

CROSS AGENCY CHILD COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Preschool
Development
Grant
Birth through Five

ISSUE NO 2 | SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER - 2020 | VOLUME 1

IN THIS EDITION:



IMPROVING PERMANENCY OUTCOMES: ADOPTION CAFÉS

Georgia DFCS recognizes that expediting permanency for children ages 0–5 has a positive impact on their overall well-being. Therefore, focus for improving outcomes continues to be addressed.

In federal fiscal year 2019 a committee consisting of members from the Education and Training Unit, Policy Unit, Georgia SHINES, Well-Being-0–5 Unit and Practice and Program Guidance, Adoption, Reunification and Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Units met to discuss monitoring and improving outcomes for children under 5 in care. As of February 2020, 39.2% of children in care were 5 and under and 60.8% of children in care were 6 and over.

In FFY 2020, Regional Adoption Café 24s were used as the forum to share and gather information regarding permanency for the 0–5 population and the urgency for the achievement of permanency. In addition, reference guides were developed for staff to guide conversations with birth parents and foster parents during visits. For more information contact **Colleen Mousinho**, Senior Director of Practice and Program Guidance, at colleen.mousinho@dhs.ga.gov.

REGIONAL ADOPTION CAFÉS

DFCS forms a committee that hosts adoption cafes to educate families about the importance of birth to five permanency.

TRAUMA-INFORMED COMMUNITIES

Since September 2019, six communities have been trained by DECAL's Early Learning Leadership Collaboratives to be more trauma responsive.

CHILDHOOD RESILIENCE SUMMIT

Need more training in trauma-informed approaches? This virtual summit will be offered in November and December.

NEW LICENSING REPORTS

Learn more about the process DECAL is using to create more family-friendly licensing reports!

EARLY LEARNING LEADERSHIP COLLABORATIVES TRAIN COMMUNITIES

In September of 2019, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) announced six Georgia communities that were selected to become the first *Early Learning Leadership Collaboratives* (ELLC). Funded by the Preschool Development Grant (PDG), the priority of the ELLCs is to build an effective network of local cross-sector leaders who are committed to championing the needs of children and families in their communities. Each ELLC was comprised of eight to ten community stakeholders from various organizations, such as the local school system, Department of Public Health (i.e., Babies Can't Wait, Home Visiting Program), Division of Family and Children Services, local child care programs, Georgia's Pre-K Program, Head Start and/or Early Head Start, local law enforcement, Georgia Family Connection Partnership, and DECAL's regional Community Partnership Coordinators.

DECAL partnered with Georgia State University (GSU) Child Welfare Training Collaborative to provide hands-on community-based trainings with each of the six ELLCs in their communities. Each ELLC team participated in trauma-informed care training as well as training to support the development of a "Building a Response to Trauma" action plan. One of the key strategies of this initiative was to design and implement a project from these two trainings and cohesively become a trauma responsive community.

Looking ahead, the EELCs will have the opportunity to continue their work by highlighting community-based trauma informed practices unique to their own community at our virtual trauma conference scheduled later this year. For more information contact **Jill O'Meara**, *Early Education Community Partnership Manager*, at Jill.omeara@decals.ga.gov.



COLLABORATING FOR CHILDHOOD RESILIENCE VIRTUAL SUMMIT

As part of the work being done within the Preschool Development Grant, DECAL is partnering with the Georgia State University School of Social Work Professional Excellence Program for an upcoming summit, **Collaborating for Childhood Resilience in Early Learning Communities: 2020 Virtual Summit**. The summit will be offered twice: Saturday, November 21 and Saturday, December 5. The summit will bring together members of the early care and learning network for a full-day of learning to focus on the unique needs of children who have experienced the trauma of adverse childhood experiences. Participants will learn about trauma-informed approaches for supporting young children and their families.

The summit features presentations and workshops from trauma-informed education experts Dr. Malissa Sadin and Josh McNeill, workshops on managing secondary traumatic stress and helping children build resilience, and an action planning session to prepare attendees with next steps after the summit. Representatives from the Early Learning Leadership Collaboratives will be on hand to share their work related to improving trauma responsiveness in their communities. This is a unique opportunity to participate in a dynamic virtual training opportunity, network with other professionals from the early care and learning network, and exchange ideas with peers and colleagues.

The summit is free and portions of the summit are approved for Bright from the Start credits. Registration details and the full conference program will be distributed in October. For questions about the summit, contact **Christi Moore**, *Director of Professional Learning*, at Christi.Moore@decalfga.gov.



FAMILY-FRIENDLY LICENSING REPORTS

Beginning in late 2019, the Georgia Department for Early Care and Learning (DECAL) worked with the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS) and Dracos~Lemming Consulting to develop and test an easily understood and useful dashboard for parents to better understand and access the information collected through child care inspections.

This project consisted of three phases: family and provider research, messaging development, and dashboard design. In the first phase of the project, DECAL, GEEARS, and Dracos~Lemming Consulting conducted multiple focus groups of parents with young children to research their understanding of DECAL's licensing process, where licensing and Quality Rated fit into their child care decision-making process, and the most critical content to communicate via an online licensing report.

Next, in the messaging development phase of the project, DECAL, GEEARS, and Dracos~Lemming Consulting developed parent-friendly definitions and descriptions of key words (e.g., licensing report) for the future dashboard and, based on parental and provider feedback, Dracos~Lemming Consulting created a mockup of the dashboard. Finally, Dracos~Lemming Consulting surveyed Georgia parents with young children to learn what they liked and disliked most about the mockup of the dashboard and test the messaging developed in phase 2 to ensure clarity. The mockup of the dashboard was met with positive feedback, with respondents liking the graphical elements of the design the most. Over 95% of respondents understood each definition/description.

The feedback from survey respondents will be used to fine tune the dashboard and definitions as DECAL moves forward in implementing the parent-friendly dashboard. Our hope is that creating a more graphical interface with parent-friendly language will increase the reports usefulness and help parents make more informed child care choices.

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 <https://www.decals.ga.gov/BftS/PreschoolDevelopmentGrant.aspx>

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UPCOMING EVENTS

10/20

CACC Strategic
Planning Meeting

