



2020-2021
LOUISIANA EARLY LEADERS
ACADEMY GUIDE

MAY 1, 2020

COVID-19 has challenged leaders in new ways, requiring adaptability and creativity, with many challenging conversations along the way. Now more than ever, early learning leaders need new skills and thought partners to solve complex problems. If you run a Type III center, this ten-month executive-level academy is for you.

The Louisiana Early Leaders Academy (LELA) is geared toward supercharging your leadership and management skills to improve quality in your center(s) during a particularly challenging time. The Academy offers a community of peer leaders, focused on building instructional leadership to best support young learners to achieve their full potential in school and in life. LELA does this through online learning sessions with peers, and individual and group coaching. For 2020-2021, directors across the state will be eligible to participate.

Applying is easy: Complete the online application* to be considered for a place in the 2020-2021 cohort. The online application is a Google form and easy to access and use.

We know you have a lot of questions like



This Early Leaders Academy Guide is designed to help you answer these questions with:

- ✓ The tentative schedule for online LELA meetings
- ✓ The application questions
- ✓ Frequently asked questions and answers
- ✓ The selection timeline
- ✓ The scoring process for the application and interview

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE ARE ONLY ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS ONLINE*.

Please do not email or submit hard copies of your application as they will not be considered.

* <https://forms.gle/zfm8sf3tK9ksh2Hf9>

LELA COHORT TWO: SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

MAY 2020

- May 1: Applications open at 8:00 a.m.
- May 13: Informational webinar
- May 20: Informational webinar
- May 22: Application period closes.
- May 29: All applicants notified of status.
- End of May 2020: Celebration of Success

JUNE 2020

- Coaches conduct needs assessments. Needs assessments allow us to create home teams and adapt our content and approach to most closely match the strengths and needs of our fellows.

JULY 2020

- Fellowship kick-off: Online orientation and foundational learning
- LELA faculty and coaches will host 5 mid-day sessions for the whole year 2 cohort of fellows. The dates and times for these sessions will be determined in collaboration with year 2 fellows. Home team meetings and 1:1 coaching will begin in July 2020.

AUGUST 2020 THROUGH MAY 2021

- Monthly cycles that include:
 - Bi-monthly learning whole group learning sessions focused on leadership and management
 - Monthly "Home Team" meetings
 - Monthly 1:1 coaching
- Celebration of Success



CONSIDERING APPLYING TO LELA?

Check out this [short commercial](#) to hear from Year One fellows about the benefits of the program.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE LOUISIANA EARLY LEADERS ACADEMY?

The Louisiana Early Leaders Academy is a competitive Fellowship program designed to build the instructional leadership skills of directors of Type III centers. Fellows collaborate and learn from and with their peers through online learning sessions, coaching, and meetings with the peers in their "Home Team." By the end of the fellowship, leaders will develop new skills, networks, and energy for the important work ahead. Additionally, they will implement new practices into their centers that will transform adult relationships and the quality of instruction that children experience every day.

WHAT IS A FELLOWSHIP?

A fellowship is designed for leaders at a certain place in their learning who join a community to grow in new ways. A "fellow," as participants are called, has a growth mindset, views themselves as a lifelong learner, and recognizes that every person has something to learn and something to teach. The fellowship provides the opportunity for a group of lifelong learners to engage in new approaches to learning and sharpen their skills.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS?

Early learning center directors are often pursuing an ambitious vision for the children in their programs. However, the everyday tasks of a center can sometimes distract them from their bold vision. Challenges like time management, teacher retention, and budgeting are necessary and sometimes overwhelm what will make a difference in the lives of children. **LELA helps leaders to refocus on their vision, while providing them with the knowledge and tools to guide quality instruction in their centers.** This means building skills to guide teachers' growth and improvement through interactions with children in their classrooms.

HOW DO I BENEFIT FROM LELA?

The Academy will provide leadership training to Louisiana's Early Learning Leaders that is essential for driving positive change in their centers, communities, the state and nation. Content is designed to support directors to improve teacher job satisfaction, program operations, and the quality of teacher-child interactions. Individualized coaching will be provided to directors on related leadership and management goals.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

The Department will select sixty directors of Type III centers who are ready to improve instructional leadership in their centers, and increase their influence in the early childhood field across the state and country. Participants will come from a wide variety of life experiences, backgrounds, and experience levels in early childhood education. They will share a sense of purpose, vision of excellence for children, and a commitment to their own professional and personal growth.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

The LELA program is designed to meet early learning leaders where they are during these challenging times. LELA is 100% virtual. Fellows are expected to:

- Attend the 5 whole group online introductory sessions in June and July 2020.
- Attend at least 10 of the whole group training sessions, scheduled mid-day from August 2020 to May 2021.
- Attend at least 5 of the Home Team calls.
- Participate in 1:1 coaching.
- Proactively reschedule one-on-one coaching visits when necessary.

To receive the full benefits of the program, we strongly suggest that participants evaluate their ability to engage during this time.

- **Attend 15 online whole group sessions and Community of Practice meetings**, and be fully present and focused on learning and connection.
- **Arrive on time for all events**, or make up time through an approved activity, if a meeting is missed.
- **Schedule regular meetings with the coach**, and be prepared for these appointments.

HOW DO I KNOW LELA WILL ADDRESS MY CHALLENGES?

The first two tasks that each fellow will complete with their coach will drive planning for the LELA experience:

1. a needs assessment and
2. a teacher survey.

This information will guide action planning and fellowship content.

WHAT DO PAST FELLOWS SAY ABOUT LELA ?

In general, LELA fellows report learning a great deal from the Academy and from time with their peers to address challenges of their work.

- **From an anonymous survey:** “LELA is really helping me to identify all of the areas that I need to address or improve. So thanks for developing this it's really gotten me evaluating my leadership.”
- **From an anonymous survey:** “ Every time the fellows meet whether in-person or for an online session, I enjoy hearing from people who are passionate about early childhood education. I also appreciate the opportunity to network with other leaders in my field and share useful tools for running our centers.”
- **From an anonymous survey:** “As a result of participating in LELA, I have developed a time management system for my center and myself. I am also transitioning into advocacy in early childcare within my community.
- **100% of participating fellows rate the content and resources as helpful.**
- **91% of participating fellows rate the LELA faculty as responsive and helpful.**

WHAT MAKES THE LOUISIANA EARLY LEADERS ACADEMY SPECIAL?

Directors are used to addressing complex challenges alone. LELA provides opportunities to work with peers who understand, and who can provide new approaches.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM A STRONG CANDIDATE FOR LELA?

If you can answer “yes” to the questions below, you should consider applying for the LELA.

- Is your role 100% administrative (director, assistant director, with no regular teaching responsibilities) in a Type III early learning center?
- Is your center rated Proficient or above?
- Are you interested in expanding your leadership role in your center, community, state, and nation?
- Are you CLASS™ reliable? If not, you will have to complete this training by the end of the LELA program in May of 2021. If selected, free training will be made available to you, but you will have to prioritize attendance.

I AM A CENTER OWNER, AND I HAVE A DIRECTOR WHO RUNS THE PROGRAM. WHICH ONE OF US SHOULD APPLY?

The person who is best-suited for the fellowship program is one who is there every day, and responsible for guiding teachers.

HOW ARE PARTICIPANTS SELECTED FOR THE EARLY LEADERS ACADEMY?

Interested applicants will participate in a competitive selection process to gain a spot in the Academy.

Applications: Online applications will launch in late spring through the [Louisiana Believes website](#), and the [Early Childhood Connections newsletter](#). No paper applications will be accepted. This guide lists the questions you will answer on the online application.

Recommendations: Community network leads will provide feedback on applicants before the interview stage. All applicants will be notified of the status of their application at this stage.

Announcements: All finalists will be notified of the status of their application in late May.

WHAT IF I AM NOT SELECTED FOR LELA?

You will have the option to review the score sheet from your application to guide future applications. Please consider asking for feedback and applying in the future.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EARLY LEADERS ACADEMY?

You will have roughly one meeting per week from August through May.

Whole fellowship sessions: Two meetings each month, 1.5 hours each.

Home Team sessions: One meeting per month, 1.5 hours each.

Coaching sessions: One meeting per month, 1 hour each.

I AM INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING AS A COACH. HOW DO I LEARN MORE?

If you have experience coaching early learning directors, contact Monica Yudron (Myudron@anlar.com) to learn how you can submit your resume.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ACADEMY?

- Attend the webinar, “*Learn about LELA and application tips*”
 - ➔ [May 13 at noon](#)
 - ➔ [May 20 at 1:00 p.m.](#)
- Read the Early Childhood Connections newsletter: [Subscribe here](#).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Please use this to prepare for the online application. The online application can be found at <https://forms.gle/zfm8sf3tK9ksh2Hf9>.

Please allow 45-60 minutes to complete a thoughtful and thorough application. This application is the first step in the competitive process of applying to be a Louisiana Early Leaders Academy fellow. We want to understand what fuels your leadership and drives your interest in supercharging your leadership skills. Please be sure to **take your time** to answer the essay questions as **incomplete applications will not be considered**. Your responses will determine if you are invited to interview.

PART 1: TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Name: | Cell phone number: |
| Email address: | |
| What is the best way to reach you during the day? | |
| Role (circle one): <input type="radio"/> Director and owner <input type="radio"/> Director, not owner <input type="radio"/> Assistant director <input type="radio"/> Other: | |
| How many years have you worked in early childhood education as a director or assistant director? As an early childhood teacher? | |
| Is your center currently open or closed? Tell us about your current plans or challenges in this area. | |

PART 2: TELL US ABOUT YOUR LEADERSHIP & PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

1. What inspired you to lead an early learning center? What do you hope families say about your center?
2. What is motivating you to reopen after the COVID-19 closure or motivated you to stay open and continue to serve families?
3. What comments and questions do you have?

PART 3: TELL US ABOUT YOUR CENTER

| | | | | |
|---|------------|---|----------|-------------|
| How many centers do you direct? 1, 2, 3 or more | | | | |
| Name of center (s): | | | | |
| Address for your primary center: | | | | |
| In what parish or parishes is your center or centers located? | | | | |
| Is at least one of your centers a Type III center? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No (The Louisiana Early Leaders Academy is for directors or administrators of Type III centers only.) | | | | |
| How many children are served in your center(s)? | | | | |
| How many children would you like to serve in your center(s)? | | | | |
| How many of those children receive public funding of any kind for their early care and education? | | | | |
| # of CCAP: | # of LA 4: | # of EHS: | # of HS: | # of NSECD: |
| # receiving another type of public funding: | | Please indicate the other type of public funding: | | |

PART 4: TELL US ABOUT TRAINING YOU'VE RECEIVED

| |
|--|
| Do you have your Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| Have you received any kind of Directors Credential (National Administrators Credential or similar)? Which one? |
| Are you a CLASS® reliable observer? Click all that apply: Infant: <input type="radio"/> Current <input type="radio"/> Expired Toddler: <input type="radio"/> Current <input type="radio"/> Expired Pre-K: <input type="radio"/> Current <input type="radio"/> Expired |
| If not yet reliable, are you prepared to participate in free CLASS® reliability training before LELA ends? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| Are you a member of any early childhood organizations or councils? Which one(s)? |
| Please list the professional development and training that you have completed in the last 12 months. |
| What is your highest level of formal education? <input type="radio"/> High school diploma or equivalent <input type="radio"/> Some college credits <input type="radio"/> Associate's Degree <input type="radio"/> Bachelor's Degree <input type="radio"/> Master's Degree <input type="radio"/> Post-master's Certificate <input type="radio"/> Doctorate (PhD, EdD, or equivalent) |
| Do you have any formal or informal training that you would like to describe? Please do so below: |

EARLY LEADERS ACADEMY: SELECTION RUBRIC

APPLICANT'S NAME: _____ **CENTER:** _____

| CRITERIA FOR APPLICANT | APPLICATION | INTERVIEW | NOTES |
|---|-------------|-----------|-------|
| Vision. The applicant is committed to an ambitious vision for the children, families, and teachers from their center and community | ____/20 | ____/20 | |
| Readiness. The applicant is interested in implementing organizational change and clearly articulates areas of improvement. | ____/5 | ____/5 | |
| Effort. The application and interview reflect thoughtful, personal responses. | ____/5 | ____/5 | |
| TOTAL | | | |

APPLICANT DASHBOARD:

| ELIGIBILITY | SERVICE | RELIABILITY | CERTIFICATES |
|--|--|---|--|
| Parish: _____ Performance Profile Rating: _____ | ____ # Children served ____ # Publicly funded ____ % Publicly served | Current CLASS reliability areas: ____ Infant ____ Toddler ____ Pre-K | ____ ECAC ____ NAC ____ Other: _____ |
| NOTES: | | | |

