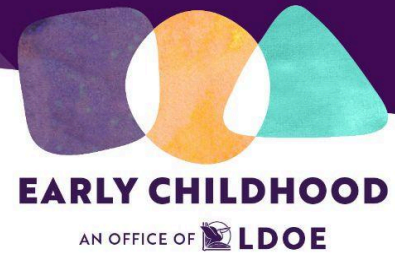




Early Childhood Newsletter



December 12, 2024

Early Childhood Performance Profiles

Last month, the LDOE released the 2023-2024 Early Childhood Performance Profiles for more than 1,830 early learning sites. The Early Childhood Performance Profiles show continued improvement from previous years, with more than 95% of sites earning a rating of Proficient or higher. The data published reflects results from nearly 14,000 local observations in more than 7,000 classrooms across Louisiana.



The LDOE also published Honor Roll designations for sites rated Excellent, for sites providing high-quality care to infants and toddlers, and for sites showing overall growth of more than one point. In total, more than 900 sites will be highlighted for the high-quality early care and education they are providing to children. This amounts to more than 50% of sites in the state, including at least one site in every community network.

These scores are a testament to the incredibly hard work of Louisiana's Early Childhood teachers and leaders. Thank you for the remarkable work you do each and every day. Your dedication to educating our youngest learners is truly appreciated and is shaping the future for our communities and our state.

Upcoming Deadlines

- 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

- 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](#))
- December 18: [CCAP Monthly Call for Providers](#)
- December 18: [CenterTrack CCMS Webinar](#)
- January 16: [Tulane TIKES Webinar Opportunity](#)
- February 6: [Monthly Provider 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](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

NEW: Tulane TIKES Webinar Opportunity on Reducing Challenging Behaviors

The Tulane TIKES Mental Health Consultation Team will offer a webinar titled “How Positive Classroom Environments and Teacher-Child Relationships Can Reduce Challenging Behaviors.” This webinar will include information about foundational aspects needed to increase positive behaviors in early childhood education settings. As part of this webinar, participants will learn how to promote positive relationships and behaviors, prevent challenging behaviors, and work with children and families when additional individualized support is required.

Pathways-approved training hours will be provided for this training, and **attendees are required to [register](#)** and attend the full duration of the webinar to receive a certificate.

- **Webinar Title:** Tulane TIKES: How Positive Classroom Environments and Teacher-Child Relationships Can Reduce Challenging Behaviors
- **Webinar Date/Time:** January 16 at 1:00 p.m.
- **Registration Link:** https://ldoe.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dwG-3mWYSmm8prKxN4pGFA

Please contact earlychildhood@la.gov with questions.

REMINDER: 2023-2024 Performance Profile Release

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

- The Early Childhood Performance Profile Ratings show continued improvement from previous years, with more than 95% of sites earning a rating of Proficient or higher.
- Emotional and Behavior Support for toddlers and Classroom Organization for pre-K scores increased to the Excellent rating.
- There are 324 Excellent Honor Roll sites, 579 Birth to Two Honor Roll sites, and 335 Top Gains Honor Roll sites.

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.

REMINDER: 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**.

- 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:

Option 1:

- **Webinar Date/Time:** December 16 at 10 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/95655645503?pwd=IHmQwcnYaDXcAPY1Hl46LVhimhyRNK.1>
- **Phone Number:** 470-250-9358
- **Meeting ID:** 956 5564 5503
- **Passcode:** 887151

Option 2:

- **Webinar Date/Time:** December 16 at 3 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97128294126?pwd=gRwybV9CMTbx2auhoN3OzWETtd7N8n.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.

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
- providing effective environmental and sustainability education

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.

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 February Provider Update Webinar using the information below:

- **Webinar Date/Time:** February 6 at 1 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/91532982014?pwd=D5xkBgKac4rzD1SbQlOOC5BNmOTOsE.1>
- **Meeting ID:** 915 3298 2014
- **Passcode:** 519100

The December 5 webinar presentation slides will be available in the [Quality Providers Library](#) on the [Louisiana Believes](#) website. Please note that there will not be an Early Childhood Provider Update Webinar in January 2025.

Please contact earlychildhood@la.gov with questions.

UPDATES FOR FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) KinderConnect Attendance Tracking

Providers can choose the best method to secure attendance tracking for their site:

- KinderSign is the application for tracking attendance on iPad and Android tablets.
 - All CCAP-certified providers have been provided with a tablet from KinderSystems.
 - Sites can also use their own tablet. EdLinkInfo.com has instructions for registering and connecting a provider's own tablet to KinderConnect.

- Providers may choose to use the CenterTrack Child Care Management System (CCMS) at no cost. Contact KinderSystems Support at 1.888.829.9258 or by e-mail at SupportLA@KinderSystems.com for help in acquiring CenterTrack to monitor and track attendance.
- KinderSmart Louisiana is a mobile application for iPhone and Android phones that allows sponsors (i.e., families) to check-in from their personal devices using the early learning site's QR Code, which can be printed from the "Reports" section in KinderConnect.

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

NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Part-Time Care

School-aged children receive part-time authorizations to attend certified providers. Providers must ensure that parents/household designees input a total of 4 attendance checks for children attending part-time:

- This means a check in and out for the morning and a check in and out for the afternoon.
- This covers entering the family home/center, checking out to attend school, returning to the home/center after school, and finally leaving the home/center for the day.

For summer care, parents of part-time children must complete a Report of Changes form. If care is needed for summer and holiday ONLY, this must be clearly indicated on a Report of Changes form. Summer and Holiday only include full-time authorizations for the summer and the holidays listed below.

CCAP payments for part-time children are automatically transferred to full-time payments for the following holidays:

- Thanksgiving 11/25/2024 - 11/29/2024
- Christmas 12/23/2024 - 1/03/2025
- Mardi Gras 3/03/2025 - 3/07/2025
- Easter 4/21/2025 - 4/25/2025

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

NEW: End-of-the-Year CCAP Payments

Due to the Christmas and New Year holidays, providers may see funds during those weeks deposited up to one day earlier than usual, depending on the provider's banking institution. Manual payments (for Semi-Automated Invoices, or SAIs) will not be processed during the week of Christmas, December 23- 27, 2024. Manual payments will resume January 3, with the regular payment run.

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

NEW: CCAP Wait List Update

On November 1, the LDOE began contacting families who were certified to the CCAP Wait List in July 2023; this call was followed by mailout of a Wait List Verification Form. This week the LDOE began contacting families who were certified to the CCAP Wait List in August 2023; this call will be followed by mailout of a Wait List Verification Form.

When received, families should review the Wait List Verification Form and note any changes since submitting their original application:

- Changes may include household contact information or household composition
- Families should check "Yes" if all information remains the same, sign the form, and return it to the LDOE as quickly as possible
- If there have been changes, the family should indicate the changes on the form and return it to the LDOE as quickly as possible.
- All families must list their provider information on the form to receive authorizations
- If a child needing care is past due for required immunizations, the parent should submit an updated shot record or an appointment card when returning the Waitlist Verification Form

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

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

The next Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Monthly Call for Providers will be held December 18. The call will include the following:

- CCAP Reminders for various certification areas
- Time to connect through questions and answers
- Early Childhood resources that support provider concerns

Providers can access the monthly call using the link below:

- **Webinar Title:** CCAP General Reminders
- **Webinar Date/Time:** December 18 at 1:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/96860329714?pwd=iFPrDL3lAwKVynKPEx3GJHf6LEzT4J.1>
- **Webinar ID:** 968 6032 9714

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

REMINDER: 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.

To learn more about CenterTrack, providers can attend this upcoming webinar:

- **Webinar Title:** CenterTrack (CCMS) Webinar
- **Webinar Date/Time:** December 18 at 12:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** https://kindersystems.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_XNIN586rRKvoCQc0TKaMGQ
- **Webinar ID:** 161 009 5358
- **Webinar Passcode:** 150046

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 site's 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.

UPDATES FOR LICENSED CENTERS

NEW: Top-Cited Deficiencies from January 2024 to Present

So far this year, the following were among the top-cited deficiencies for early learning centers in Louisiana:

- Not having documentation of CPR/PFA was cited more than 270 times
- Not submitting Critical Incident notifications as required was cited 209 times
- Not completing Orientation Training was cited 197 times

Supervision, Mandated Reporter, and CCCBC-Based Determination of Eligibility were also among the top-cited deficiencies. Please see additional information about each of those regulations:

Supervision

Supervision is fundamental to child safety and the prevention of injury and maintaining quality child care. Staff members must directly supervise children by sight and hearing at all times, even when the children are going to sleep, napping, or beginning to wake up. The importance of supervision is not only to protect children from physical injury but also from emotional or other harm that can occur if children discuss or model inappropriate topics or behavior.

As a reminder, *Bulletin 137* requires that children shall be supervised at all times. This includes all of the following occasions:

- In the center
- On the playground
- On field trips
- On non-vehicular excursions
- During all water activities and water play activities

Children shall not be left alone in any room, (except the restroom or when being provided services by therapeutic professionals), outdoors, or in vehicles, even momentarily, without staff present.

Mandated Reporter

It is imperative that staff remember that they are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect:

- While staff do not investigate suspected child abuse or neglect, it is important for all staff members to recognize and look for common physical and emotional signs of child maltreatment.
- As mandated reporters, any allegation or suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child must be reported *immediately to the parent and to the Department and the Louisiana Child Protection Statewide Hotline (855) 4LA-KIDS [(855) 452-5437] within 24 hours.*

The DCFS online Mandated Reporter training must be completed at the following times:

- Within 7 calendar days of the first day present at the center, and prior to assuming sole responsibility for any children
- Annually

Each center must establish in writing and prominently post or show parent's signature of receipt of the center's child abuse and neglect policy.

Provisional Status for Child Care Purposes

The LDOE determines whether or not a person has a Provisional CCCBC status for child care purposes. A Provisional CCCBC status arises from 1 of 2 circumstances:

- A request is made for a CCCBC but one or more components of the CCCBC are still pending.
 - The Provisional status must be identified as such in the CCCBC system before a person can work on the child care premises.
- There is a CCCBC determination of Eligibility, but the person has been named in a deficiency for Behavior Management after review of the deficiency and supporting evidence.

Documentation

The LDOE is responsible for thoroughly reviewing applications for licensure and supporting documentation. In some cases, the LDOE will contact the agency that issued the documentation to verify the documentation submitted.

Please note that according to *Bulletin 137* §1301.A. 15, an application for licensure may be denied, a license may be revoked, or license renewal may be refused for any act of fraud, such as the submission of false or altered documents or information.

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

UPDATES FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE AND IN-HOME PROVIDERS

NEW: CCCBCs for Visitors of Home-Based Providers

As stated in *Bulletin 139*, home-based providers are required to obtain CCCBCs for individuals defined in §310. Individuals are categorized as follows:

- the provider
- all adults employed in the home or on the property of the home where care is provided
- all non-caregiver adults living in the home where care is provided
- any other person in the home or on the premises when one or more children in care are present who is not a household designee for a child in care at the home and who is not a caregiver who is exempt from the requirement of having a CCCBC-based determination of eligibility for child care purposes

As the holiday season approaches, it is important to note that visitors without a CCCBC determination are not permitted on the premises where care is provided during business hours.

Please contact ldcccpcbprocessing@la.gov with questions.

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

NEW: *EC Learn* Portal is Open For Continuing Education Training

EC Learn is the LDOE's Early Childhood free online training and learning resource where early childhood educators can enroll in and access new continuing education courses.

During the first phase of *EC Learn*, Health & Safety Training, including Medication Administration in Child Care, has been launched to support the needs of the early childhood workforce in obtaining continuing education courses required by [Bulletin 137](#) and [Bulletin 139](#). Within each individual's *EC Learn* account, early childhood educators can access and download certificates of completion for the required courses. In addition, certificates will be e-mailed upon successful course completion to the participant's registered e-mail address.

Educators can access and enroll in courses at <https://eclearn.doe.louisiana.gov/>. Additional training will be added periodically to support the growth and development of the EC workforce, including new teachers and administrators.

Please contact eclearn@la.gov with questions.

REMINDER: School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC)

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

- 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.

As a reminder, the requirements for educators who work at a Type III site or a Family Child Care site with Academic Approval are that educators must:

- enroll with Louisiana Pathways by submitting an enrollment form and employment verification form
- work in the site for at least six months of the calendar year
- work at least 30 hours per week at the site

For re-leveling on the Louisiana Pathways Career Ladder, new credentials and certifications should be submitted via e-mail to cowani@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: Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) Reasons for Ineligibility

It is important to note that a determination of Eligibility may and will be withdrawn and changed to a determination of Ineligibility at any time upon receipt by the LDOE of written notice of a disqualifying event or offense from any applicable state, federal agencies, or other verifiable source.

Prohibited offenses encompass crimes outlined in [La. R.S. 15:587.1\(C\)](#), along with additional disqualifying circumstances as required by federal law. An individual will be deemed Ineligible for child care purposes for the following reasons:

- he/she refuses to consent to a child care criminal background check (CCCBC)
- he/she knowingly provide false or incomplete information related to the CCCBC
- he/she has been convicted of or have pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to any crimes specified in La. R.S. 15:587.1(C) or similar offenses in other jurisdictions
- he/she is registered or mandated to register on the Louisiana Sex Offender and Child Predator Registry, any other state sex offender registry, or the National Sex Offender Registry
- the LDOE receives notification from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) indicating that the individual's name is listed on the State Central Registry due to a justified finding of child abuse and neglect

Additionally, ineligibility may arise if the individual's name appears on another state's registry for child abuse and neglect or if the LDOE receives written notification from another state regarding the individual's ineligibility.

A criminal expungement permits the removal of a conviction from rap sheets requested for specific reasons. According to the Children's Criminal Code, criminal expungements are retained on an individual's record and can be accessed for child care evaluations. If a conviction for a prohibited offense that has been expunged, as outlined in La. R.S. 15:587.1(C), appears on an individual's rap sheet, it is still regarded as a conviction, resulting in the individual being deemed Ineligible for child care purposes.

Please contact LDECCCBCprocessing@la.gov with questions regarding ineligibility and expungements.

NEW: Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) Ineligible Determination Appeal

Individuals have the right to contest the accuracy and completeness of results presented in a CCCBC. Appeals should be filed within 45 calendar days following the receipt of a Notice of Ineligibility (NOI) related to child care. The appeal request must include a written explanation detailing the specific information in the NOI that is considered inaccurate or incomplete, along with official documentation supporting the correct information.

Upon receipt of the appeal and all necessary documentation, a decision will be rendered by the LDOE within 30 calendar days. Please note, an individual undergoing an appeal to challenge an Ineligible determination is not permitted to work in a child care facility.

An individual may request an appeal by adhering to the following procedure:

- Download the printable [Child Care Criminal Background Check \(CCCBC\) Appeal Request Form](#) from the LDOE CCCBC webpage on www.louisianabelieves.com
- Complete and sign the CCCBC Appeal Request Form
- Obtain official documentation proving the inaccuracy or incompleteness in your record
- Submit the signed Appeal Request Form, including the official documentation, to the LDOE via e-mail to LDEchildcareCBC@la.gov, Attention: Kayla Batiste, or via facsimile at 225-376-6035

Contact LDECCCBCprocesing@la.gov with any questions or for assistance.

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 LDEcccbbcprocessing@la.gov.
- For all other questions regarding early childhood, please contact earlychildhood@la.gov.
- Subscribe to our monthly newsletter by completing this [form](#).