Welcome to the Board of Early Care and Learning

August 28, 2025



Board Meeting Welcome

Dr. Kristy Beam



Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- Approve 8/28/25 agenda
- Approve 5/15/25 minutes



Inspiration Dr. Kristy Beam



Board Member Updates



Commissioner's Updates

Amy M. Jacobs, Commissioner



Federal Updates

Office of Child Care Priorities

2024 CCDF Final Rule 2025 Proposed CCDF Rules



CCDF Disaster Supplemental Funds

- Application open for supplemental CCDF funding for expenses related to 2023 and 2024 major disasters and emergencies
- DECAL application in progress for Hurricane Helene
- Application due September 15, 2025
- Funds will be awarded by September 30, 2026



FFY2026 CCDF Allocation





Finance, Legislative, & Administrative Updates

Rian Ringsrud, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration



Budget Comparison % Data as of Remaining Expenditures* Budget June 30th Balance Remaining By Program Child Care Services \$0 0% \$592,421,344 \$592,421,344 \$15,100 Nutrition \$166,923,522 \$166,908,422 0% \$549,016,276 \$536,197,076 \$12,819,200 2% Pre-K + (HS)\$86,231,553 \$86,231,553 \$0 **Quality Initiatives** 0% **Totals** \$1,394,592,695 \$1,381,758,395 \$12,834,300 1%

By Fund Source							
State General	\$71,982,694	\$71,967,594	\$15,100	0%			
State Lottery	\$548,846,095	\$536,026,895	\$12,819,200	2%			
Federal	\$773,480,303	\$773,480,303	\$0	0%			
Other	\$283,603	\$283,603	\$0	0%			
Totals	\$1,394,592,695	\$1,381,758,395	\$12,834,300	1%			

^{*} Includes encumbrances.

Finance Update

FY 2025 Q4 Budget Summary



Upcoming Budget Requests							
	Current FY26 Budget	Proposed AFY26 Budget	Proposed FY27 Budget				
By Program							
Child Care Services	\$457,646,206	\$457,646,206	\$457,646,206				
Nutrition	\$170,000,000	\$170,000,000	\$170,000,000				
Pre-K + (HS)	\$563,215,616	\$563,215,616	\$578,914,212				
Quality Initiatives	\$57,693,238	\$57,693,238	\$57,693,238				
Totals	\$1,248,555,060	\$1,248,555,060	\$1,264,253,656				
By Fund Source							
			177 055 050				
State General	\$77,355,059	\$77,355,059	\$77,355,059				
State Lottery	\$563,040,616	\$563,040,616	\$578,739,212				
Federal	\$607,659,885	\$607,659,885	\$607,659,885				
Other	\$499,500	\$499,500	\$499,500				
Totals	\$1,248,555,060	\$1,248,555,060	\$1,264,253,656				

Finance Update

AFY 2026 & FY 2027 Budget Requests



Pre-K Program

State Lottery Funds Change						
FY 2026	FY 2027	Increase	% Change			
\$563,040,616	\$578,739,212	\$15,698,596	2.79%			

Increase

Increase funds for year three of a four-year phase in to reduce classroom size from 22 to 20 students to improve instructional quality

- Increase formula funds for 98 new Pre-K classrooms=\$10,833,386
- Increase formula funds for Teacher Pay Supplement for 98 Teachers =\$878,683
- Increase funds for net cost of 98 Class Start-Up Grants=\$150,000
- Increase funds for 1 Additional Pre-K Specialist to support 98 Classes= \$104,000
- Increase formula funds for estimated annual T&E Update= \$3,732,527

Finance Update

FY 2027 Budget Request State Lottery Funds Change



Update on SFY 2025 Audit

- Audit Details
 - Conducted by Georgia Department of Audits & Accounts (DOAA)
 - Period covered by audit: 7/1/2024–6/30/2025
 - Entrance Conference Held 8/19

- What Board Members Should Know
 - May receive an "Engagement Letter" from DOAA notifying you of the audit engagement
 - · We will contact you if anything else is needed from you







Happy Helpings Statistics May-July 2025

- Served 1,977,956 Meals*
- 933 Meal Sites
- 65 Sponsors
- 109 GA Counties



Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

- Kick-off Events held in June with America's Second Harvest of South Georgia and DeKalb County Recreation Center to officially kickoff the summer meals season.
- Spike event held in July with Fannin County Recreation Department to remind families that summer meals were available until school started.
- Along with multiple physical activities that included bean bags, hula hoops, jump ropes and hopscotch, children enjoyed a nutritious meal, stay hydrated with a hydration station that included fruit and herb infused water, and taste-tested Georgia grown fruits and vegetables. Nutrition education materials were also provided.

Happy Helpings Events

















Georgia's Pre-K and Instructional Supports Updates

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



Summer Transition Program 2025



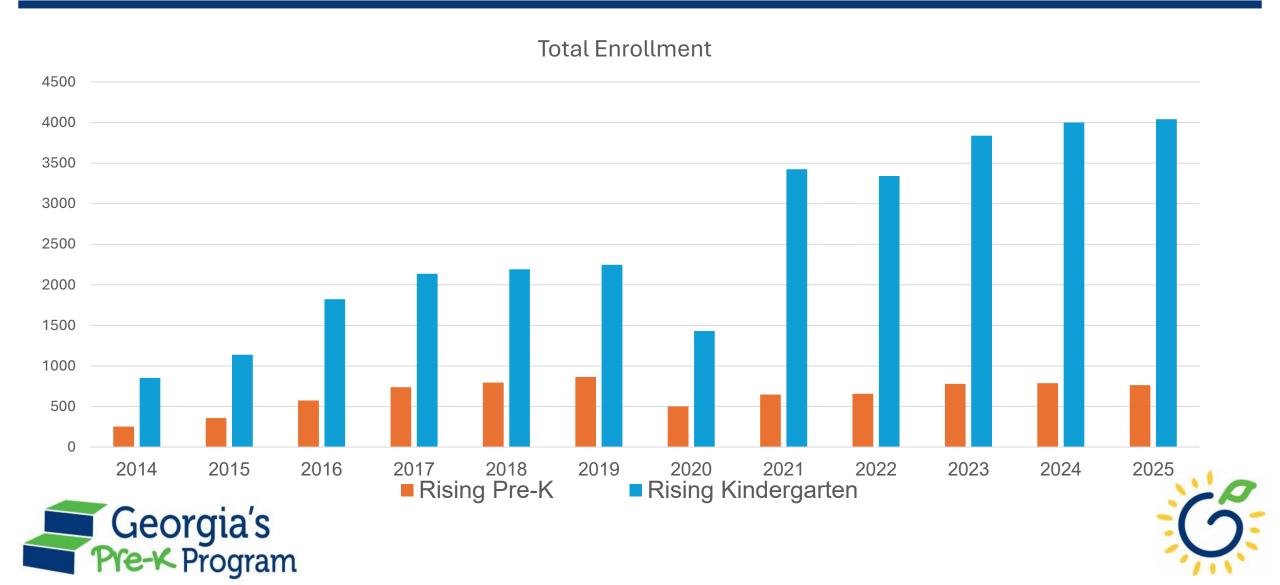
Total Classes: 395

• 326 Rising Kindergarten

• 69 Rising Pre-K



Summer Transition Program 2025

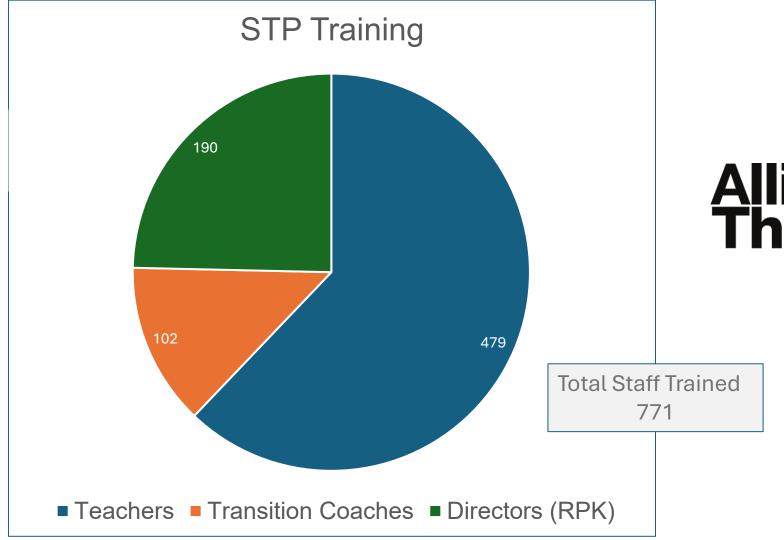


Summer Transition Program 2025













Family Testimonials

I am so proud to be a part of this program. The countless hours of preparation and meticulously planned activities left a profound impact on each child who participated. This summer, I witnessed a group of educators dedicated to building purposeful connections and laying strong foundations, all with a mindset of continuous improvement. I am excited to see how the school year can benefit from the lessons learned this Summer.

I am truly inspired by the impact of this program on Liam's development. Every day, he thrived while exercising his social skills in a playful and engaging environment. His excitement for exploring new concepts through our hands-on approach was palpable. The balance of set expectations and the flexibility to adapt made this summer a truly remarkable play-based camp experience. As both a parent and a teacher, I am deeply moved by the extraordinary care and attention given to this program by everyone involved.

They loved everything. The bus, the food, the friends, the teachers. Hazel says her favorite parts were all the fun projects and the field trips. Talin's favorites were the volcano and water day.









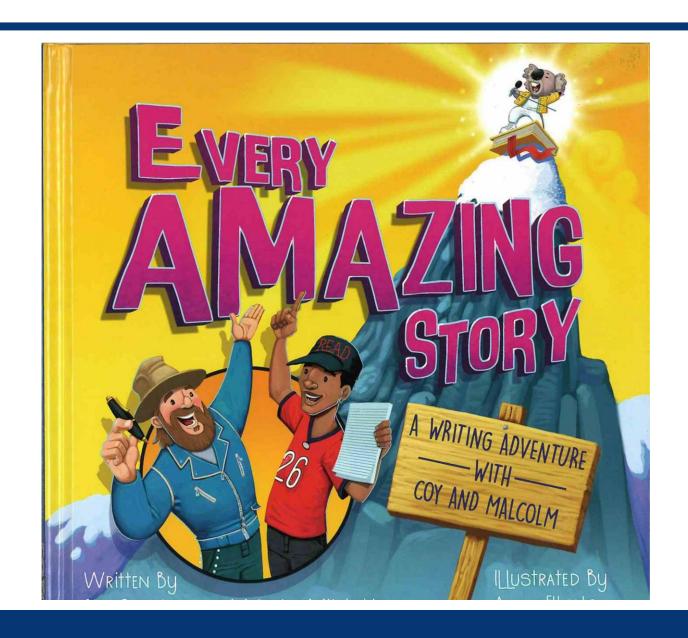


Mark Your Calendar!

October 6-10, 2025



New Pre-K Book





Adaptive Learning Mini Grants

SEEDS Program



Adaptive Learning Mini Grants



- Developed in 2022 to increase early childhood educators' knowledge, skill, and access to resources to support children with disabilities
- Eligibility:
 - Must be licensed and in good standing with DECAL
 - Classroom must have at least one child with a disability enrolled
 - Program must complete one Adaptive Learning training
 - Classroom must engage in at least four coaching visits with a SEEDS Specialist
- Receive up to \$2500 in funds to purchase adaptive materials



75 mini grants awarded in SFY 25



\$134,000 funds dispersed

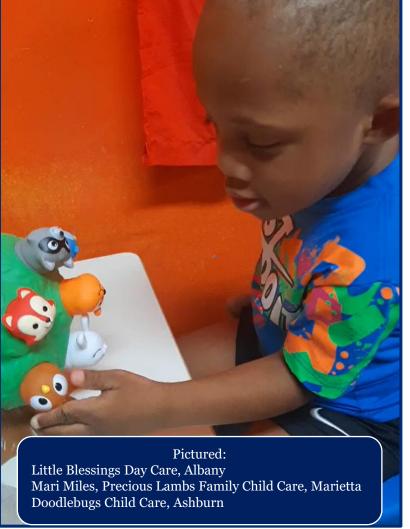


147 coaching visits completed





Adaptive Learning Mini Grants in Action









Program Testimonial

Tomorrow's New Hope Montessori – Suwanee

Dear Angela,

I wanted to share how the materials purchased through the Inclusion Grant fund have made a significant difference for the child they were intended to support in our classroom.

The new materials helped him strengthen his sensory and motor skills through hands-on exploration, and it was wonderful to see his enthusiasm as he engaged with them. One puzzle, in particular, focused on emotions and expressions; he was thrilled to work with it and learned so much about recognizing and understanding different feelings. It challenged him in the best way and helped build both his confidence and social awareness.

The charts and posters showing various actions also provided helpful visual cues, guiding him through daily activities and routines and making learning more accessible and meaningful for him.

Your guidance and support truly helped me create a more positive and inclusive learning environment for this child. Thank you for making this possible!

Kind Regards, Salina Bharwani



Child Care Services Updates

Pam Stevens, Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services



Cross Divisional Collaboration Initiative



- This initiative was included in the DECAL Strategic Plan, and it is already underway. CCS began this initiative in February, and the second meeting occurred earlier this week.
- All divisions are participating and excited about the collaborative conversations and culture being established for our work.
- Achievements to date that originated with ideas from these meetings:
 - Choking Prevention Campaign
 - DECAL QR Codes
 - Updated Provider Resources
 - Designating divisional collaboration leads

Departmentwide Choking Awareness Campaign

Survey for provider feedback

- 2 Super Saturday training events (metro area September 27, 2025; south to be scheduled)
- Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
- DECAL Divisions: CCS TA, Nutrition, Infant-Toddler, Child Development
 - 2 large campaign events (end of October Glynn Co. & metro area dates to be determined)
 - **Media & legislative representation**
- Resources (poster, flyer, emails, magnets, social media posts, etc.)

Micro-trainings







odonnellcompany





APPROACH

key messages

Be Aware

Know the risks

Know the children's ages and stages

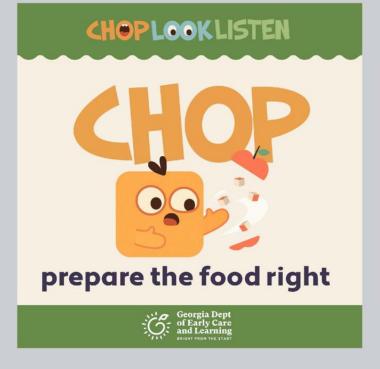
Prepare

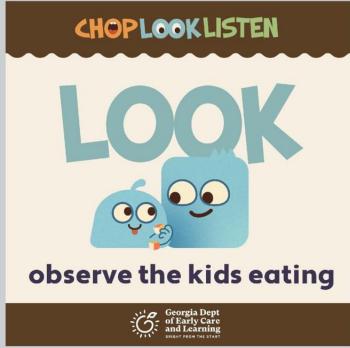
Type of Food Size/Shape/Texture of Food

Take Care

Children seated where you can see them Paying attention to bites and chewing



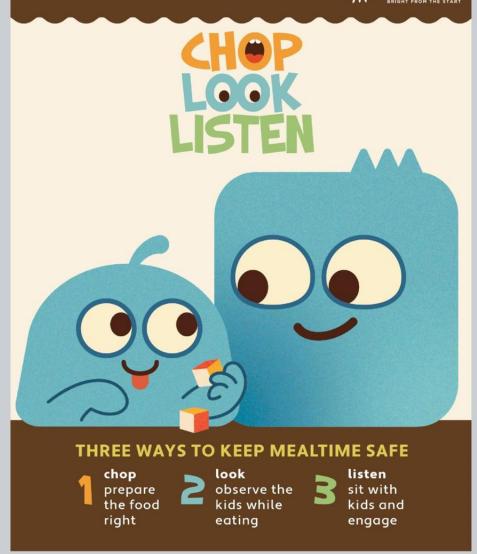










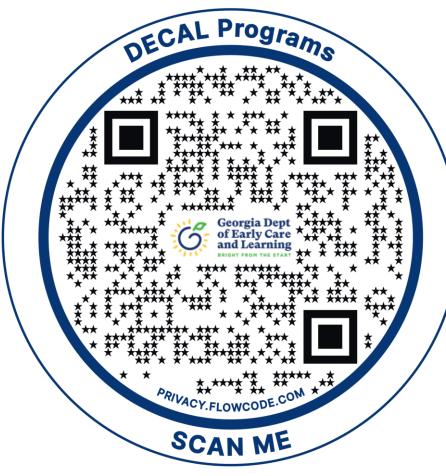






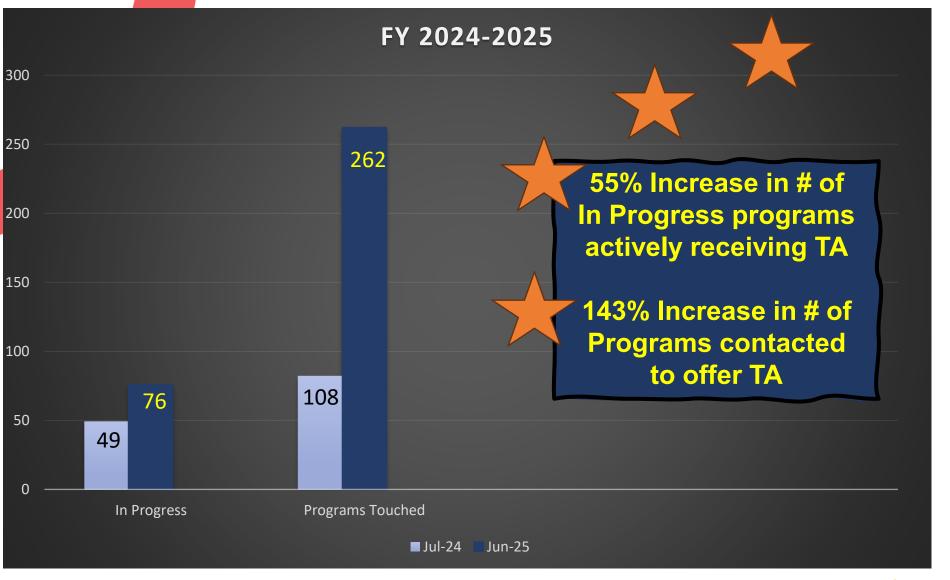
DECAL QR Codes







CCS Technical Assistance Team Achievements



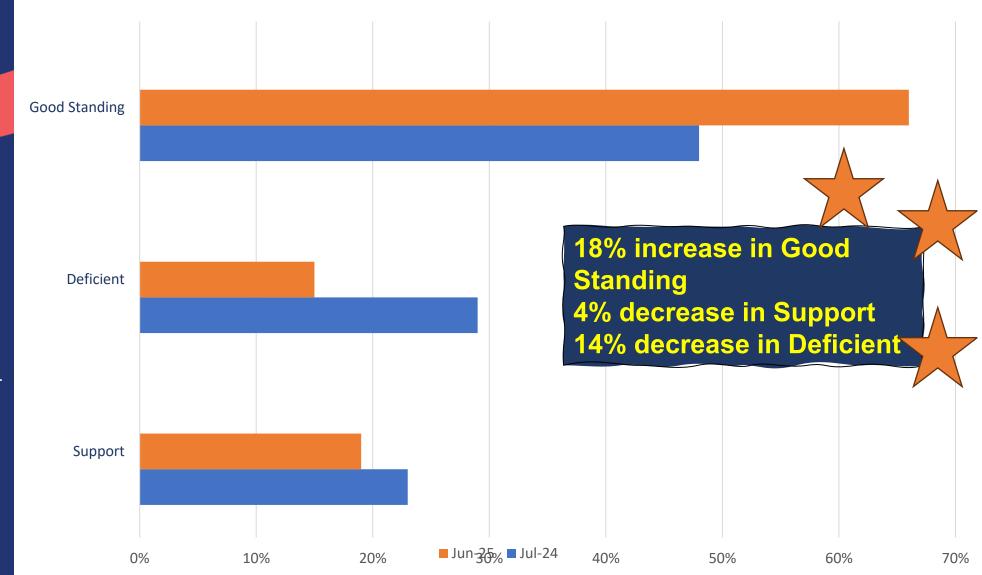


Compliance Changes





CCS Technical Assistance



Equipping for Success

CCR&R and CCS Q&A Sessions started twice a year

> Increasing **Understanding** & Equipping for Success

New TA

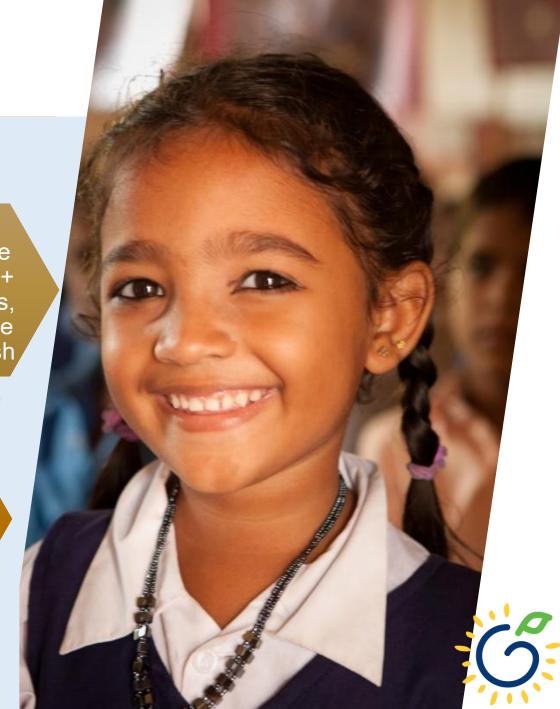
Hundreds of best practices added to Indicator Manual

Policies and Procedures implemented

> CCS TA **Toolkit** created

CCS Newsletter feature articles every quarter

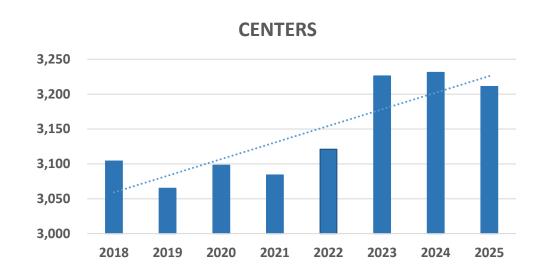
CCS Resource Suite- 60+ resources, with some in Spanish

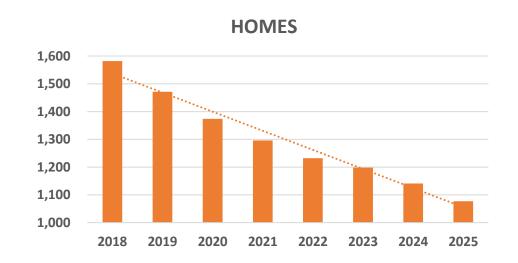




Provider count by fiscal year

- While Centers initially showed growth at the start of FY2025, the year ended with slightly fewer Centers than FY2024, shifting the previous upward trend.
- The number of Homes continued to decline at a steady pace, consistent with previous fiscal years.

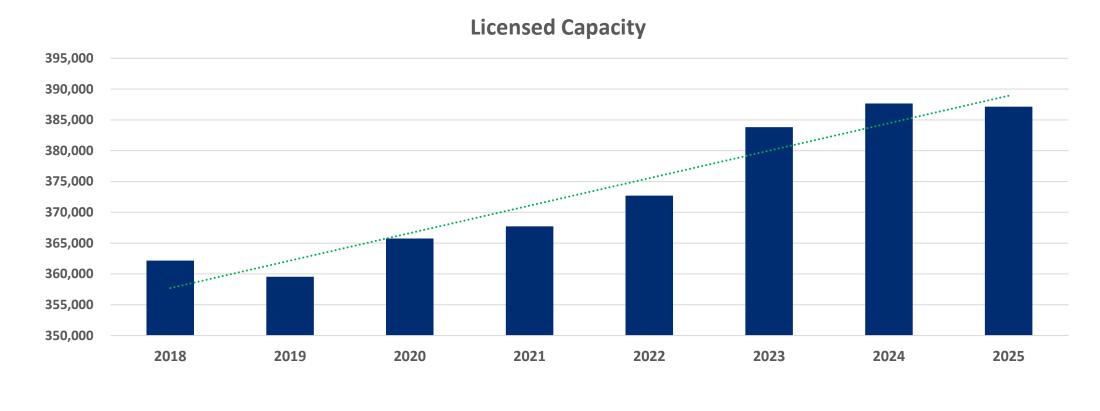






Licensed capacity by fiscal year

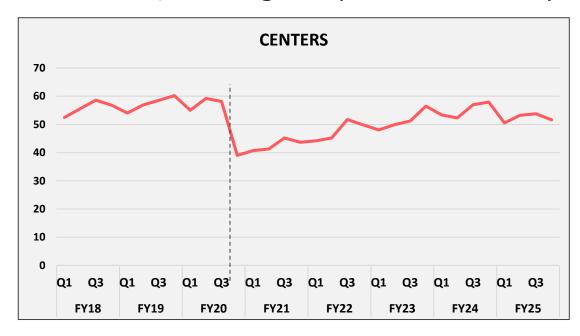
• Despite the consistent decrease in Homes and recent shift in Centers total licensed capacity has increased by 7%since 2018.

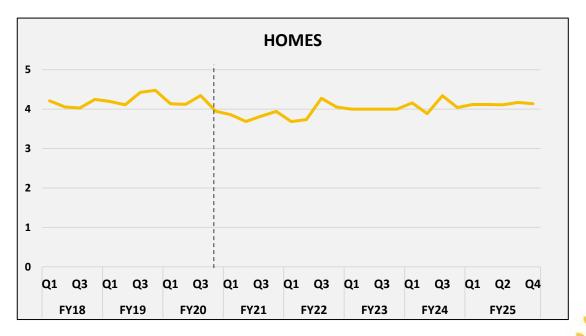




Average number of children present

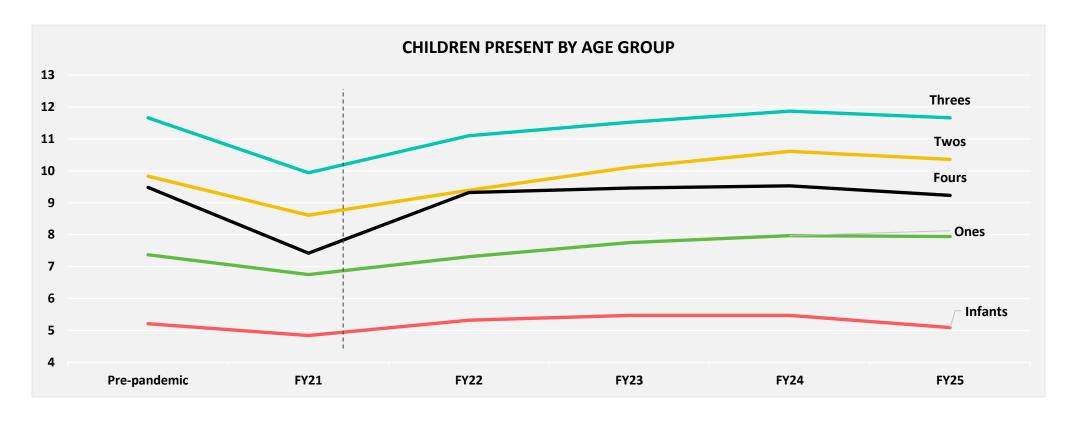
 Although the average number of children present at both Centers and Homes has been gradually recovering since the pandemic, we observed a mild shift at Centers.
 While FY2024 ended 3% below the pre-pandemic average, FY2025 closed at 8% below, slowing the pace of recovery.





Children present by age group

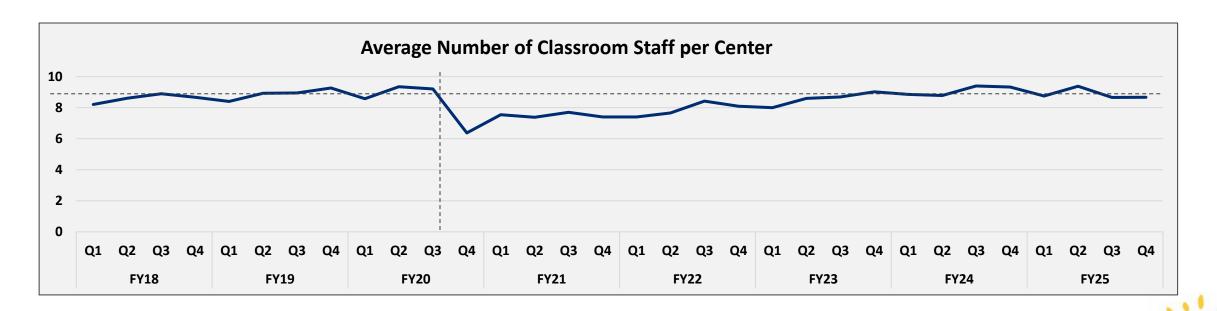
• Infants and four-year-olds account for the greatest change in pace.





Number of classroom staff present FY2025

• Since fewer children have been present, the number of staff present has also decreased. However, the decrease in staff has been much smaller than expected — while children present decreased by 5%, staff present only decreased by 1%.







Federal Programs Updates

Elisabetta Kasfir, Deputy Commissioner for Federal Programs



CAPS Cost & Funding

CAPS is funded by the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF).

- CAPS costs approximately \$385,000,000 annually for direct weekly payments at an average of \$7549 per child each year.
- In addition, Quality Rated 2- and 3-star providers are paid approximately \$17,000,000 annually in Commitment to Quality (C2Q) payments.

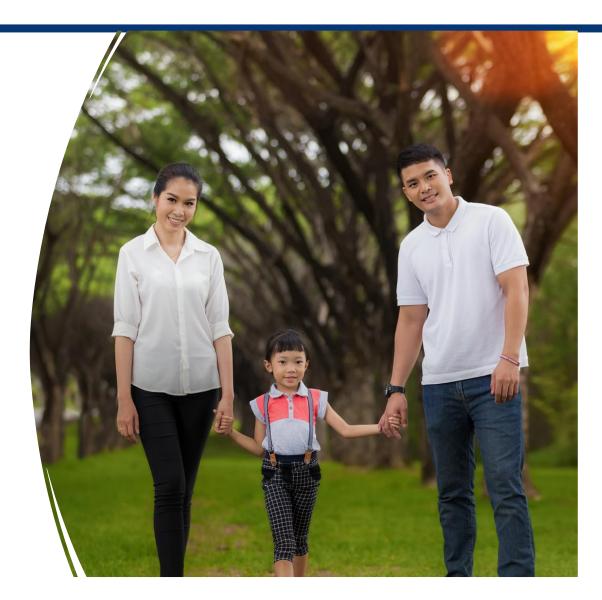
CAPS helps families pay for child care, but most families are also required to pay a family fee.

- CAPS determines the family fee based on the size and income of the family.
- When the family fee is being charged, the average family fee is \$22 a week.
- Normally, if a family chooses a provider who charges more than their CAPS scholarship, the family must pay the provider the difference.



Family Fee

- Based on a family's annual gross applicable income
- Four tiers: 0, 3, 5, and 7% of family income
- The tier applied depends on ratio of income to Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- Family Fee tiers are as follows:
 - 0 10% of FPL = 0
 - Over 10 50% of FPL = 3%
 - Over 50 100% of FPL = 5%
 - Over 100% of FPL = 7%





CAPS Eligibility



Eligibility Requirements





Eligibility Requirements (Priority Group)

Families must fall within 1 of Georgia's 13 priority groups to participate in CAPS:

Child Protective
Services and Court
Ordered Supervision
Cases

Families of children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program

Families who have experienced a natural disaster

Need to protect

Children in Georgia DFCS Custody

Children with Disabilities

Families who lack fixed, regular and adequate Housing

Families with very low income

Families experiencing domestic violence

Families participating in or transitioning from TANF

Grandparents
Raising
Grandchildren

Minor Parent

Student Parent



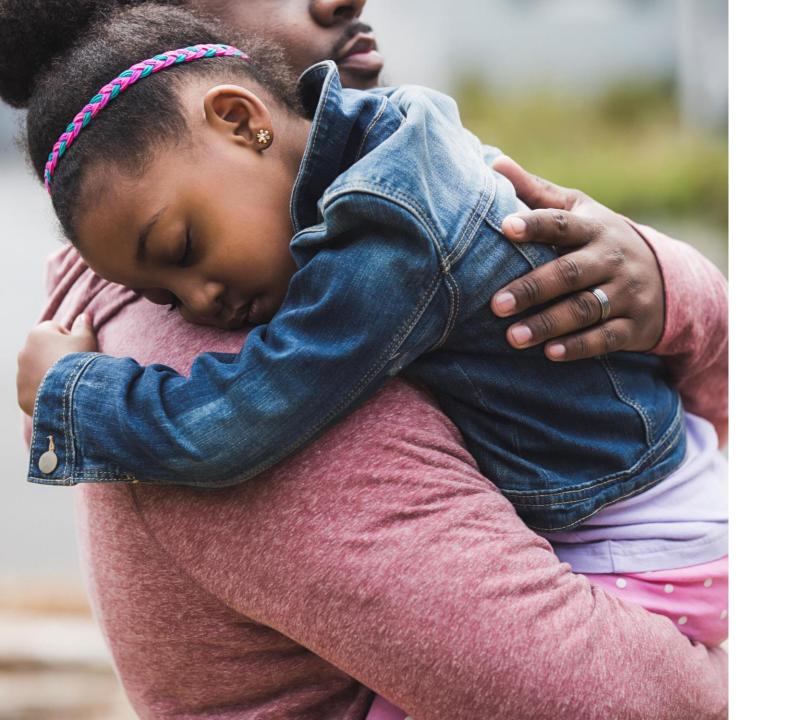


Families must earn less than 30% of the State Median Income (SMI) at initial eligibility and can remain enrolled in CAPS until income exceeds 85% of SMI.

*For example, a family of four must earn *less* than \$31,768 a year to meet initial eligibility requirements and can continue to receive CAPS scholarships until income exceeds \$90,010.







Eligibility Requirements

- Additionally, children must:
 - be a US citizen and Georgia resident
 - have an immunization record (or exemption)
 - be under the age of 13



Landscape of CAPS Providers

Most CAPS providers are licensed Child Care Learning Centers.

Provider Type	Count	Percent
Child Care Learning Center	2,115	72.6%
Family Child Care Learning Home	482	16.5%
Exempt	251	8.6%
Informal	66	2.3%
Total	2,914	100%



Where do families with CAPS seek care?

95.8% are enrolled in licensed Child Care Learning Centers 1.8% are enrolled in licensed Family Child Care Learning Homes

2.2% are enrolled in eligible Exempt Providers

.1% are enrolled in Informal Providers



99%

of children are enrolled at a **Quality Rated** provider





53,000

children currently using a CAPS scholarship



Children in CAPS by Age



28% Infants or Toddlers

(Ages birth-2)



24% Preschool

(Ages 3-4)



48% School Age

(Ages 5+)



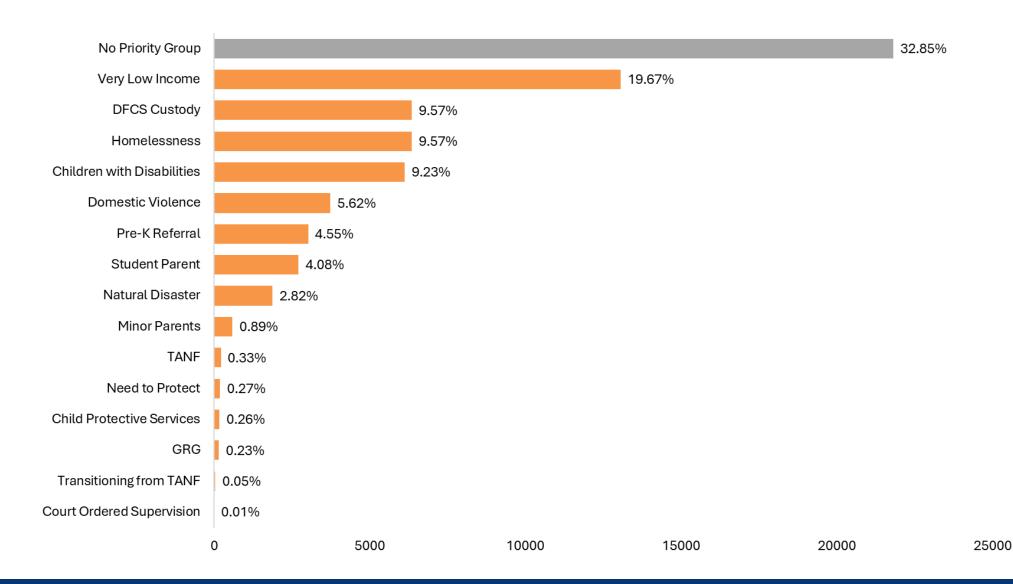
Family Size

- Average family size: 3.4
 - Median: 3
- 2 children in care per family on average

Family Size	Count	Percent
2	8,052	25.3%
3	10,454	32.9%
4	7,648	24.1%
5	3,631	11.4%
6	1,286	4%
7 or more	709	2.2%
Total	31,780	100%



Priority Groups



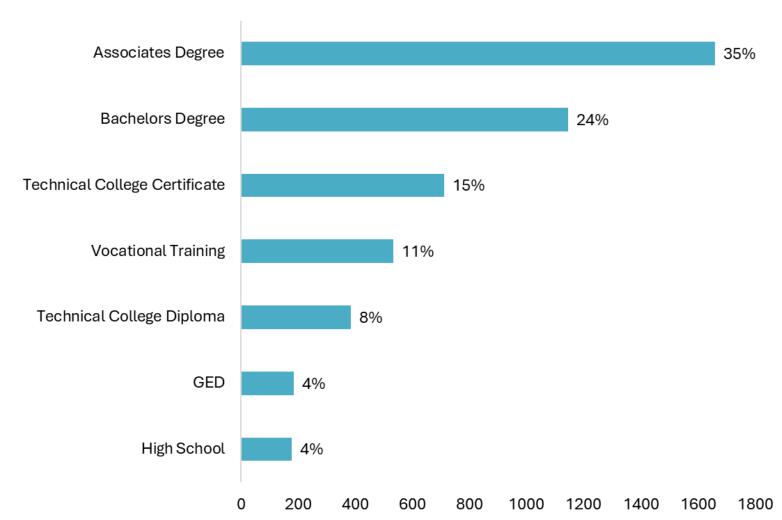


Student Parents

12% of parents report training or education as an approved activity

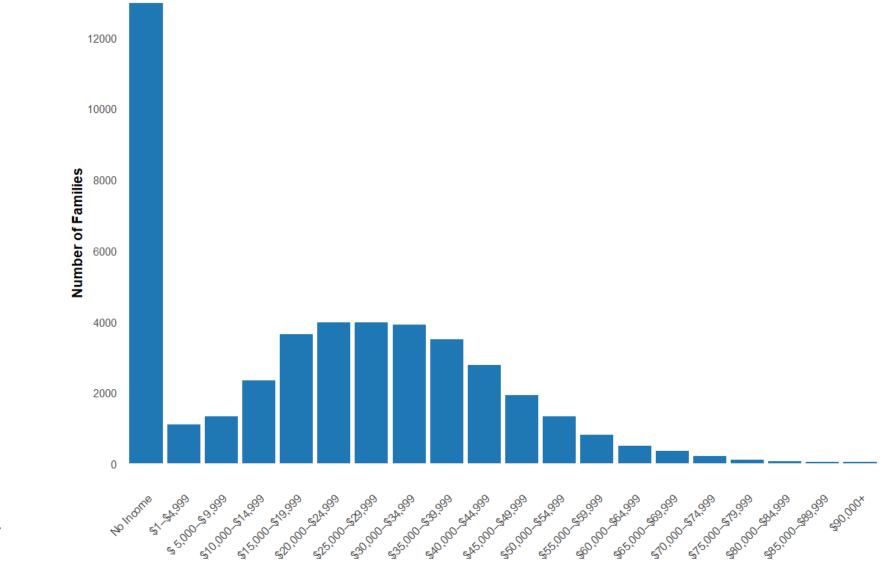
 Half of those parents are also employed (6% of our total population)

Education Programs Pursued by Parents





Income Distribution of CAPS Families





Income

- 63.2% of CAPS families are at or below 30% of the State Median Income (SMI)
- 36.8% of CAPS families are between 30% and 85% of the State Median Income (SMI)

\$0 \$27,745 \$117,127 (Median family income)

Children in CAPS by Poverty Status

 Over half of children are in families below the poverty line.

• 9% with no income

46.6%

Above Poverty

53.4%

Below Poverty

No Income 9.4%

*Excludes children in foster care



Quality Innovations and Partnerships Updates

Bentley Ponder, Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships



Community Impact Grants

- Funded by Georgia's Child Care & Development Fund (CCDF)
- Three types of two-year grants:



2Gen Innovation Grants for Student Parent Success

- Award Amount: Up to \$75,000
- Number of Grantees: 5



2Gen Community Literacy Grants

- Award Amount: Up to \$75,000
- Number of Grantees: 4



Community Transformation Grants

- Award Amount: Up to \$125,000
- Number of Grantees: 6



Quality Rated Family Support Call Center



Launched July 1, 2025

1 Manager + 4 Referral Specialists



From July 1 – July 31:

1,232 Total Families Contacted & Served

780 Incoming Phone Inquiries

452 Outgoing Calls Responding to Online Inquiries

Quality Rated NAPA Endorsements Awarded







- DECAL is partnering with Child Trends to conduct a statewide study of quality in licensed child care programs
- From August through December, Child Trends will be reaching out to randomly selected programs to ask them to participate
- Participation includes classroom observations, surveys, and gift cards for participating programs and teachers



QR Updates

Quality Rated reveals a new look





Programs Rated Since 2012

4,197

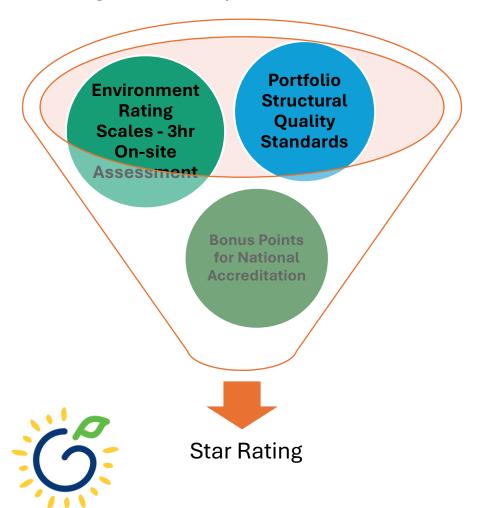
Unique providers have earned a star rating since we began Quality Rated in 2012



Rating Process Comparison

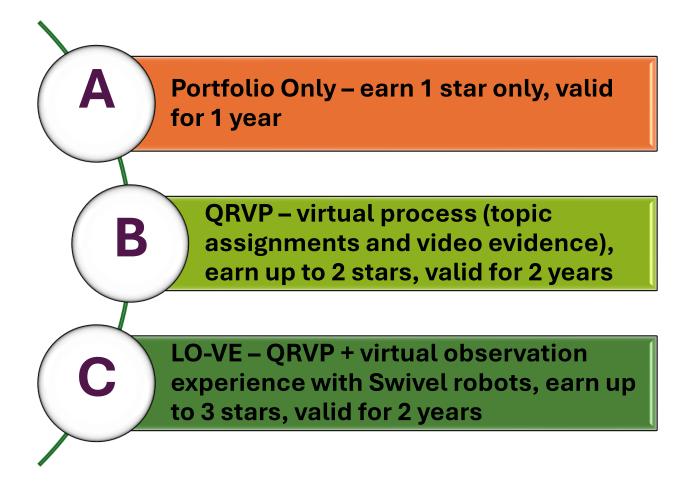
Traditional Rating Process

rating method in place since 2012



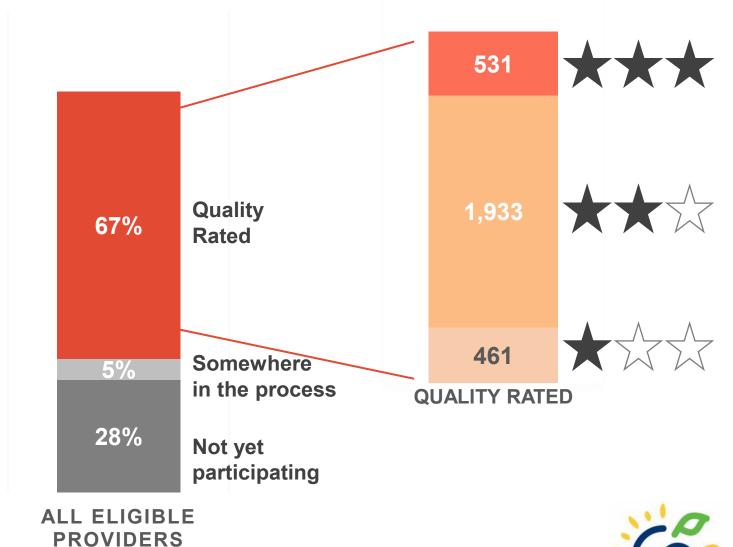
Temporary Alternate Rating Process (TARO)

rating method developed for the global pandemic



Quality Rated by the Numbers

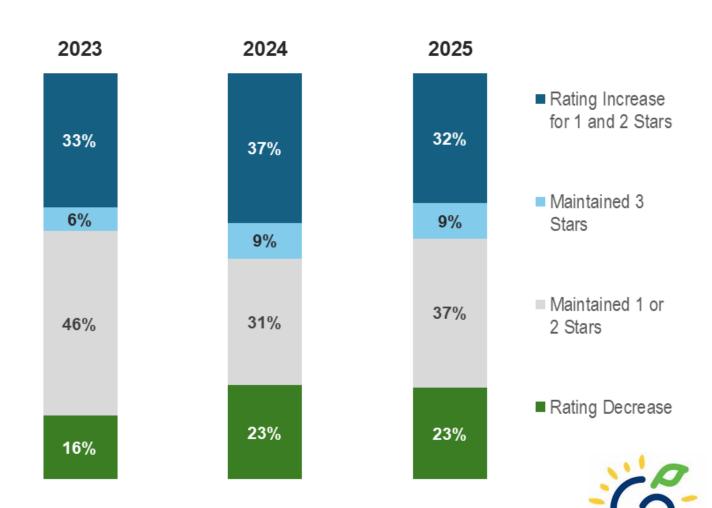




QR Reassessments, 2023–2025*

The proportion of programs earning a higher rating declined from 37% in 2024 to 32% in 2025.

 Programs whose rating went down increased from 16% in 2023 to 23% in 2024 and 2025.



*249 programs have received a reassessment so far in 2025.

QR Reassessments in 2025

- The share of providers rated at 2 stars continues to grow, driven by both decreases of 3-star ratings and increases of 1-star ratings.
- 76% of 1-star providers who were rerated in 2025 increased to a higher quality rating.
- 66% of 3-star providers who were rerated in 2025 dropped to a lower quality rating.
- 70% of 2-star providers remained at the 2star level after reassessment.

Percentage of Rating Changes by Quality Rating for 2025

			New F			
		0	1	2	3	TOTAL
	1	4%	21%	65%	11%	100%
d Rating						
	2	3%	9%	70%	18%	100%
Old						
	3	2%	8%	56%	34%	100%





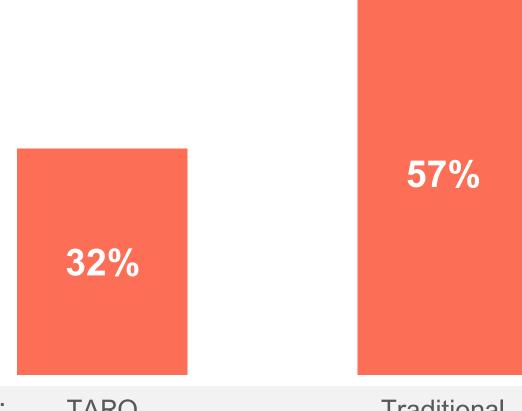


What is TARO?

The letters in **T-A-R-O** stand for *Temporary* Alternate Rating Options.

TARO was part of DECAL's response to COVID-19.

It allowed child care programs to achieve a Quality Rated star rating without an on-site observation (vs. the traditional method of portfolio review + on-site observation) 3-Star Providers That Maintained 3 Stars in 2025



Previous Rating: TARO Traditional

So What? And What's Next?

- 3 stars that were expiring in 2026 have received a 1-year extension.
 - Provides opportunities for those who have decreased in 2024 and 2025 to come back through. CCR&Rs can increase resources.
- Further analyses into TARO ratings. What worked and what didn't. Can inform future revisions.
- Demonstrates the impact of pandemic-related funding.



QR Workforce Bonus Update

16,074

Total Number of **Applications** for QRWB

13,022 Staff Have Received QRWB

1,596 Providers (82%) w/ Staff that Received QRWB

\$6.5 Million in QRWB Funds Distributed Since April

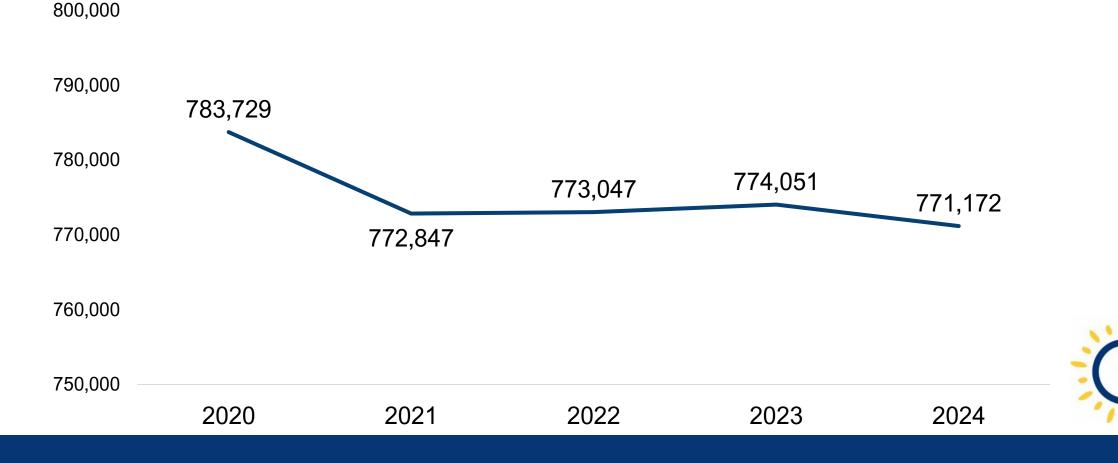


Economic Impact Study



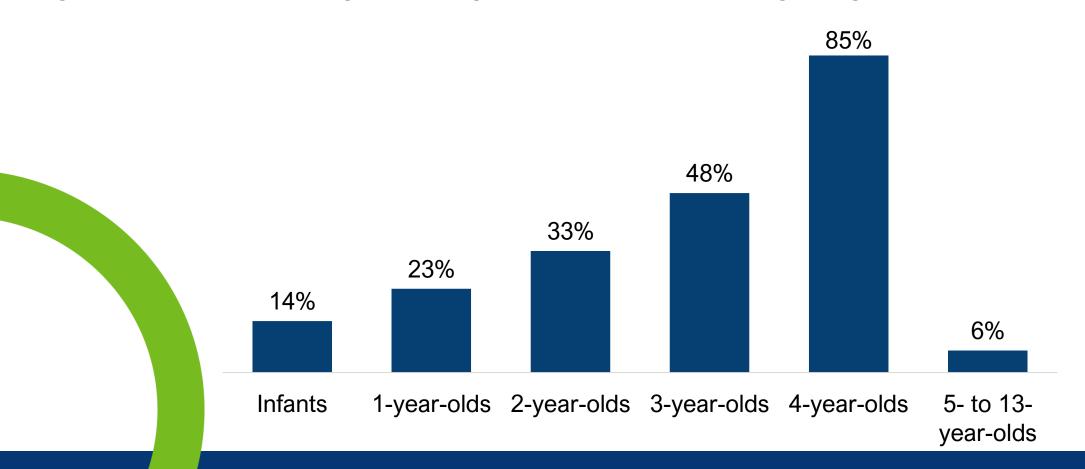
Georgia's Population: Birth Through Age 5

Georgia's birth through 5 population has declined by 1.6% since 2020. This is the primary source of demand for the ECE industry.



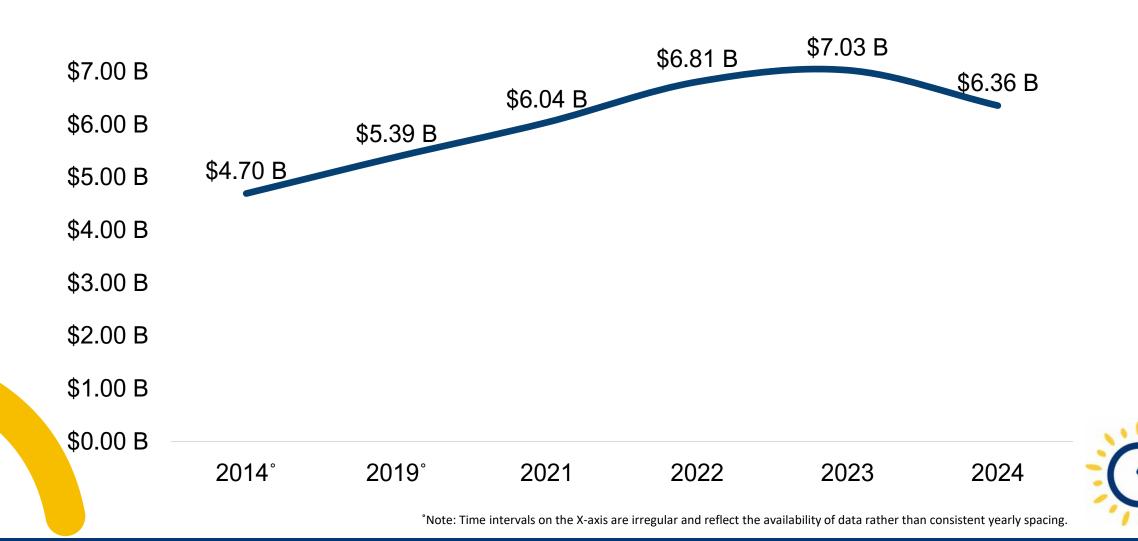
Georgia's Population Served by Licensed or Regulated ECE Industry (2024)

Enrollment in early care and education varies dramatically across age groups, increasing with age from birth through age 4.

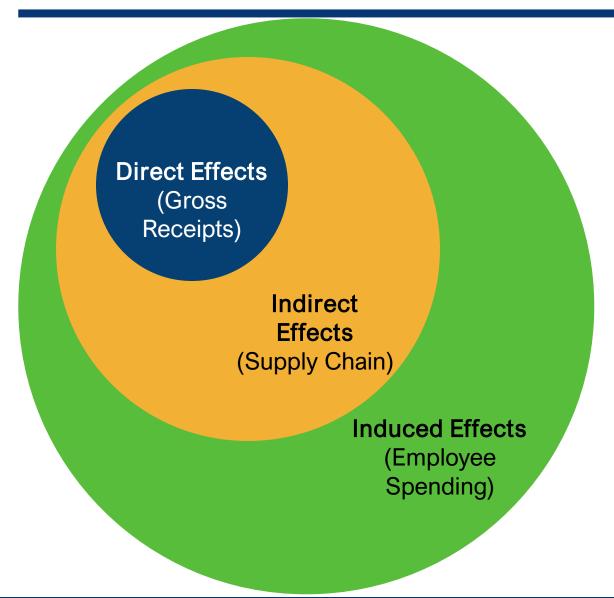




Total Annual Economic Impact of the ECE Industry in Georgia (2014–2024)



Types of Economic Impact

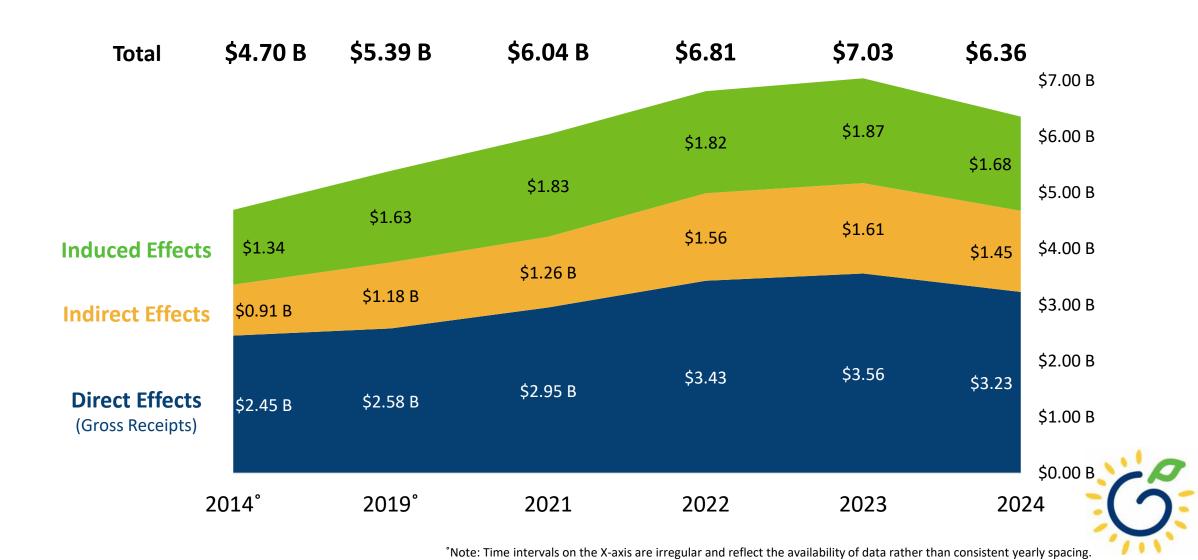


Economic impact is measured through three types of effects:

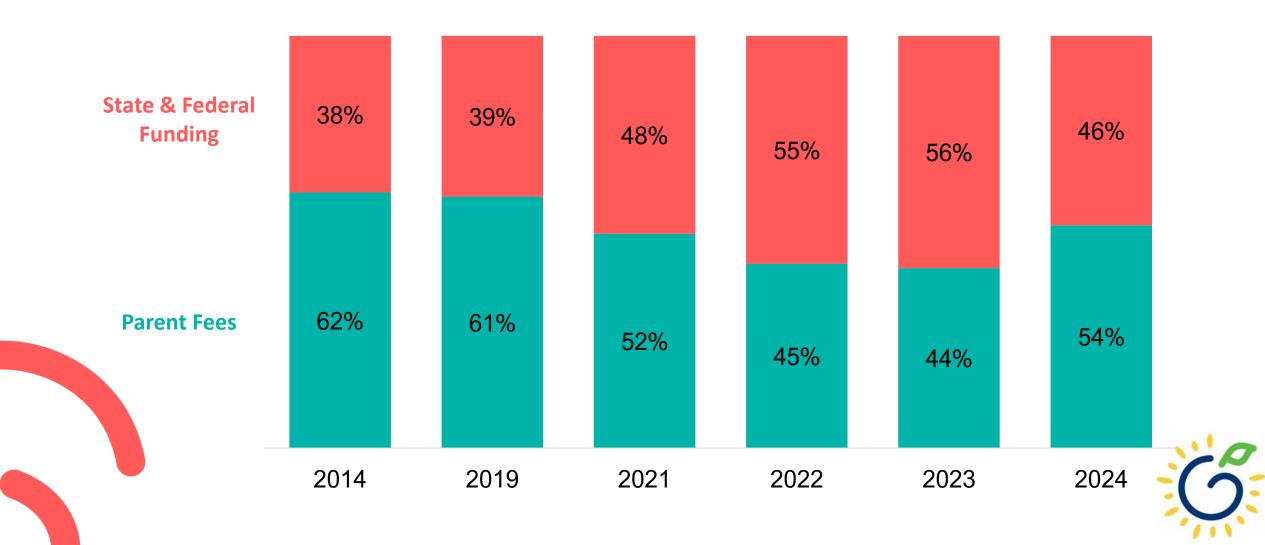
- 1. **Direct Effects**: The money spent on a product/service.
- 2. Indirect Effects: Business to business spending within the supply chain.
- 3. Induced Effects:
 Employees' household spending due to their earned income.



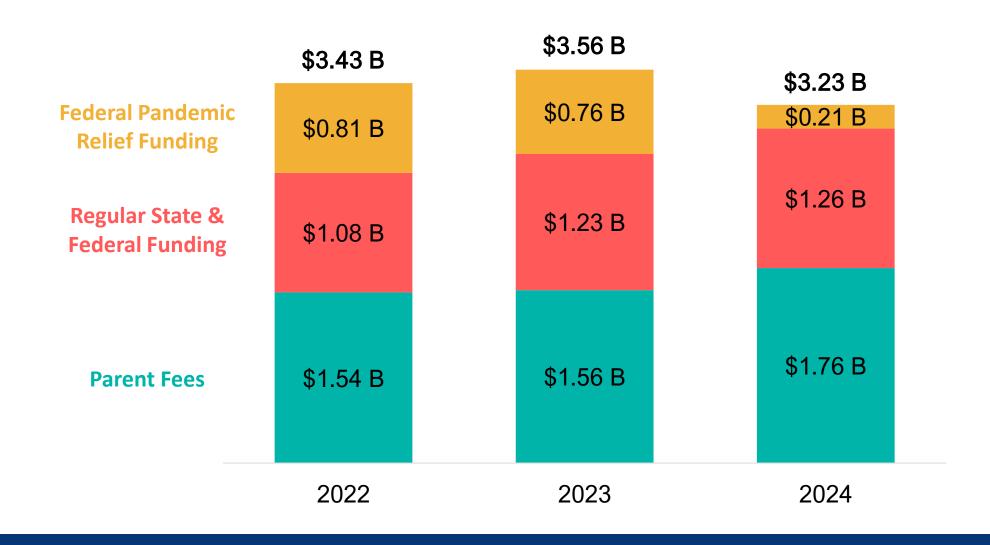
Total Annual Economic Impact of the ECE Industry in Georgia (2014-2024)



Georgia ECE Industry Gross Receipts Funded by Parent Fees and State/Federal Sources



Georgia ECE Industry Gross Receipts (2022–2024)





Research Webpage



♥ Criminal Records & Service of Process ♠ Open Records

Find child care or call: 1-877-ALL-GA-KIDS

For all other questions: 1-888-442-7735

Home

For Families -

For Providers -

For Educators ▼

About Us

Research



DECAL's Research team plays an integral role in the development and ongoing evaluation of the agency's policies and programs. We partner with some of the most prestigious research institutions in the country, and we are proud to contribute to the canon of public research about best practices in early childhood education.



Research Topics

Cost of Child Care Studies

COVID-19 Pandemic-Related

LATEST RESEARCH

DECAL is partnering with Child Trends on a statewide study of Georgia's child care and early education programs. The purpose of the study is to better understand the quality of licensed programs across the state. Results of the study will be available in the spring of 2027. DECAL will use the study results to inform resource planning and



Research Webpage



♥ Criminal Records & Service of Process ② Open Records

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For all other questions: 1-888-442-7735

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About Us

Research



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- About Us
- Career Opportunities
- □ License Fee Information
- 9 FAQ

- T CAPS
- □ GaPDS
- HeadStart
- m Thriving Child Care

- † ccs
- GAPREK
- ✓ Training and Approval System
- Inclusion and Behavior Support
- Work Sampling Online

- Contact Us
- ♠ Privacy
- ♣ Legal
- ▲ Human Trafficking Notice



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.



Welcome to the Board of Early Care and Learning

Public Comment

August 28, 2025



Committee Reports



Board Action/Business



Upcoming Budget Requests								
	Current FY26 Budget	Proposed AFY26 Budget	Proposed FY27 Budget					
By Program								
Child Care Services	\$457,646,206	\$457,646,206	\$457,646,206					
Nutrition	\$170,000,000	\$170,000,000	\$170,000,000					
Pre-K + (HS)	\$563,215,616	\$563,215,616	\$577,970,420					
Quality Initiatives	\$57,693,238	\$57,693,238	\$57,693,238					
Totals	\$1,248,555,060	\$1,248,555,060	\$1,263,309,864					
By Fund Source								
State General	\$77,355,059	\$77,355,059	\$77,355,059					
State Lottery	\$563,040,616	\$563,040,616	\$577,795,420					
Federal	\$607,659,885	\$607,659,885	\$607,659,885					
Other	\$499,500	\$499,500	\$499,500					
Totals	\$1,248,555,060	\$1,248,555,060	\$1,263,309,864					

Finance Update

AFY 2026 & FY 2027 Budget Requests



Board Meeting Dates 2026:

- February 19, 2026
- May 21, 2026
- August 27, 2026
- November 19, 2026





Board Meeting Dates 2025

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

