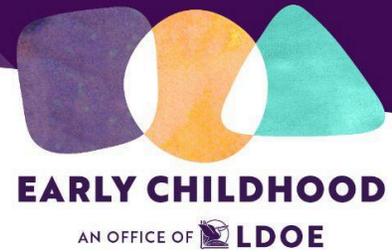




Early Childhood Newsletter



March 13, 2025

National Reading Month

March marks National Reading Month, and the LDOE encourages Early Childhood Care and Education systems across the state to engage in activities that enhance language and literacy development. Reading aloud to children is a powerful tool — it increases vocabulary, strengthens cognitive skills, and helps build a meaningful connection between the reader and the child. Early childhood educators play a vital role in fostering a love of reading through interactive storytime, discussions about books, and by encouraging children to explore the text in creative ways.



National Reading Month also offers a great opportunity to involve families in nurturing early literacy skills. Parents, as children's first teachers, are instrumental in establishing good reading habits at home. Educators can share tips with families on how to make reading a part of their daily routine — such as setting aside time for storytime, asking questions about a book, and choosing a variety of books to keep children engaged and learning.

Literacy development starts at birth, and by reading with children from an early age, we lay the foundation for future academic success. Let's use National Reading Month to inspire a lifelong love of reading and learning in every child!

Upcoming Deadlines

- March 14: [Teacher Leader Summit Early Bird](#) Registration Deadline
- April 15: [LA GATOR Scholarship Program](#) Application Deadline

Upcoming Events

- March 15: [Teacher Leader Summit Regular Registration](#) Opens
- March 18: [Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Finalists](#) Announced
- March 20: [CCAP Monthly Call for Providers](#)
- March 28: [New Director Office Hours](#)
- April 3: [Monthly Provider Webinar](#)

More Important Dates

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

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UPCOMING EVENTS

REMINDER: Teacher Leader Summit 2025 Registration

Early bird registration for Teacher Leader Summit 2025 closes Friday, March 14. The early bird registration cost for the three-day professional learning conference is \$249. The registration link is now live on the [Teacher Leader Summit webpage](#). The regular registration cost is \$299 and will be active from March 15 until April 18. Registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

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

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 April Provider Update Webinar using the information below:

- **Webinar Date/Time:** April 3 at 1 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93597745872>
- **Meeting ID:** 935 9774 5872
- **Passcode:** 641464

The March 6 webinar presentation slides are available in the [Quality Providers Library](#) on the LDOE website.

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

NEW: Office Hours for New Directors

The LDOE team conducts webinars on various topics related to early childhood quality and improving child care sites' administrative and operational functions. 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 "Infant Safe Sleep Practices." Participants will learn the importance of proper infant care, including safe sleep best practices in child care settings. They will also be provided with information on accessing *EC Learn*, the free, online professional development opportunity for early childhood educators.

- **Webinar Date/Time:** March 28 at 12 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93015014527>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 1 470 381 2552
- **Meeting ID:** 930 1501 4527

Please contact tella.henderson@la.gov with questions.

NEW: 2026 Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Award Updates!

The LDOE, in partnership with [Dream Teachers](#), is excited to recognize and celebrate some of the state's most exceptional educators through the Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year programs.

The application period **closed** on **January 15**. Finalists will be [announced](#) on March 18.

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

NEW: LA GATOR Scholarship Program: Applications Now Open

Student applications for the Louisiana Giving All True Opportunity to Rise (LA GATOR) Scholarship Program are now open and will close on **April 15** for the 2025-2026 school year.

Interested families, schools, and community members are encouraged to explore the [LA GATOR Scholarship Program webpage](#) to access program information, such as eligibility requirements and potential scholarship award amounts, as well as resources tailored for different audiences, including [families](#), [schools](#), and [service providers](#). The program administrator, Odyssey, also provides [customer support services](#).

- Call Center: 225-422-1538
- E-mail Help Desk: help.la@withodyssey.com

Please contact help.la@withodyssey.com with any questions.

UPDATES FOR FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) 2025 Sliding Fee Scale

- The new [2025 Sliding Fee Scale](#) has been updated. As of February 3, 2025, the parent’s copayment and qualifying income were calculated using the new scale.
- Additional families may now be eligible for CCAP based on the new scale.
- Providers should immediately adjust families’ co-pay amounts to reflect the new Sliding Fee Scale.

Copay	2 persons		3 persons		4 persons		5 persons	
\$0	\$0	\$3,474	\$0	\$4,292	\$0	\$5,109	\$0	\$5,927
\$2.00	\$ 3,475	\$3,746	\$ 4,293	\$4,627	\$ 5,110	\$5,509	\$ 5,928	\$6,390
\$3.00	\$ 3,747	\$4,017	\$ 4,628	\$4,962	\$ 5,510	\$5,908	\$ 6,391	\$6,853
\$8.00	\$ 4,018	\$4,289	\$ 4,963	\$5,298	\$ 5,909	\$6,307	\$ 6,854	\$7,316
\$10.00	\$ 4,290	\$4,614	\$ 5,299	\$5,700	\$ 6,308	\$6,786	\$ 7,317	\$7,872
Copay	6 persons		7 persons		8 persons		9 Persons	
\$0	\$0	\$6,744	\$0	\$6,898	\$0	\$7,051	\$0	\$7,204
\$2.00	\$ 6,745	\$7,271	\$ 6,899	\$7,437	\$ 7,052	\$7,602	\$ 7,205	\$7,767
\$3.00	\$ 7,272	\$7,798	\$ 7,438	\$7,975	\$ 7,603	\$8,153	\$ 7,768	\$8,330
\$8.00	\$ 7,799	\$8,325	\$ 7,976	\$8,514	\$ 8,154	\$8,704	\$ 8,331	\$8,893
\$10.00	\$ 8,326	\$8,957	\$ 8,515	\$9,161	\$ 8,705	\$9,365	\$ 8,894	\$9,568
Copay	10 persons		11 Persons		12 Persons			
\$0	\$0	\$7,358	\$0	\$7,511		\$0	\$7,664	
\$2.00	\$ 7,359	\$7,932	\$ 7,512	\$8,098		\$ 7,665	\$8,263	
\$3.00	\$ 7,933	\$8,507	\$ 8,099	\$8,684		\$ 8,264	\$8,862	
\$8.00	\$ 8,508	\$9,082	\$ 8,685	\$9,271		\$ 8,863	\$9,460	
\$10.00	\$ 9,083	\$9,772	\$ 9,272	\$9,975		\$ 9,461	\$10,179	

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

NEW: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Prospective Payments

Later this spring, the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) will transition to paying providers prospectively in accordance with new federal regulations. This change, in which the LDOE will make child care payments in advance of services, will help to support better provider stability. The LDOE will share more specifics about the transition in coming monthly webinars and e-mail blasts to providers.

For more information, please 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 highlight essential reminders that guide best practices for certified providers.

- **Webinar:** CCAP Essential Reminders
- **Date/Time:** March 20 at 1:00 p.m.
- **Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93833988621?pwd=dPW5gRlig7HhsF2UbbK8Pd5tE8p5Ns.1>
- **Phone Number:** 1 470 381 2552
- **ID:** 972 3350 6494

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

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

- Providers caring for CCAP-certified families are required to track daily attendance in the KinderConnect Attendance Tracking System.
 - Providers who use a Child Care Management System (CCMS) other than CenterTrack must ensure that their system is connected to the KinderConnect System with KinderBridge (API).
 - If you are having difficulty with the API connection or do not know whether your CCMS is connected to the KinderConnect System, please contact KinderSystems at 1-888-829-9258 or by e-mail at supportLA@kindersystems.com.
 - CenterTrack is a free CCMS offered by KinderSystems that Louisiana providers may obtain to track attendance.
- Additionally, providers must monitor the KinderConnect portal daily to observe for successful check-ins/check-outs for **all** certified children in attendance.
 - Attendance is noted in the site's CCMS **and** a physical attendance log when care is provided. Providers must ensure that daily attendance in the KinderConnect portal **matches** the site's physical attendance log.
 - The LDOE suggests that providers check the portal after the morning check-in and at the end of the day after the final check-out.

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

REMINDER: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Underutilization of CCAP Authorizations

Providers who check the KinderConnect portal daily for successful attendance are aiding parents in maintaining their CCAP certification.

- Providers must submit attendance logs weekly through KinderConnect.
 - Immediately addressing incomplete attendance in KinderConnect means parents will not be included on an LDOE Underutilization Report.
 - Speaking with parents (i.e., "Sponsors") whose physical attendance indicates a discrepancy in the KinderConnect portal (i.e., no attendance in KinderConnect or an incomplete attendance alert), and **having the parent correct the missing KinderConnect entry**, means parents will not be included on an LDOE Underutilization Report.
- Timely reporting of children that no longer attend or never attended a child care site means parents will not be included on an LDOE Underutilization Report.
- If a family receives a letter from the LDOE that indicates they are on the LDOE CCAP Underutilization Report and child care services are still needed, the family should contact the Department immediately at 1-877-453-2721 to state that child care services are still needed.
 - Timely receipt of the call to the Department will prevent closure of the family's case.
- If the case is closed due to the family appearing on the CCAP Underutilization Report, the parent will have to reapply and, if still deemed eligible, will be placed on the Waiting List until additional funds are available for Child Care Assistance.

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

UPDATES FOR LICENSED CENTERS

NEW: Capacity

There are two reasons a center may receive a re-measurement initiated by the LDOE:

- The LDOE needs a current floor plan on file or
- Changes have been made to the center without notification to Licensing

If the LDOE re-measures for a current floor plan to be on file, this will not negatively affect the center's capacity; if a Specialist verifies a change has been made to the license space, a re-measurement would take place, and that re-measurement may affect the center's capacity.

Once the capacity of a center has been determined, a floor plan indicating the indoor and outdoor capacity of the facility and the capacity of each area deemed as licensed space will be issued for the center.

The capacity issued by the LDOE cannot be exceeded, and licensed space must be used only by children in care and center staff during hours of operation.

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

NEW: Outdoor Playspace

The first day of Spring is approaching, and it is important that centers' outdoor areas are free of hazards. Please be reminded of the following:

- All equipment used by children must be in a clean, safe condition and in good repair.
- The outdoor play space must be enclosed with a permanent fence or other permanent barrier that
 - Protects children from traffic hazards
 - Prevents children from leaving the premises without proper supervision
 - Prevents contact with animals or an unauthorized person
- Crawlspace and mechanical, electrical, or other hazardous equipment must be inaccessible to children.

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

NEW: Hazards

The Department continues to receive incident reports regarding ingestion of water beads. Please note that water beads can be a danger to young children and can even be deadly if swallowed.

While water beads may look harmless, if ingested they can lead to choking, internal injuries, and even death if left undetected.

- Water beads can grow up to 100 times their original size when exposed to water.
- Water beads inserted into ears can damage ear structures, causing hearing loss and requiring surgery.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission urges the removal of this product entirely from child care centers.

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

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

REMINDER: *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, educators can check progress on enrolled courses and access training transcripts or certificates on "My Dashboard." In addition, *EC Learn* participants will be emailed a copy of the training certificate within 24 hours of successfully completing the final course exam. Participants can also view and download training certificates or transcripts by clicking on their Student Dashboard's "Completed" tab.

Educators can access and enroll in courses at <https://eclearn.doe.louisiana.gov/>. The LDOE is preparing two additional health and safety trainings, "Infectious Diseases" and "Sanitation in Child Care," which will be available in *EC Learn* by April 2025.

Please contact eclearn@la.gov with questions.

NEW: School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC)

The Provider School Readiness Tax Credit (SRTC) is aligned with Performance Profile ratings issued through the unified quality rating system that is established by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in [Bulletin 140](#).

- The amount of the tax credit is based on the quality of the site and the number of eligible children served.
- The number of eligible children served includes children attending the site through the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) or who are in foster care under the custody of DCFS.

Provider School Readiness Tax Credit (SRTC) letters for the 2024 tax year were mailed by the LDOE in February 2025. These letters include the "Certificate of Star Rating" and "Average Number of Children."

The average monthly number of eligible children, aged birth to five, included within the Provider SRTC amount, is calculated as outlined in [R.S. 47:6105](#) and is based on attendance, not enrollment. This calculation is detailed below:

- A child is considered full-time when the CCAP or foster care program pays for at least 12 days of service per child during the month. Two part-time participants may be combined to equal one full-time participant for purposes of this calculation.
- A child is considered to be attending part-time when CCAP or the foster care program pays for at least 40 hours of service per child during the month or CCAP or the foster care program pays for at least 5 days but no more than 11 days of service per child during the month.

In the Provider SRTC letter, the average number of children for each month of the calendar year was calculated based on payments made for children in that month, including any months with no payments, and the months were averaged over the 12 month period total.

- Months in which a site did not care for any qualifying children were included in the average, with zero children for that month(s).

SRTCs support child care directors and teachers in eligible early learning sites to provide a high-quality early learning experience for children as well as recognize these professionals for their education and commitment to the field.

The Family SRTC is an additional state child care tax credit for taxpayers with children who are under the age of 6 and enrolled in an eligible child care site and supports families based on care child expenses, income, federal and state child care tax credit, and the quality rating of the site.

Louisiana Pathways began mailing tax forms for teacher and director School Readiness Tax Credit in January 2025. In order to claim family, teacher or director School Readiness Tax Credits, individuals must file a tax return.

- The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax support to lower-income individuals who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. This assistance is offered by IRS-certified volunteers and provides free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals.
- Please contact 2-1-1 for more information or to make an appointment for assistance in filing a tax return.
- For VITA programs in your area, visit the Louisiana 211 website.

Please contact demita.walker@la.gov with questions regarding School Readiness Tax Credits.

NEW: Maintaining the CCCBC Roster

Keeping the Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) roster up-to-date is essential for compliance with [Bulletin 137 §1807 B](#). Providers adding a new hire with an existing CCCBC to their roster should follow the detailed instructions listed in the [CCCBC User Manual](#). Providers adding employees in “Corrections Requested” or “Provisional” status should e-mail LDECCCBCprocessing@la.gov for required information needed.

Applicants with existing CCCBCs that have not been associated with any early learning site within 180 days are required to complete a new CCCBC application. Providers can initiate a new CCCBC application by selecting the box “applicant has no SSN issued” and entering the applicant’s driver’s license number. If an error message stating “email address already in use” appears, a new e-mail address is required.

By following these procedures, providers ensure that the site maintains continuous compliance with CCCBC requirements. Regular roster maintenance not only fulfills regulatory obligations but also helps streamline administrative processes.

Please 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 our [Newsletter Signup](#) form.