

READY LOUISIANA

INVEST IN EARLY EDUCATION

2025 Ready Louisiana Coalition Talking Points

Ready Louisiana Coalition's Ask:

1. **Ensure the maintenance of \$103.4 million in total funding for state pre-K programs for 4-year-olds**, including LA4 and Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development Program (NSECD), between state and federal TANF funding sources to maintain seats for approximately 17,700 children.
 - **Longitudinal research supports the effectiveness of Louisiana's LA4 program.**
According to CABL, children who participated in LA4 demonstrated significantly higher kindergarten readiness, were 45% less likely to require special education services, and consistently outperformed their peers on 4th and 8th-grade assessments.¹ When children succeed in school, they are better equipped to transition into adulthood with the skills necessary to thrive in their careers.
 - Louisiana's largest quality early childhood education programs for 4-year-olds are funded through a mix of state and federal resources. These include the Cecil J. Picard LA 4 Early Childhood Program, the 8(g) Student Enhancement Block Grant Program, and the Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD) Program.²
 - LA4 is the primary preschool program in Louisiana, serving more than 16,000 children. It provides full-day pre-K programming in public schools to 4-year-olds from disadvantaged families.
 - The 8(g) Student Enhancement Block Grant Program supports roughly 3,000 at-risk preschool students to attend pre-K programs each year through the Louisiana Education Quality Support Fund, administered by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.
 - Substantial and sustainable investments in early childhood education will take all levels of government. The federal government has maintained carrying the majority of the cost to serve working families, and local communities have done what they can to offset the cost for families as well.

¹ Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning. (n.d.). *LA 4 iLEAP and LEAP report*. University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Available online at <https://picardcenter.louisiana.edu/sites/picardcenter/files/LA%204%20iLEAP%20and%20LEAP%20Report.pdf>

² Policy Institute of Louisiana. (n.d.). *State of early care and education*. Available online at <https://policyinstitutela.org/early-childhood/state-of-early-care-and-education/>

2. **Invest at least \$87.8 million in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)** to provide working families across the state with access to affordable ECE programs, as recommended by the bipartisan 2024 Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Commission. Investing at FY24 amounts would allow for the reinstatement of at least 720 ECE seats.
- **With over two-thirds of Louisiana children having all available parents in the workforce**, child care provides thousands of families with the support they need to remain productive while ensuring their children have access to high-quality early childhood education programs that best meet their needs.³
 - **As of March 2025, Louisiana had a waitlist of over 4,500 children for CCAP.**⁴ CCAP helps parents secure quality early care and education for their children while they work, go to school, or look for new jobs. These families are in every community and fill key roles in society. They are the backbone of our economy.
 - Employee absences and turnover due to child care issues **cost Louisiana employers \$762 million a year, causing a \$1.3 billion loss annually for our economy.**⁵
 - The positive health, social, and academic outcomes researchers have found in children who were in high-quality early learning programs equate to large short- and long-term cost savings. This is what led Nobel Laureate and economist James Heckman to find a **13% return on investment, making investing in early care and education one of the best ways to spend public dollars.**⁶ By investing early, the state will spend far less on remedial academic, social, and health services and programs and realize more in academic success and a thriving economy that attracts new talent and business.
3. **Appropriate at least \$30 million to the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund**, which provides a dollar-for-dollar match to local investments in ECE to specifically expand access to our most underserved population, birth to 3-year-olds. Securing a full state match would ensure the continuation of more than 2,000 ECE seats across the state.

³ Kids Count Data Center. (2023). *Children under Age 6 with All Available Parents in the Labor Force*. Available online at

<https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/5057-children-under-age-6-with-all-available-parents-in-the-labor-force#detailed/2/20/false/2545,1095,2048,1729,37,871,870,573,869,36/any/11472,11473>

⁴ Louisiana Department of Education. (2024). *Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council Quarterly Report - Quarter 4 (October - December)*. Available online at [https://go.boarddocs.com/la/bese/Board.nsf/files/DDNN5X5E5201/\\$file/02.12.2025%20ECCE%20AC%20Presentation.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/la/bese/Board.nsf/files/DDNN5X5E5201/$file/02.12.2025%20ECCE%20AC%20Presentation.pdf)

⁵ Louisiana Policy Institute for Children. (2021). *Child Care and the Economy in Louisiana*. Available online at <https://policyinstitute.org/research/child-care-and-the-economy-in-louisiana/>

⁶ Heckman, J. J., Pinto, R., & Savelyev, P. A. (2013). *Understanding the Mechanisms through Which an Influential Early Childhood Program Boosted Adult Outcomes*. National Bureau of Economic Research. Available online at <https://heckmanequation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/w23479.pdf>

- Although the Fund has several revenue sources, it does not generate sufficient revenue to address the need for high-quality early care and education in Louisiana.
- The ECE Fund encourages local communities to invest in their own families, allowing for greater access to early childhood seats, sustaining a more reliable workforce within their community.
- Parishes currently utilizing the ECE fund include: Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, Bossier, Caddo, East Baton Rouge, Grant, Jefferson, Natchitoches, Orleans, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, Tangipahoa, and Webster.
- In just three fiscal years, we have gone from four localities receiving a match to 13, and the Louisiana Department of Education estimates that the local investments will total more than \$30 million in the upcoming fiscal year.⁷
- The ECE Fund is expected to be depleted within 1–2 years. To sustain its commitments and continue incentivizing local investment, the Legislature must allocate at least \$30 million in one-time funding and ensure future legislatures uphold annual matching commitments. While the Louisiana Legislature has established dedicated funding streams to support the ECE Fund, these revenue sources do not generate enough to fully cover the state's share each year. Without additional funding, the state risks falling short on its promise to local communities.

About the Ready Louisiana Coalition:

The Ready Louisiana Coalition is a group of almost 200 chambers of commerce, businesses, advocacy groups, and civic organizations from across Louisiana. We believe investing in high-quality early care and education will prepare our students for a smart start in life, enable families to be productive in the workforce, and serve as an economic engine for local communities.

⁷ Louisiana Department of Education. (2024). *Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council Quarterly Report - Quarter 4 (October - December)*. Available online at [https://go.boarddocs.com/la/bese/Board.nsf/files/DDNN5X5E5201/\\$file/02.12.2025%20ECCE%20AC%20Presentation.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/la/bese/Board.nsf/files/DDNN5X5E5201/$file/02.12.2025%20ECCE%20AC%20Presentation.pdf)