



Early Childhood Education Initiative

A fund of Community Foundation of North Louisiana

In 2021, Community Foundation of North Louisiana (CFNLA) established the **Early Childhood Education Fund (ECE)** to increase enrollment of children ages 0 to 3 in early childhood education centers. In partnership with the City of Shreveport, Caddo Schools, and Caddo Ready Start Network, the Early Childhood Education Scholarship program began in 2022. **The ECE Initiative provides full scholarships to qualifying low-income children between the ages of 0 and 3 to attend high-quality, Type III early learning centers.**

To meet the current need in Caddo Parish and sustain the number of children receiving scholarships, our community must raise **\$3,050,000** for 2024. This will result in a **\$3,050,000 match** from the state of Louisiana. With support from the City of Shreveport and other area donors, **\$1 million** has been secured. To meet the state's deadline for matching funds, we must secure the remaining **\$2 million** by **January 31, 2024**.

Why is Early Childhood Education important?

Approximately **60% of children in Caddo Parish are not ready for kindergarten when they start school.**

As **90% of brain development happens before the age of 5**, the early years are crucial for children to build essential skills that serve as a foundation for their future development.

The **average cost of full time infant childcare in Louisiana is \$8,700** per year and is unaffordable for many families in Caddo Parish.

Receiving quality early learning not only **improves academic and economic outcomes**, but also **reduces involvement in violent crimes and the justice system.**

\$1.3 billion is lost annually in our state's economy due to child-care related employee absences and turnover.

Investing in early childhood education has shown a **return on investment of 13%.**

Every Dollar Donated is Matched by the State of Louisiana

The Louisiana Legislature created a fund designed to match local and private funds raised for early education at Type III childcare centers. In 2022, CFNLA raised **\$1 million to receive a \$1 million match** from the state. In 2023, the City of Shreveport provided one-time funding of **\$2.8 million** to receive a **\$2.8 million match!**

Currently, there is \$54 million available in state matching funds. The allocation has been approximately: \$21 million for Orleans Parish (raised through a millage), \$2.8 million for Caddo Parish, and \$300,000 for Jefferson Parish. The funds are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Since Caddo Parish is the second largest matching draw, it is likely to continue receiving funding. However, if we fail to raise similar amounts in the future, the state match may be in jeopardy resulting in children losing scholarships.



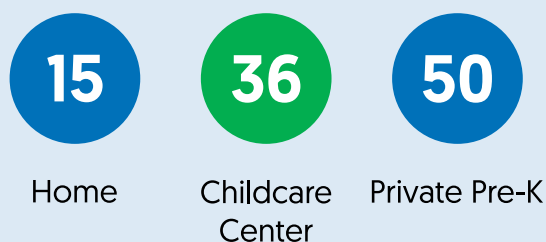
The ECE initiative has provided 647 children with scholarships.



CFNLA's Early Childhood Education Initiative Outcomes

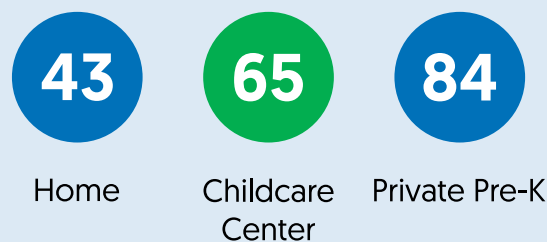
- ★ From 2021 to 2022, ECE scholarships increased enrollment of children ages 0-3 by 65%. Specifically, enrollment of ages 0-2 increased by 95%.
- ★ Among the 18 participating centers, 10 new classrooms have opened resulting in increased revenue for these private businesses.
- ★ Two years of data has shown children attending childcare centers are far more kindergarten ready than peers who do not attend preschool. Below is the first public unveiling of the 2023 data.

Fall 2023 Reading Scores of Kindergartners by Pre-K Experience



Percent of students who met or exceeded benchmark

Fall 2023 Math Scores of Kindergartners by Pre-K Experience



Average student score

Next Steps: CFNLA is working to establish sustainable, long-term funding to ensure all children in Caddo Parish have access to preschool. Ensuring children are ready to start school is how we proactively change our community. By equipping children for the future, we increase reading scores, increase graduation rates, decrease idleness, and decrease crime.

Interested in learning more about CFNLA's Early Childhood Education Initiative?
Contact Kristi Gustavson at 318-221-0582 or gustavson@cfnla.org.

