More than 1,500 of Lafayette's four- and five-year-olds have been screened for development patterns in preparation for the 1982-83 school year.

Lafayette's Early Assessment Program (LEAP) began Aug. 2 and was to be completed today. The program, sponsored by the School Board, focuses on areas of child development, as well as speech, vision and hearing.

Supervisor of Kindergarten and Elementary Education Mereline Moresi said LEAP is designed to assist the classroom teacher in developing the child's weaknesses.

Kindergarten and Head Start students throughout the parish were tested on skills ranging from bouncing balls and arranging colors to following instructions. Five teams of eight teachers worked with the youngsters, and then scored them on their performances. A printout, which will be used in the classroom, was then completed on each child.

If scores showed a problem area, "prescriptions" were given to the parent.

"This shows how — according to age — to increase the skill area," Mrs. Moresi said. "Parents can know the deficient areas and be working on them at home."

Prescriptions include playing games, like skipping and carrying a newspaper or tying bows on shoes, packages or chairs.

A detailed medical history was completed on each child during the LEAP screening, and Mrs. Moresi said medical problems, such as diphtheria, are often detected. In addition, hearing and speech patterns were tested.

"If a child has a speech problem, the therapist at the school will work with him in September. Hearing problems will be re-checked at the health unit," she said.

LEAP was begun in 1975 as a Junior League community service. It was later funded by the federal government, but was dropped from next year's budget. However, the Board approved $10,240 in local funding for the program at its July 22 meeting.