

Welcome to the Board of Early Care and Learning

February 20, 2025



**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**

BRIGHT FROM THE START

Board Meeting Welcome

Phil Davis, Board Chair



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Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- Approve 02/20/25 agenda
- Approve 11/21/24 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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Early Childhood Educators of the Year 2024-2025



Zina Hadjaz
The Quadrilingual Academy
Smyrna, GA

Georgia's
Early Childhood
Educators
of the Year
2024

**Infant
Category**



Laura Silva
My Little Geniuses Daycare
Marietta, GA

Georgia's
Early Childhood
Educators
of the Year
2024

**Toddler
Category**



Samantha Mullins
Our House at Central
Atlanta, GA

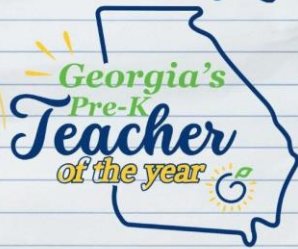
Georgia's
Early Childhood
Educators
of the Year
2024

**Preschool
Category**



Georgia's Pre-K Teachers of the Year 2024-2025

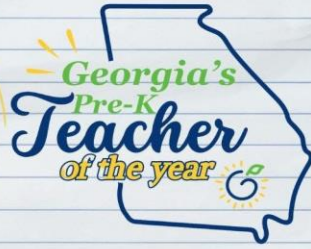
Congratulations!



Rachel Robertson
Oconee Preschool Academy
Watkinsville, GA



Congratulations!



Elizabeth Arthur
Lincoln County Elementary
Lincolnton, GA





Elizabeth Arthur



Being the first to foster a love of learning...

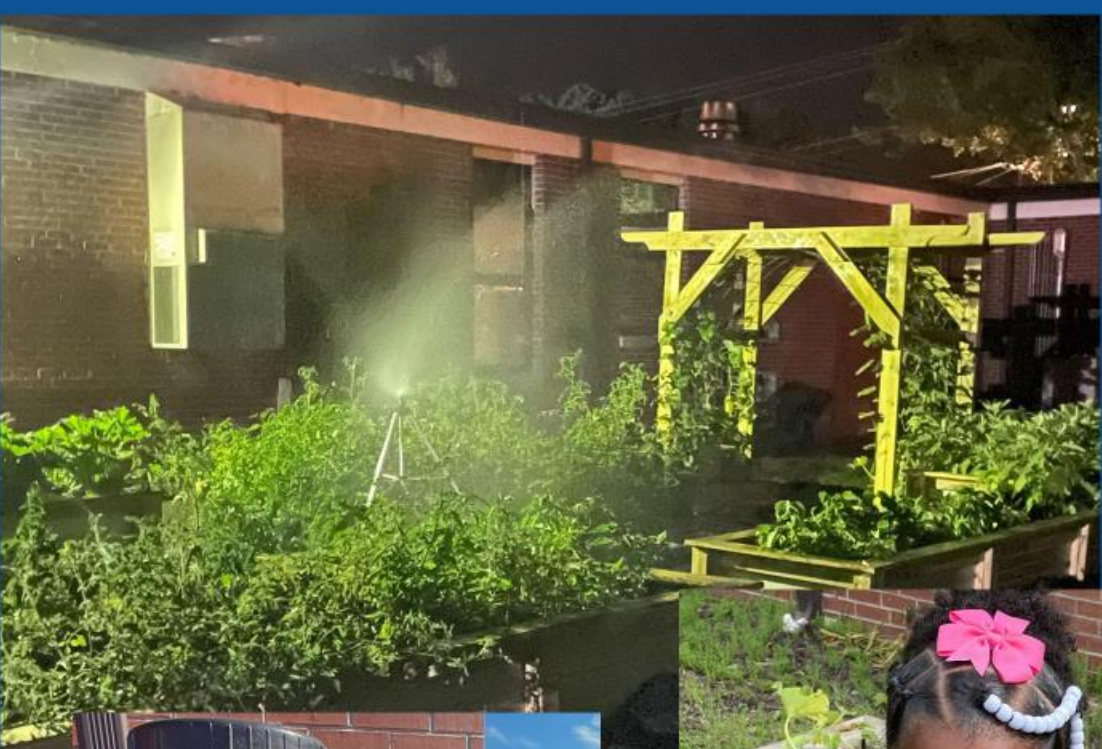


What keeps me here...



Dreaming of a garden...





Family...





Thank you for the opportunity to serve GA Pre-K

Board Resolution



Georgia Dept
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Pre-K Teacher of the Year



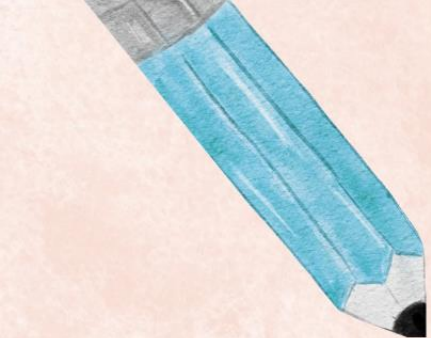
Rachel Robertson

Oconee Preschool Academy
Oconee County



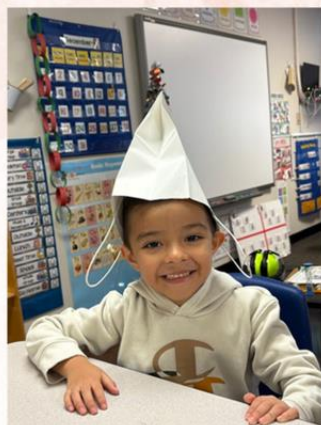
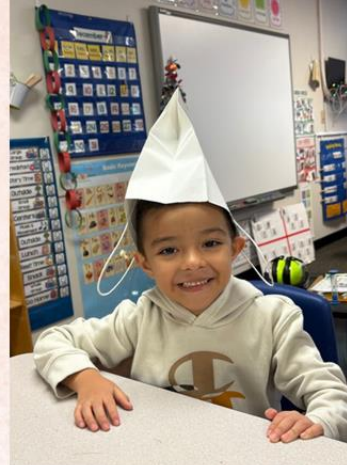
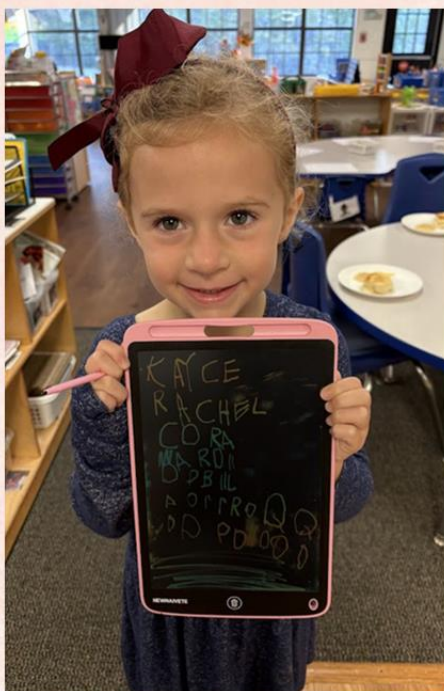
WHY PRE-K?

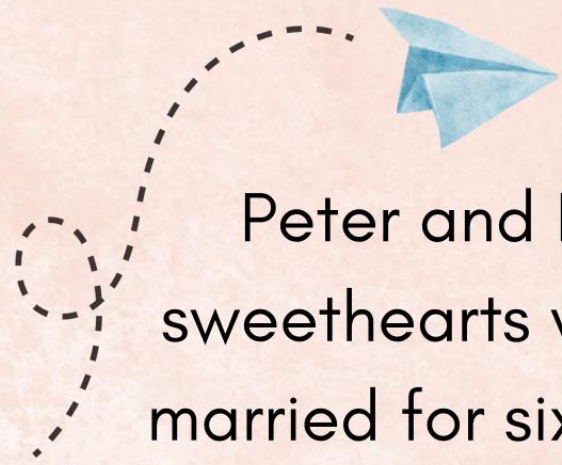
Rachel Robertson



I stumbled into the world of Pre-K in 2020 during the pandemic. I was teaching second grade and saw a post for a Pre-K position in our new county for the upcoming school year. I decided to give it a year and see how I liked it. The next slide explains why I fell in love and stayed.







Peter and I are college sweethearts who have been married for sixteen years. We have three sons. Jack is 15, Sam is 13, and Luke is 11. We also have two dogs and one three-legged cat.





For me, becoming Teacher of the Year wasn't about being the "best," but about being celebrated for showing up and doing my best. Visiting classrooms and meeting other dedicated teachers has been an incredible experience. Attending the NAEYC conference in California was the opportunity of a lifetime. The podcasts, social media takeover, and articles have allowed me to share my passion and hopefully inspire others. I am humbled and honored to have received this award. I continue to be proud to teach Georgia Pre-K.





When I'm not teaching, you can find me cheering on our boys in their various sports. We also enjoy rooting for the Dawgs. We love to travel as a family and are constantly planning our next vacation. We're looking forward to visiting New England this summer in search of the perfect lobster roll. When the weather is nice you can find Peter and I walking around our neighborhood and chatting about our day. I am also an avid reader and love curling up with a good book.



Board Resolution



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Finance, Legislative, & Administrative Updates

Rian Ringsrud, Deputy Commissioner for Finance & Administration



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FY 2025 Budget Comparison

Data as of Dec 31st	Budget	Expenditures*	Remaining Balance	% Remaining
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BY PROGRAM

Child Care Services	\$621,271,722	\$326,106,870	\$295,164,852	48%
Nutrition	\$170,000,000	\$87,083,061	\$82,916,939	49%
Pre-K + (HS)	\$541,598,948	\$269,272,691	\$272,326,257	50%
Quality Initiatives	\$83,693,238	\$52,777,708	\$30,915,530	37%
Totals	\$1,416,563,908	\$735,240,329	\$681,323,579	48%

BY FUNDING SOURCE

State General	\$71,882,694	\$30,703,154	\$41,179,540	57%
State Lottery	\$541,423,948	\$269,208,672	\$272,215,276	50%
Federal	\$802,757,766	\$435,081,359	\$367,676,407	46%
Other	\$499,500	\$247,144	\$252,356	51%
Totals	\$1,416,563,908	\$735,240,329	\$681,323,579	48%

* Includes encumbrances.

Finance Update FY 2025 Budget Summary – Q2



Governor's AFY 2025 Recommendation

	Original FY 2025 Appropriation	AFY 2025 Recommendation	Change
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BY PROGRAM

Child Care Services	\$339,388,378	\$339,388,378	\$0
Nutrition	\$170,000,000	\$170,100,000	\$100,000
Pre-K + (HS)	\$541,598,948	\$549,021,095	\$7,422,147
Quality Initiatives	\$57,693,238	\$57,693,238	\$0
Totals	\$1,108,680,564	\$1,116,202,711	\$7,522,147

BY FUNDING SOURCE

State General	\$71,882,694	\$71,982,694	\$100,000
State Lottery	\$541,423,948	\$548,846,095	\$7,422,147
Federal	\$494,874,422	\$494,874,422	\$0
Other	\$499,500	\$499,500	\$0
Totals	\$1,108,680,564	\$1,116,202,711	\$7,522,147

Governor's Recommendation AFY 2025



Nutrition Services

State General Funds Change			
FY 2025	AFY 2025	Increase	% Change
\$0	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	100%

Increase

- Increase funds for start up grants 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

Governor's
Recommendation
AFY 2025



Pre-K Program

State Lottery Funds Change			
FY 2025	AFY 2025	Increase	% Change
\$541,423,948	\$548,846,095	\$7,422,147	1.37%

Increase

- Increase funds to provide salary parity between Pre-K teachers with K12 teachers by moving to the State Board of Education salary schedule
- = \$7,422,147
- Utilize existing funds (\$3,549,690) for development costs of the new Pre-K Management System = Yes

Governor's Recommendation AFY 2025



Governor's FY 2026 Recommendation

	Original FY 2025 Appropriation	FY 2026 Recommendation	Change
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BY PROGRAM

Child Care Services	\$339,388,378	\$344,860,743	\$5,472,365
Nutrition	\$170,000,000	\$170,000,000	\$0
Pre-K + (HS)	\$541,598,948	\$563,215,616	\$21,616,668
Quality Initiatives	\$57,693,238	\$57,693,238	\$0
Totals	\$1,108,680,564	\$1,135,769,597	\$27,089,033

BY FUNDING SOURCE

State General	\$71,882,694	\$77,355,059	\$5,472,365
State Lottery	\$541,423,948	\$563,215,616	\$21,616,668
Federal	\$494,874,422	\$494,874,422	\$0
Other	\$499,500	\$499,500	\$0
Totals	\$1,108,680,564	\$1,135,769,597	\$27,089,033

Governor's Recommendation FY 2026



Child Care Services

State General Funds Change			
FY 2025	FY 2026	Increase	% Change
\$71,882,694	\$77,355,059	\$5,472,365	7.61%

Increase

- Reflect an adjustment for TeamWorks billings to meet projected expenditures= \$3,865
- Increase funds to annualize state match for Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) reimbursement to the 60th percentile of market rates for childcare providers= \$1,540,000
- Increase funds to provide 500 additional state-funded slots in the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program=\$3,928,500

Governor's
Recommendation
FY 2026



Pre-K Program

State Lottery Funds Change			
FY 2025	FY 2026	Increase	% Change
\$541,423,948	\$563,040,616	\$21,616,668	3.99%

Increase

- Increase funds for the Teachers Retirement System to reflect an increase in the actuarially determined employer contribution rate from 20.78% to 21.91%= \$1,079,658
- Reflect an adjustment to agency premiums for Department of Administrative Services administered insurance programs= \$(267)
- Reflect an adjustment for TeamWorks billings to meet projected expenditures= \$4,662
- Increase formula funds for annual update of teacher training and experience= \$5,263,853
- 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 \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025= \$1,207,440
- Increase funds for year two of a four-year phase in to reduce classroom size from 22 to 20 students to improve instructional quality= \$14,061,322

Governor's Recommendation FY 2026



DECAL Legislative Updates

HB 175

- Update language related to criminal records checks to comply with federal mandates

HB 118

- Require child care centers to maintain anti choking device on premises and require staff to be trained on pediatric CPR within 45 days of employment

HB 269

- Require child care centers to maintain commercial general liability insurance



Georgia's Pre-K and Instructional Supports Updates

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

Georgia's Pre-K Program- SY2025

Capacity:

- Awarded **101** new classrooms including 69 providers across 29 counties

Teacher Credentials:

- Credential waivers have decreased by **18%**, and the use of substitutes has dropped by **7%**

Teacher Salary:

- Lead Teacher salaries rose by **13%**
 - 77% of teachers receiving raises from the new supplement scale
 - 233 individuals obtaining T6 and T7 certifications.
- Assistant Teacher salaries increased by **27%**

SY 2026 Application Dates

- **Pre-K Teacher of the Year:**
 - Application open March 3 - 17
 - Available from the DECAL homepage
- **Summer Transition Program:**
 - Application open March 10 – 21
 - Available to STP continuation providers only
- **Georgia's Pre-K Program:**
 - Application open March 10 – 28
 - Available for new providers through KOALA homepage



About the Infant Toddler Program

- Part of Georgia's Child Care and Development Block Grant state plan to improve quality in infant and toddler classrooms
- 14 Infant Toddler Specialists who help teachers support children's development through:
 - Training
 - Coaching
 - LITTLE Grant opportunities
 - Classroom resources

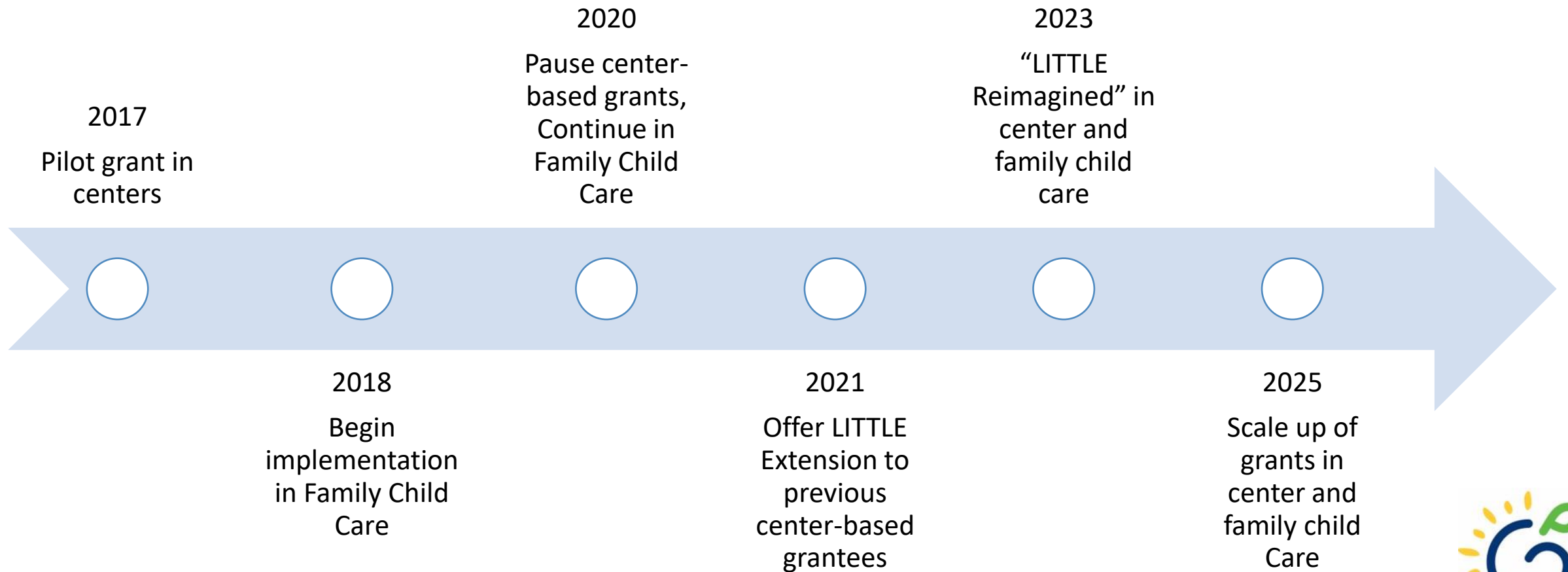


Infant Toddler Program: LITTLE Grant

- Created in 2017 to increase the quality of infant and toddler care across the state
- Builds infants' and toddlers' language and literacy skills by supporting teachers in incorporating responsive caregiving into their practice
- Since 2017, the LITTLE Grant has served over 150 licensed child care centers and family child care homes



LITTLE Grant Over Time

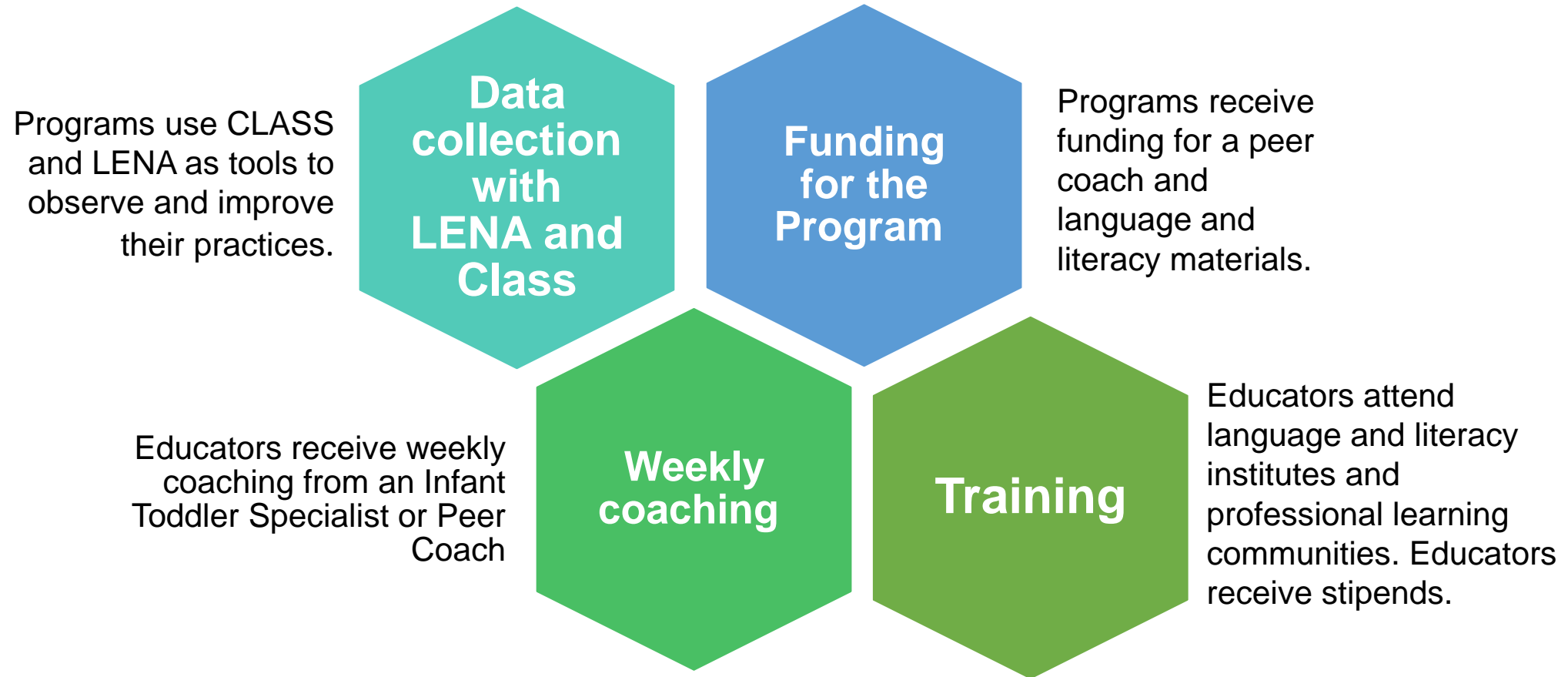


Grant Eligibility Requirements

- Be a licensed child care center or family child care in good standing with DECAL
- Have a Quality Rating of 2 or 3 stars
- Include at least one infant and one toddler classroom (centers only)
- Enroll at least three infants and/or toddlers (family child care only)
- Agree to participate in all grant components
- Must not have previously participated in the LITTLE Grant



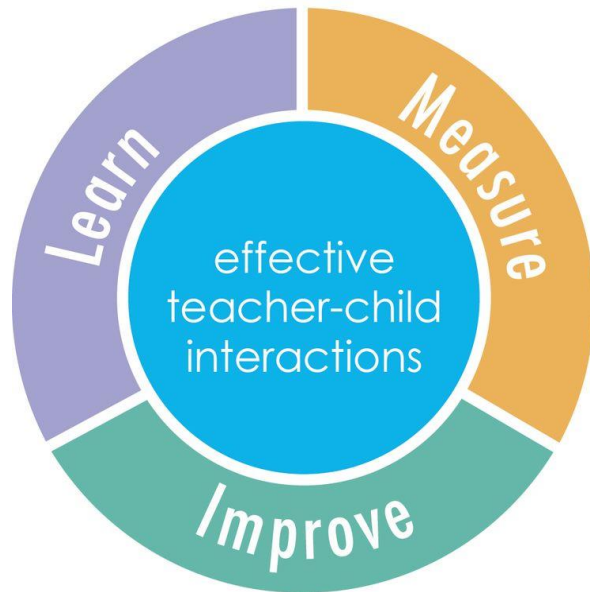
Grant Structure



Coaching Tools

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

- *Measures Teacher-Child Interactions*
- Infant CLASS emphasizes Responsive Caregiving
- Toddler CLASS centers on Emotional & Behavioral Support as well as Engaged Support for Learning
- Provides feedback on increasing responsive caregiving and supportive environments



Language ENvironment Analysis (LENA)

- *Measures the language environment of children from birth to 48 months*
- LENA Grow involves five-week cycles
- Weekly "LENA Day"
- Children wear a LENA vest equipped with a device to record their personal language or communication experiences during the day
- LENA Feedback Reports and Coaching



LITTLE Grant Testimonials

"I have developed the confidence to guide our teachers and work through challenges that affect our work force. Many times, in our line of work we are viewed as babysitters as if we are just there to watch the kids, but our company is committed to growing educators and lifelong learners. Tools such as MMCI and Practice-Based Coaching has allowed me to coach our teams of teachers to the next level."

Ashley Moffatt
The Bradley Schools, Peer Coach

"(The LITTLE Grant) is language and literacy rich, its coaching, and training and all of the grant funds for what your classrooms need. But it ultimately trickles down to the children and getting that language that they need. It's that lightbulb moment you see in a child, and it starts in an infant room. I see it even if the child can't speak. It is going to help much more in their educational goals down the road. We are still reaping the benefits of the LITTLE Grant from when we participated years ago in 2019."

Cindy Lancaster
Director of Lemon Tree Academy - Monroe



Inclusive Early Learning Week 2025

Goals:

- Increase awareness of supporting children with disabilities in all learning environments
- Promote application of inclusive practices in early childhood programs through coaching and training
- Increase access for children and families in inclusive environments

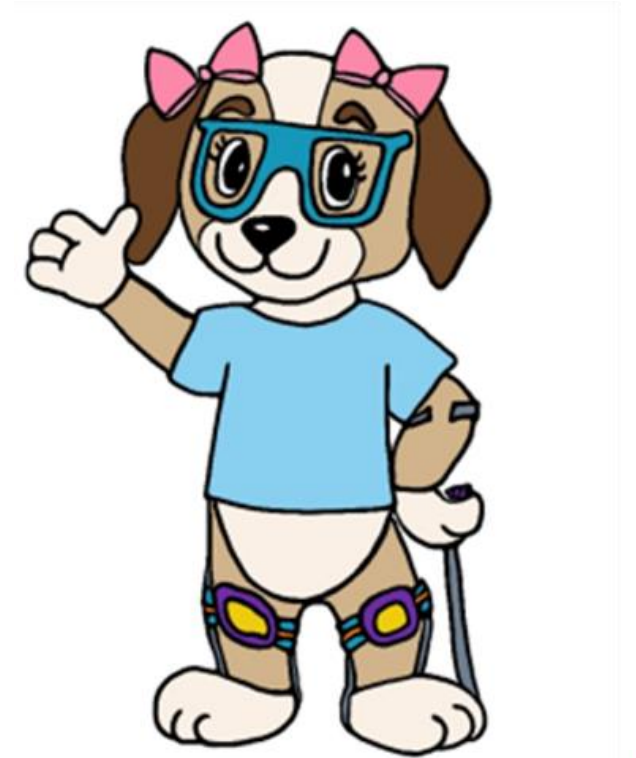


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Inclusive Early Learning Week 2025

Special Events:

- Proclamation by Governor Kemp
- Celebration toolkit with activities for children, families, and child care staff
- #LoveInclusion social media contest
- DECAL Download interview with families and inclusive child care providers
- Special program visits with CALi and Commissioner Jacobs
- Book readings at child care programs with DECAL staff
- Inclusion Starts with “I” trainings with 150 participants
 - Offered in Albany, Savannah, Atlanta



Inclusive Early Learning Week 2025



IELW Social Media Engagement Analytics



156 Contest
Entries



2,752
Interactions



2.5 M
Reach



100
Shares



150k
Video Views



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REMINDER

Children's Mental Health Week

May 5th-9th

Child Care Services Updates

Pam Stevens, Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services



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Proposed July 1, 2025 Rule Changes



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Changes Are Needed To:



Meet compliance with HB538 – Georgia Early Literacy Act



Better align with and meet compliance with CCDF requirements



Strengthen CPR requirements to better protect children in care



Clean up: renumbering and reformatting to comply with Secretary of State requirements



Proposals

- Changes to be made in licensed program rules & regulations for:
 - Child Care Learning Centers
 - Family Child Care Learning Homes
- Planned indicator manual clarifications, informational webinars, and resource/training development
- Mirror changes in Health & Safety Standards for License-Exempt & Informal Providers for CCDF compliance



General Cleanup

- Renumbering and reformatting of rules in chapters being opened to comply with Secretary of State requirements:
 - **591-1-1-.02 Definitions**
 - **591-1-1-.33 Staff Training**
 - **290-2-3-.07 Staffing and Supervision**
 - **290-2-3-.08 Children's Records**
- Removing training documentation language from **.08 Children's Records** chapter and putting it in the appropriate **.07 Staffing and Supervision** chapter in FCCLH Rules & Regulations.



CCLC
FCCLH



Proposed Rule Chapter Changes

591-1-1-.02(f) Definitions

290-2-3-.03(e) Definitions

- Potential changes out of upcoming legislation that may be needed to correspond to changes in the law.

Proposed Draft Language:

- Remove reference to the National Crime Information Centers National Sex Offender Registry and replace with general language for appropriate sex offender registries, repositories, or data bases.



CCLC
FCCLH



Proposed Rule Chapter Changes

591-1-1-.21 Operational Policies & Procedures

290-2-3.08 Children's Records

- Changes needed for clarification and compliance with CCDF requirements.

Proposed Draft Language:

- Add requirement for programs to provide information to parents on the program's suspension and expulsion policies.
- Add language as required around program practices to prevent shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma in children, to include recognition, response, and reporting.



CCLC
FCCLH



Proposed Rule Chapter Changes

591-1-1-.33 Staff Training

290-2-3-.07 Staffing and Supervision

- Changes needed for clarification and compliance with CCDF requirements.
- Changes needed for compliance with HB538 – GA Early Literacy Act.
- Changes to incorporate provider use of GaPDS to house training certificates.

CCLC
FCCLH

Proposed Draft Language:

- Add language to include volunteers and other staff being required to obtain program orientation.
- Add language for Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) which includes SIDS, since universal language now includes both terms.
- Enhance language for training in child development to include the major domains (cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and approaches to learning) and align with GELDS.
- Add language to allow programs to use the workforce registry and professional development system (GaPDS) to house their training for review by the Dept.
- Add requirement for 2 hours of language and literacy training.
- Add requirement for 2 specific hours of ongoing health and safety training.



Proposed Rule Chapter Changes

591-1-1-.14 First Aid and CPR

290-2-3-.07 Staffing and Supervision

- Changes needed for clarification and compliance with CCDF requirements.
- Changes to strengthen CPR requirements to protect health and safety of children in care.

Proposed Draft Language:

- Add “pediatric” to requirements for first aid and CPR training.
- Reduce time frame for obtaining training from 90 to 45 days and making this a core rule requirement.
- Require at least one person be present in each classroom with children to have current certification and training.



CCLC
FCCLH



Proposed Child Care Rule Changes Survey

Purpose: To better understand the feasibility of rule changes that would require child care providers to train staff, update current procedures, and possibly incur additional expenses

Participants

All licensed CCLC and FCCLH programs

Timeline

Survey sent to participants in January and remained open for two weeks

Response Rate

With **1,383** respondents, the survey achieved a **32%** response rate.



Proposed Child Care Rule Changes Survey

To enhance choking prevention measures, CCS is considering the following potential rule changes:

Reducing the time frame for new employees to complete CPR/First Aid training from 90 days to 30 days

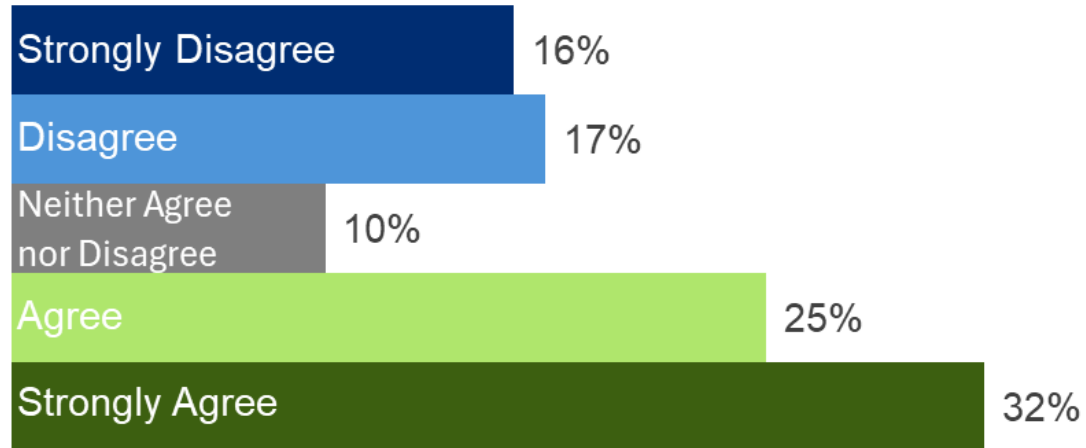
Designating CPR/First Aid training as a core rule, evaluated during every licensing visit with citations impacting risk levels and program compliance

Requiring a teacher who is CPR/First Aid certified to be present in the classroom at all times



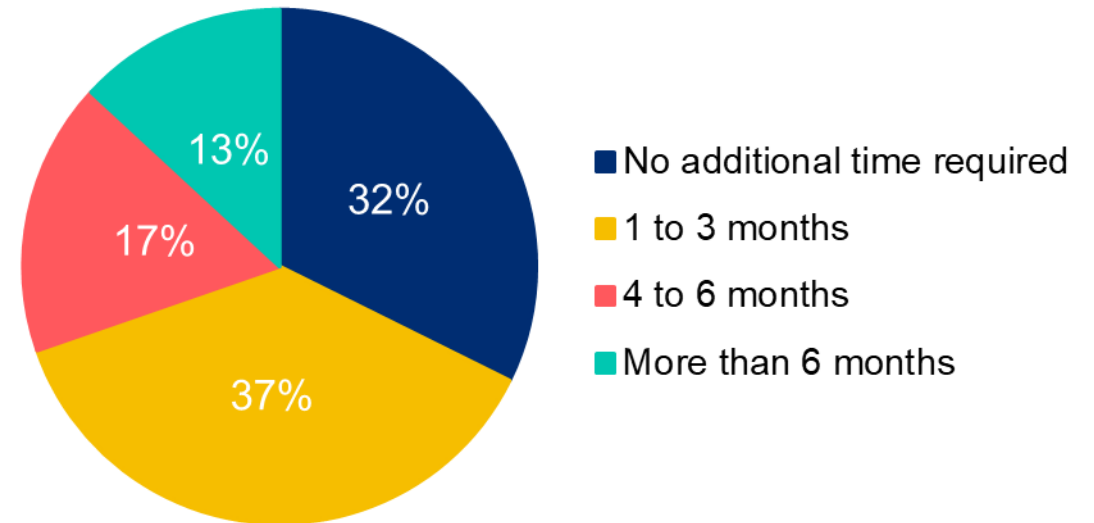
Rule Change: 30-Day CPR/First Aid Training Requirement

A **majority of respondents agree** the 30-Day CPR/First Aid Training requirement is manageable, **but one-third disagree**.



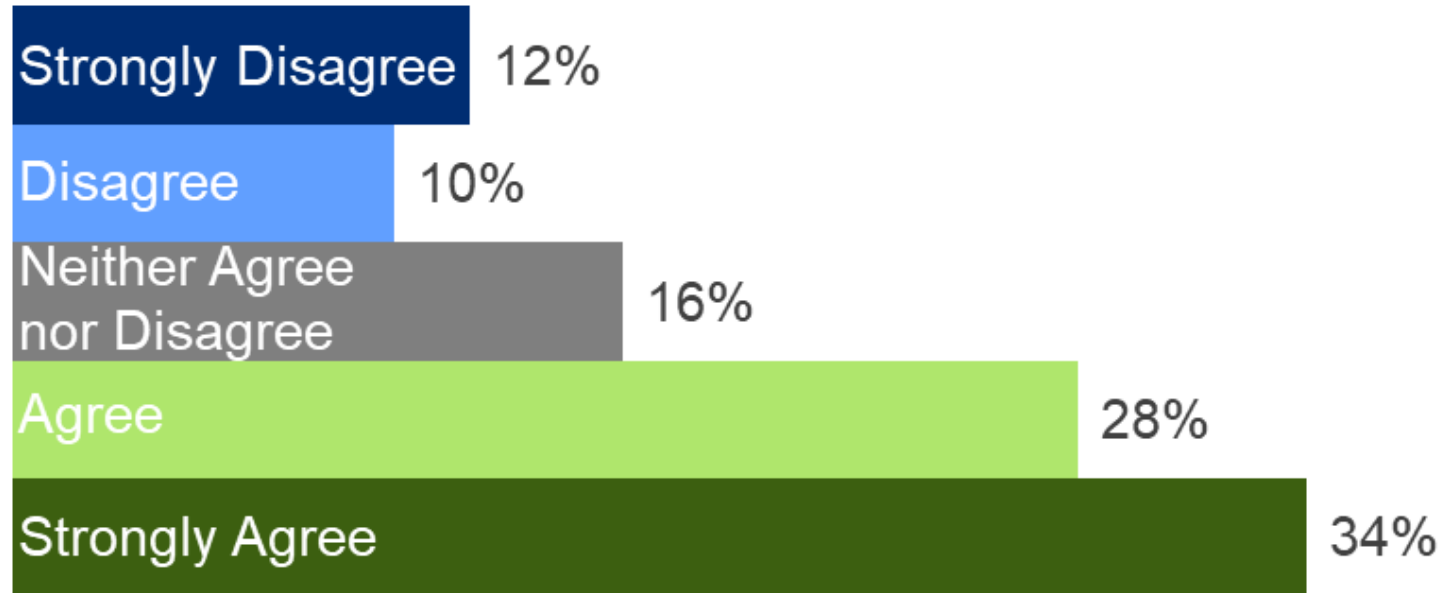
Preferred Time Frame for CPR/First Aid Training:

- **1-3 Months Most Common**
- 32% Need No Additional Time



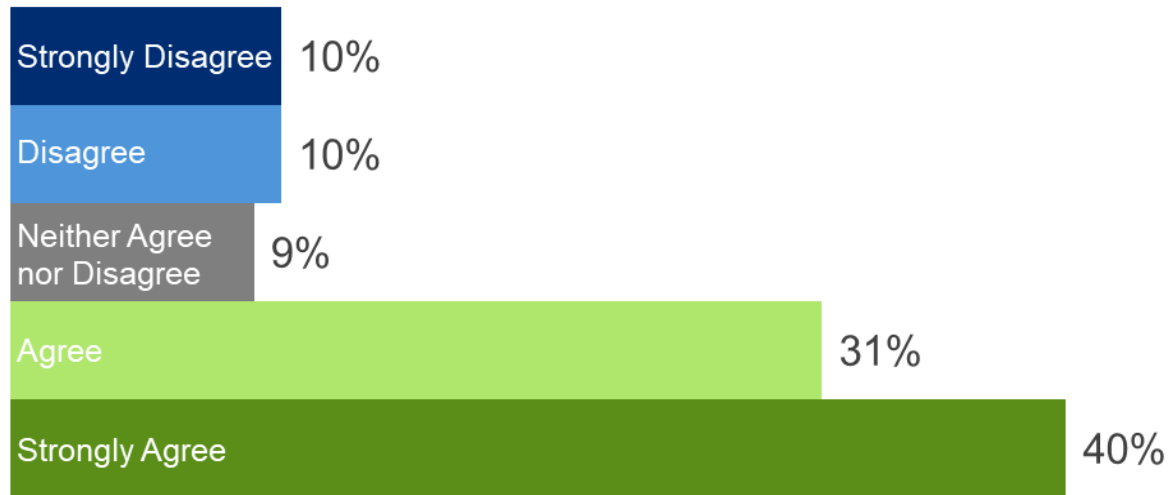
Rule Change: Classifying CPR/First Aid Training as a Core Rule

Over 60% of respondents **strongly agree or agree** that classifying **CPR/First Aid training as a core rule** would enhance safety practices.



Rule Change: Presence of CPR/First Aid-certified Staff

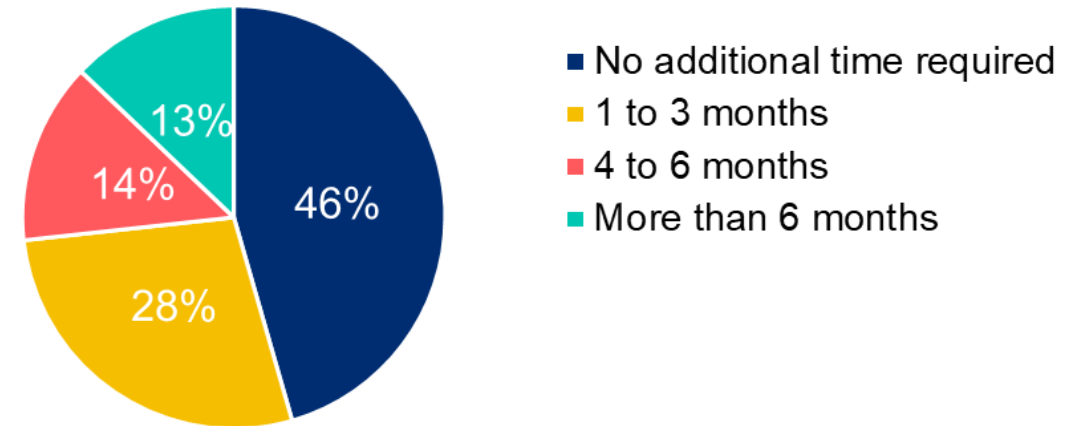
A majority of respondents **strongly agree** or **agree** that requiring a CPR/First Aid-certified staff member to be present in the classroom at all times **would be feasible** for their program.



Preferred Time Frame for CPR/First Aid-certified staff presence:

• **No Additional Time Required Most Common**

• 28% need 1 to 3 months





Anticipated Challenges with Implementation

Answer Choices	Responses
Difficulty finding approved training or trainers within 30 days of employment	48%
Difficulty ensuring a CPR/First Aid-certified staff member is present in every classroom at all times	25%
Staff availability or scheduling conflicts for CPR/First Aid certification	36%
Financial constraints related to training costs	37%
No challenges anticipated	26%
Other (please specify)	8%


Note: Respondents could select multiple options, so percentages do not total 100%.



Provider Resources & Support

Are you actively preventing Choking Hazards?



Preventative Steps:

- Remain attentive!
- Sit and participate in meals with children.
- Ensure children are seated while eating.
- Serve table foods and drinks at the same time.
- Prior to serving, ensure solid food is cut up in small pieces appropriate for child's eating ability.

DO NOT serve food commonly known as choking risks to children under 4 years: peanuts, hot dogs, raw carrots, popcorn, fish with bones, cheese cubes, grapes, and any other food that is of similar shape and size to their throat.

Never exceed the following maximum sizes for each age.

Image	Age Group	Food Item	Maximum Size
	Not appropriate	Cooked Whole Baby Carrots	Not appropriate for children under 4 years
	Not appropriate	Cooked Carrot Chunks	Not appropriate for children under 4 years
	Toddlers	Toddlers: Cooked Medium Diced Carrots	1/2 inch
	Infants	Infants: Cooked Small Diced Carrots	1/4 inch

So, what size is that? It's about the same size as these common classroom objects:

Image	Age Group	Object	Size
	Toddler	Width of USB Drive	= 1/2 inch
	Toddler	Diameter of Marker	= 1/2 inch
	Infant	Diameter of Standard Drinking Straw	= 1/4 inch
	Infant	#2 Pencil Eraser	= 1/4 inch

STAY SEATED & WITHIN ARM'S REACH OF CHILDREN 3 AND YOUNGER AT ALL TIMES WHILE THEY ARE EATING AND DRINKING.



ACTIVE SUPERVISION

Mealtime Supervision

"Staff shall be attentive and participating with all children during meals and snacks. Staff shall be seated within an arm's length away from children thirty-six months of age and younger."

SIT AND EAT WITH CHILDREN.



When teachers sit and eat with children, they are able to be attentive and participate during meals and snacks. This provides time for building relationship and social interactions with children, and to model enjoying nutritious foods.

STAY WITHIN ARMS REACH OF CHILDREN.




To enable teachers to sit and eat with children and to stay within arm's reach of children 36 months and younger who are eating/drinking, supports need to be provided, such as comfortable adult seating at the table and additional staffing for larger groups.

MAKE IT SOCIAL.




Making meals and snacks social increases supervision of children during meals and snacks. Teachers are directly engaged and participating with children, having conversations and talking with children about topics that interest them as they eat. Interactions are also natural learning opportunities that build social and language skills.



ACTIVE SUPERVISION

Mealtime Supervision Tips for Success

- Focus only on mealtime supervision during meals and snacks and refrain from unrelated classroom duties and tasks, such as putting out mats, cleaning up, etc.
- Hold infants and young toddlers while they are drinking their bottles.
- For children eating table food, place all food and drinks on the table prior to calling the children to the table.
- Provide space at each table and an adult chair for a teacher to sit at the table, eat with the children, and have social conversations with the children.
- Consider serving food already plated or utilizing family style dining. These methods allow children to sit and eat, while everyone is seated at the table, reducing the need to leave the table during the meal.
- Second helpings need to be within reach or on the table to prevent leaving the table when children request them.
- A teacher must stay within arm's reach of children 36 months and younger who are eating. Consider scheduling meals/snacks for children on individualized schedules or in small groups, rather than all at once, to make this easier to accomplish.
- In centers, if there is more than one teacher in the classroom and the group size allows one teacher to remain within arm's reach of all children during meals/snacks, divide duties so one teacher is always with children who are eating and drinking and one teacher is supervising children who are transitioning away from the tables, such as when they are handwashing or playing.
- If multiple tables are needed for larger group sizes, multiple teachers will need to be seated so that all children at all tables are within arm's reach when eating and drinking.
- In center classrooms with only one teacher, work with the Director to get mealtime support to ensure supervision requirements can be met.
 - Floater or the cook can place all food and drinks on the table prior to the teacher and children coming over.
 - Floater can help supervise children who are not eating.
 - Schedule mealtimes to occur at staggered times, rather than all at the same time, to increase options for floater support.



Core Rule:
CCLC 591-1-1-.32 (7)
FCLH 290-2-3-.07 (17)

Provider Resources & Support

- Working with Nutrition division to collaborate on a choking hazard preparation fact sheet and micro-training videos.
- Working with Infant/Toddler division to create training on responsiveness during mealtime routines and developmentally appropriate practices for infants, toddlers, and their teachers during meals.
- Working on a partnership with CHOA to collaborate on trainings for choking prevention.
- Working to establish an awareness campaign around using choke tubes in programs to help identify choking hazards.



Break

Ten Minutes



**Georgia Dept
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BRIGHT FROM THE START

Quality Innovations and Partnerships Updates

Bentley Ponder, Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships



Georgia Dept
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and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

External Research Studies

- Economic Impact Study
 - Finalizing Phase 3 report
 - Research is ongoing, and another report is expected later this year.
- Supply and Demand Study
 - Urban Institute is beginning a survey to better understand supply and demand at both the state and community level.
 - Study includes better understanding the impact of local policies and regulations.
- Pandemic Relief Evaluation
 - Child Trends has analyzed the impact of the pandemic relief initiatives on providers, workforce, families, and DECAL staff.
- Quality Study
 - We are in the initial phases of replicating the 2008–2010 Quality Study that helped create Quality Rated.

Community Impact Grants

- We received over 150 Community Impact Grant applications.
 - DECAL will fund 18.
 - Grant period is two years.
- 2Gen Innovation (28 applications, \$75,000)
- 2Gen Literacy (50 applications, \$75,000)
- Community Transformation Grants (73 applications, \$125,000)
- Volume of applications created pleasant challenges.
- Funding announcements expected in March.

Quality Rated



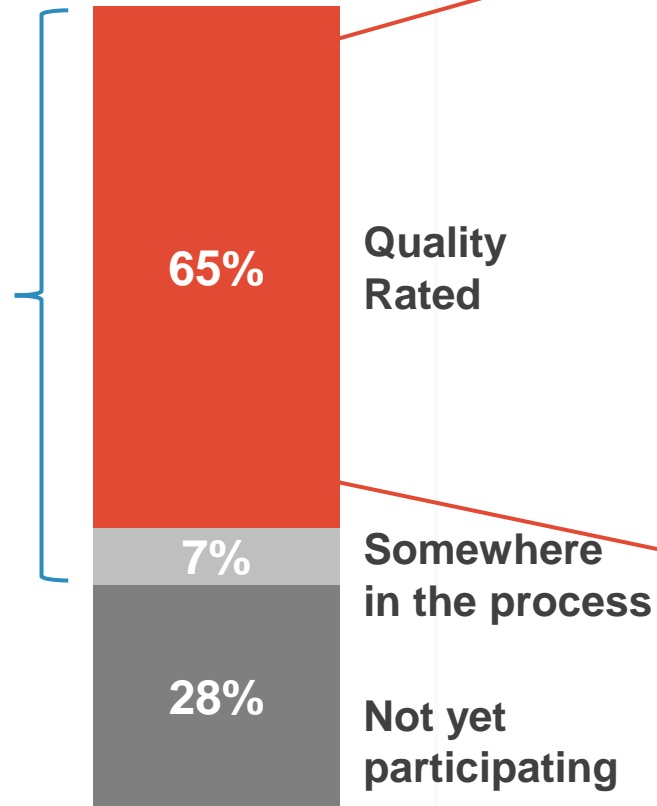
- Quality Rated is Georgia's 3-Star quality rating and improvement system for child care programs
 - Launched in 2012, DECAL has assigned over 6,000 ratings
 - Quality Rated was created using stakeholder engagement and national and state research
- While Quality Rated is voluntary, programs participating in Georgia's subsidy program (CAPS) are required to be rated
 - Policy became effective December 31, 2021
 - Due to the policy, there have been two new statuses created in QR:
 - Probationary
 - Provisional
 - Adding Commitment to Quality Payments (C2Q) and Quality Rated Workforce Bonuses (QRWB) in 2025



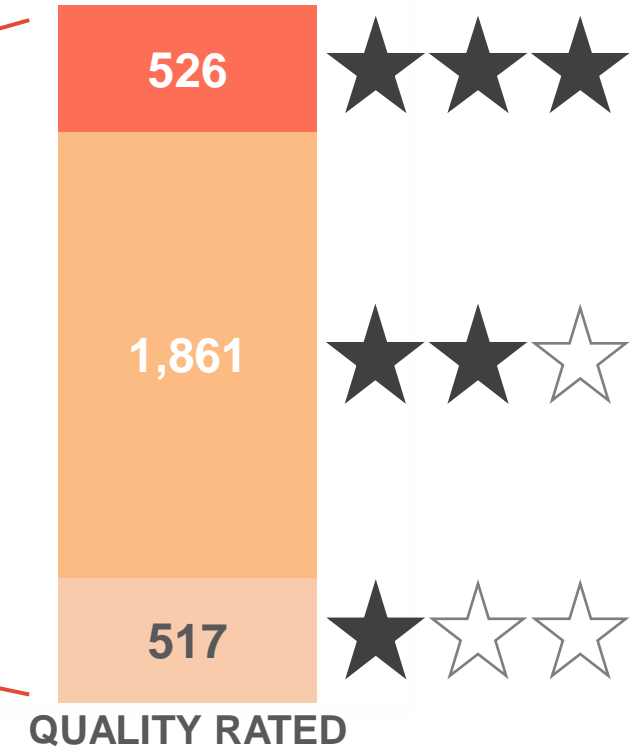
Quality Rated by the Numbers



Participating



ALL ELIGIBLE
PROVIDERS



New Quality Rated Initiatives

Related to Georgia's New CCDF Plan



Introduction of QR Commitment to Quality Payments



Introduction of QR Workforce Bonuses



New Supports for CAPS 1-Star Providers

Commitment to Quality (C2Q) Payments

- C2Q payments are quarterly payments made to 2- and 3-star Quality Rated providers
 - Payments are based on the previous quarter's CAPS billing
 - 2-star providers receive a bonus payment of 5% of the previous quarter's CAPS billing
 - 3-star providers receive a bonus payment of 10% of the previous quarter's CAPS billing



Example:

- 3-star provider ABC Child Care had \$10,000 in CAPS billing from October to December 2024.
- In February 2025, ABC Child Care will receive a \$1,000 C2Q payment.

Difference Between Tiered Reimbursement and C2Q Payments

Previous Structure Tiered Reimbursement	New Structure Commitment to Quality
Quality monies included as part of total weekly payment to provider	Quality monies paid as lump sum quarterly payments
Paid to any level of rated program	Paid to highest levels of rated programs
Administered and paid by CAPS	Administered and paid by QR
Emphasized past performance	Emphasizes an ongoing commitment to quality

2025 C2Q Payment Schedule

	Payments Issued Beginning	Eligibility Period	C2Q Verification Date
Quarter 1	February 27	9/30/24 – 1/5/25	February 10, 2025
Quarter 2	May 29	1/6/25 – 4/6/25	May 12, 2025
Quarter 3	August 1	4/1/25 – 6/30/25	July 14, 2025
Quarter 4	November 1	7/1/25 – 12/31/25	October 14, 2025

*At the end of 2024, DECAL was able to offer a BOOST payment to eligible providers. 98% of eligible providers received the payment.

Quality Rated Workforce Bonuses



Quality Rated Workforce Bonuses (QRWB): DECAL is introducing a new annual workforce award of \$500 for eligible employees of providers who are Quality Rated at the 1-, 2-, or 3-star level

Payment Process: Payments are distributed throughout the year. Each 1, 2 and 3-star program will be assigned a **Payment Application Month** during which time their eligible staff can apply for their bonus

When: Process begins April 1, 2025

Quality Rated Workforce Bonus Eligibility



Eligibility for Multiple Program Types:

- Family Child Care Learning Homes
- Child Care Centers
- Standalone School Age Programs

Eligibility Requirements for Staff:

- Employed for at least 90 days at a qualifying program
- Work on-site at a qualifying child care program/facility
- Full time teacher or support staff working at least 30 hours per week

OR

- School-age only staff working at least 15 hours per week

Payment Application Month

- Every Quality Rated program is assigned a payment month. The month is based on the program's very first rating date.
- Programs whose month would be January, February, or March will have their 2025 payments staggered into April, May and June.

	QRWB Payment Application Month 2025								
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Includes 2025 Payment Application Months	January	February	March	July	August	September	October	November	December
	April	May	June						

Spreading the Word

\$500 Annual Quality Rated Workforce Bonus!

Georgia's youngest learners appreciate you and so does Quality Rated!

You are **ELIGIBLE** if...

- ✓ Your program is currently Quality Rated with a 1-, 2-, or 3-Star Rating.
- ✓ You have worked on-site at your program for at least 90 days.
- ✓ You are a full-time teacher or support staff working 30+ hours per week OR School Age Only program staff working 15+ hours per week.

Each program has a unique Payment Application Month. **SCAN NOW** for more information and to discover your program's Payment Application Month!

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning

QUALITY RATED CHILD CARE

License #: _____

- All programs will receive a poster to promote the payments to their staff. More can be requested by emailing QualityRated@dec.al.ga.gov
- Payment portal will let staff know their program's payment application month.
- Programs will also receive palm cards to distribute to staff.

Federal Programs Updates

Elisabetta Kasfir, Deputy Commissioner for Federal Programs



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New Federal CCDF Rules

- The Office of Child Care (OCC), the division of the Administration for Children & Families (ACF), who administer the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) issued new rules that were effective April 30, 2024.
- Georgia is already in compliance with many of the new rules and applied for, and was granted, waivers for the implementation of the remaining rules until August 1, 2026.
- Several of the new rules impact how DECAL administers the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program.
- Two of these rules will require major policy and system changes affecting both families and child care providers.

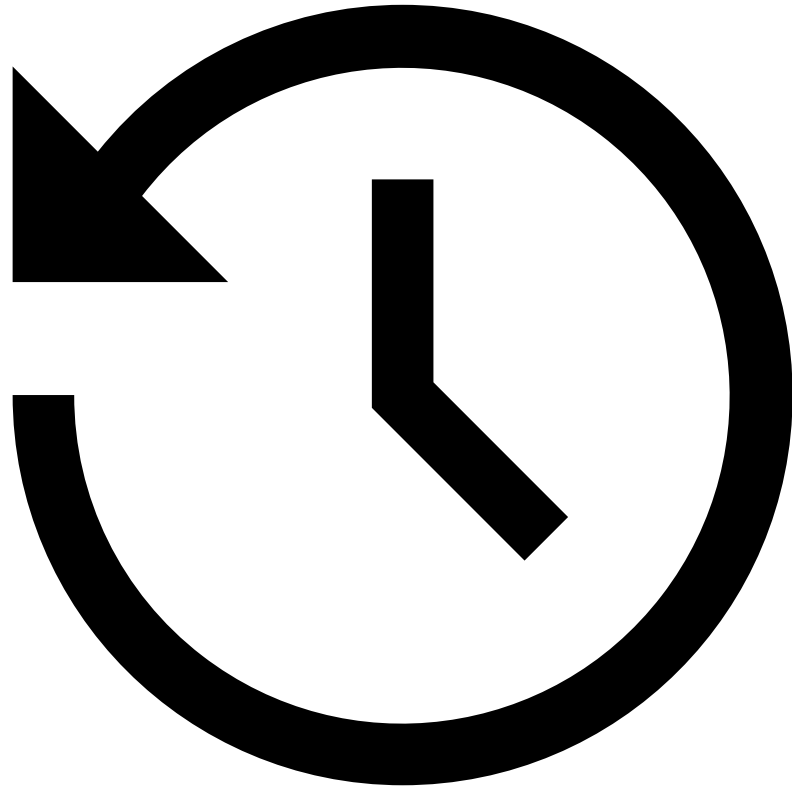


Current CAPS Policy and Payment Structure

- Payments are based on attendance. A child enrolled in CAPS must attend at least once during the service week for the provider to receive payment.
- Payments are paid as a reimbursement for services and are issued after care has been provided.



New Federal CCDF Rules

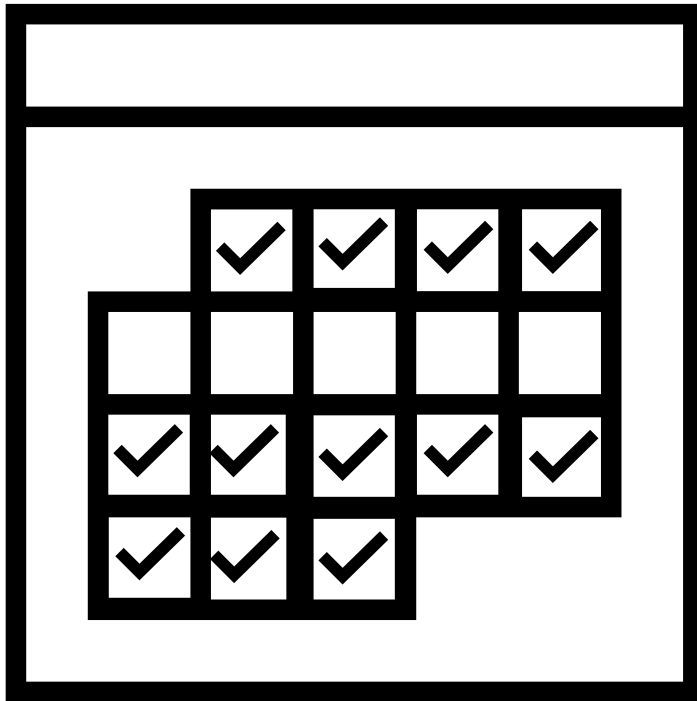


Shift to Prospective Payments

- Prospective payments refer to a payment system where child care providers are paid in advance for the services they are expected to provide, rather than after services have been rendered.
- This mirrors private pay families and helps ensure that providers have more predictable cash flow and can better manage operational costs.



New Federal CCDF Rules



Payment Based on Enrollment

- Payments to providers will be based on child enrollment rather than attendance.
- Even if a child does not attend during the service week, the provider will still be paid based on the child's enrollment.
- This change aims to help providers maintain consistent revenue and reduce the financial strain caused by fluctuating attendance rates.



Implications for Families and Providers

- Both families and child care providers will experience policy changes.
- Families will have new requirements around making a change in their child care provider.
- Providers will be required to log attendance in the GACAPS system weekly in order to remain current on which children are enrolled in their program.
- DECAL will inform and train families and providers to ensure they are prepared for the new policies.



Implementation Timeline



- Federal waiver is effective until August 1, 2026.
- GACAPS system changes are planned to go live June 17, 2026.
- Georgia plans to implement the new enrollment-based prospective payment structure the service week beginning June 22, 2026.





The following Committee meetings are in session:

Programs and Rules – Laurel 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

February 20, 2025



**Georgia Dept
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Committee Reports



Georgia Dept
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Board Meeting Dates 2025

-
- ~~February 20, 2025~~
 - May 15, 2025
 - August 28, 2025
 - November 20, 2025

