



**CHILDREN'S**  
COALITION  
For Northeast Louisiana

Ready  
Start

**EAST CARROLL**  
EARLY CHILDHOOD NETWORK

# Ready Start East Carroll Early Childhood Network Blueprint

*It's easier and less expensive to provide access to quality early care and education right from the start. Doing so ensures that our youngest learners have brain building experiences that prepare them for school and lifelong success.*

*-Amy Clancy, Director of Early Childhood Children's Coalition for Northeast Louisiana*

[1/30/2023]

## Introduction

Ready Start East Carroll Early Childhood Network is a coalition of early care and education providers working together to provide high quality early learning experiences for the parish's youngest learners. The coalition is comprised of early care and education programs; Head Start, school system, family childcare providers that have opted into academic approval, and childcare committed to creating and implementing a unique vision for early childhood. The network is driven by the unique needs of the community to improve opportunities and inspire change for children birth to five.

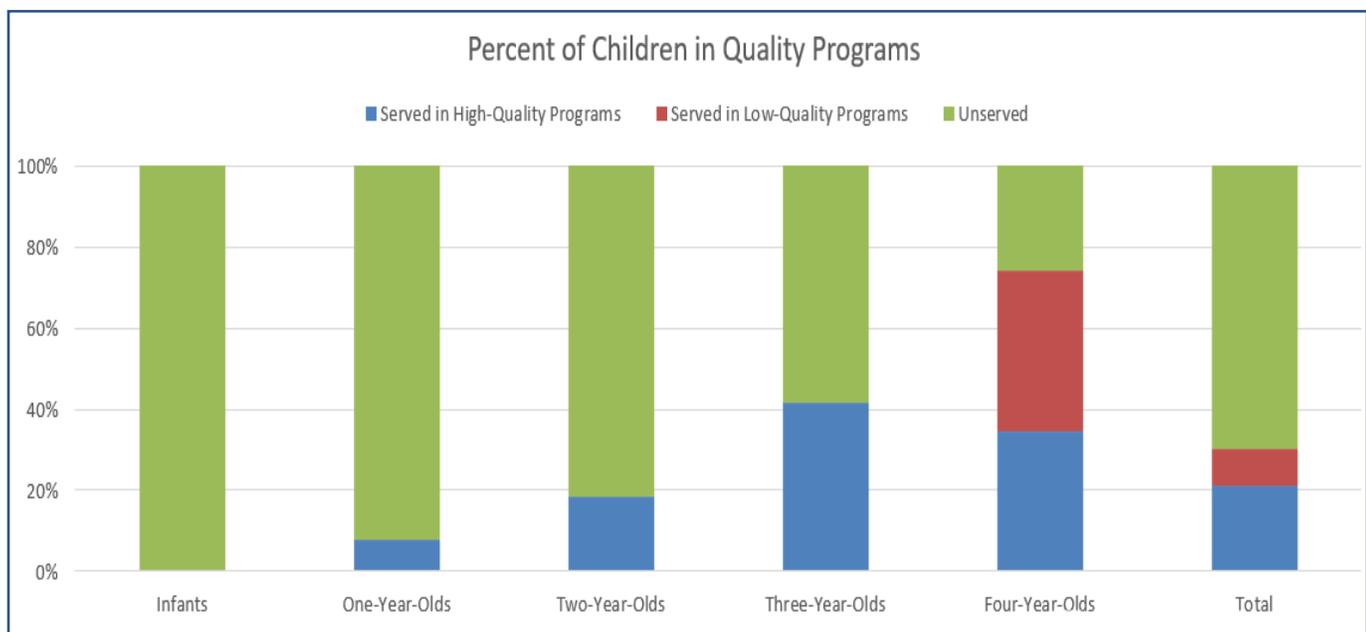
The future of East Carroll Parish is dependent on the success of its children and families. Together we have an opportunity to transform the future of our parish in one generation. Access to quality early care and education programs ensure parents keep working or complete higher education and that children are on track to a brighter future.

Research on early brain development indicates that 90% of brain development occurs by age four. That means if we wait to provide quality early care and education until age four when most children arrive to preschool, we have missed out on the most critical period of human development.

*Two out of three children ages birth to five in Louisiana have both parents or their single parent in the workforce.*  
-Louisiana Policy Institute for Children

East Carroll parish has critical gaps in access to quality early care and education for our communities' youngest learners. In 2020-2021 only 13% of Infants and Toddlers, and 38% of Threes had access to quality early care and education programs. Increased access to reliable, quality early care and education is a necessity to ensure our local economy thrives today and tomorrow. Our community has critical gaps in access to quality early care and education for our communities' youngest learners.

## Access to Quality Early Childhood East Carroll Parish by Age Group 2021-2022



## Guiding Statement

Statement: Children in East Carroll Parish will enter kindergarten healthy and ready for school.

## Strategic Plan

**Goal 1: Increase access to early care and education opportunities for Infants, Toddlers and Threes, Enrollment for the birth to age three has increased by 40 children by 2026.**

Strategies:

- Evaluate availability of current Infant, Toddler and Three-year-old seats by age and location with monthly child count
- Identify high quality early learning centers with space and desire to add additional Birth to Three seats
- Submit Coordinated Funding request for Wee Learners 2022-2023 Birth to Three seats
- Explore possible options for local fundraising options targeting local business to support improved access for Birth to Three aged children.
- Provide supports for eligible CACFP providers transitioning to become licensed Family Child Care Provider.
- Child Care Recovery Stipends

Resources:

Existing

- Wee Learners requested 9 B to 3 seats for the 2022-2023 school year
- Community Supply Building Access and Expansion Coordinator
- 1 Type III Child Care Center, 1 Early Head Start/Head Start, 6 Family Child Care Providers that have opted into Academic Approval

Needed

- Birth to Three seats funding for 2023-2024 year
- Work to expand access to areas of parish where early care and education is inaccessible

Performance Metrics: Enrollment for birth to age three age group has increased by 40 children, based on the 2026 school year data determined by annual enrollment and child count data as of October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

Annual Progress Update:

- 2021-2022: Wee Learners requested B to 3 seats but was not allocated any. Community Supply Building Access and Expansion Coordinator launched survey to inquire about childcare needs with families and businesses. CSBAE Coordinator worked with Children's First Finance to complete the CSBAE Strategic Plan that outlines the childcare needs in East Carroll Early Childhood Network.
- 2022-2023: Wee Learners was allocated 9 B to 3 seats for the 2022-2023 school year. As of November 16th, 2022, 1 seat has been filled. Birth to Three Seat allocations have been adjusted to support the higher demand in another parish. Delta Community Action Association opened 4 new infant/toddler classrooms. This expansion allowed for 16 more children to be enrolled in Early Head Start. CSBAE held

an informational meeting with eligible CACFP providers to gauge interest in transitioning to a become a licensed Family Child Care Center. Child Care Recovery Stipend payments for eligible Type III Child Care Centers to assist with operating costs. The funds will be dispensed one time per quarter.

**Goal 2: Increase access to quality ECE for four-year old children, all publicly funded Pre-K four sites are High Proficient or Excellent on 2022-2023 EC Performance Profiles.**

Strategies:

- Ready Start Coach for all programs (CLASS, Curriculum, GOLD)
- MMCI coaching for all Pre-K classrooms
- Professional development training (Frog Street Differentiated Instruction, Frog Street Making Center Time Intentional, Frog Street Classroom Strategies)
- Regularly scheduled training is offered to PreK teachers during professional development days during the school calendar. These trainings are prioritized for sites that are proficient or lower.
- Teacher wish list

Resources:

Existing

- Scheduled professional development throughout the year, teacher wish lists for school system

Needed

- Professional development for East Carroll Schools preschool teachers to support effective use of Tier 1 Creative Curriculum

Performance Metrics: CLASS Scores/Performance Profiles – all Preschool programs high proficient or excellent

Annual Progress Update:

- 2020-2021: During Spring 2021, Conscious Discipline training was offered to preschool teachers. Teachers completed the training, received Emotional Support Materials.
- 2021-2022: August 2021, PreK teachers were trained in CLASS Instructional Support and CLASS Instructional Support Kits were provided to all preschool classrooms. During Spring 2022, PreK teachers in Ouachita Parish and in Monroe City Schools were given the option to participate in a teacher wish list. This allowed the teachers to be able to purchase needed materials to enhance their classrooms. Frog Street Differentiated Instruction and Making Center Time Intentional were offered during the year. In Spring 2022 Southside Elementary PreK teachers submitted a teacher wish list. The wish list purchased items for both classrooms to support high quality education. The Children's Coalition provided transition backpacks to children attending summer PreK programs to assist with transitions to a new classroom. These backpacks included manipulative materials to aid in summer learning.
- 2022-2023: In fall 2022 Southside Elementary PreK teachers submitted a teacher wish list. The wish list purchased items for both classrooms to support high quality education. Early Childhood Specialist has scheduled Frog Street trainings for October and November 2022. Early Childhood Specialist provided MMCI Pre-K in Fall 2022.

### **Goal 3: Increase awareness of available early care and education program options by 40% by 2023.**

#### Strategies

- Marketing Campaign - TV ads, radio ads, digital ads, Social Media, posters, flyers, newspaper articles, explore other types of media such as digital billboards
- Host a Round-up Kickoff Event for parents after Early Childhood Preschool Round-Up
- Share Child Care Connections Choosing Quality Child Care checklist
- Network folders shared with local sites to share with new families

#### Resources:

#### Existing

- Met with marketing team to create marketing plan

#### Needed

- Marketing Campaign to build awareness of what high quality early childhood is
- Community meetings with local stakeholders to raise awareness of partnerships with The Children's Coalition of Northeast Louisiana & Ready Start East Carroll Early Childhood Community Network, early childhood and preschool options available locally and community impact

Performance Metrics: Community and parent survey data, Coordinated Enrollment parent survey data, Marketing data

#### Annual Progress Update:

- 2020-2021 Held a virtual parent Q & A via Zoom prior to early childhood roundup week. Shared early childhood program "spotlights" in the weeks leading up to early childhood roundup. The marketing campaign included improved TV ads, radio PSAs, digital ads, social media, posters, flyers, postcards.
- 2021-2022: Shared early childhood program "spotlights" in the weeks leading up to early childhood roundup. The marketing campaign included TV ads, radio PSAs, digital ads, social media, posters, flyers, postcards. Early Childhood Guide commercial and webpage was created. Families were surveyed in June 2022 on the experience of Coordinated Enrollment. Results stated that most families were aware of their early childhood options through friends & family or through the director/administrator of a site. Results were mixed because a small number of providers that also participated in the survey and because the survey had results from four different parishes.
- 2022-2023: Continued marketing campaign for Early Childhood Guide. Birth to Three flyers were updated in summer of 2022. Marketing materials are being updated to include Family Child Care Providers that have opted into Academic Approval and 2023-2024 Round Up dates. Early childhood program "spotlights" will be shared in the weeks leading up to early childhood roundup. The marketing campaign included TV ads, radio PSAs, digital ads, social media, posters, flyers, postcards. CSBAE Coordinator held a information meeting for local stakeholders in East Carroll Parish to bring awareness to early childhood happening in East Carroll Parish. CSBAE has also spoken to the Lake Providence Rotary Club to bring awareness to early childhood happening in East Carroll Parish. Director of Early Childhood, Ready Start Coordinator and CSBAE Coordinator are working together to build marketing materials around the importance of awareness of early care and education.

#### **Goal 4: Community network and programs partners will hold at least 2 family engagements events annually.**

##### Strategies.

- Parent Focus Group held in January 2022
- Developmental Corners installed at East Carroll Parish Health Unit and Library
- Developmental Play Kits distributed to East Carroll Parish Health Unit and Library
- Collaborate with local businesses to install little free libraries or become a Reach Out & Read site.
- Annual Coordinated Enrollment Community Event
- Past Family Engagement Events at Program Partner sites: Muffins with Mom, Donuts with Dad, Men & Children Day, Make & Take Activity, Mardi Gras Neighborhood parade
- Stipend to support sites host family engagement events

##### Resources:

###### Existing

- Desire to create activities that will engage families throughout the parish.

###### Needed

- Calendar of community events happening throughout the parish
- Community events to partner with
- Resources to assist in implementing events at program partner sites
- Community partnerships to build little libraries, developmental corners and distribute developmental play kits

Performance Metrics: We will know this goal is met when community network and program partners hold at least 2 family engagement events annually in East Carroll parish.

##### Annual Progress Update:

- 2021-2022: Parent Focus group held in January 2022. Developmental Play kits distributed throughout the parish at various community locations (The East Carroll Parish Library, The East Carroll Parish Health Unit). Children's Coalition purchased big book kits and backpacks with developmentally appropriate materials for infants and toddlers for the East Carroll Parish Library. The kits and backpacks are available for families to check out and will assist with making developmentally appropriate materials available for children aged birth to five. Developmental Corners were installed at the East Carroll Parish Library and the East Carroll Parish Health Unit in Spring 2022. Program partners collaborated in June 2022 on potential ways to engage families with different activities or events at their sites.
- 2022-2023: Development play kits continue to be distributed to community partners. The East Carroll Parish Health Unit worked with the Developmental Screening Initiative Coordinator to establish their site as a Reach Out & Read location. T.I. Community Complex in Lake Providence installed a little free

library in fall 2022. Family Engagement Event Incentive released in November 2022 to assist eligible providers with a stipend for materials purchased for Family Engagement Events.

**Goal 5: Conduct developmental screenings for every child aged birth to 3 years old enrolled in early childhood programs in the network by 2023-2024 school year.**

Strategies:

- Conduct developmental screenings – ASQ-3 for Infants and Toddlers upon enrollment in Type 3 childcare centers
- Referral to early intervention (ex. Early Steps, School Systems, private therapists) as needed based on screenings results
- Trainings on how to conduct ASQ-3, Early Steps referral process, and Red Flags for developmental delays and how to refer out for intervention services.
- Parent Handout – Developmental milestones map with early intervention resources and contacts, Early Steps, School System with step by steps what to expect overview. Consider including Families Helping Families contact for families who are interested in having an advocate to assist them through the process.
- Ensure all new teachers are trained in ASQ-3 and referral processes.
- ASQ-3 offered during consultation with Early Childhood Guide and Birth to Three Coordinator

Resources:

Existing

- Childcare centers desire to ensure developmental delays are identified as early as possible so that children have increased access to early intervention services.
- Partnership with Early Steps
- Staff that are trained in ASQ-3 Train the Trainer
- Developmental Screening Initiative Coordinator

Needed

- Trainings scheduled or accessible to sites in parish
- Consistent step by step process for conducting screenings as part of intake and enrollment

Performance Metrics: We will know this goal is met when we increase referrals for children aged Birth to Three years old by 10%.

Annual Progress Update:

- 2021-2022 Ready Start Network Coordinator, statewide Pediatric Developmental Health Coordinator, and Child Care Resource & Referral Coach began collaborating to create policies for implementing the ASQ-3 and improve the quality of screenings completed. The timeline anticipated for training and implementing the screenings will be April and May 2022. Training was held in each parish in April and May 2022.
- 2022-2023: Developmental Screening Initiative Coordinator began work in July 2022. Developmental Screening Initiative Coordinator is actively promoting the ASQ-3 at various events within the community. Providers receive support as they request on-site training or if directors/teachers attend

one of the monthly training courses offered on the topic of developmental health, screenings, or milestones. In October 2022, the Developmental Screening Initiative Coordinator trained preschool teachers at Southside Elementary School and the East Carroll Parish Health Unit on how to implement the ASQ-3s.