

2017



# DECAL EARLY HEAD START PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT



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## LETTER FROM THE COMMISSIONER



As Commissioner of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), I am proud to present the 2017 Annual Report of the DECAL Early Head Start Partnership (DEHSP). In 2015, when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded an Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership grant to DECAL, it was the first time a state-level agency in Georgia applied for and received federal funding related to Early Head Start. DECAL's application for the grant did not propose that DECAL would directly operate Early Head Start programs. Instead, DECAL proposed to partner with and support various early child care and early education programs in providing Early Head Start services to infants, toddlers, and their families in counties across the metro Atlanta area. This annual report explains DEHSP's operating model and reviews its services, accomplishments, and financial performance in 2017. We are pleased about the progress achieved by DECAL's partners, who continue to demonstrate their commitment to the well-being of infants and toddlers, and their families in Georgia.

Sincerely,  
Amy M. Jacobs  
Commissioner

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## ABOUT DECAL AND THE DECAL EARLY HEAD START PARTNERSHIP

### MISSION

DECAL enhances children's early education experience to promote their academic, social-emotional, and physical development in partnership with families, communities, the early care and education industry, and stakeholders.

### VISION

Every child in Georgia will have access to high-quality early care and education, regardless of family income or location.

### ABOUT DEHSP

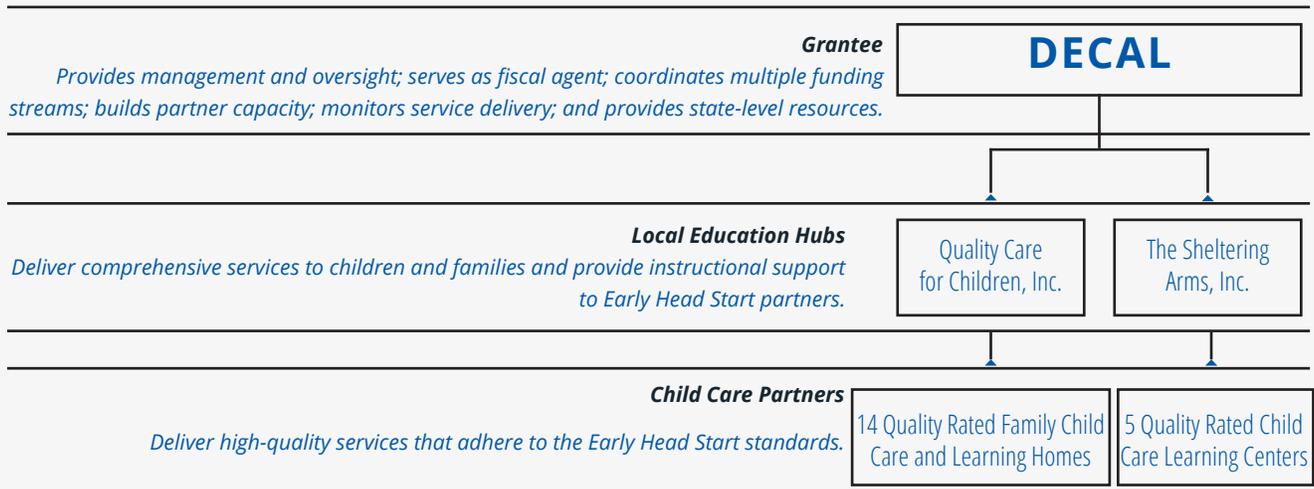
The DEHSP is a system-building initiative that strengthens the state's early education foundation while providing access to high-quality infant and toddler care in high-poverty areas. The partnership enhances and supports early learning settings to provide comprehensive services that meet the needs of low-income working families; provide access to high-quality care; promote the development of infants and toddlers through strong relationship-based experiences and prepare them for the transition into preschool.

# GOALS OF THE **DECAL EARLY HEAD START PARTNERSHIP**

- ★ Provide safe and developmentally appropriate early childhood education services that promote the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of infants and toddlers.
- ★ Leverage community resources and partnerships to support the hubs and child care program partners to meet higher standards of quality. Use the Head Start Program Performance Standards to raise the quality in DECAL Early Head Start Partnership sites.
- ★ Establish, implement, and administer governance and management structures to oversee program operations and to account for federal and matching funds.
- ★ Enhance communication systems and implement strategies across the program to ensure accountability and timely feedback among DECAL, hubs, and child care partners to improve program services.
- ★ Increase family engagement activities that foster family well-being and support mothers and fathers in their roles as primary caregivers and promoters of their children’s learning and development.



## STRUCTURE OF THE **DECAL EARLY HEAD START PARTNERSHIP**



# FAMILIES, CHILDREN & COMMUNITIES SERVED BY THE DECAL EARLY HEAD START PARTNERSHIP

## 217 FAMILIES

- 85%** were single-parent households
- 73%** earned income from employment
- 43%** received WIC
- 32%** were enrolled in an education program
- 26%** have no high school diploma
- 14%** experienced homelessness
- 55%** of homeless families acquired housing
- 8%** received income assistance

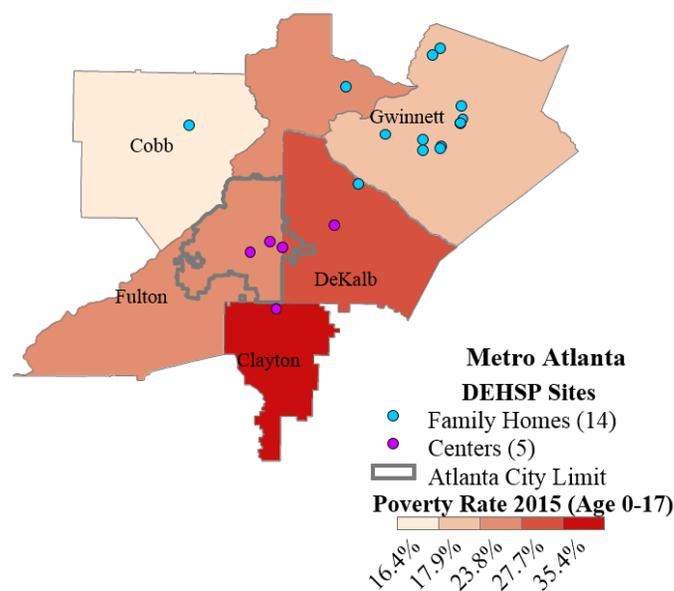
## 240 CHILDREN

- 26%** under 12 months old
- 35%** 13-24 months old
- 31%** 25-36 months old
- 7%** over 36 months old
- 19%** speak Spanish at home
- 48%** eligible for subsidized services
- 10%** have diagnosed disabilities
- 99%** have health insurance and a primary care doctor

## 5 COMMUNITIES

The map on the right shows the five most populous metro Atlanta counties where the partnership offers Early Head Start services. As the map illustrates, the partnership serves counties with high poverty rates and families with high needs.

The table below lists the five counties served by the partnership and includes important data points about each county. As the table illustrates, the poverty rate exceeds the state average in all of the counties served by the partnership except Fulton County, which includes high poverty zip codes and a large homeless population, and Gwinnett County, which includes family child care learning homes that serve dual language learners. Early Head Start programs selected in these counties serve a specific need: families who are homeless and dual language learners, respectively. The estimated number of eligible children in the five counties (25,844) is higher than the total number of Early Head Start slots the state currently receives (4,272). Based on these numbers, a substantial need clearly exists for continuing and even expanding current Early Head Start services.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Cobb County is included in the current Community Assessment for the following reasons: 1) The family child care learning home currently in Cobb County relocated there and was able to expand the number of children it could serve; 2) It is located in one of the most populous counties; 3) It includes a significant dual language learner population.

### POVERTY, ELIGIBILITY, AND EARLY HEAD START (EHS) SLOTS BY COUNTY\*

Countries Served by the DEHSP	Child Poverty Rate 2015 (Age 0-17)	EHS-Eligible Children	# of EHS Slots served in DEHSP	Total EHS Slots	EHS-Eligible Children Receiving Subsidies	EHS-Eligible Children Not Served
Clayton	35%	4,356	40	112	1,109	3,135
Cobb	16%	4,758	5	16	724	4,018
DeKalb	28%	9,024	66	295	1,835	6,894
Fulton	24%	9,151	51	602	2,404	6,146
Gwinnett	18%	6,388	37	84	651	5,653
Five Metro Counties	<b>36%</b>	<b>33,676</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>1,109</b>	<b>6,723</b>	<b>25,844</b>
Georgia	<b>25%</b>	<b>116,835</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>4,272</b>	<b>14,550</b>	<b>98,013</b>

\*DECAL produces forecasts of the under-five population using annual SEER single year of age county population estimates based on a model provided by Fortner (2013). The estimated EHS-eligible children reflects the 2016 county-level birth through age two population multiplied by the county child poverty rate (Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program (2015, November).

## FOCUS AREAS OF THE **DECAL EARLY HEAD START PARTNERSHIP**



### **IMPROVING SCHOOL READINESS**

Hubs evaluated and analyzed child outcome data from select school readiness goals aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework and the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards. The process used My Teaching Strategies® and GOLD® markers and other relevant information to report child outcomes using raw data and summaries to analyze the data. Since each child is unique in his or her developmental progress, teachers use ongoing developmental assessments to track progress and identify supports needed for children who are falling behind their peers in targeted domains of development. The domains are: physical development and motor skills; social and emotional development; approaches to play and learning; communication, language, and

literacy; and cognitive development and general knowledge.

Children's progress on indicators within the domains is assessed and compared with the widely held expectations for children at the same age. Overall, findings indicate that the majority of the children served through the DEHSP met the school readiness goals. Findings are accessible on the DEHSP's web page at <http://decals.ga.gov/BftS/ChildCarePartnership.aspx>.

An analysis of the data reported by The Sheltering Arms, Inc. hub identified teachers requiring additional support in leveling and recording children's progress. An analysis of the data reported by Quality Care for Children, Inc. hub identified a need to focus more attention on resources for dual language learners and their families.

### **ENHANCING TEACHING QUALITY**

In 2017 a leadership team was created to develop goals and objectives to enhance teaching practices and to determine ways to ensure training and technical assistance systems are in place to promote teaching that results in positive child outcomes. One of the strategies the team identified to improve teaching practices was a model called practice-based coaching (PBC).

DECAL staff, Head Start staff, and other stakeholders collaborated to develop the PBC plan for the partnership. The model was then piloted beginning in September 2017 to determine which strategies and processes would work best for full implementation. The lessons learned during the pilot will inform the full implementation of PBC.

### **PROMOTING PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Using the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework (PFCE), the DEHSP integrated parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services to support family well-being and promote children's learning and development. The program developed and implemented innovative two-generation approaches that leveraged community partnerships and other funding resources to address the needs of families across the program. To measure progress, the partnership evaluated family outcomes in the areas of family well-being, positive

parent-child relationships, families as life-long educators, families as learners, family engagement, families as advocates and leaders, and families connected to peers and the community. Indicators within each area help identify and assess family strengths and needs. In 2017, families demonstrated gains in all areas as measured at the beginning and end of the year. A detailed report is available on the DECAL Early Head Start Partnership's page at <http://decals.ga.gov/BftS/ChildCarePartnership.aspx>.

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR THE DECAL EARLY HEAD START PARTNERSHIP

## FEDERAL SHARE TOTAL:

**\$6,962,388**

### OFFICE OF HEAD START: \$4,531,230

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start provides funds to DEHSP through a competitive grant process.



### OFFICE OF CHILD CARE: \$2,431,158

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care allocates the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) to states to provide financial assistance to low-income families to access child care so they can work or attend a job training or educational program. These funds are layered through subsidy grants with DEHSP.



## NON-FEDERAL SHARE TOTAL:

**\$688,880**

### GEORGIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY: \$688,880

The Georgia General Assembly allocates state funds to meet the required match for the federal CCDF and Head Start funding.



## FINAL EXPENDITURES

**PERSONNEL | 2.2%**  
**TRAINING/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE | 0.3%**  
**BENEFITS | 1.4%**

**TRAVEL | 0.2%**  
**CONTRACTS | 95.6%**  
**SUPPLIES | 0.3%**

# REVIEWS OF THE **DECAL EARLY HEAD START PARTNERSHIP**

## FEDERAL REVIEW

Federal reviewers examined required documentation and conducted site visits and interviews in March 2017 to answer the following questions:

1. Have funds been used directly or indirectly to improve services, systems, or environments?
2. What was the overall benefit to children and families?
3. Has DEHSP been able to sustain improvements and improve outcomes for children and families?
4. Has DEHSP assisted partners in building program capacity?
5. How do the partners use the resources to build their capacity and comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards?

## PROGRAM SUMMARY REPORT

Content Area	Performance Outcome
Implementation of Services	Satisfactory Progress
Fiscal Management	Satisfactory Progress
Ensuring Health and Safety of Children	Satisfactory Progress
Providing Quality Learning Environments	Satisfactory Progress
Engaging Families and Communities	Satisfactory Progress
Program Management and Quality	Satisfactory Progress

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

To ensure that it is meeting its goals and responding to the needs of children and families it serves, DEHSP conducted a community assessment in early 2017. DECAL's Research and Policy Analysis team led the multi-method, iterative approach that examined community and state level data, and collected direct feedback from focus groups, interviews, and surveys of hub staff, providers, directors, teachers, and parents. Respondents said they felt supported by and connected to the goals of DEHSP. They also stated that all or almost all children participating in DEHSP were developmentally on track. Based on the results, DEHSP is committed to continuous quality improvement in the areas of partner support and communication, and child development.

# TESTIMONIALS ABOUT THE **DECAL EARLY HEAD START PARTNERSHIP**

## PARENT TESTIMONIAL

*"My son was enrolled in the DECAL Early Head Start program in July 2015. Since being enrolled in DEHSP, my family life has changed for the better. We loved our child care provider. She's helped us in so many ways. She cared not only for my son, but loved and cared for our entire family. I'm also thankful for our family service case manager. He was a great resource guide for me throughout the entire program. I will surely miss our monthly home visit. Last, but not least, I thank the DEHSP for helping me with the behavior challenges my son was facing. I admit I was in denial at first, but the mental health specialist (MHS) and the child care provider helped me realize some things. Since working with the MHS and provider my son's behavior has changed. We will miss the DECAL Early Head Start Program."*



## PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

*"One of the Early Head Start (EHS) students in our toddler class, who has been with us from the time he was an infant, began complaining of pain to his teachers. They had also noticed some changes in his development. Several visits to various doctors confirmed the worst – a cancerous tumor. Because he was in EHS, he could continue his schooling and his family could focus on the treatment options and costs without worrying about child care expenses being a financial burden. All of us at the Center supported him and his family throughout his cancer treatment. His teachers also incorporated his progress into class lessons to help the students transition with him. We're glad to report that he is now cancer free and in one of our Pre-K classes, where he's a star student."*