

Developing Kindergarten Readiness through Early Childhood Experiences

Office of Early Childhood Care and Education

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LAFEPA Spring 2025

Louisiana's Education Priorities

- ✓ **Early childhood** leading to kindergarten readiness
- ✓ **Literacy** instruction aligned to the Science of Reading
- ✓ **Math** instruction from foundational to advanced skills
- ✓ Opportunities ensuring a **meaningful high school experience**
- ✓ An effective **teacher for every student**
- ✓ Expand **educational choice** for students and families

Key Endeavors: Early Childhood Experiences

1. Increase language development for children ages 0-4 at the early childhood sites by providing targeted regional and statewide professional development opportunities
2. Build pathways for early childhood professionals to enter and grow within the profession
3. Develop and strengthen early childhood teachers, keeping great teachers in the classroom
4. Streamline Louisiana Department of Education processes and operations, supporting sites to operate as effectively as possibly
5. Utilize data to identify the highest needs at low performing early childhood sites



Key Endeavors: Early Childhood Experiences

6. Expand developmental screenings across early childhood program types to ensure children and families receive the support they need
7. Explore with other state agencies successful models and diversify strategies for childcare access
8. Partner with local community organizations in order to best meet community needs
9. Engage families to better understand early childhood experiences and to inform the development of resources specifically to support young children's development
10. Expand pathways to family child care program certifications



State of Early Childhood Care and Education in Louisiana



Sunset of PDG

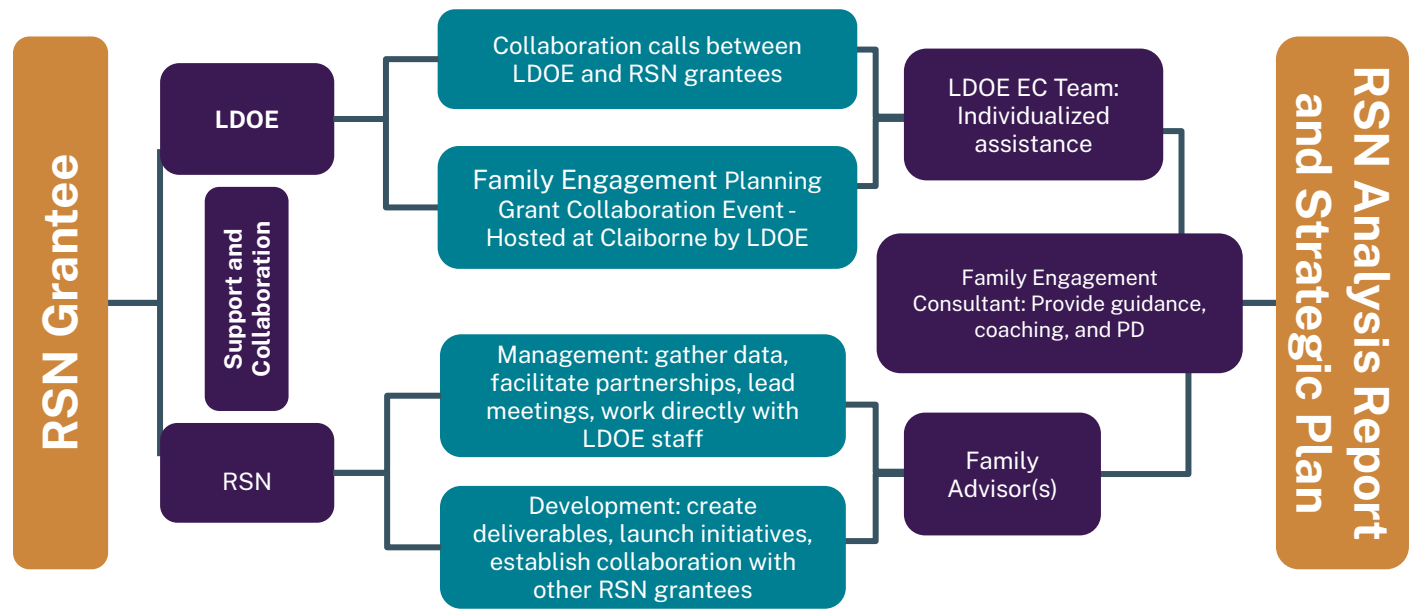


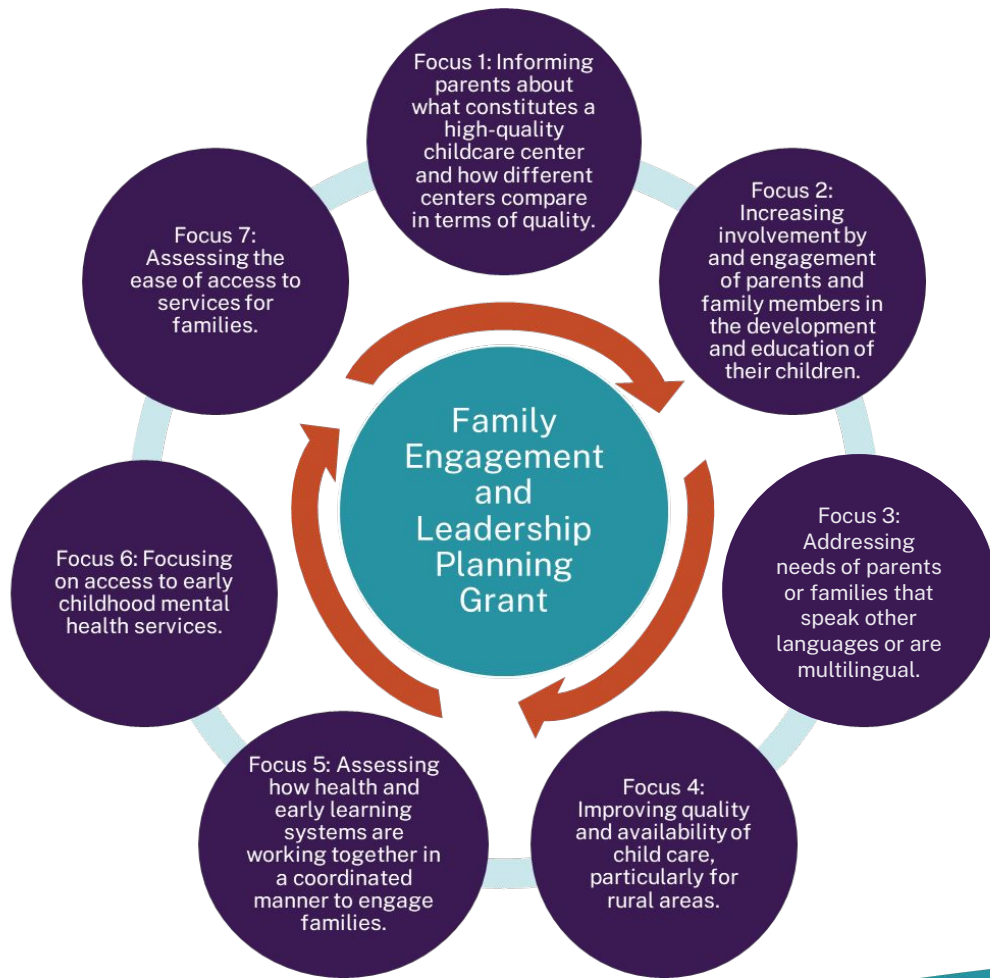
ECCE Family Engagement Activities

In 2023, the LDOE was awarded a Preschool Development Grant (PDG) to identify and address gaps in Louisiana's B-5 mixed delivery ECE system and to revise its existing needs assessment and comprehensive statewide strategic plan.

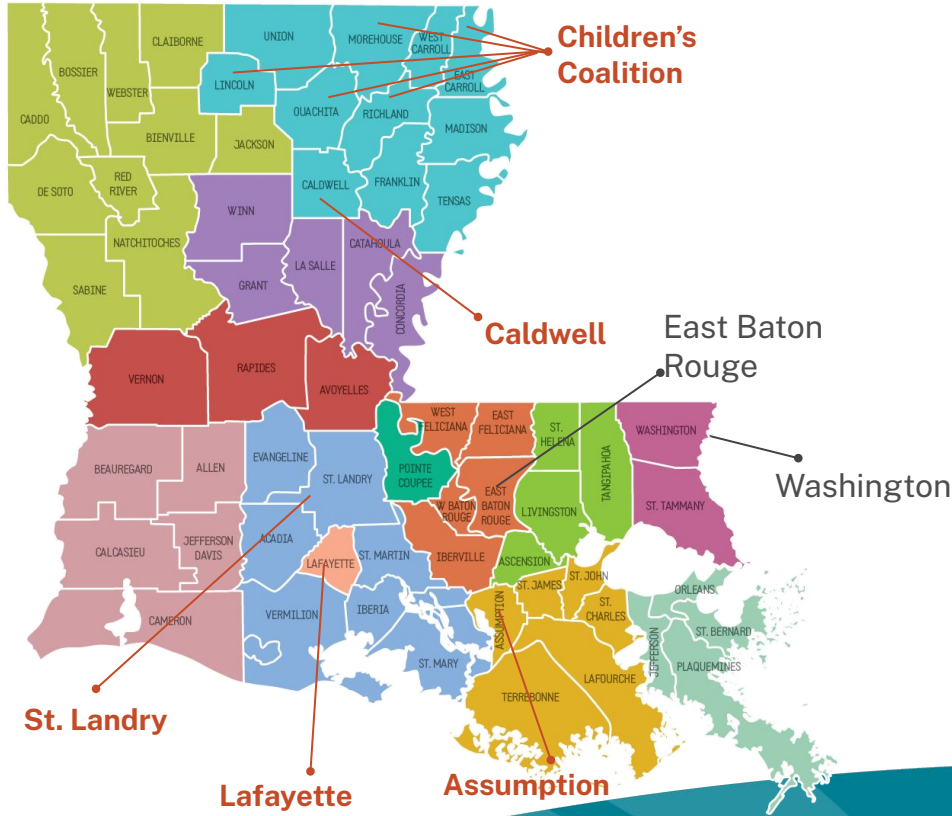
- Through PDG, the LDOE offered to Ready Start Networks (RSNs) statewide the “Family Engagement and Leadership Planning Grant” opportunity.
 - This award provided funding and technical assistance for selected networks to develop a detailed analysis of family engagement and leadership efforts within the communities they serve and a strategic plan to increase family engagement and leadership at the local level.

Framework: Family Engagement and Leadership (FEL) Planning Grant

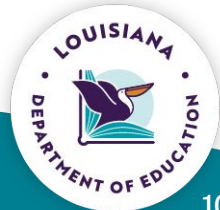




2024 Family Engagement and Leadership Grantees



Five Ready Start Networks participated in Cohort 1, and two Ready Start Networks (RSNs) participated in Cohort 2 of the Family Engagement and Leadership Planning Grant, for a total of 11 local communities engaged.



LDOE YCWD Strategic Planning Grant Grant Overview

This grant provided a collaborative opportunity between the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency to strengthen ongoing efforts and strategies related to implementing developmental screening in Type III child care sites.

For the duration of the grant period, the LDOE worked alongside CCR&Rs to:

- Analyze the current developmental screening practices for YCWD in birth to three year old classrooms within Type III child care centers.
- Enhance practices that will impact developmental screening and referral in early childhood educational B-3 settings.
- Expand early identification by increasing the number of completed developmental screenings in publicly-funded ECE programs.





LDOE YCWD Strategic Planning Grant Focus

The focus of this grant was to:

- increase the number of developmental screenings completed in birth to three year old classrooms in child care centers
- increase the number of children receiving referrals for additional services should a potential developmental delay be identified during the screening process
- provide support to sites and educators to implement developmental screening in their programs

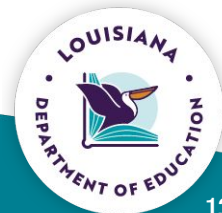


LDOE YCWD Strategic Planning Grant

Grant Expectations

As part of this opportunity, each Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCR&R):

- utilized CCR&R Master Coaches to provide training and support to 4 selected **high-performing** child care sites focused on administering developmental screenings in birth to three-year-old classrooms within type III child care sites and FCC sites with Academic Approval.
 - Sites were required to use the ASQ-3 as a tool for developmental screening
- conducted an ongoing analysis of the developmental screening processes in B-3 settings for each site.
- identified training needs and train any early childhood teachers and directors in these sites to administer developmental screenings.
- participated in LDOE provided training and support related to Early Steps and all comprehensive services provided for YCWD in early childhood settings



Supporting Resource and Referral of Young Children

On December 18th, 2024, the Department hosted a webinar for all Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies entitled, “Supporting Children through the Developmental Screening and Referral Process.”

This webinar included the following information:

- Supporting Early Child Development and Screening
- Working Collaboratively with Families
- Guiding and Supporting Families Through the Referral Process
- Utilizing Intentional Strategies



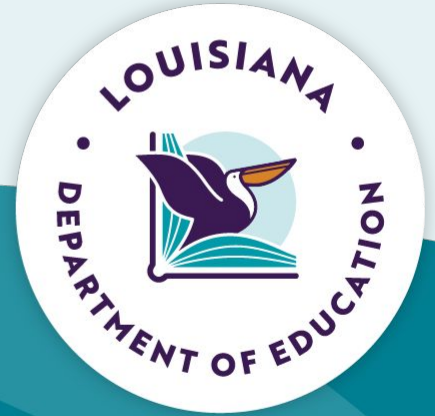
LDOE YCWD Strategic Planning Grant Grant Outcomes

The YCWD SPG has given the Department information on developmental screening processes that include the child, teacher, and director/site in the following ways:

- **Child:** The YCWD SPG targeted the child's overall quality experiences of B-3 learning by bringing knowledge and skills to the ECE workforce, improving outcomes of children of at-risk families, including young children with disabilities.
- **Teacher:** The YCWD SPG provided training/in-class coaching and supports to ECE directors and teachers focused on conducting developmental screenings for children ages birth through two years old using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®.
- **Director/Site:** The YCWD SPG provided support related to referrals of children who have been screened and exhibit developmental delays. In addition, Master Coaches partnered with ECE directors to develop strategies to make screening a continuous process within their sites.



Update on Early Childhood Key Performance Metrics

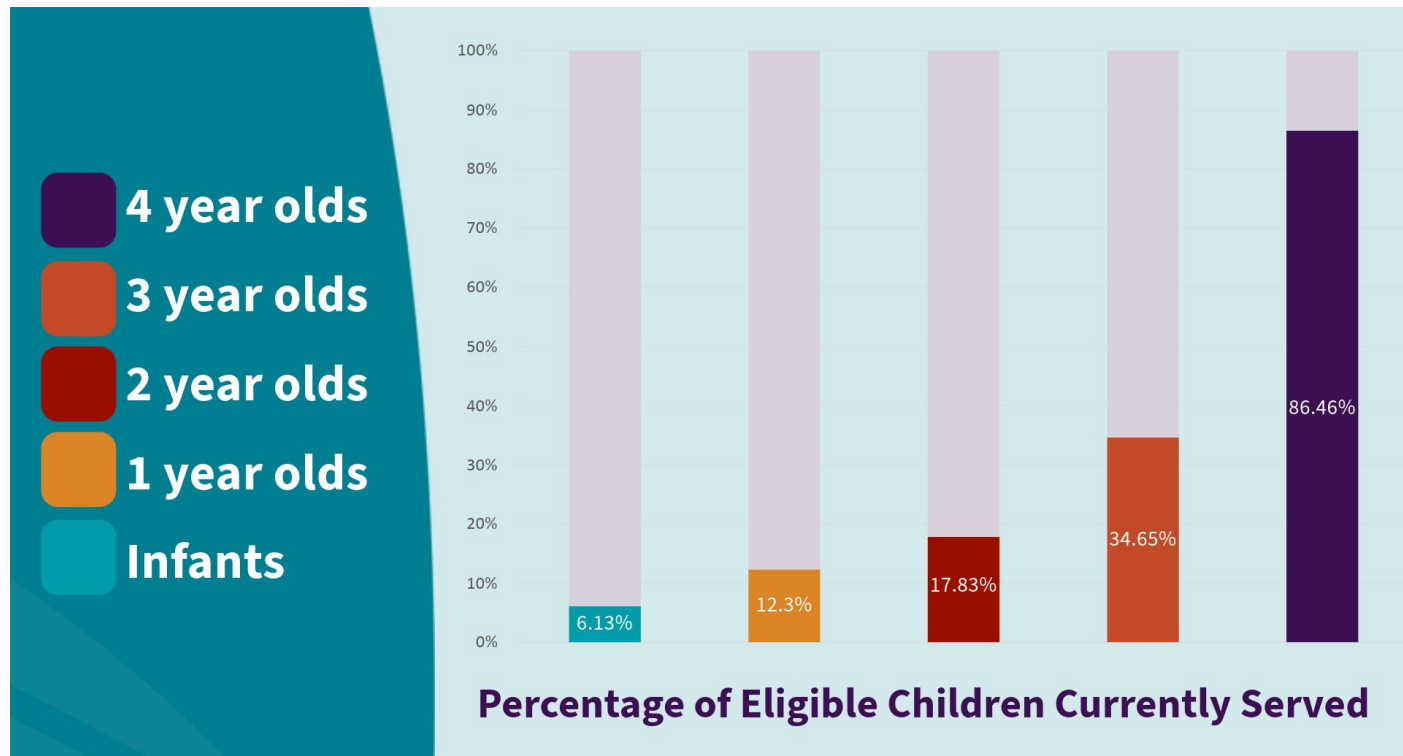


Number of Regulated Early Childhood Sites

Type of Site	Meaning	Number as of September 2024
Type I Center	Tax-exempt faith-based organization that receives no state or federal funds	194
Type II Center	Does not accept public funding, other than the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), unless they are a nonprofit	159
Type III Center	Eligible to receive most sources of government funding, including CCAP funding <i>* All Type III sites participate in the Early Childhood Accountability System</i>	1,210
Family Child Care (FCC) Provider	Registers with the LDOE and cares for up to six unrelated children in the provider's home <i>* FCC sites opting into Academic Approval participate in the Early Childhood Accountability System</i>	232
In-Home Provider	Provides child care services in the child or children's own home	2



Eligible Children in Publicly Funded Early Childhood Education Programs



Early Childhood Accountability System



Early Childhood Accountability System

- Each publicly funded child care center, Early Head Start/Head Start program, and school serving children birth to five in Louisiana receives a Performance Profile.
- The Performance Profile includes a site rating based on rigorous observations that occur at least twice in each publicly funded classroom each academic year.



Early Childhood Accountability System

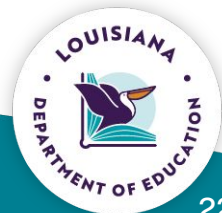
The Early Childhood Accountability System utilizes the CLASS®, or Classroom Assessment Scoring System, tool. The Performance Profile rating is based on a scale with five levels:

CLASS® Score Range	Performance Rating
6.00 - 7.00	Excellent
5.25 - 5.99	High Proficient
4.50 - 5.24	Proficient
3.00 - 4.49	Approaching Proficient
1.00 - 2.99	Unsatisfactory

Early Childhood Accountability System

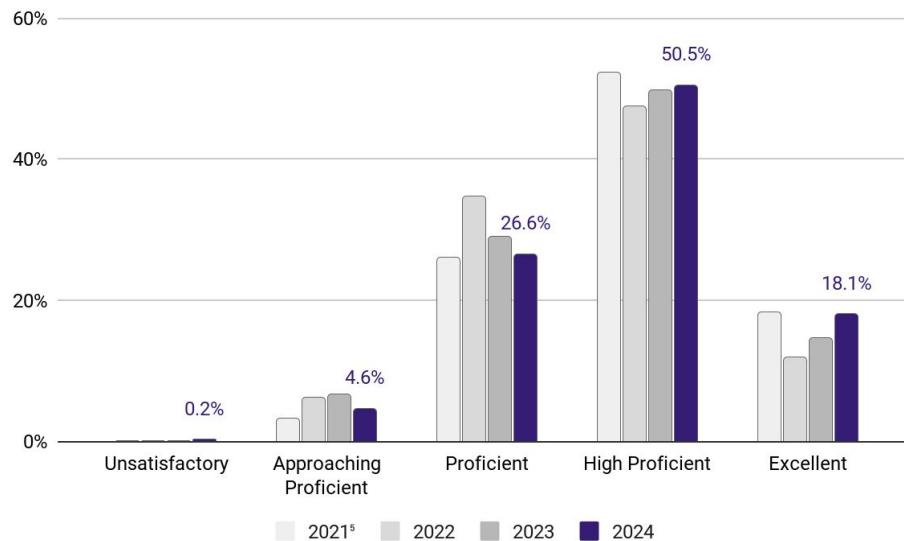
The Department released 2023-2024 Performance Profiles in November 2024. The 2023-2024 Performance Profile scores are the highest scores ever for all site types, with the most growth occurring in Family Child Care sites.

- Scores for “Emotional and Behavioral Support” in toddler classrooms and scores for “Classroom Organization” in pre-K classrooms increased to the “Excellent” rating.
- Scores for Infant and Toddler classrooms increased by 0.10 or more, showing significant growth for our state’s youngest learners.
- There are 324 “Excellent Honor Roll” sites, 579 “Birth to Two Honor Roll” sites, and 335 “Top Gains Honor Roll” sites.



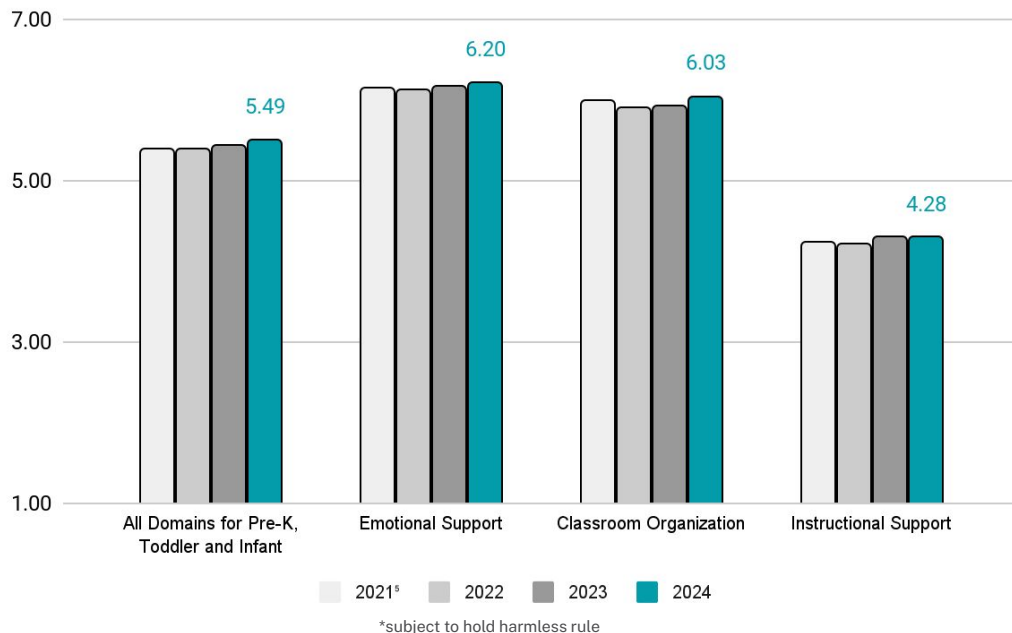
2023-2024 Performance Profiles: Performance

More than 95% of early childhood sites are rated “Proficient” or higher, with 91% of school districts rated as “High Proficient” or “Excellent.”



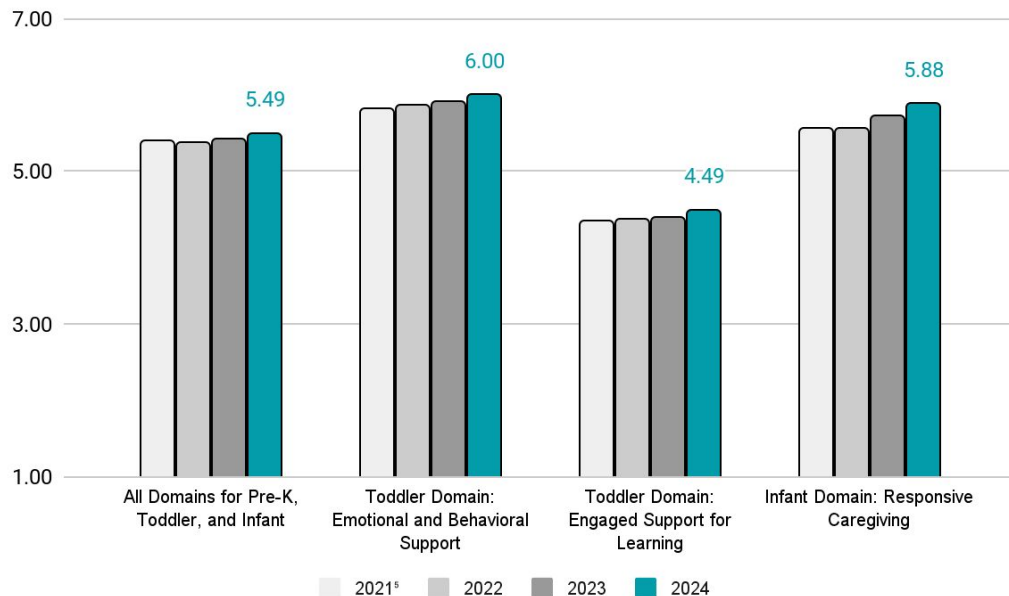
*subject to hold harmless rule

2023-2024 Performance Profiles: Pre-K



- Continued improvements across all domains.
- Overall increase of 0.07 statewide.
- Steady growth in “Emotional Support” and “Classroom Organization.”

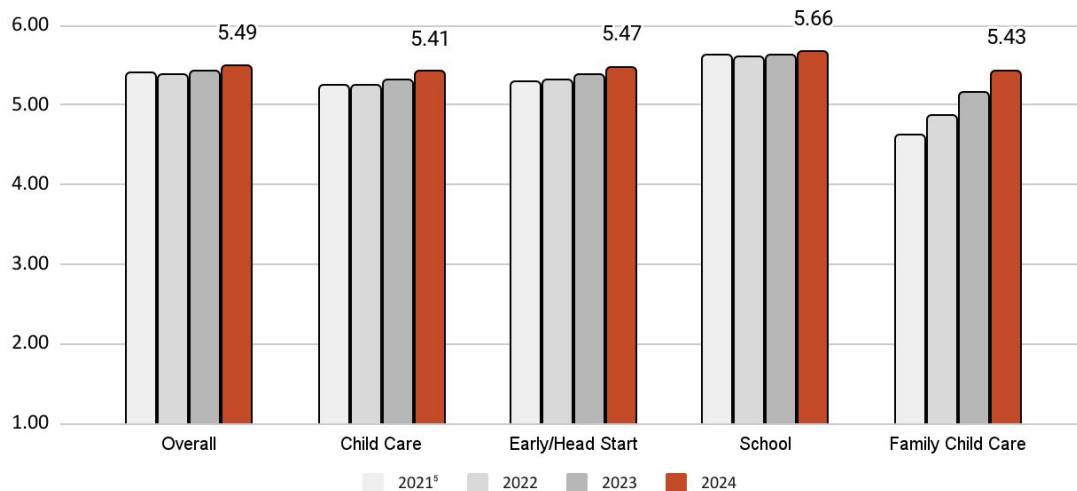
2023-2024 Performance Profiles: Toddler/Infant



- Improvement continued across all domains.
- “Engaged Support for Learning” increased to an all-time high score of 4.49.
- All domains grew at least 0.10 points.

2023-2024 Performance Profiles: Site Type

- All site type scores improved from 2022-2023.
- School scores were higher than the overall state average.
- Family Child Care sites continue to show growth from the initial pilot year.



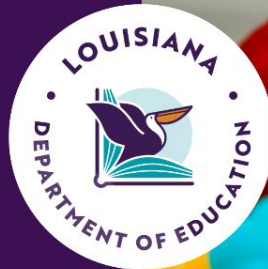
Early Childhood Key Performance Indicator: Increase Site Ratings



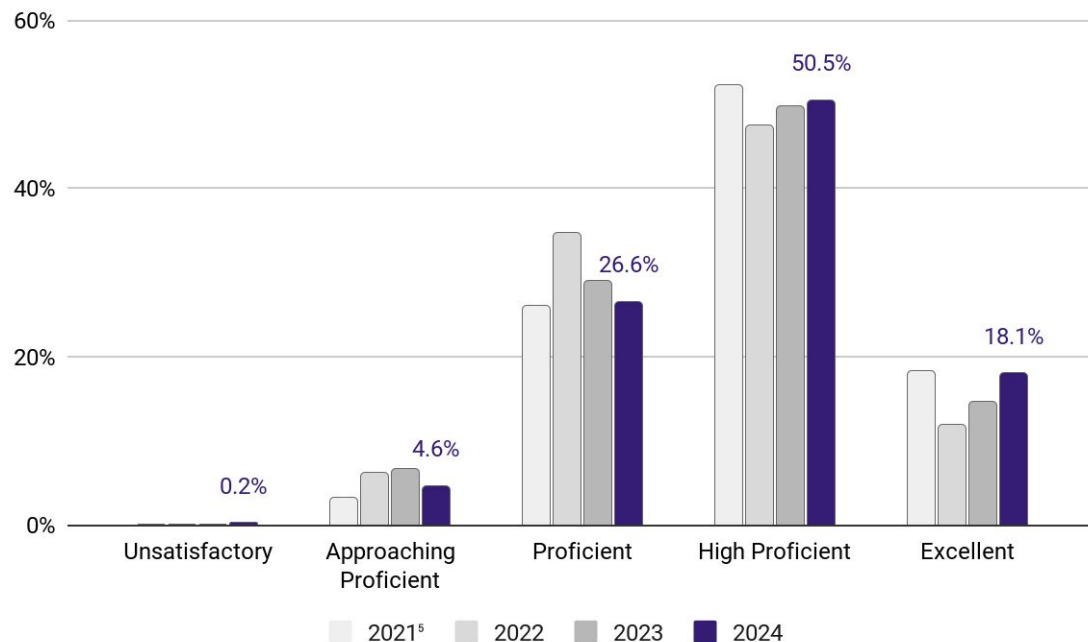
How will we measure success?

Key Performance Indicator

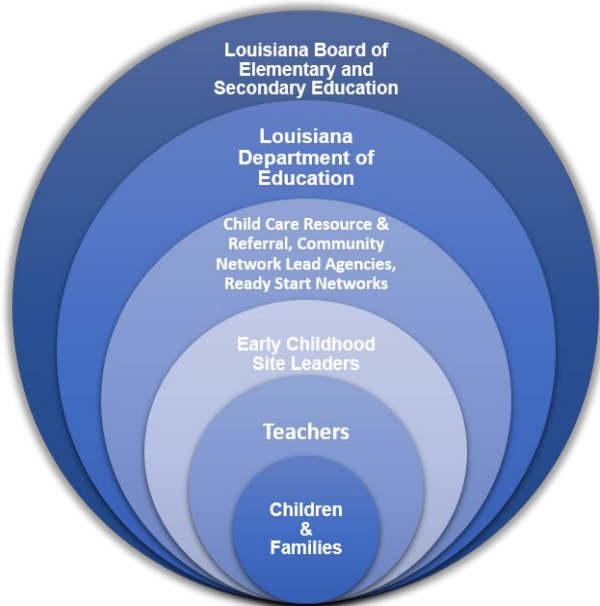
- By 2028, increase percentage of early childhood sites rated “High Proficient” or “Excellent” by 5 percentage points



Key Performance Indicator Background



Key Endeavor: Statewide Professional Development



Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs)

- The Department funds a system of these agencies, each of which has its own specified service area, operating statewide, with some agencies serving multiple parishes and others serving a single parish.
- The Department coordinates CCR&R efforts through the development of annual strategic plans, goals, and objectives for the work of all CCR&R agencies.
- CCR&Rs provide professional development, including training and coaching, to all child care sites participating in the accountability system, to drive quality improvement.

Goal: At least 15,000 annual training units



Key Endeavor: Site Improvement Support

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies will provide training and coaching to early childhood professionals (directors and teachers) at publicly funded early childhood sites with CLASS® Performance Profile scores that fall within the “Approaching Proficient” or lower range in each Early Childhood Community Network within the CCR&R’s service area.

Currently training and coaching is being provided to low-performing sites located in the following parishes:

- Acadia
- Ascension
- Caddo
- Calcasieu
- Claiborne
- Central
- Jefferson
- Lafayette
- Orleans
- Ouachita
- Plaquemines
- St. James
- St. Mary
- St. Tammany
- Terrebonne
- Vermilion



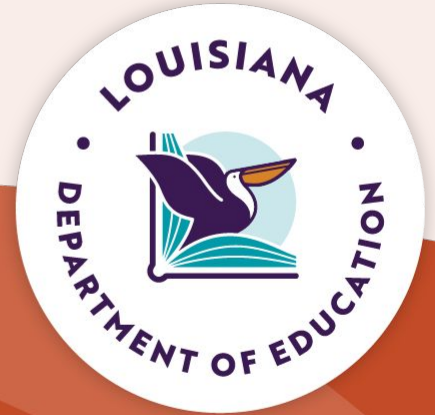
Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies support child care centers and registered family child care homes by providing research-based coaching, technical assistance, group training, and emergency respite care. In addition, the agencies provide an Early Learning Resource Center that supports families and the early learning community with connections and resources.

Revised November 14, 2024

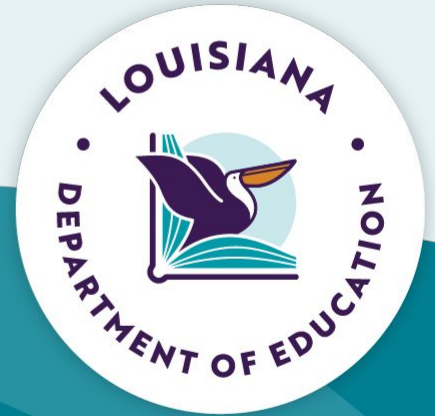
Goal: 100% of low-performing active sites engaged in Site Improvement Support



Progress Toward Future Key Endeavors: Increase Language Development Scores



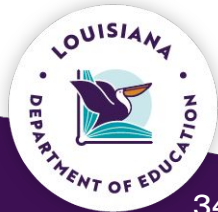
ELDS



2024 Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)

Newly updated in 2024, the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) support Louisiana's expectation that early childhood programs promote Kindergarten readiness. The ELDS support this expectation by:

- providing a continuum of developmental milestones for each age level
- aligning to Tier I curriculum options and state assessment (Teaching Strategies GOLD[®]) measures
- being a source to be used as a daily reference and resource for those that care for Louisiana's youngest learners



Early Childhood Improvement of Quality Processes



Improvement of Quality Processes

In order to achieve the Key Performance Indicator “**Grow the percentage of early childhood sites rated High Proficient or Excellent by 5 percentage points**”, Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) and CNLAs are working in collaboration with LDOE on the following quality processes:

1. Focus on **language and literacy development** as a key endeavor for further improving site Performance Profile Scores and **preparing children for kindergarten**
2. Improve **educator and family child development knowledge and understanding** through all stages of development and learning
3. Provide **targeted, intentional support that builds capacity and engages teachers**, promoting the retention and stabilization of the EC workforce



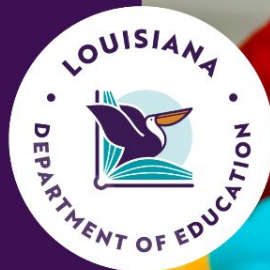
Quality Process 1:

Focus on Language and Literacy Development for Improving Site Performance Profile Scores and Preparing Children for Kindergarten



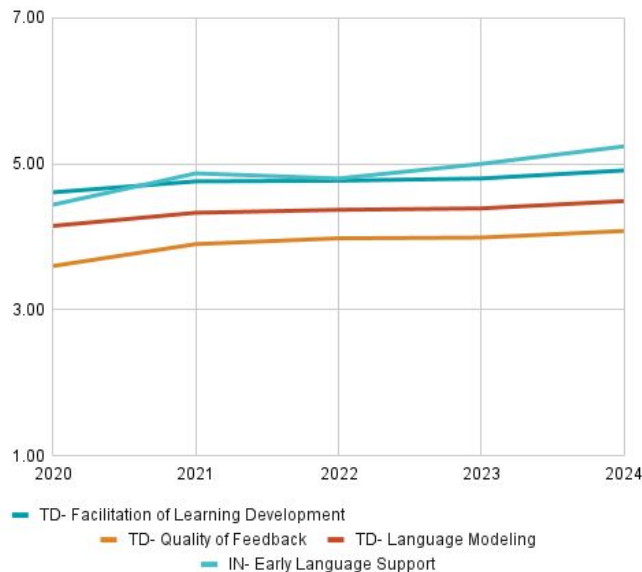
What will CNLAs do?

Analyze current CLASS®
and Teaching Strategies
GOLD® data and roadmap
areas for improvement and
support

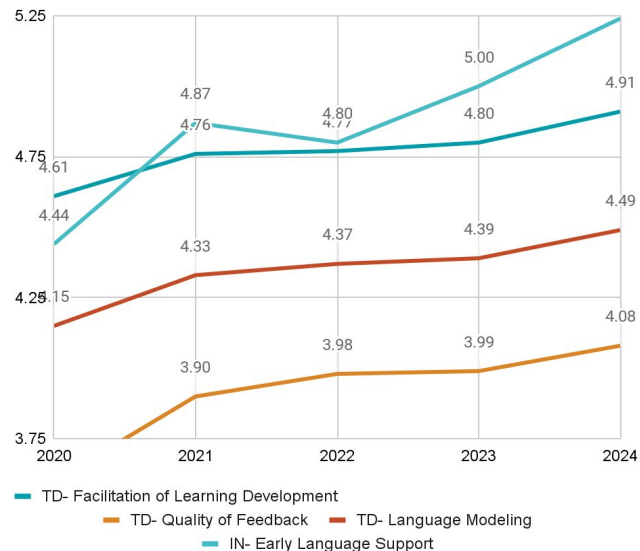


Historical Data on Key Endeavor: Steady Quality Improvement Over Time

Toddler & Infant Language Dimensions Over Time

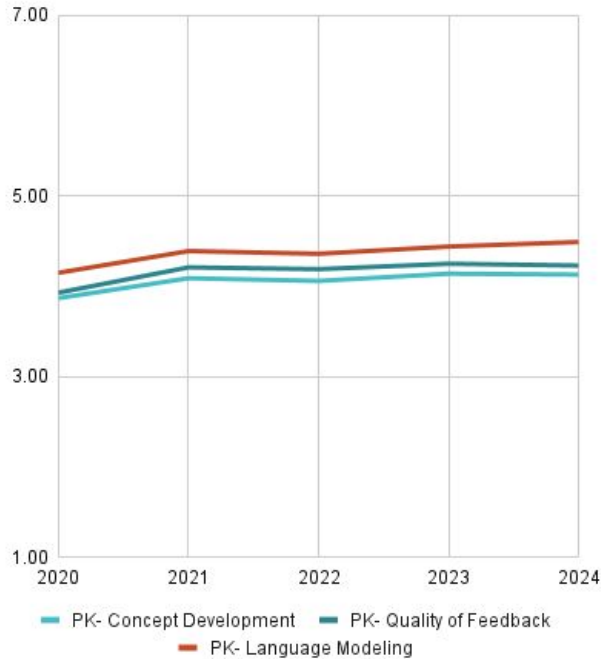


Toddler & Infant Language Dimensions Over Time

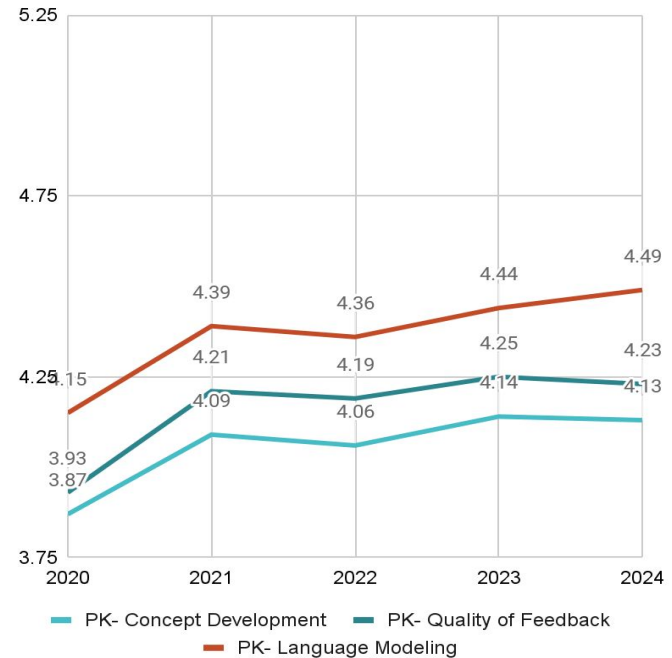


Historical Data on Key Endeavor: Steady Quality Improvement Over Time

Pre-K Language Dimensions Over Time



Pre-K Language Dimensions Over Time



Louisiana Language and Literacy Data

Recent data show the need for an increased focus on language and literacy development:

- 2023 end-of-year Teaching Strategies GOLD® checkpoint data indicate that only 17.6% of Community Networks have children who are meeting expectations for early language and literacy development.
- 2023 CLASS® data show that scores for the “Language Modeling” dimension falls within the “Approaching Proficient” range.
- 2022-2023 third grade literacy data show that only 43% of students were at the level of “Mastery” as measured by the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) assessment.

These outcomes illustrate the need for a specific focus on language and literacy development to ensure Louisiana’s youngest learners are ready for Kindergarten.



Early Childhood Language and Literacy Guideposts

The LDOE EC Language and Literacy Guideposts align with the Louisiana B-5 ELDS and the Science of Reading (SOR). There are three language and literacy guideposts that will drive language and literacy work.

Oral Language Development: includes expressive and receptive communication, vocabulary, and comprehension skills appropriate for child development

Alphabetic Principle: includes phonological awareness skills and knowledge of the alphabet at appropriate intervals for child development

Print Awareness: includes understanding and recognition of environmental print and text features appropriately aligned to child development



Early Childhood Language and Literacy Crosswalk

Louisiana Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) Aligned Prerequisite Indicators			Early Childhood Assessment	Kindergarten Entry Screeners
Older Toddler (16 - 36 months)	3 Year Old (36 - 48 months)	Preschool (48 - 60 months)	TS GOLD® Aligned Objective	DIBELS® 8th Edition
EL 3.1.2 Recognize letters of the alphabet as a special category of print, different from pictures and shapes.	EL 3.1.3 Recognize and name some letters of the alphabet, especially those in their own name, as well as letters that occur frequently in the environment.	EL 3.1.4 Recognize and name many of the letters in the alphabet, specifically letters in their own name, as well as letters that occur frequently in the environment.	Objective 16a Identifies names and letters Pre-k progression towards 16a.5: Identifies and names 11-20 upper- and 11-20 lowercase letters when presented in random order.	Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) BOY Benchmark (25+ letters)
EL 1.2.2 Sing songs with multiple words that start with the same initial sound.	EL 1.2.3 Shows awareness that some words start with the same initial sound. EL 1.5.3 Blend a sequence of spoken syllables to produce words with guidance and support.	EL 1.2.4 Identify the initial sound in a spoken word with guidance and support. EL 1.5.4 Blend a sequence of spoken syllables to produce words. EL 1.6.4 Blend onsets and rimes of single syllable spoken words with guidance and support.	Objective 15c Notices and discriminates smaller units of sound. Pre-k progression towards 15c.5: Verbally separates and blends onset and rime.	Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) BOY Benchmark (5+ phonemes)

Kindergarten Entry

TS GOLD® Aligned Objectives

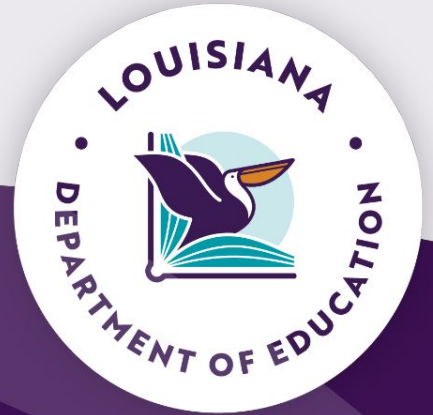
ELDS Literacy Indicators

Anticipated Outcomes

Anticipated outcomes of work related to Early Childhood Language and Literacy include an increase in age-appropriate, research-aligned early language and literacy experiences in early childhood classrooms within all early childhood site types as measured by the following:

- TS GOLD® Checkpoint Data
- Quality data as measured by CLASS®
- Assessments of ECE professional knowledge and skill development through the EC Learn platform
- Analysis of programmatic level support and partnership opportunities within all CNLAs and CCR&Rs

Educator Development



EC Learn Modules - Summer 2025

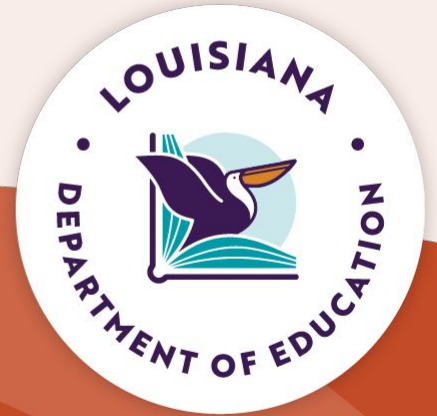
In order to support CNLAs and CCR&Rs with focused Early Childhood language and literacy professional development for educators, the LDOE is building the following professional development modules for the EC Learn platform. These modules will be aligned to the ELDS, SOR, and go live in the platform in Summer of 2025.

The LDOE will share more information regarding these modules in upcoming CNLA Office Hours.

- *A Comprehensive Overview of the New Early Learning and Development Standards*
- *Language and Literacy Foundations: Infants and Toddlers*
- *Language and Literacy Foundations: 3 and 4 Year Olds*
- *Language and Literacy Best Practices in Early Childhood Settings: B-3*
- *Language and Literacy Best Practices in Early Childhood Settings: Pre-K*
- *Understanding Early Childhood Assessment to Enhance Early Childhood Literacy Outcomes*



Additional Early Childhood Key Activities



Current Early Childhood Education Data

- **Early Childhood Site Types:**

Early childhood has differing program types to allow for variation of services and selection of best options for and by families.

- All site types apply for licensure and CCAP certification through EdLink.

- **Data Collections of Publicly Funded Programs:**

- Child Count: Community Network Lead Agencies report the number of publicly funded children in each publicly funded site on October 1 and February 1 of each year.
- Coordinated Funding Request: Community Network Lead Agencies submit to the LDOE in winter a request for how many seats they believe they have capacity to fill in the next academic year.
- Coordinated Enrollment: Community Network Lead Agencies develop and implement a process to coordinate enrollment for infant, toddler, and Pre-K children whose families want to enroll them in a publicly funded program.
- Informational Metrics: Program sites and networks report on best practices such as classroom ratios, teacher education level, and curriculum used at sites.

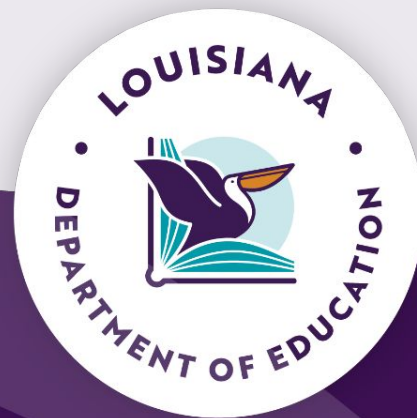


Future Early Childhood Data

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Data Systems:

- In 2025, all Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) systems will be fully transitioning from DCFS legacy systems to new data systems launching in 2025. This includes the following:
 - **KinderConnect:** CCAP Attendance
 - **Integrity Central:** CCAP Fraud/Monitoring
 - **Family Central:** CCAP Application
 - **Kinder Track:** CCAP Payment to Child Care Providers System
- Benefits of the new systems include the following:
 - A more accessible family application, that can also be accessed via a mobile phone, and that allows a more efficient application and notification system for families
 - More easily filterable data, to better access and share income levels of families served by CCAP, how many family Heads of Household are currently in school, what industries are served by CCAP families, and more
 - More advanced methods for any possible fraud detection

Closing



Contact Information

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General Early Childhood Support

(including B-3 Seats and ECE Fund)

- Email EarlyChildhood@la.gov



