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# Supporting Early Childhood Care & Education

LASAFAP Conference  
March 3, 2020

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# Agenda

*Objective: Participants will understand Louisiana's vision for and approach to Early Childhood Education, and will discuss strategies for improving access to high-quality early childhood in their communities.*

- Why Early Childhood Matters
- Louisiana's Vision for Early Childhood Care & Education
- School Systems Supporting Early Childhood
  - Super App
  - Birth to Three-Year-Old Seats
  - Ready Start Networks
- Next Steps
- Questions



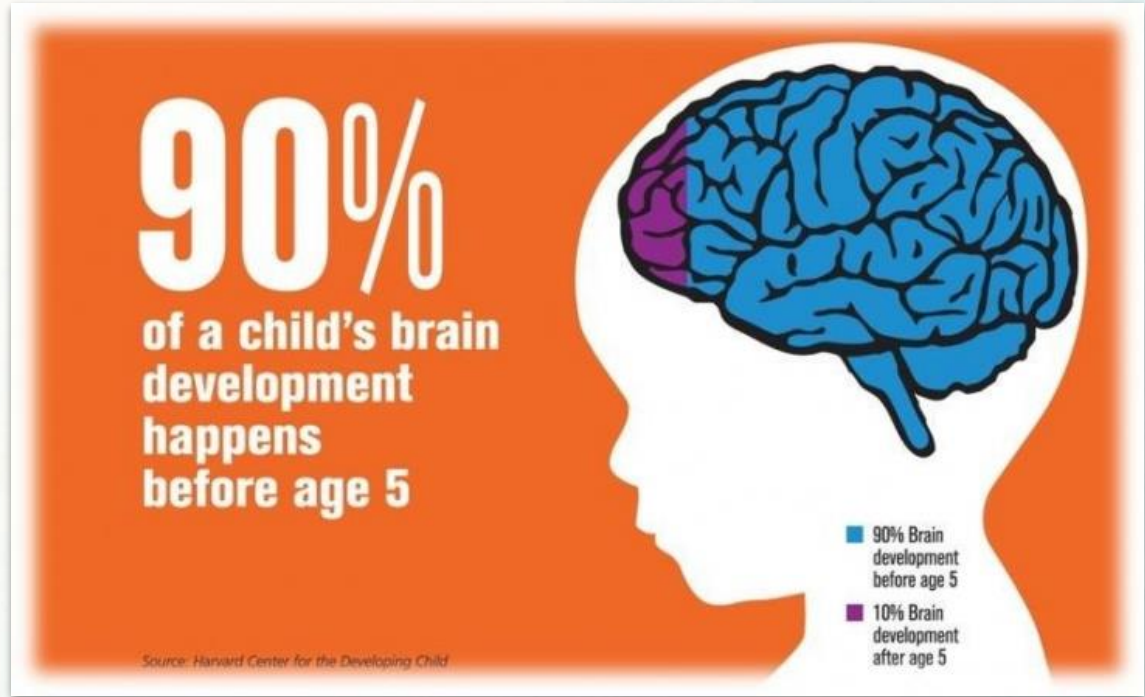


# Why Early Childhood Matters

# Why Early Childhood Matters

## Brain Development

*The first five years are the most critical in the development of a child's brain.* From birth to age three, children grow and learn at the most intense rate, forming more than a million neural connections every second; these are the years when children are learning how to learn. 90% of a child's brain development happens before age 5. [\[1\]](#)



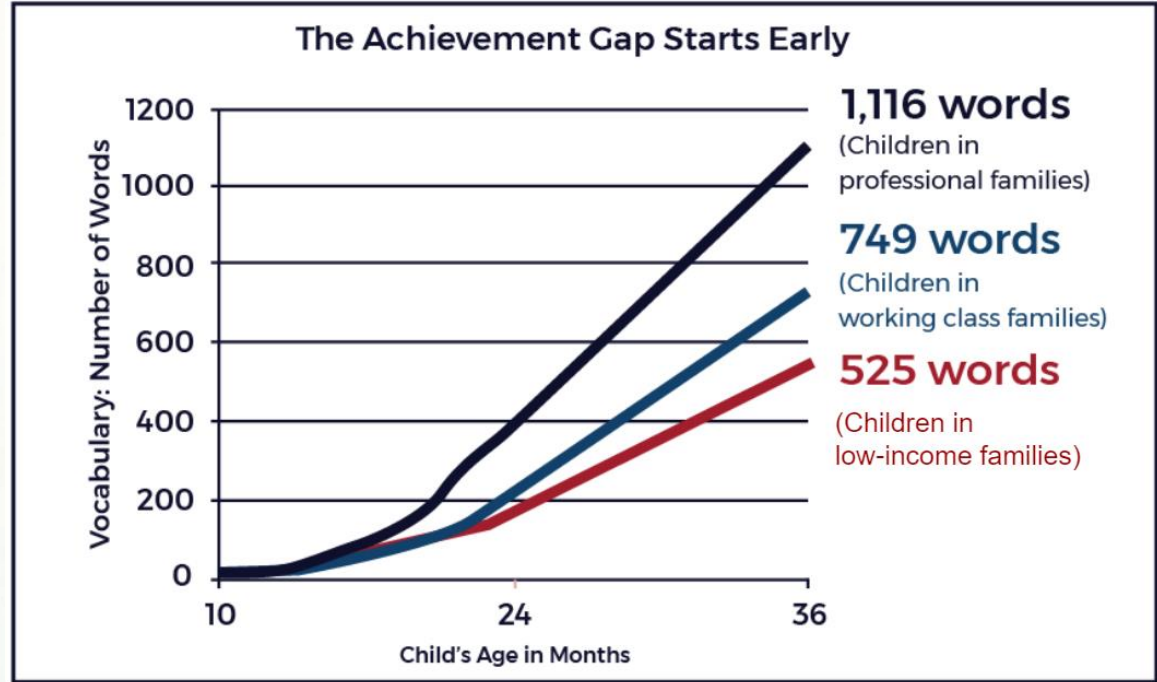


# Why Early Childhood Matters

## Achievement Gaps

*Achievement gaps develop well before children begin kindergarten. Unfortunately, many children who do not participate in high-quality early childhood programs are not fully prepared to begin school.*

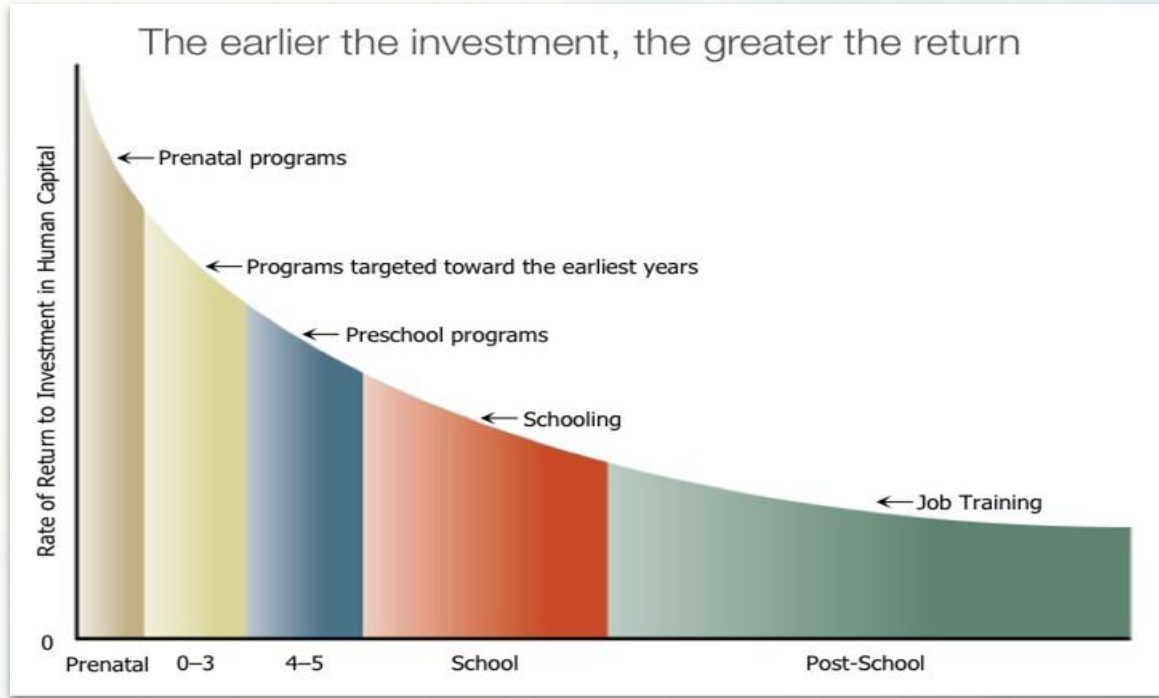
Those most likely to begin kindergarten at an academic disadvantage are low-income and minority children. Children from disadvantaged families have less than 50% of the vocabulary their more affluent peers do. [\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

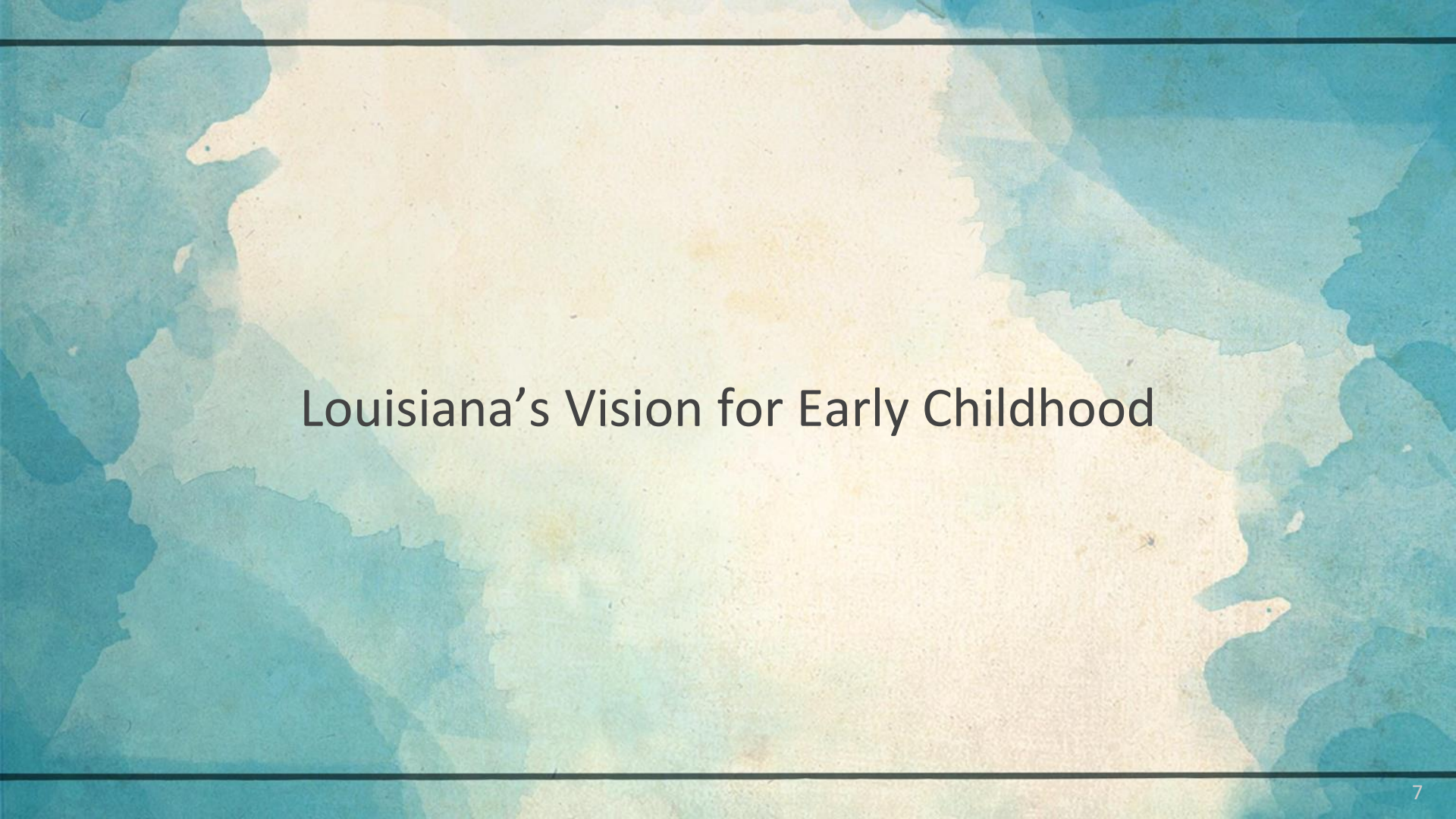


# Why Early Childhood Matters

## Smart Investment

*Higher returns than preschool alone.* Every dollar invested in high-quality birth-to-five early childhood education for disadvantaged children delivers 13% annual return on investment, significantly higher than the 7-10% return delivered by preschool alone.<sup>[4]</sup>





# Louisiana's Vision for Early Childhood



# Louisiana's Vision for Early Childhood

## Unifying Early Childhood - Act 3 (2012)

*Since the Louisiana State Legislature unanimously enacted Act 3 in 2012, Louisiana has been working to unify, improve the quality of, and expand access to its early childhood system.*

Prior to 2012, Louisiana's early childhood programs were fragmented, siloed, and were not preparing enough of their children for kindergarten.

Since 2012, Louisiana has made significant progress toward achieving the goals of Act 3, including by:

- Unifying all early childhood programs under one state governing agency (LDOE)
- Establishing a community network and early childhood lead agency in every community
- Implementing a statewide unified quality rating system for all publicly-funded child care centers, Head Starts, and pre-K programs
- Aligning quality improvement supports to the unified quality rating system



*Every day* in Louisiana, educators are committed to ensuring that *every child* has the opportunity to grow and thrive.



### *Vision:*

All children enter kindergarten ready to learn.



### *Mission:*

As a result of this vision, Louisiana has a relentless focus on these four areas:



**Empowering Ready Start Networks**



**Improving Quality of ECE Experiences**



**Expanding Access for Families**



**Strengthening State Structures**

# Louisiana's Vision for Early Childhood

## Measuring Classroom Quality

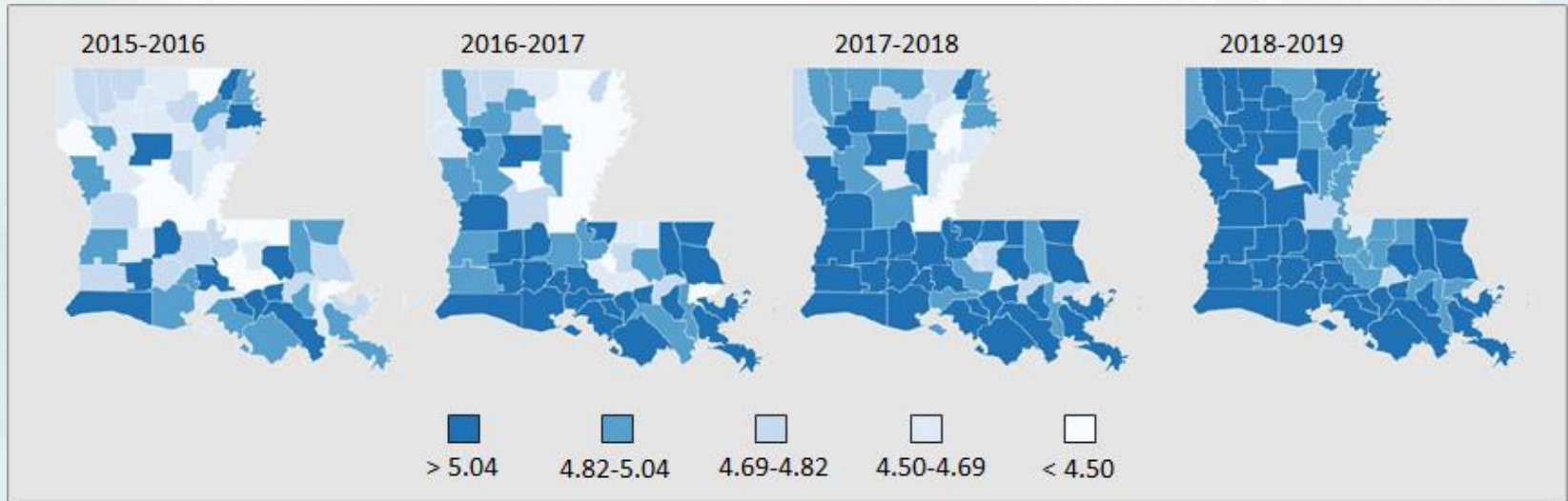
*The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)® tool measures the quality of teacher-child interactions, is correlated to educational outcomes for children, and is used in classrooms serving children from birth to pre-K in Louisiana.*

Expectations for the Classroom:	PreK Domains	Toddler Domains	Infant Domains
<i>Warm, positive environment with trusting relationships</i>	Emotional Support	Emotional & Behavioral Support	Responsive Caregiving
<i>Daily routines are organized and disruptions are minimal</i>	Classroom Organization		
<i>Children are supported to learn concepts, develop language, and connect ideas through dialogue and play</i>	Instructional Support	Engaged Support for Learning	



# Louisiana's Vision for Early Childhood Quality Improvements

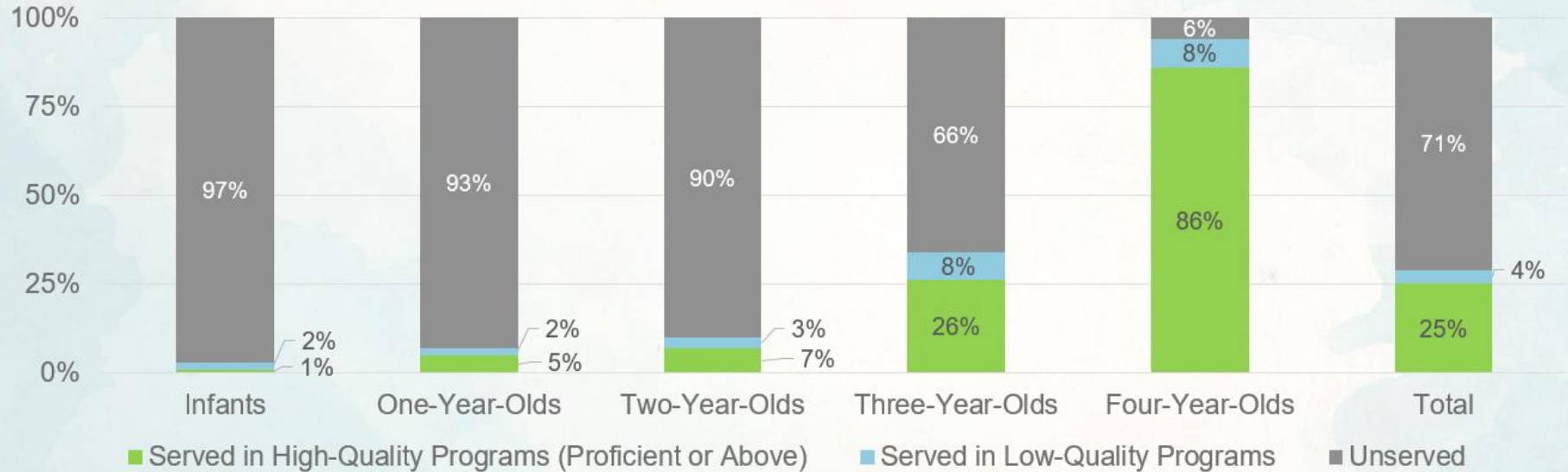
*Since the first year of implementation of the unified quality rating system, Louisiana has witnessed significant improvement in early childhood quality across communities and sites.*



[Bassok, D. et al. \(2020\). Systemwide Changes in the Quality of Early Childhood Education: Trends in Louisiana from 2015-16 to 2018-19](#)

# Louisiana's Vision for Early Childhood Access to Quality

*While there has been significant improvement in quality statewide, the access gaps remain large, particularly at the youngest ages.*





# School Systems Supporting Early Childhood

# School Systems Supporting Early Childhood

*School systems have a vested interest in ensuring that children at risk of entering kindergarten behind have access to a high-quality early childhood education.*

Research demonstrates that the experiences children have from birth to age five can have a dramatic impact on their kindergarten readiness, and that their kindergarten readiness is a strong predictor for how well they will perform in later grades.

There are several ways school systems can support the early childhood work in local communities:

- Super App
- Birth through Three-Year-Old Seats
- Ready Start Networks



# Early Childhood and Super App

# Early Childhood and Super App Overview

*For the first time, school systems submitted information related to early childhood, such as the community's blueprint and its Coordinated Funding Request, through the Super App process.*

The Early Childhood strategy sits in the LEA Structures domain.

## **Strategies communities addressed through Super App for 2020-2021:**

- **Blueprint:** How will communities design a plan to expand access to quality early childhood programs?
- **Access:** How can communities maximize existing funding to serve in-need children?
  - Communities indicated what strategies they plan to use to expand access
  - Communities submitted their [coordinated funding request](#) for LA4 and NSECD seats
  - Communities requested funding for new B-3 seats
- **Quality:** How can communities continue to improve the quality of Birth to 5 seats through high quality curriculum, professional development, and assessments?

Guidance for completing the Early Childhood components of Super App was provided [here](#).

# Early Childhood Access and Super App

## Improving Early Childhood Access

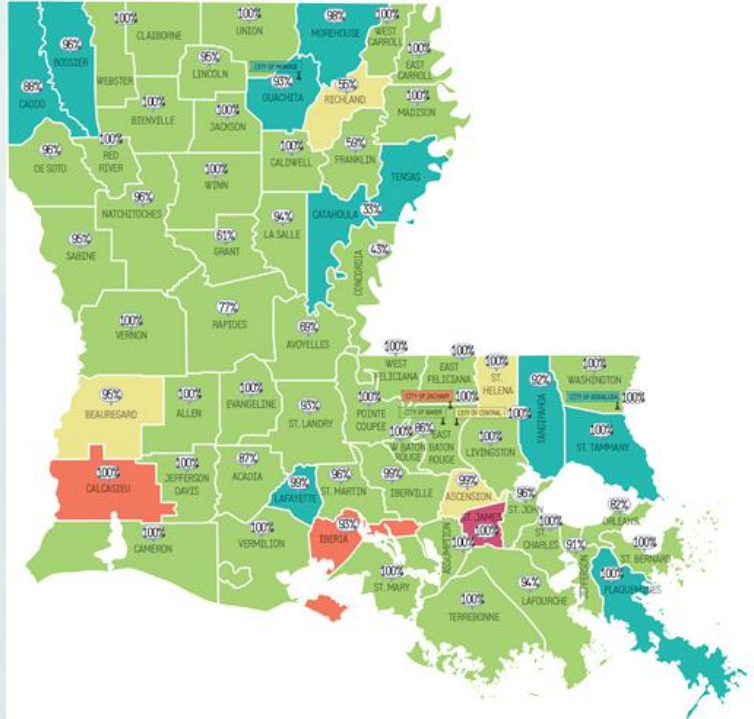
*Super App asked LEAs to identify how they plan to support access for in-need children birth to five, and provided LEAs the opportunity to work with their community network to request new seat funding.*

- In early 2019, The Early Childhood Care and Education Commission unanimously approved recommendations for improving early care and education in Louisiana via their report, [Funding Our Future: LA B to 3](#). This report outlines challenges experienced and suggested solutions for children birth to age three and their working parents across Louisiana relative to early learning.
- While Louisiana currently serves **94%** of four year olds in need, it serves **34%** of threes and **7.13%** of 0-2 year olds through subsidized care and education seats.
- These levels of access vary by community:
  - While some serve every four year old in need, others may not yet have LA 4.
  - Some communities have several child care partners, others have few or no publicly-funded child care partners
  - LEAs have varying degrees of partnerships with their Head Start partners, or sometimes are the Head Start grantees

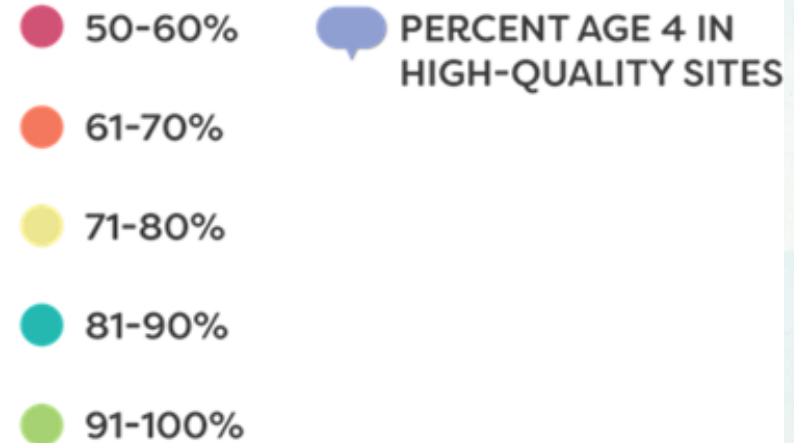


# Early Childhood Access and Super App

## Economically Disadvantaged Four Year Olds Served

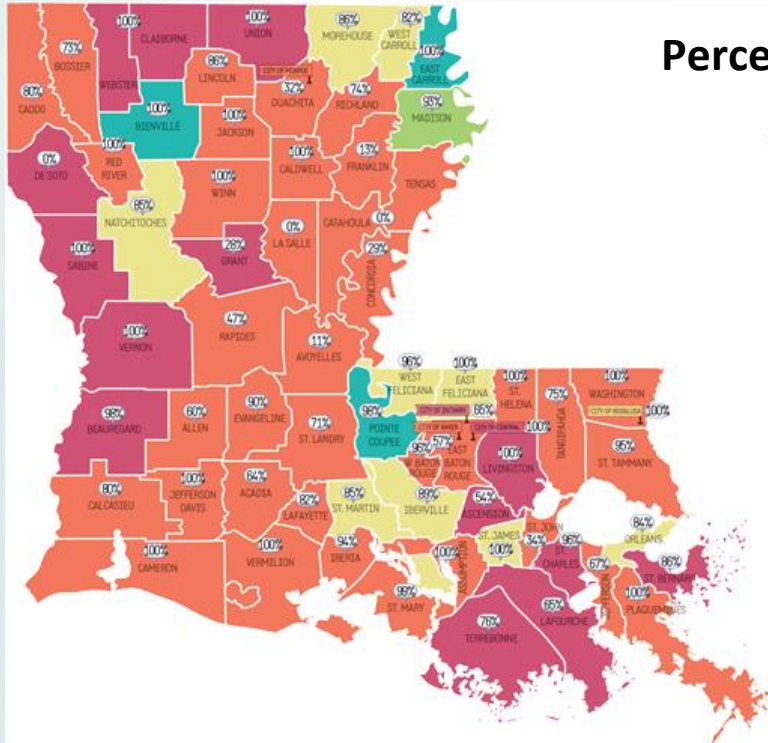


## Percent Economically Disadvantaged 4s Served

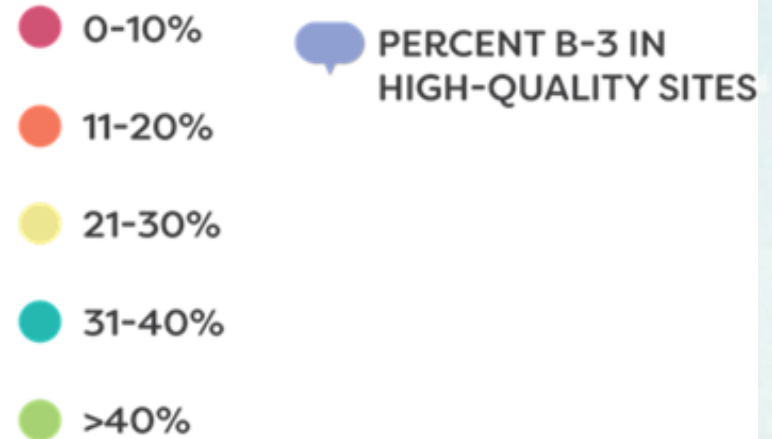


# Early Childhood Access and Super App

## Economically Disadvantaged Infant to Three Year Olds Served



### Percent Economically Disadvantaged Infants-3 Served



# Early Childhood Access and Super App Funding Strategies

*Question LS3.1 asked LEAs to identify all **funding strategies** that apply to birth through three-year-olds.*

LS3.1 Check all the strategies that the school system will use to maximize access to birth through three-year-old children within the community network.

- ☐ Strategy 1: Place four-year-old seats at child care centers.
- ☐ Strategy 2: Provide more birth through three-year-old seats at child care centers.
- ☐ Strategy 3: Convert Head Start seats to Early Head Start seats.
- ☐ Strategy 4: Develop agreements with Head Start to serve more three year olds.
- ☐ Strategy 5: Use IDEA dollars to expand delivery of special education and related services in child care centers (children with disabilities age three and older).
- ☐ Strategy 6: Secure grant funding to serve more children birth to five.

Other:

- When answering this question, LEAs were asked to identify all of the funding strategies they plan to use to serve birth through three year olds in the following school year.



# Early Childhood Access and Super App Funding Strategies

*Question LS3.2 asked LEAs to identify all **funding strategies** that apply to four-year-olds.*

LS3.2 Check all the strategies that the school system will use to maximize access for four-year-olds within the community network.

- ☐ Strategy 1: Target seats for four year olds beyond those funded by LA 4.
- ☐ Strategy 2: Place school-based pre-K classrooms in zip codes of high need.
- ☐ Strategy 3: Maximize eligibility criteria for pre-K funding.
- ☐ Strategy 4: Collaborate with Head Start to serve the maximum number of four year olds across each funding source.
- ☐ Strategy 5: Offer universal pre-K for four year olds in the district.

Other:

[1750 maximum characters]

- When answering this question, LEAs should identify all of the funding strategies they plan to use to serve or expand service for four year olds in the following school year.
- If LEAs plan to use strategies not included here, they should select “Other” and provide a written description of the funding strategy(s) they plan to use.

# Birth Through Three-Year-Old Seats

## Preschool Development Grant (PGG) B-5

*In December of 2020, Louisiana became one of 20 states to win the competitive PDG B-5 renewal grant.*

Louisiana was awarded \$11 million each year for three years to:

- **Create at least 600 new birth through three-year-old seats in child care**
- Double the number of Ready Start Network pilots
- Fund community-based guides to assist families applying for child care assistance
- Strengthen relationships with family child care home providers



# Early Childhood Access and Super App

## Coordinated Funding Request

*Question LS3.3 asked LEAs that are the Lead Agency to upload the **completed Coordinated Funding Request**.*

The link to the Coordinated Funding Request template can be located in Appendix A of the School System Planning Guide for item LS3.3. Once completed, LEAs who are Lead Agencies will upload it into Super App.

LS3.3 LEAs that are the Lead Agency for their early childhood community network:  
Please upload the completed Coordinated Funding Request template.

File name format: School System Name\_CFR

**Coordinated Funding Request**

["Upload" button]



# Early Childhood Quality and Super App Overview

*Teachers in all early childhood settings need strong and coordinated professional development, curricula, and assessments that advance the quality and continuity of practice across early childhood and early elementary settings.*

Successful implementation of high-quality curriculum and assessments requires the following:

- **Initial support:** Provide pre-service PD for teachers and leaders that builds their familiarity with the structure, approach, and key components of high-quality curricula and assessments.
- **Ongoing, focused coaching:** Build teachers' and leaders' ability to use the high-quality curricula and assessments; deepen knowledge of content and content pedagogy; build skill in using child data to meet the needs of all learners; and demonstrate how to use classroom observations to foster teacher leadership, collaboration, and improved implementation.

# Early Childhood Quality and Super App Overview

*The Department has provided indicators of success for improving early childhood quality.*

- Teachers and staff of birth to five-year-old children have access to and implement high-quality curriculum, receive orientation to curriculum training and ongoing support during the school year, and use high-quality curriculum-embedded and/or high-quality assessments to plan for individual needs of students.
- The lead agency ensures that central office and site administrators are trained on the CLASS<sup>®</sup> observation tool, provide observation feedback to teachers, and use observation results to support staff improvement.

# Early Childhood Quality and Super App Overview

*Each school system responded to the following application questions relating to improving early childhood quality.*

- Identify the number of birth to five-year-old classrooms that will be newly using the following high-quality curricula for the 2020-2021 school year.
- Identify the number of birth to five-year-old classrooms for which partner(s) will provide teacher professional development on the curricula.
- Identify the number of birth to five-year-old classrooms for which partner(s) will provide teacher professional development on child assessment.



# Early Childhood Quality and Super App Curriculum

*Question LS4.1 asked that LEAs identify high-quality **curriculum**.*

- Based on your blueprint, identify the number of birth to five-year-old classrooms, in each age band, that will be *newly* using the following high-quality curricula for the 2020-2021 school year.
- School systems may request competitive funding at any school or center in the community network, whether it has a label or not, to support the purchase of new high-quality curriculum materials where high-quality curriculum was not previously in place.
- Curriculum purchases can be made for any early childhood classroom within the district. This includes, Type III child care, Head Start/Early Head Start, and other early childhood programs.

Curriculum	Infant/Toddler	3 Year Old	Pre-K (4 Year Old)	Contribution with Existing Funds		Funding Request
				State/Local	Federal Formula	
Big Day						
Blueprint						
Creative Curriculum						
DIG						
Early Foundations						
Eureka Math						
Frog Street						
InvestiGators Club Preschool						
Learn Every Day						
Little InvestiGators						
OWL						
We Can						

# Early Childhood Quality and Super App

## Curriculum-Aligned Professional Development

*Question LS4.2 asked that LEAs identify **curriculum-aligned professional development**.*

- Based on your blueprint, identify the number of birth to five-year-old classrooms, in each age band, that will partner with vendors in the [Professional Development \(PD\) Vendor Guide](#) to provide curriculum-aligned professional development for each high-quality curriculum.
- School systems may request competitive funding at any school or center in the community network, whether it has a label or not, to provide curriculum-aligned professional development.

LS4.2 Identify the number of birth to five-year-old classrooms for which partner(s) will provide teacher professional development on the curricula.				Contribution with Existing Funds		Funding Request
Partners	Infant/Toddler	3 Year Old	Pre-K (4 Year Old)	State/Local	Federal Formula	
Abrams Learning Trends						
Agenda for Children						
Children's Literacy Initiative						
Frog Street						
Great Minds						
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt						
Pearson						
Robert Leslie Publishing						
Teaching Strategies						
Teachstone						
Tulane						
Volunteers of America Greater BR						
Voyager Sopris Learning						

# Early Childhood Quality and Super App Assessment-Aligned Professional Development

Question LS4.3 asked that LEAs identify **assessment-aligned professional development**.

- Based on your blueprint, identify the number of birth to five-year-old classrooms, in each age band, that will partner with vendors in the [PD Vendor Guide](#) to provide assessment-aligned professional development.
- School systems may request competitive funding at any school or center in the community network, whether it has a label or not, to provide assessment-aligned professional development.

LS4.3 Identify the number of birth to five-year-old classrooms for which partner(s) will provide teacher professional development on child assessments.				Contribution with Existing Funds			
Partners	Infant/Toddler	3 Year Old	Pre-K (4 Year Old)	State/Local		Federal Formula	Funding Request
Abrams Learning Trends							
Agenda for Children							
Children's Literacy Initiative							
Frog Street							
Great Minds							
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt							
Pearson							
Robert Leslie Publishing							
Teaching Strategies							
Volunteers of America Greater BR							
Voyager Sopris Learning							



# Early Childhood and Super App

## Overview of Results

*Every school system and all 65 early childhood community network in the state participated in the Super App planning process this year.*

- 55 community networks developed and submitted published blueprints
- Nearly every community network reported using at least one innovative funding strategies to improve local access to early childhood programs
- 50 community networks requested a total of nearly 5,000 new B-3 seats
- 55 community networks requested a total of \$5,598,083 to support early childhood classroom quality improvement

# Early Childhood and Super App Discussion



Turn to your neighbor and discuss the following questions:

- Were you involved in the discussion and planning for the early childhood questions in Super App?
- Who in your school system was at the table for those discussions?
- Did this process change the way you or your school school approached planning for early childhood?

# Ready Start Networks



# Ready Start Networks

## Overview

*Ready Start Networks are community networks committed to driving faster rates of improvement in access to and quality of early childhood programs in their community.*

**Ready Start Networks** are committed to creating and implementing a bold local vision for early childhood.

**Driven by local data and context, each Ready Start Network:**

- Assess local demand and quality for early care and education and create a **blueprint** to address gaps;
- Recruit stakeholders to expand their early childhood **coalition**;
- Establish local **governance** structures to make collaborative decisions; and
- Implement **fundraising** strategies to satisfy local demand.

# Ready Start Networks Cohort Map

*Ready Start continues to build interest and gain traction across the state. There are now thirteen Ready Start Networks. 26 community networks participated in the Get Ready Cohort to explore what becoming a Ready Start Network would mean for their community. The application for cohort three was released February 27.*



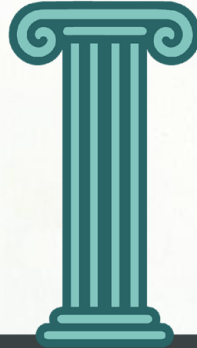
# Ready Start Networks

## Four Pillars

BLUEPRINT



COALITION



GOVERNANCE



FUNDRAISING



• READY START NETWORK •



# Ready Start Networks Blueprint

*In Super App, 52 (or 80%) community networks submitted early childhood blueprints that outlined their local early childhood vision and mission.*

A **blueprint** is an outline of the network's goals and strategies to increase the quality and quantity of seats in the community.

Blueprint components include:

- Background/Analysis of Current State
- Mission and Vision Statements
- Goals with strategies, performance metrics, and resources

The blueprint sets a vision for the organization's future, establishes agreed-upon goals, and lays out clear strategies to achieve those goals.

# Ready Start Networks

## Cohort 3

*On February 27, the Department released the Ready Start Network Cohort 3 application for communities interested in becoming a Ready Start Network.*

In exchange for their commitment to achieve the RSN four pillars, Ready Start Networks receive the following benefits:

- Prioritization for any new funding
- An additional annual allocation of \$100,000
- Additional technical assistance and support from the Department

Applications for Cohort 3 of Ready Start Networks are due April 9, 2020.

# Ready Start Networks

## Discussion



Turn to your neighbor and discuss the following questions:

- Is your community currently participating in Ready Start Networks or the Get Ready Cohort?
- Is your community considering applying for Cohort 3 of Ready Start Networks?
- How might the work of Ready Start Networks be beneficial to your community?
- What concerns or questions do you have about the Ready Start Network model?



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## Next Steps

- Contact the early childhood lead agency for your community to learn more about early childhood
- Consider applying to become a Ready Start Network, if your community is not already participating
- Stay tuned for more information regarding new birth through three-year-old seat funding

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