EVERY CHILD CARE PROVIDER IN LOUISIANA TO RECEIVE SUPPLIES TO ENSURE HEALTHY REOPENING

May 27, 2020

BATON ROUGE, La. -- The Louisiana Department of Education today announced all 1,649 child care providers in Louisiana will soon receive supplies to help them ensure the health and safety of staff and children as the state navigates reopening following the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak.

"Childcare is the profession that enables all other professions. It is the backbone of our economy, and the child care market must recover in order for our economy to recover," said Assistant Superintendent Jessica Baghian, who oversees early childhood education. "By equipping every provider with these high-demand supplies, we are taking an important step toward sustaining this critical educational and economic service, while maintaining the health and safety of our staff, children and families."

Louisiana has 1,649 licensed child care providers who will receive supplies. These providers offer services through Head Start, licensed child care centers, as well as in in-home and family-based settings certified to offer the Child Care Assistance Program.

Among the supplies, providers will receive:

- No-touch thermometers;
- Masks;
- Gloves;
- Hand sanitizer and pumps;
- Hand soap;
- Paper towels;
- Facial tissue; and
- Cleaning products, including bleach.

The supplies, which were purchased with federal emergency relief funds, will help providers implement protective measures (will open in new tab) set by the Office of Public Health, such as assessing the health of staff and children upon arrival and boosting cleaning regimens.

The supplies have started to arrive, and local resource and referral agencies will distribute supplies to qualified providers within their communities by the close of next week.

"On behalf of the Child Care Association of Louisiana and the licensed early childhood education and care profession, I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Louisiana Department of Education for its work in providing much-needed personal protective equipment during this pandemic," said Alan Young, who owns Southland Park Learning Center in Shreveport and who is an active early childhood education advocate. "As we strive to serve our essential workforce and loyal families, these vital resources are helping us to continue to provide a healthy and safe environment for our children and communities."

The delivery comes as the state continues to navigate the Roadmap to a Resilient Louisiana, (will open in new tab) the Governor's plan for safely reopening the state. Though early childhood education sites were not required to close under the stay-at-home order, more than 70 percent of providers closed their doors. Those that remained open primarily served the children of workers on the frontlines of the response effort.

With the stay-at-home order lifted, providers that previously closed are beginning to reopen. Nearly 50 percent of providers are now offering services, compared to 30 percent in April.

In addition to equipping providers with supplies to help them carry out protective measures set by the Office of Public Health, the Department has provided supplemental guidance (will open in new tab) related to day-to-day operations as they reopen.

The Department has also outlined planning priorities to ensure a strong start (will open in new tab)for every early childhood community and provided funding opportunities and resources to help providers realize those goals.

# # # # # #