



# Louisiana Implements Additional Changes to its Child Care Assistance Program

By Mary Jacob

On February 16, 2017, [John White](#), the Louisiana State Superintendent of Education sent a Dear Colleague letter announcing additional changes to the child care assistance program. Included in the changes are child care assistance to families of children with special needs who work as little as 15 hours a week.

The Department announced changes to the eligibility requirements for the [Child Care Assistance Program](#) (CCAP) to enable more working families in Louisiana to access child care assistance. These changes come in response to the feedback they received since CCAP transitioned to the Louisiana Department of Education on July 1, 2015.

The new eligibility requirements, which are effective immediately, are as follows:

- *Families who work at least 20 hours a week are now eligible;*
- *Students enrolled in school or job training full-time, regardless of total hours in class, are eligible; and*
- *Families of children with special needs who work 15 hours a week and note they often face challenges in sustaining hours due to the needs of their children are eligible.*

Prior to these changes, Louisiana's requirements were among the strictest in the nation; families not guaranteed a 30 hour work week could not access child care assistance. Furthermore, most Louisiana families averaged a CCAP stipend of only 28 percent of the amount provided for other pre-K programs. These low payments caused childcare centers a financial burden, and when parents lost their job payments to the centers were immediately stopped.

As a result, CCAP reports, *“There was a 60 percent decrease from 25,000 children to 11,000 children in the number of families receiving child care subsidy over a five-year period. Yet current numbers for this year indicate that the trend is reversing thanks in large part to our efforts to increase eligibility; increase rates for providers; reduce expensive co-pays for working families; and allow families to remain eligible for CCAP for at least one year, regardless of changes in work or school status.”*

In the long run, it is anticipated that more Louisiana children can benefit from quality care through the child care assistance program.



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