has worked to unify a fragmented early childhood system with multiple programs funded through various streams, with differing priorities and demographics served into a statewide early childhood network. The LDOE has established several opportunities for partnership and collaboration, within and across communities. The LDOE leverages regional and local relationships through the statewide early childhood network and the regionalized CCR&Rs. These entities, along with a birth through 12 grade structure, facilitate sharing best practices across the statewide early childhood mixed delivery system.

A. Existing Supports

Community Network Lead Agency Support: Each lead agency serves as the fiscal agent of the community network, coordinates the duties and responsibilities of the community network, and acts as the liaison between the community network and the LDOE. The LDOE provides many supports for lead agencies contributing to the efficiency of services the lead agency provides to each community network. These supports include a dedicated staff member to support lead agencies, weekly lead agency office hours, webinars on each lead agency requirement, and technical assistance with data systems and reporting including for *CLASSTM* and *GOLD[®]*.

Louisiana Collaboratives and Teacher Leader Summit: Collaboration between early childhood and kindergarten leaders and teachers is promoted by the shared professional development events that take place four times a year at various statewide locations. Each quarter, Louisiana has 3-4 state approved and facilitated birth through 12th grade statewide training sessions called the Supervisor and Teacher Leader Collaboratives. For early childhood, the Collaboratives bring together all lead agencies and a selection of teachers to participate in collaborative sessions that provide opportunities to learn and practice new strategies related to data analysis, coordination, and instruction. These sessions promote connections between leaders from various backgrounds and locations around the state and facilitate regional networking to problem solve on shared issues or collaborate on opportunities for improvement. In the spring, the LDOE hosts a large convention called the Teacher Leader Summit. At this convention, district leadership, lead agency staff, directors, principals, and teachers participate in sessions, build connections, and discuss instructional strategies.

CCR&R and Technical Assistance: To improve kindergarten readiness and support child care centers in the unified quality rating and improvement system, CCR&Rs are tasked with sharing best practices with child care providers while increasing collaboration and efficiency of services. CCR&Rs provide job-embedded coaching, training, and professional development. Each CCR&R hosts monthly directors' meetings in which child care directors collaborate for the purpose of building capacity to serve as instructional leaders, particularly observing classrooms and providing quality feedback to teachers, which increases sustainability of efforts in the event of teacher turnover. These meetings provide an opportunity for participation in a professional learning community while being trained on best practices in instructional leadership.

Unified Quality Rating System: Louisiana’s approach to measuring and reporting quality promotes sharing best practices and resources within and across communities. The LDOE publishes critical information about quality and improvement through the state unified quality rating system that results in a Performance Profile, with a Performance Rating scored between 1.00 to 7.00. This unified quality rating system is based on measuring what research indicates matters most for child development and measures all publicly-funded early childhood programs, including child care, Head Start, and public and nonpublic pre-K. Through the unified quality rating system, the LDOE also publishes a community network Performance Profile that includes an overall rating of quality, a rating of four-year-old access, and informational metrics reflecting the best practices of the community. This unified approach to rating programs facilitates shared best practices, resources, and professional development across the mixed delivery system.

B. PDG B-5 Activities: Strengthening Collaboration to Increase Program Quality

Through the grant, Louisiana will strengthen its existing strategic plan to share best practices among early childhood care and education program providers in the state to reduce duplication of effort, leverage financial and other resources, and increase program quality, collaboration, and efficiency of B-5 services.

Louisiana will use this grant opportunity to fund several activities that will focus on improving the quality of existing programs in collaboration at the community level. The LDOE will fund opportunities for birth to five teachers across programs to be supported to have effective interactions with children, use expertly reviewed instructional tools every day, and receive foundational training that leads to certification.

Community-Level Grants for Professional Development and Instructional Resources:

Through community-level grants, the LDOE will increase program quality through collaboration

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

around professional development and instructional resources. These grants to community networks will fund birth to five classrooms to access *CLASSTM*-aligned professional development and expert-reviewed, standards-aligned instructional resources. Communities will submit a plan for how these funds will be used to support their mixed delivery system, and how the offerings will promote collaboration and shared best practices across programs. This community approach reduces duplication of effort across the individual programs and allows communities to leverage resources such as trained coaches, space and administrative capacity, and age-specific expertise as they increase program quality across the birth to five system.

Access to Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs: As part of the work to increase program quality and alignment, Louisiana has introduced a minimum requirement of preparedness for lead child care teachers: an Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate. Through the grant funds, Louisiana will increase the availability of scholarships for child care teachers to attend BESE-approved programs to attain these certificates.

Evaluating Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs: With 22 BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs, the LDOE is now beginning the development of an evaluation system to evaluate the success of these preparation programs. Through grant funds, the LDOE will pilot an onsite review process, which will be aligned with K-12 teacher preparation evaluation systems. Through this foundational work, Louisiana will enable early childhood teachers to select Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate programs that best prepare teachers, allow directors to make informed hiring decisions, and provide data to communities about the quality of preparation programs in their area.

Louisiana Key Training Modules: To offer the very best in quality professional development and training opportunities and build efficiencies that save money at every level of the system over

time, the LDOE will fund the creation of Louisiana Key Training Modules. This set of accessible, high-quality trainings will be designed by experts on best practices in the field of early childhood and will be offered for redelivery to CCR&R agencies, local lead agencies, and other Pathways-certified instructors, including LDH child care health consultants. Each module will be vetted using approval standards ensuring that each PD module is linked to the Louisiana Early Learning and Development Standards and includes references that demonstrate ties to research, theory, and best practice. Each module will focus on a discrete practice in a key content area (e.g., inclusion, family-professional partnerships, trauma-informed care, transition) and incorporate activities and presentation methods appropriate for adult learners. These training modules will ensure trainers, coaches, community leaders, and directors can provide teachers with consistent quality trainings on subjects that matter most for supporting child development.

Shared Services Model: Louisiana will build a shared services model to reduce duplication of efforts and increase efficiency of birth to five services. Through a customized online platform that networks with other states, Louisiana will create a “knowledge hub” that provides directors with the resources to manage administrative, instructional, and operational functions of their business. Online training modules will facilitate the comprehensive onboarding of new teachers, reducing the stress of staff turnover. Louisiana will launch other shared services opportunities based on regional need, such as shared staff to provide curriculum implementation expertise, early intervention support, back office support, and development of a substitute teaching pool.

IX. Approach: Activity 5 Improving Overall Quality

After approximately six months of strategic planning to prepare, Louisiana will use Activity 5 to accomplish the following activities:

- Pilot supports to engage registered family homes in the statewide early childhood network

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

- Pilot multiple quality measures in participating family homes
- Pilot shared services infrastructure

Family Homes Improvement Activities: Louisiana will build a structure to support family homes who participate in the Louisiana Family Home Pilot. Since 2012, Louisiana has made great strides in unifying its once-fragmented early childhood landscape, but this work has not included family homes. All available supports have been focused on sites and programs participating in the statewide early childhood network, which has historically included licensed and publicly-funded child care centers, Head Start, and pre-K programs. Family homes represent a significant source of early childhood care and education in the state: there are ~9,000 family homes eligible for Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in Louisiana, and 218 family homes are certified and serving 471 children through CCAP. As described in Activities 1 and 2, Louisiana will first gather information about family homes in the state and the number of economically disadvantaged children those sites are serving and spend six months in a strategic planning process. After those steps, Louisiana will pilot supports to engage registered family homes in the statewide early childhood network, and pilot multiple quality measures in participating family homes.

Family homes that opt to be registered for CCAP will be offered expanded supports and resources to improve the quality of care and education offered in those settings. Louisiana will take the following actions for family homes that opt to become registered for CCAP.

- Support providers to become certified for CCAP and participate in CACFP
- Offer CCR&R trainings to registered family homes
- Include registered family homes in the community network for coordination and support

Louisiana will also pilot multiple quality measures in participating family homes. Participation in the pilot will make homes eligible for supports that will drive improvement, including scholarships

for teachers to obtain the Ancillary Certificate, CCR&R coaching support to improve quality, curriculum and instructional materials and prioritization for future partnerships.

Shared Services Infrastructure: After studying regional need, the LDOE will launch other shared services opportunities tailored to community demand, including shared staff to provide curriculum implementation expertise, IDEA early intervention support, back office support, child care management support, and development of a substitute teaching pool.

X. Organizational Capacity and Management

The LDOE is well organized to execute the strategic plan outlined in this grant proposal. Following the passage of Act 3 (2012), the LDOE has increased its leadership role in the state to coordinate seats and services for low-income and disadvantaged children birth to five, both within its own structure as well as with other state organizations that play a key role in deploying resources and services for children and families. Since 2015, the LDOE has operated as a birth through twelfth grade organization, increasing opportunities to promote alignment between early childhood programs with the K-12 grade system into which children matriculate. As the lead agency for the CCDF Block Grant, the LDOE has been responsible for funding access to seats and ensuring the health and safety of children in programs serving children birth to five since 2015. This grant will be managed by the Office of Early Childhood within the LDOE.

To coordinate and complete the activities of the grant, Louisiana will bring on a full-time grant manager who will coordinate across LDOE offices, including Early Childhood, Accountability and Data Systems, Talent, Grants Management, Finance, Research and Evaluation Team, and its contractors and partners. The manager will also work closely with other state agencies, community members, local and national stakeholders and experts. The LDOE will bring on a second team member to organize and drive strategic planning, data collection and reporting,

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

and stakeholder engagement that is related to the grant. Both of these positions will report to a senior LDOE Early Childhood director.

The LDOE serves as the key coordinator of most programs serving birth to five year olds as the Lead Agency for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), the location of the Office of Head Start Collaboration, the granting authority for all state-funded pre-K programs, the administrator of USDA National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and the coordinator of Section 619 part B services. The LDOE also oversees many of the policies and regulations guiding the access to programs for birth to five year olds. The activities described in this grant are fully aligned with the state's early childhood network, and build on the state's work to implement both the CCDF State Plan as well as the ESSA State Plan.

As the state's previous PDG grantee, as well as the Lead Agency for CCDF, and the recipient of multiple other federal grants, including SRCL, the LDOE has the organizational capacity to administer the funding and manage the development and sustainability of the required grant activities. The LDOE's finance and grant management teams will support funding, allocations, contracts, and reporting required for the grant, as it does with all federal grants. Through its statewide early childhood network structure, Louisiana's infrastructure already exists to ensure quality improvements are reaching the providers and communities prepared to implement the activities of the grant. Louisiana's Office of Early Childhood has been working closely with the lead agencies of these 65 networks, including the subset that will be selected as Ready Start networks, for more than three years. A key component of Louisiana's statewide early childhood network is to promote sustainability of efforts through increased local governance and expertise: by empowering local communities to support their own teachers and leaders to achieve quality,

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

Louisiana is creating a sustainable movement towards achieving high-quality early childhood experiences for all children.

Through multiple state level coordination opportunities, including the state's ECCE Advisory Council, the governor's Children's Cabinet, and the state's Young Child Wellness Collaborative initiative, the LDOE partners closely with the DCFS and the LDH to align opportunities for other services for children birth-to-five with the programs that serve them in full-day care. Examples of successful collaboration include raising the CCDF reimbursement rate for children with IFSPs to support centers to offer high-quality care and education for children requiring special needs child care. Additionally, the regional IDEA part C coordinators participate in their community network meetings with publicly-funded early childhood providers.

Opportunities to improve coordination between the agencies serving young children are underway in Louisiana. The state continues to explore data around the processes and accuracy of early identification at the community level in order to support local communities as they transition children into kindergarten and beyond. As part of the work referenced in Activity 4 to create Louisiana Key Training Modules, Louisiana is partnering with LDH, who offers ACE trainings, and DCFS, who supports foster children and families, to develop research-based trauma-informed care training modules that local communities and CC&R trainings can offer to programs serving young children. Through the work of the state's Young Child Wellness Collaborative, state level organizations are mapping the resources available to young children and families from the various agencies as a first step to better coordinate the delivery of services and resources. With continued progress on this work, Louisiana hopes to leverage its community network model to increase family and provider awareness of the existing state-level resources.

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

Finally, Louisiana is engaged in an ongoing partnership with national research partners at the University of Virginia. Their research about Louisiana’s statewide early childhood network provides research in the arena of early childhood that informs not only Louisiana, but the entire nation. The validation study called for by this grant represents the third study of early childhood quality at similar scale in Louisiana since 2014. This earlier Louisiana research conducted by researchers at UVA resulted in a researcher, Daphna Bassok, receiving [the Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers](#).

XI. Timeline and Dissemination Plan

Louisiana’s plan to complete the projects described in this grant is based on the state’s existing robust needs assessment and strategic plan, and its ambitious goals for the next phase of the state’s early childhood work.

| Project Goal 1: Enhance local infrastructure via Read Start Networks | |
|--|--|
| Activities | Timeline and Actions |
| Fund local communities to establish Ready Start Networks | January-December 2019: Fund at least two consecutive cohorts of pilot networks to establish community plans related to governance, access, and funding. |
| Support Ready Start network leaders with professional development, technical assistance, and other resources | January - May 2019: Secure professional development from national experts on systems building and technical assistance on legal components of local governance, and build tool kits based on the needs of communities that can be developed to support initial pilots, and then used in following pilots to scale. |
| Create community resource grants supporting high-quality mixed delivery partnership classrooms | May-December 2019: In Ready Start pilot networks that have successfully established local governance, provide community resource grants with which local leaders can equip classrooms in centers |
| Project Goal 2: Increase alignment and improve quality of early childhood care and education | |
| Activities | Timeline and Actions |
| Provide scholarships for child care teachers to attain early childhood certifications | January-December 2019: Through existing contracts, additional scholarships will be funded beginning in January |

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

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| Build onsite review evaluation for child care teacher preparation programs | January-December 2019: Over the course of a year, the LDOE will pilot an onsite review process to evaluate the success of BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs. |
| Fund grants for high-quality, standards-aligned birth-to-five instructional resources | January-December 2019: The LDOE will release an RFA for community plans no later than March to purchase instructional resources, particularly to benefit infant and toddler classrooms, and fund no later than May, with communities expending funds through December. |
| Fund grants to provide coaching and professional development to improve teacher-child interactions | January-December 2019: The LDOE will release an RFA for community plans no later than March to fund coaching and professional development, particularly to benefit infant and toddler classrooms, and fund no later than May, with communities expending funds through December. |
| Fund creation of Louisiana Key Training Modules on identified topics | January-December 2019: The LDOE will release an RFA by March, collect applications and award in June, and review and finalize modules in late fall to be shared by December. |

Project Goal 3: Incorporate registered Family Homes into the statewide early childhood network

| Activities | Timeline and Actions |
|---|--|
| Create multi-year strategy to understand the landscape of family homes and how best to increase quality of offerings to all children within the state's mixed delivery system | January-May 2019: Together in conversation with the state's early childhood stakeholders, the LDOE will develop a multi-year strategic plan to assess the family home landscape and to incorporate measures of quality. |
| Pilot supports to engage registered family homes in the statewide early childhood network | June- December 2019: After strategic planning for and consultation with local and national stakeholders regarding this activity has concluded, the LDOE will pilot a process to provide resources and support to family homes to improve quality. |
| Pilot multiple quality measures in participating family homes | June-December 2019: After strategic planning for and consultation with local and national stakeholders regarding this activity has concluded, the LDOE will pilot multiple measures of quality in participating family homes and will analyze the results. |

Project Goal 4: Improve State Systems that Inform statewide early childhood network

| Activities | Timeline and Actions |
|---|---|
| Contract with University of Virginia to conduct a validation study of Louisiana's unified quality rating system | January-December 2019: The University of Virginia will conduct a year-long validation study with the goal of providing the LDOE new evidence on the validity of the state's unified quality rating system, assess the validity of observed improvement, and explore the impact of state and program factors on improvement. |

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

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|---|---|
| Develop birth-to-12th grade data system | January-December 2019: LDOE will begin creating a statewide early childhood data system with K-12 integration and alignment that will serve as a single source of information for state planning, while protecting children's confidential information. |
| Build shared services infrastructure | January-May 2019: LDOE will engage local and national stakeholders and technical assistance organizations to update its strategic plan to include shared services for child care centers |
| | June-December 2019: LDOE will develop a “knowledge hub” that provides directors with the resources to manage administrative, instructional, and operational functions of their business. |

Dissemination Plan: The LDOE has developed a Dissemination Plan to inform public stakeholders regarding the goals and progress of the PDG B-5 application. Before formally applying for this grant, the LDOE sought out the support of the Governor, state superintendent of education, ECCE Advisory Council and Commission, and several state agencies with a vested interest in improving the future of early childhood in our state. The LDOE conducted a statewide webinar and sought feedback on its plan. More than fifty Louisiana organizations have co-signed a letter of support, which is included in the appendix.

The LDOE has robust, long standing, statutorily created engagement structures. The state will use these active structures to engage several audiences and stakeholders who already support and drive the direction of Louisiana’s early childhood approach. Target audiences for sharing information about PDG B-5 are the ECCE Advisory Council and Commission, the Governor's Office, LDH, DCFS, and community networks (including leaders of publicly-funded sites).

The following recurring structures will be used to support collaboration and updates on activities related to PDG-B-5.

- **ECCE Advisory Council** - The ECCE Advisory Council, established by law in 2012, meets 4-6 times a year. The Council will advise on the implementation of this grant.

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

- **ECCE Commission** - The ECCE Commission will be informed through regular meetings on any goals, outputs, or other products related Louisiana's plan for supporting increased access to high-quality seats.
- **Quarterly Supervisor Collaboratives:** Four times a year, the LDOE provides training and support to all early childhood lead agencies through the Supervisor Collaboratives. The LDOE will facilitate strong engagement and feedback with the leaders of the Early Childhood Community Networks on progress, reports, and data from the grant.
- **Annual Teacher Leader Summit:** The LDOE hosts the annual Teacher Leader Summit, a multi-day conference for educators and leaders Birth-12th grade. Over 600 early childhood teachers attend from all program types. At the 2019 Teacher Leader Summit, the LDOE will share implementation learnings and gain feedback on PDG B-5.
- **Early Childhood Connection Newsletter:** Bi-weekly, the LDOE sends out a newsletter to the early childhood field. This newsletter is received by over 11,000 teachers, program leaders, and stakeholders. This newsletter will disseminate reports and PDG updates.
- **Presentations at statewide conferences and meetings:** The LDOE has formed partnerships with many early childhood associations and professional organizations around the state. Routinely the LDOE is invited to provide updates to these large audiences on the goals and priorities for projects such as PDG B-5. These opportunities provide in-person access to mixed audiences of teachers, program leaders, and stakeholders across various regions of the state. These opportunities will be used to share goals and collect feedback.

LDOE staff support both the ECCE Advisory Council and Commission. Staff members support development and dissemination of all reports and products shared with these convening

bodies. LDOE staff also facilitate the Supervisor Collaboratives and the Annual Teacher Leader Summit. The PDG B-5 grant coordinator will develop reports and products to be disseminated.

The effectiveness of dissemination for event-based opportunities will be measured by attendance, participation, and level of feedback provided. For the newsletter, the LDOE measures both readership and click rate. The LDOE will use this information to determine the effectiveness of the dissemination plan, and revisit as needed.

XII. Program Performance Evaluation Plan

Louisiana’s existing systems allow for routine data collection processes to measure the statewide access to high-quality early childhood programs, and the successes and challenges of the collaborative leadership model. Using existing data collection processes as well as additional capacity during the grant year, the LDOE will conduct ongoing evaluations of the project goals and objectives. The LDOE has a dedicated research staff of data scientists who will utilize data analysis software to support this program evaluation plan. The following table shows each project goal and the corresponding short-term outcomes, metrics the state will use to evaluate those outcomes, and appropriate new and existing data sources. The LDOE will also evaluate monthly whether the obligations and expenditures are proportional and on track to the planned budget allocations and timeline. With this information, combined with any updated data or strategy, the LDOE will refine the budget and strategy to use funds effectively and efficiently.

Project Goal 1: Incorporate Family Homes into Statewide Early Childhood Network

| Short-Term Outcomes | Performance Metrics | Data Source |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Family homes are incorporated into the state's early childhood network for quality, enrollment, and local collaborative leadership | Satisfactory participation of family homes in Pilot (to be defined after Activities 1 & 2) | Quarterly review of Family Home Pilot |
| Registered family homes have | Results from the Family Homes | Family Home Pilot self- |

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

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|--|--|--|
| increased knowledge about available resources for quality | Supports Self-Assessment administered to registered family homes at three points over the year show increased knowledge of resources and quality | assessment Family Home Pilot quality observations |
| Louisiana begins collecting data and information about family home experiences that is aligned to its quality rating system. | Collection of family home quality data that is used to develop a needs assessment and establish a baseline | Stakeholder engagement |

Louisiana does not currently collect data on family home enrollment, quality, or teacher satisfaction with and knowledge of improvement supports. The LDOE will refine its logic model after the strategic planning period to reflect the learnings from the updated needs assessment.

Louisiana will establish the following data collection and program evaluation processes:

- **Quarterly review of Family Home Pilot:** On a routine basis, the LDOE will collect and review data on both the family homes registered with CCAP and the ones participating in the Family Home Pilot, such as the number of homes and service levels.
- **Family Home Pilot Self-Assessment:** The LDOE will create a self-assessment tool to routinely administer to registered family homes that measures the sites’ knowledge and use of resources that support business sustainability and quality improvement.
- **Family Home Pilot Quality Observations:** The LDOE will launch a pilot for participating family homes to assess quality. Success will be measured by survey results and how analysis of data collected informs future policy, including through partnership with UVA.
- **Technical Assistance and Stakeholder Engagement:** The LDOE will routinely engage with national experts and stakeholders to review the pilot and gather input and feedback.

Project Goal 2: Increase Alignment and Improve Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education

| Short-Term Outcomes | Performance Metrics | Data Source |
|--|---|--------------------|
| Teachers can identify and attend high-quality training opportunities | Scholarships are provided to an increased number of lead teachers proportional to | Scholarship counts |

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

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|--|--|---|
| | grant funding; An onsite evaluation tool is launched with trained staff conducting at least 2 pilot evaluations | Performance Profiles Teacher Survey data |
| Teachers are equipped with the resources they need to provide high-quality instruction | Percent of sites and classrooms with 3 stars on <i>GOLD</i> ® and preK and toddler curriculum improves; Percent of teachers satisfied with supports improves; Instructional Support scores improve | |
| Teachers interact more effectively with children birth-to-five | <i>CLASS</i> TM scores improve, particularly in targeted areas | |
| Teachers learn important information on subjects that matter most for supporting child development | CCR&Rs use key training modules in every region of the state for at least 30% of their trainings; <i>CLASS</i> TM scores improve, particularly in targeted areas | |

The LDOE already has systems in place to measure the quality of every publicly-funded early childhood site in the state, as well as the use of and satisfaction with supports for teachers and directors. Louisiana will rely on the following data collection systems:

- **Scholarship Results:** The LDOE will use the data on the number and program attended of teachers using scholarships to assess whether the percent of teachers in high-quality preparation programs increase.
- **Performance Profiles:** Through annual Performance Profiles, the LDOE collects data on the quality of every publicly-funded site, which will be used to determine whether more sites use expertly-reviewed instructional tools and offer high-quality interactions.
- **Teacher Survey:** Each year, the LDOE administers a statewide teacher satisfaction survey. This survey will be used to evaluate teachers’ satisfaction with supports, and will inform logic model refinements.

Project Goal 3: Establish state-local infrastructure via Ready Start Network Pilots

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

| Short-Term Outcomes | Performance Metrics | Data Source |
|---|---|--|
| Communities are enabled to make changes and find investments to improve quality and access | Ready Start Network Pilots <i>CLASSTM</i> and access data improve Ready Start Network Pilots collaboratively raise additional matching funds to achieve their goals | Network and Site Performance Profiles Child Count enrollment data |
| Local leaders drive improvement and quality in their community that is tailored to their specific needs | Communities make measurable progress toward achieving goals identified in pilot applications | |
| Classrooms in mixed delivery settings offer high-quality birth to three opportunities | Mixed delivery partnerships are formed, supported, and sustained in Ready Start networks | |

By piloting a new governance structure, Louisiana will be able to compare the enrollment practices and quality improvement of the community networks that participate in the pilot against the networks that do not participate in the pilot. Specifically, the LDOE will use the following data sources to evaluate the success of the pilot:

- **Network and Site Performance Profiles:** The LDOE collects informational metric data and CLASS observation data for every community and site in the state. These data will be used to evaluate whether the networks that participate in the pilot improve at a faster rate than other networks in the state.
- **Child Count Enrollment Data:** LDOE will use the existing Child Count process to evaluate the success of networks to increase enrollment in mixed delivery settings and to increase publicly-funded access to high-quality programs.

Project Goal 4: Improving State Systems

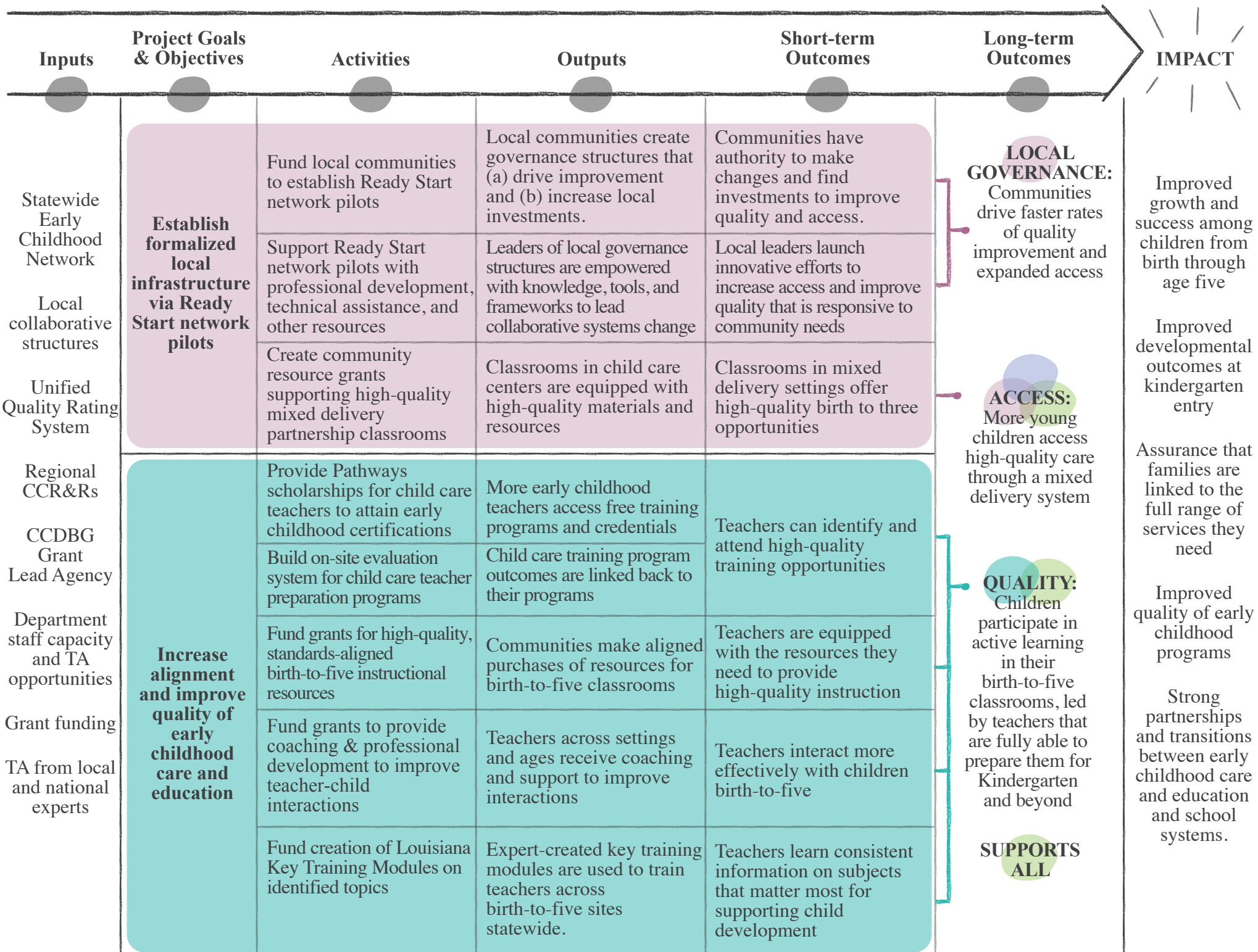
| Short-Term Outcomes | Performance Metrics | Data Source |
|--|---|-------------|
| Based on research, Louisiana strengthens its unified quality | UVA identifies areas to strengthen Louisiana’s system | UVA report |

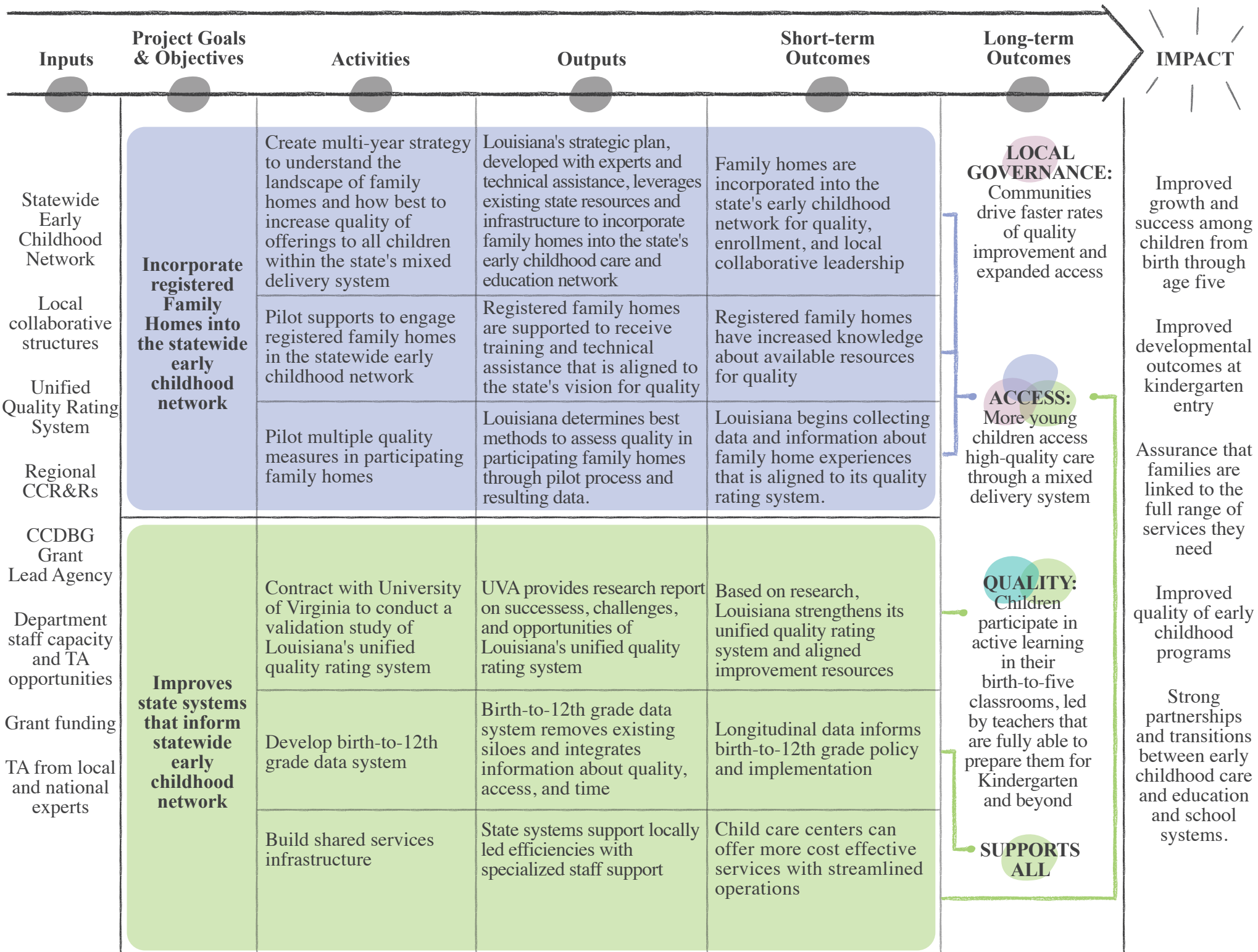
Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| rating system and aligned improvement resources | and Louisiana implements recommendations | |
| Comprehensive data informs birth-to-12th grade policy and implementation | Phase 1 and 2 of data system are built; Generate unique identification numbers for every publicly-funded child | End-of-year Contract Performance Evaluation |
| Child care centers can offer more cost effective services with streamlined operations | Evaluate the success of contract in building efficiencies in multiple areas for child care centers | Center data on cost and efficiencies Participation in shared services |

The LDOE will utilize the following data collection and evaluation processes:

- **University of Virginia (UVA) report:** UVA will conduct a validation study that will generate a report. This report will be shared with the ECCE Advisory Council to engage on future improvements and to amend Louisiana’s logic model.
- **End-of-year Contract Performance Evaluation:** The LDOE will complete contracts to begin building the comprehensive data system and for other components of the work. Contract Performance Evaluations will be completed to evaluate whether the contracted work met the objectives of the projects. One metric for evaluating this project is whether the data system can successfully provide every child with a unique identification number upon entry into a publicly-funded program. This will strengthen data infrastructure and lay the foundation for critically important research and analysis for years to come.
- **Data on shared services:** If the shared services pilot is successful, the percent of centers participating will increase. The LDOE will use participation data to evaluate this project.





XIV. Sustainability Plan

Louisiana will sustain the strategic planning and improvement work of this grant.

| Project Goals | Sustainability Plan |
|--|--|
| Enhance local infrastructure via Ready Start networks | Building local infrastructure ensures that the systems shaped by the grant can drive sustainable improvements to the mixed delivery birth-to-five system. |
| Align Investments to Improve Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education | By aligning investments to increase program quality and deploying resources through community-level grants, the state ensures that local communities build capacity that extends beyond the grant year to improve birth-to-five classrooms within the mixed delivery system. |
| Incorporate registered Family Homes into the statewide early childhood network | Louisiana’s strategy to incorporate registered family homes into the statewide early childhood system will be ready to implement during the grant year, and will incorporate sustainable improvements within a provider type not currently included within the state’s system. |
| Improve State Systems that Inform statewide early childhood network | The data system and validation study will provide information to drive long-term strategy and improvement. The investment to build shared services infrastructure will reduce costs and increase efficiencies across the mixed delivery birth to five system. |

Through Act 639 (2018), Louisiana has established the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission, comprised of 38 legislators, government officials, providers, advocates, and community representatives. This commission is charged with creating recommendations around increasing access to high-quality early childhood seats and projecting the necessary funding for this goal. The commission will release a report prior to the 2019 legislative session guiding the state to increase its investments in early childhood access and governance. The commission’s work will leverage the grant to increase access and improve quality over time.

XV. Budget and Budget Justification

Louisiana is applying for \$10 MM to achieve its PDG B-5 goals.

Project Goal 1: Establish local infrastructure via Ready Start networks

The LDOE is applying for \$3.9 MM to support pilots to establish local governance that incentivizes innovation and drives improvement, as described in Activities 2 and 3.

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

| Activity | Expense | Budget | Budget Category |
|---|--|-------------|-----------------|
| Fund local communities to establish Ready Start Network Pilots | Allocations to local pilots to build and begin executing governance plans that promote increased access and quality | \$2,400,000 | H (Flowthrough) |
| | One-time child care supplement to support participation | \$500,000 | H (Flowthrough) |
| Support Ready Start Network Pilots with professional development, technical assistance, and other resources | Develop local governance supports, including but not limited to facilitators, toolkits, templates, legal consultation, and cost modeling | \$350,000 | F (Contracts) |
| | Provide systems-building and leadership professional development to local Ready Start leaders | \$150,000 | F (Contracts) |
| Create community resource grants supporting high-quality mixed delivery partnerships | Community-level grants to provide centers with classroom material supports to foster future mixed delivery partnerships | \$500,000 | H (Flowthrough) |

Project Goal 2: Increase alignment and improve quality of early childhood care and education

The LDOE is applying for \$1.6 MM to prepare, equip, and support teachers to offer high-quality experiences for children in birth-to-five classrooms, as described in Activities 2 and 4.

| Activity | Expense | Budget | Budget Category |
|--|--|-----------|-----------------|
| Provide scholarships for child care teachers to attain early childhood certifications | Increase teacher access to credentials via scholarships | \$350,000 | F (Contracts) |
| Build onsite evaluation system for child care teacher preparation programs | Creation and implementation of onsite evaluation system tools, processes, and policies | \$100,000 | F (Contracts) |
| Fund grants for high-quality standards-aligned birth-to-five instructional resources | Community-level grants to purchase curriculum and aligned resources | \$420,482 | H (Flowthrough) |
| Fund grants to provide coaching and professional development to improve teacher-child interactions | Community-level grants to fund coaching and professional development aligned to CLASS | \$420,482 | H (Flowthrough) |

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

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|--|--|-----------|---------------|
| Fund creation of Louisiana Key Training Modules on identified topics | Creation of expert-developed ready-to-go presentations offered across the state to all providers | \$300,000 | F (Contracts) |
|--|--|-----------|---------------|

Project Goal 3: Incorporate Family Homes into Statewide Early Childhood Network

The LDOE is applying for approximately \$1.43 MM to create a family homes needs assessment to inform a strategic plan for family homes, as described in Activities 1, 2, and 5.

| Activity | Expense | Budget | Budget Category |
|---|--|-----------|--------------------|
| Create multi-year strategy to understand the landscape of family homes and how best to increase quality of offerings to all children within the state's mixed delivery system | Contracts with experts to understand landscape and develop strategy, including to pilot activities around supports and quality | \$200,000 | F (Contracts) |
| | LDOE systems changes that are required by strategic plan | \$150,000 | H. (Other Charges) |
| Pilot supports to engage registered family homes in the statewide early childhood network | Access to child care supports, including MHC and CCR&Rs for registered family homes | \$500,000 | F (Contracts) |
| | Scholarships for registered family home providers | \$200,000 | F (Contracts) |
| Pilot quality measures in participating family homes | Develop and pilot quality measures in volunteer family homes | \$300,000 | F (Contracts) |
| | Bonuses to incent pilot participation | \$300,000 | H (Flowthrough) |

Project Goal 4: Improve State Systems that inform the Statewide Early Childhood Network

The LDOE will apply for \$2.7 MM to conduct a validation study of the state's unified quality rating system, develop a comprehensive data system, and implement a shared services pilot.

| Activity | Expense | Budget | Budget Category |
|---|--|-------------|-----------------|
| Contract with University of Virginia to conduct a validation study of Louisiana's unified quality rating system | A study that validates Louisiana's unified quality rating system using direct assessments of children's learning and researcher-collected classroom observation data | \$1,000,000 | F (Contracts) |

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

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|---|---|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Develop birth-to-12th grade data system | Fund initial building of statewide early childhood data system | \$1,000,000 | F (Contracts) |
| Build shared services infrastructure | One salaried employee to develop and implement a strategic plan for regionalized shared services support | \$119,000 | A (Personnel) B (Fringe) |
| | Fund state level platform and supports to centers for technology costs | \$200,000 | H (Other) |
| | Initial subscriptions for participating centers for shared services | \$150,000 | F (contracts) |
| Grant Management Costs | One Year Grant Coordinator Salary | \$91,000 | A (Personnel) B (Fringe) |
| | 25% of salary and benefits for supervisor of PDG grant coordinator | \$29,928 | |
| | Computers and technology for grant-funded employees | \$4,000 | E (Supplies) |
| | Other stakeholder engagement costs, including room rentals, associated meeting costs, printed materials, etc. | \$60,000 | H (Other Costs) |
| | Local and national travel associated with the grant, including 4 participants attending grant conference | \$30,000 | C (Travel) |
| | State Indirect Costs – 10.6% charged on a base of \$3,692,618 | \$391,418 | J (Indirect Costs) |

The LDOE has secured \$3MM in nonfederal funds as a match, to be spent during the project grant period. These funds support the work of the activities described in this project:

| Funding Source | Activity | Amount |
|--|---|-------------|
| State General Funds | Statewide lead agency allocations to build collaborative leadership (65 lead agencies) | \$1,238,150 |
| State General Funds | 3rd Party CLASS evaluations of program quality conducted by University of Louisiana Lafayette | \$686,850 |
| Louisiana’s Quality Education Support Fund | State government grant funding provided to the LDOE dedicated to Early Childhood Care and Education Network Implementation | \$275,000 |
| Philanthropic | Grant funding to proportionally support contracts for the PDG B-5 project goals and activities: Project Goal 1: \$300,000; Project Goal 2: \$50,000; Project Goal 3: \$250,000 ;Project Goal 4: \$200,000 | \$800,000 |

Through this combination of state and philanthropic funds, the LDOE is well positioned to leverage the PDG B-5 federal funds to achieve the state’s established goals, and to drive long-lasting, sustainable improvement for its unified mixed delivery birth-to-five system.

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

Budget Modification Narrative

Louisiana is budgeting \$7.1 MM in federal PDG funds to achieve its PDG B-5 goals detailed in the grant application.

Project Goal 1: Establish local infrastructure via Ready Start Networks

The LDOE plans to spend \$3.25 MM to support pilots in establishing local governance that incentivizes innovation and drives improvement, as described in Activities 2 and 3. The LDOE has modified its original budget by reducing the budgeted amount for allocations to local pilots. As the LDOE scales this pilot, this budget amount will be supplemented with additional philanthropic dollars.

| Activity | Expense | Budget | Budget Category |
|---|--|---------------|------------------------|
| Fund local communities to establish Ready Start Network Pilots | Allocations to local pilots to build and begin executing governance plans that promote increased access and quality | \$1,750,000 | H (Flowthrough) |
| | One-time child care supplement to support participation | \$500,000 | H (Flowthrough) |
| Support Ready Start Network Pilots with professional development, technical assistance, and other resources | Develop local governance supports, including but not limited to facilitators, toolkits, templates, legal consultation, and cost modeling | \$350,000 | F (Contracts) |
| | Provide systems-building and leadership professional development to local Ready Start leaders | \$150,000 | F (Contracts) |
| Create community resource grants supporting high-quality mixed delivery partnerships | Community-level grants to provide centers with classroom material supports to foster future mixed delivery partnerships | \$500,000 | H (Flowthrough) |

Project Goal 2: Increase alignment and improve quality of early childhood care and education

The LDOE plans to spend approximately \$832,000 to prepare, equip, and support teachers to offer high-quality experiences for children in birth-to-five classrooms, as described in Activities 2 and 4.

To accommodate the budget modifications, the LDOE is eliminating the originally-proposed

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

community-level grants to purchase curriculum and instructional resources because while limited, there are other funds available to support this activity. Additionally, the LDOE is reducing the amount planned to spend on community-level grants to fund coaching and professional development and the creation of the Key Training Modules.

| Activity | Expense | Budget | Budget Category |
|--|--|---------------|------------------------|
| Provide scholarships for child care teachers to attain early childhood certifications | Increase teacher access to credentials via scholarships | \$350,000 | F (Contracts) |
| Build onsite evaluation system for child care teacher preparation programs | Creation and implementation of onsite evaluation system tools, processes, and policies | \$100,000 | F (Contracts) |
| Fund grants for high-quality standards-aligned birth-to-five instructional resources | Community-level grants to purchase curriculum and aligned resources | \$0 | n/a |
| Fund grants to provide coaching and professional development to improve teacher-child interactions | Community-level grants to fund coaching and professional development aligned to CLASS | \$231,926 | H (Flowthrough) |
| Fund creation of Louisiana Key Training Modules on identified topics | Creation of expert-developed ready-to-go presentations offered across the state to all providers (Key Modules) | \$150,000 | F (Contracts) |

Project Goal 3: Incorporate Family Homes into Statewide Early Childhood Network

The LDOE plans to spend approximately \$1.3 MM to create a family homes needs assessment to inform a strategic plan for family homes, as described in Activities 1, 2, and 5. The LDOE is eliminating the system changes from the budget activities and plans to find other funding to support these changes.

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

| Activity | Expense | Budget | Budget Category |
|---|--|-----------|-----------------|
| Create multi-year strategy to understand the landscape of family homes and how best to increase quality of offerings to all children within the state's mixed delivery system | Contracts with experts to understand landscape and develop strategy, including to pilot activities around supports and quality | \$200,000 | F (Contracts) |
| | LDOE systems changes | \$0 | n/a |
| Pilot supports to engage registered family homes in the statewide early childhood network | Access to child care supports, including MHC and CCR&Rs for registered family homes | \$400,000 | F (Contracts) |
| | Scholarships for registered family home providers | \$200,000 | F (Contracts) |
| Pilot quality measures in participating family homes | Develop and pilot quality measures in volunteer family homes | \$300,000 | F (Contracts) |
| | Bonuses to incent pilot participation | \$200,000 | H (Flowthrough) |

Project Goal 4: Improve State Systems that inform the Statewide Early Childhood Network

The LDOE plans to spend approximately \$1.7 MM to conduct a validation study of the state's unified quality rating system and implement a shared services pilot. The LDOE is eliminating the funding for the development of a statewide early childhood data system. The LDOE will still develop a birth-to-12th grade longitudinal data system on the timeline described in the grant narrative, but will leverage other funding sources that align with the current grant year.

Additionally, the LDOE will change the structure of the shared services pilot such that the initial subscription support is no longer necessary. The LDOE also plans to reduce the amount spent on changes to the state level platform.

| Activity | Expense | Budget | Budget Category |
|---|--|-------------|-----------------|
| Contract with University of Virginia to conduct a validation study of Louisiana's | A study that validates Louisiana's unified quality rating system using direct assessments of children's learning and researcher-collected classroom observation data | \$1,000,000 | F (Contracts) |

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

| | | | |
|---|---|-----------|-----------------------------|
| unified quality rating system | | | |
| Develop birth-to-12th grade data system | Fund initial building of statewide early childhood data system | \$0 | n/a |
| Build shared services infrastructure | One salaried employee to develop and implement a strategic plan for regionalized shared services support | \$119,000 | A (Personnel) B (Fringe) |
| | Fund state level platform and supports to centers for technology costs | \$150,000 | H (Other) |
| | Initial subscriptions for participating centers for shared services | \$0 | n/a |
| Grant Management Costs | One Year Grant Coordinator Salary | \$91,000 | A (Personnel) B (Fringe) |
| | 25% of salary and benefits for supervisor of PDG grant coordinator | \$29,928 | |
| | Computers and technology for grant-funded employees | \$4,000 | E (Supplies) |
| | Other stakeholder engagement costs, including room rentals, associated meeting costs, printed materials, etc. | \$60,000 | H (Other Costs) |
| | Local and national travel associated with the grant, including 4 participants attending grant conference | \$30,000 | C (Travel) |
| | State Indirect Costs – 10.6% charged on a base of \$3,692,618 | \$234,146 | J (Indirect Costs) |

The LDOE has secured \$3MM in nonfederal funds as a match, to be spent during the project grant period. This amount will be used to supplement and offset the changes made in the budget modification process. These funds support the work of the activities described in this project:

| Funding Source | Activity | Amount |
|--|---|-------------|
| State General Funds | Statewide lead agency allocations to build collaborative leadership (65 lead agencies) | \$1,238,150 |
| State General Funds | 3rd Party CLASS evaluations of program quality conducted by University of Louisiana Lafayette | \$686,850 |
| Louisiana's Quality Education Support Fund | State government grant funding provided to the LDOE dedicated to Early Childhood Care and Education Network Implementation | \$275,000 |
| Philanthropic | Grant funding to proportionally support contracts for the PDG B-5 project goals and activities: Project Goal 1: \$300,000; Project Goal 2: \$50,000; Project Goal 3: \$250,000 ;Project Goal 4: \$200,000 | \$800,000 |

Louisiana Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

Through this combination of state and philanthropic funds, the LDOE is well positioned to leverage the PDG B-5 federal funds to achieve the state's established goals, and to drive long-lasting, sustainable improvement for its unified mixed delivery birth-to-five system.