DECAL PDG B-5 DATA SUBGROUP COMMITTEE MEETING
SUMMARY OF THEMES

INTRODUCTION

On October 17, 2019, the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (Institute of Government) assisted the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) in facilitating a needs assessment committee meeting for the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5).

The needs assessment committee was created to assist in the completion of the needs assessment activity for the PDG B-5 grant. The needs assessment will be used to shape and focus a strategic plan as part of the PDG B-5 grant activities. There are eleven domains in the needs assessment that need to be addressed to fulfill PDGB-5 grant requirements.

LIST OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT DOMAINS

1. Definitions
2. Focal populations
3. Data on children served or awaiting service
4. Quality and availability of early childhood care and education (ECCE)
5. Data and research gaps
6. Quality and availability of programs and supports
7. Measurable indicators of progress
8. Early childhood care and education facility issues
9. Barriers to funding and provision of ECCE supports
10. Transition supports and gaps
11. Interagency collaboration

The needs assessment subgroup committee was split into two rooms (red and blue) for morning and afternoon sessions to discuss focal populations, number of children served, quality and availability of early childhood care and education (ECCE), quality and availability of programs and supports, system integration, transition supports, and interagency collaboration (e.g. domains 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, and 11).

MORNING SESSION

For the morning session, each room was equipped with two facilitators and three note takers for discussion of quality and availability of ECCE and quality and availability of programs and supports (e.g. domains 4 and 6).

Each group discussed roses (strengths), buds (opportunities), and thorns (weaknesses) of domains 4 and 6 concerning the following topic areas:

- Early care and education
- Supports for focal populations
- Early intervention services
- Supports for the workforce

RED ROOM CONCLUSIONS

The red room was facilitated by Susan Adams and Diane Early from Child Trends. Melinda Moore, Brian Simmons, and Meghan Armstrong from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government took notes. Tables 1-4 below summarizes the most common roses, buds, and thorns for domains 4 and 6.

Table 1. *Early care and education*

Roses	Buds	Thorns
Georgia's Pre-K; full day care, pay increases for teachers	Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language-Rich Environments (LITTLE) Project	General funding to the ECCE system
Quality Rated child care	2-Generation approach to ECCE	Data about B-5 outcomes are difficult to collect
Special education inclusion programs	Public schools serving 3 year olds	Collaboration between and across agencies
Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS)	Blending funding types to expand services	Lack of training in bias awareness
Community level collaboration	Trauma-informed care training	Misaligned developmental approaches (Tier 1 Instruction) and practices for the B-5 population
Philanthropic and development grant funders are diverse	Region-based family engagement	Availability of space in programs
	CACDS utilization; 2020 goal	

Table 2. *Supports for focal populations*

Roses	Buds	Thorns
Subsidies for childcare align with focal populations	Opportunity for better data on who are accessing services	Lack of training and awareness surrounding children with disabilities and behavioral problems
McKinney-Vento act gives a cohesive working definition of homelessness	Funding opportunities for the 3 and under population	Suspensions and expulsions in the B-5 population
Early Head Start focus on PDG B-5 vulnerable populations	Future investment in health advisory boards	Affordability of quality ECCE for families
Georgia's Pre-K Summer Transition Program	Potential to build an online shared resource site specific to vulnerable populations	Program eligibility evaluation varies between programs and services
(Childcare and Parent Services) CAPS Helplines	Statewide collaboration and meetings across agencies and programs	English-only website and printed materials
Single point of entry to early intervention through Children First	CAPS training family support staff in family-centered coaching	Limited access to ECCE in rural areas
$170 million grant from federal Department of Education for B-12 literary focus		No clear system or way to know how to refer families in need of services who have children with disabilities
Community-based literacy grants		Measurement and identification of homeless children
Summer meal program		Limited infant/toddler care statewide
Focus on positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS)		Lack of collaboration and alignment across programs and services
Research opportunities with the Head Start health surveys		Low family engagement and understanding of high-quality care

Table 3. *Early intervention services*

These services are generally provided to the B-3 population.

Roses	Buds	Thorns
DECAL special education inclusion services and behavioral support helpline	Expansion of Georgia preschool programs	Lack of understanding the importance of early intervention services
Georgia Parent Infant Network for Educational Services (PINES)	CAPS family support consumer education regarding developmental assessments	Difficulty navigating services
Watch Me Grow CDC developmental milestone program	Workforce training of preservice teachers	Lack of providers
Preschool classes for children experiencing deafness and blindness	Future resources around child nutrition for families	Limited availability of home visiting
Preschool special education beginning at 3 years of age	Provision for parent support before children enter into foster care/state custody	Restrictive environments that are not inclusive for children with disabilities
Telehealth for public health intervention in rural areas; Babies Can't Wait therapeutic intervention		Lack of intervention in pregnancy support and prenatal care
National programs with mental health initiatives are reaching Georgia		Cost and funding of early intervention programs
Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS) toddler mental health task force		Lack of data concerning children who do not receive services

Table 4. *Supports for the workforce*

Roses	Buds	Thorns
DECAL scholars program	Raise credentials efforts	Teacher retention and compensation
Quality Rated programs require staff with more professional development training	Increase B-5 credentials/diplomas	Low prestige
Behavioral support helpline	Pre-K to K-12 equitable pay	Lack of support from public school administrators for the B-5 programs in their schools and communities
Peer coaches from the LITTLE Project	Workforce research opportunities	Lack of extension of Pre-K teacher of the year program to private programs
Child Development Associate (CDA) certification available at Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG)	Business support training for private providers	Lack of public awareness on the cost of quality care ECCE
Professional Development System (PDS); state group training system	TCSG-Georgia State University bridge program from CDA to Bachelor's degree	Pre-K is not a part of the PDS training system
Pre-K teacher of the year program	Peer support	
DECAL professional development unit		

BLUE ROOM CONCLUSIONS

The blue room was facilitated Bentley Ponder and Nadia Hall from Child Trends. Theresa Wright, Jennifer Inglett-Hendershot, and Katie Davis from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government took notes. Tables 5-7 below table summarize the most common roses, buds, and thorns for domains 4 and 6.

Table 5. *Early care and education/Early intervention services*

The group in the blue room merged the two categories (early care and education and early intervention services) in their discussion during the roses, buds, and thorns activity.

Roses	Buds	Thorns
Availability of services through Early Head Start and Head Start programs	Opportunity for public schools to enter the ECCE space	Pre-K programs that are not full day
Georgia's Pre-K full day program	Childcare partnerships; especially in rural areas	Lack of family knowledge concerning Quality Rated
Quality Rated policy focus	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) ask the K-12 system to reach out and collaborate with ECCE programs serving children with disabilities	True cost of Quality Rated programs unknown
Statewide partnerships	PDG B-5 grant	3-Star system of Quality Rated difficult to explain
Policymakers are talking about ECCE	Early Education Empowerment Zones (E3 Zones)	Workforce turnover
Quality Rated program	TCSG programs that prepare people for the B-5 workforce	Decrease in early care learning centers
GEEARS map		Transportation
Centralized agency at state-level for certification/Quality Rated		Lack of nontraditional hours of care
Early intervention services at Early Head Start and Head Start programs		Lack of research about childcare centers
Pre-K is a norm		
Increase in quality and access of ECCE programs		

Table 6. *Supports for focal populations*

Roses	Buds	Thorns
Summer transition program	Project LITTLE	Lack of family awareness of available services
Many programs are inclusive to vulnerable populations and adjusting supports to meet needs	Increase in reimbursement rates for CAPS services	Lack of year-round services
Great collaborative relationships between agencies and programs	Increased collaboration between Babies Can't Wait and Children First	Lack of infant and toddler care
Increased awareness of existing programs	ECCE teachers are a part of early intervention teams	Lack of resources for undocumented children
Funding for English Language Learners (ELL) and trauma-informed care	TCSG and DECAL collaboration	Too much pressure on parents to advocate for children
DFCS refers to Quality Rated care when available	Federal laws are beginning to address these populations directly	Many vulnerable families fall through system gaps/cracks
Continuum of care efforts across programs for families	Creation of an easily accessible web page for families to understand/access services	Perceived delay of services
Adult education supports for low literacy		Definition of poverty is too narrow
Project LITTLE		Unregulated family childcare
Behavioral support specialists		Lack of support for grandparents raising grandchildren
New Horizons program through Department of Public Health		CAPS process difficult for transient families, grandparents raising grandchildren, etc.

Table 7. *Supports for the workforce*

Roses	Buds	Thorns
Increased pay in base pay for Pre-K teachers	ECCE teachers can do a lot with little funds	Pre-K assistant pay
DECAL scholars program	Opportunity to offer business development training to private centers	Lack of good research surrounding workforce development
Annual training	Educate policymakers about real cost of ECCE	Morale
B-5 teacher training programs	Parents want information from teachers about development and education	Workforce are often eligible for the same supports that vulnerable populations need
Background checks are subsidized	Census count	Lack of technology use and savvy
DECAL's professional learning division	Next election cycle may provide more press	Turnover rates
State associations that provide professional development	Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) and Department of Education (DOE) Early Childhood Pathway	Role expectations exceed professional training

AFTERNOON SESSION

For the afternoon session, each room was equipped with three facilitators and three note takers for data updates and discussion of focal populations, number of children served, barriers to funding and provision of high quality ECCE, system integration and interagency collaboration, and transition supports and gaps (e.g. domains 2, 3, 9, 11, and 10). Participants sat at three separate tables and received one-page documents with the domains' definitions and the state's response to the domain within the PDG B-5 grant.

Each group addressed the following questions:

- Is the information consistent with what you know about these domains?
- Is there additional data and/or research in this area that has been overlooked?
- What are the gaps in Georgia's current policies around these domains?
- Do you have recommendations (or current promising practices) to improve data surrounding these domains?

The red room was facilitated by Deputy Commissioner Adams, Clayton Bassett, and Rob O'Callaghan from DECAL. Melinda Moore, Brian Simmons, and Meghan Armstrong from the Institute of Government took notes of the activity and discussion.

DOMAINS 2 & 3: FOCAL POPULATIONS AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVED

Rob O'Callaghan facilitated discussion with participants concerning focal populations and number of children served (e.g. domains 2 and 3). Generally, participants agreed that most of the data presented was accurate with what they knew from their own programs and data. Concerns were presented about accuracy with the Head Start and Babies Can't Wait program enrollment data and counts of the B-5 population used at the state level for funding decisions. Participants expressed they would like to see Supplemental Special Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and foster care data added into the Cross Agency Child Data System (CACDS). Other data that were not present that participants stated might be useful includes: licensed program capacities, homeless counts, poverty counts, family income, and parent education level. Participants identified gaps in policy concerning data sharing agreements, proxy use, nutrition-based educational standards and practices, and data collection practices. Recommendations included adding heath indicators to population data, working with Children First to receive birth county information about foster children to attain an aggregate count these children in services, and creating funding opportunities for programs that serve low-income families to include nutrition education.

DOMAINS 9 & 11: BARRIERS TO FUNDING AND SERVICES AND SYSTEM INTEGRATION

Clayton Bassett facilitated discussion with participants concerning barriers to funding and services and system integration (e.g. domains 9 and 11). Participants agreed that the information presented about these domains represented their experience with barriers to funding and services and system integration. Participants noted that data are missing from the CACDS system from many programs that would assist in ECCE system integration. Recommendations included changing forms and websites to be more user-friendly for parents, creation of tax credits for child care to go directly to centers rather than families to then disperse to centers, blended funding streams directed towards capacity and salary for public special education ECCE programs, creation of a centralized registration system for families, and revision of actual cost for services.

DOMAIN 10: TRANSITION SUPPORTS AND GAPS

Deputy Commissioner Susan Adams facilitated discussion with participants concerning transition supports and gaps (e.g. domain 10). Participants found that the data presented about this domain was consistent with their knowledge of transition supports and gaps in Georgia. Additional data and research included: data showing the benefits of no transitions between Pre-K and Kindergarten when attending Pre-K in the same location as the K-5 school, and family income data and homelessness status that inform transition plans. Recommendations from participants for domain 10 include funding public services for 3 year olds, localized ECCE to K-12 transition coaches, building a collaborative and easily accessible centralized data system, implementing policy requiring programs to include transition planning, and capturing data about children who do not attend ECCE programs.

BLUE ROOM CONCLUSIONS

The blue room was facilitated by Deputy Commissioner Bentley Ponder and Laura Wagner from DECAL and Nadia Hall from Child Trends. Theresa Wright, Jennifer Inglett-Hendershot, and Katie Davis from the Institute of Government took notes of the activity and discussion.

DOMAINS 2 & 3: FOCAL POPULATIONS AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVED

Nadia Hall facilitated discussion with participants concerning focal populations and number of children served (e.g. domains 2 and 3). Participants found the data presented matched with their perceptions, but also stated that the number of students with disabilities served statewide to be too low. A data inventory survey was suggested to assist in capturing missing and overlooked data like TANF, SNAP, homelessness status, disability status, and ELL status. Recommendations include: amending data collection policies across programs to be consistent, definitions of poverty being unified, attaining WIC information, having a centralized registration system for services, and using the Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS) data to capture a more accurate count of infants and toddlers in Georgia.

DOMAINS 9 & 11: BARRIERS TO FUNDING AND SERVICES AND SYSTEM INTEGRATION

Laura Wagner facilitated discussion with participants concerning barriers to funding and services and system integration (e.g. domains 9 and 11). Participants found the information presented to be consistent with what they found in their own agencies. Participants suggested including more information about "braided" funding sources and the fees associated with funding staff and services, Get Georgia Reading initiatives, Georgia's Interagency Collaboration Council, 2-generational approach used in addressing families, and DECAL's regional offices around the

state. Identified policy gaps include more access to CAPS staff at public assistance, TANF, and public health offices, increasing the Public Assistance System to be a 24-hour system, integration of data and registration systems, and strengthening connections between programs and agencies so that referrals can be made easily to families, expansion of family knowledge and access to available programs. Participants recommended the following: using TANF funds for children under 5, using WIC as an access point for ECCE program information, creation of a single registration system for services, continue to build into the CACDS with additional data, and clearer explanation of the 3-start Quality Rated system for families.

DOMAIN 10: TRANSITION SUPPORTS AND GAPS

Bentley Ponder facilitated discussion with participants concerning transition supports and gaps (e.g. domain 10). Participants found that the information presented to them was consistent with what they understood, but pointed out that there was no data concerning children not being served in ECCE programs to compare the known information. Additional data that participants would like to access to track transition progress includes: Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), aftercare services, services accessed prior to Pre-K and Kindergarten, family income, and DOE test scores/outcome for longitudinal analysis of ECCE outcomes. Policy decisions recommended includes: streamlining of data definitions, systems, and collection methods, clearer eligibility requirements for qualification of services across programs, and creation of an integrated data system. Recommendations for the improvement of data and services surrounding transition supports and gaps included: data collection on service referral, accessing services, and outcomes, creating data sharing agreements with DFCS to obtain more information about foster children, and using a unique identifier to track long-term data about transitions.