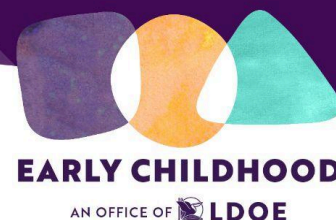




# Early Childhood Newsletter



October 10, 2024

## National Book Month

October is recognized as National Book Month, a time dedicated to highlighting the significance of reading in fostering the development of essential oral language and emergent literacy skills in children. Language development refers to children's emerging abilities to understand and use language, including receptive skills (the ability to listen and understand) and expressive skills (the ability to use language to communicate ideas, thoughts, and feelings). Emerging literacy lays the foundation for reading and writing and is embedded in the language and communication domain for infants and toddlers.



One way to celebrate National Book Month is by taking advantage of the grab-and-go [LDOE Literacy Resources for Families](#). These resources are designed to support family literacy engagement, recognizing that parents are a child's first teachers. The resources include activities and one-pagers with simple tips for enhancing literacy skills at home.

Let's use this opportunity to inspire a love for reading in Louisiana's youngest children and help them develop essential skills for future literacy success!

## Upcoming Deadlines

- October 10: [Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Award Nominations](#) close at 11:59 p.m.
- October 31: Community Network Lead Agency submission of October 1 Child Count via the [Child Count Portal](#)
- October 31: Fall TS Gold® Checkpoint
- November 1: Directors and teachers with an expiring ECAC should submit for an initial or renewal application via the [LDOE Educator Certification Portal](#)
- December 16: [U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School](#) application submission
- December 31: Submission of new credentials and certifications to Louisiana Pathways for re-leveling

## Upcoming Events

- October 25: [New Director Office Hours](#)
- November 7: [Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar](#)

## More Important Dates

Please see the [LDOE School System Support Calendar](#).

## In This Issue

- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Updates for Funding and Enrollment](#)
- [Updates for Licensed Centers](#)
- [Updates for Family Child Care and In-Home Providers](#)
- [Updates for Licensed Centers, Family Child Care, and In-Home Providers](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **NEW: Office Hours for New Directors**

The LDOE team conducts webinars on various topics related to early childhood quality and improving the administrative and operational functions of child care sites. Through engaging sessions and monthly guest speakers, the office hours are designed to support directors seeking professional development training to facilitate effective ECE leadership development.

This month's topic is "An Introduction to the Tulane Mental Health Consultation Services (T-MHCS) Program." Participants will learn the purpose and methods of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC), including promoting healthy development, supporting caregivers in fostering this development, and addressing challenging behaviors or mental health concerns of young children.

<b>Webinar Date/Time:</b>	October 25 at 12 p.m.
<b>Webinar Link:</b>	<a href="https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/92298578944">https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/92298578944</a>
<b>Webinar Phone Number:</b>	1 346 248 7799
<b>Meeting ID:</b>	922 9857 8944

Please contact [tella.henderson@la.gov](mailto:tella.henderson@la.gov) with questions.

### **NEW: Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar**

The LDOE hosts monthly webinars for early childhood providers. These webinars include essential reminders and updates for all provider types. Providers can access the upcoming November Provider Update Webinar using the information below:

<b>Webinar Date/Time:</b>	November 7 at 1 p.m.
<b>Webinar Link:</b>	<a href="https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/91532982014?pwd=D5xkBgKac4rzD1SbOlOOC5BNmOTQsE.1">https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/91532982014?pwd=D5xkBgKac4rzD1SbOlOOC5BNmOTQsE.1</a>
<b>Phone Number:</b>	1 470 250 9358
<b>Meeting ID:</b>	915 3298 2014
<b>Passcode:</b>	519100

The October 3 webinar presentation slides will be available in the [Quality Providers Library](#) on the [Louisiana Believes](#) website.

### **REMINDER: The 2026 Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Award Nominations portal closes TODAY!**

Calling all excellent Early Childhood Teachers and Leaders! Eligible candidates for nomination for the Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Award are individuals who work in Type III child care centers, Head Start centers, Early Head Start centers, or CCAP-certified Family Child Care sites. Nominators can be colleagues, friends, family members, community members, or anyone else who knows an early childhood teacher or leader who is making a positive impact on the state's youngest learners. Teachers and leaders can also nominate themselves. Anyone can submit a nomination, and the nomination survey takes less than five minutes to complete. You can be nominated for this award more than once; however, an overall honoree cannot be renominated.

School-based pre-K applicants should apply for the pre-K through grade 12 Teacher and Leader of the Year Awards.

Please complete the [Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Nomination form](#) by today, Thursday, October 10, 2024, at 11:59 p.m.

Please contact [shallan.jones@la.gov](mailto:shallan.jones@la.gov) with questions.

### **REMINDER: Green Ribbon Schools Application Available**

The LDOE is excited to announce that the application to be recognized as a [U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School](#) for the 2024-2025 school year will be available in September on the [Environmental Education](#) web page. Eligibility requirements include that schools, systems, and early learning centers show progress in

- reducing environmental impacts and costs;
- improving health and wellness; and
- providing effective environmental and sustainability education.

To assist interested applicants, the LDOE will host a series of webinars to help potential applicants understand the three pillars of the application and the application process. Final applications are due on December 16 by 5 p.m.

Additional information is available on the [Environmental Education](#) web page.

Please contact [environmentaleducation@la.gov](mailto:environmentaleducation@la.gov) with questions.

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## **UPDATES FOR FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT**

### **NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Underutilization Monitoring**

CCAP continues to make child care payments based on enrollment for eligible families that utilize the authorizations. Please remember that providers **are required** to ensure the KinderConnect Attendance Tracking system is accessed by parents daily to capture attendance. If a family is using KinderConnect to sign in and out, the case will not appear on the LDOE Underutilized Report.

- Families who have not scanned their children in/out of care for 30 days are considered underutilizing participants. This may result in termination of the family's CCAP benefits.
- If child care services are still needed, the parent may contact the LDOE immediately at 1-877-453-2721 or submit a CCAP 10 - Report of Changes form (ensure section 8 is completed), indicating that services are still needed.
- Timely receipt of the call to the LDOE or Report of Changes form will prevent closure of the family's case.
- If the case is closed, the parent will have to reapply and, if deemed eligible, will be placed on the Waiting List until additional funds become available for child care assistance.

For more details, contact the CCAP Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-614-5917.

### **NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) KinderBridge (API) for Child Care Management Systems (CCMSs)**

If your site is using Procure Online, BrightWheel, or another attendance reporting/Child Care Management System (CCMS) that needs to connect with KinderConnect, you must contact KinderSystems support by phone at 1-888-829-9258 or by e-mail at [SupportLA@KinderSystems.com](mailto:SupportLA@KinderSystems.com) to configure KinderBridge (API). KinderBridge (API) is the software that connects KinderConnect to the site's CCMS and allows providers to transmit the

attendance data to KinderConnect. Transmitting attendance data through KinderConnect will ensure that attending children do not show up on the LDOE's Underutilized Report.

For more information on KinderBridge, see [Guides and Quick Reference Cards \(ORCs\)](#) and [Listing of Active and Certified CCMS providers](#).

For more details or further assistance, please contact KinderSystems Support at 1-888-829-9258 or by e-mail at [SupportLA@KinderSystems.com](mailto:SupportLA@KinderSystems.com).

### **NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Presumptive Eligibility and Complete Applications**

To improve application processing and payment practices for families and providers, the LDOE began Presumptive Eligibility for Redetermination Applications for families effective October 1, 2024. Presumptive Eligibility allows additional time for families to submit a complete renewal application in Cafe' for CCAP services to continue. This will eliminate a possible lapse in child care services for families as they work to renew their certification.

- Providers can assist by having families complete their Child Care Assistance Program applications and requests for changes online through the [Cafe Customer Portal](#).
- A complete application at redetermination means that CCAP receives an application with **all** supporting documents for processing the application **prior to the end of the family's certification**.

Effective for applications received on or after October 1, as families submit complete initial or redetermination applications in Cafe' and report income, the unearned income of child support will no longer be budgeted in the family's income as part of CCAP eligibility certification or redetermination.

For more information, contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-614-5917 or e-mail [CCAPPHD@la.gov](mailto:CCAPPHD@la.gov).

### **NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Special Needs Copayments**

Per the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the following are acceptable forms of verification to establish that a child meets Special Needs requirements:

- Current Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- Current Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Current Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Award letter for the child
- A written medical statement from the child's physician

Families meeting the Special Needs criteria receive CCAP at the state maximum rate per age of the child. Providers may charge a daily rate above the state's maximum rate, and parents are required to pay the difference to the provider for child care services.

For more information, contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-614-5917 or e-mail [CCAPPHD@la.gov](mailto:CCAPPHD@la.gov).

### **REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Application Asset Question – Assistance for Clients**

As providers assist parents in completing the CCAP application, particular attention should be given to answering the asset question properly. Parents may access the [Family Assets](#) video and the [Remember Guide](#) on the LDOE website to aid in responding correctly, so that delays with application processing will not occur.

- Specifically, if the family's assets DO NOT exceed \$1,000,000, the response should be "Yes."
- If the family's assets DO exceed \$1,000,000, the response should be "No."

- If answered incorrectly or left blank on the application, processing delays will occur.

For more information, contact the LDOE Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-614-5917 or e-mail [CCAPPHD@la.gov](mailto:CCAPPHD@la.gov).

## UPDATES FOR LICENSED CENTERS

### NEW: Restroom Supervision

Supervision is fundamental to safety, the prevention of injury, and maintaining quality child care, and this includes the use of the restroom:

- Staff members must be ready to provide assistance and guidance when children are ready to use the restroom.
- Older preschool children and school-age children may use the restroom without direct visual observation, but staff members must remain within hearing range in case children need assistance and to prevent inappropriate behavior.

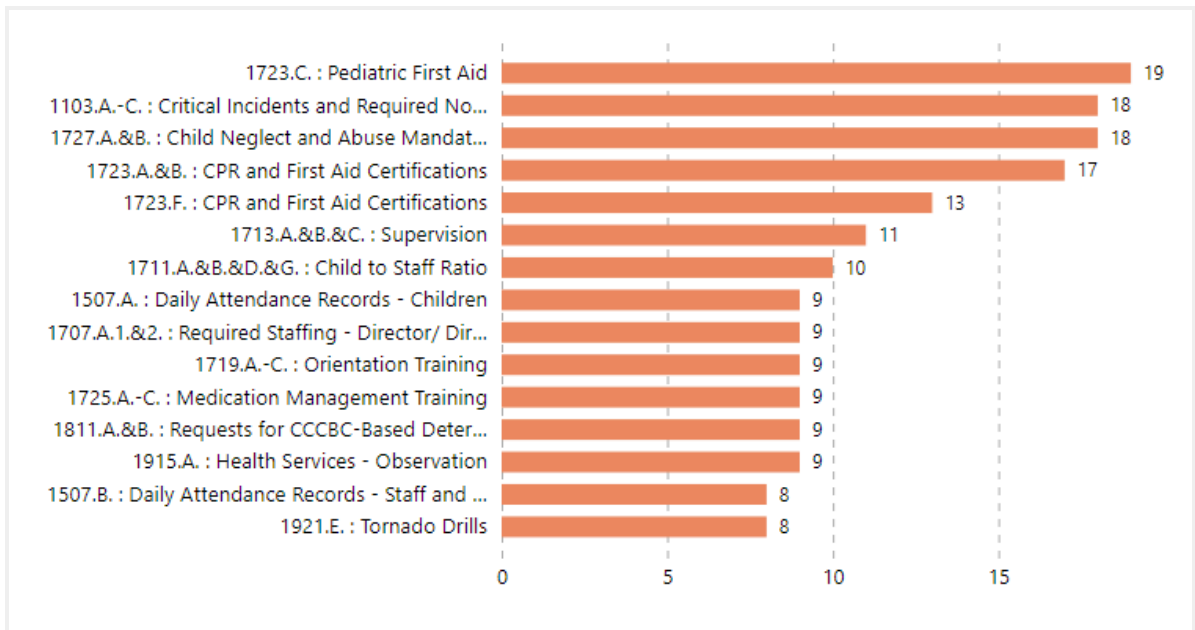
Bulletin 137 requires the following:

- A staff member is in proximity to and can see the children who are developmentally able to go to the restroom independently to ensure immediate intervention to safeguard a child from harm while in the restroom.
- Individuals who are not staff members must not enter the center restroom area while in use by any child other than their own child.
- A child aged four and older may be permitted to go and return from the restroom without staff.

Please contact your [licensing consultant](#) with questions.

### NEW: Most-Cited Deficiencies for September 2024

The chart below shows deficiencies cited from inspections conducted during the month of September 2024. Not completing Pediatric First Aid timely and not submitting Critical Incidents and Required Notifications appropriately continue to be among the top-cited.



Daily Health Checks, Health Services - Parental Notification, and End-of-Day Checks were also highly-cited in September. Please see additional information about each of those regulations below.

### Daily Health Checks

Every day, a staff member must conduct a health check of each child as soon as possible after the child enters the child care facility. Staff members should gain information necessary to complete the daily health check by direct observation of the child, by querying the parent/guardian, and, where applicable, by conversation with the child.

Daily health checks seek to identify potential concerns about a child's health, including recent illness or injury to the child as well as any signs of abuse or neglect. Bulletin 137 requires that, upon arrival at the center, the physical condition of each child must be observed for possible signs of illness, infections, bruises, or injuries. When something is observed it shall be documented. Note: It is also a best practice to document when nothing is observed, to indicate that the required check of each child was completed.

### Health Services - Parental Notification

When there is an injury, accident, illness, or unusual behavior that occurs at the facility, it must be documented and reported to the parent.

The following injuries can be reported no later than the day of injury, when the child is released to the parent or authorized representative:

- Scrape on the knee with no bleeding
- Cut on the elbow

Parents or legal guardians must be notified *immediately* in the following circumstances:

- Blood not contained in an adhesive strip
- Head, neck, or eye injury
- Human bite that breaks the skin
- Animal bite
- Impaled object
- Temperature reading over 101 ° Fahrenheit

### End-of-Day Check

It is important to ensure the entire center and play yard is checked after the last child leaves, to ensure that no child is left behind. The end-of-day check must be documented and include the following:

- Date
- Time of visual check
- Signature of the staff conducting the visual check

Please contact your [licensing consultant](#) with questions about any of these Bulletin 137 regulations.

### **REMINDER: Motor Vehicle Checks**

It is imperative that vehicles are adequately inspected for children before staff exit the vehicle. A staff person must physically walk through the vehicle and inspect the following:

- all seat surfaces
- under all seats
- all enclosed spaces and recesses of the vehicle interior



For field trips, each vehicle must have a face-to-name count conducted in addition to the visual passenger check at the following times:

- prior to leaving the center for the destination
- upon arrival at and prior to departure from each destination
- upon return to the center

A staff member must record the time of the visual passenger check and sign the log indicating that no child was left in the vehicle.

Please contact your [licensing consultant](#) with questions.

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## UPDATES FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE AND IN-HOME PROVIDERS

### REMINDER: Cumulative File

There must be a cumulative file maintained for each child. The file must include the following:

- an information form
- written authorization for emergency medical treatment
- individuals to whom the child may be released
- special dietary requirements

The information form must be signed and dated by the parent as changes occur and contain the following:

- the name of the child
- date of birth
- sex
- date of admission
- the name of parents
- the home address of both child and parents
- the phone numbers where parents may be reached while the child is in care
- the name and phone number of the person to contact in an emergency if parents cannot be located promptly
- any special concerns including but not limited to allergies and chronic illnesses
- any special needs of the child, if applicable
- any special dietary needs, restrictions, food allergies, or intolerances, if applicable

Please contact [providercertification@la.gov](mailto:providercertification@la.gov) with questions.

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## UPDATES FOR LICENSED CENTERS, FAMILY CHILD CARE, AND IN-HOME PROVIDERS

### NEW: 2024 Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) Go Live

The 2024 Louisiana Birth to Five [Early Learning and Development Standards](#) (ELDS) are now available on the LDOE website. The ELDS outline the skills and abilities that children should be able to know and do at each age and can be used by early childhood educators when designing age-appropriate activities and experiences and determining developmentally-aligned expectations for children. The LDOE will be sharing additional standards-aligned content and resources in the coming months.

Please contact [earlychildhood@la.gov](mailto:earlychildhood@la.gov) with questions.

### **NEW: School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTCs)**

The LDOE will send e-mail notifications of site star ratings and levels to eligible directors by late October 2024.

Parent School Readiness Tax Credit (SRTC) forms (R-10614) will be mailed to Type III sites and Family Child Care sites with Academic Approval in December 2024.

- Once tax forms are received, site directors should complete the child care portion and distribute the forms to all eligible parents.

Director and Staff member School Readiness Tax Credit (SRTC) forms (R-10615) will be mailed from Louisiana Pathways beginning in January 2025.

For re-leveling on the Louisiana Pathways Career Ladder, new credentials and certifications should be submitted via e-mail to [cowanj@nsula.edu](mailto:cowanj@nsula.edu) or via mail to Louisiana Pathways before December 31, 2024, at the address below:

Louisiana Pathways  
Attention: Career Development  
1800 Warrington Place  
Shreveport, LA 71101-4425

Please contact [demita.walker@la.gov](mailto:demita.walker@la.gov) for questions regarding SRTCs.

### **NEW: Renew Your Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) and Initiate Career Ladder Re-Leveling for Eligibility for School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTCs)**

Early childhood educators must have a valid Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) by December 31, 2024, to qualify for certain levels of SRTCs.

- Directors and teachers with an expiring Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate must submit a renewal application *at least six to eight weeks before expiration*, via the [LDOE Educator Certification Portal](#).
- Complete initial or renewal applications must be submitted no later than November 1, 2024, to guarantee processing by the deadline of December 31, 2024.
- Incomplete applications, or those submitted after December 1, may not be processed by the Certification team before the deadline and thus may not qualify for re-leveling and a potential increase in SRTCs for tax year 2024.

Questions may be submitted via “Ask a Question” in the [LDOE Educator Certification Portal](#).

### **NEW: Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) Applications with Out-Of-State Residential History**

In accordance with federal regulation 45 CFR §98.4, the CCCBC Section must request the following for applicants who have legally resided in another state within the past five (5) years:

- A name-based search of the Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) of the state(s);
- A name-based search of the Sex Offender Registry (SOR) of the state(s) and
- A name-based search of the Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Registry states.

To prevent application processing delays, providers should be sure to follow the CCCBC instructions carefully. Providers must download the out-of-state forms and unique instructions located in the “Attachments” section of the CCCBC application. The provider must then upload the completed forms into the CCCBC System in order to complete the application process.

Please note, some states require original documents to perform checks. If original forms are required by the other states, the provider must mail the completed original CAN and CHRI forms to the LDOE; the LDOE will then mail the original documents to the other state(s). The LDOE will review the uploaded forms for completeness and request background checks from each particular out-of-state agency.



Contact the CCCBC team with any questions or for assistance by emailing [LDECCBCprocesing@la.gov](mailto:LDECCBCprocesing@la.gov).

**REMINDER: Application Guidance**

IDEMIA will not allow fingerprinting if the applicant’s information in the CCCBC System does not match the applicant’s driver’s license or approved identification. Before submitting an application, please review the information entered to ensure accuracy. The following information must match the applicant’s ID:

1. The spelling of the applicant’s name–please omit any spaces or apostrophes in the applicant’s name
2. The applicant’s date of birth
3. The applicant’s social security number

Contact the CCCBC team with any questions or for assistance by emailing [LDECCBCprocesing@la.gov](mailto:LDECCBCprocesing@la.gov). For IDEMIA finance and NCAC questions, contact 877-512-6962, or for UEID and scheduling assistance contact 844-539-5543.

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**CONTACT US**



- For questions regarding licensing or child health and safety, please contact [LDElicensing@la.gov](mailto:LDElicensing@la.gov).
- For all questions regarding Child Care Criminal Background Check processing, please contact [LDEccbcprocessing@la.gov](mailto:LDEccbcprocessing@la.gov).
- For all other questions regarding early childhood, please contact [earlychildhood@la.gov](mailto:earlychildhood@la.gov).
- Subscribe to our monthly newsletter by completing this [form](#).