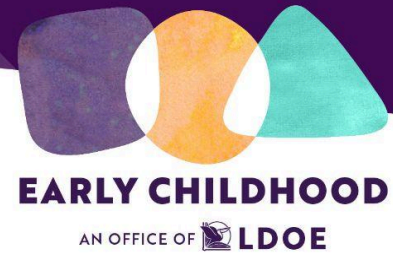# Early Childhood Newsletter

February 12, 2026

Celebrate Early Ed Month in Louisiana!
February is dedicated to celebrating the important role of early learning programs for children. This month highlights the essential need for access and continued investment in high-quality early care and education for Louisiana's youngest learners.

Throughout February 2026, events will take place to spotlight the critical issues affecting early childhood education that impact the children and families across the state.

Visit the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children website for a list of Louisiana Early Ed Month 2026 activities.

Upcoming Deadlines
- February 13: CNLA and RSN RFA due to earlychildhood@la.gov by 5 p.m.
- February 28: SmartTeach™ Winter Checkpoint

Upcoming Events
- February 18: KinderSystem CenterTrack Webinar
- February 18: Early Childhood Active Coaching Office Hours
- February 19: CCAP Monthly Call for Providers
- February 19: Revised *Bulletin 137* Training
- February 24: Young Children with Disabilities Community of Practice
- February 26: CCAP New Provider Training
- February 26: Revised *Bulletin 137* Training
- February 27: New Director Office Hours
- March 5: Monthly Provider Update Webinar
- March 5: Revised *Bulletin 137* Training
- March 10: Monthly CNLA Office Hours
- April 16, 21, 22: Spring Collaboratives for CNLAs and CCR&Rs

More Important Dates
Please see the LDOE School System Support Calendar.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

NEW: Teacher Leader Summit 2026
Early bird registration is now open for Teacher Leader Summit 2026, Louisiana's premier professional learning event for educators. Teacher Leader Summit 2026 will take place May 26-28 at the New Orleans Earnest N. Morial Convention Center.

Early Bird Registration
- Registration Window: February 9-March 15
- Rate: $249

Regular Registration:
- Registration Window: March 16-April 12 (or when capacity is reached)
- Rate: $299

Registration must be completed on the TLS 2026 event site. All registrations include full access to sessions, an official TLS 2026 t-shirt, and lunch on May 26 and May 27. Registration is on a first-come first-served basis, once registration capacity is reached, additional registrants will be added to a waitlist. No onsite registration will be available.

Please contact ldoeevents@la.gov with questions or refer to the Teacher Leader Summit 2026 site.

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 March Provider Update Webinar using the information below:
- **Webinar Date/Time:**   March 5 at 1 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:**   https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93597745872
- **Meeting ID:**   935 9774 5872
- **Passcode:**   641464

For more information, please contact earlychildhood@la.gov.

NEW: Early Childhood Active Coaching Office Hours
The LDOE hosts monthly Active Coaching Office Hours specifically for early learning sites participating in site improvement. These sessions provide important reminders, guidance, and updates to support continuous growth and implementation efforts.

All early learning providers are welcome to attend. Providers can access the upcoming webinar using the information below:
- **Webinar Date/Time:**   February 18 at 12 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:**   https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/98038985498
- **Meeting ID:**   980 3898 5498
- **Passcode:**   989833

For more information, please contact earlychildhood@la.gov.

NEW: Office Hours for New Directors
The LDOE team hosts New Director webinars focused on early childhood quality and operations, while also expanding new directors' peer networking.

This month's topic is "Creating a Positive and Professional Center Culture." Participants will gain information on how to build a positive, professional center culture. The webinar will also highlight the importance of professionalism

and strong relationships in creating a respectful, safe learning environment.

Interested participants can access the webinar using the information below:
- **Webinar Date/Time:**   February 27 at 12 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:**   https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/98824530491
- **Meeting ID:**   988 2453 0491
- **Passcode:**   760909

Please contact Tella.Henderson@la.gov with questions.

NEW: Young Children with Disabilities (YCWD) Community of Practice Webinar
The LDOE hosts monthly webinars for early childhood special education administrators and educators. These webinars include professional development and updates regarding young children with disabilities in early childhood settings.

Providers can access the January YCWD Community of Practice Webinar using the information below:
- **Webinar Date/Time:**   February 24 at 3 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:**   https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/91561982271
- **Meeting ID:**   915 6198 2271
- **Passcode:**   787411

For more information, please contact Caitlyn.Robinson@la.gov.

NEW: Teaching Strategies® Webinars
Teaching Strategies® provides webinars to help users succeed in using the platform. Users can register to attend sessions live or watch the on-demand sessions at any time.

The links below will bring you to the landing page for each webinar:
- What's New and What's Coming From Teaching Strategies
- What's New in Gold Administrator Reports
- Featured Webinars

Contact TeachingStrategies® at 1 800 637 3652 with questions.

NEW: Revised Bulletin 137 Provider Training

The Division of Licensing will offer three training opportunities for owners and directors regarding the revisions to *Bulletin 137*. Webinar information below:
- **Webinar Date/Time:**   Every Thursday, February 19 - March 5
- **Webinar Time:**   10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:**   *Bulletin 137 Revisions*

A copy of the updated *Bulletin 137 - Licensing Regulations* will be needed to follow along with the training and all attendees will receive 1 continuing education hour.

Please contact your Licensing Consultant with questions.

NEW: CCAP Monthly Provider Call
CCAP hosts a monthly call for all certified providers that shares CCAP updates and requirements for providers and families. Providers can access the February Monthly Call via the information below:
- **Webinar Date/Time:**   February 19 at 1 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:**   CCAP Monthly Call for Providers
- **Meeting ID:**   939 7378 5023
- **Passcode**:   082226

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

NEW: CCAP New Provider Training
CCAP hosts a monthly training for all newly-certified providers. The training gives providers essential tools and resources that support their new role as a certified provider. The training can be accessed via the information below:
- **Webinar Date/Time:**   February 26 at 1 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:**   CCAP New Provider Training
- **Meeting ID:**   927 7154 6056

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

NEW: KinderSystems February Webinar
Learn about CenterTrack, a Child Care Management System (CCMS) free to Louisiana child care providers! Interested participants can access the webinar using the information below:
- **Webinar Date/Time:**   February 18 at 12 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:**   CenterTrack Webinar
- **Webinar ID:**   160 165 2409

Please note that attendees need to register for the webinar prior to attending. Please e-mail SupportLA@KinderSystems.com with questions.

UPDATES FOR FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

REMINDER: Early Childhood Literacy Initiative - Upcoming Early Childhood Curriculum Funding, Reviews, and Updates to the Tier I Early Childhood Curriculum List
The LDOE updated the state's *Early Learning and Development Standards* (ELDS) in 2024 to reflect the latest research and best practices in early childhood education. In alignment with these updated standards, the LDOE has revised the "2025-2026 Instructional Materials Review (IMR) Rubric" for Early Childhood Education (ECE), Ages Birth to Five, and is currently reviewing newly submitted early childhood curricula.

In anticipation of those soon-to-be-announced new Tier 1 curricula aligned with the Science of Reading, the LDOE is allocating funding for new infant, toddler, and pre-k curriculum purchases. This funding was approved by BESE at the January 14 BESE meeting, and funding is now available to CNLAs, for school-based pre-K classrooms, and to CCR&Rs, for child care classrooms, through eGMS. This funding opportunity will run from February 1 - June 30.

Funding can be used to provide the following:
- **Curriculum Allocation:** The curriculum allocation will be used to purchase newly-rated high-quality instructional materials (rated as Tier I) that align to the updated *Early Learning and Development Standards* and LDOE IMR review processes. The list of newly-rated curriculum will be available from the LDOE by mid-February and continue to be populated as reviews are completed.

    - CNLAs should work with schools to purchase newly-rated Tier I curriculum and curriculum-aligned professional development requested by school-based publicly funded pre-K classrooms.
    - CCR&Rs should work with child care sites to purchase newly-rated Tier I curriculum and curriculum-aligned professional development requested for infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms by Type III child care and FCC sites who have opted into Academic Approval.

- **Science of Reading (SoR) Training Stipend Allocation (available for district-employed pre-K teachers, through CNLAs):** The SoR Training stipend allocation will be used to provide LDOE-created SoR training to support early identification and interventions, including for teachers of young children with disabilities who teach pre-K.

    - This portion of the allocation offered through CNLAs to school-based pre-K educators will fund $250 stipends for the completion of 3 LDOE Science of Reading pre-K modules through the LDOE Canopy platform. These modules will be ready in the LDOE Canopy platform by late February.

    - Please note: There will be additional information regarding funding opportunities for training

stipends for publicly funded child care center teachers, Early Head Start/Head Start teachers, Family Child Care educators with Academic Approval, and NSECD teachers in publicly-funded sites shared at a later date.

The LDOE is committed to supporting providers and school systems through this transition. Information about new Tier I curricula that have been approved will be made available via this newsletter, e-mail blasts, and webinars. These newly-reviewed and approved resources will ensure that all early childhood classrooms are equipped with high-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials that support strong learning outcomes for every child, from birth to age five.

Please reach out to LouisianaCurriculumReview@la.gov with questions related to the instructional materials reviews.

For all other questions, including those related to funding, purchases, and newly-rated curriculum, please reach out to earlychildhood@la.gov.

NEW: Heggerty Curriculum Purchase
To provide targeted support to young children to improve literacy and language outcomes for pre-K classrooms in Type III child care center and Family Child Care settings, the LDOE is purchasing Heggerty Pre-Kindergarten and Early Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum manuals, along with professional development opportunities. Heggerty is a supplemental literacy support to use in collaboration with Tier I curriculum.

The distribution of this purchase will be filtered through Child Care Resource and Referral agencies across the state.

- CCR&Rs will be collecting from child care early learning sites, by no later than February 20, how many manuals each site is requesting.
  - *All materials will be shipped directly to the CCR&R and distributed as announced by your CCR&R.*

- There is not an expected date for recipients to begin using the materials. However, it would be best if educators wait to use the materials until after they have been trained to use them correctly in April or May.

Heggerty will provide a series of 10 virtual administrator professional development opportunities:
- These sessions will focus on supporting educators to implement Heggerty Curriculum lessons to improve child outcomes in language and literacy objectives and support young children and educators who teach children in Type III child care centers and Family Child Care sites.
- Educators needing professional development will sign up for 1 of 10 virtual sessions offered in April and May 2026. Participants will be able to choose the best time and date for their schedules.
  - More information concerning training dates and registration will be provided in the March 5 Monthly Provider Webinar and March Early Childhood Newsletter.

For more information, please contact Caitlyn.Robinson@la.gov.

REMINDER: February 1 Child Count
Per *Bulletin 140*, Community Network Lead Agencies (CNLAs) and publicly funded sites are required to count publicly funded children served at each of those sites as of February 1 and submit that count to the LDOE by February 28.

CNLAs will work with each publicly funded early learning site in capturing accurate data as of February 1, 2026:
- Child Count is intended to count every publicly funded child birth through age four at each publicly funded site in the state.
- Child Count is intended to be an unduplicated count: only count children under one funding source.
- A child's age cohort is determined by the child's age on September 30 of the academic year, not the age configuration of the classroom they are in. During February Child Count, the child age cohort is still determined by the child's age on September 30. Determine the child's age using the table below:

Age Group	Children born between...	Children who have...
Infants	October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025	Not reached their first birthday before September 30, 2025
Ones	October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024	Reached first birthday on or by September 30, 2025
Twos	October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023	Reached second birthday on or by September 30, 2025
Threes	October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022	Reached third birthday on or by September 30, 2025
Fours	October 1, 2020– September 30, 2021	Reached fourth birthday on or by September 30, 2025

For questions regarding Child Count, please contact your local Community Network Lead Agency.

NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Attendance Tracking - Provider's Role
CCAP-Certified Family Child Care and Type III providers are required to monitor attendance each week at their site. This means ensuring the site's Child Care Management System (CCMS) is linked to KinderConnect, to submit weekly attendance.

Providers must maintain a secure, working internet connection so family attendance is visible in the attendance portal. Checking the portal for successful attendance when child care services are provided helps parents to maintain their CCAP cases and prevent payment delays for providers. Providers should also immediately notify clients who are not checking in/out properly and regularly by demonstrating the correct way to utilize the tablet and/or phone to document attendance.

Certified providers must compare weekly CCAP bank deposits with remittance advices for accuracy. Payment discrepancies of any kind should be reported in the Provider Help Desk Ticket System within 30 days of the discrepancy. Children who no longer or never attended a site for services should be placed in the Provider Help Desk Ticket System for removal.

Accessing the Louisiana EdLink Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Infosite offers a wealth of support with attendance resources, tools, and training for families and providers.

For additional help, contact KinderSystems at 1-888-829-9258 or by e-mail at supportLA@kindersystems.com.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) KinderConnect Message Center
The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) will use the KinderConnect Message Center to communicate program updates with providers. The updates may include mass alerts and notices or individual provider messages.

To enter the KinderConnect Message Center, providers should do the following:
- Access the Home page of KinderConnect that defaults to the *News*.
- Next, press the *Messages* icon to review messages.
- A *New Message* tab is available for response to individual messages only, not mass alerts sent to all providers.
- Providers should begin checking the Message Center regularly for CCAP communications.

Providers may access the KinderConnect Quick Reference Card for Messages for additional assistance.

For additional help, contact KinderSystems at 1-888-829-9258 or e-mail supportLA@kindersystems.com.

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Family Central Portal
In 2026, the LDOE will launch the new FamilyCentral application portal for families. The new application portal will allow families to apply for child care assistance more efficiently. Families can use Family Central to:
- Apply for child care assistance
- Renew existing child care assistance (i.e., Redetermination)
- Update household information and upload requested verifications
- Update provider information
- Communicate with their case worker through Family Messages

EdLinkInfo.com includes a Family Central Overview Video and step-by-step guides and information on using Family Central.

For additional assistance, contact the Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-614-5917.

NEW: CCAP B-3 Seats Recertification Notifications to Providers
The LDOE is working to conclude the process of sending out provider notifications for the CCAP B-3 Seats program children who have been re-certified and rejected. The e-mail will come from the NoReplyCCAP@la.gov e-mail address, so please check your e-mail inbox daily for the CCAP B-3 Seats re-certification or rejection notices for your site.

For additional assistance, contact the Provider Help Desk through the Provider Help Desk Ticket System or at 225-250-7635 or 225-614-5917.

NEW: CCAP Case Redeterminations
Redeterminations for CCAP families have resumed. Clients and providers with a February 2026 redetermination should have received a redetermination notice in the mail in mid-January 2026 as a reminder.

These redeterminations include the families whose cases were extended from June and July 2025 to February 2026. It is important that all CCAP families have the most up-to-date contact information on file with the LDOE for all future notifications.

If the family's prior redetermination month was extended from June or July 2025 and neither the provider nor the parent have received a redetermination notice for the month of February 2026, please contact the LDOE as soon as possible to avoid potential breaks in service. Families should email LDECCAP@la.gov, and providers should contact the CCAP Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-614-5917.

REMINDER: School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTCs)
Parent School Readiness Tax Credit (SRTC) forms (R-10614s) were mailed to Type III sites and Family Child Care sites with Academic Approval last month. 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-10615s) were mailed from Louisiana Pathways last month. 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

Please contact demita.walker@la.gov for questions regarding SRTCs.

UPDATES FOR LICENSED CENTERS

NEW: *Bulletin 137* Revisions
A revised version of *Bulletin 137* has been posted to the LDOE website. The proposed revisions to *Bulletin 137* address the requirement of licensure of Nonpublic Schools due to Act 409 (2025) and additional revisions to strengthen measures designed to protect children.

The revisions to *Bulletin 137* include the following sections:

Section	Brief Description
Chapter 1: Definitions	Updates meaning of early learning center, adds meaning for "Student Mentor," and makes a technical change
Chapter 3: Licensure	- Clarifies requirement of licensure of prekindergarten programs operated by a non-public school - Removes non-public day school with pre-K attached exemption - Adds Montessori association and registered family day care home exemption
Chapter 5: Ownership of	Updates meaning of Juridical Entity

Early Learning Centers	
Chapter 7: Licensing Process and Procedures	• Makes technical change of documentation establishing ownership • Adds requirement for secured point of entry • Clarifies requirements for submitting a renewal application
Chapter 9: Changes Requiring a New License	• Clarifies requirement for a change in location
Chapter 11: Operating Violations and Incidents; Fines; Appeals	• Add requirements for Child Safety and Minimum Standards information
Chapter 13: Denial, Revocation, or Non-Renewal of License	• Adds requirements for Suspension
Chapter 15: Minimum General Requirements and Standards	• Clarifies requirements of general liability insurance policy • Adds requirement for Student Mentors
Chapter 17: Minimum Staffing Requirements and Standards	• Adds another director qualification • Updates child to staff ratio and supervision requirements • Updates orientation training to require documentation of notification to parents that "written consent to release" is not applicable to staff members' personal communication devices or accounts but only to release of information by center
Chapter 18: Child Care Criminal Background Checks	• Makes technical changes
Chapter 19: Minimum Health, Safety, and Environment Requirements and Standards	• Updates requirements for communication and request for 25 square feet • Prohibits water beads or Orbeez • Adds meal requirements for centers location in schools
Chapter 21: Minimum Transportation Requirements and Standards	• Clarifies training requirements for contracted drivers

For questions, licensed centers should contact a Licensing Consultant. Nonpublic schools with questions should e-mail ldelicensing@la.gov.

REMINDER: Prevention of Delay of Provider Approvals for Renewal
It is imperative that Type III license renewals and CCAP certification renewals are complete and submitted timely.
- "Complete" means that all documents submitted are current and meet _Bulletin 137_ requirements.
  - For example, documentation of commercial liability insurance must consist of the insurance policy or current binder that includes the name of the early learning center, physical address of the center, name of the insurance company, policy number, period of coverage and explanation of the coverage.
- "Timely" means that a license renewal must be submitted no later than the last day of the month prior to the month in which the current license expires.
  - For example, if your license and certification expire March 31, you must submit your license and certification renewal by February 28.
  - Notice is given 60 days prior to the expiration date via EdLink e-mail alert.

Please adhere to the guidance above to avoid payment delays.

Please contact your Licensing Consultant with questions.

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

NEW: Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) Transferability and Validity
In accordance with 45 CFR Part 98, criminal background checks for staff members in Louisiana child care programs are both transferable and valid for a period of five years. Eligibility is established upon successful completion of the required background screening and is maintained as long as employment with a licensed child care provider in Louisiana continues without a break in service exceeding 180 consecutive days.

When a staff member moves between licensed child care providers within Louisiana and the transition occurs within 180 days of leaving the previous position, a new background check is not required within the five-year period, except when an owner CCCBC position is being assumed (i.e., when transitioning from a CCCBC staff position to an owner role). Any employment interruption from a licensed early learning center or family child care provider site exceeding 180 consecutive days requires completion of a new Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) and the submission of new fingerprints.

For additional information or assistance, contact ldecccbcprocessing@la.gov.

NEW: IDEMIA No Charge Authorization Codes (NCACs)
IDEMIA NCACs for 27N4H8-LA Department of Education-Early Learning Center are restricted solely to use for Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) purposes. NCAC coupon codes intended for other services are not valid for payment of a CCCBC.

A NCAC Authorization form must be completed to obtain NCACs. Please note the expiration date of the coupon codes. The expiration date will be included in the e-mail notification received from IDEMIA that contains the coupon codes.

For IDEMIA finance or NCAC questions, call 877-512-6962 or e-mail LAUEPaccounts@us.idemia.com. For UEID or scheduling, call 844-539-5543.

CONTACT US

- For questions regarding licensing or child health and safety, please contact LDElicensing@la.gov.
- For questions regarding the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), please contact the LDECCAP@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 our Newsletter Signup form.