

# Excerpt from Expanding High-Quality Child Care for Infants & Toddlers

Lessons from Implementation of Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships in States



# Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships

## Awards and State Profiles

### Total Annual Partnership Awards to All Grantees

State	Federal FY 2015-2019 Round 1 Grants <sup>A</sup>	Federal FY 2017-2021 Round 2 Grants <sup>B</sup>	Federal FY 2019- 2023 Round 3 Grants <sup>C</sup>
ALABAMA	\$ 8.3 million	\$ 2.2 million	\$10.5 million
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	\$ 0.9 million	\$ 3.0 million	\$ 7.6 million
GEORGIA	\$16.2 million	\$ 2.1 million	\$20.1 million
LOUISIANA	\$ 8.4 million	\$ 5.2 million	\$15.5 million
MARYLAND	\$ 3.4 million	\$ 0	\$ 4.5 million
OKLAHOMA*	\$11.8 million	\$ 7.8 million	\$24.3 million
WASHINGTON	\$ 8.4 million	\$ 4.1 million	\$13.3 million

**Note:**

**Round 1 Grants** – In Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, Congress allocated \$500 million for the first round of EHS expansion and EHS-CC Partnership grants. ACF awarded the grants for this first round to state and local agencies in winter 2014. Grantees must reapply for these awards every five years.

**Round 2 Grants** – Congress allocated an additional \$135 million for new EHS expansion and EHS-CC Partnership grants in FY 2016. ACF awarded the grants for this second round of funding in winter 2017.

**Round 3 Grants** – Congress allocated a combined \$165 million for new EHS expansion and EHS-CC Partnership grants between FY 2018 and FY 2019. ACF awarded the grants in spring 2019. Spring 2019 awards also included grant renewals for state and local agencies that had received Round 1 awards in winter 2014.

**Endnote:**

**A** Calculated by the author based on information on the federal fiscal year 2014 awards, found at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecl/early-learning/ehs-cc-partnerships/grant-awardees>.

**B** Calculated based on data from the Tracking Accountability in Government Grants System, available at <https://taggs.hhs.gov>.

**C** Data provided by the Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, via email on August 16, 2019.

\* Oklahoma funding amounts include grants to two tribal EHS-CC Partnerships grantees.

To see the full report, please visit: [www.theOunce.org/Partnerships](http://www.theOunce.org/Partnerships)



Louisiana Department of Education viewed the Partnerships as an opportunity to “test drive” child care assistance reforms, increase continuity and quality of child care for children and families, as well as to establish unified early childhood systems at the state and community level.

# Louisiana Profile

## Louisiana's Story

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) has oversight for child care subsidy, licensing, the state Head Start Collaboration Office, and early childhood professional development/quality initiatives in the state. When the opportunity to apply for federal Partnerships grants came about in 2014, LDOE was already engaged in an ambitious effort to establish a well-coordinated and accountable system of early childhood care and education programs due to enactment of the Early Childhood Education Act (Act 3) in 2012. Act 3 sought to coordinate state and federally funded early care and education programs serving children age birth to 5, including the state administered CCDBG program, Early Head Start and Head Start, the state pre-kindergarten program and early childhood special education. The legislation focused on unifying a fragmented system, accountability for publicly-funded early childhood care and education providers, and choice for families. The Act 3 implementation plan established parish-based (parishes are similar to counties in other states) community networks with lead agencies funded to provide a variety of supports to improve quality and equalize funding across early care and education programs within each network.

Given Act 3, LDOE staff believed the Partnerships' goals to promote collaboration and to leverage the strengths of EHS grantees and child care partners were well aligned with those of the state. LDOE viewed the Partnerships as an opportunity to "test drive" child care assistance reforms, increase continuity and quality of child care for children and

families, as well as to establish unified early childhood systems at the state and community level. The state started to identify subsidy eligibility policies that had the unintentional consequence of restricting access to high-quality care or interrupting continuity of services, such as reducing child care provider payments when programs layered EHS and child care funding, limited payment for days children were absent and requiring families to re-apply for the subsidy multiple times during a year. LDOE made several policy changes to ease these barriers in 2015 for children in Partnerships slots, and later extended many of them to the entire subsidy system after CCDBG reauthorization regulations made clear the changes were allowable.

To build connections and make sure Partnerships grantees understood the child care subsidy system, LDOE ramped up communication mechanisms. They met regularly with Partnerships grantees and all EHS providers in the state, which was critical to effective program implementation and troubleshooting problems. Strategies included: convening quarterly meetings with EHS grantees and partners to discuss child care subsidy and EHS policy barriers, successes and share implementation strategies; providing assistance to address individual case issues; organizing an email listserv for Partnerships programs to communicate with each other; creating short informational guidance documents; and extending training and classroom supports for Partnerships teachers to all teachers at the child care partners programs.



## Louisiana Federal Award

**\$8.4 million**

Federal FY 2015-2019  
Round 1 Grants

**\$5.2 million**

Federal FY 2017-2021  
Round 2 Grants

**\$15.5 million**

Federal FY 2019- 2023  
Round 3 Grants

*“We were struck by how important comprehensive services, including supplying diapers and formula for babies and toddlers in child care partner sites, were to these struggling families.”*

**LISA BROCHARD, Executive Director, Office of Early Childhood Operations at LDOE**

LDOE knew that grantees in their state had 18 months to meet federal Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS). The agency worked with grantees to help them access professional development systems and scholarships – funded by CCDBG quality set-aside funds – to help staff get the training and education they needed to comply. Louisiana has a state tax incentive for higher education for child care teachers. Data began to show that once teachers obtain their CDA, some move forward to obtain their AA and BA degrees in early childhood education, which has created a better qualified pipeline of teachers. The success of this partnership made the state leaders feel confident to move to require CDA or ancillary certificate for all lead teachers serving children in subsidy by July 1, 2019.

Louisiana state officials shared that the Partnerships opportunity facilitated a focus on infants and toddlers who were the least served by the state.

“This opened our eyes to where in the state the need is for growing the supply of high-quality care and families who have low incomes,” said Lisa Brochard, executive director, office of early childhood operations at LDOE. They were struck by how important comprehensive services, including supplying diapers and formula for babies and toddlers in child care partner sites, were to these struggling families. LDOE intentionally hired staff with understanding of the HSPPS and Early Head Start to administer the child care assistance program and to staff the help desks available for grantees to get information about accessing child care subsidies. This “cross-pollination” is one of the long-lasting and positive changes to support better coordination in the state.

## What Were Louisiana’s Strategies?

### Leveraged multiple funding sources and state systems to support program success and quality.

- Leveraged pre-existing investments (including from CCDBG funds) to augment quality and comprehensive services in child care partner settings.
- Made early childhood mental health consultation supports available to child care partners.
- Allowed layering of EHS funding and full-day, full-year child care subsidy payments to support the cost of high-quality care meeting HSPPS.

### Supported continuous access to infant and toddler child care for working families earning low incomes.

- Extended child care assistance payments to guarantee full-day rates and increased the number of allowable absent days from two to five days per month for children in Partnerships.
- Lengthened eligibility periods for assistance to match eligibility for EHS, even if that is beyond the 12-month minimum required by CCDBG law.
- Waived child care co-payments for children in families with incomes at or below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- Made Partnerships children who are eligible for EHS also categorically eligible for child care assistance, which has stayed in place despite having to start a waitlist for child care assistance in 2017.

### **Raised the bar for what quality infant and toddler child care could and should be.**

- Focused on reaching children in families experiencing homelessness to make sure they receive the highest quality care and benefit from comprehensive health, nutrition and family services by participating in Partnerships programs.

### **Built a higher education pathway for the infant and toddler workforce.**

- Helped Partnerships teachers meet HSPPS by linking them to state scholarships so they could earn their CDA certificate, which is required of all child care teachers caring for infants and toddlers in the Partnerships.
- State funds supported a blended program of coaching to help improve teachers' scores on an assessment of adult-child interactions and available supports to attain a CDA. Over 300 teachers have gone through this program as of 2019.

### **Piloted reforms were expanded statewide to improve care for many more infants and toddlers.**

- Strengthened education requirements for lead child care teachers from no required degree to a CDA for lead teachers in programs with infants and toddlers receiving child care assistance. The experience of implementing the Partnerships requirement that teachers earn an Infant-Toddler or Family Child Care CDA in 18 months provided valuable lessons for the state when rolling out this policy statewide.
- Redesigned child care assistance systems to make it easier for working families to keep assistance and provide continuity of care for infants and toddlers.

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## **USEFUL LINKS**

**Louisiana's updated licensing regulations** with special requirements for programs that are caring for children with subsidy. <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/early-childhood/child-care-and-development-fund-licensing>

**Louisiana's updated requirements for teacher education.** [https://regents.la.gov/assets/docs/Teacher\\_Education\\_Initiatives/Bulletin746LAStandardsforStateCertificationofSchoolPersonnel.pdf](https://regents.la.gov/assets/docs/Teacher_Education_Initiatives/Bulletin746LAStandardsforStateCertificationofSchoolPersonnel.pdf)

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**The Ounce of Prevention Fund** (the Ounce) gives children in poverty the best chance for success in school and in life by advocating for and providing the highest-quality care and education from birth to age five. The Ounce envisions a world in which high-quality early learning opportunities beginning at birth are an integral part of our nation's education system. With commitment to quality as our guiding principle, the Ounce works at the intersection of practice, policy and research and forges public-private partnerships. Over the last 30 years, the Ounce has developed an effective approach to advancing knowledge, testing ideas in real-world settings, advocating for policy change, engaging champions and training practitioners and leaders.