Board Meeting Welcome

Dr. Kristy Beam

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning

BRIGHT FROM THE START

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- Approve 11/19/26 agenda
- Approve 08/27/26 minutes

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Inspiration

Joyce Freeman

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Board Member Updates

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

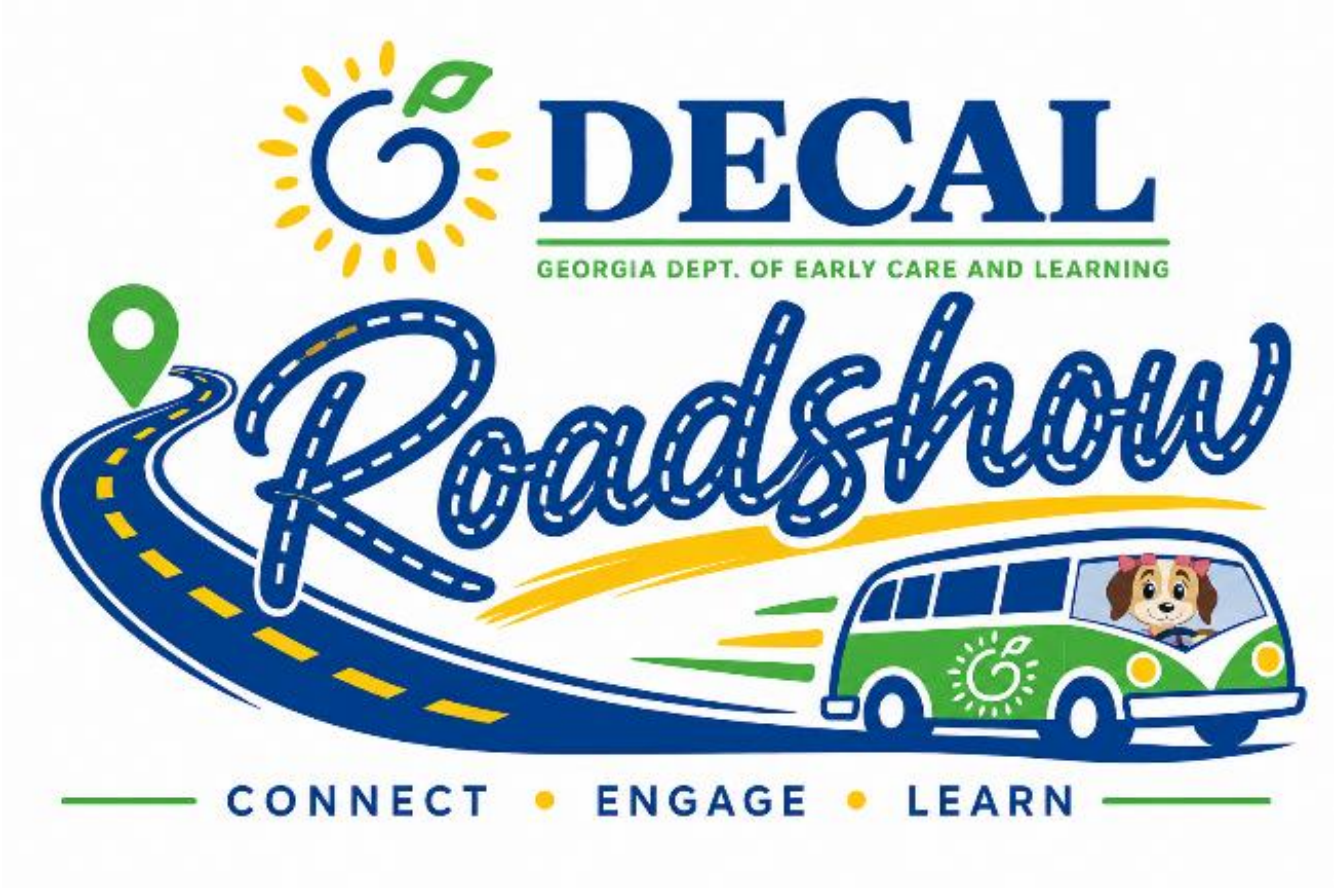
Commissioner's Updates

Amy M. Jacobs, Commissioner

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning

BRIGHT FROM THE START

DECAL on the Road



Tifton

Cartersville

Morrow

Statesboro

Who attended?

More than **260** child care directors, assistant directors, administrators, and owners



Listening Sessions

Help Shape the Road Ahead



Breakout Sessions

GELDS

Criminal Background Checks

Social-Emotional Connection

Licensing and Quality Rated

Exhibit Hall







Bringing DECAL services and supports directly to providers

Next Stop: YouTube

From the plenary to the breakout sessions, you can find it all on DECAL's YouTube channel.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWtWQ0psNSs&list=PLK7FjhYUKuuU





Thank you for joining us!

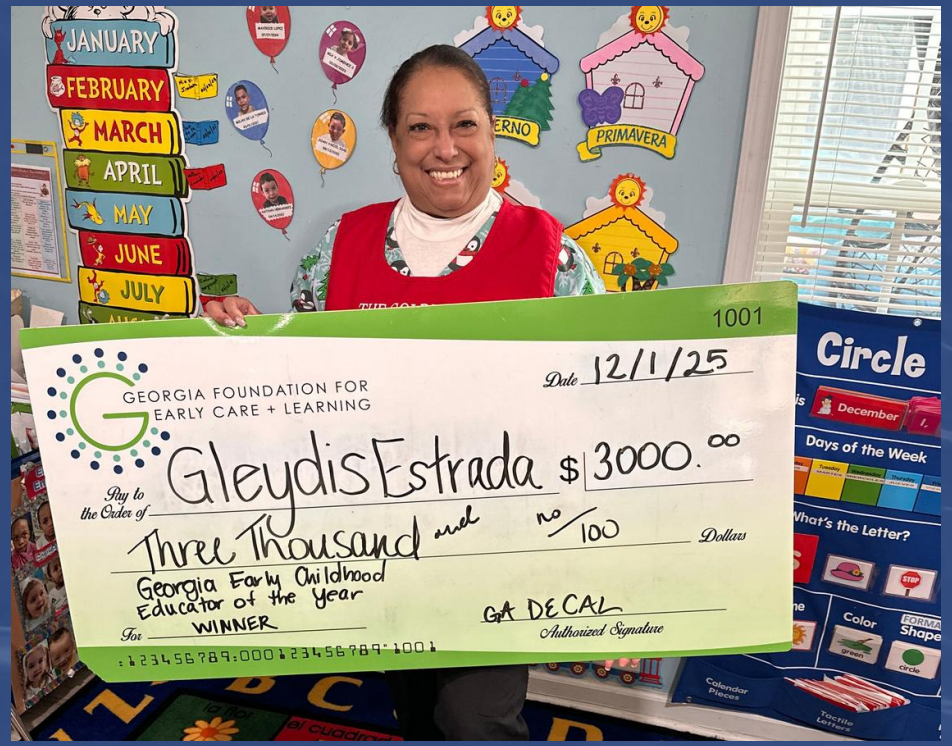
Georgia's Early Childhood Educators of the Year

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START









GEORGIA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

FAMILY CHILD CARE LEARNING HOME
LAWRENCEVILLE , GA

GLEYDIS ESTRADA

Board Resolution

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START









GEORGIA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

TOWNE LAKE ACADEMY
WOODSTOCK, GA

GLORIA LINLEY

Board Resolution

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START









GEORGIA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

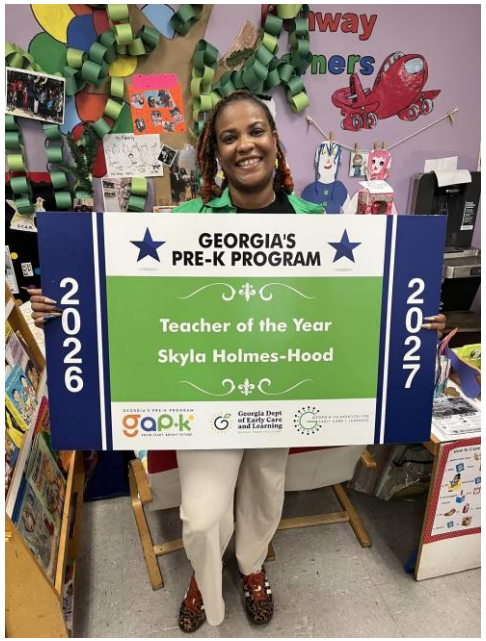
LIFETIME YOUTH LEARNING CENTER
UNION CITY, GA

KENYETTA ROBINSON

Board Resolution

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

2026-2027 Georgia's Pre-K Teachers of the Year









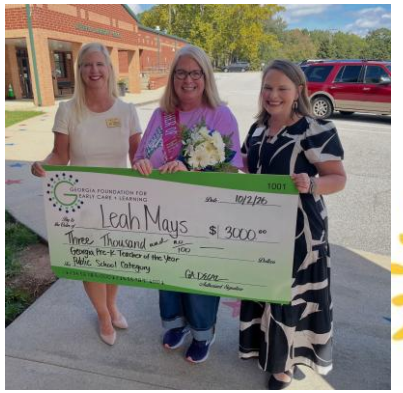


Skyla Holmes-Hood

Angel's Paradise Higher
Learning Academy
Private Provider Winner

Leah Mays

Jefferson City
Early Learning Center
Public School Winner





THANK YOU FOR VISITING!

TODAY'S LEARNERS are *tomorrow's leaders.*

We are so glad you were a part of Georgia's Pre-K Week!

Georgia Pre-K Week









Voices for Georgia's Children

Suzanne Wooley, Senior Communications Manager

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START



Georgia Pre-K Week

October 5-9, 2026

Celebrating Georgia's Future Through Early Learning

TODAY'S
Tomorrow's Leaders.
LEARNERS.

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

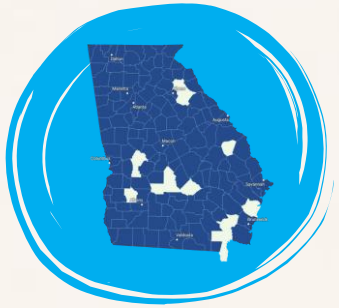
Voices for Georgia's Children

2026 AT-A-GLANCE



951

Pre-K sites registered



146

Georgia counties reached



83

state legislators participated



180

confirmed state leader visits



9

Congressional legislators participated

Georgia Pre-K Week

Voices for Georgia's Children

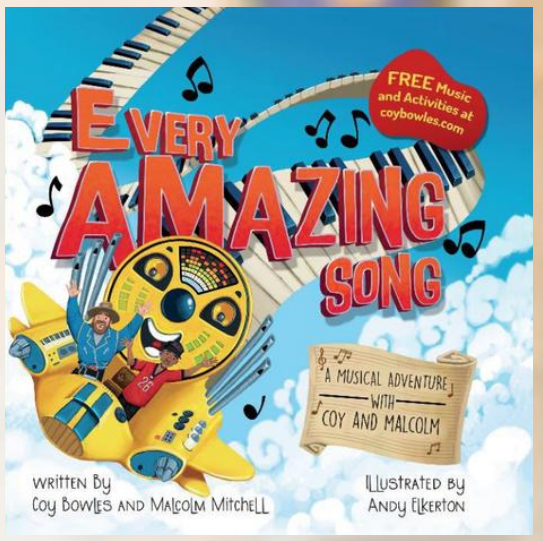
LITERACY, LEARNING, AND LEADERSHIP







October 6 • Building Kidz of Roswell



Official Book for 2026 Georgia Pre-K Week

Georgia Pre-K Week

Voices for Georgia's Children

TODAY'S
Tomorrow's Leaders.
LEARNERS.

Georgia Pre-K alumni demonstrate the lasting value of early learning.

FEATURED STORIES

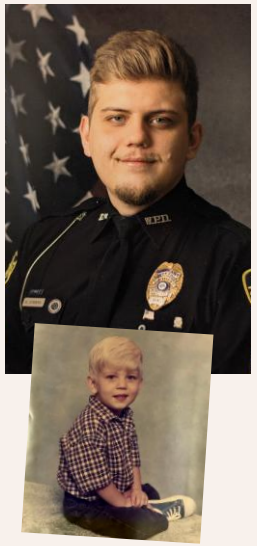
PRE-K TEACHER IN ALPHARETTA



GOOGLE SOFTWARE ENGINEER IN N.Y.C.



POLICE OFFICER IN WAYCROSS



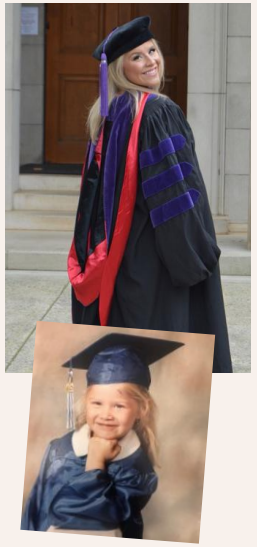
IT ANALYST IN ATLANTA



DECAL EMPLOYEE IN ATLANTA



ATTORNEY IN GAINESVILLE





GEORGIA'S PRE-K PROGRAM gapk | Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning BRIGHT FROM THE START | Voices for Georgia's Children

TODAY'S
Tomorrow's Leaders.
LEARNERS.

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning BRIGHT FROM THE START | Voices for Georgia's Children

A WEEKLONG CELEBRATION, CAPTURED IN PICTURES

TODAY'S LEARNERS



SUNDANCE MONTESSORI
ALPHARETTA

GROWING SKILLS THAT LAST



J.T. REDDICK ELEMENTARY
TIFTON

TOMORROW'S LEADERS



DODGE CO. PRIMARY PRE-K
EASTMAN

STRONG COMMUNITIES START HERE



OATLAND ISLAND WILDLIFE CENTER NATURE PRE-K,
SAVANNAH

GEORGIA'S FUTURE



KIDOVATIONS EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE,
STATESBORO

2026 PHOTO CONTEST

739 TOTAL ENTRIES → **19,758** TOTAL VIEWS → **1,221** TOTAL VOTES

80 BOOK PRIZE PACKS FOR REGISTRATION AND PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS!

Georgia Pre-K Week

Voices for Georgia's Children

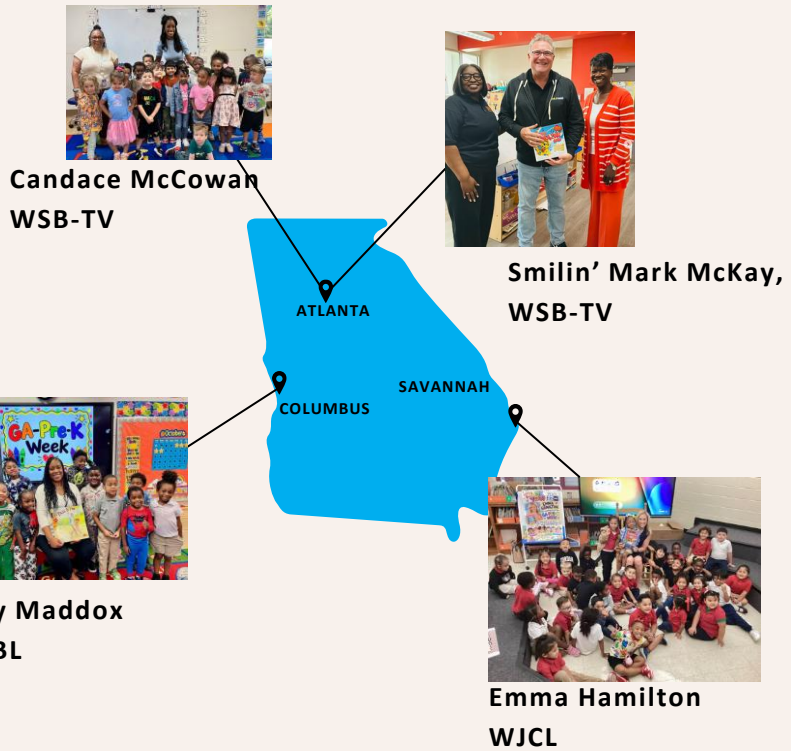
THE STORY REACHED BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

A STRONGER DIGITAL PRESENCE AMPLIFIED GEORGIA PRE-K WEEK ACROSS THE STATE.

+661%
FACEBOOK IMPRESSIONS

+701%
INSTAGRAM IMPRESSIONS

+244%
INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENTS



4

MEDIA PARTICIPANTS

22

EARNED MEDIA PLACEMENTS

Georgia Pre-K Week

Voices for Georgia's Children

THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM 2026

1. **Broader Reach**

   Strong statewide participation and expanded geographic representation.

2. **Powerful Classroom Stories**

   Alumni, educators, and photo contest participants brought the theme to life.

3. **Greater Visibility**

   Digital engagement and earned media extended the celebration outside the classroom.

Georgia Pre-K Week

Voices for Georgia's Children

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU TO DECAL, GEORGIA'S EDUCATORS, PARTICIPATING CENTERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS!

Suzanne Wooley
Senior Communications Manager
Voices for Georgia's Children
swooley@georgiavoices.org

Georgia Pre-K Week

Voices for Georgia's Children

Finance, Legislation, & Administration Updates

Rian Ringsrud, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

FY 2027 Budget Comparison – Quarter 1

As of Sept 30th	Budget	Expenditures*	Remaining Balance	Remaining %
By Programs				
Child Care Services	$462,979,476	$101,805,442	$361,174,034	78%
Nutrition	$170,497,195	$45,221,150	$125,276,045	73%
Pre-K + (HS)	$594,164,145	$143,625,940	$450,538,205	76%
Quality Initiatives	$57,243,738	$32,922,839	$24,320,899	42%
Totals	$1,284,884,554	$323,575,371	$961,309,183	75%
By Funding Sources				
State General	$77,508,972	$350,428	$77,158,544	100%
State Lottery	$593,989,145	$145,012,583	$448,976,562	76%
Federal	$613,336,437	$178,211,608	$435,124,829	71%
Other	$50,000	$753	$49,247	98%
Totals	$1,284,884,554	$323,575,371	$961,309,183	75%

Includes encumbrances.

Happy Helpings

Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

Fiscal Year 2026

- Coordinated 3 events to promote the availability of free nutritious meals
  - Kick-off events
    - YMCA of Rome & Floyd County in Rome
    - Karing Heartz Community Development Corp. in Jonesboro
  - Spike event
    - DeKalb County Recreation Department in Decatur
- Served **3,139,246** Meals
  - Meals increased by 8.5% (245,126) over FY25

833 Meal Sites

57 Sponsors

111 GA Counties





Free Nutritious Meals available throughout Georgia



Local Fruits & Vegetables



Physical Activity

Georgia's Pre-K and Instructional Supports Updates

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

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Georgia's Pre-K at a Glance

October 2026 • FY27 Roster 1

70,022

Enrollment

children enrolled

3,886

Classes

awarded

55%

Population served

of estimated four-year-olds

18

Average class size

students

2,829

Wait list

children statewide

Georgia's Pre-K Classrooms

October 2026 • FY27

3,886
Total classrooms

146
Newly funded in FY27

86
Classes closed

Current net gain of 60 classes

Bright Spots in FY27

70,022
children enrolled

+1,293
from 2025–26

Enrollment has turned upward

The first increase across the three-year enrollment view.

↓ 466 fewer

Wait-list reduction

2,829 children on the wait list, down 14% from May 2026.

+ 146

New classrooms funded

Newly funded classrooms exceed the 86 classes closed by 60.

↑ 55%

4-year-olds served

The share of Georgia's estimated four-year-old population served increased from 53% to 55%.

Bottom line: **FY27 is showing early gains in enrollment, fewer children waiting for a seat, and continued classroom expansion.**

Pre-K Enrollment Study: Caregiver Survey Report

Veronica Lopez-Delgado
Research Professional, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Survey Background

- Prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency, approximately 60% of Georgia's 4-year-olds were enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program each year. That percentage dropped to 49.1% in 2021 and has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

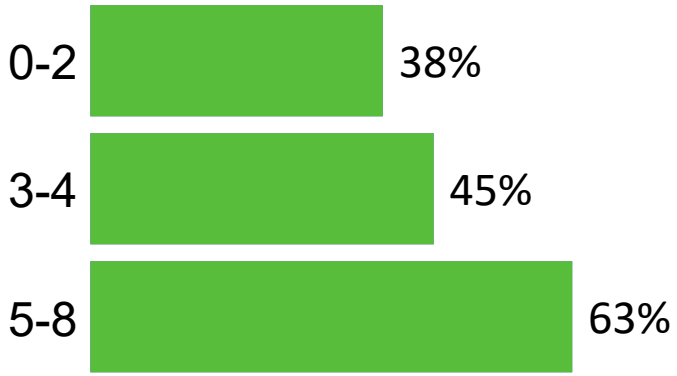
- In 2025, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) partnered with the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) to survey caregiver's views on pre-kindergarten, their experiences with Georgia's Pre-K, and other factors that effect their decision to enroll in the program.

Methodology

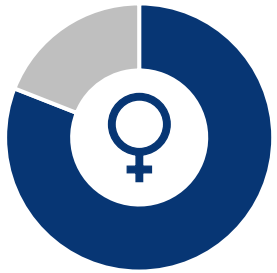
- From May through June 2026, the CVIOG team collected responses from a random statewide sample of households likely to have pre-kindergarten aged children and caregivers whose children were on the Georgia's Pre-K waitlist.
- The final sample included 375 caregivers (appx. 7% response rate)
- To improve representativeness of Georgia's population and to reduce sampling bias, the data obtained has been weighted based on demographic characteristics.

Survey Respondents

Children's Ages
(*N*=375)



Gender
(*N*=352)



81% Female

Race
(*N*=349)



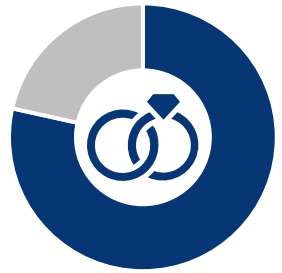
59% White

Education
(*N*=352)



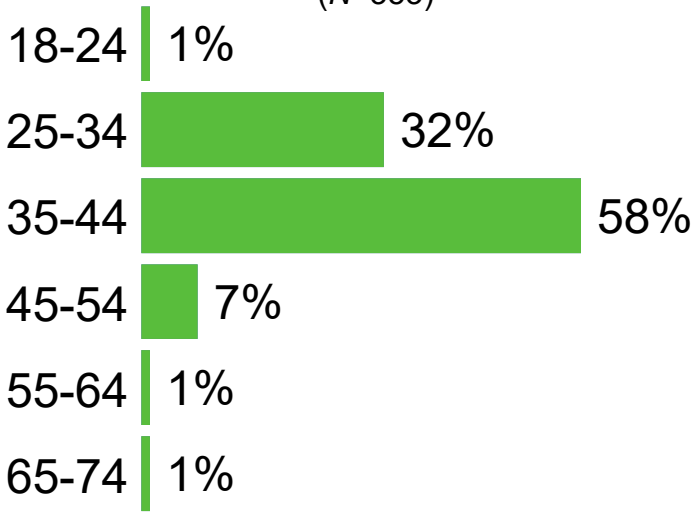
63% Bachelor's degree (4-year) or higher

Marital Status
(*N*=353)

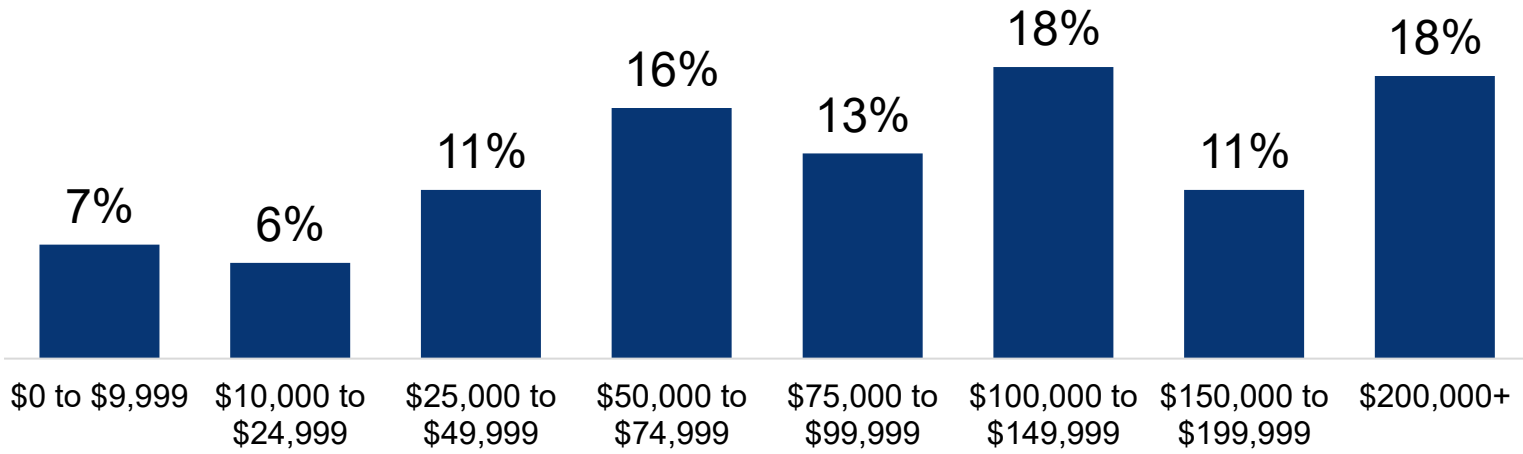


81% Married

Respondent's Ages
(*N*=353)



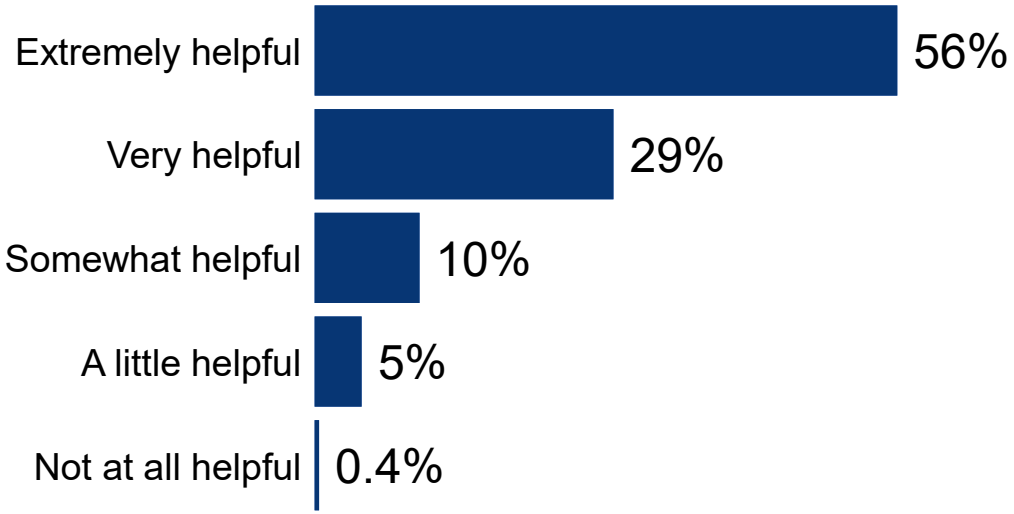
Household Income
(*N*=346)



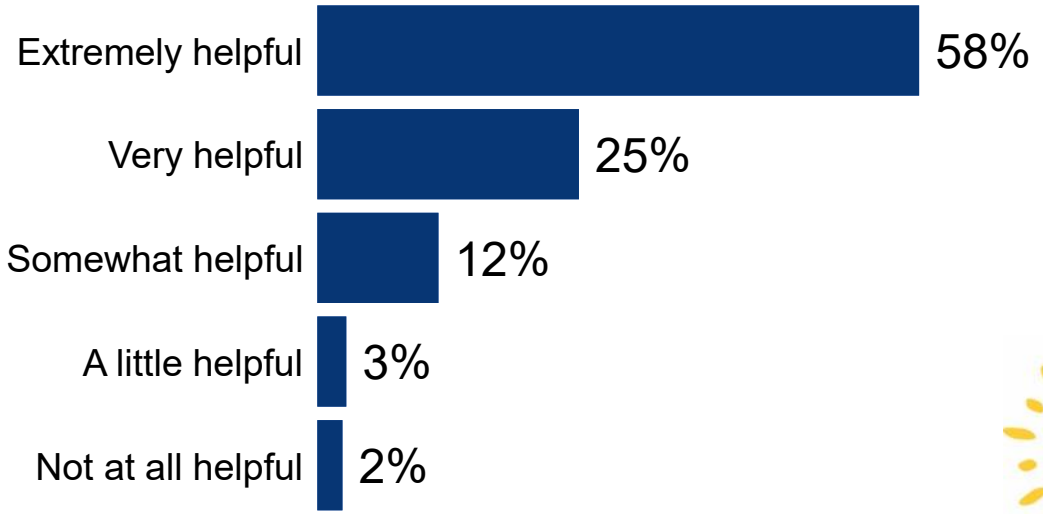
Overall Feelings Towards Pre-K

Almost all families believe pre-k programs are helpful in getting children ready for school (99%) and believe Georgia's Pre-K Program would be helpful for their child(ren) (98%).

Overall, how helpful do you feel pre-kindergarten programs are for school readiness?
(*N*=365)

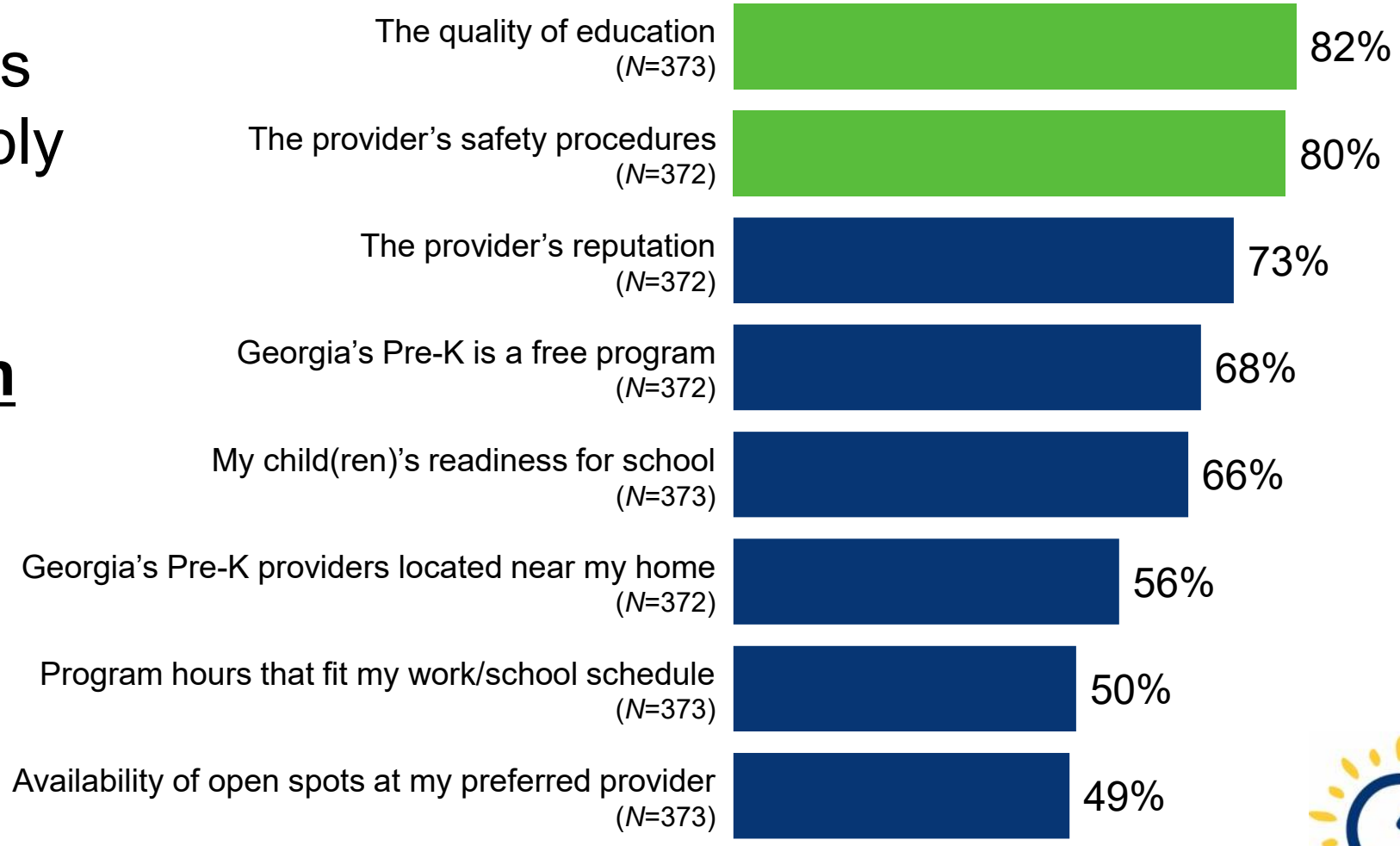


In general, how helpful do you feel enrolling your child(ren) in Georgia's Pre-K Program would be for them?
(*N*=364)



Families' Top Priorities

Families' top priorities when deciding to apply to Georgia's Pre-K Program are the **quality of education** and **safety**.



Top Reasons Families Enroll their Child(ren) in Georgia's Pre-K Program

(*N*=297)

68%
Want to prepare them for elementary school

51%
Want them to practice positive social behaviors

41%
Want to identify/support developmental or learning needs early

38%
Want them to develop emotional skills

25%
Want them to improve language skills

25%
Want to provide routine and stability

Top Reasons Families Do NOT Enroll their Child(ren) in Georgia's Pre-K Program

(*N*=85)

22%
Prefer to enroll their child(ren) in a faith-based program

19%
Believe private-pay pre-k provide better quality education/care

18%
Prefer to enroll their child(ren) in a half-day program

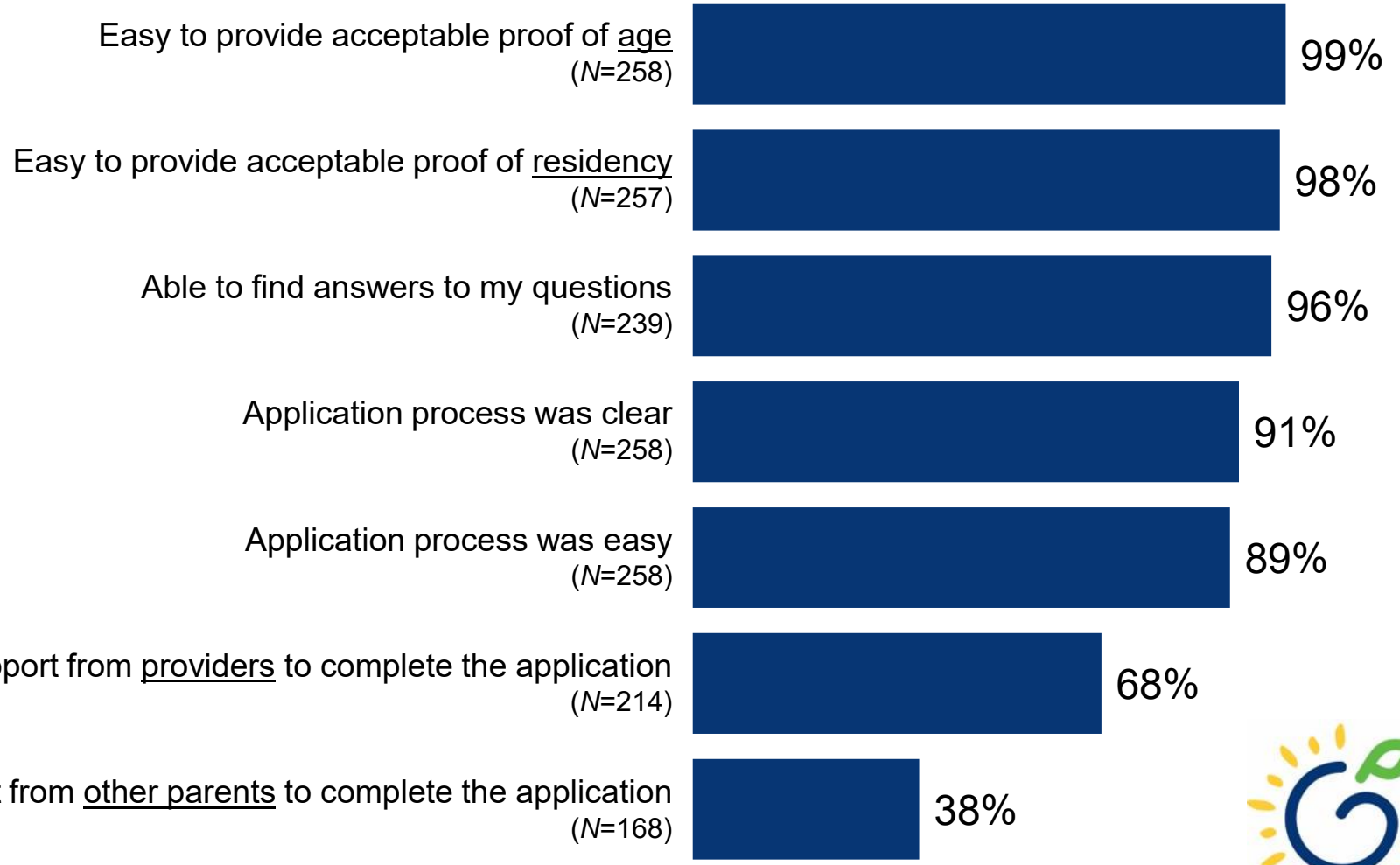
15%
Are unaware of Georgia's Pre-K Program

14%
Are uncertain of securing a spot at their preferred Georgia's Pre-K provider

14%
Prefer to keep current non-Georgia's Pre-K provider

Application Process

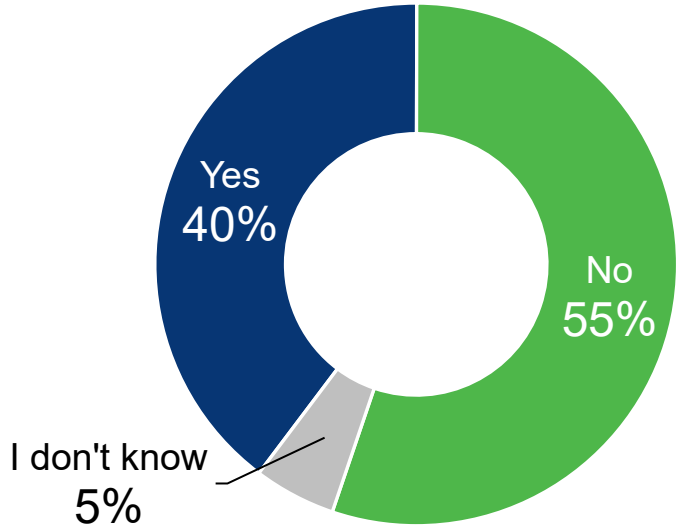
Overall, families found applying to Georgia's Pre-K Program to be **clear** and **easy**.



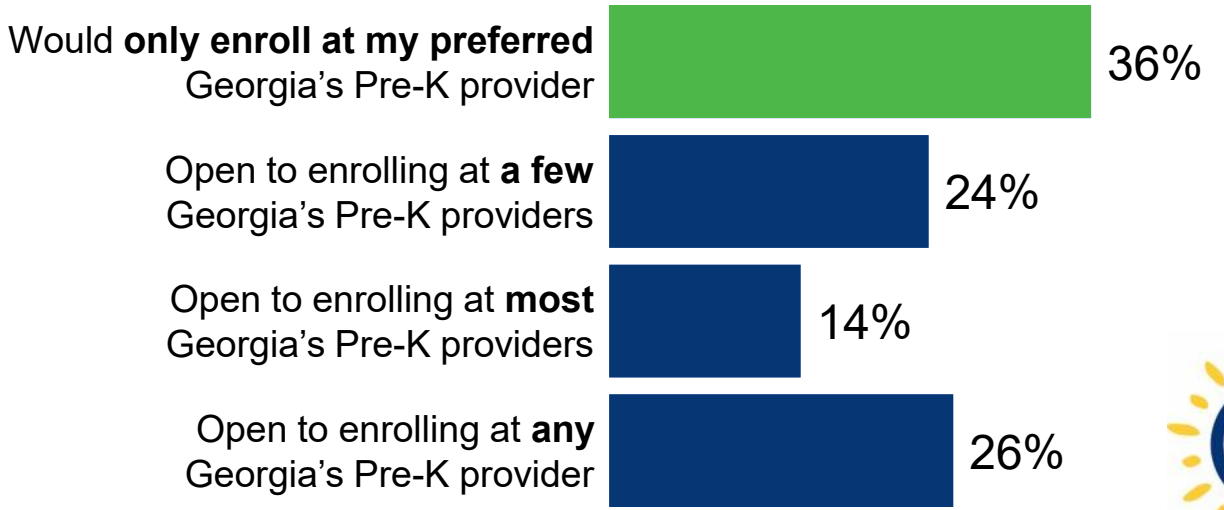
Application Preferences

Most families **applied to only one** Georgia's Pre-K provider (55%), while 36% would **enroll only at their preferred provider**.

Did you apply to more than one Georgia's Pre-K provider for the same child within a school year?
(*N*=260)



When considering Georgia's Pre-K providers, which best describes your preference for a specific provider?
(*N*=296)



Pre-K Enrollment Trends Research

Complete **In Progress**



Focus groups will help us learn more about how and why families make decisions about enrolling in Pre-K.

Enrolled and unenrolled families in each county: Gwinnett, Fulton, Henry, Lowndes, Hall, Whitfield, Clayton, McIntosh/Glynn, Clarke

Special populations: Spanish speaking, parents of children with disabilities, waitlisted families

The promise that Georgia has always delivered: a solid start for a bright future!



Pre-K Marketing Campaign









Break

Ten Minutes

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning

BRIGHT FROM THE START

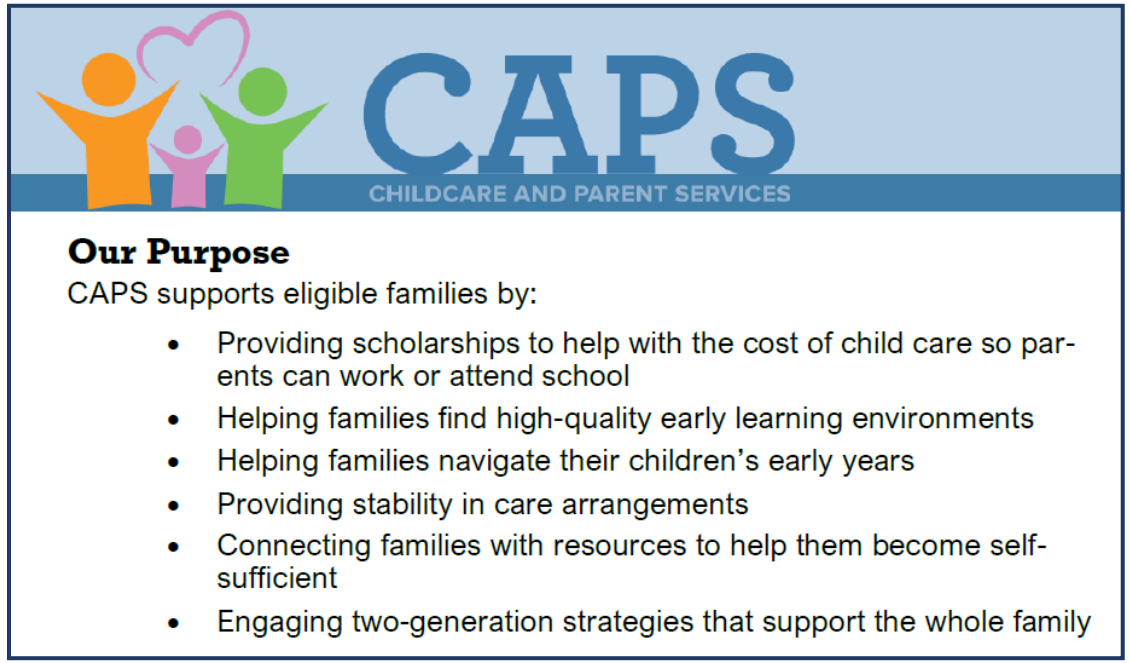
Federal Programs Updates

Elisabetta Kasfir, Deputy Commissioner for Federal Programs

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

CAPS Fact Sheet: Our Purpose

- Provide child care scholarships for families pursuing employment or education.
- Promote quality early learning and stable care.
- Connect families with resources and support.
- Engage 2Gen strategies and empower families toward self-sufficiency.



CAPS Fact Sheet: Cost & Funding

- $395 million in annual child care payments.
- $7,549 average annual cost per child.
- $16 million annually in Commitment to Quality (C2Q) payments.
- $22 average weekly family fee.

Cost & Funding

CAPS is funded by the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and is administered through the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. CAPS costs approximately $395,000,000 annually for direct weekly payments at an average of $7,549 per child each year. In addition, Quality Rated 2- and 3-star providers are paid approximately $16,000,000 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. The average family fee is $22 a week.

CAPS scholarships vary depending on the age of the child and the type and location of the child care provider. If a family chooses a provider who charges more than their CAPS scholarship, the family must pay the provider the difference.

CAPS
CHILDCARE AND PARENT SERVICES

CAPS Fact Sheet: Eligibility Requirements

- **Income:** Must meet state income guidelines.
- **Work/Education:** Minimum 24 hours weekly for most families.
- **Priority Groups:** Must qualify under designated categories.
- **Additional Criteria:** Residency, age, and citizenship requirements.

Eligibility Requirements

So that CAPS can target Georgia's most vulnerable families, families must meet the following eligibility requirements to participate in CAPS:

Income

- Families must earn less than 50% of the State Median Income (SMI) at the initial eligibility determination and can remain enrolled in CAPS until income exceeds 85% SMI.
- For example, a family of four must earn less than $57,559 a year to meet initial eligibility requirements and can continue to receive CAPS scholarship(s) until income exceeds $97,851 a year.

Participating in a State-Approved Activity

- For most families, the parents must work or attend school for at least 24 hours a week.

Priority Groups

- Families must belong to one of Georgia's identified priority groups as part of the initial eligibility determination and in some instances, at redetermination. Information on priority groups is available on the back of this flyer.

Additional Requirements

- The parent must be a Georgia resident. The child must have an immunization record or exemption, be under the age of 13 (with some exceptions), and must be a U.S. citizen or a lawfully admitted qualified alien.

CAPS
CHILDCARE AND PARENT SERVICES

CAPS at a Glance

CAPS is designed to serve

52,400

children at a given time.

57%

of Georgia child care providers are CAPS providers.

CAPS serves

14%

of Georgia's potentially eligible children.

30%

of CAPS families participate for more than 1 year.

99%

of children receiving care using CAPS scholarships are in a Quality Rated program (includes Probationary and Provisional statuses).

In FY2026, CAPS

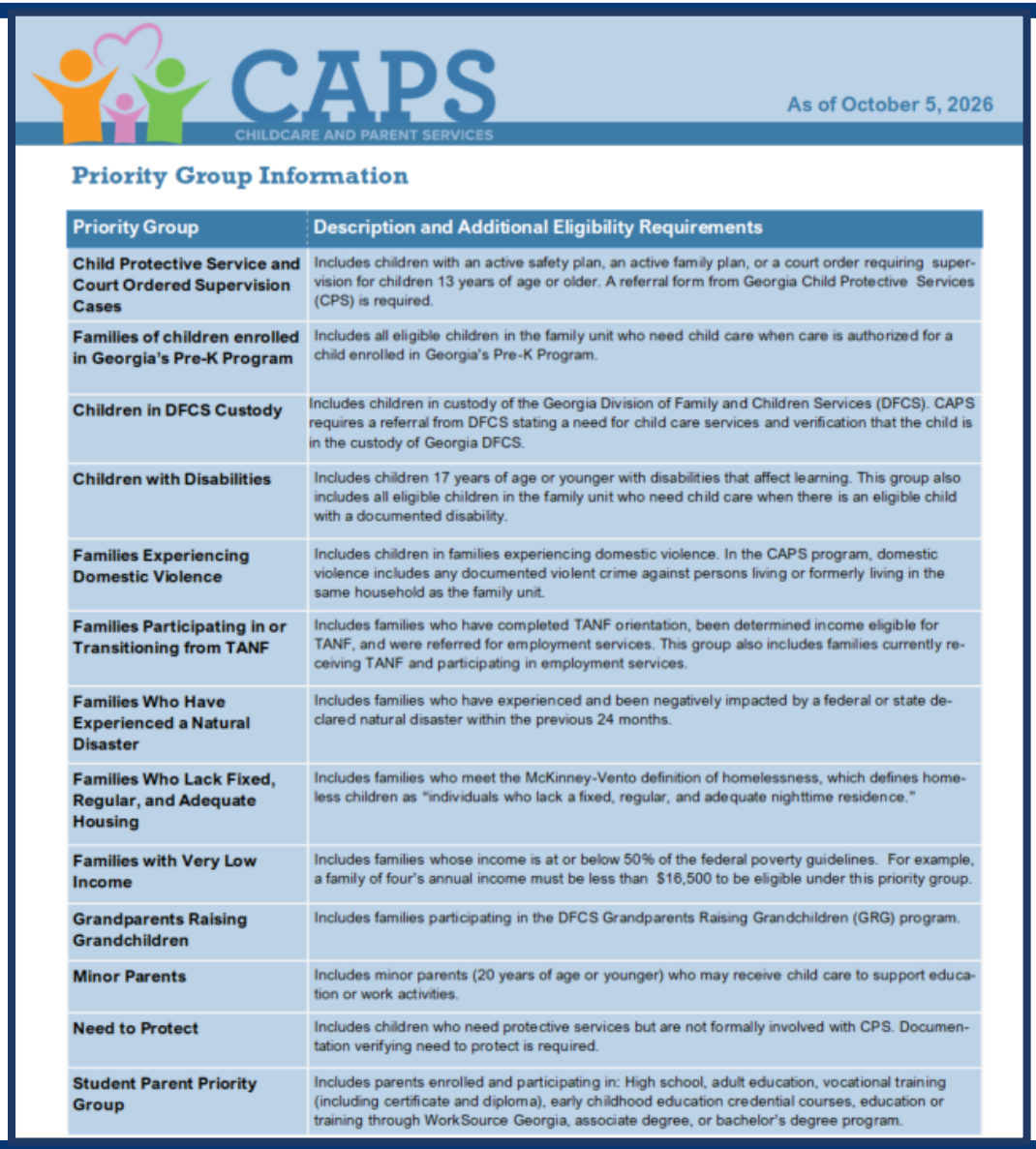
received

60,376

applications for scholarships.

Priority Group Information

- 13 designated priority groups.
- Prioritizes Georgia's most vulnerable children and families.
- Includes families facing economic hardship, safety concerns, and other barriers to child care.
- Families must meet applicable eligibility requirements.



CAPS
CHILDCARE AND PARENT SERVICES

As of October 5, 2026

Priority Group Information

Priority Group	Description and Additional Eligibility Requirements
Child Protective Service and Court Ordered Supervision Cases	Includes children with an active safety plan, an active family plan, or a court order requiring supervision for children 13 years of age or older. A referral form from Georgia Child Protective Services (CPS) is required.
Families of children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program	Includes all eligible children in the family unit who need child care when care is authorized for a child enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program.
Children in DFCS Custody	Includes children in custody of the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). CAPS requires a referral from DFCS stating a need for child care services and verification that the child is in the custody of Georgia DFCS.
Children with Disabilities	Includes children 17 years of age or younger with disabilities that affect learning. This group also includes all eligible children in the family unit who need child care when there is an eligible child with a documented disability.
Families Experiencing Domestic Violence	Includes children in families experiencing domestic violence. In the CAPS program, domestic violence includes any documented violent crime against persons living or formerly living in the same household as the family unit.
Families Participating in or Transitioning from TANF	Includes families who have completed TANF orientation, been determined income eligible for TANF, and were referred for employment services. This group also includes families currently receiving TANF and participating in employment services.
Families Who Have Experienced a Natural Disaster	Includes families who have experienced and been negatively impacted by a federal or state declared natural disaster within the previous 24 months.
Families Who Lack Fixed, Regular, and Adequate Housing	Includes families who meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness, which defines homeless children as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."
Families with Very Low Income	Includes families whose income is at or below 50% of the federal poverty guidelines. For example, a family of four's annual income must be less than $16,500 to be eligible under this priority group.
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren	Includes families participating in the DFCS Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) program.
Minor Parents	Includes minor parents (20 years of age or younger) who may receive child care to support education or work activities.
Need to Protect	Includes children who need protective services but are not formally involved with CPS. Documentation verifying need to protect is required.
Student Parent Priority Group	Includes parents enrolled and participating in: High school, adult education, vocational training (including certificate and diploma), early childhood education credential courses, education or training through WorkSource Georgia, associate degree, or bachelor's degree program.

CAPS Policy Updates: October 5, 2026

Program Integrity: Strengthened family responsibilities and program accountability.

Scholarships: Clarified reporting and scholarship changes.

Eligibility: Updated income verification requirements.

Foster Care: Clarified eligibility and redetermination.

Providers: Updated participation and supervision requirements, along with the ability to report changes to care type.

CAPS Family & Provider Advisory Councils





- Established in 2025 to strengthen family and provider engagement.
- Statewide representation of diverse families and child care providers.
- Members selected through public applications for two-year terms.

CAPS Family & Provider Advisory Councils

What they recommended…	What we did…
Providers requested clearer guidance and more proactive communication when scholarships change	When new scholarships are created providers will receive a copy.
Issues with renewal process including upload limits and document recognition issues, as well as a lack of clarity in email notifications (e.g., which site the renewal applies to for larger groups of centers)	Systems enhancements that included: better email specificity and improvements to document upload and AI validation, along with more intuitive navigation and reporting features
Families shared scholarships and CAPS letters are hard to understand	Scholarship and Policy communications have been simplified; a summary showing payments during school and holidays is now provided to families
Summer Employment Documentation Guidance- Develop and communicate clear guidance and provide necessary forms in advance for educators and others whose employment or income changes during the summer, to reduce stress and ensure timely submission during CAPS renewal periods.	Resolved with October 2025 Policy updates with a clarified definition for irregular income

Employee Advisory Group (EAG)

- Provides a platform for CAPS consultants to share ideas and feedback on proposed process and policy changes directly with leadership.
- Promotes employee engagement, collaboration, and workplace improvements.
- Discussed workplace culture, communication, training, and employee recognition.
- Identified opportunities for clearer policy communication, stronger collaboration, and improved employee support.



Child Care Services Updates

Pam Stevens, Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services
Jennifer Johnson, Process and Quality Improvement Manager

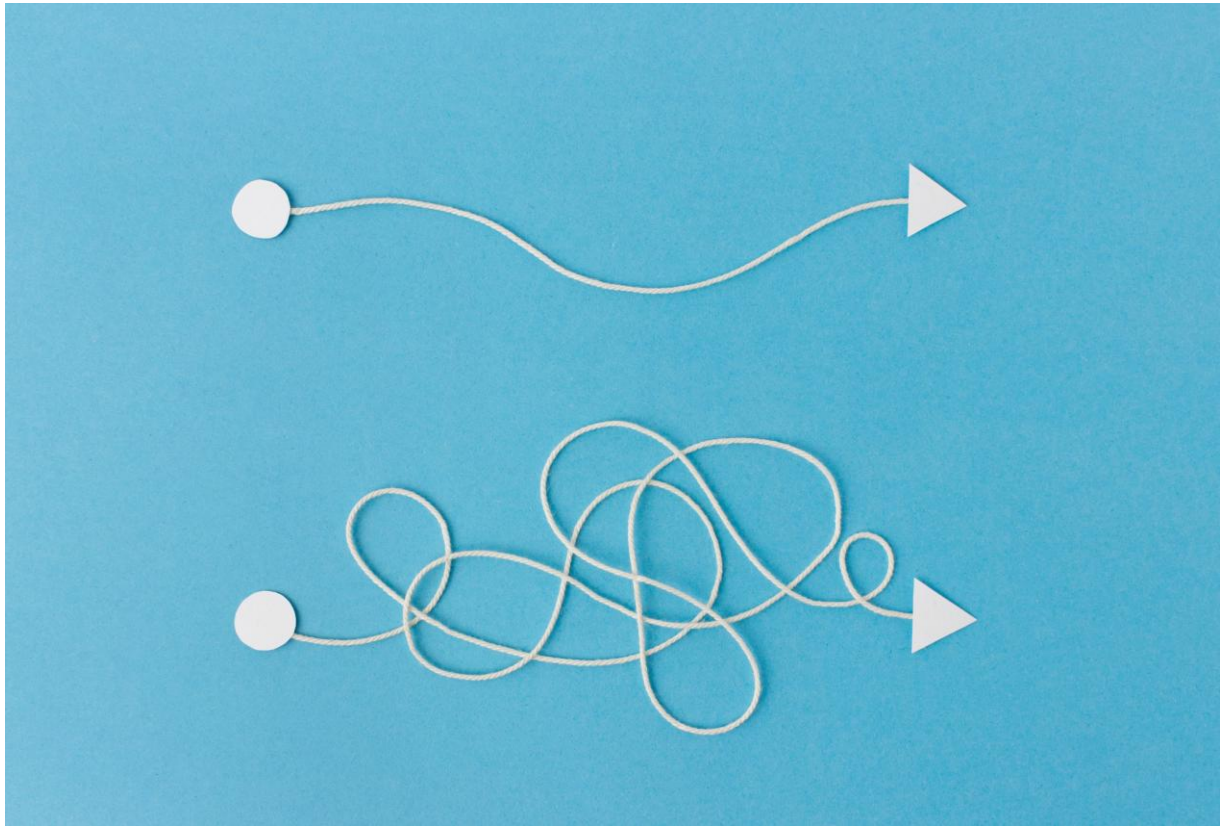
Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Child Care Services Licensing Quality Assurance Framework



Child Care
SERVICES

Process & Quality Improvement

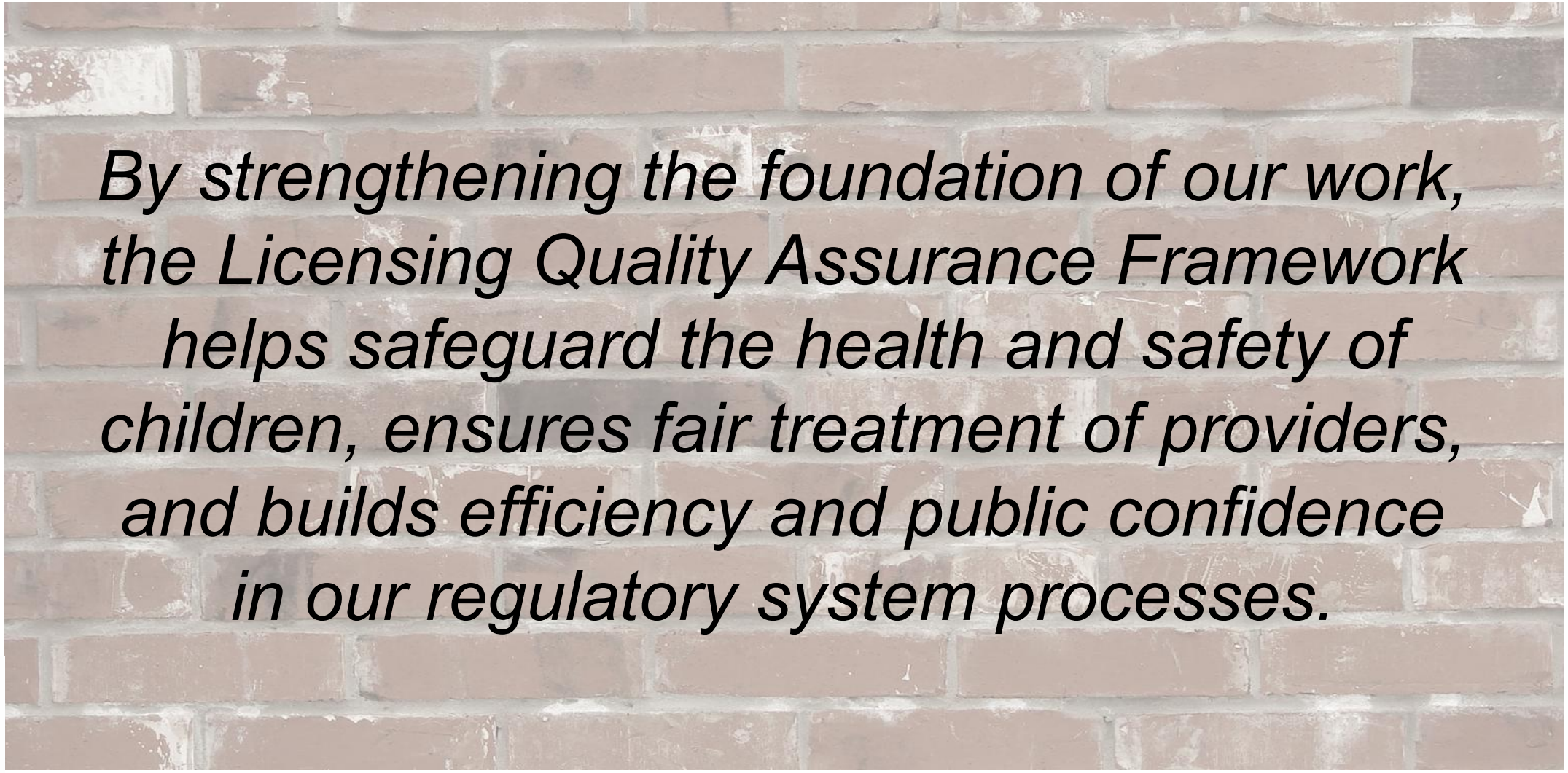


- Child Care Services is comprised of over 140 staff who are divided into six regional units and 11 specialty units.

- The Process & Quality Improvement Unit is one of those 11 specialty units.
  - We implement and oversee quality assurance, work reviews, policy, and so much more!
  - We aim to ensure strong quality improvement measures are in place in CCS.

Child Care SERVICES

Our “Why”



Child Care SERVICES

Building Quality Through Consistency

A consistent experience should not depend on where the work happens, or who is doing the work that day.

CONSISTENCY MEANS

- Shared understanding of policies and procedures
- Aligned expectations for quality work
- Similar approaches to documentation and decision-making

CONSISTENCY DOES NOT MEAN

- Every situation is identical
- Professional judgment is removed
- Context and individual circumstances are ignored

The goal: reduce unnecessary variation while preserving sound professional judgment.

Child Care SERVICES

Licensing Quality Assurance Framework in Action

01

OBSERVE

QA visits, existing data, and a focused look at current practices.

QA visits • Data • Practices

02

EXPLORE

Identify strengths, patterns, and opportunities for focused support.

Strengths • Patterns • Opportunities

03

COACH

Partner with staff and leadership to define goals and action steps.

Collaboration • Goals • Action steps

04

IMPROVE

Revisit progress, apply learning, and continue refining practices.

Progress • Learning • Refinement

WHAT THIS WORK DELIVERS

01

Standardized Practices

Guidance and tools for consistent interpretation and uniform application of regulations and policies.

02

Enhanced Accountability

Measurable indicators and systems that support staff competency and appropriate action.

03

Supported Professional Development

Targeted training, coaching, and resources that foster continual growth.

04

Promoted Transparency

Documented decisions, responsibilities, tracking, and follow-up procedures.

05

Driven Continuous Improvement

Data and trends used to refine licensing practices, identify needs, and improve outcomes.

Child Care SERVICES

Licensing Quality Assurance Framework (LQAF) Key Concepts



- Grounded in established policies and procedures
- Six-month rotational cycles
- Region/unit assigned Quality Assurance (QA) Consultant
- Quality assurance parallel visits
- QA performance summary and support plans
- Emphasis on coaching and feedback
- Quality Assurance Initiative workgroup

Child Care SERVICES

Looking Ahead



Building a culture of quality assurance and continuous improvement in CCS!

Recognize strengths. Address inconsistency. Support meaningful, sustainable improvement.

Child Care SERVICES

Quality Innovations and Partnerships Updates

Bentley Ponder, Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships

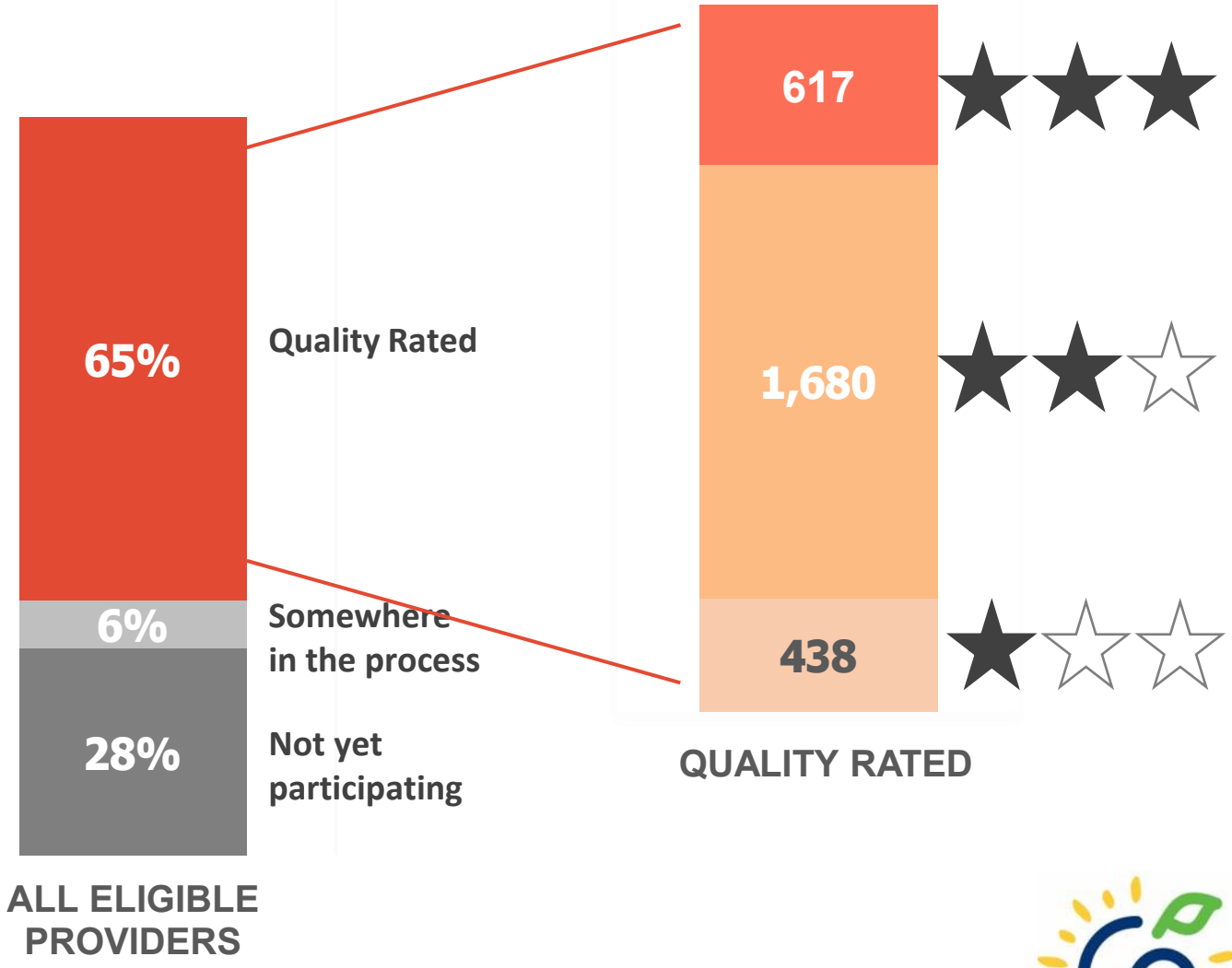
Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START



Quality Rated & Quality Rated Workforce Bonuses

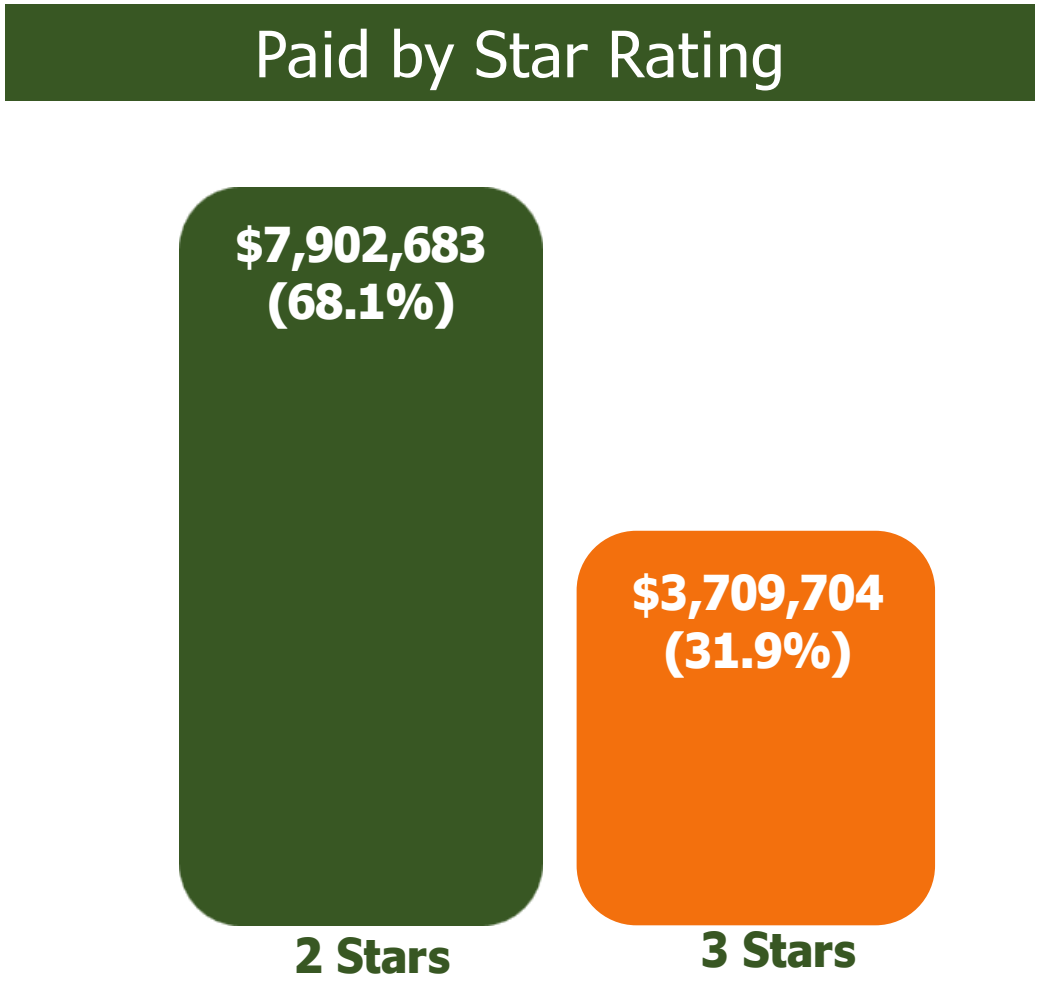
Quality Rated by the Numbers





Commitment to Quality (C2Q) Payments

- Paid to eligible 2- and 3- star providers.
- Calculated as 5% or 10% of CAPS payments for the preceding quarter.
- 2,093 QR providers received at least 1 payment in 2026.
- 1,629 QR providers received all 3 payments in 2026.



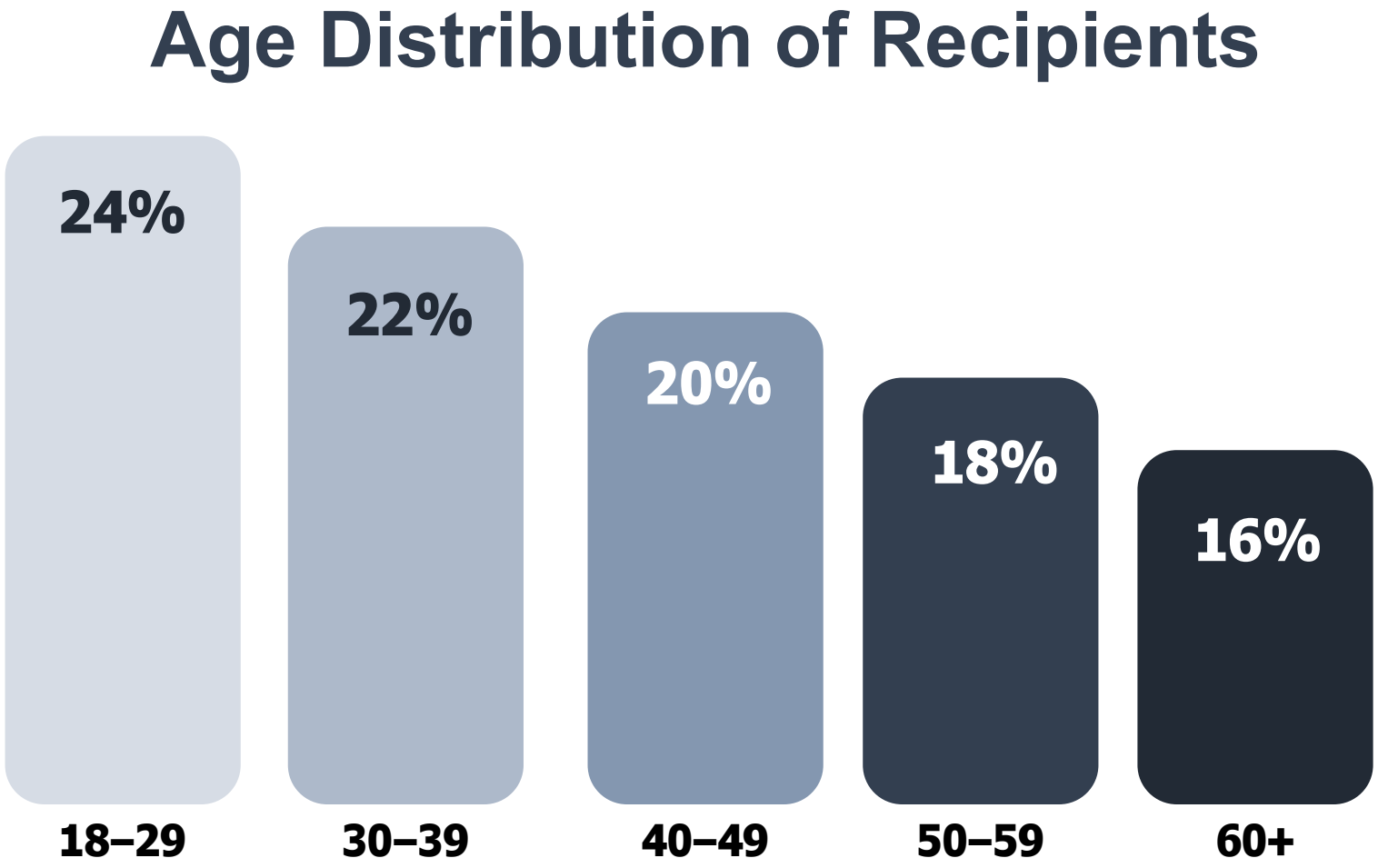
What is the Quality Rated Workforce Bonus?

- Launched in April 2025 to provide annual $500 payments to eligible child care staff.
- Recognizes the contributions of early childhood educators and supports Georgia's child care workforce.
- To be eligible, employees must work at least 30 hours a week at a Quality Rated program and have been employed for at least 90 days.
- Employees apply during an assigned application month, and payments are distributed throughout the year.
- At an annual wage of $27,000, a $500 bonus represents around 1.8% of annual earnings.

QRWB at a Glance

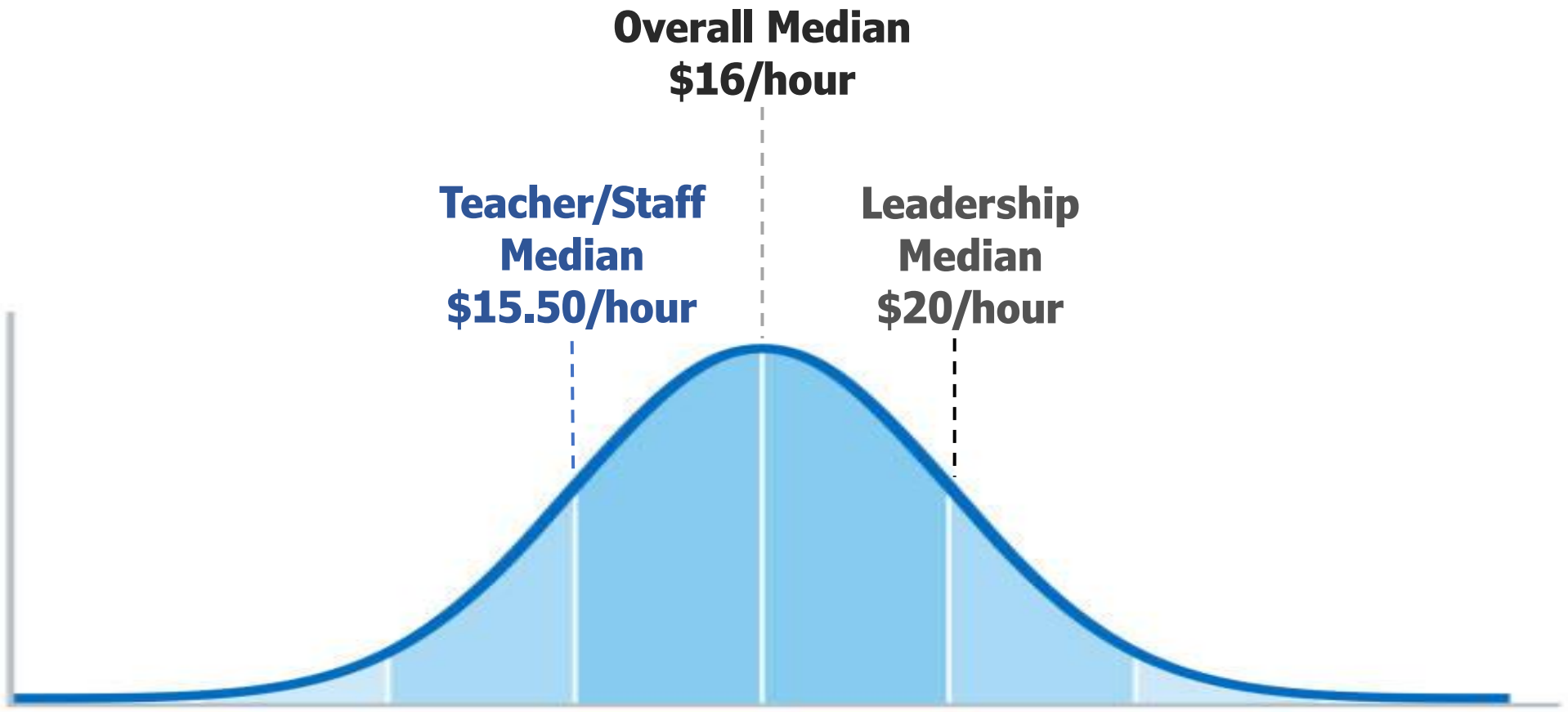
$18M	distributed to ECE staff since April 2025
2,630	QR providers with participating staff
88.2%	of QR providers have staff who received a QRWB
42,176	applications received
35,479	recipients approved to receive bonuses
71%	of recipients are teachers (12% other staff and 17% leadership)

Who Received the Bonus?

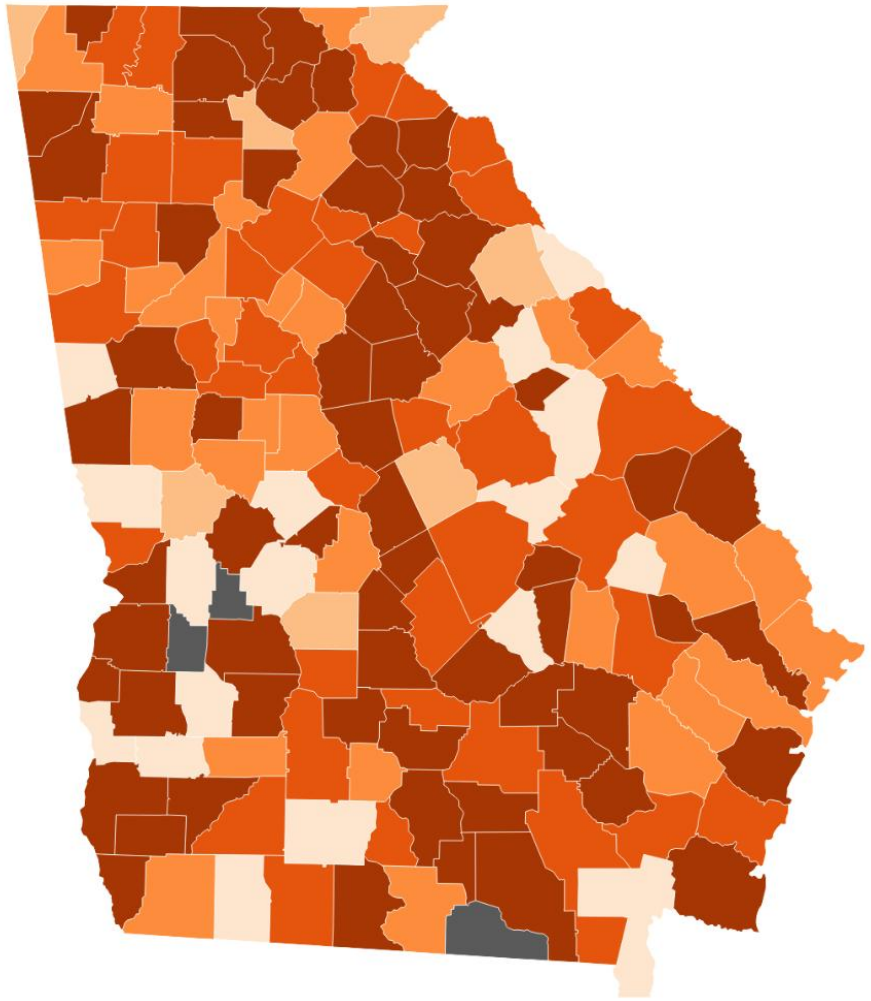


Who Received the Bonus?

Median Hourly Earnings by Role for QRWB Recipients



Where Do Recipients Work?

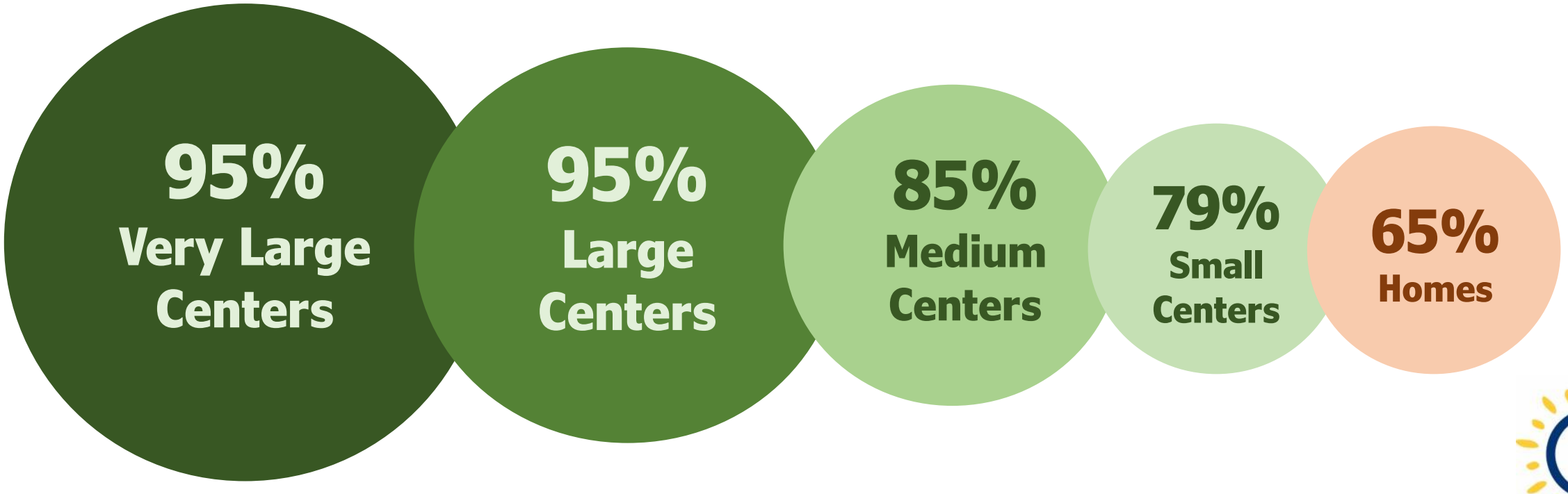


Percent of eligible providers in each county with at least one staff member who received the bonus

QRWB has had far reach all over Georgia.

Where Do Recipients Work?

Provider size was positively associated with QRWB participation. Nearly all *very large* and *large* eligible centers (95%) had at least one QRWB recipient, compared with just 79% of *small* centers and 65% of *homes*.



QRWB Survey Overview

Distribution

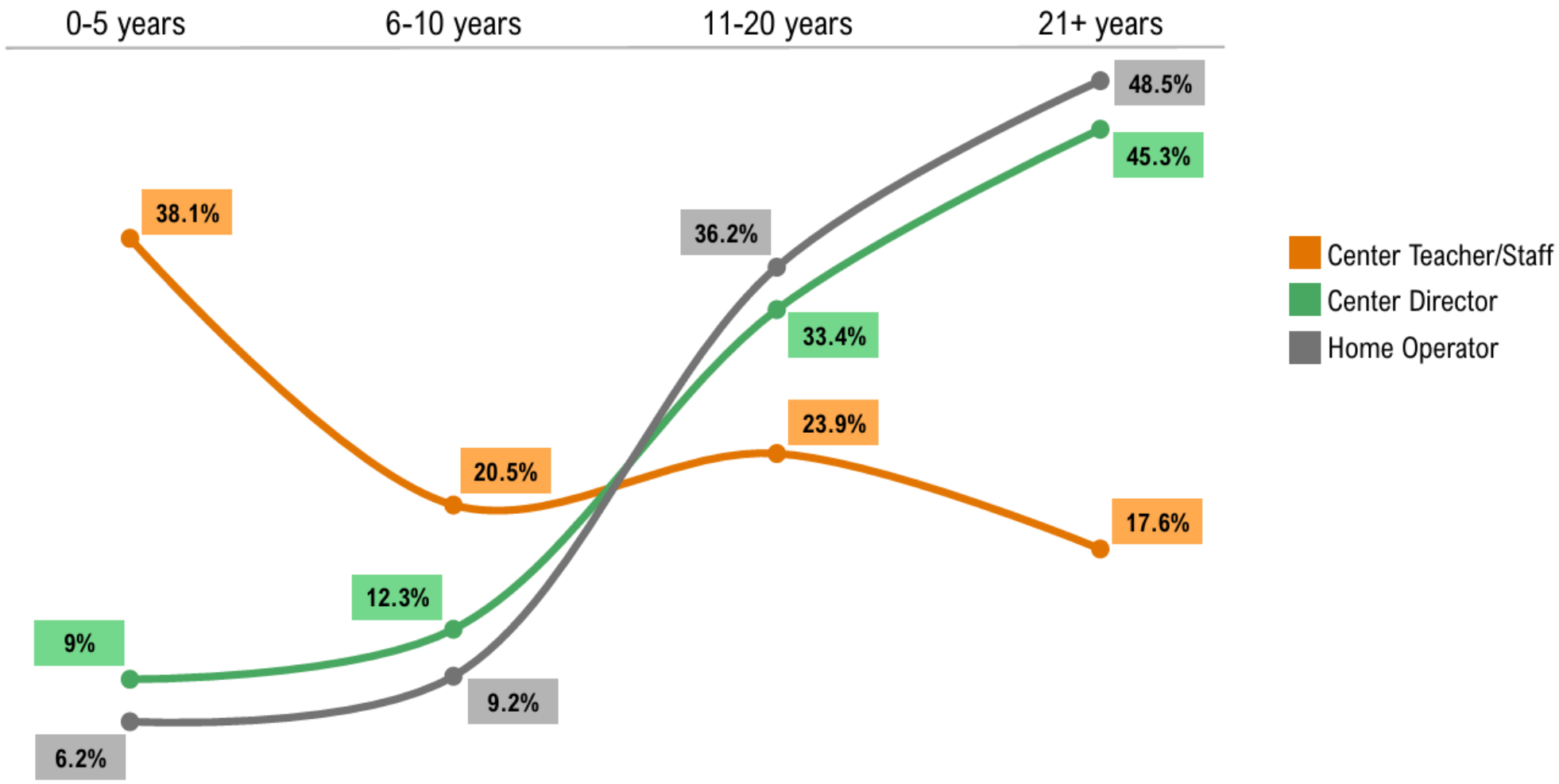
- QRWB surveys were sent out in June 2026.
- Distributed to teachers/staff, directors, and family home operators.
- We plan to survey recipients every 3 months.

Participation

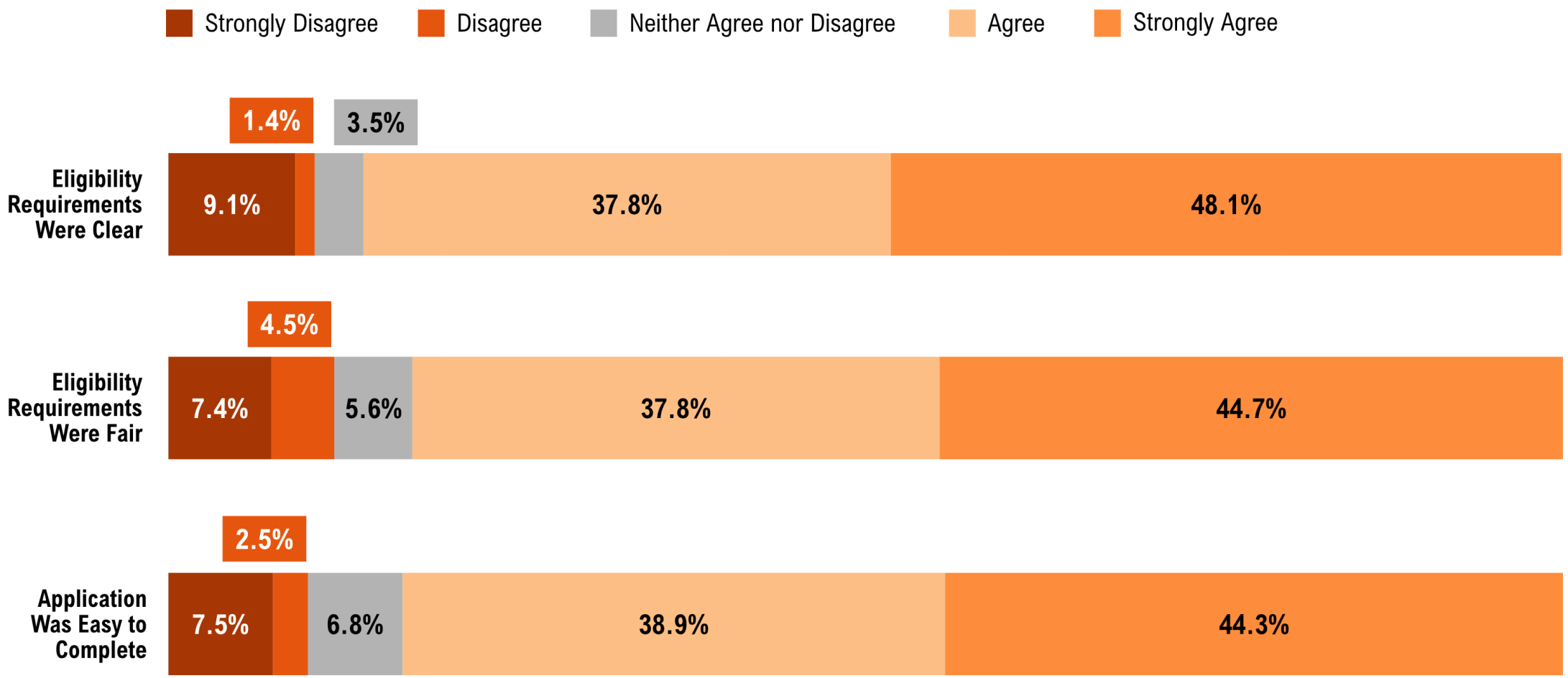
- Child care teachers and other staff: 8,723 respondents (44% response rate)
- Center directors: 1,003 respondents (45% response rate)
- Home operators: 141 respondents (46% response rate)

Nearly 9,900 responses across the three surveys

Years in Early Childhood Education by Role

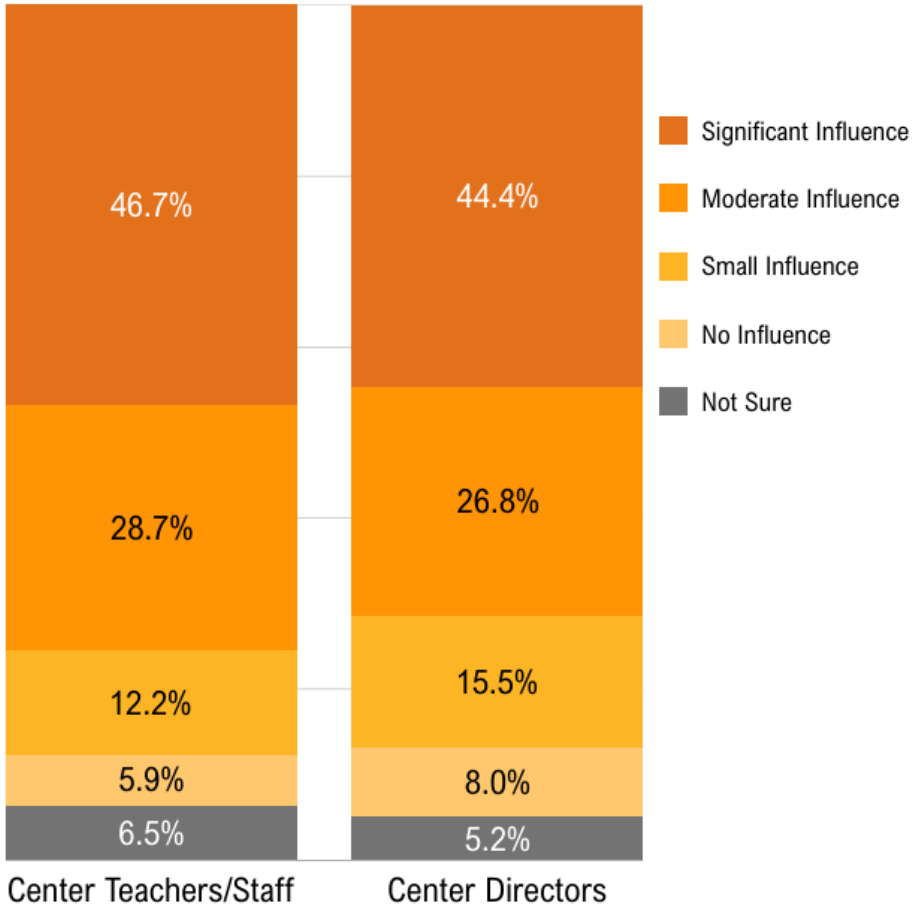


How Easy Was the Application Process?

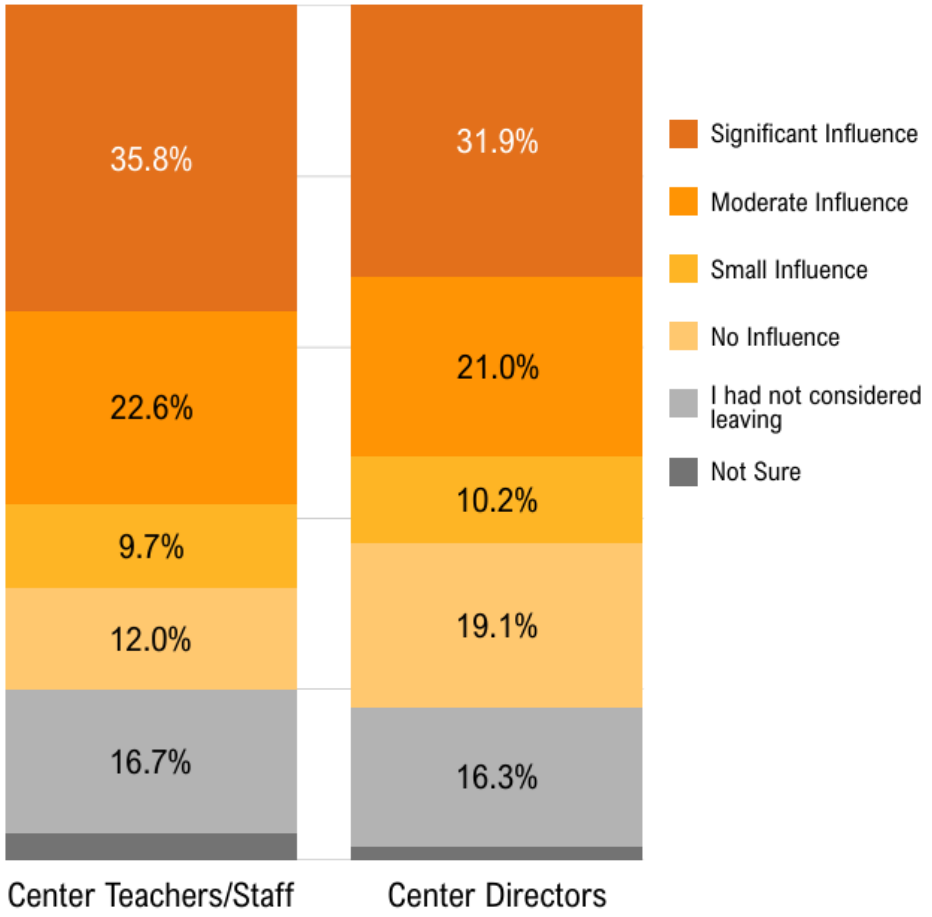


Job Satisfaction and QRWB

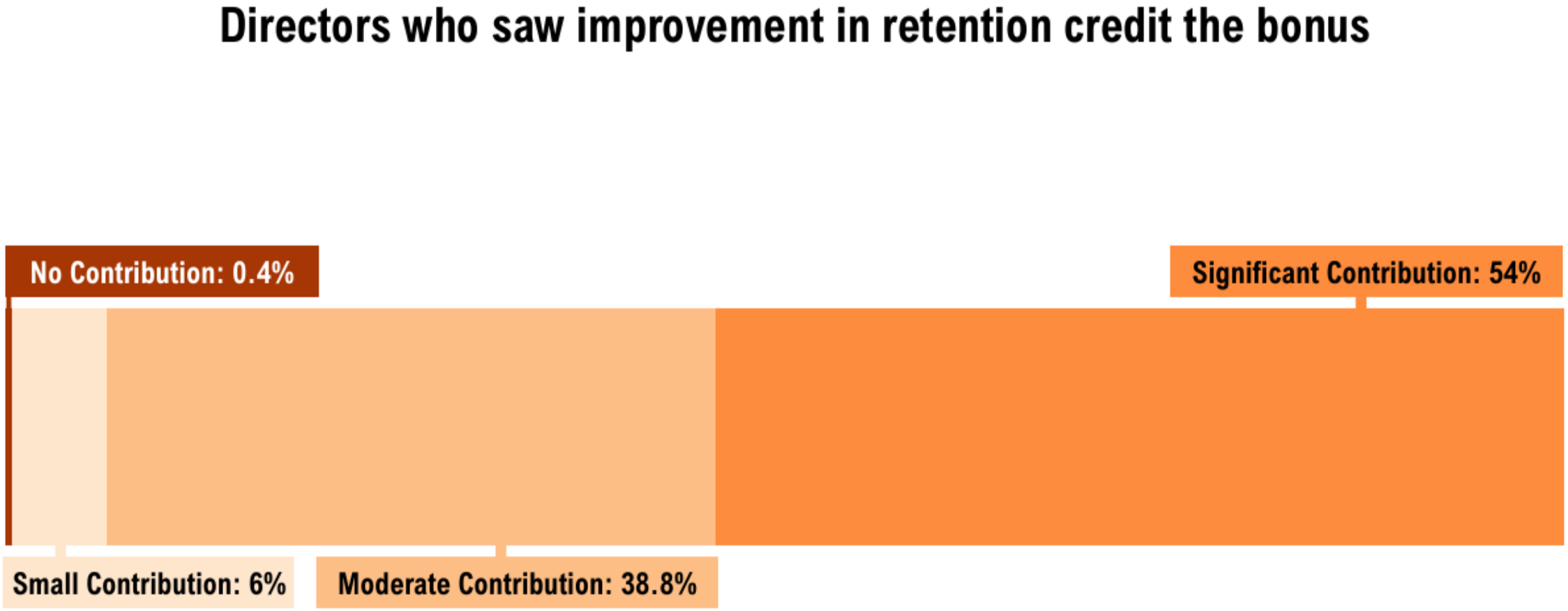
Improvement in Job Satisfaction



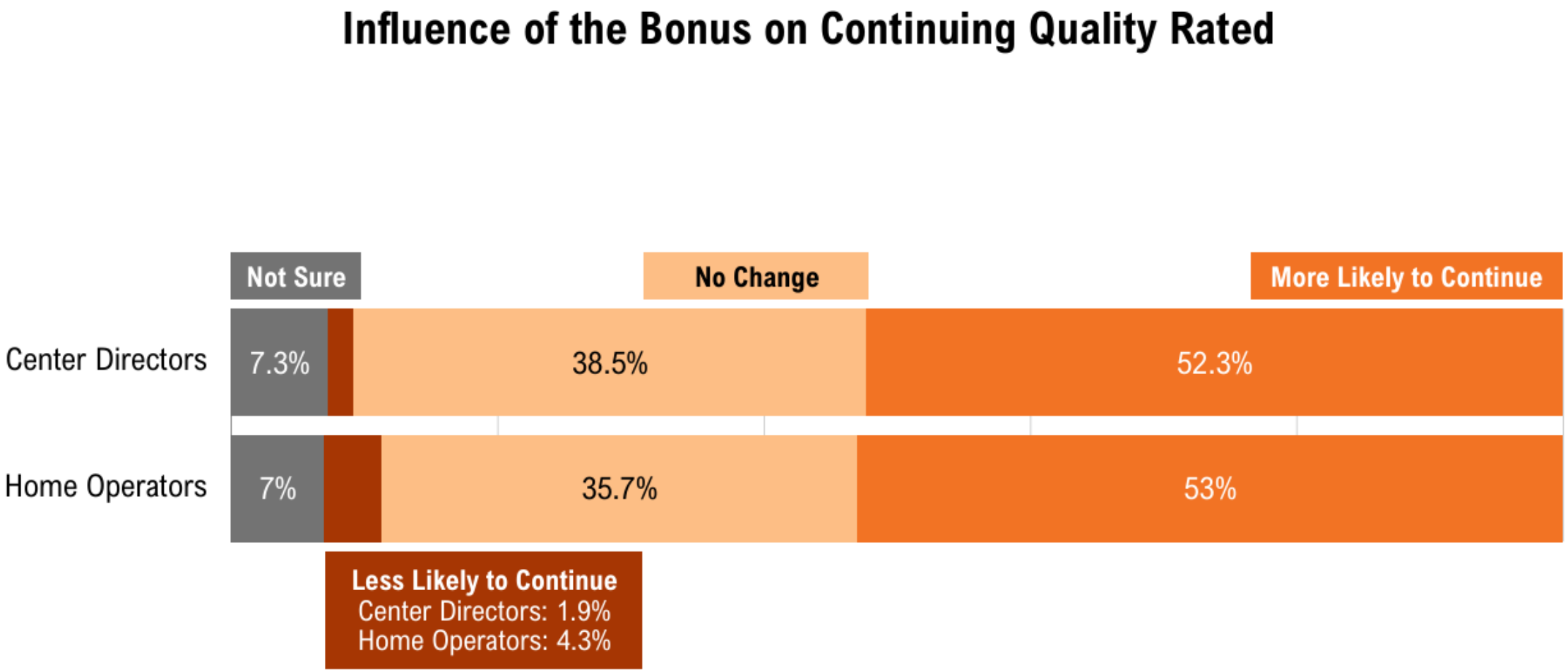
Influence on the Decision to Stay in the Job



Employee Retention and QRWB



QRWB as a Quality Rated Incentive



What Have We Learned Thus Far...

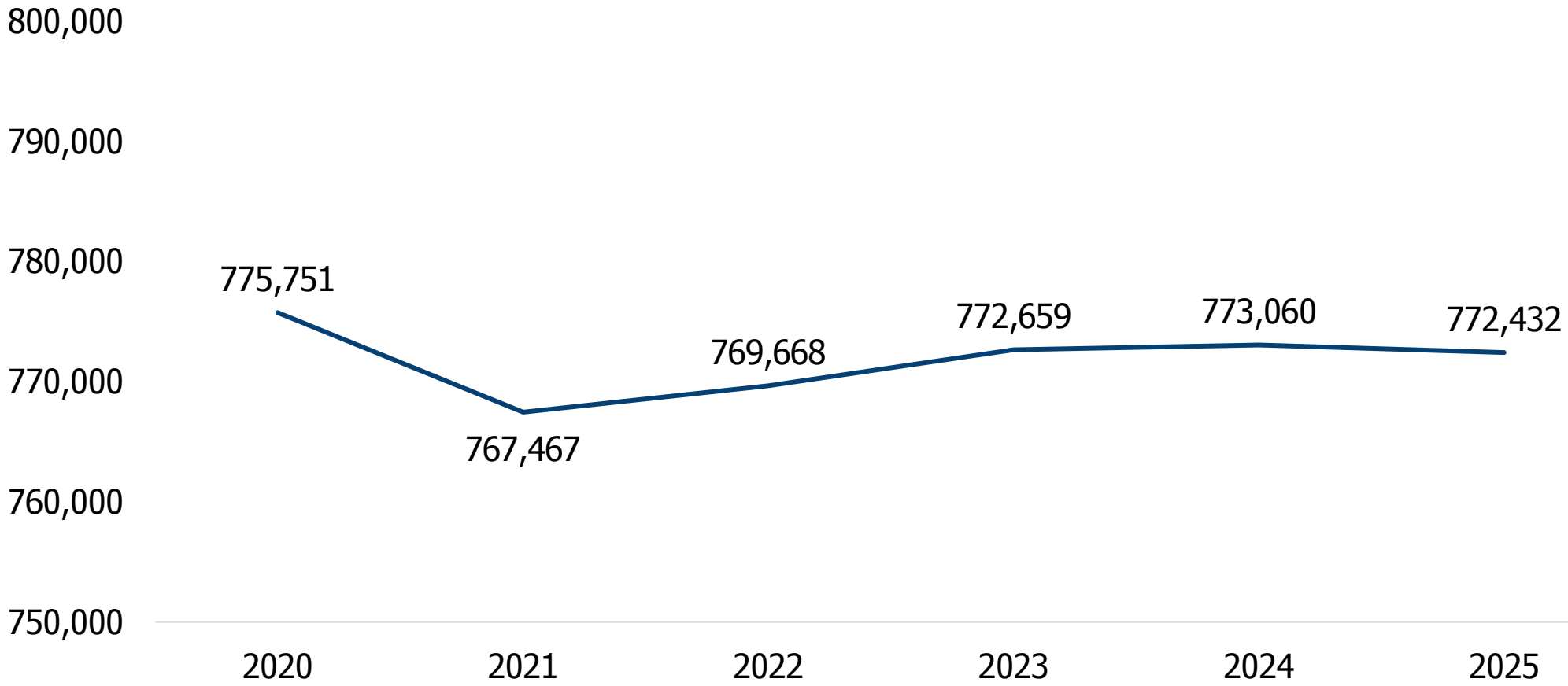
- QRWB has statewide reach, with recipients at 88% of Quality Rated providers and representation across Georgia.
- The initiative successfully reached the frontline workforce, with more than 8 in 10 recipients serving in teacher or staff roles.
- Participation was exceptionally strong, with nearly 90% of applicants approved, indicating that the initiative was accessible and effectively targeted to eligible staff.
- The workforce receiving bonuses is relatively early-career, with most recipients having 10 years or less of experience, which means the initiative is supporting employees at a main retention stage.

Economic Impact Study & Needs Assessment



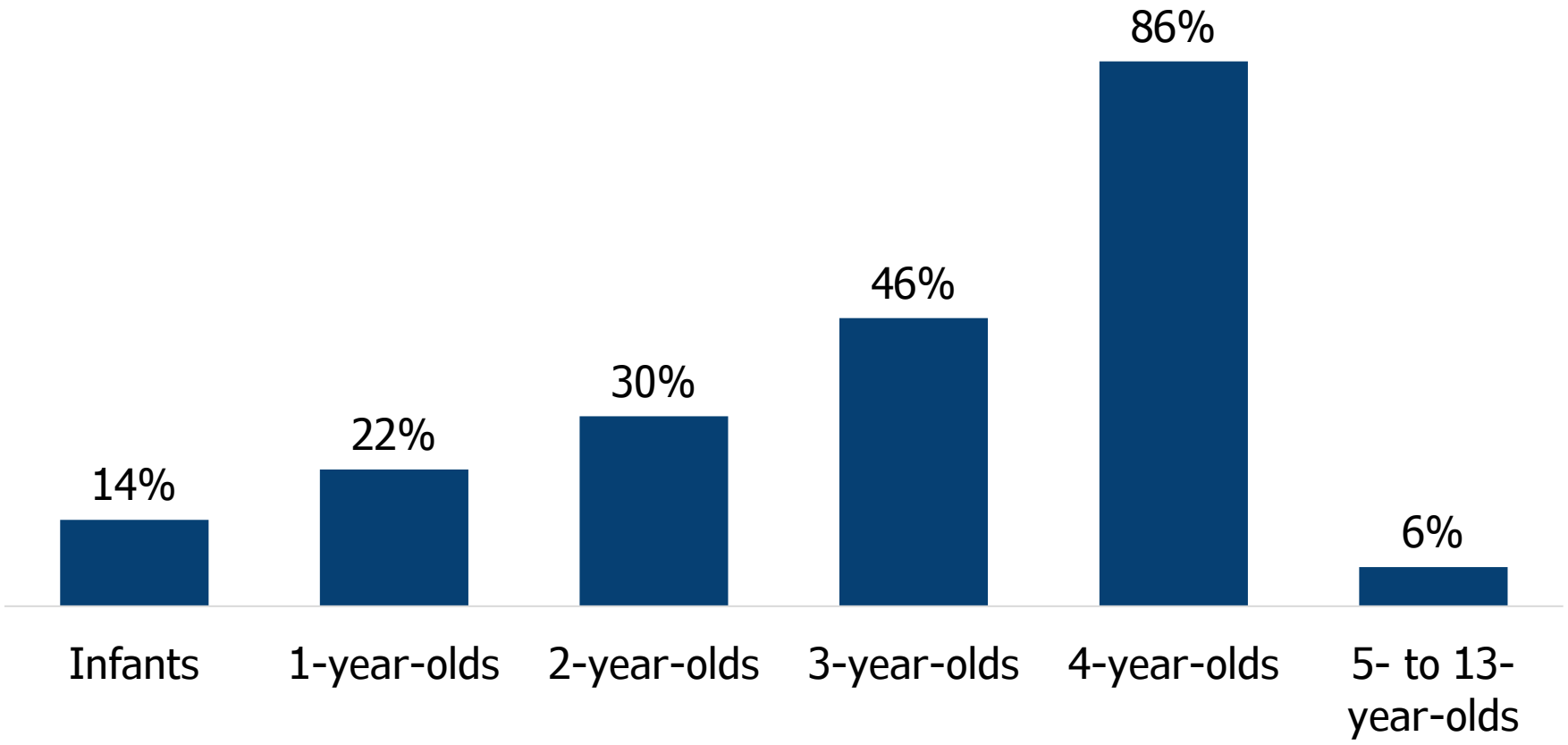
Georgia's Population: Birth Through Age 5

Georgia's birth through 5 population has declined by 0.4% since 2020. This is the primary source of demand for the ECE industry.

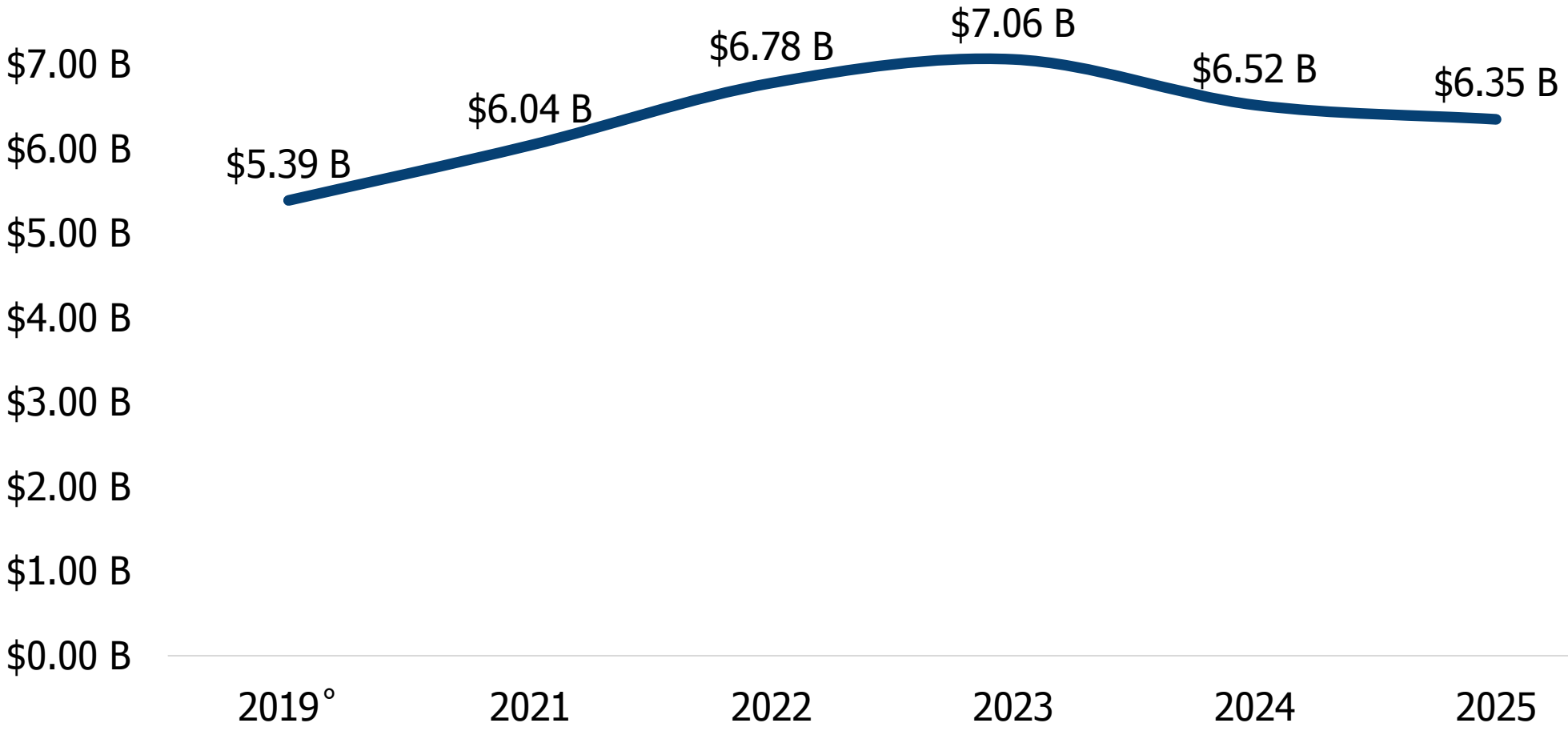


Georgia's Population Served by Licensed or Regulated ECE Industry (2025)

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

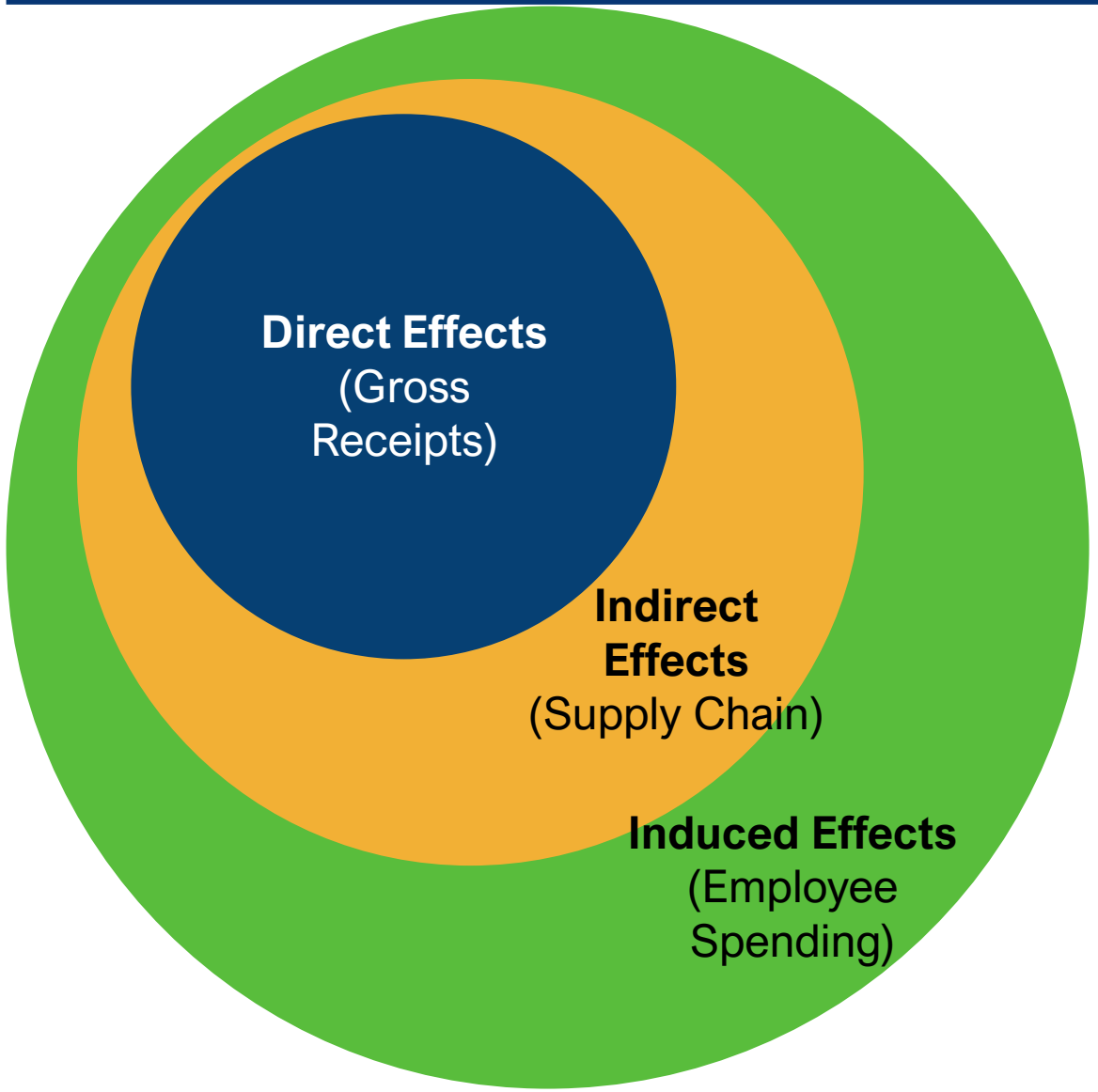


Total Annual Economic Impact of the ECE Industry in Georgia (2019–2025)



˚Note: Time intervals on the X-axis are irregular and reflect the availability of data rather than consistent yearly spacing.

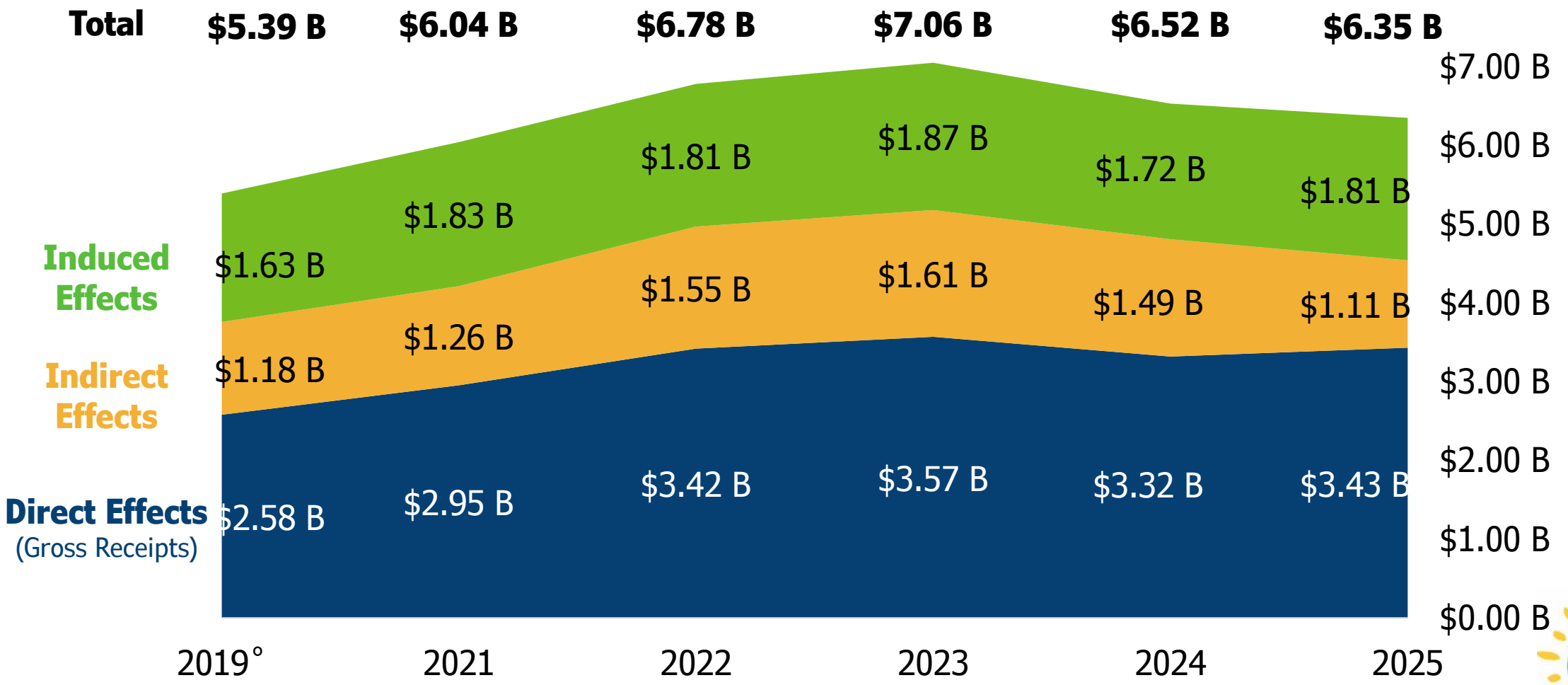
Types of Economic Impact



Economic impact is measured through three types of effects:

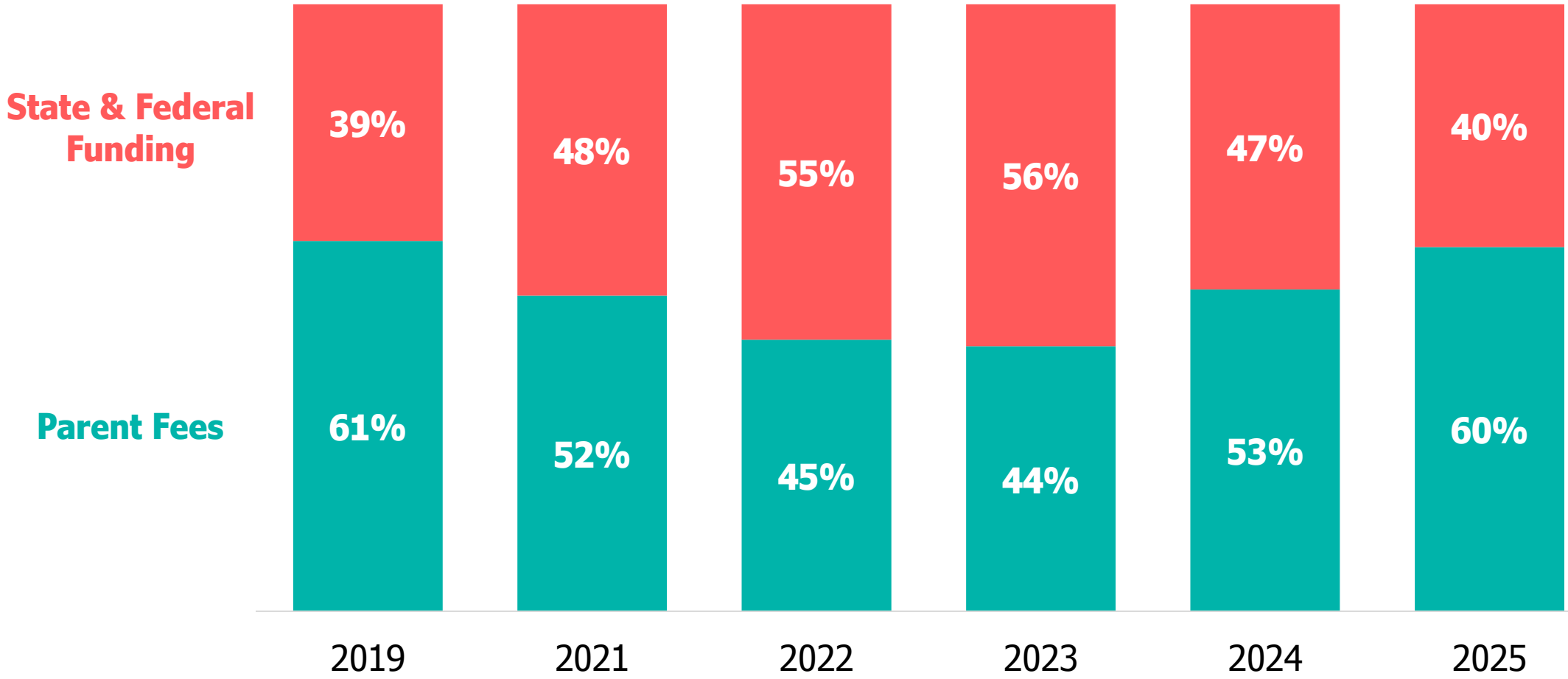
1. **Direct Effects**: The money spent on a product or service
2. **Indirect Effects**: Business-to-business spending within the supply chain
3. **Induced Effects**: Employees' household spending due to their earned income

Total Annual Economic Impact of the ECE Industry in Georgia (2019-2025)

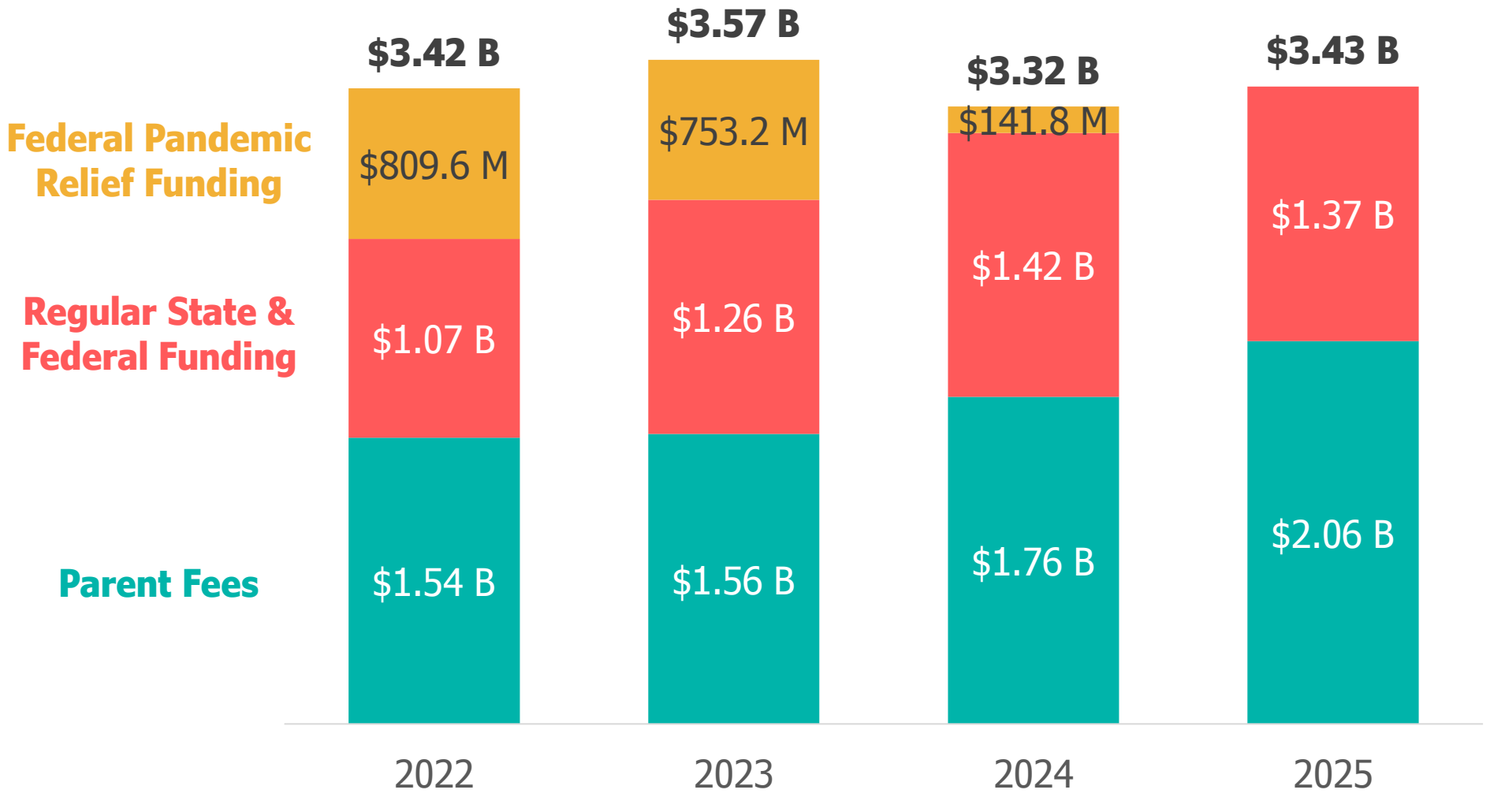


°Note: Time intervals on the X-axis are irregular and reflect the availability of data rather than consistent yearly spacing.

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



Georgia ECE Industry Gross Receipts (2022–2025)



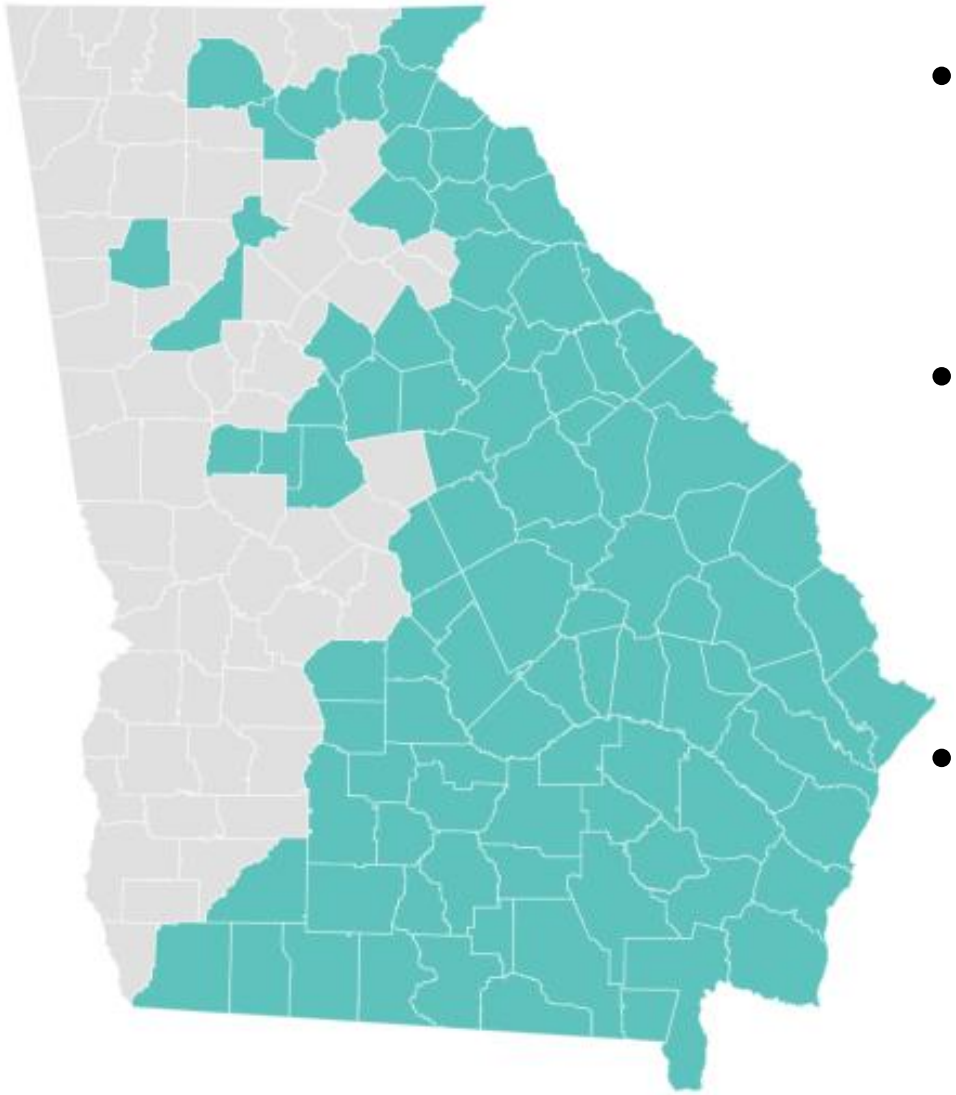
Georgia's Child Care Needs Assessment

- Conducted by DECAL's research partner, Child Trends
- Data collection included:
  - Survey of licensed providers
  - Feedback sessions with licensed providers at DECAL's road shows
  - Focus groups with parents, teachers, family child care providers, and other stakeholders
  - DECAL Listens phone line
- Results will inform DECAL's CCDF plan
- Full report coming next spring

Disaster Relief & 2Gen Community Grants



Hurricane Helene Disaster Relief Funds



- DECAL was awarded **$19,866,040** in CCDF American Relief Act Supplemental Disaster Relief Funds
- Funds will be used to support facility recovery, workforce stabilization, and supply expansion in the 95 counties impacted by Hurricane Helene
- **Application for facility recovery funds is being developed and will be released early 2027**

2Gen Community Grants

- Funding will support a **Two-Generation (2Gen) approach** that intentionally supports the needs of children and the adults in their lives simultaneously.
- Communities could apply for either a **Planning Grant** or an **Implementation Grant** to address locally identified needs and strengthen early childhood systems.
- Applications open: October 2, 2026 – November 2, 2026
  - Planning Grant: 44 applications submitted
  - Implementation Grant: 60 applications submitted
- Timeline
  - Award announcement: Spring 2027
  - Grant term: July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2029

2027 Here We Come

- Implementation of the QR Integrity and Accountability Framework
- Results from the Quality Study
- Official “restart” of the Quality Rated revision process
- Results from the CAPS Family Experiences Study
- Results from the Economic Impact Workforce Study
- End of Current Community Impact Grants and start of the 2Gen Community Grants
- Disaster Relief application opens

Welcome to the Board of Early Care and Learning

Public Comment

November 19, 2026

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning

BRIGHT FROM THE START

Board Actions and Business

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
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Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning

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Board Meeting Dates 2027

- February 18, 2027
- May 20, 2027
- August 26, 2027
- November 18, 2027

