

# Welcome to the Board of Early Care and Learning

*November 16, 2023*



**Georgia Dept  
of Early Care  
and Learning**

**BRIGHT FROM THE START**

# Board Meeting Welcome

*Phil Davis, Board Chair*



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# Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- Approve 11/16/2023 agenda
- Approve 08/24/2023 minutes



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# Inspiration

*Susan Harper*



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# Board Member Updates

# Commissioner's Updates

*Amy M. Jacobs, Commissioner*



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# Congratulations



**Charlotte Richards**  
*Chattahoochee County Pre-K*

GA Pre-K  
**Teacher**  
  
**of the Year**  
2023-2024



**Merodie Brown**  
New Odyssey for Children



# TOTY Surprise Announcements





# Child Care Tuition Assistance Program for Early Educators



New **pilot** program designed to support providers to recruit and retain staff:

- DECAL will provide financial support to offset cost of tuition for staff members' children
- 626 applications submitted by the deadline
- Programs chosen by random selection within each DECAL region; 24 centers and 6 family child care learning homes
- Selected programs were notified on November 1



# Georgia Council on Literacy

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- DECAL is staffing the Birth-to-Five subcommittee
- Committee has met twice
  - September
  - November
- Has drafted recommendations and goals for the report due to the General Assembly in December



# Birth-to-Five Goals

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## Workgroup Goals

- 1. Increase access to high-quality child care:** This goal aims to provide families with more options for high-quality child care in various settings, giving them more options to choose what works best for them.
- 2. Support families by strengthening high-quality, evidence-based early literacy resources:** This goal focuses on providing resources and support to families to enhance early language and literacy skills beginning at birth, setting a strong foundation for their education.
- 3. Create compensation comparable to the K-12 system for the early learning workforce:** To attract and retain quality educators, this goal seeks to improve compensation for those in the early learning field.
- 4. Increase evidence-based professional learning opportunities specific to literacy:** This goal aims to enhance the knowledge and expertise of educators, specifically related to the science of reading and aligning with K-12 literacy efforts.
- 5. Ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate language and literacy environments and instructional experiences:** This goal stresses the importance of making language and literacy environments and instructional experiences responsive to the diverse populations in Georgia, ensuring that they are evidence-based and culturally sensitive.



# Birth-to-Five Recommendations

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## Workgroup Recommendations

1. **Revise Georgia's Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (WKC)s:** Align the WKC)s with current research on the science of reading and early education quality, supporting the implementation of the Georgia Early Literacy Act (HB 538).
2. **Review and update the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS):** Ensure that the GELDS reflect current evidence-based research, including research related to the science of reading, and are in alignment with updates to the K-12 Georgia Standards of Excellence.
3. **Explore family engagement models for supporting language and literacy development for birth-to-five:** Investigate different models, tools, and strategies for engaging families in language and literacy development, considering a 2Gen Framework and the diverse needs of Georgia's families.
4. **Create a public awareness campaign:** Raise awareness about the science of early literacy and the importance of active community and family engagement in child development.
5. **Review child assessment tools:** Assess the reliability and validity of child assessment tools, including formative assessments and developmental screenings, to better understand their effectiveness and utilization in the state.



# Finance, Administration, & Nutrition Updates

*Rian Ringsrud, Deputy Commissioner for Finance & Administration*



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## Budget Comparison

Data as of Sept 30 <sup>th</sup>	Budget	Expenditures*	Remaining Balance	% Remaining
By Program				
Child Care Services	\$811,597,941	\$407,450,976	\$404,146,965	50%
Nutrition	\$170,000,000	\$43,764,610	\$126,235,390	74%
Pre-K + (HS)	\$443,965,064	\$85,345,148	\$358,619,916	81%
Quality Initiatives	\$57,693,238	\$8,571,994	\$49,121,244	85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,483,256,243</b>	<b>\$545,132,728</b>	<b>\$938,123,515</b>	<b>63%</b>

By Fund Source				
State General	\$62,534,475	\$16,176,446	\$46,358,029	74%
State Lottery	\$443,790,064	\$85,304,122	\$358,485,942	81%
Federal	\$976,432,204	\$443,455,103	\$532,977,101	55%
Other	\$499,500	\$197,057	\$302,443	61%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,483,256,243</b>	<b>\$545,132,728</b>	<b>\$938,123,515</b>	<b>63%</b>

\* Includes encumbrances.

## Finance Update

## FY 2024 Q1 Budget Summary



# Fiscal Year 2023\* Wrap-Up



- Served **2,848,166** Meals
- 997 Meal Sites
- 69 Sponsors
- 100 GA Counties (*up from 85*)



- Served **64,883,038** Meals
- 3,296 Centers & Sites
- 513 Sponsors & Institutions
- 157 GA Counties

*\*October 2022-September 2023*

# Happy Helpings Start-up Grants

- \$300k allocated as part of amended FY22 budget for the purpose of expanding access to meals in unserved or underserved areas. \$195K awarded in FY22.
- 13 new & experienced Sponsors were awarded Happy Helpings Start-up Grants totaling \$105k in FY23.
- 81,667 Meals were served at 35 additional meal sites in 16 unique unserved counties.
- Grant monies primarily used to purchase equipment, food and salaries.

	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Awarded</b>	\$195,000	\$105,000	\$300,000
<b>Sponsors</b>	9 Experienced	13 New & Experienced	15 (unique) New & Experienced
<b>Meals</b>	30,482	81,667	112,149
<b>Counties</b>	11	16	27 (unique)



# Start-up Grant Enabled Purchases such as:



Vehicle  
New Visions



Freezer & Storage Unit  
Rock of Salvation



112,149 meals were served during FY22 & 23 through the Start-up Grants.



Insulated Milk Box &  
Food Delivery Bag  
GNSI



Freezer  
Dream it Forward



Cooler & Warmer Boxes  
Chance of Change

# What Did the Start-up Grants Enable?

During FY 22 and 23, sponsors served 112,149 meals

## Examples of Grant Purchases

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Chance of Change  | Cooler and Warmer Bags                 |
| Dream it Forward  | Freezer                                |
| GNSI              | Insulated Milk Box & Food Delivery Bag |
| New Visions       | Vehicle                                |
| Rock of Salvation | Freezer and Storage Unit               |



# Federal Programs Updates

*Sheila Williams, CAPS Scholarship Administration Director*



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# GACAPS Payment System



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# GACAPS (Georgia Childcare and Administrative Payment System)



## Login

\* Indicates required field

\* Username

\* Password

Remember me

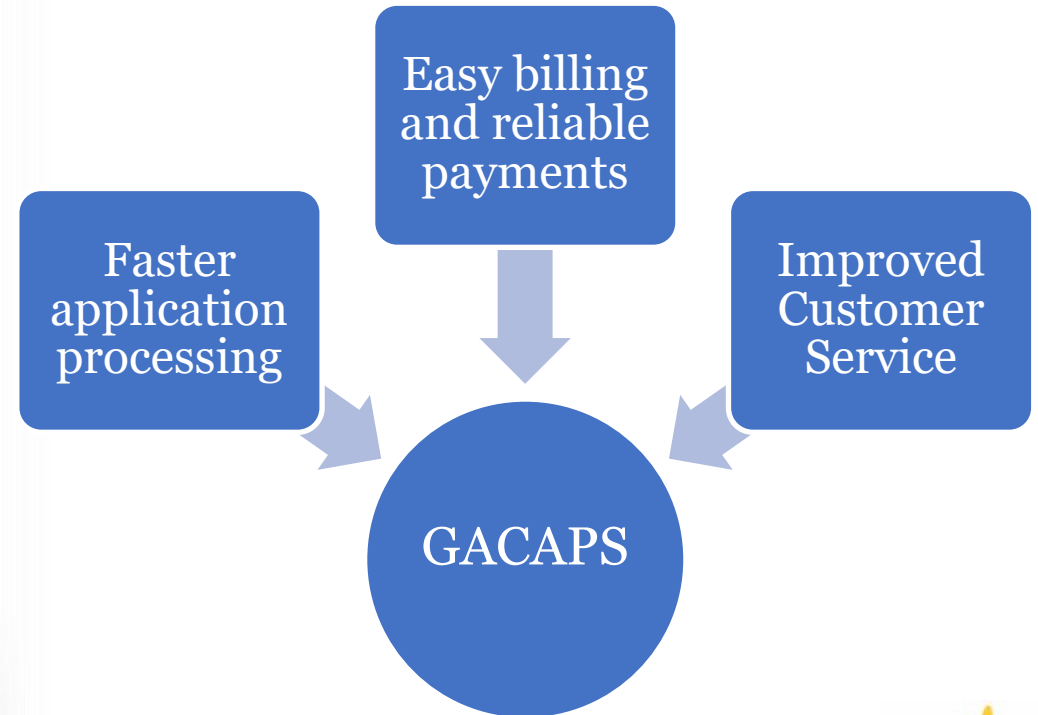
[Click here to Login](#)

[Forgot Password?](#)

Create a ticket if you are experiencing any issues.

[Support Ticket](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) • [Terms & Conditions](#)



# Provider Relations Structure



Enrollment  
Services



Provider Support



Education and  
Outreach



Quality  
Assurance and  
Payments

# Access and Family Fee Updates



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# ACCESS

Awarding Child Care Education Scholarship Supplements

# September 2024

**ACCESS** has been extended through  
September 2024.

CAPS will continue to pay the full cost of  
tuition minus the family fee.

Families will begin paying their family fee in  
October 2023



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20-202-708-1000





# CAPS Application Pilot



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# CAPS Application Process Pilot

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**The CAPS Application Process Pilot is an initiative that puts Families First.**



**Families are randomly selected for based on the following criteria:**

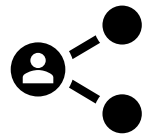
- Application Received Date
- Email Address



**When selected families are ready to complete their interview, they will contact CAPS.**



# CAPS Application Process Pilot



Families are notified via email, robo-call, and SMS.



Families can contact the CAPS Pilot Team to connect with a Scholarship Administration Specialist.

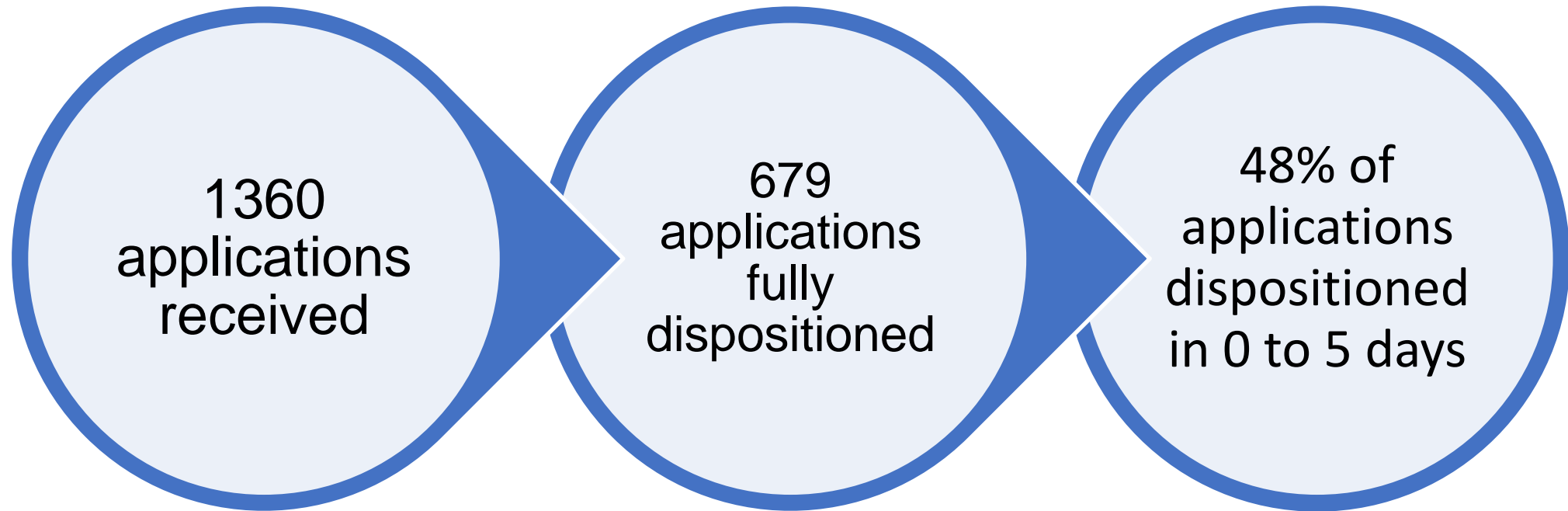


Verified information and documentation, application will be processed in real time.



# CAPS Application Process Pilot Data

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# CAPS Priorities



Increase Efficiency



Improve the CAPS Experience



Strengthen Knowledge and Supports for CAPS Staff



# Application Pilot Goals

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1

INCREASE  
EFFECIENCY FOR  
STAFF AND  
FAMILIES

2

IMPROVE THE CAPS  
EXPERIENCE FOR  
APPLICANTS

3

STRENGTHEN  
KNOWLEDGE AND  
SUPPORTS FOR STAFF



# Georgia's Pre-K and Instructional Supports Updates

*Susan Adams, Deputy Commissioner for Georgia's Pre-K and Instructional Supports*



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# Technical College System of Georgia Grants

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- DECAL has partnered with the Technical College System of Georgia to issue grants to technical colleges to support embedding entry level ECE credentials into adult education programs.
- Students are pursuing a credential while also earning a high school equivalency.
- Grants have been awarded to 7 technical colleges.
- To date, a total of 52 students have enrolled across the 7 grantees.





# About the Infant Toddler Program

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- Part of Georgia's Child Care and Development Block Grant state plan to improve quality in infant and toddler classrooms
- 11 Infant Toddler Specialists who help teachers support children's development through:
  - Training
  - Coaching
  - LITTLE Grant Opportunities
  - Classroom resources



# Infant Toddler: LITTLE Grant Program

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- Created in response to data showing a need to increase the quality of infant and toddler care in Georgia
- Builds infants' and toddlers' language and literacy skills by supporting teachers in incorporating responsive caregiving into their practice
- Since 2017, LITTLE has served 96 licensed child care centers and 96 Family Child Care Learning Homes



# About LITTLE: Grant Structure

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Programs use CLASS and LENA as tools to observe and improve their practices.

Data collection with LENA and Class

Funding for the Program

Programs receive funding for a peer coach and language and literacy materials.

Educators receive weekly coaching from an Infant Toddler Specialist or Peer Coach

Weekly coaching

Training

Educators attend language and literacy institutes and professional learning communities. Educators receive stipends.



# LITTLE Grant: Outcomes

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Directors, peer coaches and teachers reported positive changes to their practice.

Directors felt that they could sustain the changes made throughout the LITTLE grant.

Children in participating programs have experienced over 5 million conversational turns and heard over 225 million adult words



# LITTLE Grant Updates

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- 9 Family Child Care Learning Homes 11 Child Care Learning Centers will participate in LITTLE this year.
- Addition of a family engagement component to promote children's language and literacy at home.
- This year, the LITTLE program is expected to serve up to 85 early childhood programs and over 400 children.



# Infant Toddler & Inclusion: CCR&R Referrals

- Approach was developed in response to the large number of programs going through Quality Rated in 2023.
- Child Care Resource & Referral staff refer programs based on the “Big Three ERS Concepts” (relationships, interactions, schedules).
- Piloted in the Central West and Central East Regions, with plans to expand statewide.
- 50 referrals received

“From the start, when I recommended my 2 programs... the Infant Toddler Specialist and the Inclusion Specialist have both been extremely informative. . . It is so refreshing to have this level of support when we are trying to help our programs get to the next level of quality.”

- CCR&R Staff Member

“I LOVE all the CC&R TAs that I have worked with have all been willing to offer their support and give their guidance on each referral.”

- DECAL Infant Toddler Specialist



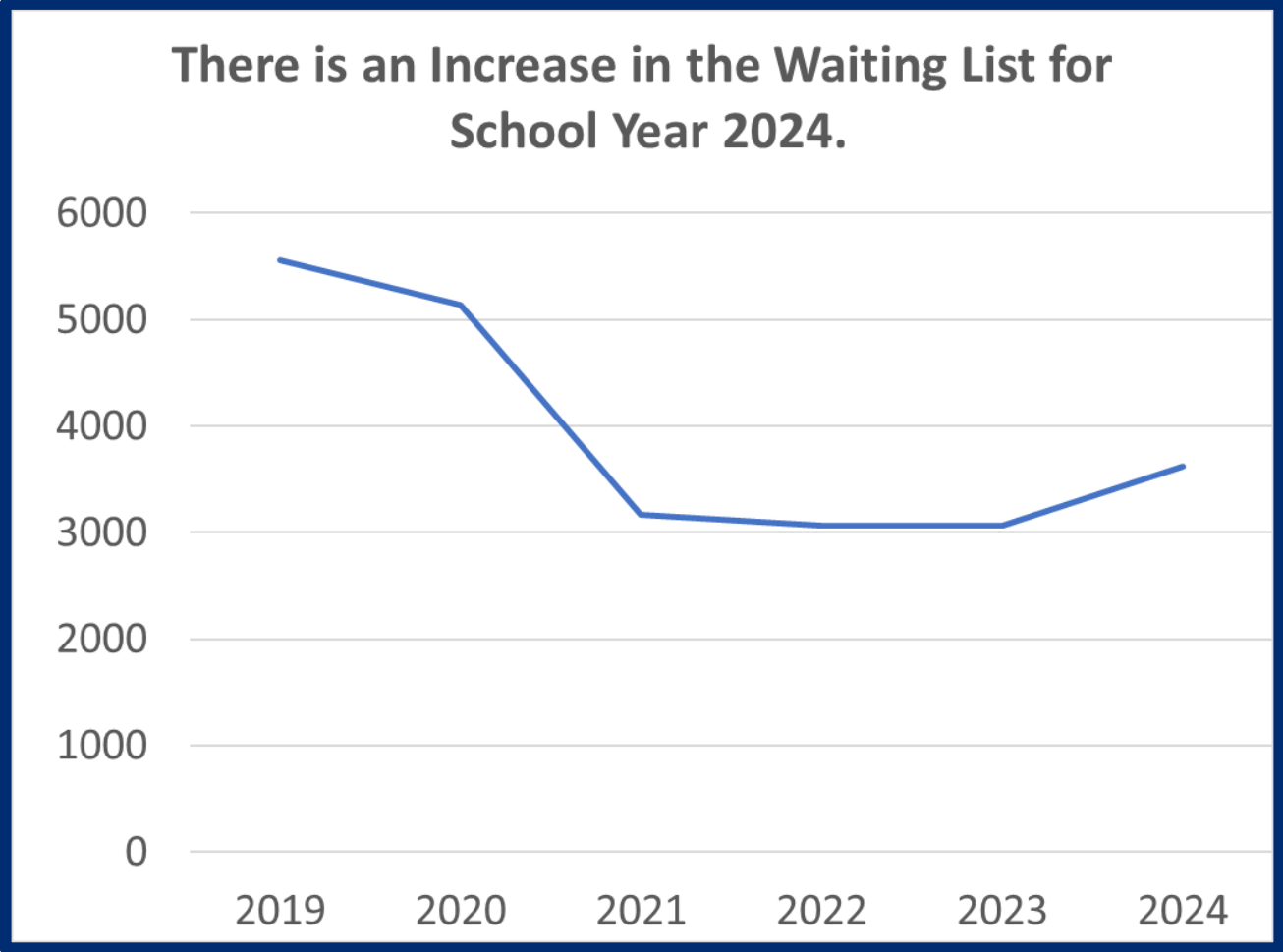
# The Engaging World of Infants & Toddlers

- Three-part training series for up to 300 Infant and Toddler Teachers
- Focused on how to foster foundational language and literacy skills using developmentally-appropriate materials
- Participating teachers will receive a materials kit after each session



# Pre-K Enrollment- School Year 2024

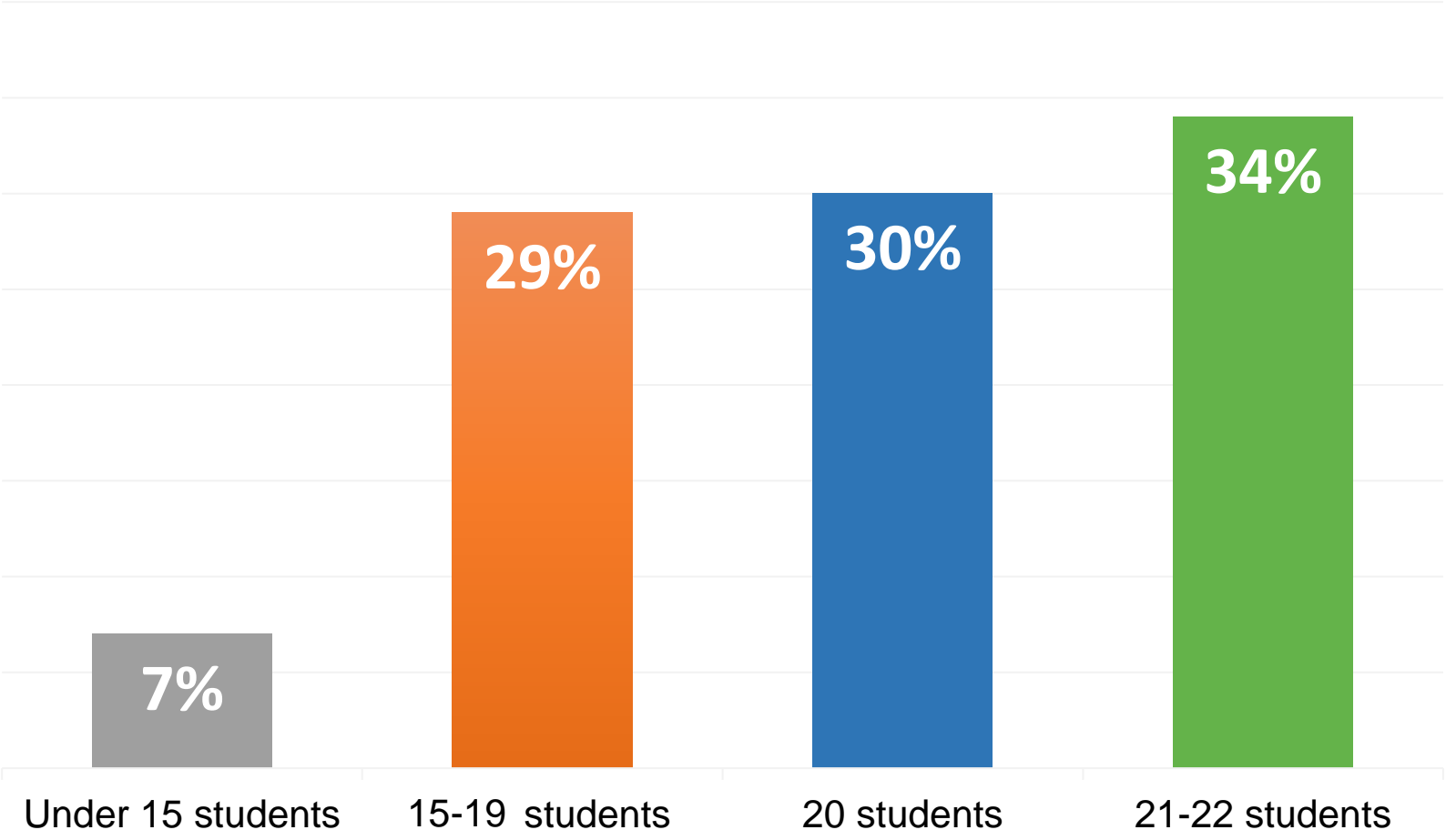
- Grantees: 849
- Sites: 1,831
- Classes: 3,682
- Children: 70,855
- Waiting List: 3,620



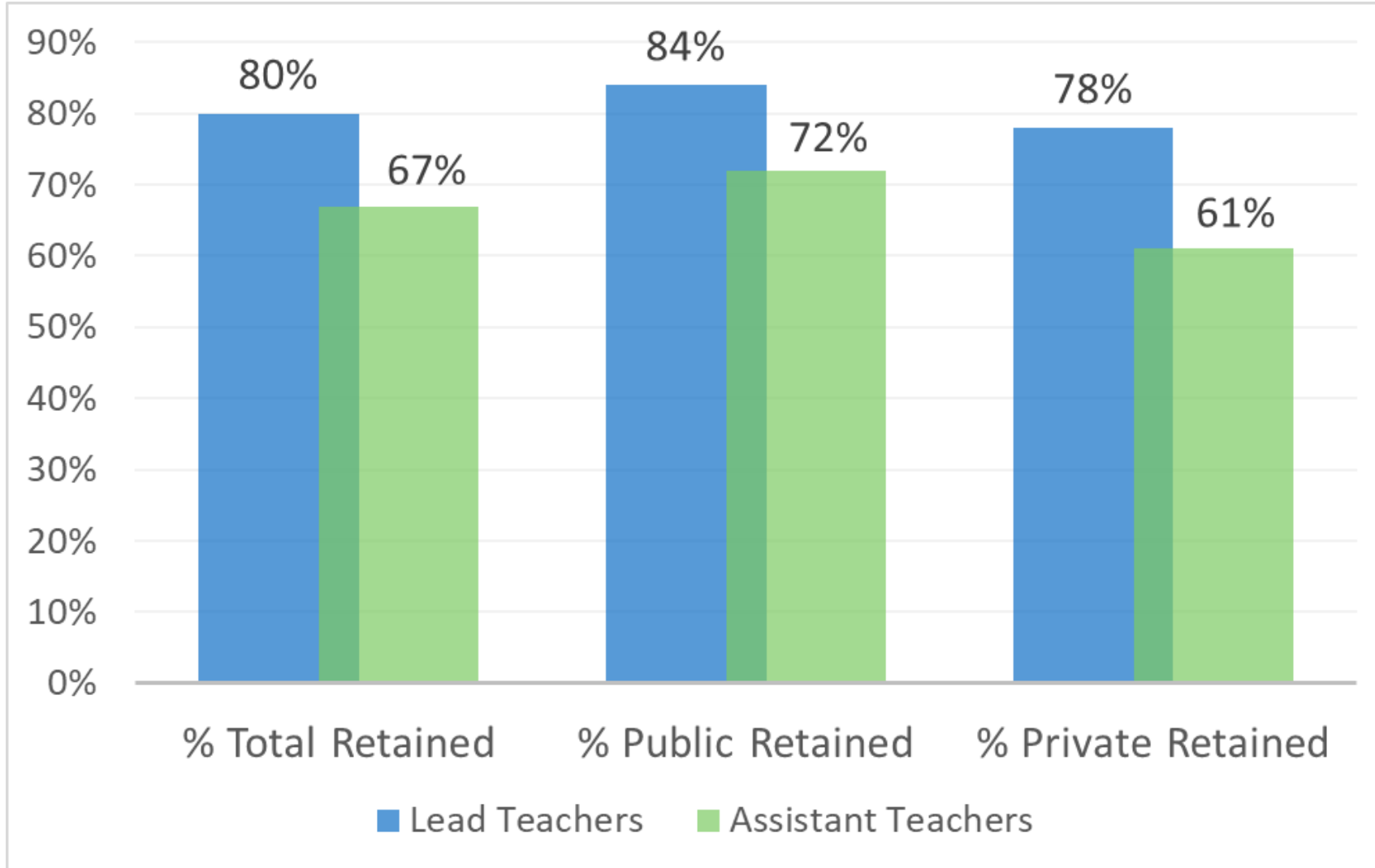


# Class Size Distribution

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# Teacher Retention SY2024



# Georgia Pre-K Week

Voices for Georgia's Children

*Polly McKinney, Advocacy Director*

*Olivia Amato, Program Specialist*



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Georgia

Pre-K  
Week

A celebration of Georgia's Pre-K Program and quality early education in Georgia.





# What is Georgia Pre-K Week?

Georgia Pre-K Week is a weeklong celebration of Georgia's nationally recognized Pre-K program and other quality early learning programs during the first full week of October.

Now in its **13th** year, Georgia Pre-K Week gave elected officials and other leaders from across the state a chance to visit and read to Pre-K classrooms in their districts and communities and actively engage in early learning.





# Pre-K Week 2023

October 2-6

**109** state leaders made  
**142** visits to Pre-K sites

**66%**

(156 out of 236)

of current legislators have  
participated in a Pre-K Week  
while in office!





# Beyond State Leaders

**843** Pre-K Centers across **140** counties registered for Pre-K Week and over **900** participated!



All registered centers received access to nutrition education platform **“Small Bites Adventure Club”** in partnership with the American Heart Association and DECAL Nutrition Services.

Georgia Power returned as a Pre-K Week sponsor for their **10th** year!

**20+** organizations across the state joined Voices as community partners this year.



# Pre-K Site Celebrations







## DECAL Partners

### Thank you to...

- Commissioner Amy Jacobs
- Deputy Commissioner Susan Adams
- Liz Young
- Meghan McNail
- Reg Griffin
- Jerry Brown
- John Huston
- Diana Meyers
- The **many** DECAL Consultants & Pre-K Specialists who coordinated and accompanied legislative visits



**Final Report 2023 coming soon!**



Questions?



# Break

*Ten Minutes*



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# Quality Innovations and Partnerships Updates

*Bentley Ponder, Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships*



# Quality Innovations and Partnership Structure

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# QIP Internal Supports: Specific Restructuring Goals

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- Strengthen internal research capacity. This includes more capacity for data analysis, internal research projects, and increased communication/dissemination of research projects. It also includes the development and maintaining of a Departmental research agenda.
- Solidify Community Outreach and Partnering. Over the last few years, DECAL has offered many community level grants. While successful, there has been a haphazardness to their administration and not enough focus on evaluation and “lessons learned.”
- Increase business support capacity. This includes supporting businesses in helping meeting their employees’ child care needs and also helping child care providers with additional business supports.
- “Call Out” specific supports offered to the Commissioner and other Exec team members.
- Address evolving business needs of Quality Rated.
- Continue to support EHS in the restructuring and using the grant as an opportunity for 2Gen support and raising quality.
- Provide more “non-Bentley” decision making opportunities.



## Institutional Research and Data Quality Team

- Develop and maintain DECAL's Research Agenda\*
- Create and maintain research databases
- Conduct internal data analyses and research studies
- Disseminate research findings for multiple audiences
- Utilize research to inform policy and program innovation
- Oversees Georgia's Cross-Agency Child Data System
- Streamlines and oversees the Data Sharing Agreement and Data Request process
- Serves as an IT Liaison
- Stay informed with current research trends and new innovations

## Research Partnerships and Business Supports

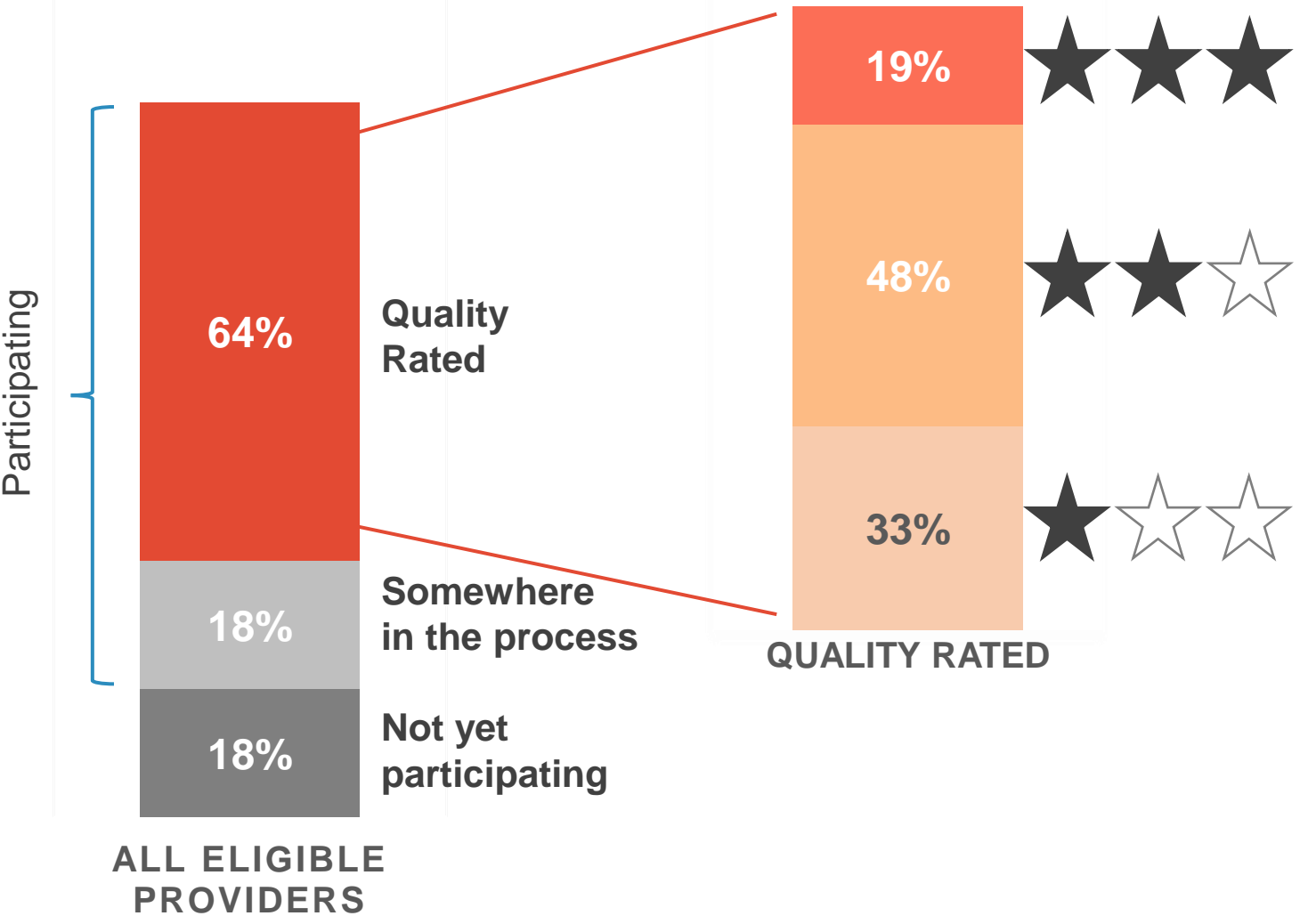
- Develop and maintain DECAL's Research Agenda\*
- Oversee external research contracts
- Collaborate with internal teams and external stakeholders to define and operationalize research projects, objectives, and deliverables.
- Foster a culture of collaboration within the agency and external partners.
- Manage current business support contract and other DECAL Business Support Initiatives
- Manages the Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery (EXPAND) Grants.\*\*
- Provides communication, marketing, outreach and communication support to the Commissioner, Executive Team and DECAL divisions.
- Manages Special Projects for the Department and QIP
- Oversees QIP Contract Operations

## Community Partnerships and 2Gen Outreach

- Oversees Community Liaison Activities between DECAL and Local Communities.
- Directs DECAL's Early Education Community Partnership Coordinator Team
- Oversees DECAL's Community Transformation Grants
- Manage DECAL's Community Level 2Gen Innovation Grants and Trauma Responsive Care Grants
- Manages the Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery (EXPAND) Grants.\*\*
- Creates a DECAL Business Liaison Initiative
- Oversee DECAL's Call Center Contract
- Lead 2Gen Activities within the QIP Division
- Create stakeholder engagement opportunities at the community level.

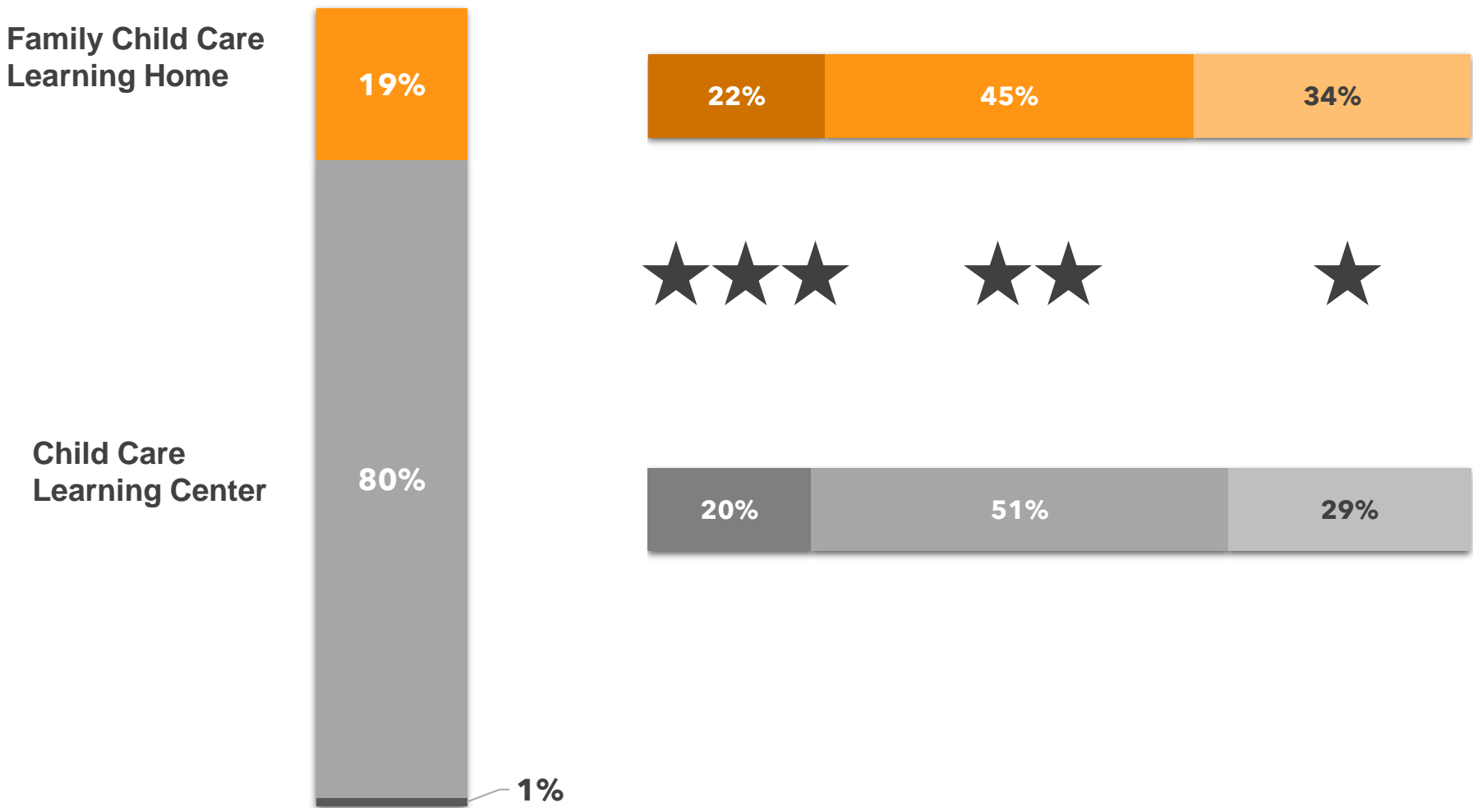
\*Shared between Institutional Research and Research Partnership; \*\*Shared between Research Partnership and Community Partnership.

# Of Georgia's 4,504 eligible providers, **2,888** are Quality Rated.





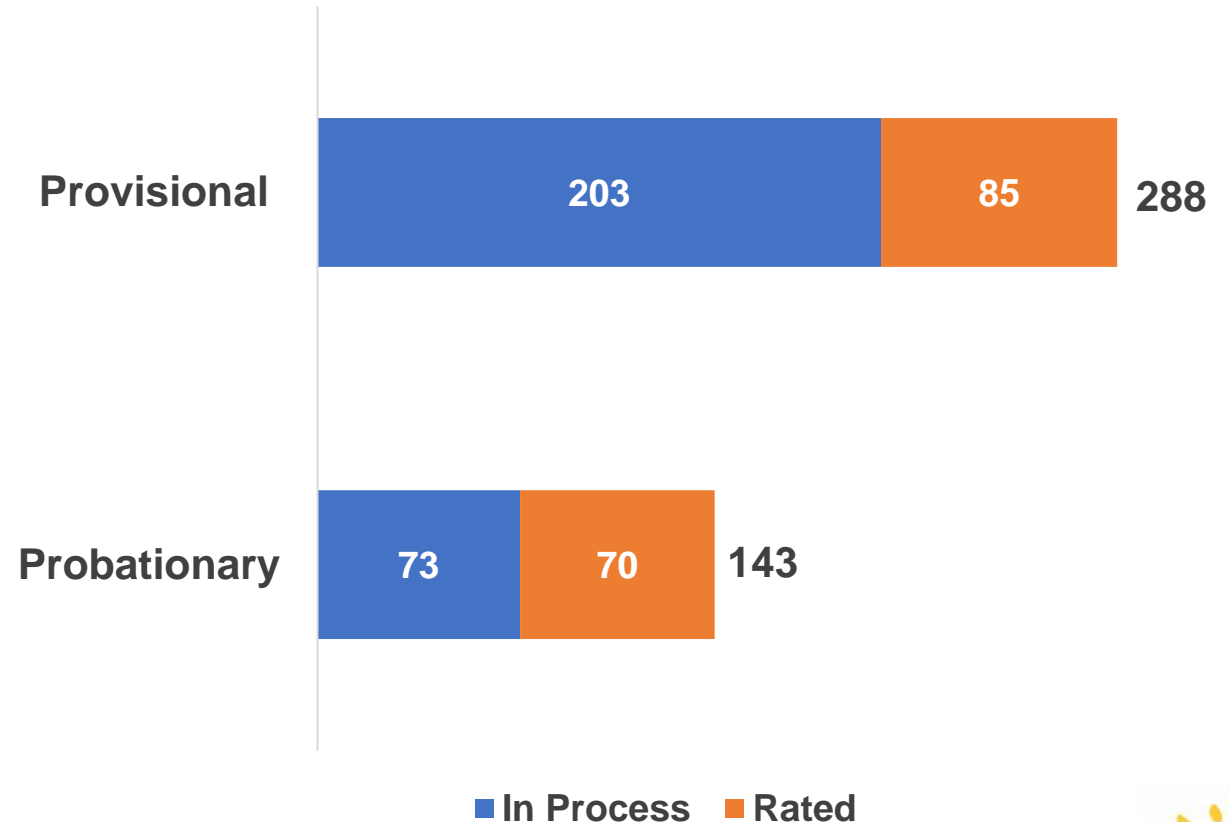
# Quality Rated by Program Type



# Provisional and Probationary Providers

**Provisional Status:** Allows newly licensed programs and programs new to CAPS to be CAPS Scholarship-eligible for a limited time while achieving a star rating.

**Probationary Status:** CAPS providers who do not earn enough points to rate can continue participating in the CAPS program for a limited time while improving their quality rating outcomes.



# Quality Rated Comprehensive Review

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- With the 10-year anniversary in the rear-view mirror, DECAL leadership is turning its attention to the future of Quality Rated.
- Discussions around revising QR have been ongoing since 2019, the Pandemic temporarily put those discussions on hold.
- With renewed vigor, the first step in revision consideration was to conduct a comprehensive review of Quality Rated.



# Why Review Quality Rated?

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## Time

- Over ten years since Quality Rated was designed.
- Opportunity to incorporate new research in ECE as well as other related fields.
- Recognize the changing landscape of early education in GA including impacts from COVID-19 pandemic.

## Provider Impact

- More providers have been rated multiple times; this is an opportunity to ensure the system is supporting continuous quality improvement.
- Opportunity to better understand how well QR is meeting the needs of the multiple populations it is designed to support.

## Outcomes

- Ultimately, the comprehensive review will produce proposed revisions to Quality Rated to move into the next decade with a strengthened system.



# Systematic, Comprehensive, Methodical

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## **All Aspects of Quality Rated will be Reviewed**

- Reviewing all internal and external processes
- Reviewing QR supports offered to providers
- Reviewing QR supports offered to families
- Reviewing how quality is communicated

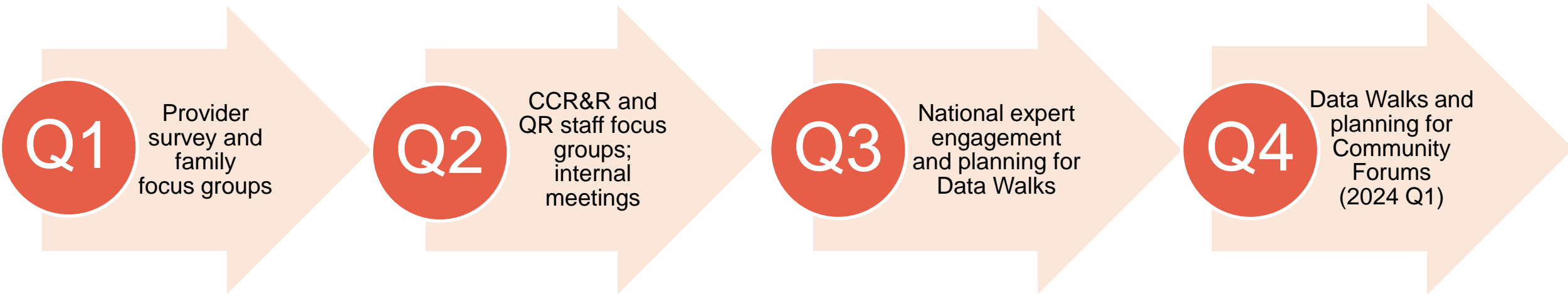
## **How the Review will be Conducted**

- Provider surveys
- Family focus groups
- QR staff focus groups
- CCR&R staff focus groups
- ECE national expert focus groups
- DECAL internal leadership workgroups
- Stakeholder data walks
- Community forums



# Quality Rated Review Timeline – 2023/2024

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# Comprehensive Review Progress

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## **Focus Groups with Families**

- Conducted by The Urban Institute
- February 14 – April 20
- Seventeen focus groups held
- Attended by 101 participants
- Seven groups had families with needs for non-traditional hours
- Five groups had CAPS participants

## **Survey of Quality Rated and QR-Eligible Providers**

- Conducted by the Urban Institute
- March 24 – May 1
- 41% of QR providers fully completed the survey
- 20% of non-QR providers completed the survey
- 39% of multi-site providers completed the survey

## **Listening Sessions with QR and CCR&R Staff**

- Conducted by Child Trends
- May 1 – May 10
- Four sessions held
- Attended by 27 people



# EXPAND Grants

Jill Taylor, Director of Community Partnerships & 2Gen outreach

Shayna Funke, Director of Research Partnerships & Business Supports



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# EXPAND Grants — Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery

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- Funded by the American Rescue Plan Act
- Designed to address child care needs during nontraditional hours, such as evenings, overnight, early mornings, and weekends

## EXPAND Grants for Licensed Child Care Providers



Grant funds support them extending their operating hours through hiring additional staff, making necessary health and safety improvements, and more

## EXPAND Collaborative Grants for Government Entities and Nonprofit Organizations



Grant funds support a collaborative of community partners implementing a project that addresses the need for nontraditional hour child care in the local community. Projects are unique to each community.



# Why EXPAND Grants?

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- DECAL collected feedback from Georgia families, child care providers, the ECE workforce, DECAL staff, and other stakeholder groups about supports Georgia's ECE system needed
- Key recommendation that emerged was to strengthen supports to families needing care during nontraditional hours
- Aligns with DECAL's Strategic Plan goal to “*expand Two Generation (2Gen) approaches to better support children and families*”
- Grants may uncover nontraditional hour care solutions that can be scaled up or other lessons learned to help DECAL better support access to nontraditional hour care more widely



# EXPAND Grants Updates

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- Grants began with seven licensed child care programs and six nonprofit and government entities on October 1
- Grantee planning period now through December 31
- Project implementation begins January 1, 2024
- Evaluation by UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government



# EXPAND Grantees: Licensed Child Care Providers

## Child Care Learning Centers

- Bright Horizons Preschool
- Bright Ones Learning Center
- Creative Labs Learning Center
- Learning Voyage Success Center
- Start Bright Academy Hiram

## Family Child Care Learning Homes

- Danielle Albanese, *It Takes A Village, LLC*
- Edelina Lane, *Lina Lane's Learning Center*



# EXPAND Grantees: Non-Profits and Government Entities

- Alliance Theatre, a division of the Robert W. Woodruff Arts Center, Inc.
- City of Thomasville Payroll Development Authority
- Columbus Technical College
- Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
- Navicent Health, Inc.
- The Manufacturers Education Foundation, Inc. (Georgia Association of Manufacturers)



# Child Care Services Updates

*Pam Stevens, Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services*



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# Clean Water Georgia Kids Campaign

*Rhonda Parker, Child Care Services Director of Field Operations*



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# What is the WIIN Grant Program?

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- The Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act Or “WIIN Act” of 2016
- A federally grant-funded program to provide resources to train and test lead in drinking and cooking water
- The Program is a partnership between The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and RTI International





# How is DECAL involved?

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- Invited to the table by The State of Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) in 2021
- Outreach to licensed child care programs



# How can child care programs participate?

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- Free Program for all child care licensed programs
- Sign up to register for one of the pre-enrollment webinars  
<https://bit.ly/3hW66kN> to enroll  
[www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/georgia](http://www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/georgia)
- Training provided on how to collect samples and return
- Eliminate childhood exposure to lead in drinking and cooking water





Find and get the **lead**  
out of water where  
children learn and play



**Clean Water for Georgia Kids**



# Average Number of Children Present per Provider

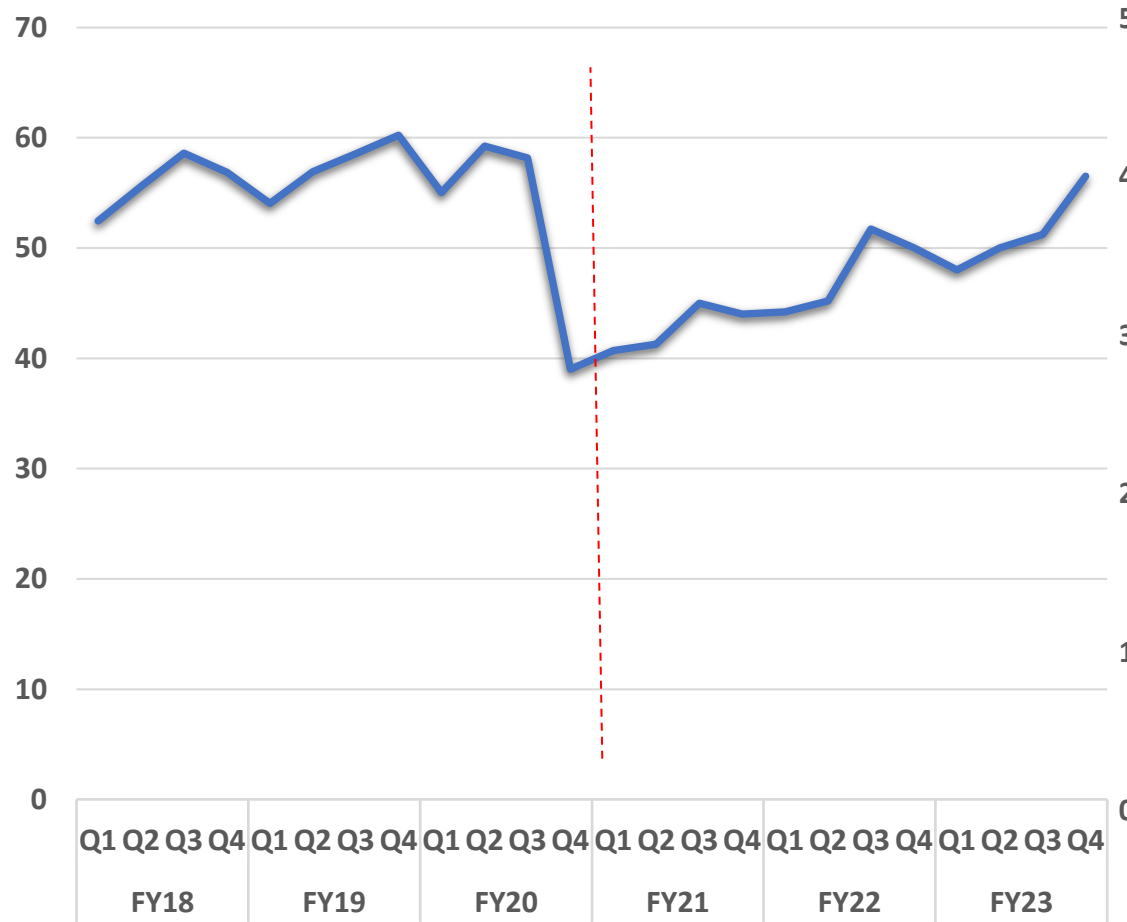
Provider Type	Quarter	Pre-Pandemic Avg	FY21	FY22	FY23	Difference	
Child Care Learning Center (CCLC)	Q1	53.85	40.70	44.20	48.04	-6	-11%
	Q2	57.25	41.29	45.19	49.91	-7	-13%
	Q3	58.44	45.23	51.73	51.24	-7	-12%
	Q4	58.54	43.67	49.84	56.52	-2	-3%
	Annual Average	57.02	42.72	47.74	51.43	-6	-10%
Family Child Care Learning Home (FCCLH)	Q1	4.19	3.86	3.68	4.03	-0.2	-4%
	Q2	4.10	3.69	3.73	3.94	-0.2	-4%
	Q3	4.27	3.83	4.28	4.31	0.04	1%
	Q4	4.36	3.94	4.05	4.00	-0.4	-8%
	Annual Average	4.23	3.83	3.94	4.07	-0.2	-4%

"Difference" compares the most recent quarter to pre-pandemic levels

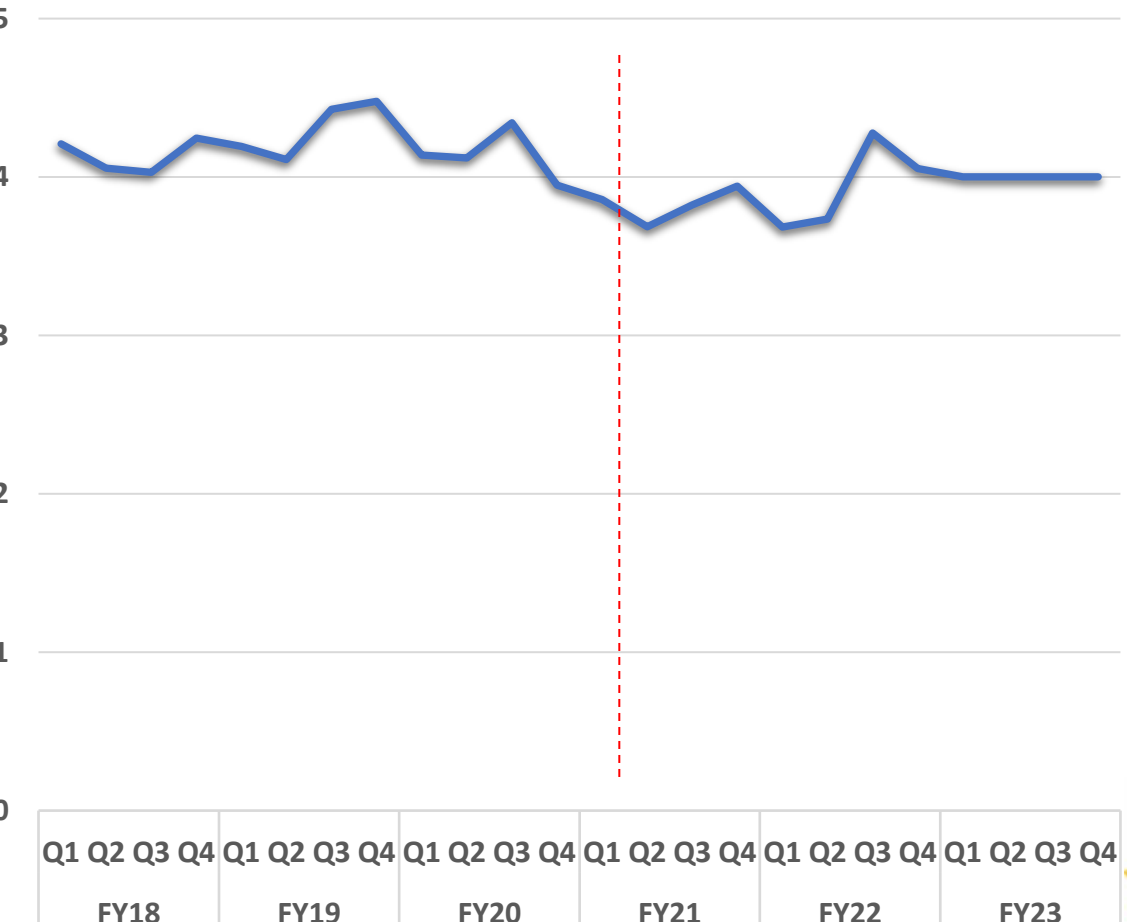


# Average Number of Children by Provider Type

CCLC



FCCLH



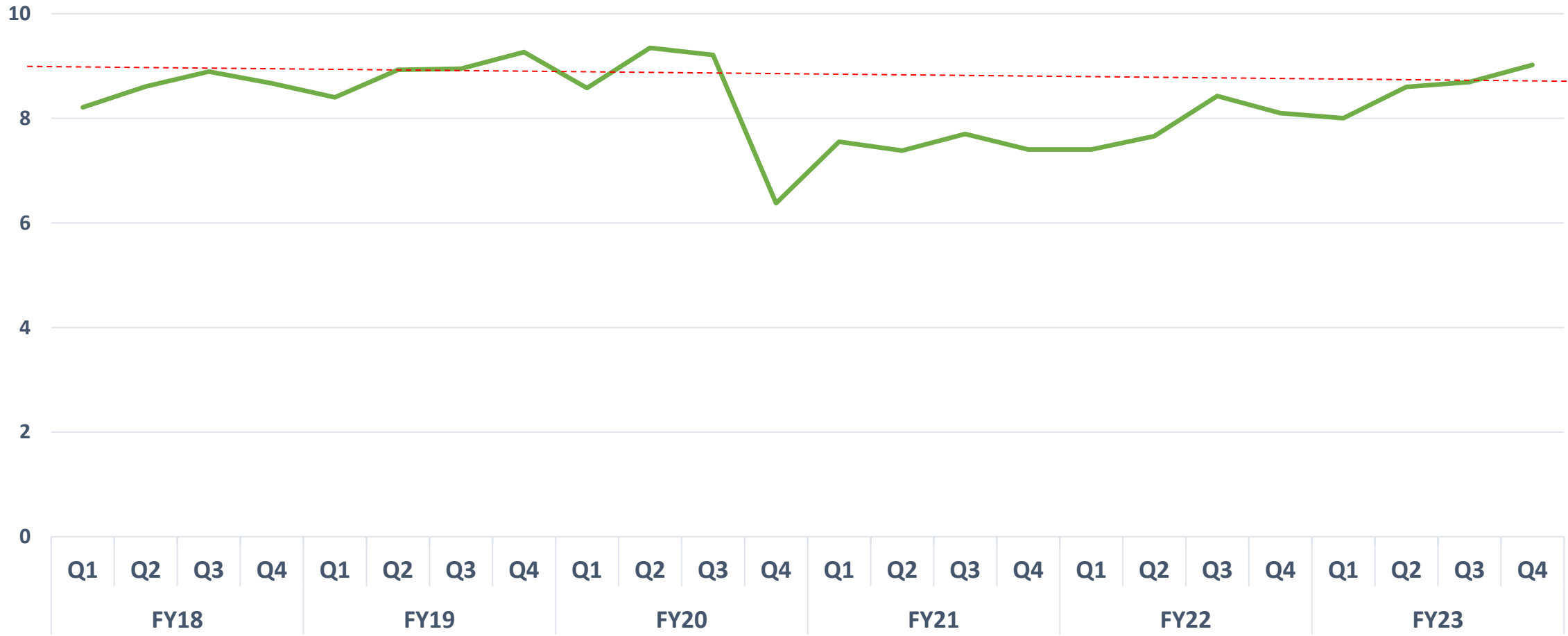
# Average Number of Staff per Facility

Quarter	Pre-Pandemic Avg	FY21	FY22	FY23	Difference	
Q1	8.40	7.55	7.41	8.02	-0.38	-4%
Q2	8.96	7.38	7.66	8.59	-0.37	-4%
Q3	9.02	7.70	8.42	8.69	-0.33	-4%
Q4	8.97	7.40	8.10	9.02	0.06	1%
Annual Avg	8.84	7.51	7.85	8.57	-0.26	-3%

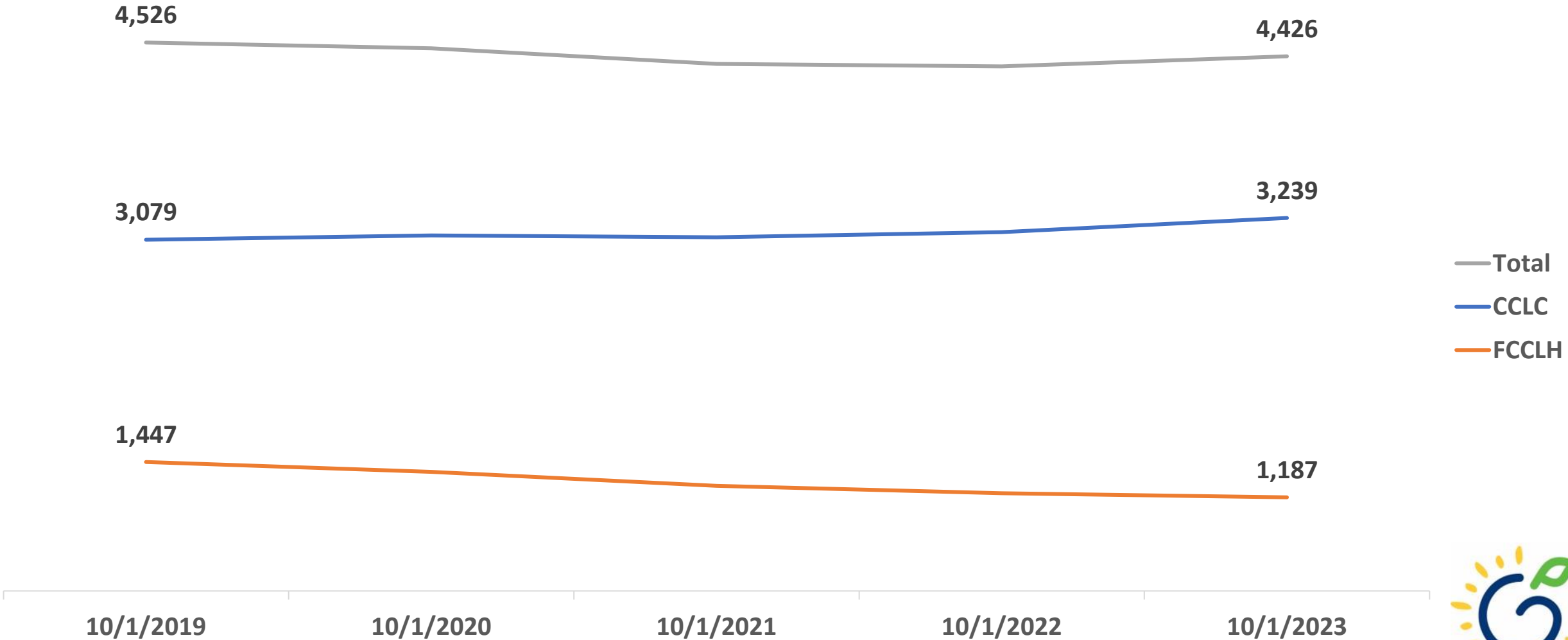
"Difference" compares the most recent quarter to pre-pandemic levels



# Average Number of Classroom Staff per Facility



# Licensed Child Care in Georgia





The following Committee meetings are in session:

**Programs and Rules** – Hickory Conference Room

**Budget and Finance** – Cypress Conference Room

**Quality Innovations and Partnerships** – Oak Conference Room

*The Public Comment Period will commence at 1:00 pm.*



**Georgia Dept  
of Early Care  
and Learning**  
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Welcome to the Board of Early Care  
and Learning

# Public Comment

November 16, 2023



**Georgia Dept  
of Early Care  
and Learning**

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# Committee Reports



**Georgia Dept  
of Early Care  
and Learning**  
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# Board Meeting Dates 2024

- 
- February 15, 2024
  - May 16, 2024
  - August 22, 2024
  - November 21, 2024

