

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
PDG B-5 Needs Assessment Committee Meeting Summary
October 17, 2019

Attendees

Guests: Julie Barnett (Kindercare/Knowledge Learning), Charmaine Godley (United Way Atlanta), Thomas Goldring (Georgia Policy Labs), Monica Griffin (Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta; CHOA), Victoria Hines (Division of Family and Children Services; DFCS), Kim Holland (Gwinnett County Schools), Japera Johnson Hemming (Georgia Policy Labs), Judith Kerr (Department of Public Health; DPH), Hows King (Discovery Point), Courtney May (Georgia Child Care Association), Whitney Mitchell (Department of Education; DOE), Naima Mohamed Simon (Department of Human Services; DPH), Rashidat Mohammed (DPH), Twanna Nelson (DPH), Wande Okunoren-Meadows (Little Ones Learning Center), Joe Perrault (Family Child Care Association), Ellen Reynolds (Georgia Child Care Association), Tevin Roberts (Georgia Head Start Association), Pam Runkle (Quality Care for Children), Kelcie Silvio (Voices for Georgia’s Children), Lori Smith (Baldwin County Schools), Micole Talley (DOE), Tanya Thomas (Georgia Head Start Association), Meghan Welch (DOE), Shana Weldon (Atlanta Public Schools), Jessica Woltjen (Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students; GEEARS), Keisha Wynn (Kids ‘R’ Kids)

Carl Vinson Institute of Government Facilitators: Melinda Williams Moore, Theresa Wright, Jennifer Inglett-Hendershot, Brian Simmons, Katie Davis, Meghan Armstrong

Child Trends Facilitators: Diane Early, Nadia Hall

DECAL Staff: Bentley Ponder, Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships; Susan Adams, Deputy Commissioner for Pre-K and Instructional Support; Rob O’Callaghan, Senior Research and Policy Advisor; Laura Wagner, Director of Community Outreach and Partnerships; Clayton Bassett, Preschool Development Grant Director; Courtney Woullard, Preschool Development Grant Coordinator; Sonja Adams, Director of Provider Services; Jessie Bruno, Research and Policy Analyst; Faith Duncan; Director of Field Operations; Randy Hudgins; Research and Evaluation Director; Shawnell Johnson; CAPS Family Support Director; Elisabetta Kasfir, Deputy Commissioner for Federal Programs; Christi Moore, Director of Professional Learning; April Rogers, Program Operations Director ; Allison Setterlind, Head Start Collaboration Director; Pam Stevens, Deputy Commissioner of Child Care Services.

On October 17, 2019, the needs assessment committee meeting for the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5), facilitated by Georgia’s Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) was called to order at 9:15 am by Deputy Commissioner Susan Adams.

Deputy Commissioner Adams opened the meeting with an overview of the PDG B-5 grant activities, definitions, and guidelines that Georgia will abide by to fulfill the grant specifications. Senior Research and Policy Advisor Rob O’Callaghan detailed material about the PDG B-5

needs assessment phase, specifically focusing on data management, data needs, and data collection. Deputy Commissioner Bentley Ponder gave an outline of the grant's needs assessment domains to be addressed during the needs assessment committee meeting.

Dr. Melinda Moore described the agenda and goals for the meeting. Dr. Moore guided participants into two separate rooms (red and blue), each with a DECAL and Child Trends facilitator and three note takers for a discussion of the following domains:

Domain 4: Quality and availability of early childhood care and education (ECCE),

Domain 6: Quality and availability of programs and supports.

The facilitated group discussion began at 10:30 am.

Each room participated in a roses (strengths), buds (opportunities), and thorns (weaknesses) exercise concerning the following topic areas:

1. Early care and education
2. Supports for focal populations
3. Early intervention services
4. Supports for the workforce

One room was facilitated by Deputy Commissioners Adams and Diane Early and the second room was facilitated by Deputy Commissioner Ponder and Nadia Hall. Participants discussed and reported out their conclusions of the roses, buds, and thorns activity at conclusion of the small group discussions.

The red room concluded the following about quality and availability of ECCE and the quality and availability of programs and supports (e.g. domains 4 and 6):

- Georgia Pre-K is generally agreed upon as a strength in Georgia ECCE, especially full-day Pre-K.
- The Cross Agency Child Data System (CACDS) is seen as a strength in Georgia.
 - All Head Start programs report data into CACDS which assists with filling data gaps.
- The two-generation approach (serving both families and children) to ECCE programming from DECAL, DPH, and other agencies is seen as an opportunity to expand this approach to more programming across Georgia.
- The PDG B-5 grant along with other funding streams is seen as an opportunity to increase collaboration between agencies and programs.
- Lack of data concerning outcomes for the B-5 population is viewed as a “thorn”.
 - Lack of real-time data makes assistance with vulnerable populations difficult as they are more likely to be transient.
- Inconsistent eligibility requirements between ECCE programs and services are seen as a weakness and may impede families from accessing ECCE programs.

The red room concluded the following about quality and availability of ECCE and the quality and availability of programs and supports (e.g. domains 4 and 6):

- The GEEARS map is generally agreed upon as a strength.
 - It allows stakeholders to locate available ECCE programs and centers and then assess gaps in service.
- The increase in pay for lead preschool teachers is viewed as a strength in the workforce.
- There is an opportunity to increase trauma-informed practice in workforce training.
- The 2020 Census is considered an opportunity to garner a more accurate estimate of the B-5 population in Georgia.
 - This will assist in long-term fiscal preparation.
- While the Quality Rated system is generally seen as positive, navigating it is viewed as a weakness.
 - Participants said that families lack understanding of Quality Rated and how to find an open space for their child.
- The cost of quality ECCE programs is viewed as a weakness.
 - Some programs price out many vulnerable populations.

The morning session of the meeting was concluded at 12:00 pm for lunch and resumed at 1:00 pm.

Deputy Commissioners Adams and Ponder directed participants back to the red and blue rooms for a “speed update” activity concerning the following domains: focal populations, number of children served, barriers to funding and provision of high quality ECCE, system integration and interagency collaboration, and transition supports and gaps (e.g. domains 2, 3, 9, 11, and 10). Attendees received one-page documents with the domains’ definitions and the state’s response to the domain within the PDG B-5 grant.

Each group addressed the following questions:

- Is the information consistent with what you know about these domains?
- Is there additional data and/or research in this area that has been overlooked?
- What are the gaps in Georgia’s current policies around these domains?
- Do you have recommendations (or current promising practices) to improve data surrounding these domains?

Each room had three DECAL facilitators, a Child Trends facilitator, and three note takers. One room was facilitated by Deputy Commissioner Adams, Clayton Bassett, and Rob O’Callaghan, and Diane Early. The second room was facilitated by Deputy Commissioner Ponder, Laura Wagner, and Nadia Hall.

The red room concluded the following about focal populations, number of children served, barriers to funding and provision of high quality ECCE, system integration and interagency collaboration, and transition supports and gaps (e.g. domains 2, 3, 9, 11, and 10):

- In general, data presented about the domains were found to be consistent with what participants knew and saw in their programming.
- Participants suggested that a more accurate count of children experiencing homelessness might be obtained by accessing data from the Gateway Center.
 - May also be able to more easily obtain homelessness status if it has been reported to the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) via a sibling.
- Data about the target populations are disparate; more cooperation and collaboration built into policy would assist with data sharing.
- Data from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are desired for richer data analysis.

The blue room concluded the following about focal populations, number of children served, barriers to funding and provision of high quality ECCE, system integration and interagency collaboration, and transition supports and gaps (e.g. domains 2, 3, 9, 11, and 10):

- In general, data presented about the domains were found to be consistent with what participants knew and saw in their programming.
 - Participants did point out that it would be helpful to know more data about the B-5 population not being served by ECCE programs to compare data between those served and those not served.
- Georgia's Cross Agency Child Data System (CACDS) was proposed as an opportunity to educate organizations about its purpose and discussed as potentially becoming a central repository of B-5 data.
 - Participants stated that Medicaid and Children Health Insurance Program (CHIP) data would provide richer data analysis.
 - Different interpretations of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) impede progress on collecting relevant data of the focal populations.
 - Data sharing agreements may need to begin at the local level to fill in data gaps.
 - A link to DOE data may assist in the data gaps for longitudinal data about B-5 outcomes.
- Policies that include transition planning may help families and children transition well to the next stage of ECCE or grade school.
- Better policy and practice alignment between agencies are desired to allow for consistent data, process clarity for families, and program implementation.

After the afternoon session, the groups adjourned to the larger room. Deputy Commissioner Adams thanked the participants and facilitators for their insights and time discussing data for the PDG B-5 needs assessment. She stated that the next step for the needs assessment phase will be to document the discussion from the meeting and apply for the PDG B-5 Year 2 grant.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.