

# DECAL Early Head Start Partnership

## 2017 Self-Assessment Results

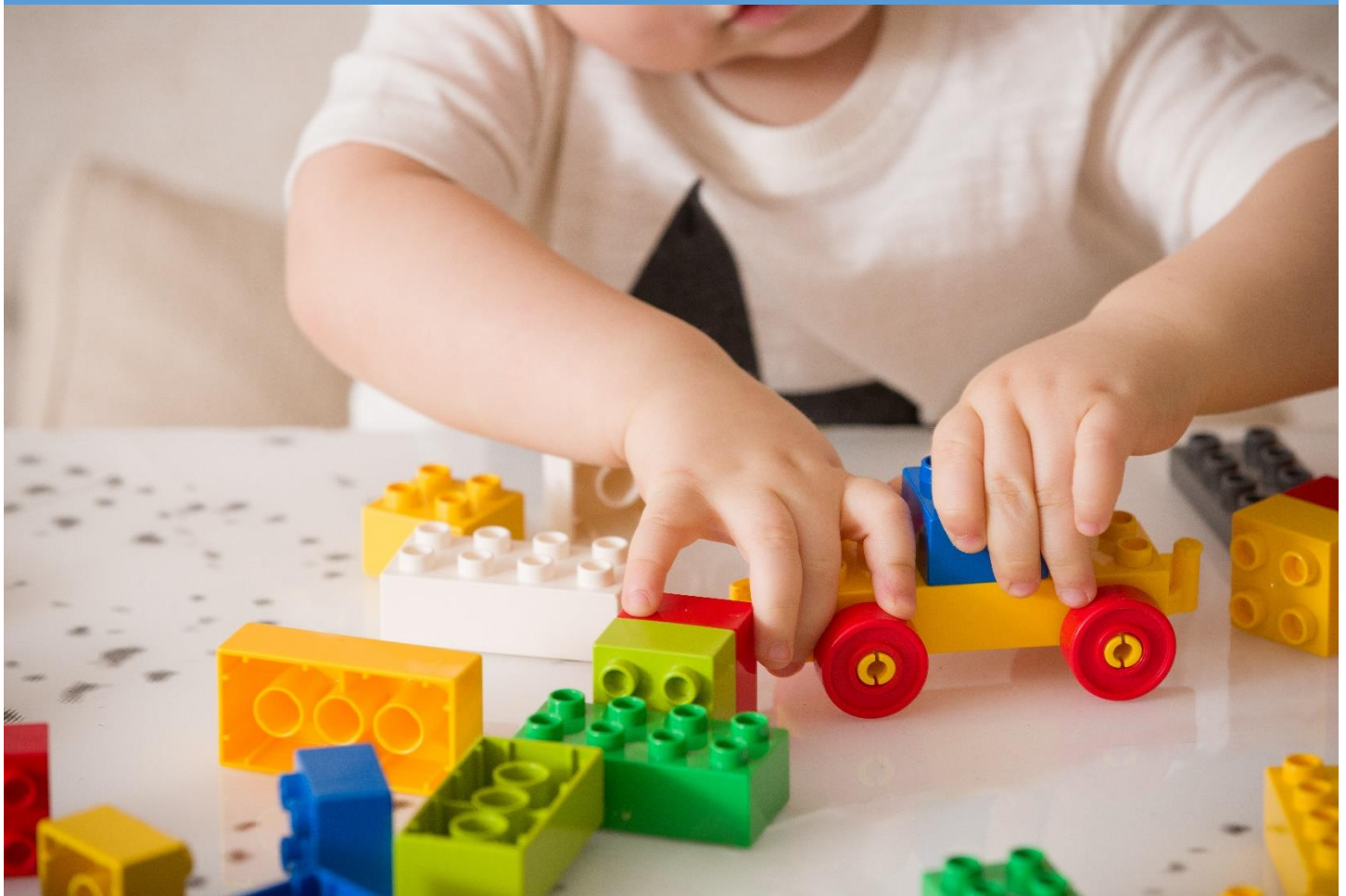


**DECAL  
EARLY HEAD START  
PARTNERSHIP**






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
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning



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# DECAL Early Head Start Partnership: 2017 Self-Assessment Results

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## Section 1: Introduction

In 2014, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) was awarded \$3.5 million a year for five years to serve as a grantee for the DECAL Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership (DEHSP). The purpose of the grant was to increase access to high-quality early education, including comprehensive services, for low-income infants and toddlers and their families.

Specifically, the goals focused on:

- Delivering comprehensive services to families
- Creating early education hubs to support programs and meet Early Head Start (EHS) standards
- Enhancing quality in the child care partner programs to meet EHS standards
- Monitoring the project and measuring improvements in access and quality
- Revising the state's child care subsidy policies to support Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP) statewide

In order to understand how effective DEHSP is in meeting these goals, DECAL's Research and Policy Analysis Team conducts an annual self-assessment. This self-assessment utilizes a multi-method approach that consists of surveys, focus groups, and analyses of administrative data. The self-assessment is instrumental in ensuring accountability for DECAL as the lead grantee. It also helps to monitor current progress toward meeting the aforementioned goals, to identify systematic issues, and to conceptualize innovative ways to improve the partnership. This report details results from the 2017 Self-Assessment.

In 2016, the first self-assessment was completed. It concluded that management systems and supports that had been implemented were working to support the hubs and partner programs. Furthermore, these findings provided a baseline for DEHSP to continue evaluating progress and identifying procedural changes that would strengthen the partnership.

The 2017 Self-Assessment utilized the same methods used in 2016 — focus groups, surveys, and analyses of administrative data. By employing various modes of data collection with all stakeholders involved in the project, DECAL gathered feedback from diverse perspectives to ensure representation and accountability for the 2017 Self-Assessment. Based on these findings, DECAL has created an updated Plan of Improvement that builds upon the reported successes, incorporates new strategies and policies, and provides enhanced leadership of DEHSP.

### Overview

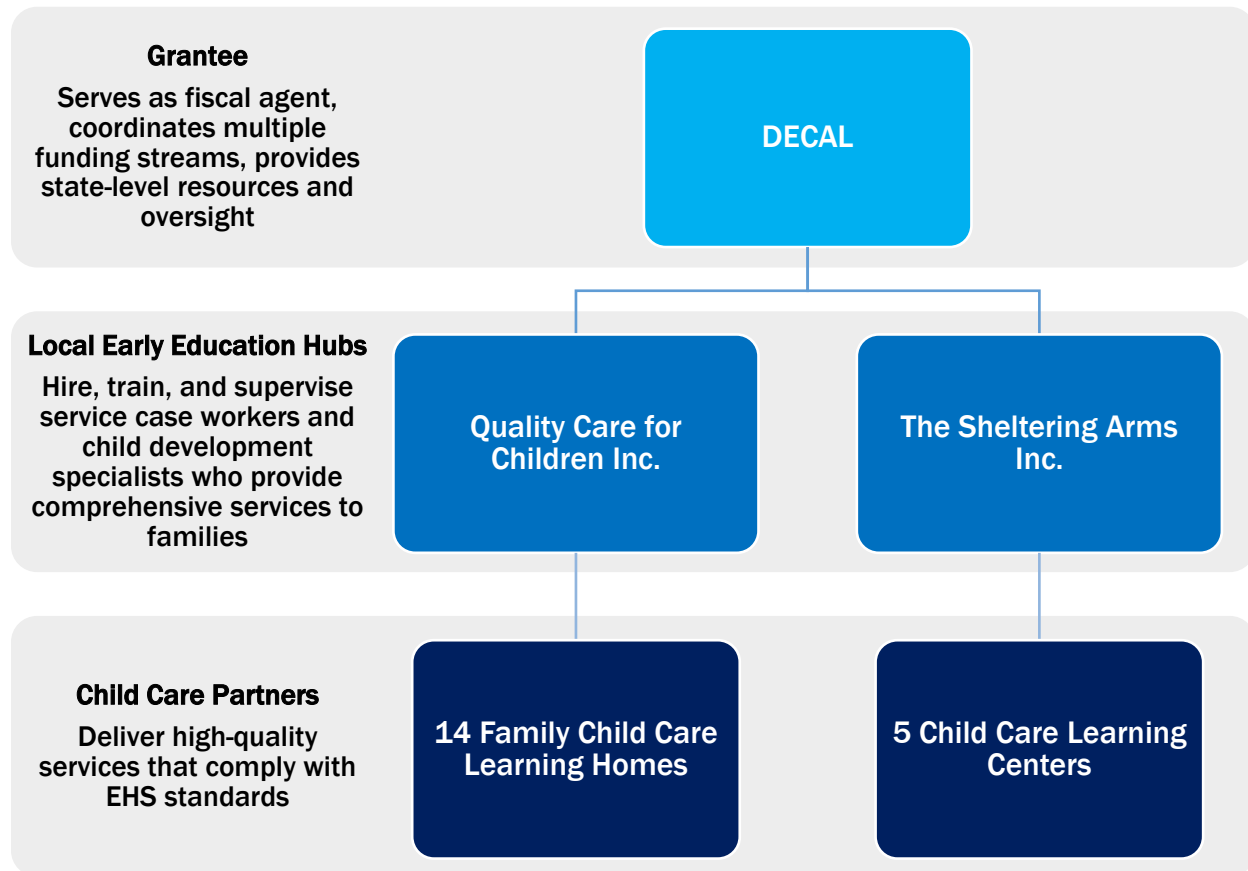
The DEHSP model includes two partner child care hubs that promote school readiness and provide comprehensive services to children and their families. There are two hub partners,





Quality Care for Children Inc., and The Sheltering Arms, Inc. Quality Care for Children works with Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLHs) that specifically serve dual language learners (DLLs) and Sheltering Arms works with Child Care Learning Centers (CCLCs). In 2017, Quality Care for Children served as the hub for 14 participating FCCLHs and Sheltering Arms served as the hub for five CCLCs, together serving a total of 240 children and their families. Figure 1 charts the DEHSP management structure, as well as roles and responsibilities of each partner.

**Figure 1. DEHSP Management Structure Roles and Responsibilities**



This report presents results from the 2017 Self-Assessment and is organized into the following sections: Methodology, Summary of Common Themes in Responses, Family Child Care Learning Home (FCCLH) Partner Results, Child Care Learning Center (CCLC) Partner Results, Hub Staff Results, and Conclusions. It is important to note that even though the partnership operates across both FCCLHs and CCLCs, previous self-assessments have demonstrated that different methods need to be employed to gauge successes and challenges with each. Therefore, most of the results are grouped under either FCCLH partners or CCLC partners.





It is exciting to present these results. DECAL leadership have long viewed the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) model as a unique opportunity to improve early education experiences for the state’s youngest learners. The self-assessment helps leadership to evaluate how well the partnership is succeeding.





## Section 2: Methodology

The 2017 Self-Assessment was conducted by DECAL’s internal Research and Policy Analysis Team, utilizing a multi-method, triangulated approach. It involved conducting surveys, interviews, and focus groups with key stakeholders from various levels of the partnership, and reviewing and comparing results from the 2016 Self-Assessment. Each data collection method is discussed below.

### Focus Groups

For the 2016 Self-Assessment, two focus groups were conducted at DECAL’s headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. The purpose of the focus groups was to identify strengths and challenges associated with receiving grant funds, to support child care partners’ efforts to provide comprehensive services to families, and to identify ways to improve the self-assessment process. These focus groups included local hub representatives, family providers, directors, teachers, and parents. While the 2016 focus groups provided useful information about ways the partnership could be strengthened, the feedback was not applicable to all groups and, due to time constraints, many topics were not discussed at a deeper level. Therefore, for the 2017 Self-Assessment, the research team decided to use targeted focus groups to allow for more time and engagement with topics that are relevant to each group. With this plan in mind, DECAL conducted separate focus groups with CCLC partner directors, FCCLH partners, and families.

The CCLC partner director and FCCLH partner focus groups took place at sites where they were already receiving professional development. By going to the participants’ location, DECAL was able to increase attendance and achieve greater participation from the partners. These focus groups allowed the research team to capture meaningful, personal feedback with a level of detail that is difficult to achieve through surveys and other impersonal modes of data collection.

### Teacher Interviews

Three teachers were interviewed by DECAL’s Research and Policy Analysis Team as a part of the self-assessment process. Teachers who were interested in being interviewed filled out an index card during DEHSP Professional Learning Institute in Clarkston, Georgia. Four teachers filled out an index card and three were available to participate in an interview. The interview protocol emphasized training and professional development, classroom management, curriculum support, and comprehensive service delivery to families. Results from the teacher interviews are included in the CCLC Teacher Surveys section to provide a comprehensive picture of this important group’s perspectives.



## Surveys

FCCLH partners, CCLC partner directors, CCLC teachers, and hub staff received paper surveys to complete during the DEHSP Professional Learning Institute, which took place from June 26–28, 2017, in Clarkston, Georgia. A Spanish version of the survey was available for FCCLH partners, all of whom speak Spanish. The surveys covered key topics such as comprehensive service delivery to families, family engagement, perceptions of child development, training, and curriculum support. Table 1 displays the total number of surveys distributed and the response rates from the 2017 DEHSP Self-Assessment.

**Table 1. Survey Response Rates by DEHSP Partner**

Group	Survey Distributed	Responses	2017 Response Rate
FCCLH Partners	14	13	93%
CCLC Directors	5	2	40%
CCLC Teachers	49	26	53%
Hub Staff	30	9	30%

**Table 2. Survey Response Rates by DEHSP Partner by Year**

Group	2016 Response Rate <sup>1</sup>	2017 Response Rate
FCCLH Partners	100%	93%
CCLC Directors	100%	40%
CCLC Teachers	16%	53%
Hub Staff	100%	30%

In 2017, only 2 Directors and 9 Hub Staff responded to the survey, representing a 60 and 70 percentage point decrease from 2016, respectively.

[1] The 2016 survey response rates are as reported in the 2016 DEHSP Self-Assessment report.

As evident from Table 2, nearly all FCCLH partners responded to both the 2016 and 2017 Self-Assessment surveys. More than half of CCLC teachers responded to the survey in 2017, which was a 37 percentage point increase from 2016. The 2016 Self-Assessment utilized online surveys, whereas the 2017 Self-Assessment used paper surveys. The results shown in Table 1 would suggest that teachers may be more likely to respond to a paper survey whereas hub staff and CCLC directors may be more likely to respond to an online survey. These findings could be used to help maximize survey response rates for the 2018 Self-Assessment. Because only two directors completed a survey, the results from the director survey are not summarized in this report.

## Methodology Summary

Overall, the results from the focus groups, interviews, and surveys suggest that FCCLH partners, CCLC partner directors and teachers, and hub staff have unique and important perspectives on DEHSP. This report does not draw comparisons between groups (e.g., comparing findings from







FCCLH to those from hub staff). However, the report does summarize the common perspectives that emerged from an evaluation of all the responses received from all the stakeholder groups.

The remainder of this report is organized into five sections. Section 3 summarizes the common responses and themes that emerged from the focus group, interview, and survey results. Section 4 focuses on the results from the FCCLH partners. Section 5 shares the responses from CCLC partners. Section 6 presents results from hub staff surveys. Finally, Section 7 discusses overall conclusions and next steps.





## Section 3: Summary of Common Themes in Responses

Overall, the results from the focus groups, interviews, and surveys suggest that FCCLH partners, CCLC partner directors, hub staff, and families share similar opinions about many aspects of DEHSP. Because understanding the common perceptions of DEHSP is beneficial when evaluating existing processes and designing improvements, this report presents them here. The groups held positive perceptions of the support DEHSP provides, its impact on classroom and program quality, and several of its services to families. The groups also were in accord on the need for additional supports and improved communication within the partnership structure.

### Supportive Environment

The vast majority of respondents came away feeling supported by DEHSP. All of the 13 FCCLH partners who responded said they felt this way. A full 80% (n=20) of the CCLC partner teachers surveyed felt both connected and supported. Among hub staff, almost 67% (n=6) felt connected and 78% (n=7) said they felt supported. Most of the six families who participated in focus groups reported overall satisfaction with the support they received from the partnership. They also said they trusted the providers to give their children a supportive and positive learning environment. Specifically, the families said their children enjoyed going to school, that their children were able to receive speech services when requested, and that the food was similar to the food served in the home. They were satisfied that their children were receiving healthy meals consistent with their culture and extremely happy with the education and support their children were receiving. All families said they would participate again if given the opportunity.

### Positive Impact on Quality

The questions put to partners, directors, teachers, and the hub staff about DEHSP's positive impact on classroom and program quality elicited similar sentiments. Fully 80% (n= 20) of responding CCLC partnerteachers, and most CCLC partner directors, said that DEHSP had a positive impact on the overall classroom quality. FCCLH partners cited training, technical assistance, classroom and playground renovations, and home visits, as the most effective tools provided by DEHSP that have helped them raise the quality of the learning environment in their facilities. They also said the developmental assessments provided by DEHSP have helped them document their success, which, in turn, have helped them feel more professional. CCLC directors observed that since joining DEHSP, teachers in their centers have been more supportive of each other's efforts to improve quality, more collegial in terms of offering strategies and support to non-EHS teachers, more likely to share various learning materials across classrooms, and more interested in diversifying learning materials available for the children in a given classroom.

### Positive Impact on Family Engagement

Most respondents agreed that their association with DEHSP resulted in increased family engagement in terms of higher student attendance and parental involvement, thanks in part to the contributions from family support specialists. All of the 13 FCCLH partners and the five CCLC





partner directors who were questioned spoke positively of DEHSP's assistance, reporting that it helped them design and implement activities to promote family engagement and partnership. As a result, just over half, or 54% (n=7) of the FCCLH partners reported that at least one mother volunteers monthly or more frequently. Over a third, or 39% (n=5) of them reported that at least one father volunteers monthly or more frequently. Nearly 70% (n=9) reported that parents assist with planning activities that support bonding and school readiness. Additionally, although the rate is still above the state average, the partners said that after deploying DEHSP strategies to encourage attendance, absenteeism declined dramatically, from 53% in 2015-16 to 29% in 2016-17. One of the more successful tactics involved meeting with parents to demonstrate the tools they use to track child development, to communicate the importance of establishing a routine, to discuss the performance standards for attendance, and to describe fun-filled activities that appealed to families. Over 80% (n=10) of FCCLH partners said they successfully used the strategies. Among CCLC partner teachers, 71% (n=17) used them and over three-quarters (76%, n=13) judged them successful.

### **Positive Impact on Child Development**

All 13 FCCLH partners surveyed said all or nearly all of the children in their care are on track across all domains of physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development. A majority of CCLC partner teachers reported that all or almost all of their children are on track in terms of physical development, motor skills, approaches to learning and play, cognitive development, and general knowledge. The same percentage of FCCLH partners and 58% (n=15) of the CCLC teachers said all or almost all of the children in their classroom were physically healthy, rested, and well-nourished when they arrived to class each day.

The feedback from families of children in DEHSP facilities validated the impressions of the partners and teachers. Specifically, families said their children enjoyed going to school, that their children were able to receive speech services when requested, and that the food was similar to the food served in the home. Most families reported good communication between themselves and their child's teacher. Additionally, families discussed trusting their provider due to the positive and constant communication about what was occurring during the day. Families reported satisfaction in knowing that their children were receiving healthy meals that are consistent with their culture. Overall, parents reported being extremely happy with the education, learning environment and support their children received. Families reported that they trusted the providers to give their children a supportive and positive learning environment.

### **Importance of Curriculum Supports**

The Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) is one of the curriculum supports provided to DEHSP program staff and it appears to be universally popular and effective. GELDS provides online training and resources that help CCLC partner teachers and FCCLH partners design lesson plans that are consistent with Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS). Every FCCLH partner and CCLC partner teacher reported using GELDS considered it useful for a variety of tasks, including conducting assessments; planning lessons





and class activities; individualizing instruction; structuring parent-teacher conferences; and tracking developmental milestones.

### **Need for Supplemental Supports**

Hub staff, FCCLH partners, CCLC partner teachers, and families shared the view that additional supports would enhance their experiences with DEHSP. Half of the FCCLH partners who responded (n=4) said training before the EHS program starts would be beneficial. Among the CCLC partner teachers, slightly less than half (48%, n=4) asked for additional classroom help, with two of them desiring more time to plan lessons and one wishing for more training. Half of the four hub staff who responded (n=2) desired more ongoing professional development and training in serving children with disabilities. One wanted more support in providing comprehensive services for all families and one needed help applying EHS health, safety, and education practices to other initiatives, such as Quality Rated. The responses from a few families align with the comments from the partners and hub staff members. Families said they would appreciate more services and supports to help them determine whether their children have speech or socialization issues, to provide more dual language interactions, and to facilitate more communication between families and instructional staff, in particular discussions with their children’s curriculum consultants.

### **Need for Enhanced Communication**

Regular and clear communication between all groups involved in DEHSP is essential to effective program implementation and ultimately, successful outcomes for the children enrolled. Most families reported good communication between themselves and their children’s teachers and said they trust their provider because they received positive and constant communication about what was occurring in the classroom. Likewise, almost 80% (78%, n=7) of hub staff respondents said they communicate with partner programs at least once a week.

The consensus among some parties who participated in the self-assessment, nevertheless, was that improvements in several aspects of information sharing would significantly enhance DEHSP. CCLC partner directors reported several communications challenges with the hub staff related to that group’s role in the center and in the family recruitment and transition processes. Hub staff are primarily recruiting children for DEHSP from families that are already enrolled in partner programs, rather than children who are not connected to the partners. FCCLH partners and CCLC partner directors believe that branching out would expand DEHSP’s impact and improve the partners’ businesses. Enhanced communication, it seems, could help all of the entities achieve more optimal recruiting results.

Additionally, some CCLC partner directors and some FCCLH partner programs that have EHS and Pre-K classrooms, but no Head Start (HS) classes, suggest that better information and communication about options are needed when hub staff and others are advising families who are transitioning from DEHSP. CCLC directors believe that families are often counseled to transition from EHS to a HS program, even if that leads them to transition out of a partner





program in order to continue to receive similar funding. This belief is confirmed by responses from FCCLH partners, who also report that they often lose children transitioning out of EHS to programs that offer a HS classroom. Some CCLC partner directors also reported that in some cases they have felt uninformed during the transition process, unaware of which families were leaving the program and which families were staying. Furthermore, they say that after discussing transition options with families, some families preferred to accept alternate funding for HS in order to keep their children enrolled at the partner’s facility through Pre-K. Directors therefore recommend that hub staff and families should be better informed about alternate funding options, such as child care subsidies.

As DEHSP leaders consider program improvements, the feedback suggests that strengthening and broadening communications among hub staff, CCLC partner directors, FCCLH partners, and families will greatly enhance the effort to ensure the continuity, quality, and affordability of early care and education to children.







## Section 4: Family Child Care Learning Home Partner Results

In 2017, FCCLH partners served 47 infants and toddlers and their families. While CCLCs also serve low-income families, the FCCLH model specifically targets learners whose home language is Spanish. Since all of the FCCLH partners speak Spanish, all components of the self-assessment were offered in English and Spanish. The assessment components included surveys and focus groups for both FCCLH partners and participating families, and analysis of administrative and program data. The surveys were completed during the DEHSP Professional Learning Institute, while the focus group was conducted at Quality Care for Children headquarters on July 15, 2017. The focus group took place during the FCCLH partners' monthly meeting, which all 14 FCCLH partners attended.

### Family Child Care Learning Home Partner Survey

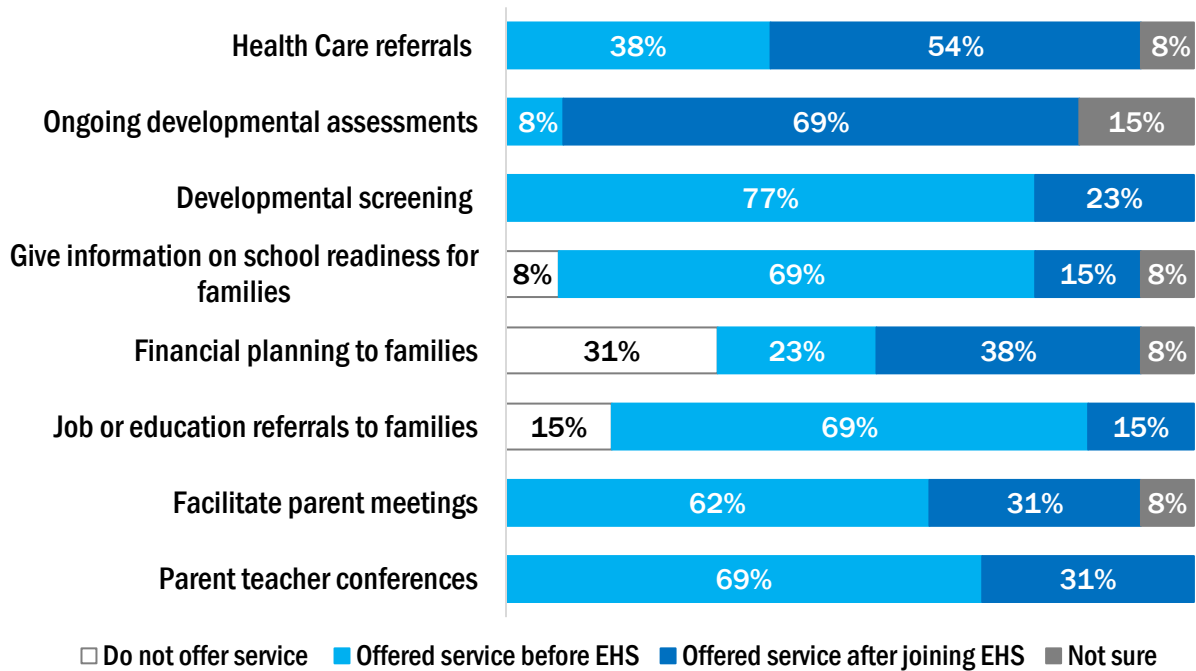
As previously mentioned, 13 of FCCLH partners completed the survey. The survey assessed the partners' opinions on topics such as delivering comprehensive services to families, family engagement, perceptions of child development, and curriculum support. The survey results identify how DEHSP has helped FCCLH partners expand the services they offer to families of children at their program. The findings also suggest that DEHSP can better support FCCLH partners by providing more training. Key findings from the partner survey are listed below.

#### *Comprehensive Services*

An important goal of DEHSP is to expand the range of services that partner programs can provide to both children and families. To assess the impact of DEHSP on the services provided, FCCLH partners were asked if they offered a series of comprehensive services to families (e.g., health care referrals, ongoing developmental assessments, developmental screenings, information on school readiness). If the partners reported offering one of the listed comprehensive services to families, they were asked if they started offering the service before or after joining DEHSP. Figure 2 displays the reports of when the FCCLH partners started delivering specific comprehensive services to families.



Figure 2. The majority of FCCLH partners reported offering all of the provided comprehensive services in 2017.



The DEHSP helped most of the FCCLH partners expand the services they offer to families by providing ongoing developmental assessments and health care referrals for families. A small number of FCCLH partners reported that joining DEHSP has allowed them to expand services by offering financial planning assistance to families, facilitating parent leadership meetings, and hosting parent-teacher conferences. Since the hub facilitates financial planning and convenes the parent leadership meetings, the partners engage families to promote awareness of these activities. Overall, these findings suggest that DEHSP has helped expand the services that FCCLH partners offer to children and their families.

Not only does DEHSP aim to offer comprehensive services to families, but DEHSP also strives to keep all partners informed throughout the process of delivering these services. Accordingly, the survey asked FCCLH partners if they felt that the hub staff was including them in the process of delivering comprehensive services to families. All the partners in a small sample reported feeling included in the process. This finding suggests that hub staff are working collaboratively with the partners to deliver comprehensive services to families.



*Family Engagement*

Families who are informed about what is occurring in their children’s classrooms can continue to reinforce what their children are learning outside the classrooms. Therefore, it is essential for DEHSP to support programs’ efforts to increase family engagement and parent participation. A strength of DEHSP is that services are provided through DECAL and the hubs that help programs engage families in their children’s EHS program. For example, family services specialists are members of the hub staff. These staff members work with EHS programs to encourage parents who do not volunteer regularly to participate more or in different ways in their children’s EHS program. The survey asked FCCLH partners if family engagement and participation have increased, decreased, or stayed the same since joining DEHSP.

**100%** (n=13) of FCCLH partners reported that family engagement and participation have increased since joining DEHSP.

A measure of family engagement at a particular program is the frequency of parents’ volunteerism. FCCLH partners were asked how often at least one mother and one father volunteered at their program.

**54%** (n=7) of FCCLH partners reported that at least one **mother** volunteers monthly or more frequently.



**39%** (n=5) of FCCLH partners reported that at least one **father** volunteers monthly or more frequently.



It is encouraging that the partners report one parent volunteers in their classrooms at least once a month. A strong indicator of family engagement is whether parents not only volunteer, but also assist with planning activities. Therefore, FCCLH partners were also asked if parents assist with planning activities that support bonding and school readiness.

**69%** (n=9) of FCCLH partners reported that parents assist with planning activities that support bonding and school readiness.

The DEHSP will continue to support the providers’ family engagement efforts and promote fathers volunteering in order to see sustained improvements in 2018.

*Child Development*

Families with varying access to resources present different sets of challenges for FCCLH partners. In order to understand the partners’ perceptions of a child’s development, FCCLH partners were asked how many of their children were bathed and fed each day when they arrived





at the program. All FCCLH partners (n=13) reported that all or almost all of the children in their classrooms were physically healthy, rested, and well-nourished when they arrived each day.

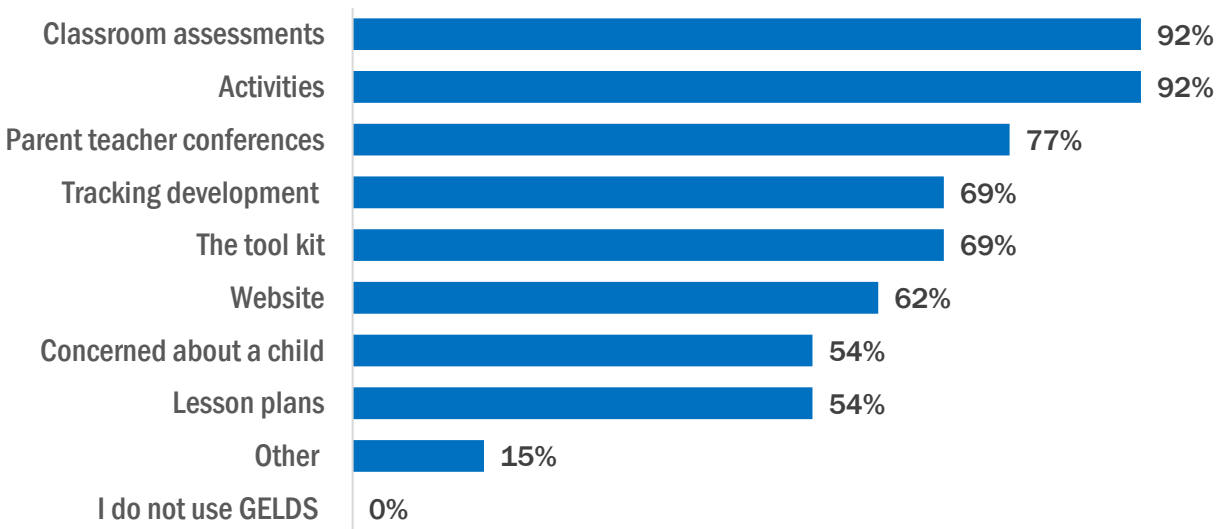
Since each child is unique in his or her developmental progression, it is important that DEHSP provide the partners with ongoing developmental assessments to track progress and identify supports needed for children who are falling behind their peers in targeted domains of development. The survey asked FCCLH partners about children’s development and motor skills; social and emotional development; approaches to play and learning; communication; language and literacy; cognitive development; and general knowledge.

**100%** (n=13) of FCCLH partners reported that all or almost all of the children in their classrooms were **developmentally on track** in all of the aforementioned domains.

*Curriculum Support*

The Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) is one of the curriculum supports provided to DEHSP program staff. The GELDS provides online training and resources that help CCLC partner teachers and FCCLH partners design lesson plans that are consistent with HSPPS standards. FCCLH partners were asked to select from a list of ways that they use the GELDS in their centers. The options included assessments, help with lesson planning, assistance with individualizing instruction, help conducting parent-teacher conferences, tracking developmental milestones, using the GELDS tool kit to help teachers design and organize classroom activities for future use, using the website for ideas, learning how to identify developmental delays, and designing lesson plans. The results are displayed in Figure 3.

**Figure 3. How FCCLH partners use GELDS**



*Lesson Planning*





During the 2016 Self-Assessment process, partners indicated that they had little time for lesson planning. Since FCCLHs are expected to plan lessons that are intentional, individualized, and developmentally appropriate for all children in the classroom, one recommendation from this research is that they allocate sufficient time during their regular work day for lesson planning. In order to estimate a baseline for the amount of time the partners allocate to lesson planning, they were asked approximately how much time they have for lesson planning and preparation during a typical work week. The majority said they are given time to plan during their work day. However, a small number still need to find strategies that allow for lesson planning and preparation during their work week.

**85%** (n=11) of FCCLH partners reported that they had three-to-five hours a week for lesson planning.

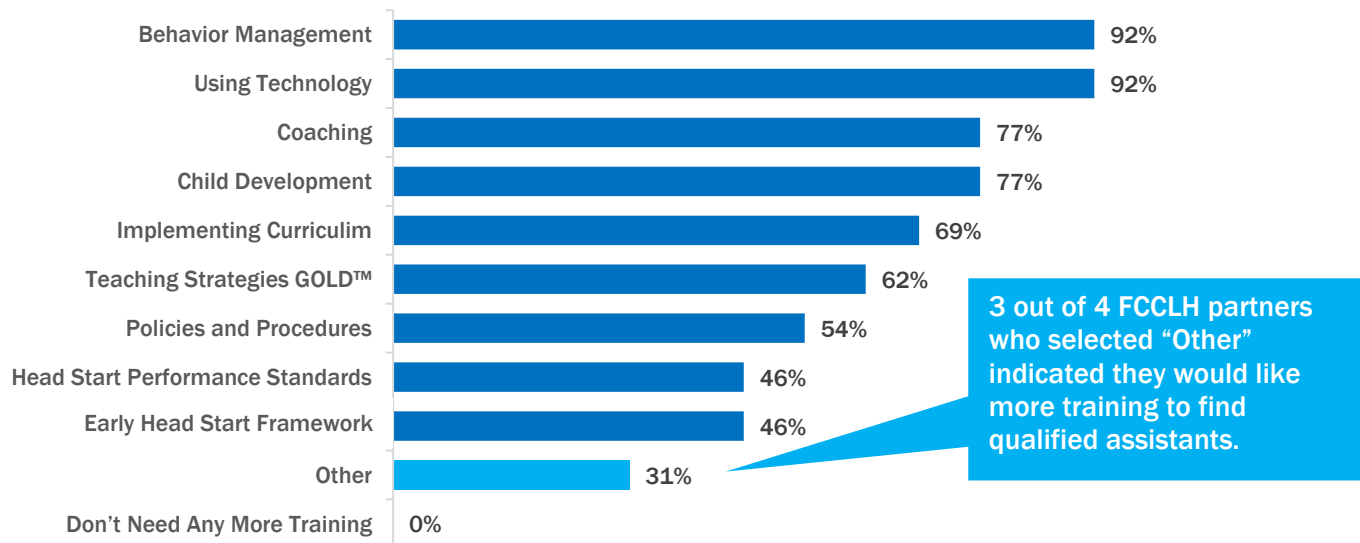
**8%** (n=1) of FCCLH partners reported one-to-two hours a week.

**8%** (n=1) of FCCLH partners reported that they do not have time (planning is done before or after work).

*Training*

The DEHSP provides formalized training opportunities for FCCLH partners in areas where there is a need. In addition to time designated for lesson planning, the partners are required to attend trainings as DEHSP child care providers. A number of training suggestions were mentioned in the 2016 Self-Assessment. The 2017 Self-Assessment compiled the most frequently mentioned trainings and asked partners to choose the most beneficial. The results are displayed in Figure 4.

**Figure 4. Training preferences for FCCLH partners**



The findings from Figure 5 suggest that DEHSP needs to continue to provide the partners with training, especially in behavior management, technology use, child development, and coaching.





Additionally, DEHSP can brainstorm ways to help the partners find qualified assistants. By providing these supports, DEHSP can help ensure that FCCLH partners are receiving the tools and training they need to be successful.

*Additional Supports Needed by Family Child Care Learning Home Partners*

In order to gauge whether FCCLH partners are receiving the support they need to participate fully in DEHSP, they were asked if there were supports not provided that would make teaching in their EHS classrooms easier. Over 60% (n=8) of FCCLH partners responded to the question.

**50%** (n=4) of FCCLH partners reported that they have the support they need.



**50%** (n=4) of FCCLH partners reported that they would like the training to start before the program begins.

Based on these responses, DECAL should make a concerted effort to include training on identified topics prior to the start of the program year. Overall, FCCLH partners are happy with the supports they received from DEHSP.

*Family Child Care Learning Home Partners' Perception of the Partnership*

The FCCLH partners were asked if they agreed with two statements regarding their connection to the goals of DEHSP. All of the partners who responded to this question agreed with the statement that they felt connected to and supported by DEHSP in their role.

**100%** (n=10) of FCCLH partners agreed that they felt **connected** to DEHSP.

**100%** (n=7) of FCCLH partners agreed that they felt **supported** by DEHSP.

Another primary aim of DEHSP is to help improve the quality of partner child care programs. FCCLH partners were asked if their participation in DEHSP has helped increase the quality.

**100%** (n=8) of FCCLH partners reported that DEHSP had a **positive impact** on the overall quality of their program.

*Attendance*

One indicator of family engagement is child attendance. Children who do not attend class regularly may miss important learning opportunities, have adjustment difficulties, and be at a greater risk for developmental delays. Since attendance can be a challenge for some families, it is important that DEHSP, hub staff, and child care partners work with families to ensure children regularly attend class.

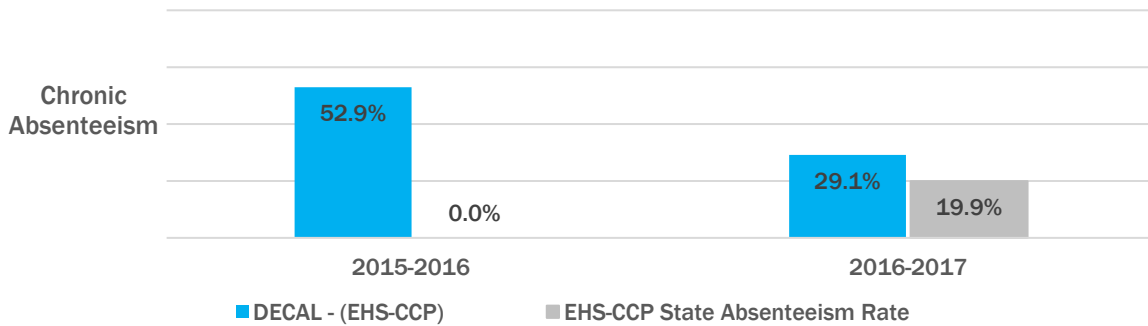
Across Head Start programs, chronic absenteeism is a term applied to children with patterns of absence that put them at risk of missing more than 10% of program days a year. The following





figure represents the change in the percentage of children served who were reported as chronically absent for the entire partnership, by program type, and compared to the rate of chronic absenteeism across all Georgia Early Head Start Partnership programs by year of data collection.

**Figure 5. The DEHSP's absenteeism rate dropped 23.8 percentage points, but was still higher than the state rate.**



[1] No state level data is available for 2015-2016.

[2] Chronic absenteeism data was collected voluntarily on an annual basis by the Georgia Head Start State Collaboration Office in partnership with DECAL’s Research & Policy Analysis Unit. Some programs may not have participated in all four years of data collection. Georgia’s chronic absenteeism rates were calculated by adding the total number of children served and dividing it by the total number of children reported as chronically absent. This data only represents grantees who participated in data collection for the given year of reporting. 2016-2017 is the first year for DEHSP data collection.

The DEHSP’s rate of absenteeism could be related to the unique challenges of families. The complex needs of families experiencing homelessness and the complicated schedules of parents enrolled at the technical college in particular may be contributing to the increased rates of absenteeism. Nevertheless, DEHSP is committed to lowering rates of chronic absenteeism and questions were asked in the self-assessment in order to understand better how DEHSP partners feel about attendance. While this section summarize results from the FCCLH partners specifically, chronic absenteeism is something center partners are also tasked with addressing, and reported as a challenge in this self-assessment.

FCCLH partners were first asked if they implemented strategies to encourage attendance at their program. The majority of them (83%, n=10) reported that they had implemented strategies to encourage attendance at their program and all of them said the tactics were successful.

**100%** (n=10) of FCCLH partners indicated they use strategies to encourage attendance reported that their strategies were successful.

FCCLH partners were asked to describe the strategies they used to encourage attendance. More than 60% (62%, n=8) of them responded to the question.



**38%** (n=3) of FCCLH partners mentioned showing parents the tools (e.g., Teaching Strategies GOLD™ Milestone Reports) they use to track child development.

**25%** (n=2) of FCCLH partners mentioned communicating to parents the importance of establishing a routine.

**25%** (n=2) of FCCLH partners mentioned talking with the parents about the new Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) for attendance.

**25%** (n=2) of FCCLH partners mentioned including fun activities that capture the attention and interest of children and families.

In summary, the responses from the partners suggest that talking to parents about their children’s developmental progress, the importance of an established routine, and fun activities that capture the interest of children and families were all successful strategies to improve children’s attendance. These strategies could be contributing to the decline in chronic absenteeism from 52.9% in the 2015-2016 to 29.1% in the 2016-2017 school year. Absenteeism will continue to be monitored in 2018 in conjunction with ongoing efforts to encourage attendance.

*Conclusions from the Family Child Care Learning Home Partner Survey*

The 2017 Self-Assessment identified trends across FCCLH partners that speak to the commitment of those partners to the mission of DEHSP and the efforts that DECAL and the hub staff have made to support them. These trends are encouraging, and DEHSP plans to build on this success in 2018. While the overall survey results are positive, FCCLH partners did report some challenges in running their EHS program, which are highlighted in the focus group section below.





## Family Child Care Learning Home Partner Focus Group

DECAL’s Research and Policy Analysis Team conducted a focus group with FCCLH partners at Quality Care for Children headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, on July 15, 2017. Participants included all 14 FCCLH providers participating in DEHSP. They were asked about changes, quality improvements, and challenges they have experienced since participating in DEHSP, as well as how they collaborate with children’s families and support school readiness and comprehensive services. The topics highlighted included program changes, training, family engagement, and overall support received from DEHSP. The following section includes summaries of the strengths and challenges, as well as the proposed strategies to overcome the challenges, for each of the topics that were discussed.

### *Findings*

#### Program Changes Since Joining DEHSP

##### Home Visits

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCLH partners reported that the home visits were positive experiences that improved the quality of their program. Home visits allowed FCCLH partners to get to know each child in his/her home, while also enabling them to help parents reinforce what the child is learning in the classroom.</li> </ul>	
Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>EHS standards do not allow FCCLH partners to transport the children.</b> The partners felt like this rule forced them to miss opportunities to take the children to the library or to the park.</li> <li>FCCLH partners reported that Good Friday and Columbus Day are no longer holidays.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The partners suggested providing more clarification around the rules for transporting children. DECAL will meet with the FCCLH partners to explain that transportation services for infants and toddlers require stringent safety measures (passenger restraints and additional staff to supervise children during travel) and cost-prohibitive liability insurance.</li> <li>The partners recommend reinstating the Good Friday and Columbus Day holidays.</li> </ul>





**Training**

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCLH partners reported that the DESHP trainings and curriculum support helped them improve the overall quality of their classroom instruction. Specifically, they liked the structure of the curriculum and the lessons in implementing daily activities that foster child development.</li> </ul>	
Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCLH partners reported challenges applying both HSPPS and DECAL licensing standards.</li> <li>Even though the rules were translated into Spanish, the FCCLH partners, who all spoke Spanish, had difficulty understanding the rules.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The partners would like more training focused on applying HSPPS standards in conjunction with DECAL licensing standards.</li> <li>The partners would like a readily accessible list of frequently asked questions surrounding licensing rules and HSPPS written in Spanish that they can quickly reference during work hours.</li> </ul>

**Attendance and Family Engagement**

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most FCCLH partners did not report having trouble with child attendance or family engagement. They reported that the family support specialist assisted them by helping to design and implement activities to promote family engagement, such as assigning homework and inviting parents to volunteer by reading to the class.</li> </ul>	
Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few FCCLH partners reported challenges getting parents to volunteer at their program. They reported that the strategies offered by the family support specialist did not help as much as they would have liked.</li> <li>FCCLH partners reported challenges identifying and documenting parent volunteer hours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The partners would like DECAL and the hub staff to find new ways to help them motivate families to volunteer at their child’s program and strategies on how to document their volunteer hours.</li> <li>The partners recommended that hub staff avoid explicitly telling parents that they are not required to volunteer in the classroom.</li> </ul>







**Overall Support Received from DEHSP**

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCLH partners reported that the technical assistance they received at their program helped improve the quality of their classrooms and playgrounds and provided an improved learning environment for the children. Specifically, the developmental assessments provided by DEHSP have helped them document their success, which, in turn, has helped them feel more professional.</li> </ul>	
Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FCCLH partners reported challenges finding qualified substitutes. A substitute teacher must have a CDA (Child Development Associate credential with an infant-toddler endorsement or FCCLH Endorsement) to teach in an EHS classroom. The partners reported that candidates with a CDA prefer to open their own businesses or find full-time jobs as lead teachers.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DECAL and the hub staff should help the partners find qualified substitute teachers.</li> </ul>

*Conclusions from Family Child Care Learning Home Partner Focus Groups*

The focus group identified several ways that DEHSP helps support FCCLH partners. For example, the partners reported that the training and technical assistance, the renovations to their classroom and playground, the home visits, and the other tools provided by DEHSP helped them improve quality.

The partners did report several challenges. First, they would like to be able to transport children. However, this is not allowed under the current EHS rules and regulations. Second, they would like to have more training on how to keep up with HSPPS in conjunction with DECAL licensing standards. Third, the partners would like hub staff to provide more help and tips for motivating families to volunteer. Fourth, they reported challenges finding qualified substitute teachers.

**Family Child Care Learning Home Partner Family Focus Group**

DECAL’s Research and Policy Analysis Team conducted a focus group with families who have been participating in the DEHSP for at least one year. This focus group was held at Quality Care for Children headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, on November 16, 2017, before the start of the monthly Parent Leadership Organization meeting. Participants included six families with children enrolled in partnering FCCLHs. Families were asked questions about the EHS program their children were enrolled in, including what they liked about it, what could be improved, their





involvement, and the support they received. The families listed resources and supports received from the partnership, communication with DEHSP partners, and suggestions for DEHSP program improvement. The following section includes summaries of the strengths and challenges, as well as proposed strategies to overcome challenges for each of the topics discussed.

*Findings*

**Overall Support Received from DEHSP**

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most families reported overall satisfaction with the support they received from the partnership. Families reported that they trusted the providers to give their child a supportive and positive learning environment. Specifically, families said their children enjoyed going to school, that their children were able to receive speech services when requested, and that the food was similar to the food served in the home. Families reported satisfaction in knowing that their children were receiving healthy meals that are consistent with their culture.</li> </ul>	
Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A small number of families reported challenges determining whether or not their child had a speech issue or if their child was shy.</li> <li>Families did not report services that they personally received from the partnership. When prompted, families still did not report receiving services other than services provided to their children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families reported that these issues were usually resolved as the provider got to know the child better.</li> <li>In the future, DEHSP can provide more targeted services for the families or be more explicit about what services are directed to the whole family rather than the individual child.</li> </ul>

**Communication with DEHSP Partners**

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most families reported good communication between themselves and their child’s teacher. Families said they trusted their provider due to the positive and constant communication about what was occurring in the classroom.</li> </ul>	
Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families reported having little-to-no communication with curriculum consultants. With the exception of the family services case managers, families reported only having contact with the providers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providers, consultants, and other DESHP partners should introduce themselves to families when they are in the classroom. Providers can help with these introductions or let families know why these partners are in the classroom.</li> </ul>





**Suggestions for DEHSP Improvements**

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, families reported being extremely happy with the education and support their child received. All families said they would participate again if given the opportunity. When prompted about ways to improve the program, only one suggestion was offered.</li> </ul>	
Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three families wished their child had more interactions in Spanish throughout the day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providers should talk to families about their child’s language preference prior to starting the program. Efforts should be made to provide Spanish and English instruction when requested. Parents should be informed about reasons for using one language over another.</li> </ul>

**Overall Conclusions from Family Child Care Learning Home Partner Results**

The 2017 DEHSP Self-Assessment results for FCCLH partners were positive. The majority of partners reported that the DESHP helped improve the overall quality of their programs. Specifically, the partners reported that since joining DEHSP, family engagement has increased and they can offer more comprehensive services to families.

The survey and focus groups identified some ways that DEHSP can better support FCCLH partners in their role within DEHSP. These supports included targeted trainings prior to the start of the program year, more focused training on applying EHS standards in conjunction with DECAL licensing standards, clarification on the rules regarding transporting children, and more technical assistance on how to measure and document parental participation. The DEHSP has implemented pre-service training to address these needs. For example, a three-day intensive Professional Learning Institute on June 26-29, 2017, provided training on topics that were requested based on the 2016 Self-Assessment results. DECAL plans to offer similar trainings in the future to provide the continued support and professional development requested by DEHSP partners.

Families in the partnership reported high levels of satisfaction with the program. All families said if given the opportunity they would participate in the program again. FCCLH partners remain committed to DEHSP’s mission and vision and continue to feel supported in their role as EHS child care partners. DEHSP hopes to build on this success as the partners work with hub staff to deliver services in 2018.





## Section 5: Child Care Learning Center Partner Results

The 2017 Self-Assessment process for CCLC partners included a teacher survey, a director survey, teacher interviews, and a director focus group. Since there were only two responses to the director survey, the results were not summarized in this report. Focus groups and surveys were completed during DEHSP Professional Learning Institute training in Clarkston, Georgia, from July 24–26, 2017. As previously mentioned, due to the low response rate, teacher interviews are embedded in the Teacher Surveys section to provide more comprehensive information and feedback from CCLC partner teachers.

### Child Care Learning Center Partner Teacher Surveys

Five CCLC partners served 152 infants, toddlers, and their families in 22 Early Head Start classrooms in 2017. More than 50% (53%, n=26) of teachers at CCLCs partners completed a survey during the 2017 DEHSP Professional Learning Institute. As mentioned previously, the 53% response rate for CCLC partner teachers is 37% higher than the response rate from 2016. Items from the 2017 survey were selected based on feedback from the 2016 Self-Assessment results. Survey items highlighted important topics such as comprehensive service delivery to families, family engagement, child development perceptions, training and curriculum support, and overall perception of DEHSP. It is important to note that while many of the questions on the teacher survey were the same as the questions asked on the FCCLH survey, the data from these surveys are reported separately. The 14 FCCLH partners operate their own businesses, while teachers are employees of the CCLCs. Therefore, the data from the CCLC partner teacher surveys is not compared directly with the data from the FCCLH partners. The results are summarized in the following subsections.

#### *Perceptions of Family Engagement*

A pillar of the DEHSP mission is to help programs increase family engagement and participation. A measure of family engagement at a particular program is how frequently parents volunteer and assist with planning activities. As such, CCLC partner teachers were asked how often at least one mother and one father volunteer at their program.

**42%** (n=11) of CCLC partner teachers reported that they have at least one mother volunteer in their classroom at least once a month or more frequently.

**31%** (n=8) of CCLC partner teachers reported that they have at least one father volunteer in their classroom at least once a month or more frequently.

The results indicate that approximately half the CCLC teachers in the sample had parents volunteer less than once a month. This finding suggests that a majority of teachers may need help encouraging or finding ways for parents to volunteer in the classroom.





*Attendance*

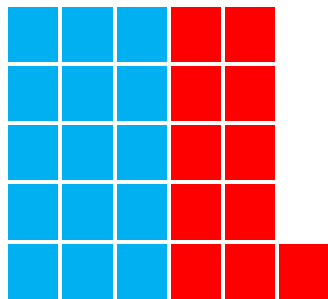
CCLC partner teachers were asked if they implemented any strategies to encourage attendance in their classroom, and if so, whether they were successful.

**71%** (n=17) of CCLC partner teachers reported that they use strategies to encourage attendance.

**76%** (n=13) of CCLC partner teachers who indicated they used strategies to improve attendance in the classroom reported that they were successful.

*Perceptions of Child Development*

CCLC partner teachers were asked how many children in their classroom were physically healthy, rested, and well-nourished when they arrived to class each day.



**58%** (n=15) of CCLC partner teachers reported that all or almost all of the children in their classrooms were physically **healthy**, rested, and well-nourished when they arrived to class each day.

**42%** (n=11) of CCLC partner teachers reported that at least some of their children were **not healthy**, rested, and well-nourished when they arrived to class each day.

Most children are perceived as healthy, rested, and nourished, but not all. This finding presents a challenge for CCLC teachers who must ensure that a child’s basic needs are met, while at the same time helping them get developmentally on track in cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development. Teachers must refer the family to a family services specialist who works to address any issues, provide resources, and track referrals. While challenging for the teachers, it is important to note that the comprehensive services available to children and families through DEHSP provide the resources and supports to help ensure that children’s needs are met so that they are able to learn and grow.

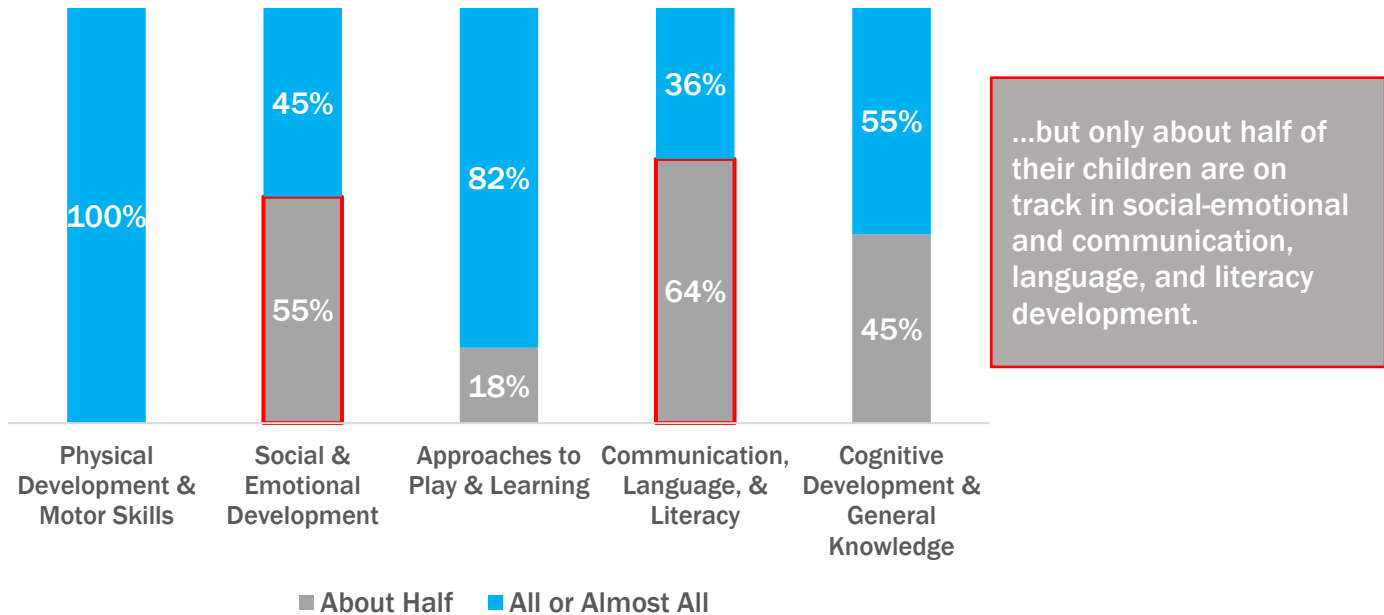
An important goal of DEHSP is to help all children get on track developmentally in domains of social, physical, and cognitive development. As a result, CCLC partner teachers are provided with ongoing developmental assessments to track progress and identify supports needed for each child participating in EHS. The survey asked CCLC teachers if few or none, about half, or all/almost all of their children were developmentally on track in the areas of physical development and motor skills; social and emotional development; approaches to play and learning; communication, language, and literacy; cognitive development; and general knowledge. Figure 6 presents the CCLC partner teachers’ responses.







Figure 6. The majority of CCLC partner teachers reported that **all or almost all** of their children are on track in physical development-motor skills; approaches to learning and play; and cognitive development-general knowledge...



These findings suggest that DEHSP should expand its curriculum support that emphasizes cognitive, social-emotional, and communication, language, and literacy development. It is important to note that the survey question did not specify whether or not children were on track based on any specific developmental delays they may have. In next year’s self-assessment, the survey will differentiate the results based on whether the family’s child is on track for the relevant age group or has any developmental delays.

*Lesson Plans*

To examine CCLC partner teachers’ typical work weeks and lesson planning, they were asked approximately how much time they have for lesson planning and preparation during a typical work week. Slightly more than half of CCLC teachers reported that they have at least an hour to plan, while close to half reported they had less than an hour a week.

**38%** (n=9) of CCLC partner teachers reported that they were **not given time** to plan during regular work hours.

**46%** (n = 11) of CCLC partner teachers reported they were given **less than an hour** a week for planning.



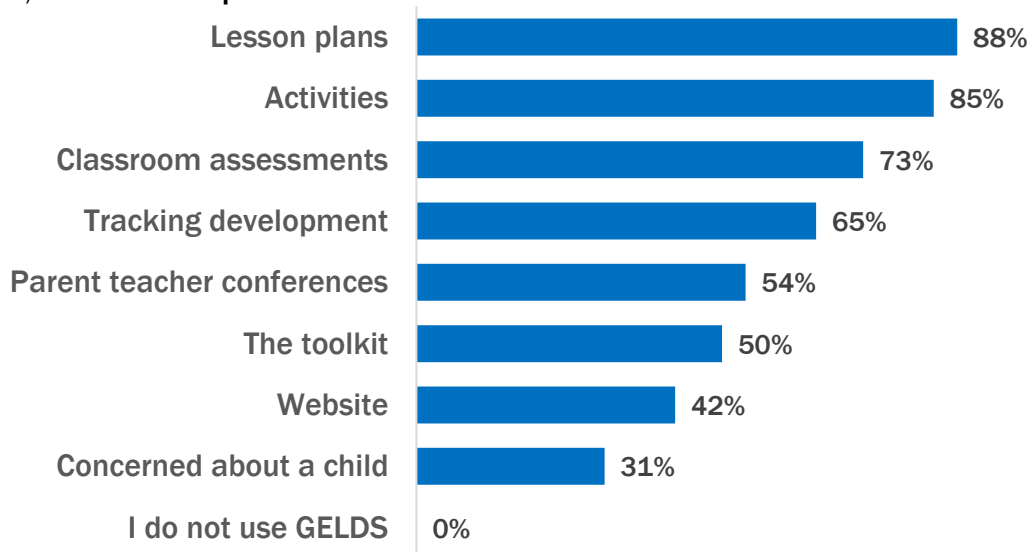
**54%** (n=13) of CCLC partner teachers reported they were given **at least an hour a week for planning.**

Although most CCLC partner teachers are given an hour or more to plan during a typical work week, a significant portion of them are not given time during regular work hours for lesson planning. This finding was supported by CCLC teacher interviews and highlights the need for DEHSP to work with program staff to ensure that all partner programs are providing teachers with time for lesson planning and preparation.

*Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS)*

CCLC partner teachers were asked to select from a list of ways that they use GELDS in their classroom. The options included assessments, help with lesson planning, assistance developing class activities, guidance for conducting parent-teacher conferences, tracking developmental milestones, using the GELDS tool kit (a process that helps teachers’ design and organize classroom activities for future use), the website, learning to identify developmental delays, and designing lesson plans. Figure 7 displays teachers’ reported use of the GELDS in the classroom.

**Figure 7. The majority of CCLC partner teachers used the GELDS for parent-teacher conferences, tracking child development, classroom assessments, activities, and lesson plans.**



*Training*

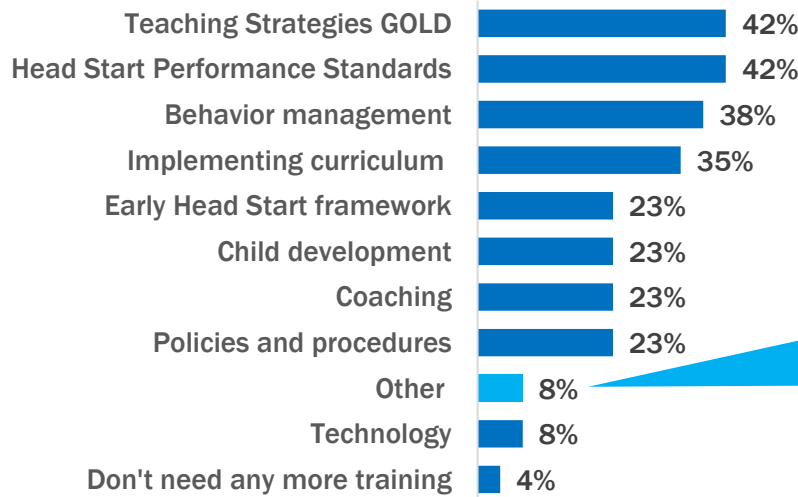
The DEHSP provides teachers with regular training to foster professional development and keep them informed of the ongoing changes to HSPPS and curriculum. CCLC teachers were asked





what additional training they needed. The topics included HSPPS; policies and procedures; child development; curriculum for infants and toddlers; coaching; behavior management; EHS framework; technology use; and Teaching Strategies GOLD™. The results are displayed in Figure 8.

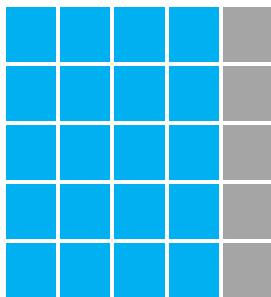
Figure 8. CCLC partner teachers want more training in a variety of areas.



One teacher wanted more training on finding grants and another wanted training on serving children with special needs.

*Child Care Learning Center Partner Teachers' Perception of the Partnership*

An important aim of DEHSP is to improve the quality of all partner programs. CCLC teachers were asked if their participation in DEHSP has helped improve the quality of their classroom.



**80%** (n=20) of CCLC partner teachers who responded reported that DEHSP had a positive impact on the overall quality of their classroom.

In order to successfully implement quality improvements in the classroom, teachers need to feel supported and connected to the mission of DEHSP. CCLC partner teachers were asked if they agreed with two statements, one about feeling connected to the goals of DEHSP and the other about feeling supported by DEHSP in their role as a teacher. Overall, the majority of CCLC teachers who responded to the question agreed with the statement that they felt connected to and supported by DEHSP in their role.





**80%** (n=20) of CCLC partner teachers agreed that they felt **connected** to the goals of DEHSP.

**77%** (n=17) of CCLC partner teachers agreed that they felt **supported** by DEHSP.

CCLP teachers were asked if there were any supports that would make their classroom job easier. A quarter (n=9) of them responded to the question. The responses are summarized below.

**44%** (n = 4) of CCLC partner teachers said that two teachers is not enough for an EHS classroom.

**22%** (n = 2) of CCLC partner teachers said they do not have enough time for lesson planning.

**11%** (n = 1) of CCLC partner teachers said that they would like more training.

#### *Conclusions from Child Care Learning Center Partner Teacher Surveys*

The 2017 CCLC partner teacher surveys echoed many of the themes found in the FCCLH partner surveys. These themes centered around a strong connection to DEHSP, the belief that many of their children are developmentally on track, the need for more planning time, and a need for targeted training. It is interesting to note that while 92% of FCCLH partners desired training in technology, only 8% of CCLC partner teachers were interested in receiving more training in technology. This contrast in desired training reiterates the need to address these two groups of child care educators according to their distinct needs.

### **Child Care Learning Center Partner Director Focus Group**

A focus group was held during the DEHSP Professional Learning Institute for the five CCLC partner directors. The purpose of the focus group was to understand positive changes that occurred as a result of CCLC directors' participation in DEHSP; to learn about the challenges they faced participating in DEHSP; and to discuss strategies that would help them overcome the aforementioned challenges. The CCLC directors were asked questions regarding their experiences with EHS and how they collaborate with and support families. The directors identified renovations to the facility as a positive impact. They listed communication with teachers and the hub staff, recruiting children, and transitioning children in and out of the program as challenges. The strengths, challenges, and strategies to overcome each challenge for each topic are highlighted below.





Findings

Communication

Strengths

- Since joining DEHSP, CCLC partner directors said teachers have been more likely to support one another’s efforts to improve quality in the classrooms. They have noticed that EHS teachers are offering strategies and support to non-EHS teachers. Directors also reported that teachers are more likely to share various learning materials across classrooms, diversifying the collection of learning materials available for the children in a given classroom.

Challenges

- CCLC partner **directors reported challenges communicating with the hub staff.** Specifically, hub staff and directors were not communicating frequently about the hub staff’s role in the CCLC. In some cases, directors did not have notice that hub staff were holding meetings. As a result, directors encountered challenges allocating enough space for the hub staff to work in conjunction with the program staff. Directors were also unable to answer parents’ questions about the hub staff’s work at their center.

Strategies to Overcome Challenges

- CCLC directors and hub staff should use a shared calendar application such as Microsoft Outlook to schedule meetings at the centers.
- DECAL, the hub staff, and program staff should provide a more detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of the hub staff members. A clearer description of the roles of the hub staff would help CCLC directors understand how to support them in their role.
- Hub staff should check in with CCLC directors at arrival to let them know they are at the facility.
- DECAL, hub staff, and CCLC directors will meet to identify strategies to improve communication and will implement the strategies and processes.

Facility Renovations

Strengths

- Most CCLC partner directors agreed that the facility renovations had a positive impact on the overall quality of their program. The renovations provided program staff with an environment that is more conducive to fostering learning and development.

Challenges

- CCLC directors mentioned that the renovations required programs to vacate their facility for much longer than anticipated.

Strategies to Overcome Challenges

- All renovation projects have been completed, but future renovation projects should be divided up so that they do not require programs to relocate for several months.







### Family Engagement

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, CCLC partner directors reported significantly more family engagement than they had prior to joining DEHSP. Directors also acknowledged that once they were able to understand how the family support specialist could support their program, they were able to work together to achieve a strong turnout at parent meetings.</li> </ul>	
Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initially, <b>the role of family support specialists was unfamiliar to the CCLC directors, so they were unsure of how someone in that role could assist their program.</b> Directors reported that the family support specialist had trouble getting desirable turnouts for parent meetings on their own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DECAL worked with CCLC directors to provide a clear description of the family support specialist’s daily roles and responsibilities. The description focused on how the family support specialist could work with the program staff to support family engagement.</li> </ul>

### Recruitment / Transitions

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not only is EHS free for qualifying families, but families know that it is a high-quality program. As a result, the CCLC partner directors report that offering an EHS classroom has helped attract families to their program.</li> </ul>	
Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CCLC directors say that hub staff are primarily recruiting children from families that are already enrolled in partner programs, rather than recruiting other families from the community. If children are already enrolled in the CCLC, adding them on to their EHS roster does not support the partner’s business development goals.</li> <li>CCLCs that offer a Pre-K classroom, but no HS classes, often lose children transitioning out of EHS to programs that have HS classes. Families are often advised to transition from EHS to a HS program, even if they have to transition out of a partner program, in order to continue to receive similar funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hub staff and CCLC directors should initially set goals on how many children they can recruit from the community. The CCLC director and the hub staff should then work together to meet the center’s business, and the DEHSP’s recruitment, goals.</li> <li>The transition coach’s process should allow directors of CCLC partner programs to present child care options at their center to families transitioning out of EHS. The transition coach’s process should include a meeting with the CCLC director and the family. During the meeting, the director and transition coach should outline the advantages of staying at the partner program. The meeting will also include a discussion of</li> </ul>





- CCLC directors suggest that families are not informed about alternate funding to HS (e.g., child care subsidies). Directors reported that after discussing transition options with families, some families preferred to accept alternate funding to HS to keep their child enrolled in the same partner program for Pre-K. The directors reported that the hub staff did not present these options to families.
- **CCLC directors do not feel informed about the process of transitioning families out of their EHS program.** In some cases, the directors were unaware of which families were leaving the program and which families were staying.
- alternative funding streams for HS that may make it possible for the family to stay at the CCLC partner program. The transition coach will then meet with families at a separate time to discuss options for transitioning to an alternate program. In this process, the transition coach is supporting both the CCLC director and the family in achieving their goals.
- Transition coaches should inform CCLC directors of families’ transition decisions. The directors should, in turn, agree to respect families’ decisions by not approaching them again after they have made an informed decision.

*Conclusions from Child Care Learning Center Partner Director Focus Group*

The CCLC partner director focus group discussed several ways DEHSP supported their centers in 2017. For example, the directors noted that since joining DEHSP, teachers were more likely to support one another’s efforts to improve quality by offering technical assistance or sharing learning materials across classrooms. CCLC directors also agreed that the support from DEHSP has improved the overall quality of their centers.

The focus group also identified several challenges in the partnership. Directors mentioned poor communication with hub staff and lack of information about transition plans for families with children aging out of EHS. DECAL’s Plan of Improvement will address these challenges.

**Child Care Learning Center Partner Family Focus Group**

In an effort to solicit feedback from families with children attending CCLC partner facilities, families who had participated in the program for at least one year at the time of data collection were invited to join a focus group held at Atlanta Technical College on November 21, 2017, prior to the start of the Parent Leadership Organization Meeting. However, only two parents showed up for the meeting, and one parent was also a teacher in the program. It was therefore deemed inappropriate to use the information since it would present a limited view of the families participating and would not provide anonymity. For those reasons, the information gathered during the CCLC family focus group is not shared in this report. The lack of participation indicates that DECAL needs to do a better job of communicating its expectations about family engagement to hub staff.





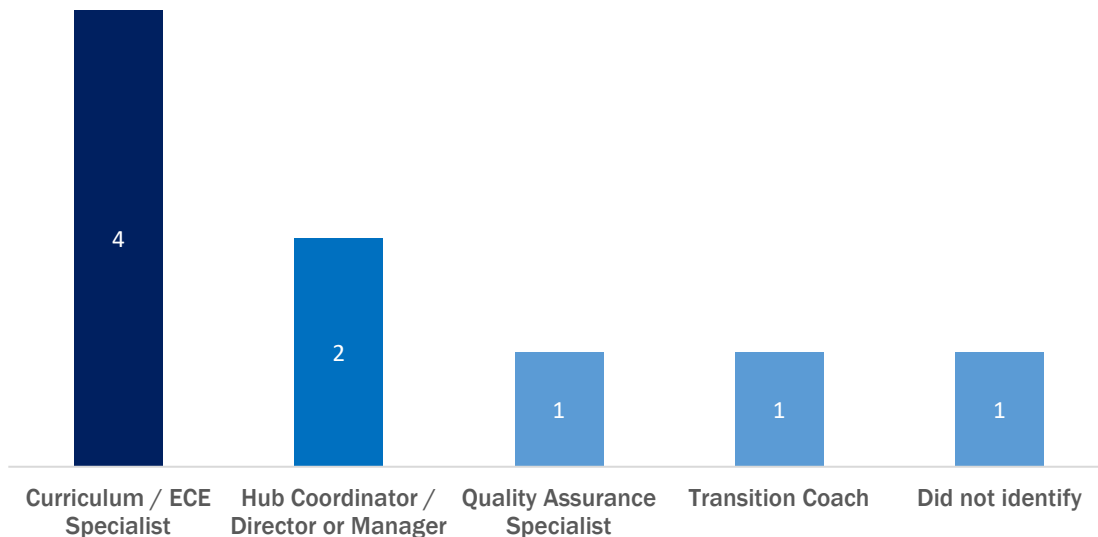
## Section 6: Hub Staff Survey Results

The Hub Staff also completed paper surveys during the 2017 DEHSP Professional Learning Institute. All 30 hub staff members were given a survey and nine of them responded, yielding a 30% response rate. The hub staff response rate was 70% higher in 2016 when an online survey was used, suggesting that hub staff may be more likely to respond to an online survey. The survey collected feedback on the hub staff’s roles and responsibilities, communication with the program staff, and service delivery to families. The results of the hub staff survey are summarized in the section below.

### *Hub Staff’s Roles*

The survey asked respondents to identify their role with the hub. It is important to note that no family service specialists identified their role on the survey. As a result, the responses discussed in this summary may not reflect the opinions of family service specialists. A breakdown of the respondents’ positions within the hubs is displayed below.

**Figure 9. The majority of hub staff respondents were either curriculum/ECE specialists, hub coordinators, directors, or managers.**



### *Communication with Program Staff*

Regular communication between the hub staff and the partner program staffs is essential to delivering high-quality comprehensive services to families. The survey asked hub staff how frequently they communicate with partner program staff. The majority of hub staff reported they communicate with partner programs at least once a week.

**78%** (n=7) of hub staff reported they talk with partner programs at least once a week.



These findings suggest that most hub staff in the sample communicate with program staff on a weekly basis.

### *Providing Comprehensive Services to Families*

An ongoing goal of DEHSP is to support continual improvements in delivering high-quality, comprehensive supports to families. As a result, hub staff members were asked, “What supports would make delivering high-quality comprehensive services to families more effective?” Four (44%) respondents answered the question. A summary of the results is outlined below.

**50%** (n=2) of hub staff mentioned ongoing professional development training and identified training on including children with disabilities as a need.

**25%** (n=1) of hub staff mentioned providing comprehensive services for all families, not just those receiving EHS funding.

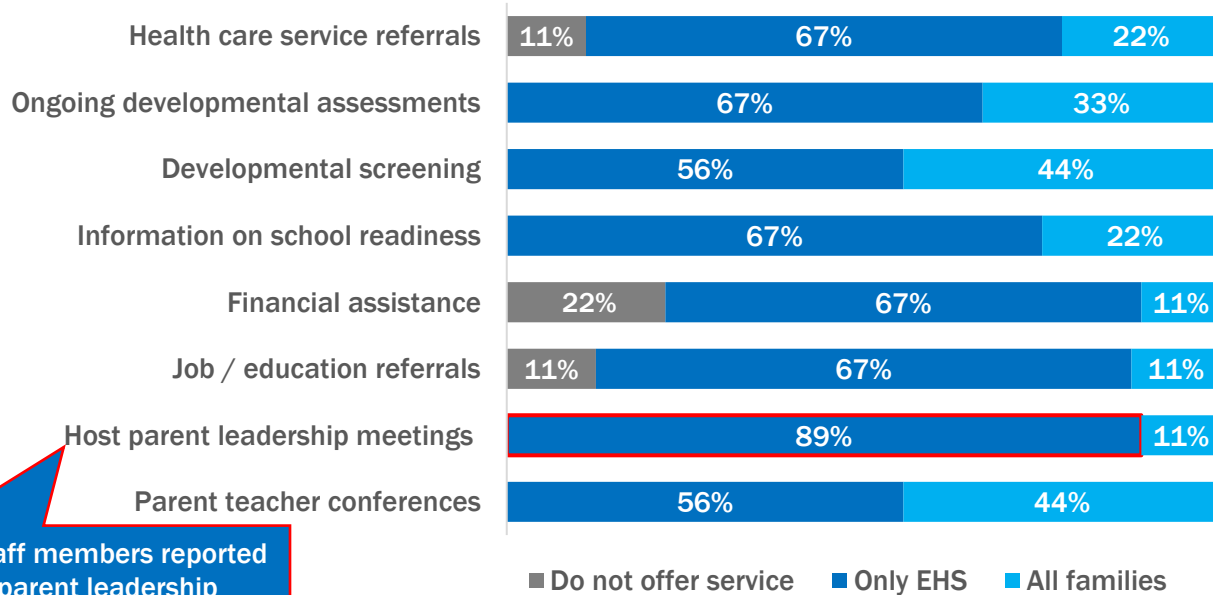
**25%** (n=1) of hub staff mentioned applying EHS safety, health, and education practices to other early childhood education initiatives such as Quality Rated.

### *Comprehensive Services Offered to Families in Early Head Start Only*

Hub staff were asked to identify whether certain comprehensive services are offered only to families receiving EHS at partner programs or to all children in the program. The comprehensive services included health care referrals, ongoing developmental assessments, developmental screening, distribution of information on school readiness, financial assistance, job/education referrals, hosting parent leadership meetings, and parent-teacher conferences. The results are displayed in Figure 10.



**Figure 10. The majority of hub staff services are provided only for families receiving EHS.**



8 hub staff members reported that parent leadership meetings are held only for families receiving EHS.

These findings would suggest that DEHSP has some work to do in expanding the delivery of comprehensive services to all families attending partner programs, not just to those with children in EHS.

*Implementing Parent Leadership Organizations*

Since parent leadership meetings are an essential tool for engaging families and including them in decision-making for the program, the survey asked hub staff how they can support partner programs to create a parent leadership organization. Four respondents (44%) answered the question. One respondent mentioned holding parent leadership meetings regularly; one mentioned including all families — not just those receiving EHS; one mentioned providing incentives to parents to attend the meeting; and one mentioned selecting parents to be representatives for the policy council or parent committee.

The findings suggest that parent leadership organizations can be implemented by holding meetings regularly. In turn, families can be recruited by offering incentives or leadership positions. Hub staff also reported that including all families with children enrolled in partner programs, not just those in EHS, may be an important component of successfully implementing a parent leadership organization. If all families are allowed to participate in partner provider activities, instead of just families in EHS, the organization may be able to engage more parents in recruitment and other efforts.







*Connection to and Support from DEHSP*

When hub staff were asked if they agreed with the two statements concerning a connection to the goals of DEHSP and whether they felt supported by DEHSP in their hub roles, the majority of respondents agreed. However the findings indicated that curriculum specialists need additional supports.

**67%** (n=6) of hub staff agreed that they felt **connected** to the goals of DEHSP.



**78%** (n=7) of hub staff agreed that they felt **supported** by DEHSP.



*Conclusions from Hub Staff Surveys*

Although these findings are encouraging, there is room for improvement to ensure that all members of the hub staff feel connected to and supported by DEHSP. While most hub staff members feel supported, DEHSP should make it a priority to understand how to support curriculum specialists better.





## Section 7: Conclusions and Next Steps

The overall results from the 2017 Self-Assessment are positive. First, the majority of partners in DEHSP report feeling connected to the goals of DEHSP and supported by DEHSP to perform their roles in delivering comprehensive services to children and families. Second, all FCCLH partners stated that all or almost all children were developmentally on track in all five domains, and more than half of the teachers reported that all or almost all of their children were developmentally on track in four out of five domains. The one domain scoring lower, communication, language, and literacy, was also an area for which teachers requested additional training. To date, bilingual curriculum specialists have installed systems and supports for all providers to ensure that language modeling occurs during everyday activities. However, DECAL continues to support the theory that children learn best in their primary language. The fact that the CCLC partner teachers recognize children’s current abilities and want to find ways to improve instruction to meet the children’s needs is encouraging. CCLC partner directors report that the positive impacts of DEHSP are influencing the way non-EHS classrooms are operating. Finally, 78% of the hub staff report communicating with partnering programs at least once a week.

While the majority of self-assessment results are positive, the less-than-positive findings offer DECAL insights into ways that DEHSP and its program systems and processes can be improved. The challenges identified in the self-assessment support the notion that delivering EHS services is more complex than delivering services in regular child care. Despite these challenges, DEHSP is committed to finding innovative ways to deliver better support to partners. Many of the improvements center on a clarification of partners’ responsibilities and roles. Further information is outlined in the Plan of Improvement below.

Figure 11. DECAL’s Plan of Improvement for FCCLH Partners





Figure 12. DECAL's Plan of Improvement for Teachers



Figure 13. DECAL's Plan of Improvement for CCLC Directors and Hub Staff



Overall, DEHSP self-assessment results suggest that partner child care providers and hub staff are proud of their work in 2017. DECAL looks forward to updating the self-assessment to include ways DEHSP is currently serving families and ways that the partnership can improve its delivery of services. The DEHSP would like to thank all partners who contributed to the 2017 Self-Assessment.



## Conclusion and Next Steps



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