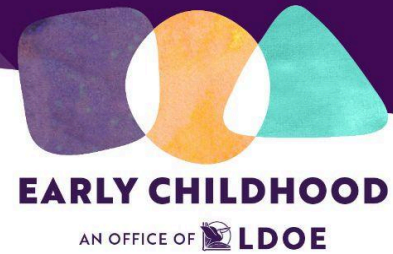


Early Childhood Newsletter



November 14, 2024

National Family Literacy Month

November is National Family Literacy Month! The LDOE encourages all Early Childhood Care and Education stakeholders to recognize and celebrate National Family Literacy Month by encouraging parents and other caregivers to read to their children.

Early Childhood Care and Education providers and systems are uniquely positioned to bring awareness about the important role families play in their children's education. Learning to read starts early, as children interact with the people around them. These interactions, especially with family members, provide young children with the opportunity to develop strong communication skills and vocabulary. Reading with young children adds an additional

layer of support by helping children build listening and memory skills, and establishing reading as a fun and happy experience, encouraging children's growth toward becoming strong readers. Families are a key component of support for learning and provide continuous guidance to children as they grow and develop.



The LDOE invites all Early Childhood Care and Education providers and systems to champion the celebration of National Family Literacy Month by planning activities and events that focus on families learning and reading together. To support families, providers can do the following:

- Share information and strategies with families related to the value of reading with their child(ren)
- Provide continuous encouragement to families on the importance of reading together
- Engage families in discussions about what they can do at home to support their child(ren) throughout different stages of development

Upcoming Deadlines

- November 21: [2024 Louisiana Child Care Parent Poll](#) closes
- December 16: [U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School](#) application closes
- December 31: Submission of new credentials and certifications to Louisiana Pathways for re-leveling
- January 15: [Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Application](#) closes

Upcoming Events

- November 20: [CCAP Monthly Call for Providers](#)
- November 20: [Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council Meeting](#)
- December 5: [Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar](#)
- December 9: [Early Childhood Care and Education Commission Meeting](#)
- December 16: Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Application Support/Office Hours Calls for Candidates ([10 a.m. call](#); [3 p.m. call](#))

More Important Dates

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

In This Issue

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UPCOMING EVENTS

NEW: 2023-2024 Performance Profile Release

[Performance Profiles](#) for the 2023-2024 academic year will be released in alignment with K-12 school performance scores on November 20, 2024.

- Networks can calculate preliminary results from last year by using the [Performance Rating calculator](#) and the community network calculator roster from the [EC CLASS® Portal](#).
- Performance Profiles are anticipated to be available on [Louisiana School and Center Finder](#) at the beginning of 2025.

Contact earlychildhood@la.gov with any 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 December Provider Update Webinar using the information below:

- **Webinar Date/Time:** December 5 at 1 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/91532982014?pwd=D5xkBgKac4rzD1SbQl0OC5BNmQTQsE.1>
- **Meeting ID:** 915 3298 2014
- **Passcode:** 519100

The November 7 webinar presentation slides will be available in the [Quality Providers Library](#) on the [Louisiana Believes](#) website.

NEW: The 2026 Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Award Application Portal Has Opened!

The [application portal](#) for the Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Award Program for the 2026 award year has opened and will close on **January 15, 2025**.

- Please review the [Awards Programs](#) page for more information.
- All Teachers and Leaders from Type III, CCAP-certified FCC, and Early Head Start/Head Start programs are invited to apply.
 - Even if you were not nominated for this award program, you are invited to apply!
 - Past finalists are invited to re-apply. Only overall honorees are excluded from re-applying.

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

To provide application support, the LDOE is offering Application Support/Office Hours Calls for Candidates:

- **Webinar Date/Time:** December 16 at 10 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/95655645503?pwd=IHmOwcnYaDXcAPY1Hl46LVhjmyRNK.1>
- **Phone Number:** 470-250-9358
- **Meeting ID:** 956 5564 5503
- **Passcode:** 887151

- **Webinar Date/Time:** December 16 at 3 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97128294126?pwd=gRwybV9CMTbx2auhoN3QzWETtd7N8n.1>
- **Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID:** 971 2829 4126
- **Passcode:** 195441

Please contact shallan.jones@la.gov with questions.

REMINDER: Green Ribbon Schools Application Available

The application to be recognized as a [U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School](#) for the 2024-2025 academic year will close on December 16 on the [Environmental Education](#) webpage. Eligibility requirements include that schools, systems, and early learning centers show progress in the following areas:

- 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 with questions.

UPDATES FOR FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Monthly Call for Providers

The LDOE is pleased to announce the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Monthly Call for Providers. The November Monthly Call will include the following topics:

- Current practices for this month’s topic, “Underutilization and Attendance Tracking”
- Answers to provider questions and concerns
- The right resources to contact as issues arise
- The “Hot Topic” for the next monthly call

Providers can access the monthly call using the link below:

- **Webinar Title:** Underutilization and Attendance Tracking
- **Webinar Date/Time:** Wednesday, November 20 at 1:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/96000018276>
- **Webinar ID:** 960 0001 8276

Contact the CCAP Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-614-5917 with questions.

NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) CenterTrack Child Care Management System (CCMS)

CenterTrack is a free Child Care Management System (CCMS) available to Louisiana child care providers:

- All provider types are welcome to use the CenterTrack CCMS at no cost.
- CenterTrack simplifies data collection, generates reports, and saves providers time and resources.
- CenterTrack is fully integrated with the KinderConnect Attendance Tracking System.
- Through CenterTrack families can access invoices and accounts and make child care payments conveniently.

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

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Underutilization Monitoring

Please remember that CCAP providers **are required** to ensure that 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 family's 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 timely submission of the 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.

REMINDER: 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), you must contact KinderSystems support by phone at 1-888-829-9258 or by e-mail at 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 \(QRCs\)](#) and the [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.

REMINDER: 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 all required documentation in Café 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 [Café 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 Café and report income, child support will no longer be budgeted in the family's income as part of CCAP eligibility determination and certification.

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

REMINDER: 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.

UPDATES FOR LICENSED CENTERS

NEW: Top-Cited Deficiencies for October 2024

In the month of October, the following were among the top-cited deficiencies:

- 31 centers were cited for not submitting Critical Incident reports as required
- 25 centers were cited for not having documentation of CPR and PFA as required
- 17 centers were cited for not having completed the DCFS Online Mandated Reporter Training as required

Visitor's Daily Attendance Records, Cribs, Infants & Bottle Feeding, and Continuing Education were also among the top-cited deficiencies in October. Please see additional information about each of those regulations below.

Daily Attendance Records - Visitors

There must be a daily attendance record to capture all visitors that come to the center. The record must include the following:

- Name of visitor
- Date of visit
- Arrival and departure times of the the visitor
- Purpose of the visit

Cribs

When an infant is in the crib, only the child and the fitted sheet can be in the crib.

Cribs shall be free of the following:

- toys
- other soft or loose bedding, including
 - comforters
 - blankets
 - sheets
 - bumper pads
 - pillows
 - stuffed animals
 - wedges

Note that this list is not an exclusive list.

Infants & Bottle Feeding

Infants should always be held for bottle feeding. Teachers should hold infants in the teacher's arms or sitting up on the teacher's lap.

Bulletin 137 §1919.H. states the following:

- Infants who cannot hold a bottle shall be held while being bottle-fed.
- A child shall not be placed lying down on a mat or otherwise with a bottle, sippy cup, etc.
- A bottle shall not be propped at any time.

Continuing Education

Providers should conduct an assessment to identify areas of focus and provide opportunities for continuing education of staff members. Each staff member of an early learning center must obtain a minimum of 12 clock hours of continuing education per center anniversary year. This includes volunteers and substitutes.

Staff members who are not left alone with children and who have no supervisory or disciplinary authority over children must obtain a minimum of 3 clock hours of continuing education in job-related topics.

- Example: If the center's cook is not in a classroom assisting with children or walking children down the hall, only 3 clock hours of continuing education is required.

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

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 must contain the following:

- the name of the child
- date of birth
- sex of the child
- date of admission
- the names of parents
- the home address(es) 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 with questions.

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

REMINDER: 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 with questions.

REMINDER: 2024 Parent Poll Opened November 7

The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, in partnership with the LDOE, is administering its annual survey to help further understand the child care needs of Louisiana families with children under the age of 5.

The [2024 Louisiana Child Care Parent Poll](#) opened Thursday, November 7, and can be shared in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Vietnamese](#).

This survey is for any parent, guardian, or caregiver raising children under the age of 5, not just for moms and dads. Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and will not affect families' eligibility for child care or any other services. Families do not need to complete this survey to continue participating in any public program, including the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). All answers will be kept confidential, and participants can answer the survey without giving their name. The survey will take less than 15 minutes to complete.

Please share the survey with families in one of the following ways:

- Download printable flyers (available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Vietnamese](#)) with the survey link and post them on a parent information board.
- Share the survey on Facebook and/or Twitter. This [social media toolkit](#) has several templates and graphics for Facebook and Twitter posts to help promote the survey.
- Send a letter about the Parent Poll (released on November 7) home to families.
- E-mail the content of the Parent Poll letter to families.

The poll closes November 21. Should you have any questions about the survey, please contact info@policyinstitutela.org.

REMINDER: School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC)

The LDOE sent e-mail notifications of site star ratings and levels to eligible directors in 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 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 for questions regarding SRTCs.

REMINDER: Renew 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 as soon as possible, to guarantee processing by the deadline of December 31, 2024.

- Incomplete applications, or those submitted after November 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) Fingerprinting Sites Update

The fingerprinting site located at Mystic Boulevard in Houma permanently closed on October 8, 2024. LDOE’s partners, the Louisiana State Police and IDEMIA, are collaborating to extend the operating hours of the Canal Boulevard in Thibodaux fingerprinting location. This adjustment aims to accommodate the increased demand resulting from the closure of the Houma site.

Additionally, please note that the fingerprinting site in Colfax is currently closed until further notice. During this period, the Natchitoches and Alexandria enrollment centers will be available until the Colfax location issues are resolved or a new location is identified.

A newly-established fingerprinting site is now operational in Slidell. The site is located at 3191 Terrace Ave., inside of FITS Indoor Range.

Contact the CCCBC team with any questions or for assistance by emailing LDECCBCprocessing@la.gov. For IDEMIA finance and NCAC questions, contact 877-512-6962; for UEID and scheduling assistance, contact 844-539-5543.

OTHER

NEW: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Advisory Council and Commission Upcoming Meetings

The next ECCE Advisory Council meeting will take place on November 20, 2024, at 1 p.m. in the Thomas Jefferson Room at the Claiborne Building, located at 1201 N. Third Street in Baton Rouge ([livestream](#)). ECCE Council meeting materials will be available online in [BoardDocs](#).

The next ECCE Commission meeting will take place on December 9, 2024, at 1 p.m. in the Thomas Jefferson Room at the Claiborne Building, located at 1201 N. Third Street in Baton Rouge ([livestream](#)). ECCE Commission meeting materials will be available online in the [Policy and Guidance Library](#).

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, for special assistance at this meeting please contact caitlyn.robinson@la.gov at least three business days in advance of the meeting describing the assistance that is needed.

For additional information, please email earlychildhood@la.gov.

CONTACT US



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