



CLASS Matters: Increasing Quality in Louisiana Early Childhood Programs

Findings from Data Analysis, Stakeholder Interviews, and National Research

This report from the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children includes data-informed recommendations to assist with improving provider quality and teacher practice, as measured by CLASS. The report and recommendations are based on analyses of the first two years of Louisiana CLASS data, interviews with 18 stakeholders across the state, and a review of national research around improving teacher practice, child outcomes, and CLASS scores.

KEY FINDINGS

- Improving child-teacher ratio quality and increasing assessment use positively affects CLASS scores
- Teachers with higher levels of education experienced higher CLASS scores
- Stakeholders view CLASS positively, and especially like the tool’s focus on teacher-child interactions
- Stakeholders and national research agree – access to high-quality professional development and coaching support improved teacher practice and children’s learning

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Separate the Proficient rating category into two categories to distinguish differences in quality for higher-performing providers and to better differentiate supports (*Included in rules passed by BESE April 2018*)
- Add infant classrooms to the rating system, ensuring adequate support (*Included in rules passed by BESE April 2018*)
- Provide additional targeted support to providers with Approaching Proficient ratings, including providers at both the low- and high-end of the range (*Partially included in rules passed by BESE April 2018*)
- Increase access to low/no-cost education training programs for non-lead teachers to help address teacher talent pool shortages (*LDE changed its policies to include this starting July 1, 2018*)
- Reduce maximum child-teacher ratios for child care centers (see chart below) (*Included in rules passed by BESE June 2018—reduction in teacher:child ratios for Type I Centers to be the same as Type II/III*)
- Increase the infant reimbursement rate to support quality access
- Provide additional one-on-one, job-embedded coaching and ensure quality coaching based on best practices
- Increase uniformity of CLASS observation procedures across regions, including notification, local observer, and observation windows

Age Range	CFOC Recommendation	Most Common Nationally	Louisiana	
			Type II/III	Type I
Infants	3:1	4:1	5:1	6:1
1-year-olds	4:1	6:1	7:1	8:1
2-year-olds	4:1	8:1	11:1	12:1
3-year-olds	7:1	10:1	13:1	14:1
4-year-olds	8:1	10:1	15:1	16:1

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

System Level

- Develop a state professional development plan based on a gap analysis of current opportunities and pilot any new models or systems with a variety of provider types and across age levels
- Increase training for center directors/principals on CLASS, including CLASS observer certification training
- Incorporate classroom environment checklist to guide teachers in classroom setup and organization
- Fund additional grants for high-quality materials