The Quality Connection

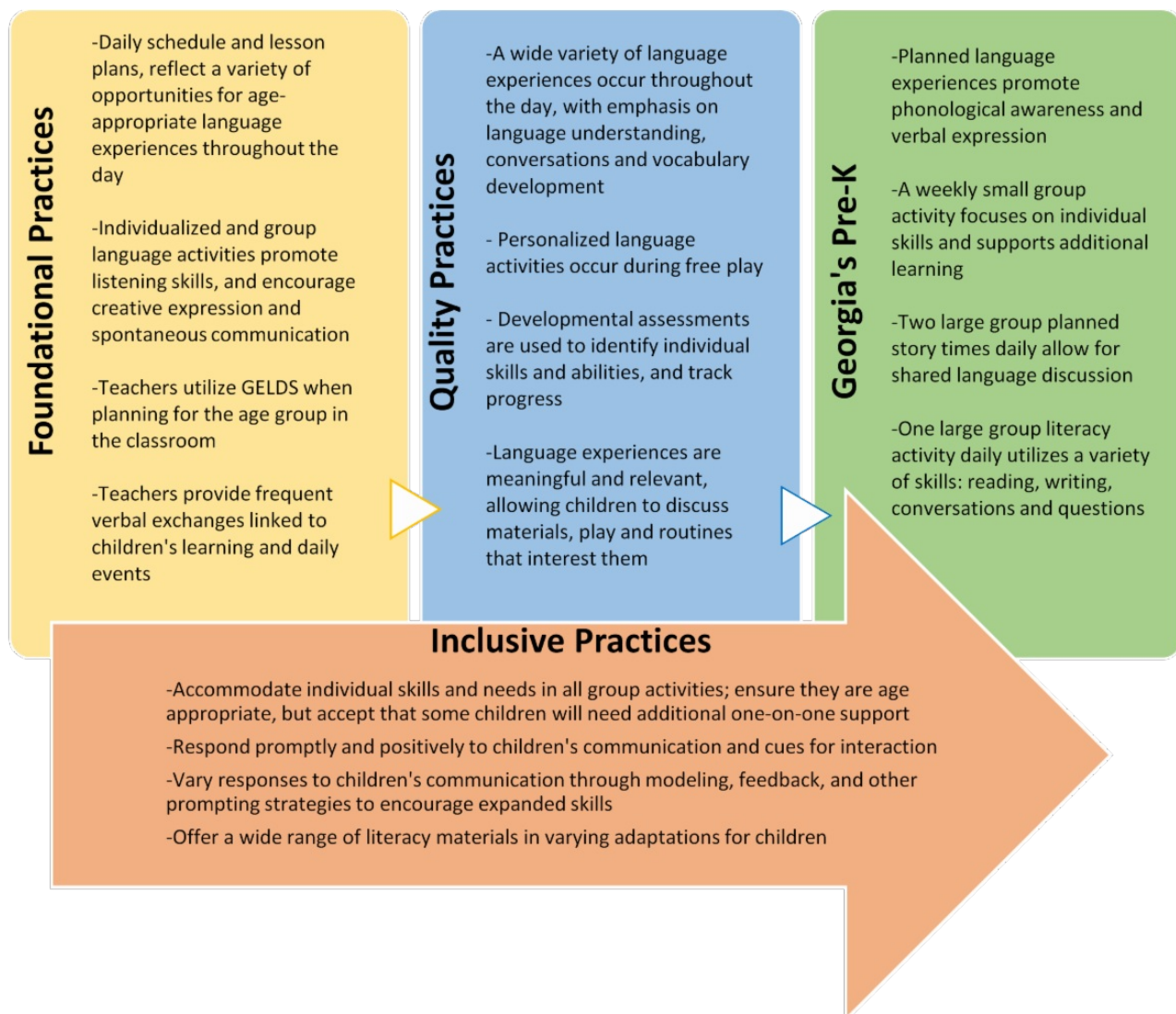## Issue 5

Beyond the Rule

A Path to Quality Care

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Each issue of *The Quality Connection* will focus on one classroom component and will identify connections between requirements and expectations of DECAL's various divisions and what impact each one has on classroom practices around the specific component. *The Quality Connection* will illustrate how all DECAL programs are part of a quality continuum and are designed to work together towards continuous quality improvement.

This issue will focus on the importance of **language experiences.**

The following chart shows the progression of fundamental practices found in Child Care Licensing rules, to practices utilized in Quality Rated and preschool-specific practices found in Georgia's Pre-K. Strategies for Inclusion and Behavior Support should be embedded throughout all levels of quality practices.

Foundational Practices

-Daily schedule and lesson plans, reflect a variety of opportunities for age-appropriate language experiences throughout the day

-Individualized and group language activities promote listening skills, and encourage creative expression and spontaneous communication

-Teachers utilize GELDS when planning for the age group in the classroom

-Teachers provide frequent verbal exchanges linked to children's learning and daily events

Quality Practices

-A wide variety of language experiences occur throughout the day, with emphasis on language understanding, conversations and vocabulary development

- Personalized language activities occur during free play

- Developmental assessments are used to identify individual skills and abilities, and track progress

-Language experiences are meaningful and relevant, allowing children to discuss materials, play and routines that interest them

Georgia's Pre-K

-Planned language experiences promote phonological awareness and verbal expression

-A weekly small group activity focuses on individual skills and supports additional learning

-Two large group planned story times daily allow for shared language discussion

-One large group literacy activity daily utilizes a variety of skills: reading, writing, conversations and questions

Inclusive Practices

-Accommodate individual skills and needs in all group activities; ensure they are age appropriate, but accept that some children will need additional one-on-one support

-Respond promptly and positively to children's communication and cues for interaction

-Vary responses to children's communication through modeling, feedback, and other prompting strategies to encourage expanded skills

-Offer a wide range of literacy materials in varying adaptations for children

Language Experiences - Facts to Remember

Caregivers and teachers can create a language rich environment by providing many and varied materials in the classroom and encouraging children to express their thoughts and ideas as they participate in routines and activities. By naming objects, feelings, and actions, caregivers expand vocabulary for even the very youngest children. Asking open-ended questions and listening to a child's response, allows children to express themselves, and promotes conversation.

When a caregiver responds to an infant's cooing and babbling, they send the message that what the child has to say is important. When a caregiver engages in pretend play with toddlers and preschool children, they encourage creative expression, and when they ask questions that promote deeper thinking, children begin to develop problem solving skills. Back and forth conversations with children of any age, enrich the learning environment by providing meaning to activities and deepen relationships between children and caregivers.

Ensure all children are included in the classroom by utilizing a variety of communication methods, including sign language, assistive technology, picture boards, Frequency Modulation (FM) systems for hearing aids, translators, other languages, etc. Communicating with children and families in their native language and through methods other than verbal communication when needed, improves experiences for everyone.

How do language experiences connect to child development and the classroom environment?

Infants	Toddlers & 2's	Preschool 3's & 4's	School Age
All language experiences should be individualized	**Most language activities should be individualized**	**Group language activities should be limited and engaging**	**Group language activities should be self-chosen**
-An infant turns in the direction of the sound from a musical instrument or teacher's voice	-A teacher sings a simple song while modeling corresponding fingerplay actions and encourages children to participate	-A teacher reads a story to children, then encourages them to retell the story using hand puppets as props	-Children use a prompt to tell a progressive story, while the teacher captures the story on chart paper
- A teacher recites simple rhymes or songs using infant names during morning arrival	-A teacher names qualities of an object as she talks to children (Ex. "Place the red ball in the blue box")	-A teacher asks children to describe something they have painted, then writes their description on the picture	-Children prepare a healthy snack, using picture directions and ingredients provided by the teacher
-A teacher introduces sign language with older infants to communicate needs and wants, then verbally acknowledges and responds when infants use signs to communicate	-A teacher asks children simple questions and allows them time to respond (Ex. "Would you like more milk?" and one child nods and says yes, while another gives the sign for more)	-A teacher demonstrates thumbs up and thumbs down gestures to children, then asks children to express their feelings about specific activities, songs, meals, etc. using thumbs up/down	-Children use gestures and motions to play a game of charades

-Children are allowed to write and perform their own play |

How can spaces and materials be used in the learning environment to encourage language development?

Expressive Language	• Spaces and materials that encourage children to use words to express their thoughts and feelings, to engage in conversations, and to ask questions. • Example: children read books, create or sings songs, recite rhymes and/or stories, and have conversations with other children
Written Language	• Spaces and materials that allow children to create or explore written letters, words and language. • Example: children use paper and writing instruments to create and write in journals, practice writing words or letters, or observe words written on pictures, cards, or labels
Receptive Language	• Spaces and materials that contain equipment and activities that allow children to listen to recorded stories and spoken words. • Example: children use a tape player and headphones to listen to stories, while other children participate in activities that require following directions (ex. Simon says)

Additional information and resources

- **Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning/Quality Rated**
  http://qualityrated.org/
- CAPS Quality Rated Deadline:
  https://caps.decal.ga.gov/en/CAPSQualityRatedDeadline
- For Provider assistance/inquiries regarding children's behavior, please contact the Inclusion and Behavior Support Specialist Helpline at: 1-833-354-4357 or email inclusion@decal.ga.gov
- For additional language and literacy information, please access the following links:
  - Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) - http://www.gelds.decal.ga.gov/
  - Cox Campus Language and Literacy Online Training - https://app.coxcampus.org/courses/categories