

Overview of Early Childhood Funding Sources

Below are descriptions of available local, state, and federal funding that can be used to support early childhood care and education. These descriptions may help LEAs understand how to maximize funding locally to serve as many children as possible within their community.

Cecil J. Picard Early Childhood Program (LA 4): This is Louisiana's primary state-funded preschool program, which serves more than 17,000 children. LA 4 provides economically disadvantaged children with early childhood education during a six-hour-a-day program. LA 4 is available to all districts that apply and is currently offered in most of Louisiana's parishes, several charter schools, one tribal school, and through diverse delivery partnerships with Type III child care centers. This funding source is a combination of state funds and TANF federal funds with specific reporting and reimbursement requirements.

- **Eligibility:** Children who are four years old by September 30 and whose household income falls at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible to attend the program.
- **How to Determine the Number of Seats to Request:** Requests should reflect family demand for seats. Seats are awarded based on the number of children sites anticipate serving during the academic year and the availability of funds. Four year olds of families who meet the income requirements are eligible to attend the program. Children from families with higher incomes can attend pre-K but must be funded using locally-provided funds or by paying tuition on a sliding scale up to the cost of care.
- **Application:** Seats are requested by the lead agency of the early childhood community network via the Coordinated Funding Request. Interested LEAs and centers must work with their community's lead agency to request funding.
- **Payment:** Payments are calculated based on the number of children attending 74% of the scheduled school calendar days in a month. Based on October Child Count enrollment for the 6-hour instructional program, funds may be reallocated if the program does not fill 95% of the allocated number of seats. Districts serving more than their allocated number of students may be awarded additional funds if funds are available.
- **Resource:** [2026-2027 LA 4 Reporting and Payment Requirements](#)

Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD): Implemented with the goal of reimbursing preschool tuition for enrolled children from low-income families, the Nonpublic Schools Early Childhood Development (NSECD) Program provides pre-K programming to more than 1,400 three and four year olds from economically-disadvantaged families. Children in the NSECD program receive full-day pre-K in BESE-approved nonpublic schools and child care centers.

- **Eligibility:** Children who are four years old by September 30 and whose household income falls at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible to attend the program. Eligible providers for NSECD are nonpublic schools and Type III child care centers.

- **How to Determine the Number of Seats to Request:** Requests should reflect family demand for seats. Seat allocations are awarded based on several factors, including the number of children sites anticipate having the capacity to serve during the academic year and community need.
- **Application:** Interested BESE-approved nonpublic schools and Type III child care centers must work with their community's lead agency to request funding.
- **Payment:** Monthly payments are calculated based on the number of children attending 74% of the scheduled school calendar days in a month.
- **Resource:** [2026-2027 NSECD Program Procedures and Provider Responsibilities](#)

CCAP Birth through Three-Year-Old (CCAP B-3) Seats: This funding expands access to quality child care for families at or below 85% State Median Income who have children aged birth to three years old in need of full-time care. The seats are funded at the CCAP state maximum rate and are available in CCAP-certified child care centers and Family Child Care sites with Academic Approval that are rated Proficient or above and offer infant care.

- **Eligibility:** To be eligible for CCAP B-3 Seats, children must be aged 3 years or younger by September 30, 2026, families' household total income must be at or below 85% State Median Income, and families must be employed for 20 hours or more per week, in school or training full time, or actively seeking employment.

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP): CCAP provides low-income households access to quality, affordable child care that allows them to continue working or receiving an education. CCAP funds full-day care, before care, after care, and summer or holiday care in licensed and some license-exempt settings.

- **Eligibility:** To be eligible for CCAP, children must be under 13, or under 18 with a disability; all adults in the household must be working or attending a school or training program for at least 20 hours a week; and household monthly gross income must fall at or below 85% of the State Median Income.
- **Waitlist:** As of October 1, 2022, the Department implemented a CCAP Waitlist due to funding constraints. Exceptions to the waitlist include children in families currently receiving Child Care Assistance, children who are experiencing homelessness, children of families participating in the Strategies to Empower People Program (STEP) or Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships, children in foster care, or children requiring special needs care.
- **Application:** Families should apply online via the [CAFE' Portal](#). Providers interested in becoming certified to accept CCAP payments should apply online via the [CAFE' Provider Portal](#).
- **Resource:** [Louisiana Child Care Assistance Program](#)

8(g) Louisiana Quality Education Support Fund: Since its inception, the 8(g) Fund has assisted schools and districts statewide, enabling them to provide better educational opportunities for all of Louisiana's children. The 8(g) Block Grant Program, administered by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, provides funding for specific focus areas, including pre-K programs for at-risk four year olds (for offering high-quality early childhood education). Public school districts can use these funds to offer pre-K programs to children eligible by income or developmentally unprepared status.

- **Eligibility:** Four-year-olds who are at risk of being “developmentally unprepared” or at risk of being insufficiently ready for the regular school program, based on screening results; economically disadvantaged (200% Federal Poverty Level or below); and children who are not enrolled in any other publicly-funded pre-K program.
- **How Funding is Determined:** Based on a per-pupil allocation, eligible systems and schools receive block grant funding according to enrollment figures from the previous year. BESE requests that agencies attempt to fill 8(g) program spaces with 70 percent economically disadvantaged four-year-olds and 30 percent “developmentally unprepared” children. If the agency is already serving all economically disadvantaged four-year-olds with another funding source, then 100 percent of the children served should meet the “developmentally unprepared” definition.
- **Resources:** [8\(g\) Grants Program](#) and [LDOE Developmental Screenings Guidebook](#)

Title I Part A: Title I Part A funds, which are allocated directly to LEAs, can be used to fund high-quality preschool programs. Such a program is designed to prepare eligible children with the prerequisite skills and dispositions for learning that will enable them to benefit from later school experiences.

- **Eligibility:** All preschool-age children residing in the school attendance area are eligible to attend the program. LEAs are required to prioritize children most at-risk of failing to meet the state’s academic achievement standards based on multiple, educationally-related objective criteria.
- **How to Determine the Amount of Funding to Request:** Collaboration between the LEA fiscal authority and lead agency, whether the lead agency is a part of the school district or a different agency, should determine the best way to maximize Title I dollars, which may include requesting Title I Preschool set-aside funds.
- **Application:** Districts will continue to request set-aside funds for Title I Preschool through the Super App process.
- **Resource:** [Serving Preschool Children Through Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended](#)

IDEA (Individual with Disabilities Education Act): Part B, Section 619 of IDEA provides funding to support children with disabilities aged three through five. This includes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education.

- **Eligibility Part B, Section 619 of IDEA:** These funds may be used only to provide services to children aged three through five who have been identified as children with disabilities in accordance with Part B, Section 619 of IDEA federal requirements.
- **How Funding is Determined:** Districts receive an allocation based on the number of Part B, Section 619 of IDEA-eligible children with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) served in both self-contained and reverse mainstream classrooms.
- **Resource:** [IDEA Website](#)

Head Start and Early Head Start: Head Start is a federal program that supports the school readiness of children ages three through five from low-income families through comprehensive preschool programming and specialized family services. Early Head Start serves children from birth through age two and supports pregnant women with a family income at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

- **Eligibility:** Children ages birth through five, whose family income is at or below the federal poverty guidelines, are eligible. Children from homeless families, children with special needs, children from families receiving public assistance such as TANF or SSI, and children in foster care are also eligible. Also, Head Start/Early Head Start grantees use a Community Needs Assessment completed every five years to establish selection criteria and recruit families. This assessment also establishes criteria for accepting over-income children consistent with the specific needs identified within each community.
- **Resources:** [Louisiana Head Start](#) and [Head Start Directory](#)

Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP): The Rural Education and Achievement Program, Title V, Part B, provides financial assistance to meet the unique needs of rural school districts and to assist them in meeting their academic achievement goals. This program is designed to help rural districts use federal resources more effectively in order to address their unique needs. Applicants do not compete but are entitled to funds if they meet basic eligibility requirements.

- **Eligibility:** Eligibility is regulated by community population density or daily school attendance served by the LEA, and LEAs must be designated as “rural” by the U.S. Department of Education.
- **How Funding is Determined:** Funding eligibility is restricted by statute and awarded annually to eligible LEAs on a formula basis.
- **Resource:** [Rural Education Achievement Program](#)

Education Excellence Fund (EEF): In 1999, the Louisiana State Legislature created the Millennium Trust to distribute the proceeds from the tobacco settlement. At the same time, the Education Excellence Fund (EEF) was created as a component of the Millennium Trust. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is responsible for providing the appropriations and oversight of this fund to ensure that all expenditures are used to support “excellence in educational practice.”

- **Eligibility:** The Department distributes funds to eligible local education agencies based on student enrollment:
 - 85% of the appropriation is distributed to local school systems and charter schools based on the number of students in the most recent Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) Budget Letter.
 - 15% of the appropriation is distributed to approved non-public schools based on the number of students as reported for the previous school year.
- **How Funding is Determined:** LEA will annually prepare and submit to the LDOE a prioritized plan for the expenditure of funds it expects to receive in the coming year from EEF, which may include early childhood education programs focused on enhancing the preparation of at-risk children for school. This plan will include performance expectations that ensure accountability in the expenditures. Must be approved by the Department and by the appropriate standing committees of the legislature.
- **Resource:** [Education Excellence Fund](#)

Local Taxes: Districts use local dollars like sales taxes, property taxes, and set aside to increase access to pre-K seats to families who may be over income or children who don’t meet the age requirement for publicly-funded pre-K. This significantly reduces the financial burden facing families with young children and helps ensure that children enter Kindergarten ready to learn.

- **Eligibility:** Eligibility of children funded with local dollars is determined by the LEA.
- **Resource:** [Systems Building Resource Guide Chapter 7: Financing Strategically](#), ACF

Private Funds: There are a variety of funding strategies that can bring in private dollars, including student scholarships, family tuition, local (such as city or parish) governing bodies, and private investors (such as philanthropic and business investors). Finding other potential funding sources might be the missing piece for a comprehensive funding portfolio for early childhood care and education in the community. Each community must research to find the best fit for private funding for early childhood care and education.

- **Eligibility:** Children’s eligibility is typically determined by the community partnership with the funder/donor. The community network and funder will typically collaborate to create an eligibility policy using local funding sources for early childhood care and education.
- **Resource:** [Systems Building Resource Guide Chapter 7: Financing Strategically](#), ACF

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Fund - Local: Community Network Lead Agencies can receive local funds from local municipalities, city governments, philanthropic organizations, businesses, and individual donors. These qualifying local funds may be matched dollar-for-dollar, up to the entire amount raised locally by the community network, via the Early Childhood Education Fund.

- **Eligibility:** Local funding eligibility can be partially set by the community network lead agency. However, there must be a minimum requirement of “economically disadvantaged.”
- **Resource:** “Economically disadvantaged” is defined in [Title 28, Part 1, Chapter 11 of the Louisiana Administrative Code](#).

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Fund - State Match: The Louisiana Early Childhood Education (ECE) Fund is a state matching fund that offers local entities in Louisiana a dollar-for-dollar match on investments made to expand access to quality early care and education for economically-disadvantaged children. To be eligible for the ECE Fund’s state matching dollars, community network lead agencies can receive local funds from local municipalities, city governments, philanthropic organizations, businesses, and individual donors. An award will not be made unless the local entity’s financial commitment to the project proposed for funding provides matching funds from non-state and non-federal sources at a rate of at least one-to-one. Fund awards are reserved for projects that expand the number of early childhood care and education quality seats for families eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) in Type III early learning centers with a performance rating of “Proficient” or above and at least one classroom with children 15 months or younger.

- **Eligibility:** State match funding awarded must be used to fund slots for children who are eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).
- **Resource:** [CCAP Eligibility Requirements](#)

Early Childhood Funding Sources and Age Configuration

Funding Sources	Infants	Ones	Twos	Threes	Fours
Cecil J. Picard Early Childhood Program (LA 4)					X
Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD)				X	X
CCAP Birth through Three-Year-Old Seats (CCAP B-3)	X	X	X	X	
Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)	X	X	X	X	X
8(g) Louisiana Quality Education Support Fund					X
Title I				X	X
Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA Part B 619)				X	X
Early Head Start (Federal-Direct)	X	X	X		
Head Start (Federal-Direct)				X	X
Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP)					X
Education Excellence Fund (EEF)				X	X
Local Taxes (Local-Direct)	X	X	X	X	X
Private Funds (Local-Direct, Private Funds Donated to the CNLA)	X	X	X	X	X
Early Childhood Education Fund (ECE Fund-Local)	X	X	X	X	
Early Childhood Education Fund (ECE Fund-State Match)	X	X	X	X	
Private Pay - (Optional - Paid by Families)	X	X	X	X	X