Early Childhood Overview
Preparing All Louisiana Children for Kindergarten
Challenge: Many Choices, But Little Clarity on Quality

Research suggests that children who participate in high quality early childhood programs are more likely to enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

- **Children do not have equal access to high quality early childhood programs.**
  - Quality and availability of programs varies across the state.
  - What matters most is the quality of interactions and instructions in the classroom.

- **Families do not have clear, comparable information on the quality of programs.**
  - Programs have different standards and measures of success which makes it difficult for families to compare the quality of programs.

- **Providers are held to different standards.**
  - Programs have different regulations and accountability which creates a range of quality.
**Vision for Unified System**

**Act 3 (2012) sets a vision for unified system where all children enter ready for kindergarten.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fragmented System</th>
<th>Vision for Unified System</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children are falling through the cracks and are not consistently prepared</td>
<td>High standards for what children should learn and what excellent teaching looks like</td>
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<td>Teachers are not equally prepared nor rewarded for their work</td>
<td>Teachers who are excellent at interacting with children and guiding learning are supported and rewarded</td>
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<td>Families do not have easy-to-use information to make the best choice</td>
<td>Families apply through shared processes and are satisfied with their children’s experience</td>
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<td>Providers are subject to inconsistent expectations and do not have equitable resources to achieve outcomes</td>
<td>Consistent expectations for health, safety and learning, and adequate funding levels across programs based on serving children well</td>
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Since 2012, Louisiana has unified policies and expanded support for programs and teachers in these areas.
Louisiana’s fragmented early childhood system led to Act 3 (2012), which calls for a unified system to ensure all children enter kindergarten ready.

- **2012**: BESE approves multi-year plan for implementation
- **2013**: 13 Early Childhood Community Network Pilots launch
- **2014**: 16 more Community Network Pilots launch. Additional legislation is passed to unify licensing, enrollment, and funding.
- **2015**: 33 more Community Network Pilots launch. Full implementation of Act 3 required by August.
Local Communities Lead the Way

Community Network Pilots:
- Cohort 1 = 13 Networks (July 2013)
- Cohort 2 = 16 Networks (April 2014)
- Cohort 3 = 33 Networks (Jan. – March 2014)
- All parishes have opted in

Each Community Network:
- Has a lead agency
- Includes all publicly-funded early childhood programs (child care, Head Start, PreK)

Activities of Each Community Network:
- Account for every birth-to-age-5 at-risk child
- Assess and track progress of all children
- Observe every classroom and provide job-embedded PD for teachers based on the CLASS tool
- Implement coordinated enrollment
- Establish governance structure
Louisiana has made great progress since Act 3 was passed in 2012. Pilots have launched, communities have led the way, and important lessons have been learned.

For full implementation by August 2015, Louisiana will ensure:

1. **Every community has its own Early Childhood Network Pilot**
2. **Policies are in place for a fully unified system**

   **Unified Expectations**
   - All early learning centers operate under streamlined regulations with LDE license
   - All publicly-funded programs are participating in the 2015-16 Learning Year for new unified quality rating and improvement system

   **Supported Teachers**
   - Every teacher has access to ongoing training, feedback, and coaching to improve
   - Teachers use scholarships to obtain CDA coursework at BESE-approved providers

   **Easier Enrollment for Families**
   - All communities are coordinating enrollment processes and applying for funding as networks for 2016-2017

3. **Funding is gradually increased to ensure families can choose a quality option for their children**
Working closely with stakeholders and new Advisory Council, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) has reviewed a comprehensive set of policies in 2014-2015.

Network leaders have led local implementation and supported field through policy changes. For more, see new Early Childhood Guidebook at www.louisianabelieves.com.