

Louisiana Center Director Guide

Professional Development

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Section 1: Introduction

Welcome to the Louisiana Center Director Policy Guide! This guide was developed to complement the Greaux Healthy Early Childhood Education Training Series. This guide provides center directors and owners with the knowledge and skills to improve the health and environment of their centers. This guide features research-based policy implementation that is specific to indoor play, outdoor play, and screen time. Throughout this guide, you will learn how implementing policy-based best practices will assist your center to follow state licensing regulations.

Greaux Healthy

Greaux Healthy is a public service initiative powered by Pennington Biomedical Research Center, in partnership with the State of Louisiana, focused on preventing and treating childhood obesity in the state. Drawing from over 35 years of scientific research, Greaux Healthy creates evidence-based tools, resources, and programs that promote better health for children of all ages. Pennington Biomedical is a Louisiana-based world-renowned research center that promotes metabolic health and the elimination of metabolic disease through scientific discoveries.

Greaux Healthy's mission is to partner with communities to greaux healthier generations by expanding the access and reach of PBRC's evidence-based practices.

Greaux Healthy's Early Childhood and Education (ECE) Training Series

The ECE Training Series teaches child care center staff and directors how to alter the center's environment and policies to support healthy habits in our youngest population. The ECE Training Series offers professional development clock hours requirements set by the Louisiana Department of Education.

The ECE Training Series consists of three modules: Screen Time, Indoor Play, and Outdoor Play. Pennington Biomedical research scientists and public health experts gathered evidence-based practices to develop these training modules to support childhood obesity prevention within centers. Supplemental resources are available to support teachers and directors to put into practice what they are learning within each module.

ECE Training Series Modules

Screen Time Module

The Screen Time training module is designed to help teachers and directors to reduce or eliminate screen time. Children today are surrounded by screens. Children who spend a lot of time watching screens have a higher risk for obesity and developmental delays, and they are less likely to get enough sleep. Since over 80% of children attend child care centers,¹ centers are an important part of our children's daily world. It is important to watch out for screen time and make sure children have plenty of time to be physically active and learn from the real world. For centers that wish to continue to use screens occasionally, the module also provides tips to use high-quality screen time in small amounts to enhance learning.

Indoor Play Module

The Indoor Play training module educates on the best practices of incorporating indoor play into the center's daily schedule and provides activities that promote motor skill development. The preschool years are considered some of the most active times in an individual's life. Preschool children need time for movement and active play. Active play provides children with opportunities to interact and develop connections, which contributes to their physical, social, language, and motor skills development.² Centers have an opportunity to help ensure that children meet the recommended amount of daily physical activity. Preschoolers should engage in physical activity, whether indoors or outdoors, for at least 3 hours each day.³ This module will break down what physical activity looks like in toddlers and infants, and how to ensure they are getting the proper amount of play while at the center.

Outdoor Play Module

The Outdoor Play training module provides evidence-based best practices to child care directors and staff to foster outdoor play and early child development. Physical activity in early childhood is critical for both physical and mental development. However, recent reports among Louisiana ECE centers suggest early learning centers only meet 39% of best practices for outdoor play, including policy, environment, playtime, and professional education metrics.⁴ This module helps teachers learn how to best use the outdoor play area to help children engage in active play.

Section 2: Professional Development

Professional development opportunities are essential for child care center staff to ensure a supportive environment for both center staff and the children. Providing education to the children's families is also an essential component in creating healthy environments for the children the center serves. By offering ongoing training, resources, and learning opportunities, the center director or owner can enhance staff skills, promote effective teaching strategies, and improve child care center practices. This ensures that staff are well-equipped to meet the evolving needs of children, while also creating a positive, informed, and cohesive partnership with families.

Louisiana Licensing Standards⁵

As a child care center director or owner in Louisiana, you are the expert at your center for the state's licensing standards for running a child care center. It's important to know the state's rules for running a child care center. The licensing regulations are minimum standards, and you can set higher standards than the state requires. Knowing how to improve these standards is key to keeping your center's license and providing a safe, caring space for Louisiana's young children. All Louisiana licensing standards can be found on the Bulletin 137 at <https://www.doa.la.gov/media/iuzgjape/28v161.doc>.

Providing professional development for child care center staff according to state guidelines is crucial for ensuring quality care and meeting regulatory standards. In Louisiana, there are specific requirements for ongoing professional development to help staff improve their skills and knowledge in early childhood education. Louisiana child care center directors and owners must give staff members who are alone with children, or in charge of supervising or disciplining them, chances to keep learning and improving their skills. It is required that each staff member obtains a minimum of 12 clock hours of professional development per year.

§1721. Continuing Education

- A. Early learning centers shall provide opportunities for continuing education of staff members who are left alone with children, or who have supervisory or disciplinary authority over children.
 - 1. Staff members of early learning centers, shall obtain a minimum of 12 clock hours of continuing education per center anniversary year.

Standards Alignment

Aligning standards with professional development is essential for child care staff to ensure they deliver high-quality care and education. By connecting their training and skills with the latest guidelines and best practices, providers can create a safe, supportive, and engaging environment for children. This helps them stay up to date with new research, improve their teaching strategies, and meet the diverse needs of the children under their care. Professional development also gives staff the tools they need to grow in their careers while making a positive impact on the families they serve.

Greaux Healthy's Early Childhood Education Trainings were designed with specific learning standards in mind. Throughout each training module, there are shapes that appear on screen. Each shape indicates material that aligns with one of these standards:

Louisiana's Early Learning and Development Standards: The Early Learning and Development Standards are intended to be a framework for high-quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood programs and were designed to be used by early childhood educators throughout Louisiana.

Teaching Strategies Gold Dimensions: Inform instruction without disruption by embedding authentic, observation-based assessment into each part of your day. GOLD aligns to early learning guidelines in each state and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

CLASS Domains: CLASS is an acronym of Teachstone's observation tool, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System®. It measures what matters most to children's learning and development: interactions among educators and children. It also provides specific descriptions of impactful educator-child interactions, based on research.

The Greaux Healthy Early Childhood Education (ECE) Training Series Learning Standards Index outlines how training content across modules, including Outdoor Play, Indoor Play, and Screen Time, aligns with key early learning standards and frameworks.

Greaux Healthy's ECE Training Series Learning Standards Index				
Module	Slide	LA's Early Learning & Development Standards ▲	Teaching Strategies Gold Dimensions ■	CLASS Domains ★
Outdoor Play	14: Types of Physical Activity - Light	AL 1 , AL 2, CC 2, CC 3, LL 1, PM 1, PM 2, PM 3, SE 1, SE 5	Cognitive, The Arts, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Classroom Organization, Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	15: Types of Physical Activity - Moderate	AL 1 , AL 2, CC 2, CC 3, LL 1, PM 1, PM 2, PM 3, SE 1, SE 5	Cognitive, The Arts, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Classroom Organization, Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	16: Types of Physical Activity - Vigorous	AL 1 , AL 2, LL 1, PM 1, PM 2, PM 3, SE 1 , SE 5	Cognitive, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Classroom Organization, Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	19: Outdoor Playtime - Can Be Educational	AL 1, AL 2, CSS 5, LL 1, PM 1, PM 2, PM 3 , PM 4, SE 1 , SE 5	Cognitive, Social Studies, Literacy, Physical, Social Emotional Learning	Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	26: Ms. Yonetta's Dilemma - Answers	AL 2 , PM 1 , PM 3 , SE 1	Cognitive, Physical, Social Emotional	Emotional Support
	41: Outdoor Play Environment - Activity Types	AL 1 , AL 2, LL 1, PM 1 , PM 2, PM 5, SE 1, SE 5	Cognitive, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	43: Types of Gardens	PM1, PM2, PM3	Physical	Not Applicable
	44: Outdoor Play Environment - Portable Play Equipment	AL 1, LL 1, PM 1 , PM2, PM 3 , PM 5, SE 1, SE 5	Cognitive, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	50: Ms. Chelsey's Planting Puzzle - Answers	AL 1 , AL 2 , PM1 , PM2 , PM3	Cognitive, Physical	Not Applicable
Overall Notes: Priority standards are bold.				
General: PM 5 addresses students demonstrating safe behaviors which is applicable to Indoor and Outdoor Play.				

Greaux Healthy's ECE Training Series Learning Standards Index				
Module	Slide	LA's Early Learning & Development Standards ▲	Teaching Strategies Gold Dimensions ■	CLASS Domains ★
Indoor Play	15: Types of Physical Activity - Light	AL 1 , AL 2, CC 2, CC 3, LL 1, PM 1, PM 2, PM 3, SE 1 , SE 5	Cognitive, The Arts, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Classroom Organization, Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	16: Types of Physical Activity - Moderate	AL 1 , AL 2, CC 2, CC 3, LL 1, PM 1, PM 2, PM 3, SE 1 , SE 5	Cognitive, The Arts, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Classroom Organization, Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	17: Types of Physical Activity - Vigorous	AL 1 , AL 2, LL 1, PM 1, PM 2, PM 3, SE 1 , SE 5	Cognitive, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Classroom Organization, Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	19: Indoor Play	PM 5	Physical	Not Applicable
	21: Types of Play - Guided Play	AL 1 , AL 2, LL 1, PM 1, PM 2, PM 3, PM 5, SE 1 , SE 5	Cognitive, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Classroom Organization, Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	22: Types of Play - Free Play	AL 1 , AL 2, AL 3 , CC 3, LL 1, PM 1, PM 2, PM 3, PM 5, SE 1 , SE 5	Cognitive, The Arts, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Classroom Organization, Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	35: Guided Play - What's Your Role	AL 1, LL 1, PM 1, PM 2, PM 3	Cognitive, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Instructional Support
	37: Ways to Encourage Indoor Play	CM 1, LL 1, PM 1, PM 2, PM 3, SE 5	Mathematics, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	45: Using Daily Themes for Physical Activity Planning	PM 1, PM 2, PM 3	Physical	Not Applicable
	63: Types of Learning Centers	AL 1, AL 2 , AL 4, CC 1, CC 2, CC 3, CSS 4, CSS 5, LL 1, PM 1, PM 2, PM3, SE 1, SE 5	Cognitive, The Arts, Social Studies, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Classroom Organization, Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	66: Portable Play Equipment	AL 1, LL 1, PM 1, PM 2, PM 3, PM 5, SE 1, SE 5	Cognitive, Language, Physical, Social Emotional	Instructional Support, Emotional Support
Overall Notes: Priority standards are bold.				

Greaux Healthy's ECE Training Series Learning Standards Index				
Module	Slide	LA's Early Learning & Development Standards ▲	Teaching Strategies Gold Dimensions ■	CLASS Domains ★
Screen Time	21: Positive vs. Negative Screen Time	PM 1, PM2 , PM3	Physical	Not Applicable
	34: Screen-Free Engagement and the Whole Child	Not Applicable	Cognitive, The Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, Language, Literacy, Physical, Social and Emotional, English Language Acquisition	Instructional Support, Emotional Support
	41: Engaging	LL 1 , LL 2, LL 4	Language, Literacy	Instructional Support
	42: Actively Involved	CC 1	Cognitive, The Arts	Instructional Support
Overall Notes: Priority standards are bold.				

Education and Professional Development Best Practices

Physical Activity

Research-based best practices for education and professional development on physical activity include:

- Provide professional development on children's physical activity at least 2 times per year
- Provide children with planned lessons focused on building gross motor skills at least once a week
- Talk with children informally about the importance of physical activity
- Offer families education on children's physical activity at least 2 times a year

Additionally, professional development for current staff on children's physical activity should include 5-6 of the following topics:

- Recommended amounts of daily physical activity
- Encouraging physical activity
- Limiting long periods of seated time
- Motor skill development
- Communicating with families about encouraging children's physical activity
- The center's policies on physical activity

Screen Time

Research-based best practices for professional development on screen time include:

- Provide professional development on screen time at least 2 times per year or more.
- Include a variety of topics.
- Offer families education on screen time 2 or more times per year.

Additionally, professional development for current staff on screen time should include a variety of topics such as:

- Recommended amounts of screen time
- Appropriate types of programming
- Communicating with families about healthy screen time habits
- Appropriate supervision and use of screen time.

If you want to learn more about evidence-based best practices that you can implement at your center, the Louisiana Department of Health, Well-Ahead Louisiana offers Go NAPSACC to Louisiana child care centers. Go NAPSACC is an evidence-based platform that allows centers to assess their current practices and make an action plan for change. They also provide videos and resources for changes related to the topic you are interested in.

To access Go NAPSACC, you can go to <https://gonapsacc.org/> for more information!

Everyone Plays a Role

Everyone, including directors, teachers, and families, play a role in ensuring that children are being provided with quality opportunities that support healthy behaviors.

A Center Director's role is to identify education and professional development resources and share those resources with their teachers. Professional development and education can increase knowledge, skills, and activities that promote physical activity among children.

A Teacher's role is to apply what they learn to their classrooms and identify resources on physical activity to share with families.

A Family's role is to use the resources provided by the teachers to encourage and increase their child's physical activity at home.

Opportunities for Teachers

Professional development and education for teachers can range from informal to formal activities. These activities may include educational resources, observations with follow-up, planned trainings, ongoing coaching, and staff orientation.



**Educational
Resources**



**Observation
with Follow Up**



**Planned
Trainings**



**Ongoing
Coaching**



**Staff
Orientation**



Ongoing Coaching

When directors provide regular feedback and guidance, teachers can work on their strengths and improve in areas where they need help. This kind of support helps staff stay motivated and confident in their work. Coaching also allows directors to address any challenges teachers might face and offer solutions, which can lead to better care and learning for the children.

Planned Trainings

Planned trainings are important for child care center directors to offer to their staff because they help teachers learn new skills and stay up-to-date with the best practices and teaching methods. Planned trainings are typically done on a professional development day and cover important topics. By providing regular, planned trainings, directors give teachers the tools they need to handle different situations in the classroom and create a positive environment for the kids. This not only helps the teachers feel more prepared, but it also makes the center a better place for children to grow and learn.

Observations

It is important for child care center directors to conduct observations with follow-ups because it helps teachers improve. It is important to discuss what went well and what could be improved after an observation. This feedback is valuable because it gives teachers a chance to reflect on their work and learn new ways to be more effective, leading to a better learning environment for the children.

Educational Resources

Providing educational resources to your staff on a regular basis will ensure that they stay up to date on practices. When you come across a resource whether in your email or shared in a meeting, keep it and share it with your staff. As the director, you have an ability to control the amount of educational resources your staff get.

Staff Orientation

As new staff come onboard to your center, it is important to set your expectations with professional development. Orientation is a time when new teachers learn about the center's policies, goals, and the best practices. By getting your new staff training on best practices it ensures everyone starts on the same page and understands what's expected of them. This can help teachers feel more confident and prepared for their roles, which benefits the children and families enrolled at their center.

Case Studies

Case Study: Mr. Apple's Professional Development

Mr. Apple had a meeting with his director about new policies and practices that the center will be implementing to help children be more active. He is unsure how these new practices will work in his classroom, and he is not comfortable approaching and educating families about the children's physical activity. He has a few children in his class that are overweight, and he doesn't want to offend their families by talking to them about getting their kids to be more active.

How could Mr. Apple become more comfortable with putting new policies and practices into action?

- Identify educational resources and training for teachers
- Talk with other teachers about how they plan to put the policies and practices into action in their classrooms

How could Mr. Apple encourage families to get their kids to be more active?

- Have informal conversations with families to gauge the families' interests and hobbies
- Once comfortable, start by sharing small bits of information and continue the conversation from there
- Use multiple means of communication with families so that no one feels singled out, such as sharing on social media, sending home a handout for all families, or posting a flyer in the classroom or hallway

Case Study: Ms. Jessica's Professional Development

Ms. Jessica is the director at the Friends and Family Early Learning Center. She has been encouraging her teachers and staff to get children outdoors. She was inspired by Ms. Chelsey's recent success with starting a garden, changing up her activities, and getting new portable play equipment. She wants her other teachers to be inspired too and thinks learning more about outdoor play might be the way to go. She's not sure when and what sort of topics on outdoor play she should include.

What are benefits to continued education?

- Stay current on best practices
- Gain new skills
- Provide updates to child care policies
- Ensure everyone is getting the same information

How frequently should teachers and staff receive training on outdoor play and learning?

- At least two times per year

What topics should be included?

- Recommended amount of outdoor playtime for children
- Using the outdoors to encourage children's physically active play
- Communicating with families about outdoor play and learning
- The program's policy on outdoor play and learning

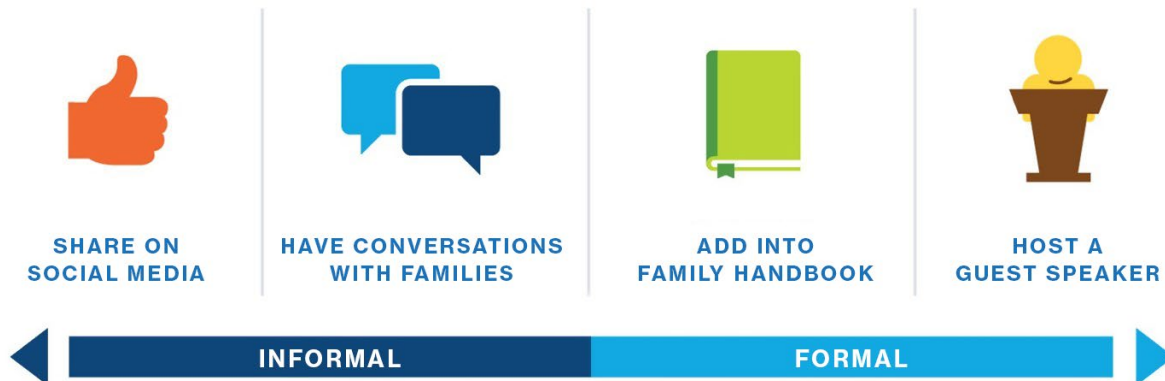
Who else should Ms. Jessica provide information to and on what topics?

- **Parents:** at least two times per year
- **Topics:** amount of outdoor playtime for children, being physically active outdoors, program's policy on outdoor play and learning

Section 3: Family Education and Engagement

As a center director, you and your staff play a unique role in providing education for families. You can educate families through social media, conversations with center staff, the family handbook, and by hosting a guest speaker or subject-matter expert. Family education can take place in various ways. For example, through providing information in your family handbook, sharing information through a variety of avenues, scheduling parent-teacher conferences at least twice a year, and having information and resources readily available for parents.

Engaging your families in the educational process further strengthens the care provided and promotes a collaborative approach to the well-being and development of every child.



Best Practices for Parent Education

Teachers and staff are not the only ones who need information, parents do too. Parents are an important part of the puzzle and play a key role in helping meet a center's outdoor play and learning goals. It is important to engage parents with the appropriate information multiple times per year. One idea is to provide parents with information on outdoor play at the beginning of each season, which can allow them to revisit their child's clothing options too. Parents need similar information as provided in teacher and staff trainings. You don't have to start from scratch.

Tips for Sharing Family Education

Provide information in your family handbook.

- The importance of strong partnerships
- Why you value their involvement
- What you can do to work together

Share information with families through a variety of avenues.

- Newsletters
- Social media
- Face-to-face conversations

Schedule parent-teacher conferences at least twice a year.

Have information and resources available for parents.

- Handouts
- Websites
- Videos

Ways Families Can Support

Providing educational resources and information to families can encourage families to support your efforts when at home. Families can use these resources to reinforce what their child is learning at the center, like practicing motor skills or being physically active outside more often. By using these tools, families play an important role in helping their child succeed and feel supported both at home and at the child care center.

Case Studies

Case Study: Ms. Green's Professional Development

Tyler is four years old and uses his tablet right before bed. He sometimes wakes up at night to play on his tablet. His mom is not sure what to do and asks his ECE teacher, Ms. Green, for advice.

How can Ms. Green encourage Tyler's Mom to limit his screen time?

- Help Tyler's mom create a home media plan
- Brainstorm other activities to do before bed
- Educate her on the impact that screen time has on children's sleep

Help Tyler's mom Create a Home Media Plan

Where should Tyler's mom limit screens?

- No screens in the bedrooms

When should she limit screens?

- No screens 1 hour before bed
- No screens throughout the night

How much screen time?

- No more than 30 minutes at a time
- No more than 1 hour each day

Section 4: Professional Development Check List

Use the checklist below to ensure you are meeting the professional development best practices for physical activity and screen time.

- ☐ I provide 2 or more opportunities per year for staff to get professional development on a variety of screen time best practices that go toward their 12 hours required by the Louisiana Department of Education.
- ☐ I provide 2 or more opportunities per year for staff to get professional development on a variety of physical activity best practices that go toward their 12 hours required by the Louisiana Department of Education.
- ☐ My staff plans lessons focused on building gross motor skills each week.
- ☐ My staff provides families with education on children's physical activity 2 or more times per year.
- ☐ My staff provides families with education on children's screen time 2 or more times per year.

Section 5: References

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