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# PROGRAM CHANGES ENABLE MORE WORKING FAMILIES TO AFFORD AND QUALIFY FOR CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

Jan 19, 2021

*Child Care Assistance Program increases reimbursement rates, income eligibility*

BATON ROUGE, La. -- The Louisiana Department of Education announced changes to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) (will open in new tab), which provides federal funds to help low-income working families pay for child care. The changes, approved during today's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education meeting, enable more Louisiana families to afford and qualify for child care assistance.

Effective February 1, 2021:

- CCAP daily reimbursement rates will be increased to reflect the state's current market rates for child care, significantly reducing out of pocket cost for working families and increasing family choice.
- Income eligibility will be increased to 65% of the State Median Income (SMI) in order to align with other child care programs, allowing families to make more income and still qualify for child care subsidy (CCAP).
- Providers will be reimbursed at the state's newly established daily reimbursement rate irrespective of their own rates to assist with paying toward the true cost of quality child care.

"To reach our goal of ensuring all students are ready for kindergarten, it's vital that we increase access to high-quality child care for Louisiana's most vulnerable children," said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Cade Brumley. "This shift puts higher quality programs within the reach of families who need them."

Historically, families receiving child care assistance have been limited in their options by what they can afford with the help of child care assistance. Current CCAP reimbursement rates provide access to approximately one in four centers. The rate increase will allow CCAP-eligible families to choose between three in every four centers. This change will help ensure that more low-income families that are working, in school or actively seeking work can access high-quality child care for their children. This will expand options for families who couldn't previously afford the gap between what a provider charged and what the state pays, and thereby, open the door to families who could not previously afford child care at all.

"These necessary updates to the CCAP program help to address the real financial needs of low-income families regarding child care," said BESE President Sandy Holloway. "Raising the reimbursement rates and expanding income eligibility will greatly increase the number of quality child care options

for more families across the state that need assistance, and that ultimately leads to more children being prepared to learn on day one of kindergarten."

"The proposed changes to the CCAP rates are one of the most significant and impactful measures we can take that will have lifelong impacts on our youngest learners," said Alan Young, Owner of Southland Park Learning Center and Early Childhood Advisory Council Member. "These proposed changes will provide families access to additional high-quality early learning centers,ensuring every child is ready to learn when they enter kindergarten."

"The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children applauds the Louisiana Department of Education and BESE for making the necessary changes to both the reimbursement rates and eligibility criteria of the Child Care Assistance Program," said Louisiana Policy Institute for Children Executive Director Dr. Libbie Sonnier. "These changes will help more Louisiana families get back to work to support our economy as well as support the growth and development of young children entering kindergarten ready to learn."

The income eligibility for CCAP is being increased to approximately 200% of the federal poverty level or $43,440 for a family of three. Along with making child care affordable for more families, this change also better aligns CCAP's income eligibility with other early childhood programs like LA 4.

The policy changes are part of a broader effort by the Department — in collaboration with BESE, child care providers, advocates and families — to unify the system of early childhood education and to prepare all children for kindergarten by increasing access to and affordability of child care statewide.

To learn more about CCAP and how to apply, families can visit louisianabelieves.com (will open in new tab), email LDEccap@la.gov (will open in new tab) or call 1-877-453-2721.

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