



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

Child Care Services – Staff Training and Professional Development Policy

The Child Care Services (CCS) Division at DECAL has a robust professional development process for staff. Once hired, all new staff receive two days of department orientation, then move into the Child Care Services Onboarding process, which provides over 120 hours of training and hands-on experience over a four-month period before new consultants can conduct inspection visits independently. Specialty unit consultants receive additional training after completion of the CCS Onboarding process. An onboarding plan is created by the CCS Process and Quality Improvement (PQI) Unit for each newly hired CCS staff and consists of a classroom training schedule, on-site or virtual practice inspections, online learning opportunities, and office days for meetings, enrichment activities, and processing work. Classroom trainings are competency based and cover a wide range of topics including health and safety topics related to licensing Core and Non-Core rules, and Child Care Development Fund requirements, which are embedded in licensing rules; the role of the consultant; principles of documentation; investigations; technology and other related skills important to the role of a regulatory consultant. All onboarding training sessions are presented by PQI staff, or designated staff from specialty units. In addition to classroom training, newly hired licensing consultants are paired with a mentor consultant who conduct joint or shadow inspection visits and investigations with new staff during the onboarding process, evaluating their skills, measuring learning and progress, providing coaching, and additional support as needed. The PQI unit provides monthly written feedback to managers of new hires documenting strengths and progress. The PQI unit also utilizes a variety of resources, both electronic and printed, workbooks to ensure consistent information is given and consistent procedures are followed. Training on computer systems used in the division and department is also provided during onboarding. The CCS Onboarding process is a collaborative process between the newly hired staff, trainers, mentors, and managers to ensure staff are as prepared as possible when they complete the onboarding process with many of the necessary skills consultants need to carry out their role as regulators.

All CCS staff are required to complete 24 hours of professional development from an approved source, annually, as part of their job responsibilities. The PQI unit highlights possible trainings, webinars and other types of professional development in a monthly calendar and published newsletter to all CCS staff. Staff can take advantage of in-person trainings or online trainings and courses and are encouraged to identify and obtain professional development based on job responsibilities, career goals, or personal interest topics related to their roles or job performance. CCS staff are encouraged to use NARA regulator competencies to help identify training needs and interests including health and safety topics; child development; diversity and inclusion; building technology skills; understanding statutes; building leadership skills, and in-depth focus on particular rules and regulations. CCS staff are also encouraged to participate in professional learning communities to increase knowledge and support one another as they grow and improve skills around leadership, setting goals, and developing productive habits.