



# Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning

BRIGHT FROM THE START

This document describes the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning's (DECAL) proposed plan for distributing funds from the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA). DECAL has received \$403,660,875 from the CRRSA to help mitigate the negative financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Georgia's child care industry and to help eligible Georgia families (also negatively impacted by the pandemic) pay for child care.

DECAL will use this historic investment in early learning to support child care programs, the early care and education workforce, and families with young children. DECAL will administer this funding in context of the following:

- The funding is one-time in nature, and DECAL does not expect to receive this level of funding from the federal government annually.
- Therefore, the projects described in this plan are one-time in nature and will not require an on-going appropriation to accomplish the goals of each project.

Given the large amount of funding and the spending timeline set forth by the CRRSA, DECAL will distribute this funding in phases. Phase 1 will be comprehensive and broad supporting all open, licensed programs, the professional workforce who directly serve young children, and families who rely on the Childcare and Parent Services program (CAPS), Georgia's subsidized child care program, to pay for childcare.

Phase 2 (and subsequent phases) will be more strategic and targeted based on specific needs of the child care industry, the workforce, and families with young children as informed by feedback from providers, families, and stakeholders.

## Phase 1:

**Child care programs:** STABLE, Round 3 (*This funding will help child care programs remain open during the public health crisis by providing financial assistance to address decreased revenue from reduced enrollment and increased operating costs.*)

Short Term Assistance Benefit for Licensed Entities (STABLE) payments will be available to all open, licensed child care providers. Like with the previous STABLE payments, providers will have a measure of autonomy in determining how to use the funds to best meet the needs of their program; funds may be used to pay for salaries and benefits for lead teachers, assistant teachers, and other employees; substitute teachers; tuition relief for families; lease or mortgage payments; utilities; cleaning supplies; classroom materials and supplies; unreimbursed food; and additional supplies required by CDC guidelines.

This benefit payment will be based on program capacity, not on attendance, for open programs only.

**Early care and education workforce:** The Early Childhood Professionals Bonus *(This funding will help offset lost wages, ensure employee retention, and reward quality among early care and education professionals.)*

All Georgia Pre-K teachers, assistant teachers, child care teachers, and staff will be eligible to receive a one-time \$1,000 bonus.

The Early Childhood Professionals Bonus will be available to Georgia's early care and education professionals (not just teachers but also directors, assistant directors, cooks, etc.) working in licensed child care programs, Department of Defense (DOD) programs, Early Head Start and Head Start programs, and Georgia's Pre-K lead and assistant teachers in public schools.

**Families with young children:** Eliminating Payments for Families Receiving CAPS *(This funding will help ensure that children in families eligible for subsidized child care will continue to receive high quality child care by reducing the financial burden for families.)*

Families receiving CAPS will not be required to pay any additional tuition charged by the provider or the family co-pay. DECAL will pay the provider the full published rate for 12 months, thereby significantly enhancing families' access to quality child care during this time when a family's ability to pay is compromised.

**Competitive grant for programs serving school age:** School Age Grant *(This funding will support child care providers who are incurring additional expenses while caring for and supporting school age children while they attend school virtually and during the summer months to provide academic and social enrichment programs.)*

Licensed child care providers who serve school age children and license-exempt providers who have served a child who has received CAPS within the last two years will be eligible to receive a School Age Grant. \$5,000,000 will be allocated for the School Age Grant project.

School Age Grant funds may be used to enhance technology to support students who attend school virtually during the school year and to support summer education activities to prevent learning loss. Funds can also be used for equipment, materials, and after school curriculum designed specifically for children 5 to 12 years old.

Best Practices in School Age Care training will be available for all grant recipients, and school age technical assistance will be offered to a subset of grant recipients.

To comment on this proposed plan to distribute funding from the CRRSA, email DECAL at [ccdfstateplan@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:ccdfstateplan@dec.al.ga.gov) by February 23, 2021. The final spending plan for Phase 1 will be posted on the DECAL COVID page with timelines for implementing each project.