

# Welcome to the Board of Early Care and Learning

*May 16, 2024*



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# Board Meeting Welcome

*Phil Davis, Board Chair*



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# Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- Approve 05/16/2024 agenda
- Approve 02/15/2024 minutes



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# Inspiration

Susan Harper



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# Board Member Updates

# Commissioner's Updates

*Amy M. Jacobs, Commissioner*



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# Pre-K Teacher of the Year

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- Funded through a private donor/DECAL Foundation
- Each finalist receives \$500
- Next Steps
  - August – CLASS Observation, interview, small group video submission
  - September - Winners announced, one for the private child care centers and one for the public schools
  - Winners receive \$3000 for themselves, \$3000 for a classroom makeover and \$1500 for travel and substitutes.



# Pre-K TOTY Finalists – Private Child Care Centers



# Pre-K TOTY Finalists – Public Schools





# A Magnificent Field Trip to the Governor's Mansion

- New book written by Malcolm Mitchell
- Each Pre-K classroom and students received a copy of the new book
- Field trip to the Governor's Mansion on May 8<sup>th</sup>



# Finance, Legislative, & Administrative Updates

*Rian Ringsrud, Deputy Commissioner for Finance & Administration*



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## FY 2024 Budget Comparison

Data as of March 31st	Budget	Expenditures*	Remaining Balance	% Remaining
BY PROGRAMS				
Child Care Services	\$997,069,448	\$811,069,182	\$186,000,266	19%
Nutrition	\$170,155,978	\$122,077,161	\$48,078,817	28%
Pre-K + (HS)	\$462,730,096	\$344,801,976	\$117,928,120	25%
Quality Initiatives	\$57,817,036	\$39,118,879	\$18,698,157	32%
Totals	\$1,687,772,558	\$1,317,067,198	\$370,705,360	22%

BY FUNDING SOURCES				
State General	\$63,285,758	\$42,012,928	\$21,272,830	34%
State Lottery	\$462,555,096	\$344,664,586	\$117,890,510	25%
Federal	\$1,161,432,204	\$930,130,707	\$231,301,497	20%
Other	\$499,500	\$258,977	\$240,523	48%
Totals	\$1,687,772,558	\$1,317,067,198	\$370,705,360	22%

\* Includes encumbrances.

## Finance Update FY 2024 Budget Summary – Q3





## Amended FY 2024 - HB 915

Original FY 2024  
Appropriation

Amended FY 2024

Change

### BY PROGRAMS

Child Care Services	\$330,040,159	\$330,511,666	\$471,507
Nutrition	\$170,000,000	\$170,155,978	\$155,978
Pre-K + (HS)	\$443,965,064	\$462,555,096	\$18,765,032
Quality Initiatives	\$57,693,238	\$57,817,036	\$123,798
Totals	\$1,001,698,461	\$1,021,214,776	\$19,516,315

### BY FUNDING SOURCES

State General	\$62,534,475	\$62,534,365	\$751,283
State Lottery	\$443,790,064	\$462,555,096	\$18,765,032
Federal	\$494,874,422	\$475,649,841	\$0
Other	\$499,500	\$499,500	\$0
Totals	\$1,001,698,461	\$1,021,214,776	\$19,516,315

Amended FY 2024  
Appropriation  
HB 915



# Child Care Services

State General Funds Change			
FY 2024	AFY 2024	Increase	% Change
\$62,534,475	\$63,005,982	\$471,507	1.43%

## Increase

- Increase funds to provide a one-time \$1,000 salary supplement for full-time, benefit-eligible employees for recruitment and retention= \$471,507

Amended FY 2024  
Appropriation  
HB 915



# Nutrition Services

State General Funds Change			
FY 2024	AFY 2024	Increase	% Change
\$0	\$ 155,978	\$ 155,978	100%

## Increase

- Increase funds to provide a one-time \$1,000 salary supplement for full-time, benefit-eligible employees for recruitment and retention= \$55,978
- Provide startup grants of up to \$10,000 per provider to establish additional Summer Food Service Program meal sites in areas with high rates of child food insecurity= \$100,000

Amended FY 2024  
Appropriation  
HB 915



# Pre-K Program

State Lottery Funds Change			
FY 2024	AFY 2024	Increase	% Change
\$ 443,790,064	\$ 462,555,096	\$ 18,765,032	4.23%

## Increase

- Increase funds to provide a one-time \$1,000 salary supplement for full-time, benefit-eligible teachers and employees for recruitment and retention= \$8,300,892
- Provide funds for computer refresh= \$99,574
- Increase funds to reflect the correct employer contribution rate for State Health Benefit Plan= \$1,389,766
- Increase funds to expand the Summer Transition Program= \$8,974,800

Amended FY 2024  
Appropriation  
HB 915



# Quality Initiatives

State General Funds Change			
FY 2024	AFY 2024	Increase	% Change
\$0	\$123,798	\$123,798	100%

## Increase

- Increase funds to provide a one-time \$1,000 salary supplement for full-time, benefit-eligible employees for recruitment and retention= \$123,798

Amended FY 2024  
Appropriation  
HB 915



## FY 2025 Appropriation

Original FY 2024  
Appropriation

FY 2025  
Appropriation

Change

### BY PROGRAMS

Child Care Services	\$330,040,159	\$339,388,378	\$9,348,219
Nutrition	\$170,000,000	\$170,000,000	\$0
Pre-K + (HS)	\$443,965,064	\$541,598,948	\$97,633,884
Quality Initiatives	\$57,693,238	\$57,693,238	\$0
Totals	\$1,001,698,461	\$1,108,680,564	\$106,982,103

### BY FUNDING SOURCES

State General	\$62,534,475	\$71,882,694	\$9,348,219
State Lottery	\$443,790,064	\$541,423,948	\$97,633,884
Federal	\$494,874,422	\$494,874,422	\$0
Other	\$499,500	\$499,500	\$0
Totals	\$1,001,698,461	\$1,108,680,564	\$106,982,103

FY 2025  
Appropriation  
HB 916



# Child Care Services

State General Funds Change			
FY 2024	FY 2025	Increase	% Change
\$62,534,475	\$71,882,694	\$9,348,219	14.95%

## Increase

- Increase funds to provide for a 4% cost-of-living-adjustment for state employees not to exceed \$3,000= \$35,010
- Increase funds to raise Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) reimbursement to improve market rates for childcare providers= \$ 9,269,016

FY 2025  
Appropriation  
HB 916



# Pre-K Program

State Lottery Funds Change			
FY 2024	FY 2025	Increase	% Change
\$443,790,064	\$541,598,948	\$97,633,884	22%

## Increases

### Teachers:

- Increase funds to adjust the state base salary schedule to increase salaries for certified Pre-K teachers and assistant teachers by \$2,500= \$24,986,832
- Improve salary parity between Pre-K lead teachers and K-12 teachers by moving to the State Board of Education salary schedule= \$4,682,380
- Provide funds for a salary increase for assistant Pre-K teachers to provide parity with K-12 paraprofessionals= \$14,752,422
- Increase formula funds for teacher training and experience= \$1,261,840
- Increase formula funds to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per- month (PMPM) rate for certified teachers at public Pre-K providers to \$1,760 effective July 1, 2024= \$2,414,115

FY 2025  
Appropriation  
HB 916





# Pre-K Program

## Increases – Continued

### **Classrooms:**

- Increase funds for year one of a four-year phase in to reduce classroom size from 22 to 20 students to improve instructional quality= \$9,509,822
- Increase funds to expand the Summer Transition Program= \$8,974,800
- Increase operating funds for Pre-K programs by increasing start-up grants for new Pre-K classrooms from \$8,000 to \$30,000 per classroom= \$1,981,493
- Increase operating funds for Pre-K programs by providing \$15,000 replenishment grants every five years= \$11,454,000
- Increase operating funds for Pre-K programs by increasing transportation funding from \$16.50 per category I student to \$80.78 per student for all students= \$4,052,718
- Increase operating funds [specifically] for private providers= \$11,498,339

### **DECAL:**

- Increase funds to provide for a 4% cost-of-living-adjustment for state employees not to exceed \$3,000= \$242,607
- Provide funds for computer refresh= \$49,787
- Increase funds to upgrade provider management system= \$612,290
- Provide funds for three Pre-Kindergarten administrative positions= \$383,311

FY 2025  
Appropriation  
HB 916



# Georgia's Pre-K and Instructional Supports Updates

*Susan Adams, Deputy Commissioner for Georgia's Pre-K and Instructional Supports*



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# Summer Transition Program 2024

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- Program Models
  - Rising Pre-K
  - Rising Kindergarten
- Five-week program
  - 23 Instructional Days
- Class sizes
  - 12 for Rising Pre-K
  - 14 for Rising Kindergarten
- Funded with Lottery dollars



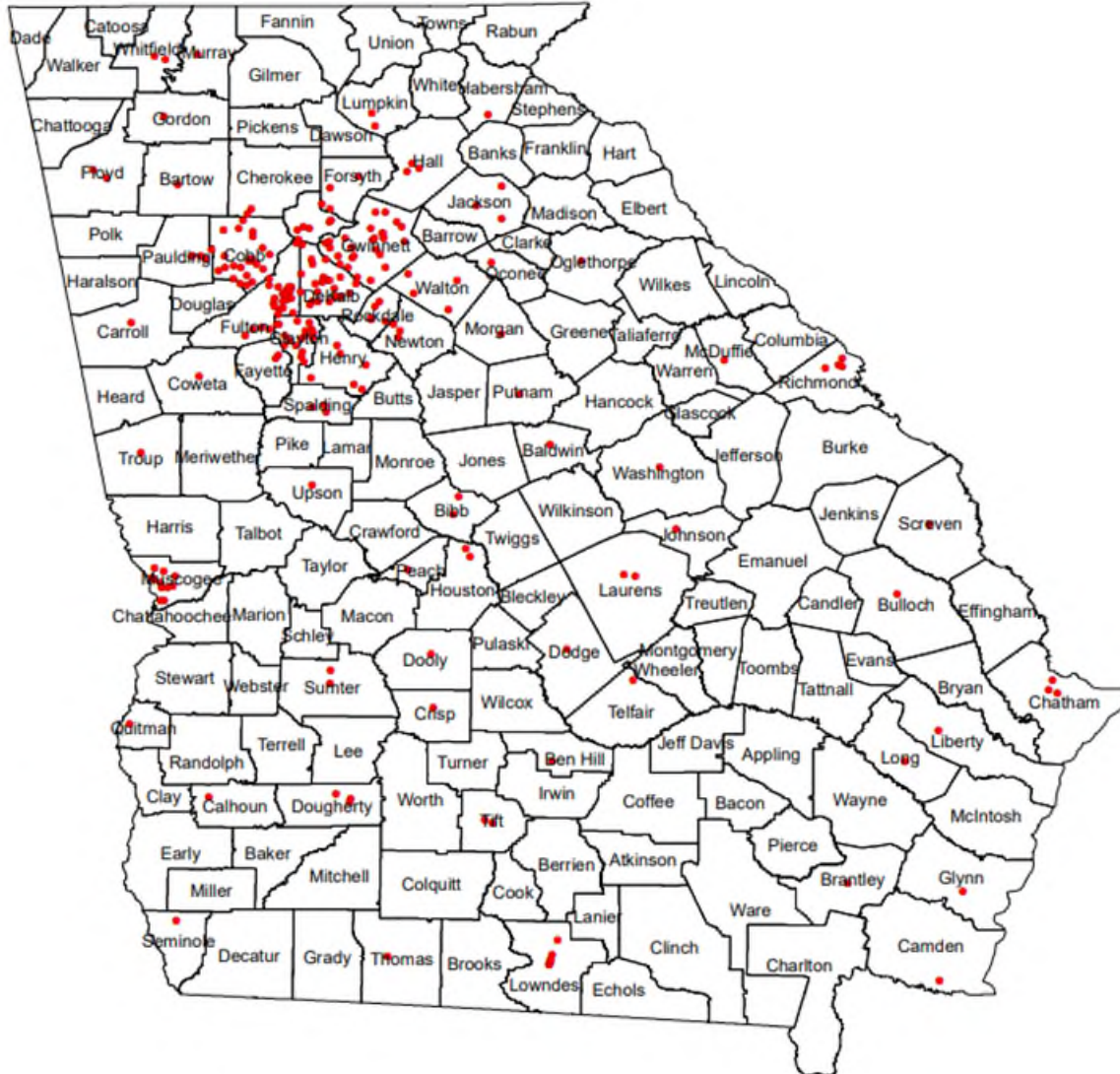
# Rising Pre-K Classrooms



Slots: 840  
Classes: 70



# Rising Kindergarten Classrooms



Slots: 4,564  
Classes: 326

# Pre-K FY 2025 Updates

*Budget Increases support the access to and quality of Georgia's Pre-K Program*

Access	Quality
Funding of additional classrooms (~90 classes per year for next four years)	Reduction of class size from 22 students to 20 students
Inclusion of Pre-K in the K-12 capital outlay formula	Salary parity with K-12 for Pre-K lead and assistant teachers
Increased operating funds for private programs	Increased start-up funding for new classrooms and ongoing replenishment grants for continuation classrooms
Increased funds for transportation	



# New GAPre-K System

- New system, GAPREK, will launch on July 1, 2024.
- New Phase 1 functionality will include:
  - Electronic signature and submission on grant agreements
  - Online change and waiver requests
  - Real-time teacher and student data entry
  - Automated teacher and student data verification
  - Revised payment advices
  - Updated Pre-K visit process
- Future Phase to include a Family Portal
  - Electronic submission of forms and documents
  - Online waiting list



# Get GAPREK Ready!

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- Upcoming communication and training opportunities
  - DECAL Download Podcast - *posted on April 23<sup>rd</sup>*
  - GAPREK Website- *Launch Mid-May*
  - Regional Information Sessions- *Last 2 weeks of May*
  - Webinars & Tutorial Videos- *Post in June*
  - Training
    - Virtual- *Beginning mid-June*
    - In-person- *August*





# Supporting Children's Mental Health

Laura Lucas, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Director



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# Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Updates

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- Promotion/Prevention
  - Children's Mental Health Week May 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>
  - Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) – DECAL Pilot
- Policy/Finance
  - Billing Guide for IECMH Clinicians – Data shows increase in billing!
  - Next - Private Insurance and Financial Mapping Project
- Workforce Development
  - Georgia Association for Infant Mental Health has trained almost 150 clinicians in Child Parent Psychotherapy in Georgia!
  - On-going training in other IECMH best practice models





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# Children's Mental Health Week

May 6th-10th

- Virtual puppet shows
- Teacher gift card giveaways
- Classroom activities
- **New** Classroom Calm Corner Resources
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Feelings Friday Dance Party with CALi
- 1 grand prize winner will receive a live puppet show and a visit from CALi!







# What is Mental Health Consultation?

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Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) is a **prevention-based service** provided by a trained mental health professional to help guide and support caregivers (families, teachers, and childcare providers) to provide optimal social and emotional development for young children.



IECMHC has been shown to improve children's social skills and emotional functioning, promote healthy relationships, reduce challenging behaviors, reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions, improve classroom quality, and reduce provider stress, burnout, and turnover.



# IECMHC Pilot Update

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- Currently conducting a pilot:
  - Macon and Savannah
  - 11 child care programs
  - 6 consultants
    - 2 of the 6 are supervisors who are supporting multiple clinicians
    - 1 consultant at DECAL providing office hours for SEEDS helpline support
  - 5 Inclusion and Behavior Support Specialists
- Pilot Components:
  - Training for care center staff on Pyramid Model and Trauma-Informed Care
  - Funding to purchase social-emotional materials for classrooms
  - Relationship-building with and resource-sharing by consultant
  - Mental Health support for individual children and families
- Initial evaluation reflects a need and desire for IECMHC, more outcomes expected in year 2 of the pilot.
- Success story



# Federal Programs Updates

*Elisabetta Kasfir, Deputy Commissioner for Federal Programs*



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# COVID Billing Policy

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## Emergency CAPS Payment Policy Waiver

Implemented in April of 2020 during the nationally declared public health emergency

Enabled providers to continue to operate or to pay teachers in the event of low enrollment or a temporary closure





# COVID Billing Policy

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The emergency CAPS payment policy waiver regarding COVID billing and temporary closure is ending



The nationally declared public health emergency ended in May 2023



The funding used to support this policy was limited and will be expiring in the near future



# COVID Billing Policy

CAPS will not pay providers if the child did not attend at least once during the service week, except in instances under the former policy regarding holding a slot

CAPS will not pay if the provider was not open for care at least one day during the service week

***Former*** CAPS Billing Policy Will Resume

June 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

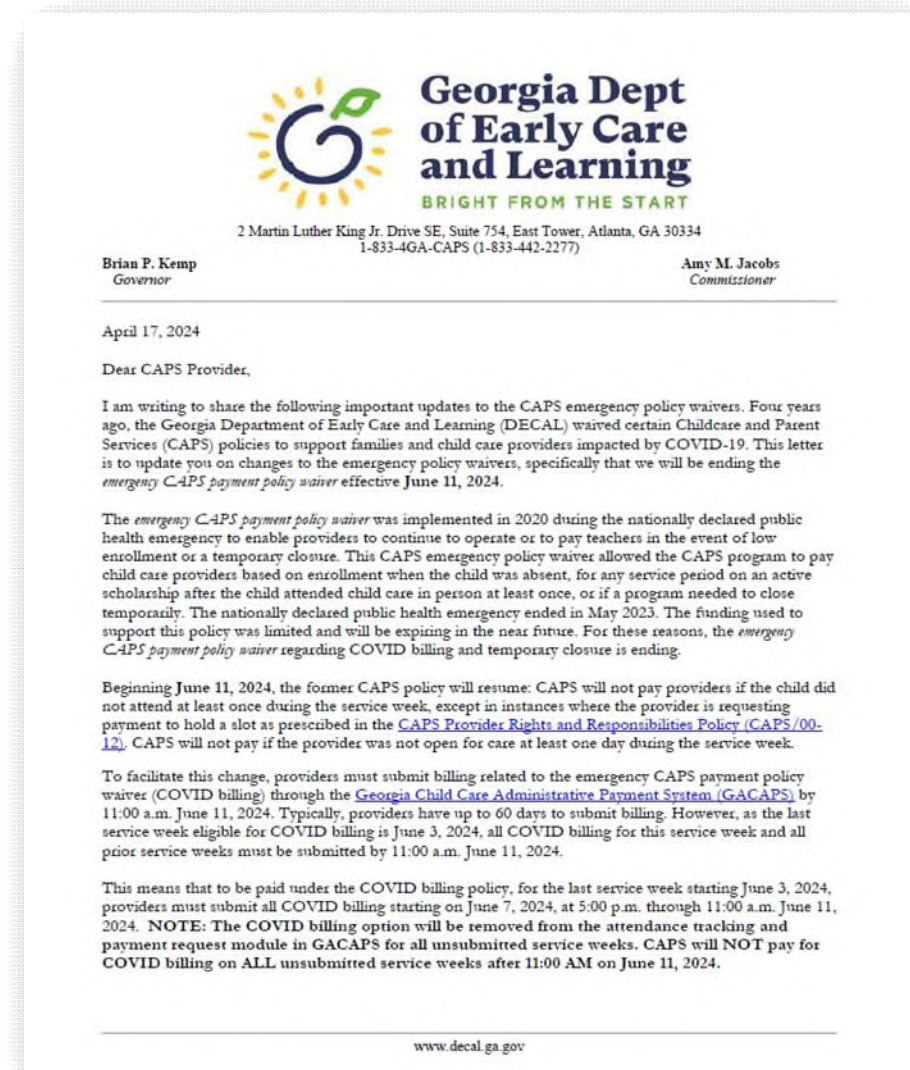


# COVID Billing Communication

CAPS families and providers were notified of this change in written communication

Those without an email address on file were notified via regular mail or robocall/SMS

Providers will also receive weekly reminders of this very important update





# ACCESS

*Awarding Child Care Education Scholarship Supplements*

# September 2024

ACCESS has been extended through service period ending September 29, 2024.

CAPS will continue to pay the full cost of tuition, minus the family fee.

Families resumed paying their family fee in October 2023.



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# Break

*Ten Minutes*



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# Child Care Services Updates

*Pam Stevens, Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services*



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# Exemption Changes



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# Two Goals

- Streamline and make the exemption categories more user friendly
- Increase support and monitoring for our exempt providers who participate in Child and Parent Services (CAPS)



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# Why have exemptions?

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- Families want a variety of experiences for young children
- Licensure has very specific requirements
  - Required square footage of indoor space per child
  - Food service
  - Learning materials
  - Warm water for hand washing
- Some environments could never meet licensing requirements but provide meaningful experiences for children
  - Sports camps
  - Summer outdoor recreation programs
- License exempt programs support family choice.



# What are the issues?

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## Categories

- 14 categories are confusing.
- Some of the categories are very similar.
- Providers are sometimes able to “stack” exemptions to avoid licensure.





# Exemption Revision Process

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- ✓ Survey
  - All licensed providers
  - All exempt providers
- ✓ Stakeholder Meeting
  - Licensed providers
  - Exempt providers
  - Community partners
- ✓ Technical Assistance
  - National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance



# Recommendation 1

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Exempt programs that do not receive CAPS, and therefore are not monitored, will not be listed on [qualityrated.org](https://qualityrated.org). A listing on [qualityrated.org](https://qualityrated.org) could be perceived as an endorsement.



# Recommendation 2

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Exempt programs that participate in the CAPS program currently receive one health and safety monitoring visit per year. Like licensed programs, providers that receive CAPS funding will receive two health and safety monitoring visits per year and will be offered ongoing training and technical assistance.



# Recommendation 3

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The exemption categories will be consolidated and clarified. Instead of 14 exemption categories, Georgia will have 7 exemption categories.



# Recommendation 4

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Programs that receive CAPS as well as licensed faith-based programs within religious environments, will continue to access the exemption process through the current application and approval procedure. All other categories will complete a self- assessment and be entered into an online exemption registry.





# Child Care Services Rule Revisions



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# CCS Proposed Rule Changes - CCLC

## ***Rules and Regulations for Child Care Learning Centers***

### ***Rule Chapter 591-1-1-.46 Exemptions***

- Reducing from 14 categories to 7
- Establishing procedures for online Exemption Applications (receives CAPS and licensed faith-based programs) vs. Exemption Self-Assessments (does not receive CAPS)



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# CCS Proposed Rule Changes - CCLC

## ***Rules and Regulations for Child Care Learning Centers***

### ***Rule Chapter 591-1-1-.46 Exemptions***

- **.46(1)** – establishes the expectation for submitting an online application or self-assessment through the Department, as determined by services provided
- **.46(1)(a)** – identifies exemption categories required to complete an online application and application requirements for approval
- **.46(1)(b)** – identifies exemption categories required to complete an online self-assessment and establishes program operating expectations
- **.46(1)(c)** – identifies the 7 exemption categories



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# Quality Innovations and Partnerships Updates

*Bentley Ponder, Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships*

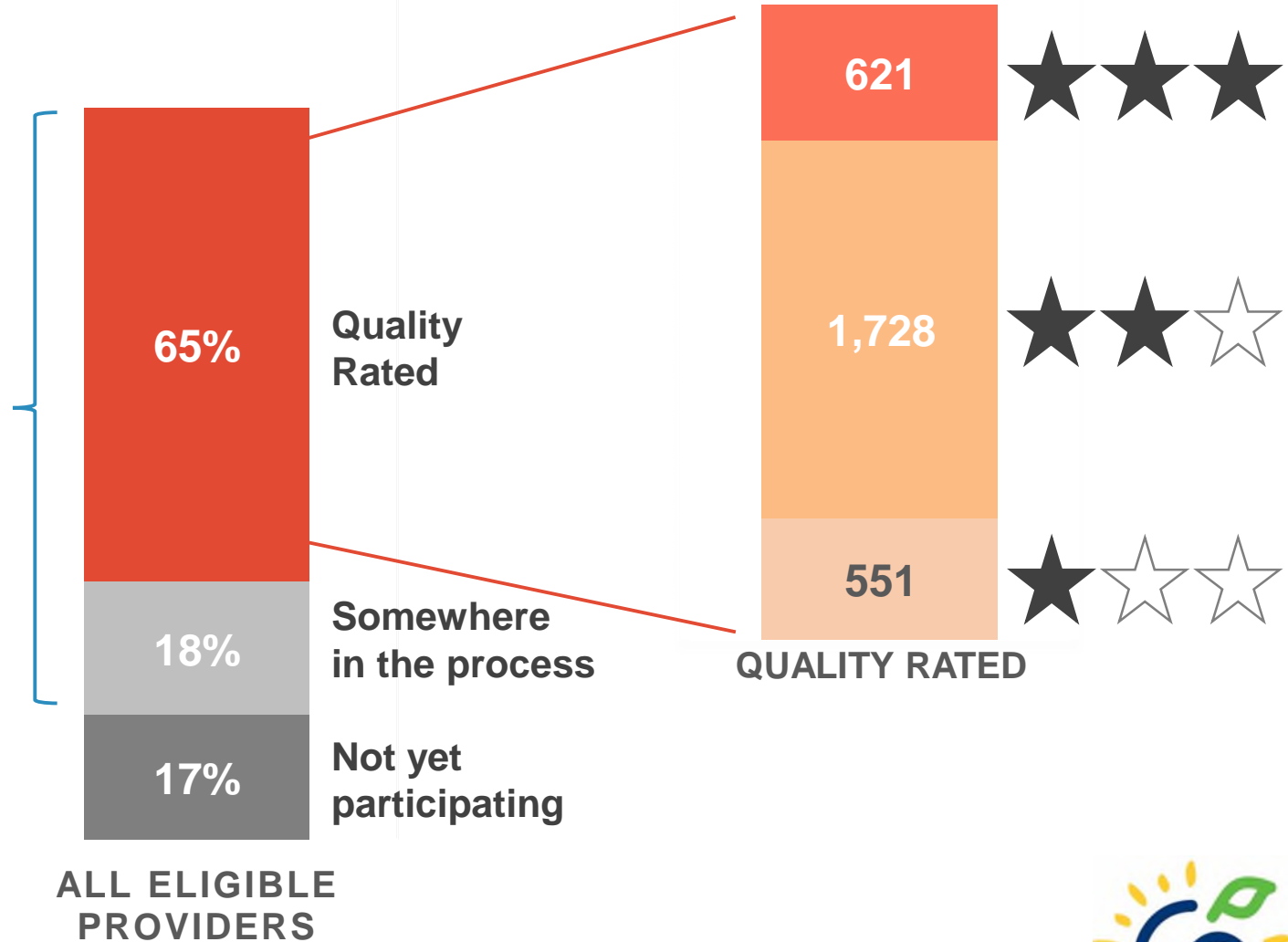


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# Quality Rated by the Numbers



Participating





# Quality Rated: Key Components & Successes

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- 3-Star System with ratings valid for three years
- Programs rated with portfolio and observation
- Technical Assistance is offered through the Child Care Resource and Referral System
- Through different mechanisms Quality Rated has been able to offer financial supports during and after the rating process
- Philanthropic Support
- COVID-19 Pandemic Ratings



# Comprehensive Quality Rated Review

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## Time

- Over ten years since Quality Rated was designed.
- Opportunity to incorporate new research in ECE as well as other related fields.
- Recognize the changing landscape of early education in GA including impacts from COVID-19 pandemic.

## Provider Impact

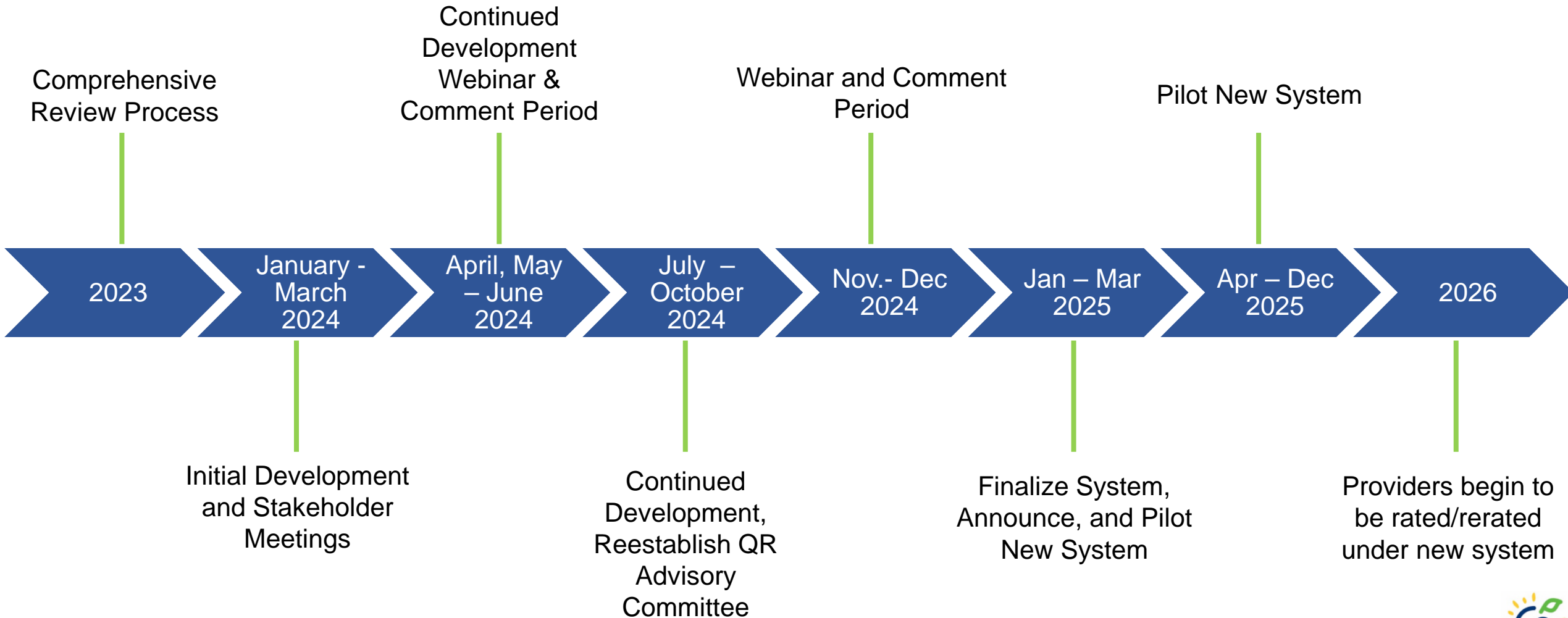
- More providers have been rated multiple times; this is an opportunity to ensure the system is supporting continuous quality improvement.
- Opportunity to better understand how well QR is meeting the needs of the multiple populations it is designed to support.

## Review Components

- Provider surveys
- Family focus groups
- QR staff focus groups
- CCR&R staff focus groups
- ECE national expert focus groups
- DECAL internal leadership workgroups
- Stakeholder data walks



# Revision Timeline



# Review Process – Key Findings

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- Most Quality Rated providers said they benefited from QR, but they didn't always get the benefits they expected
- Most Quality Rated providers said that Quality Rated was fair
- Changes that could improve Quality Rated
  - Recognize the process, not just the outcome
  - Include multiple pathways
  - Have some required components, but include more options
  - Provide more than three rating levels
    - Include different assessments and weigh indicators differently
- Communication was a consistent theme.





# Big Picture Changes

Current QR	Revised QR
3 Star Rating System	5 Star Rating System
Reinforces quality for a single point in time	Reinforces continuous quality improvements
Portfolio contains mostly self-reported data and reflects plans/goals	Elective Components reflect accomplishments
Self-Directed Professional Development	Predetermined professional development ensuring key topics are covered for each rating level
School-age classrooms not included in center ratings	School-age classrooms included in center ratings
Observation at all levels	Formal observation at highest levels
<b>Providers complete the portfolio &amp; have a classroom observation to receive score</b>	<b>Providers select the rating level they want &amp; then demonstrate they meet the requirements of that level</b>



# Five Star Levels



# New System Rating Components

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## Prerequisite Components

- Compliance with all DECAL Programs
- Commitment to Quality Statement

## Core Components

- Designated Professional Development varies at each star level
- CQI Activities & Demonstration of Skills varies at each star level

## Elective Components

- Choice of support strategies to promote the well-being of children, families, and program/staff; number & complexity increases by star level



# Core Components

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## Designated Professional Development

- Orientation Training for Each Level
- Quality Environments Training
- Business Sense Training
- Leadership Training
- Inclusivity Training

## CQI Activity Determined by Star Level

- Self-Assessment and CQI Plan
- CQI Interactive Topic Activities
- Live Skills Demonstrations
- Formal Assessments, Potential Choice of Reliable Tool



# Elective Component Samples

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## Children

- Focus on inclusive practices
- Farm to ECE activities
- Library partnership visits or book rotations
- Health screenings on site
- Enhanced ratios

## Families

- Frequent newsletters
- Family engagement activities
- Sliding scale fees
- Connections to community resources and outlets
- Family lending library

## Program Staff / Business Practices

- Staff retention bonuses or sliding pay scale
- Fringe benefits offered
- National or State Conference attendance
- Member of Peer Support Network
- Career credentials

# New Key Features of Rating Levels

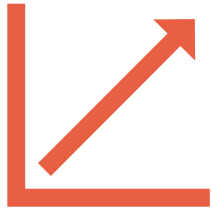
Key Features	Star 1	Star 2	Star 3	Star 4	Star 5
Compliance with all applicable DECAL programs required to achieve and maintain rating	X	X	X	X	X
Signed Commitment to Quality Statement required	X	X	X	X	X
Predetermined professional development training required	X	X	X	X	X
Accomplishment of set number of provider selected electives for children, families, program staff / business practices	X	X	X	X	X
Official assessment with cut scores required for rating			X	X	X
<b>Choice</b> of official assessment tool used for CQI activity (ERS, CLASS etc)			X	X	?
Rating determination based on completion of activities, not on scores for activities or official assessments	X	X			



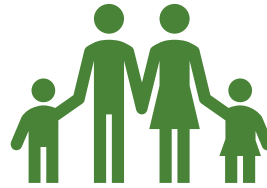


# Proposed New Quality Rated Goals

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Support and promote  
Continuous Quality  
Improvement (CQI)  
for long-term  
sustainable change



Incorporate the  
unique needs and  
experiences of  
children, families, and  
providers across all  
geographic regions  
and provider types



Effectively communicate  
levels of quality to  
increase awareness of  
and access to all types  
of high-quality early care  
and learning programs





The following Committee meetings are in session:

**Programs and Rules** – Hickory Conference Room

**Budget and Finance** – Cypress Conference Room

**Quality Innovations and Partnerships** – Oak Conference Room

*The Public Comment Period will commence at 1:00 pm.*



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# Welcome to the Board of Early Care and Learning

## Public Comment

May 16, 2024



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# Committee Reports





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# Board Meeting Dates 2024

- 
- ~~February 15, 2024~~
  - ~~May 16, 2024~~
  - August 22, 2024
  - November 21, 2024

