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## **Quality Progress Report (QPR)**

### **For**

## **Georgia**

### **FFY 2024**

***QPR Status: Accepted as of 2025-04-01 15:52:49 GMT***

The Quality Progress Report (QPR) collects information from states and territories (hereafter referred to as lead agencies) to describe investments to improve the quality of care available for children from birth to age 13. This report meets the requirements in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 for lead agencies to submit an annual report that describes how quality funds were expended, including the activities funded and the measures used to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services.

For purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions of applicable laws printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text. The lead agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to the applicable laws regardless of these modifications.

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

## **QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT**

The Quality Progress Report (QPR) collects information from lead agencies to describe investments to improve the quality of care available for children from birth to age 13. This report meets the requirements in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 for lead agencies to submit an annual report that describes how quality funds were expended, including the activities funded and the measures used to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services. Lead agencies are also required to report on their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) quality improvement investments through the CCDF Plan, which collects information on the proposed quality activities for a three-year period; and through the ACF-696, which collects quarterly expenditure data on quality activities.

The annual data provided by the QPR will be used to describe how lead agencies are spending a significant investment per year to key stakeholders, including Congress, federal, state and territory administrators, providers, parents, and the public.

**Specifically, this report will be used to:**

- Ensure accountability and transparency for the use of CCDF quality funds, including a set-aside for quality infant and toddler care and activities funded by American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act
- Track progress toward meeting state- and territory-set indicators and benchmarks for improvement of child care quality based on goals and activities described in CCDF Plans; and
- Understand efforts in progress towards all child care settings meeting the developmental needs of children
- Inform federal technical assistance efforts and decisions regarding strategic use of quality funds.

**What Period Must Be Included:** All sections of this report cover the federal fiscal year activities (October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024), unless otherwise stated. Data should reflect the cumulative totals for the fiscal year being reported, unless otherwise stated.

**What Data Should Lead Agencies Use:** Lead agencies may use data collected by other government and nongovernment agencies (e.g., CCR&R agencies or other TA providers) in addition to their own data as appropriate. We recognize that lead agencies may not have all of the data requested initially but expect progress towards increased data capacity. The scope of this report covers quality improvement activities funded at least in part by CCDF in support of CCDF activities. Lead agencies must describe their progress in meeting their stated goals for improving the quality of child care as reported in their FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

**How is the QPR Organized?**

The first section of the QPR gathers basic data on the population of providers in the state or territory and goals for quality improvement and glossary of relevant terms. The rest of the report is organized according to the ten authorized uses of quality funds specified in the CCDBG Act of 2014:

- 1) Support the training and professional development of the child care workforce
- 2) Improve the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines
- 3) Develop, implement, or enhance a quality rating improvement system for child care providers
- 4) Improve the supply and quality of child care for infants and toddlers
- 5) Establish or expand a lead agency wide system of child care resource and referral services
- 6) Support compliance with lead agency requirements for licensing, inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety
- 7) Evaluate the quality of child care programs in the state or territory, including how programs positively impact children
- 8) Support providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation
- 9) Support the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development
- 10) Other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry.

The Office of Child Care (OCC) recognizes that quality funds may have been used to address the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. These activities should be reflected in the relevant sections of the QPR.

### **When is the QPR Due to ACF?**

The QPR will be due to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) by the designated lead agency no later than December 31, 2024.

### **Glossary of Terms**

The following terms are used throughout the QPR. These definitions can also be found in section 98.2 in the CCDBG Act of 2014. For any term not defined, please use the lead agency definition of terms to complete the QPR.

***Center-based child care provider*** means a provider licensed or otherwise authorized to provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a non-residential setting, unless in

care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work. Associated terms include "child care centers" and "center-based programs."

**Director** means a person who has primary responsibility for the daily operations and management for a child care provider, which may include a family child care provider, and which may serve children from birth to kindergarten entry and children in school-age child care.

**Family child care provider** means one or more individuals who provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a private residence other than the child's residence, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work. Associated terms include "family child care homes."

**In-home child care provider** means an individual who provides child care services in the child's own home.

**License-exempt** means facilities that are not required to meet the definition of a facility required to meet the CCDF section 98.2 definition of "licensing or regulatory requirements." Associated terms include "legally exempt" and "legally operating without regulation."

**Licensed** means a facility required by the state to meet the CCDF section 98.2 definition of "licensing or regulatory requirements," which explains that the facility meets "requirements necessary for a provider to legally provide child care services in a state of locality, including registration requirements established under state, local or tribal law."

**Programs** refer generically to all activities under the CCDF, including child care services and other activities pursuant to §98.50 as well as quality activities pursuant to §98.43.

**Provider** means the entity providing child care services.

**Staffed family child care (FCC) networks** are programs with paid staff that offer a menu of ongoing services and resources to affiliated FCC educators. Network services may include individual supports (for example, visits to child care homes, coaching, consultation, warmlines, substitute pools, shared services, licensing TA, mental health services) and group supports (for example, training workshops, facilitated peer support groups).

**Teacher** means a lead teacher, teacher, teacher assistant or teacher aide who is employed by a child care provider for compensation on a regular basis, or a family child care provider, and whose responsibilities and activities are to organize, guide and implement activities in a group or individual basis, or to assist a teacher or lead teacher in such activities, to further the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children from birth to kindergarten entry and children in school-age child care.

## 1) Overview

*To gain an understanding of the availability of child care in the state or territory, please provide the following information on the total number of child care providers.*

### 1.1 State or Territory Child Care Provider Population

#### 1.1.1 Total Number of Licensed Providers:

Enter the total number of licensed child care providers that operated in the state or territory as of September 30, 2024. These counts should include all licensed child care providers, not just those serving children receiving CCDF subsidies.

☒ Licensed center-based programs **3238**

☐ Unable to provide number. Indicate reason:

**Additional clarification: Based on most recent submission of the FY 2023 ACF-800 data there were 2336 licensed center-based programs receiving CCDF funding. Please report the number of ALL licensed center-based programs operating in the state here, regardless of receipt of CCDF funding.**

☒ Licensed family child care homes **1134**

☐ Unable to provide number. Indicate reason:

**Additional clarification: Based on most recent submission of the FY 2023 ACF-800 data there were 488 licensed family child care homes receiving CCDF funding. Please report the number of ALL licensed family child care homes operating in the state here, regardless of receipt of CCDF funding.**

## 2) Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce

Goal: *Ensure the lead agency's professional development systems or framework provides initial and ongoing professional development and education that result in a stable child care workforce with the competencies and skills to support all domains of child development.*

### 2.1 Lead Agency Progression of Professional Development

#### 2.1.1 Professional Development Registry:

Did the lead agency use a workforce registry or professional development registry to track progression of professional development during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

☒ Yes. If yes, describe: **The Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS) serves as the state's workforce registry and training registration system. GaPDS provides the workforce with a single web-based application to easily register for state approved trainings while also maintaining their credential and workplace information. Credentials, degrees, and training certificates entered in GaPDS are reviewed and verified by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) for accuracy and alignment with state early childhood requirements. PSC is also the state agency that oversees and monitors certification for Georgia's K-12 teachers.**

☐ No. If no, what alternative does the lead agency use to track the progression of professional development for teachers/providers serving children who receive CCDF subsidy? Describe:

#### 2.1.2 Participation in Professional Development Registry:

Are any teachers/providers required to participate?

☒ Yes. If yes, describe: **Participation in the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS) is not required for all early childhood educators in Georgia; however, individuals participating in key Lead Agency initiatives must have active GaPDS profiles. These key initiatives include: Quality Rated, Georgia's QRIS; DECAL Scholars, the agency's scholarships and incentives program for individuals pursuing degrees and credentials in early childhood education; individuals accessing free trainings offered by agency staff and partners (for registration purposes); and Georgia's Pre-K Program lead and assistant teachers.**

☐ No. If no, describe:

#### 2.1.3 Number of Participants in Professional Development Registry:

Total number of participants in the registry as of September 30, 2024 **200,244**

#### **2.1.4 Spending - Professional Development Registry:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☒ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☐ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

## **2.2 Workforce Development**

### **2.2.1 Professional Development and Career Pathways Support:**

How did the lead agency help teachers/providers progress in their education, professional development, and/or career pathway between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024 (check all that apply)? If selected, how many staff received each type of support?

☒ Scholarships (for formal education institutions) **2,321**

☒ Financial bonus/wage supplements tied to education levels **1,443**

☒ Career advisors, mentors, coaches, or consultants **355**

☐ Reimbursement for training

☐ Loans

☐ Substitutes, leave (paid or unpaid) for professional development

☒ Other. Describe: **Educators received stipends for participating in the following professional development/training programs: inclusion and Pyramid trainings (440); infant/toddler literacy trainings (127); business practices trainings (100).**

☐ N/A. Describe:

### **2.2.2 Spending - Professional Development and Career Pathways Support:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☒ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☒ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

## **2.3 Child Care Provider Qualifications**

### **2.3.1 Number of Licensed Child Care Programs Qualifications:**

Total number of staff in licensed child care programs with the following qualification levels as of September 30, 2024:

☒ Child Development Associate (CDA) **2,027**

☒ Associate's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **2,340**

☒ Bachelor's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **4,278**

☒ State child care credential **6,312**

☒ State infant/toddler credential **56**

☐ Unable to report this data. Indicate reason:

### **2.3.2 Number of Licensed CCDF Child Care Programs Qualifications:**

Total number of staff in licensed CCDF child care programs with the following qualification levels as of September 30, 2024:

☒ Child Development Associate (CDA) **1,586**

☒ Associate's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **1,395**



☒ Bachelor's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **2,595**

☒ State child care credential **4,377**

☒ State infant/toddler credential **42**

☐ Unable to report this data. Indicate reason:

## **2.4 Technical Assistance for Professional Development**

### **2.4.1 Technical Assistance Topics:**

Technical assistance on the following topics is available to providers as part of the lead agency's professional development system (can be part of QRIS or other system that provides professional development to child care providers):

☒ Business Practices

☒ Mental health for children

☒ Emergency Preparedness Planning

☒ Other. Describe other technical assistance available to providers as part of the professional development system: **During the Pre-K Summer Transition Program, DECAL contracts with the Rollins Center for Language and Literacy to provide ongoing technical assistance (TA) to Pre-K teachers to support children who are multilingual learners. A part of the LITTLE (Lifting Infants and Toddlers Through Language-rich Environments) grant, TA was provided to teachers on responsive caregiving and language and literacy development. Additionally, teachers in child care centers and family child care providers participating in the Quality Rated Language and Literacy programs received TA on supporting language and literacy development. The Inclusion and Behavior Support program provided technical assistance to child care providers on teaching practices that support social emotional development and the inclusion of children with disabilities.**

### **2.4.2 Spending - Technical Assistance for Professional Development:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☒ CCDF quality funds

☒ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☒ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

## 2.5 Spending – Training and Professional Development

### 2.5.1 Spending – Training and Professional Development:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to support the training and professional development of the child care workforce during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? **\$33639344**

☐ Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

## 2.6 Progress Update

### 2.6.1 Progress Update – Training and Professional Development:

Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 6.3.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

**The Lead Agency has a robust Research and Policy Analysis Team that routinely oversees and conducts programmatic and system-level evaluations of early learning in the state. Currently, Georgia's primary mechanism for measuring quality is Quality Rated, the state's quality rating and improvement system. Programs are assigned a one-, two-, or three-star rating based on five standards submitted via an electronic portfolio and an independent observation using the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) family of instruments.**

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 6.3.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **Access to quality training is measured through the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS), the state's workforce registry and training registration system. GaPDS also includes the Georgia Training Approval (GTA) system, the state's mechanism for ensuring the quality of trainings offered to the workforce. In addition to**

ensuring the quality of trainings offered, GTA staff also review trainer qualifications and experience to ensure highly qualified, knowledgeable trainers are offering professional development opportunities across the state. In federal fiscal year 2024, GTA staff reviewed 192 trainer applications, with 166 approved to offer trainings in Georgia. Similarly, during the reporting period, 1,351 trainings were submitted for review by GTA staff, of which 1,000 were approved. In addition to individual trainers, the GTA system approves training organizations, known as Approved Sponsor Organizations (ASO), to offer trainings in Georgia. During the reporting period, 95 ASO applications were submitted, with 78 approved. Additionally, ASOs submitted 653 training applications, with 614 approved. All total, including those approved in previous fiscal years, GTA has 501 approved trainers and 73 approved ASOs offering professional development in Georgia. These approved trainers and ASOs offer 8,468 approved, high-quality trainings for Georgia's ECE workforce. The bulk of ASO trainings are offered by child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs), each of which maintains approved ASO status with GTA. As part of their support for programs going through Quality Rated, CCR&Rs provide a variety of trainings, including child development, understanding quality instruction, understanding the Environment Rating Scales, and supporting Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) post rating. To further ensure access to high-quality trainings in Georgia, GaPDS includes online trainings through the Online Library Learning Initiative (OLLI). OLLI currently hosts 66 courses for internal DECAL staff as well as for members of the workforce, including instructional staff, administrators, coaches/technical assistance staff, and trainers. Courses are available in English and Spanish.

Since fall 2023, the Lead Agency has implemented an Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) pilot in three targeted areas across the state (Atlanta, Macon, and Savannah). The pilot included training in the Pyramid Model and Trauma Informed Care with approximately 62 early care and learning teachers and child care program staff trained, representing 12 child care programs. The IECMH consultant supports direct screening and assessment services and makes referrals as needed for children, families, and child care program staff. The IECMH pilot consisted of six mental health professionals working with five Inclusion and Behavior Support Specialists. Initial pilot evaluation results indicate that child care program staff felt this service was helpful and that they were more aware of how trauma can impact and even cause challenging behaviors. IECMH consultants also provided family training and engagement activities to promote mental health and wellbeing directly to family members.

The Lead Agency has developed a Mental Health 101 training for child care providers

through the Online Library Learning Initiative (OLLI). This free course introduces foundational concepts in child and adult mental health. Additionally, the agency collaborates with the Georgia Association for Infant Mental Health (GA-AIMH), housed at Georgia State University, which serves as Georgia's early childhood workforce training hub. GA-AIMH offers free, asynchronous training tailored to child care providers on topics related to infant and early childhood mental health.

The Lead Agency has also partnered with Resilient Georgia and Dr. Jordan Murphy to create the Infant Early Childhood Professional Development course. This training includes modules on Wellness for Early Childhood Professionals, Theoretical Framework for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, Trauma and Memory, The Brain and Autonomic Nervous System, Promoting Healthy Relationships at Home and in the Classroom, Learning Difficulties, and the Intersection of Trauma and ADHD. These courses, approved by DECAL, are free to early care and learning professionals and provide training hours. The courses integrate the Community Resilience Model (CRM), an evidence-based framework that promotes practical, trauma-informed strategies for wellness and self-care among early care and learning professionals.

In September 2023, the Lead Agency launched the Thriving Child Care Business Academy, an online platform offering free live training, technical assistance, and on-demand resources. The Academy covers essential topics such as planning and management, human resources, marketing, and leadership to equip child care owners and administrators with the tools and skills needed to strengthen their business practices and stabilize program finances as COVID-19 pandemic relief funding ended.

The Academy's live trainings are approved by Georgia Training Approval, and participants who meet the requirements earn state-approved training hours. The strong demand for these trainings demonstrated their value to Georgia providers. In its first year, the demand for small business study groups significantly exceeded the allocated budget, prompting DECAL to increase funding. By the end of the term:

- Enrollment in 155 small groups totaled 861 participants.
- Attendance for 45 webinars reached 841.
- Webpage visits exceeded 27,000.

These metrics highlight the Academy's success in addressing the needs of child care providers statewide.

The Lead Agency operates an Infant Toddler Specialist Network to provide coaching and training for the infant, toddler, and family child care workforce. Between October 1, 2023, and September 30, 2024, Infant Toddler Specialists coached 199 infant and toddler teachers and family child care providers on responsive caregiving and early language and literacy development, resulting in 598 coaching visits. Additionally, they facilitated 95 trainings on developmentally appropriate teaching practices and materials to foster young children's language and literacy skills, reaching 1,229 professionals.

The Inclusion and Behavior Support Program offers the SEEDS (Social Emotional Early Development Strategies) Helpline, enabling early learning professionals to access coaching and training focused on inclusion and social-emotional teaching practices. Last year, the Helpline received 961 calls from child care providers, leading to 1,728 professionals receiving coaching and 4,285 trained on social-emotional learning and inclusive practices.

The Lead Agency also provides a Pyramid Model Training Series that trains early learning professionals on the importance of young children's social and emotional development, its connection to challenging behavior, and the use of culturally responsive practices to address implicit biases in early learning environments. Over the past year, Inclusion and Behavior Support, Infant Toddler, and Pre-K Specialists conducted 342 Pyramid Model trainings, reaching 759 infant, toddler, preschool, Pre-K, and family child care professionals.

### 3) Improving early learning and development guidelines

*Goal: To ensure the lead agency has research-based early learning and development guidelines appropriate for children birth to age 12, including children with special needs and dual language learners that are used to inform practice and professional development.*

#### 3.1 Early Learning and Development Guidelines

##### 3.1.1 Spending - Early Learning and Development Guidelines:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to improve early learning and development guidelines during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☒ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☐ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☒ Unable to report. Indicate reason: **Spending related to the activities reported in this section cannot be isolated and are reported in other sections.**

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on improving upon the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines? \$

☒ Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason **Spending related to the activities reported in this section cannot be isolated and are reported in other sections.**

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not capture in the item already reported:

☐ No

#### 3.2 Progress Update

##### 3.2.1 Progress Update - Early Learning and Development Guidelines:

Improving upon the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 6.4.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

**As previously mentioned, the Lead Agency has developed a four-session training on how to use the GELDS that addresses understanding the GELDS, lesson planning, and developmentally appropriate practices. These trainings are offered free of charge to programs participating in Quality Rated, the state's QRIS, and are provided through the state's CCR&R network. Each year, the Lead Agency monitors the number of participants in these trainings to ensure saturation across the state. Further, as updates are made to the Planning Educational Activities for Children (PEACH) website, user data will be tracked to understand which parts of the site users are accessing the most and the breakdown of ages served by users. These data will be used to ensure the site continues to provide meaningful resources and support for using the GELDS to inform instructional practices across the state.**

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 6.4.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

**In January 2023, Georgia launched a revamped online platform for the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), merging the Planning Educational Activities for Children (PEACH) lesson planning site with the GELDS website. This unified platform serves as a one-stop resource for early childhood educators to access GELDS information, download resources, order materials, and create lesson plans.**

The GELDS lesson planning portal includes customizable templates for age groups from birth to five and a comprehensive repository of instructional activities to support children's development in all GELDS domains. Users can create, download, print, and share lesson plans. By the end of FFY2024, the GELDS website had 4,710 users who collectively created 8,760 lesson plans and 23,248 new activities for lesson plans.

Significant progress has also been made in updating the face-to-face GELDS training series, expanding it from four to eight sessions. Five of the new trainings have been approved, and a Training for Trainers series has begun to ensure consistent and accurate delivery across Georgia's six child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs). The Lead Agency continues to support CCR&R trainers and monitor training sessions for quality assurance. The remaining three trainings are in the final stages of development, with a Training for Trainers series scheduled for FFY2025.

Additionally, GELDS training is available through the agency's Online Learning Library Initiative (OLLI). During FFY2024, the Lead Agency added a new course, Intentional Teaching Using the Communication, Language, and Literacy Domain. The following course completion numbers were recorded on OLLI for FFY2024:

- Intentional Teaching and Planning with the GELDS: 1,194 completions
- Intentional Teaching Using the Math Subdomain: 254 completions
- Intentional Teaching Using the Science Subdomain: 238 completions
- Intentional Teaching Using the Social Studies Subdomain: 131 completions
- Intentional Teaching Using the Communication, Language, and Literacy Domain: 425 completions



#### 4) Developing, implementing, or enhancing a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) and other transparent system of quality indicator

*Goal: To ensure the lead agency implements a quality rating and improvement system, or other quality rating system, to promote high-quality early care and education programs.*

##### 4.1 Quality rating and improvement system status

###### 4.1.1 QRIS or other system of quality improvement status:

Indicate the status and include a description of the lead agency's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

☒ The lead agency QRIS is operating state- or territory-wide.

- General description of QRIS: **Quality Rated, Georgia's QRIS, has three tiers or ratings: one star, two stars, and three stars. Two and three stars are considered high-quality care. Star ratings are earned through a point system that includes completing an online portfolio, scores from Environment Rating Scale observations, and bonus points for nationally accredited providers. CCDF providers who are eligible for Quality Rated are required to have earned or be in the process of earning a star level. The state also created provisional and probationary statuses for providers in the process of earning a star rating who are serving children with CCDF subsidy. The provisional status is for providers who are newly licensed or new to subsidy. The probationary status is for providers who went through the rating process and did not earn a star rating and for providers who allowed their rating to expire. These two statuses allow providers to maintain subsidy for a limited amount of time while working toward earning a star rating.**
- How many tiers/levels? **3** [insert number of tiers below as required and describe each tier and check off which are high quality]
  - Tier/Level 1: **The first level in Georgia's three-star QRIS is "one star." The Lead Agency considers one star to be foundational and not yet achieving high quality. Providers at this level can be considered as maintaining licensing standards related to health and safety and may exhibit some emerging higher quality practices related to young children's learning needs in the areas of engaging relationship building, positive and nurturing interactions, curriculum content and activity planning, and daily scheduling.**

☐ High Quality

- Tier/Level 2: **The second level in Georgia's QRIS is "two stars." The Lead Agency considers two and three stars to be high quality. Two-star providers show a commitment to frequently engaging in high-quality practices, although these may not be sustained across all classrooms, and there is room for improvement in terms of the frequency of high-quality care demonstrated by all program staff.**

☒ High Quality

- Tier/Level 3: **The third and highest level in Georgia's QRIS is "three stars." The Lead Agency considers three stars to be the highest level of quality. Programs at this level demonstrate ongoing and sustainable high-quality classroom practices that impact child outcomes. This finding was validated by an independent study conducted by Child Trends. The final report from that study was issued in 2017.**

☒ High Quality

- Tier/Level 4:  
☐ High Quality
- Tier/Level 5:  
☐ High Quality
- Tier/Level 6:  
☐ High Quality
- Tier/Level 7:  
☐ High Quality
- Tier/Level 8:  
☐ High Quality
- Tier/Level 9:  
☐ High Quality
- Tier/Level 10:  
☐ High Quality

- Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition: **1,893**
- Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition: **455**
- Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition: **1,989**
- Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition: **Number served is not available. Total licensed capacity for providers meeting high-quality programs is 227,669.**

☐ The lead agency QRIS is operating a pilot (e.g., in a few localities, or only a few levels) but not fully operating state- or territory-wide.

- General description of pilot QRIS (e.g., in a few localities, or only a few levels):
  - Which localities if not state/territory-wide?
  - How many tiers/levels? [insert number of tiers below as required and describe each tier and check off which are high quality
    - Tier/Level 1:  
☐ High Quality
    - Tier/Level 2:  
☐ High Quality
    - Tier/Level 3:  
☐ High Quality
    - Tier/Level 4:  
☐ High Quality
    - Tier/Level 5:  
☐ High Quality
    - Tier/Level 6:  
☐ High Quality
    - Tier/Level 7:  
☐ High Quality
    - Tier/Level 8:  
☐ High Quality
    - Tier/Level 9:  
☐ High Quality
    - Tier/Level 10:  
☐ High Quality
  - Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:
  - Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:
  - Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
  - Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:
- ☐ The lead agency is operating another system of quality improvement.
- General description of other system:
  - Describe assessment scores, accreditation, or other metrics associated with this system:
  - Describe how “high quality” is defined in this system?
  - Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:

- Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:
  - Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
  - Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:
- ☐ The lead agency does not have a QRIS or other system of quality improvement.
- Do you have a definition of high quality care?
    - ☐ Yes, define:
      - Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:
      - Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:
      - Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
      - Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:
    - ☐ No

#### **4.1.2 Spending - Quality rating and improvement system status:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- ☒ CCDF quality funds
- ☐ Non-CCDF funds
- ☐ CARES funds
- ☐ CRRSA Funds
- ☒ ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- ☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

## **4.2 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems participation**

### **4.2.1 QRIS or other system of quality improvement participation:**

What types of providers participated in the QRIS or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024 (check all that apply)?

- ☒ Licensed child care centers
- ☒ Licensed family child care homes
- ☒ License-exempt providers
- ☒ Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy
- ☒ Early Head Start programs
- ☒ Head Start programs
- ☒ State Prekindergarten or preschool programs
- ☐ Local district-supported Prekindergarten programs
- ☒ Programs serving infants and toddlers
- ☒ Programs serving school-age children
- ☒ Faith-based settings
- ☐ Tribally operated programs
- ☒ Other. Describe: **Because Quality Rated is a program-wide rating mechanism for licensed child care, Georgia's Pre-K classrooms operating in child care centers are included in the center's Quality Rating assessment. Georgia's Pre-K classrooms operated by local school systems are not eligible to participate in Quality Rated. Licensed faith-based settings are eligible to participate in Quality Rated, while those that operate under an exemption are not. While most license-exempt programs are not eligible to participate in Quality Rated, license-exempt programs operated by the Department of Defense, public universities and technical colleges, and Head Start and Early Head Start grantees are eligible to participate.**

#### 4.3 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits

##### 4.3.1 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits:

What types of financial incentives or technical assistance are available for providers related to QRIS or other system of quality improvement? Check as many as apply.

- ☒ One-time grants, awards or bonuses
  - ☐ Licensed child care centers **41**
  - ☐ Licensed family child care homes **17**
- ☐ On-going or periodic quality stipends
  - ☐ Licensed child care centers
  - ☐ Licensed family child care homes
- ☒ Higher CCDF subsidy rates (including tiered rating)
  - ☐ Licensed child care centers **2,408**
  - ☐ Licensed family child care homes **478**

☒ Ongoing technical assistance to facilitate participation in QRIS or improve quality of programs already participating in QRIS (or some other technical assistance tied to QRIS)  
☒ Other. Describe **\$6,618,000 was distributed to 13,236 individual teachers and family child care providers in the form of a \$500 workforce bonus when their program received their rating.**

#### 4.3.2 Spending - Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- ☒ CCDF quality funds
- ☐ Non-CCDF funds
- ☐ CARES funds
- ☐ CRRSA Funds
- ☒ ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- ☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

#### 4.4 Spending – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

##### 4.4.1 Spending – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) related to QRIS or other quality rating systems during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? **\$89331786**

☐ Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **Continuing from FFY2023, the Lead Agency distributed \$850,000 in one-time Quality Rated Restoration Grants (QRRG) to the remaining eligible child care centers and family child care providers. These funds were designed to help providers return to rating with an on-site observation following the COVID-19 pandemic. The**

funds paid for classroom supplies and materials and access to online Environment Rating Scale training modules. \$6,618,000 was also distributed to 13,236 individual teachers and family child care providers in the form of a \$500 workforce bonus when their program received their rating. The remaining ARP funds were used for these two incentives. ARP funds of \$347,200 were also used to fund the final three months of a contract with the Environment Rating Scales Institute (ERSI) for reliable third-party assessors to conduct observations at child care programs to help clear the backlog of live observations following the pandemic.

Effective January 2022, all child care providers participating in the child care subsidy program that are eligible to be rated by the state's QRIS must have a rating or be in the process of being rated. Quality Rated paid tiered reimbursement bonuses to child care providers based on their star ratings. Providers with a one-star rating received a 25 percent bonus; two-star providers received a 35 percent bonus; three-star providers received a 55 percent bonus, and providers in the process of being rated received a 15 percent bonus. These tiered reimbursement bonuses were in addition to base reimbursement rates. Almost all (99%) of child care subsidy providers received some level of bonus. For the 2024 QPR period, providers were paid bonuses totaling \$80.5M for children age 3 and up. Bonus payments for children age 2 and under are reported in Section 5.

## 4.5 Progress Update

### 4.5.1 Progress Update – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems:

Developing, implementing, or enhancing a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) or other transparent system of quality indicators.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.3.6 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. Georgia measures its progress based on the number and percentage of early learning programs that are 1) participating in Quality Rated, and 2) have achieved a one-, two-, or three-star rating. This data is included in the Lead Agency's dashboard and is updated in real time. Georgia also looks at the distribution of star ratings across the three levels and the success rate of providers going through the rating process and earning a star rating. Additionally, the Lead Agency monitors monthly the percentage of CAPS scholarships and percentage of providers participating in the CAPS program who are Quality Rated. The state's current goal is that all eligible child care programs that receive child care subsidy funds will be rated by the end of 2021.

In terms of the three measures above:

- As of February 2021, 2,437 programs are Quality Rated. This is approximately 54 percent of eligible programs. It does not include 54 programs who have gone through the process and did not achieve a star level.

- The current distribution of stars suggests that the state is effectively discriminating levels of quality (child care learning centers: 14 percent, 50 percent, 35 percent, and 2 percent are three, two, one, and zero stars, respectively; family child care learning homes: 27 percent, 42 percent, 27 percent, and 3 percent are three, two, one, and zero stars, respectively).

- As of February 2021, 80 percent of eligible facilities are participating in Quality Rated, and 68 percent of those facilities have achieved a star rating.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.3.6 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: In the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan, the Lead Agency identified several key measures to help gauge the success, impact, and growth of Quality Rated: 1) percentage of eligible providers participating in Quality Rated; 2) the distribution of star levels; 3) success rate (earning a rating) of providers participating in Quality Rated; and 4) the percentage of CAPS providers with a Quality Rated rating and the percentage of children receiving CAPS in a Quality Rated program.

As of September 30, 2024, 83 percent of eligible providers were participating in Quality Rated, and 65 percent held a one-, two-, or three-star rating. The distribution of star levels was, 18 percent of rated providers held a one-star, 63 percent a two-star, and 19 percent a three-star rating. For licensed child care centers, 72 percent were rated, with 19 percent one star, 63 percent two stars, and 18 percent three stars; for licensed family child care homes, 46 percent were rated, with 13 percent one star, 61 percent two stars, and 27 percent three stars. 1,438 of 1,489 providers (97%) that completed the rating process between October 2023 and September 2024 successfully earned a star rating. Eighty percent of providers that served children in CAPS were Quality Rated, with an additional 5.1 percent in provisional status, 2.2 percent in probationary status, and 1.3 percent not pursuing a rating; 11 percent of CAPS providers were exempt or informal and not eligible for a rating. Ninety-two percent of children with a CAPS scholarship were enrolled at a Quality Rated provider, with an additional 3 percent at a provider in provisional status, 2.2 percent at a provider in probationary status, and 0.4



percent at a provider not pursuing a rating; 2.7 percent of children were enrolled at exempt or informal providers who were not eligible for a rating. Seventy-three percent of children in CAPS were enrolled at a high-quality provider, defined as two or three stars.

In FFY2024, the Lead Agency continued to provide CCDF subsidy providers a pathway to earning a star rating in Quality Rated through a probationary status and a provisional status.

Probationary status is awarded to programs that went through the Quality Rated process and did not achieve a rating or those that allowed their rating to lapse without attempting a rereating. Provisional status is for providers who are newly licensed or are new to CAPS. During FFY2024, 76 providers held probationary status, with one of them achieving a star rating, while the remaining continued progression toward earning their star rating. During this same time, 261 providers held provisional status, with 57 of them achieving a star rating, and four of them not earning a rating: these four were moved into probationary status; the remaining 200 provisional providers were in progress as of September 30, 2024. Providers with these statuses sign a memorandum of understanding that outlines key benchmarks that must be met to retain their status, and they are required to become rated within the allotted time frame to remain eligible to receive child care subsidy. In August 2024, the Lead Agency began piloting a new system with 28 of the probationary providers by assigning them a Quality Rated coach to work with them on improving outcomes in their classrooms with the goal of achieving a star rating. The focus of the pilot is to develop relation-based professional engagement through intensive on-site and virtual coaching support for 6-12 months with a plan of action designed around the program's specific program improvement needs. During the report period, a Quality Assurance Manager and one of three Education Specialist Coaches were hired to help these providers address their most critical needs with the goal of turning their programs around. The pilot, if successful, will be extended into FFY2025 to offer these enhanced supports to all probationary providers.

To help providers prepare for a return to live observations in FFY2022, the Lead Agency offered Quality Rated Restoration Grants (QRRG) funded through CRSSA and ARPA that continued into early FFY2024. The QRRG awarded funds for programs to purchase the needed classroom equipment, materials, and supplies to refresh classrooms, along with funds to purchase online training modules to help classroom staff gain a deeper understanding of the instruments used to conduct the live assessments.

The Quality Rated Language and Literacy Endorsement pilot concluded in FFY2023. In the two-year pilot, 23 centers and nine family child care providers earned the endorsement by completing targeted professional development around appropriate language and literacy

instruction. An independent evaluation of the endorsement continued in FFY2024 with results expected in FFY2025. These results will inform the revisions of Quality Rated that the Lead Agency is currently developing.

The Lead Agency began the work of revising the Quality Rated system in FFY2023 by conducting a comprehensive review of all aspects of the system. Partnering with external research groups, the Lead Agency investigated the national landscape of QRIS, conducted provider surveys, and hosted multiple focus group listening sessions with various stakeholders including families with and without non-traditional hour care needs, Quality Rated program staff, CCR&R technical assistance staff, invested advocacy groups, and QRIS national experts. Several data walks, in-person and virtual, have been held to begin analyzing the multitude of data points collected. In FFY2024, the Lead Agency continued research around Quality Rated systems and convened two large stakeholder meetings to gauge feedback and possible revisions. The Lead Agency began designing a statewide quality study that will begin in FFY2025 that will inform revisions to Quality Rated.

## 5) Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers

*Goal: Ensure adequate and stable supply of high quality child care with a qualified, skilled workforce to promote the healthy development of infants and toddlers. Please report on all activities funded by quality dollars and infant toddler set-aside.*

### 5.1 Infant/Toddler Specialists

#### 5.1.1 Infant/Toddler Specialists:

Did providers have access to infant/toddler specialists during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

☒ Yes

- Number of specialists available to all providers **13**
- Number of specialists available to providers serving children who receive CCDF **13**
- Number of specialists available specifically trained to support family child care providers **13**
- Number of providers served **199**
- Total number of children reached **This data is not tracked and therefore not available**

☐ No, there are no infant/toddler specialists in the state/territory.

☐ N/A. Describe:

#### 5.1.2 Infant/Toddler Specialists Supports Provided:

If yes, what supports do the infant/toddler specialists provide?

☒ Relationship-caregiving practices (or quality caregiving/developmentally appropriate practices)

☒ On-site and virtual coaching

☐ Health and safety practices

☐ Individualized professional development consultation (e.g., opportunities for or awareness on career growth opportunities, degreed/credential programs)

☒ Group professional development

☒ Family engagement and partnerships

☐ Part C early intervention services

☐ Mental health of babies, toddlers, and families

☐ Mental health of providers

☒ Behavioral Health

☐ Other. Describe

### **5.1.3 Spending – Infant/Toddler Specialists:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☒ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☒ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

## **5.2 Staffed Family Child Care Networks**

### **5.2.1 Number and Description of Staffed Family Child Care Networks:**

How many staffed family child care networks operated during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

☐ Number of staffed family child care networks:

- ☐ Describe what the network/hub provides to participating family child care providers:

☒ No staffed family child care networks operate in state/territory

### **5.2.2 Spending - Staffed Family Child Care Networks:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☐ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☐ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

- ☐ CRRSA Funds
- ☐ ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- ☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☒ No

### 5.3 Spending - Programs and services for infants and toddlers

#### 5.3.1 Spending - Programs and services for infants and toddlers:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside), above and beyond to the 3% infant and toddler set-aside, to improve the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? **\$24196141**

☐ Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **Effective January 2022, all child care providers participating in the child care subsidy program that were eligible to be rated by the state's QRIS must have a rating or be in the process of being rated. Quality Rated paid tiered reimbursement bonuses to child care providers based on their star ratings. Providers with a one-star rating received a 25 percent bonus; two-star providers received a 35 percent bonus; three-star providers received a 55 percent bonus, and providers in the process of being rated received a 15 percent bonus. These tiered reimbursement bonuses were in addition to base reimbursement rates. Ninety-nine percent of child care subsidy providers received some level of bonus. For the 2024 QPR period, providers were paid bonuses totaling \$21.5M for children age 2 and under. Bonus payments for children age 3 and up are reported in Section 4.**

### 5.4 Progress Update

#### 5.4.1 Progress Update - Programs and services for infants and toddlers:

Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.4.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

The state has made considerable investments in data, research, and program evaluations related to the quality of infant and toddler classrooms. This includes tracking and analyzing Quality Rated administrative data and implementing and commissioning formal evaluations of programs designed to improve the quality of infant and toddler care.

Currently, the state's primary data source for measuring quality is Quality Rated administrative data. The state monitors the number of programs achieving the different star levels. Embedded in these ratings are center-based classrooms and family child care learning homes that serve infants and toddlers.

The biggest component of a program's star rating is the process quality score that is based on ERS observations, including the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, 3rd Edition (ITERS-3). The state tracks and analyzes ITERS-3 scores to determine which items are more likely to receive lower scores. These findings are used in developing training and technical assistance.

The state is currently expanding services for programs serving infants and toddlers. These expanded services include the Lifting Infants and Toddlers Through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE) grants. The Lead Agency's Internal Research and Policy Analysis Team is, in partnership with Child Trends, evaluating the LITTLE grants program as part of the state's CCDBG Research and Evaluation Implementation Grant. The evaluation includes analyzing the scores from the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)-Infant and CLASS-Toddler observations that LITTLE programs receive to support their professional learning activities. Preliminary findings from the first two years of the LITTLE grants show improvements in key dimensions of quality in participating grantee infant and toddler classrooms, as measured by the CLASS-Infant and CLASS-Toddler.

The state will continue to use the ITERS-3, CLASS-Infant, and CLASS-Toddler to measure progress for improving quality. The state will also continue to invest in research and evaluation that measures quality improvement of infant and toddler classrooms.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.4.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: In FFY2024, the Lead Agency continued to monitor how many providers have earned a star level in Quality Rated, including providers who serve infants and toddlers. As of September 30, 2024, 67 percent of programs that are licensed to serve infants or toddlers are Quality Rated. The rating distribution of programs licensed to serve infants or toddlers closely parallels Quality Rated providers overall, with 19 percent holding a one-star, 62 percent a two-star, and 19 percent a three-star rating.

The Lead Agency continues to use ITERS-3 scores to improve quality. After being awarded their rating, programs receive a detailed report with results for each ITERS-3 item along with suggestions for continued quality improvement activities. Programs are encouraged to work with their child care resource and referral agency to continue working on improving quality. The Lead Agency also used ITERS-3 scores to support programs holding a probationary status. These scores are used to help develop benchmarks and strategic planning with the provider and inform the piloting of site visits from Lead Agency staff to coach on areas of improvement. Finally, in FFY2024 the Lead Agency used ITERS-3 results to design a plan to develop resources that will be offered to support one-star CAPS providers in FY2025.

In FFY2023, the Lead Agency completed a pilot of the Quality Rated Language and Literacy Endorsement, which ITERS-3 results helped to develop. Overall, 23 centers and nine family child care programs received the endorsement. In FFY24, the Lead Agency created a professional learning community of endorsed programs to help sustain practices developed during the endorsement process.

Through the Lifting Infants and Toddlers Through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE) grant, the Lead Agency provided professional development and funding to child care programs to enhance the quality of care for infants and toddlers. As part of the grant, Infant Toddler Specialists collaborated with 18 child care programs, conducting 339 coaching visits with 63 infant and toddler professionals and delivering training to 73 professionals focused on responsive caregiving and early language and literacy.

The LITTLE grant uses the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to design group and individualized professional development for child care staff while evaluating the progress of each participating classroom. This approach measures improvements in the quality of interactions and teaching practices. During the most recent LITTLE grant cohort, which concluded in July 2024, Infant Toddler Specialists conducted 84 observations using CLASS-Infant

and CLASS-Toddler tools.

The Lead Agency's Pyramid Model Training series was designed to increase the early childhood workforce's knowledge of social emotional development. Between October 2023 and September 2024, DECAL Specialists trained 258 infant and toddler teachers on strategies to build nurturing relationships, provide supportive environments, and teach social emotional skills to young children. DECAL partnered with Child Trends to conduct an evaluation on the impact of Pyramid Model training. The evaluation consisted of 178 early learning professionals who completed the training, 69 of whom were infant and toddler teachers. Ninety-four percent of early learning professionals who participated in the evaluation reported that they are implementing new strategies and practices to support creating safe learning environments, creating calm predictable transitions, and helping children regulate their emotions, and that these strategies are making a difference. Teachers also reported an increase in the SEL knowledge and self-efficacy following the training and using fewer exclusionary practices like sending a child to the office, sending a child home, or permanently removing a child from the classroom.

The Lead Agency's Social Emotional Early Development Strategies (SEEDS) Helpline received requests from 67 infant and toddler child care professionals for coaching focused on promoting strong social-emotional development and inclusive practices. As a result of these requests, the Inclusion and Behavior Support Specialists provided 114 coaching visits and provided 21 trainings to infant and toddler teachers.

The Lead Agency's Infant and Toddler Specialist Network and Inclusion and Behavior Support Program collaborated with the statewide network of CCR&Rs to provide coaching to infant and toddler classrooms engaged in the Quality Rated process. CCR&R staff referred infant and toddler classrooms to the Lead Agency when they would benefit from additional professional development to improve classroom quality. Infant Toddler and Inclusion and Behavior Support Specialists provided coaching and training to 65 infant and toddler teachers on positive relationships, interactions, and classroom schedules, resulting in 390 visits being conducted.



## 6) Establishing, expanding, modifying, or maintaining a statewide system of child care resource and referral services

*Goal: Lead agency provides: services to involve families in the development of their children, information on a full range of child care options, and assistance to families in selecting child care that is appropriate for the family's needs and is high quality as determined by the lead agency.*

### 6.1 Spending – Child Care Resource and Referral Services

#### 6.1.1 Spending – Child Care Resource and Referral Services:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to establish, expand, modify, or maintain a statewide CCR&R during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☒ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☐ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to **establish, expand, modify, or maintain a statewide CCR&R** during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? **\$16131196**

☐ Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent

☐ No

### 6.2 Progress Update

#### 6.2.1 Progress Update – Child Care Resource and Referral Services:

Establishing, expanding, modifying or maintaining a statewide system of child care resource and referral services.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.5.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

**Each year, the Lead Agency enters into contractual agreements with each of Georgia's six CCR&Rs. As part of the contract, the Lead Agency sets performance measures the CCR&R must meet; these performance measures are adjusted annually with each new contract. Each CCR&R submits an Action Plan detailing how the CCR&R will work toward attaining the performance measures. For FY 2021, the two agency-stipulated performance measures were as follows:**

**Performance Measure 1a: By the end of the contract year, 90 percent of CAPS providers (providers receiving subsidy) in the region will submit a portfolio, indicating they are ready to be rated. Quarterly targets will be developed at the beginning of the contract year to ensure the Contractor is on target to meet this performance measure;**

**Performance Measure 1b: Total number of providers submitting a portfolio will be tracked by provider type to ensure Contractor is addressing the needs of child care learning centers and family child care home providers. No target is set for this measure; information gathered will be used to inform action plan adjustments as needed.**

**Performance Measure 2: During the contract year, at least 95 percent of programs supported by Contractor will receive a 1-, 2-, or 3-star rating. No more than 5 percent of ratings awarded should be 0 stars. This measure includes all application types. Performance data is pulled directly from the state's Quality Rated system. As needed, targeted support is provided to the CCR&Rs by the Lead Agency to ensure adequate progress toward each performance measure.**

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.5.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

**The Lead Agency maintains contracts with six child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies across the state, each of which is required to meet annual performance measures outlined in the contract. Each year, the Lead Agency reviews CCR&R progress on the prior year's performance measures and assesses provider needs in each region. Performance measures are adjusted as necessary to ensure they continue to meet provider needs.**

**The primary focus of the CCR&Rs is to support child care providers in improving program quality and preparing for Quality Rated observations. CCR&Rs also implement Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) strategies for programs requiring ongoing support after receiving a quality rating. The performance measures for 2024 were as follows:**

- **Performance Measure 1: 95 Percent of Providers Earn One to Three Stars**

**This measure tracks the star ratings of all providers completing the Quality Rated process in**

2024. The goal is for at least 95 percent of providers to achieve a minimum one-star rating, with no more than 5 percent receiving a zero-star rating. This measure applies to all application types.

Results: All CCR&R regions met this goal, with regional percentages ranging from 95 percent to 99 percent.

- Performance Measure 2: Focused Monthly Support for Programs Scoring Below 3.0 on ERS Observations

Programs receiving a live Environment Rating Scales (ERS) observation score below 3.0 from October 2023 to September 2024 were provided targeted monthly support, excluding CAPS providers eligible for probationary processes. At a minimum, this support included monthly in-person technical assistance visits, conducted on-site, off-site, or virtually (e.g., via Zoom or the Torsh coaching platform). Visits focused on specific action plans or goals tailored to the program's needs, guided by the Quality Rated Continuous Quality Improvement Report.

Results: All regions demonstrated adequate progress. All interested child care programs received targeted monthly support from technical assistance (TA) providers. Additionally, the Lead Agency collaborated with CCR&R staff to create a referral process for TAs to request specialized support from the Lead Agency's Infant/Toddler and Inclusion and Behavior Support teams. Providers requiring growth in infant/toddler care or inclusion received assistance from a CCR&R TA and an Infant/Toddler and Inclusion and Behavior Support Specialist.

- Performance Measure 3: 90 Percent of TA Staff Demonstrate Proficiency in ERS Tools

This measure required that at least 90 percent of technical assistance staff show progress toward or maintain proficiency in using each ERS tool when supporting providers.

Results: All six regions met this measure. TA staff participated in a variety of supports, including reliability training, live and online sessions, and guidance from a CCR&R ERS Anchor TA.

**7) Facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspection, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards**

*Goal: To ensure child care providers maintain compliance with lead agency licensing, inspection, monitoring, and health and safety standards and training.*

**7.1 Complaints about providers**

**7.1.1 Number of Complaints about providers:**

How many complaints were received regarding providers during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? **2,073**

**7.1.2 Spending - Complaints about providers:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity (including maintaining a hotline)?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☒ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☐ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

**7.2 Licensing Staff**

**7.2.1 Number of Licensing Staff:**

How many licensing staff positions were there in the state or territory during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? Number of staff **89 positions regularly participate in the child care monitoring process through various types of visits.**

**7.2.2 Spending – Licensing Staff:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☒ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☐ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

### **7.3 Health and Safety Standards Coaching and Technical Assistance**

#### **7.3.1 Coaching or technical assistance on health and safety standards as a result of inspection:**

How many child care programs received coaching or technical assistance to improve their understanding and adherence to CCDF health and safety standards as a result of an inspection or violation during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? **2,673**

#### **7.3.2 Spending - Coaching or technical assistance on health and safety standards as a result of inspection:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☒ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☐ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

## 7.4 Spending - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards

### 7.4.1 Spending - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspections, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? **\$63519297**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

## 7.5 Progress Update

### 7.5.1 Progress Update - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards:

Facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspection, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.6.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **Georgia uses an enforcement and compliance system to determine a program's compliance zone. Zones are deemed as either "good standing," "support," or "deficient." At each visit, a program's compliance zone is determined by incorporating the current visit and the prior 12 months' licensing history.**

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.6.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **Child care licensing staff from the Lead Agency continued to monitor programs for compliance with rules and regulations. During the reporting period, 9,450 inspections were conducted in licensed child care learning centers, family child care learning homes, and license-exempt programs, with a focus on getting the annual unannounced licensing inspection completed for all programs.**

**The Lead Agency uses a rolling compliance determination system evaluating the past 12 months of a program's history based on all visits that have occurred during that time frame. Because of this, the compliance zone of any program is subject to change at any point in time due to visits that are occurring. As of September 2024, licensed programs were in the following compliance**

zones: 4,287 programs in Good Standing, 32 programs in Needs Support, and 23 programs in Deficient. During the reporting period, 889 stand-alone TA visits within 219 individual programs had been conducted at licensed child care programs throughout the state to provide facilitated coaching and training in identified areas of need to help increase knowledge and understanding around rules and regulations and improve compliance. This is an increase in the number of TA visits provided during the previous fiscal year, as an emphasis was placed on conducting monthly on-site TA to all programs receiving services. During this reporting period 62 training sessions attended by 695 caregivers were conducted to address health and safety standards and increase compliance with Lead Agency requirements. In addition, not only is TA being focused on areas of non-compliance and areas of requested assistance, but all programs are also receiving TA in the areas of schedules, relationships, and interactions to support licensing foundational quality and bridge quality best practices. Focused TA is also being provided in the following areas: playgrounds, staff training, physical plant hazards, infant safe sleep, children's records, and transportation (if applicable), as these are the areas that are the most frequently cited according to program data.

From October 1, 2023 to May 31, 2024, health and safety grants, using ARPA Supplemental funding, were provided to all licensed child care learning centers with a capacity of 101+ and any family child care learning home and child care learning center given permission to operate by December 31, 2023, that had not previously received these grants, to purchase equipment and materials that supported compliance with health and safety rules and regulations.

Additionally, health and safety TA grants were allocated to 102 qualifying programs with multi-year non-compliance and/or adverse actions in playground related rule violations during this reporting period. Sixty-nine of these programs accepted the grants, receiving a minimum of six-monthly visits, mandated core rule training and support in purchasing equipment and materials needed for sustained compliance improvement.

**8) Evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs and services, including evaluating how programs positively impact children**

*Goal: Lead agency investment in effective quality improvement strategies using reliable data from evaluation and assessment*

**8.1 Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs**

**8.1.1 Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs:**

What measure(s) or tool(s) were used to evaluate and assess the quality of and effective practice in center-based programs during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

☒ QRIS

☒ CLASS

☒ ERS

☐ FCCERS

☒ ITERS

☐ State evaluation tool. Describe

☒ Core Knowledge and Competency Framework

☒ Other. Describe As part of Quality Rated, Georgia uses the Environment Rating Scales for live observations. In child care centers, this includes the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (ITERS-3), the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (ECERS-3), and the School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale, Updated Edition (SACERS-U). The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (FCCERS-3) may also be used with small centers who house children of multiple ages in one space, mimicking a typical family child care setting. Georgia also uses instruments that are part of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Georgia's Infant and Toddler Specialist Network uses the infant and toddler versions of the CLASS. Infant and Toddler Specialists use the data with grantees in coaching sessions and in professional learning communities. In Georgia's Pre-K Program, the CLASS preschool version is used. Pre-K Specialists conduct observations and use the data in classroom coaching and in Professional Learning Communities. The Inclusion and Behavior Support team uses the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) for preschool and Pre-K classrooms and the Teaching Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS) for infant and toddler classrooms to evaluate teachers' practices around fostering young children's social emotional development.

☐ Do not evaluate and assess quality and effective practice

**8.1.2 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs:**



Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☒ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☐ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

## 8.2 Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs

### 8.2.1 Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs:

What measure(s) or tool(s) were used to evaluate and assess the quality of and effective practice in family child care programs during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

☒ QRIS

☒ CLASS

☐ ERS

☒ FCCERS

☐ ITERS

☐ State evaluation tool. Describe

☒ Core Knowledge and Competency Framework

☒ Other. Describe **As part of Quality Rated, Georgia uses instruments from the family of Environment Rating Scales for live observations. In family child care programs this includes the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (FCCERS-3). Georgia also uses observation tools from the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Georgia's Infant and Toddler Specialist Network uses the infant and toddler versions of the CLASS. Infant and Toddler Specialists use the data with grantees in coaching sessions and in professional learning communities. The Inclusion and Behavior Support team uses the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) for preschool classrooms and the Teaching Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS) for infant and toddler classrooms to evaluate teachers' practices around fostering young children's social emotional development. The Inclusion and**

**Behavior Support Specialists completed TPOT and TPITOS observations in 518 child care programs that received coaching last year.**

☐ Do not evaluate and assess quality and effective practice

### **8.2.2 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☒ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☐ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

### **8.3 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs**

#### **8.3.1 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs:**

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs, practice, or child development during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?  
\$

☒ Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason: **Spending related to the activities reported in this section cannot be isolated and is reported in other sections.**

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **The Lead Agency leveraged ARP Supplemental Discretionary monies to fund the final three months of a contract with the Environment Rating Scales Institute (ERSI). The funds paid for reliable third party assessors to conduct observations at child care programs to help clear the backlog of live observations during 2023 calendar year following the pandemic. One hundred twenty four observations were conducted at a cost of \$347,200.**

## 8.4 Progress Update

### 8.4.1 Progress Update - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs:

Evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs and services, including evaluating how programs positively impact children.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.7.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

**The state has made considerable investments in data, research, and program evaluations related to child care program quality. This includes tracking and analyzing Quality Rated administrative data and implementing and commissioning formal evaluations of programs designed to improve quality. In the Quality Rated Validation Study and Pre-K Longitudinal Study quality measures such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) age-appropriate instruments are used. While this includes the implementation of Quality Rated, it also involves other initiatives and programs that have strong professional development components. The distribution of ratings in Quality Rated is a mechanism the state uses to evaluate progress in improving quality. The current distribution of stars suggests that the state is effectively discriminating levels of quality (child care learning centers: 14 percent, 50 percent, 35 percent, and 2 percent are three, two, one, and zero stars, respectively; family child care learning homes: 27 percent, 42 percent, 27 percent, and 3 percent are three, two, one, and zero stars, respectively). As of February 2021, 80 percent of eligible facilities are participating in Quality Rated, and 68 percent of those facilities have achieved a star rating. Quality Rated data also includes scores from the four Environment Rating Scales: Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, 3rd Edition; Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, 3rd Edition; Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Revised; and School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale, Updated. The scores from these scales are consistently aggregated, allowing the state to see improvements and challenges. In addition to the ERS instruments, the Lead Agency also uses CLASS for evaluation purposes in Georgia's Pre-K Program and in some of the professional development opportunities offered to Pre-K teachers. Results demonstrate that a greater percentage (26 percent) of Georgia's Pre-K classrooms are more likely be high quality compared to Kindergarten (17 percent), First Grade (9 percent), Second Grade (13 percent), and Third Grade (14 percent).**

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.7.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **The Lead Agency monitors and reviews Quality Rated rating distributions to monitor trends in quality. The current distribution of stars suggests that the state is effectively discriminating**

levels of quality, with 18 percent of rated providers holding a one-star, 63 percent a two-star, and 19 percent a three-star rating. For center-based programs, 19 percent, 63 percent, and 18 percent are one, two, and three stars, respectively; for family child care programs, 13 percent, 61 percent, and 27 percent are one, two, and three stars, respectively. As of September 30, 2024, 65 percent of eligible facilities have achieved a star rating.

In terms of impact, the Lead Agency monitors the percentage of children receiving CCDF subsidy enrolled in a Quality Rated program. As of September 30, 2024, 92 percent of children receiving CCDF subsidy were in a Quality Rated program. The remainder were in a program with a provisional or probationary Quality Rated status or in a program ineligible for Quality Rated, with less than half a percent in a program not pursuing a rating.

The Lead Agency also aggregates Environment Rating Scale (ERS) data to monitor quality and look for trends that can be used to target improvements. The ERS instruments are used in the Quality Rated rating process. A total of 2,206 observations were conducted for the purpose of a rating during FFY2024, with an average score of 4.16 out of 7. The breakdown for each scale is as follows: ECERS-3, 829 individual observations conducted with an average score of 3.96 out of 7; ITERS-3, 1,063 individual observations conducted with an average score of 4.32 out of 7; FCCERS-3, 228 individual observations conducted with an average score of 4.14 out of 7; and SACERS-U, 86 individual observations conducted with an average score of 4.33 out of 7.

The Lead Agency also uses the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to help identify needed supports and provide professional development for programs participating in Georgia's Pre-K or Lifting Infant and Toddlers through Language Rich Environments (LITTLE). Georgia's Pre-K teachers who participate in Making the Most of Classroom Interactions (MMCI) Professional Development received a pre- and post-CLASS observation. Making the Most of Classroom Interactions is a structured group coaching model that immerses teachers in Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) professional development. This program helps teachers develop awareness and enact changes in their interactions with students in the classroom. There were 366 observations completed on the teachers participating in MMCI. Last year, 84 CLASS-infant and CLASS-toddler observations were completed in infant and toddler classrooms participating in LITTLE. Infant Toddler Specialists completed 42 baseline observations and 42 endpoint observations.

#### Family Child Care Learning Homes

8 out of the 8 family childcare learning homes participated in CLASS baseline and endpoint observations, using the Toddler CLASS tool. For all 8 family childcare learning homes, the

endpoint score in the Emotional and Behavioral Support domain was within the high range at an average of 6.03, and the endpoint score in the Engaged Support for Learning was within the mid-range at an average of 4.27. Within both domains of the Toddler CLASS tool, all family child care learning homes scored within the mid-range at both the baseline and endpoint observations, with an increase ranging from 5% to 38% in high-scoring classrooms.

Based on the LENA Grow Impact Report, children in the 8 family child care learning homes experienced a 10% increase in conversational turns from their first LENA day to their last LENA day. Children who started out experiencing less talk compared to other peers in their classroom had a 43% increase of conversational turns. Children who started out experiencing less talk the national median of 15 turns per hours had a 216% increase of conversational turns.

#### **Child Care Learning Centers**

10 out of the 10 child care learning centers participated in CLASS baseline and endpoint observations. Infant classrooms CLASS endpoint scores fell within the mid-range at an average of 5.08. CLASS scores in the infant classrooms generally started in the low end of the mid-range at both the baseline and endpoint observations, with a significant increase ranging from 11.55% to 63.46%. Toddler classrooms CLASS endpoint scores in the Emotional and Behavioral Support domain was within the mid-range at an average of 5, and the endpoint score in the Engaged Support for Learning was within the mid-range at a 3. CLASS scores in the toddler classrooms generally started in the mid-range at both the baseline and endpoint observations, with an increase ranging from 8.28% to 39.83% within the Emotional and Behavioral Support domain and an increase ranging from 31% to 124.55% within the Engaged Support for Learning domain.

Based on the LENA Grow Impact Report, children in the 10 child care centers experienced a 8% increase in conversational turns from their first LENA day to their last LENA day. Children who started out experiencing less talk compared to other peers in their classroom had a 37% increase of conversational turns. Children who started out experiencing less talk the national median of 15 turns per hours had a 39% increase of conversational turns.

## 9) Supporting child care providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation

*Goal: Support child care programs and FCCs in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation by a national accrediting body with demonstrated, valid, and reliable program standards of quality*

### 9.1 Accreditation Support

#### 9.1.1 Accreditation Support:

How many providers did the lead agency support in their pursuit of accreditation (e.g., financial incentives, technical assistance with the accreditation process, coaching/mentoring by accredited programs) during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

- ☐ Yes, providers were supported in their pursuit of accreditation
- a. Licensed center-based programs
  - b. License-exempt center-based programs
  - c. Licensed family child care homes
  - d. License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home)
  - e. Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy
- ☒ No lead agency support given to providers in their pursuit of accreditation.
- ☐ N/A. Describe:

#### 9.1.2 Spending – Accreditation Support:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

- ☐ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- ☐ CCDF quality funds
- ☐ Non-CCDF funds
- ☐ CARES funds
- ☐ CRRSA Funds
- ☐ ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- ☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on accreditation during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? \$

☐ Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent

☒ No

## 9.2 Progress Update

### 9.2.1 Progress Update – Accreditation Support:

Supporting providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.8.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **The state is continually evaluating policies related to supporting quality improvement, including measuring the impact of Quality Rated policies related to national accreditation. However, since the state does not financially support national accreditation, these analyses are limited to policy analysis. Using funds from the state's PDG B-5 Renewal Grant, the state will be undergoing a review and subsequent revision of Quality Rated that will include soliciting stakeholder feedback related to incorporating national accreditation into Quality Rated.**

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.8.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **The state does not financially support national accreditation. Programs currently gain bonus points toward a rating in Quality Rated if they have achieved national accreditation. Since FFY2023, the Lead Agency has been undergoing an extensive Quality Rated comprehensive review process to inform revisions to the program. Several data walks and stakeholder meetings were convened during the reporting period with the goal of obtaining feedback from the public regarding the proposed revisions to the program, which include additional consideration of certain national accreditations. With the decision to conduct a statewide study of quality to begin in FFY2025, the work on the revisions continues, and all final decisions on components of a revised system are unlikely to occur before 2026.**

## 10) Supporting providers in the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development

*Goal: Assist programs to meet high-quality comprehensive program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development*

### 10.1 High-Quality Program Standards

#### 10.1.1 High-Quality Program Standards:

How did the state or territory help providers develop or adopt high quality program standards during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

☒ QRIS, check which indicators the lead agency has established:

☒ Health, nutrition, and safety of child care settings

☒ Physical activity and physical development in child care settings

☐ Mental health of children

☒ Learning environment and curriculum

☒ Ratios and group size

☒ Staff/provider qualifications and professional development

☒ Teacher/provider-child relationships

☒ Teacher/provider instructional practices

☒ Family partnerships and family strengthening

☐ Other. Describe:

☒ Early Learning Guidelines

☐ State Framework. Describe

☒ Core Knowledge and Competencies

☒ Other. Describe **The Lead Agency continues to support programs in social emotional development, infant and early childhood mental health, and prevention of challenging behaviors through training, technical assistance, and coaching in the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competencies in Infants and Young Children. Programs are supported in early language and literacy development through training and coaching through LITTLE (Lifting Infants and Toddlers Through Language-rich Environments) grants and through the Quality Rated Language and Literacy Endorsement. The Lead Agency also finished implementing a pilot program for a QR Nutrition and Physical Activity Endorsement modelled on the Language and Literacy Endorsement. The Lead Agency also works with other child serving state agencies and community organizations to build an early childhood system of care that promotes coordinated policy and collaborative service delivery to**



support young children with (or at risk for) social, emotional and behavioral/mental health needs and to promote healthy social and emotional development for all children through the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health work.

☐ N/A – did not help provider develop or adopt high quality program standards

#### 10.1.2 Spending - High-Quality Program Standards:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☒ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☒ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to support providers in the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? \$

☒ Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason: **Spending related to the activities reported in this section cannot be isolated and is reported in other sections.**

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **The CCDF quality spending related to supporting this activity is intricately a part of the spending in other activity areas and cannot be reasonably separated from the total spending of those areas. The amount included for this activity is the sum of state general funds, USDA funds, and ARPA Supplemental Discretionary funds.**

☐ No

### 10.2 Progress Update

#### 10.2.1 Progress Update - High-Quality Program Standards:

Supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.9.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **During the first six months of 2021, the state is developing an evaluation plan for the Community Transformation Grants. Specifically, the state is partnering with the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students to develop and conduct a formal evaluation. In addition, lead researchers from the Carl Vinson School of Government at the University of Georgia will work with each grantee to establish evaluation measures for their specific grant. The Lead Agency's Program Performance Evaluation plan for Georgia's PDG B-5 Renewal Grant includes measures that will inform this indicator. Georgia's PDG B-5 Needs Assessment also highlighted specific needs related to access to and quality of infant and toddler care, and the Lead Agency will be periodically updating the Needs Assessment. The Lead Agency will continue to engage the Quality Rated Advisory Committee for feedback to help identify where local communities might benefit from more support. Finally, the Lead Agency will support school-age programs with new school-age grants to help these programs reduce the impact of the pandemic. The Lead Agency will develop evaluation measures for these grants.**

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.9.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **The Lead Agency's Community Transformation Grants (CTGs) were initially funded by Georgia's Preschool Development Grant and then expanded with funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) concluding in June 2024. In total, 26 communities were awarded CTGs to implement projects over an 18-month grant term. Some CTG projects focused on increasing access to high-quality early education and supporting the early learning workforce, while others focused on other supports that promote healthy child development, such as addressing food insecurity or providing enhanced services to young children related to the early identification and treatment of developmental delays and disabilities. The CTGs helped grantees establish local partnerships and develop initiatives that increased community awareness of early childhood needs and fostered greater engagement opportunities for young children and their families. An evaluation of the grants by the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS) will report findings in FFY2025. The Lead Agency plans to offer new community-level grants in FFY2025.**

Standards related to health, physical activity, and physical development are embedded in Quality Rated, the state's QRIS. Programs submit a portfolio where they conduct a self-assessment related to health and nutrition and create an action plan for how they will use self-

assessment findings. In FFY2024, the Lead Agency continued a comprehensive review of Quality Rated, which included gathering input from providers, families, Quality Rated and CCR&R staff, advocacy groups, and national QRIS experts. The Lead Agency also hosted a series of data walks and stakeholder meetings to gather additional feedback and present proposed recommendations and revisions to the system. The proposed revisions include moving to a five-star system with diverse pathways to achieve a rating based on meeting prerequisite, core, and elective components that allow programs to demonstrate how they support and promote the well-being of children, families, and their program staff. Including core and elective components will allow the Lead Agency to strengthen standards related to health, nutrition, and physical activity. The Lead Agency is working closely with the Georgia State Physical Activity and Nutrition (G-SPAN) committee to develop a set of recommendations that crosswalk best practices that could be incorporated into the new system. The work on the revisions continues, and all final decisions on components of a revised system are unlikely to occur before 2026.

The Lead Agency launched a pilot of the Quality Rated Nutrition and Physical Activity Endorsement, funded by the Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning, in June 2024. Participants are completing training, self-assessments, and action plans around high-quality nutrition and physical activity practices. Fourteen centers are expected to receive the endorsement in FFY2025.

The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Task Force, convened by the Lead Agency, continues to carry out recommendations from the Georgia Legislative House Study Committee on Infant and Toddler Social Emotional Health. The task force serves as a cross-agency collaborative focused on early child mental health policy, finance, workforce development and promotion, and prevention efforts to support infant and early childhood mental health in Georgia. The task force has addressed all of the legislative committee recommendations, specifically making substantial progress in the following areas:

- Expanded access to Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) in Georgia and received national recognition for a collaborative workforce development strategy, as partnerships between the Lead Agency, the Georgia Department of Public Health, United Way, the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students, and the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) made the training possible. CPP is an evidenced-based dyadic (2Gen) trauma treatment model for children birth to age 5 and their families. There are currently more than 100 CPP providers in Georgia, which yields a 200% increase in CPP providers in Georgia. The next training, funded by DBHDD, began in spring 2024 and directly supports CPP access in Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics <https://www.ccbhcgeorgia.org/>.

- Created an Infant and Early Childhood Behavioral Health Services webpage for clinicians who serve children birth to age 6 and their families. A collaboration among the Lead Agency, the Georgia Department of Community Health, and DBHDD, the webpage includes billing guides for dyadic treatment, such as CPP, and the Georgia DC:0-5 Crosswalk, which supports using an age-appropriate diagnostic tool for assessment and diagnosis for young children. These efforts are ongoing, with plans to add a prevention-based billing guide to the webpage in 2025.
- Children’s Mental Health Week was celebrated in May 2024 and occurs annually during the first full week of May. Sponsored by the Lead Agency, this week provides opportunities for early childhood educators to learn how to promote social and emotional wellness and early relational health using resources like how to create a Calm Corner or engaging activities like a puppet show about feelings or learning age-appropriate breathing techniques to increase positive coping skills . In 2024, approximately 1,721 children viewed a puppet show to promote the use of feeling words to describe emotions during Children’s Mental Health Week. 90% of the teachers and/or child care staff accessed the Children’s Mental Health Week webpage to view early childhood and adult mental health resources.

ARPA-funded school-age grants concluded in FFY2023. In FFY2024, in collaboration with the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network, the Youth Development Micro-Credential was developed and piloted to help providers increase out-of-school time (OST) professional skills, as well as gain experience and knowledge in youth development work. Twenty-one providers completed the six required courses, 12 additional professional learning hours, a two-hour capstone project, and four hours of coaching or participation in a professional learning community. These 21 providers received a \$500 stipend once the requirements were completed.

In FFY2024, the Lead Agency wrapped up an ARPA-funded project with the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network to increase supports for school-age providers. Activities within this project included conducting a crosswalk with the currently used School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) and School-Age Program Quality Assessment (SAPQA), conducting observations in 25 classrooms with the SAPQA, conducting stakeholder engagement sessions around incorporating school-age in Quality Rated, and preparing a report on the feasibility of using the SAPQA and incorporating school-age in Quality Rated. Results of the report show a clear need for increased supports for professionals and for stand-alone school-age programs and school-age classrooms in child care centers. The work from this project will inform revisions to Quality Rated relating to incorporating greater supports for school-age care.

The Lead Agency’s Child and Family Development Program has a team of Family Peer

Ambassadors, parents or caregivers of young children who attend community events and share information on child development, developmental monitoring, searching for quality child care, and nutrition with other families of young children. During this period, DECAL trained 35 Family Peer Ambassadors, who attended 190 events within their communities, connecting with approximately 6,125 families of young children. Between FFY 2023 to FFY2024, there was a 7% increase in both the number of events attended by ambassadors and the number families contacted at those events.

## 11) Other activities to improve the quality of child care services

*Goal: To improve the quality of child care programs and services related to outcomes measuring improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry*

### 11.1 Sustainability funding to child care providers

#### 11.1.1 Sustainability funding to child care providers:

Did the state or territory continue to provide stabilization grants to child care providers using funds other than the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Stabilization funds during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

☐ Yes. If yes, describe and check which types of providers were eligible and number served.

☐ Licensed center-based programs

☐ License-exempt center-based programs

☐ Licensed family child care homes

☐ License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home)

☐ In-home (care in the child's own home)

☐ Other (explain)

☒ No.

☐ N/A. Describe:

#### 11.1.2 Spending – Sustainability funding to child care providers:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☐ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☐ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☐ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☒ No

### 11.2 Data Systems Investment

### 11.2.1 Data Systems Investment:

Did the state/territory invest in data systems to support equitable access to child care (e.g., modernizing and maintaining systems; technology upgrades and data governance improvements to provide more transparent and updated information to parents; a workforce registry; updated QRIS systems; CCR&R updates; monitoring systems) from October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

☒ Yes. Describe: **The Lead Agency continues to support a multi-year initiative to develop new program application data systems to support federal and state requirement changes for all early care and education state programs to better serve and support the early childhood education system in Georgia. The effort and use of these IT systems are for managing provider participation in programs and provider payments.**

☐ No

### 11.2.2 Spending - Data Systems Investment:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☒ CCDF quality funds

☒ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☒ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

## 11.3 Supply and Demand Analysis

### 11.3.1 Supply and Demand Analysis:

Did the state/territory conduct an analysis of supply and demand or other needs assessment to identify areas of focus to build supply or target funding from October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

☒ Yes. Describe findings: **The Lead Agency contracted with the Urban Institute in July 2024 to explore the supply and demand of child care for targeted populations across the state. Research is ongoing, and the results are not yet available. The project includes analyzing administrative data about licensed child care providers and conducting a survey of licensed child care providers to better understand supply, particularly for children in underserved geographic areas, infants and toddler, and children with disabilities. Researchers will also use secondary data to answer questions about demand and conduct a comparative supply and demand gap analysis. The Lead Agency is also working with Third Sector Intelligence (3Si) to continue developing analytical tools to measure child care supply and demand for a variety of geographic units of analysis on an ongoing basis.**

☐ No

#### **11.3.2 Spending - Supply and Demand Analysis:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- ☒ CCDF quality funds
- ☐ Non-CCDF funds
- ☐ CARES funds
- ☐ CRRSA Funds
- ☐ ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- ☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

#### **11.4 Supply and Demand Initiatives**

##### **11.4.1 Supply and Demand Initiatives:**

Did the state/territory implement initiatives designed to address supply and demand issues related to child care deserts and/or vulnerable populations (such as infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, English language learners, and children who need child care during non-traditional hours) during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? Check all that apply.

☐ Child care deserts



- ☐ Infants/toddlers
- ☐ Children with disabilities
- ☐ English language learners
- ☒ Children who need child care during non-traditional hours
- ☐ Other. Describe:

#### 11.4.2 Spending - Supply and Demand Initiatives:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- ☒ CCDF quality funds
- ☐ Non-CCDF funds
- ☐ CARES funds
- ☐ CRRSA Funds
- ☒ ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- ☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

#### 11.5 Provider Compensation and Benefits

##### 11.5.1 Spending - Provider Compensation and Benefits:

What compensation and benefits improvements did teachers/providers receive between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024 (check all that apply)? If indicated, how many providers received each type of support?

- ☒ Financial bonuses (not tied to education levels) **13,236**
- ☐ Salary enhancements/wage supplements
- ☐ Health insurance coverage
- ☐ Dental insurance coverage
- ☐ Retirement benefits
- ☐ Loan Forgiveness programs
- ☐ Mental Health/Wellness programs
- ☐ Start up funds
- ☐ Other. Describe:

☐ N/A. Describe:

#### 11.5.2 Spending - Provider Compensation and Benefits:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

☒ Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

☐ CCDF quality funds

☐ Non-CCDF funds

☐ CARES funds

☐ CRRSA Funds

☒ ARP Supplemental Discretionary

☐ ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

☐ Unable to report. Indicate reason:

☐ No

#### 11.6 Spending – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services

##### 11.6.1 Spending – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on other activities to improve the quality of child care services during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? **\$21584349**

☐ Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **The Lead Agency used \$1.1 million for the Thriving Child Care Business Academy (<https://www.decal.ga.gov/Thriving.aspx>), an online platform of free training and resources to support child care program owners and administrators in enhancing their business and financial management skills.**

**\$3 million went to the Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery (EXPAND) grants program to support increasing access to child care during nontraditional hours (evenings, overnight, early mornings, and weekends). Seven licensed child care providers received grants to directly support extending their hours of operation, and six nonprofit and government entities received grants to form collaboratives of community partners that work together to**

address the need for nontraditional hour care in their communities.

\$750,000 went toward a contract with the Urban Institute to conduct a study of families' experiences with the CAPS program. The study is ongoing and includes analyses of administrative data and surveys, focus groups, and interviews with families and other stakeholders. Results will help inform improvements to the CAPS program.

\$1.9 million went toward Community Transformation Grants to address the unique needs of local populations by building community partnerships that address and support the early childhood needs of young children and their families. Twenty-six community organizations received grants to innovate and pilot solutions to increase access to resources at the community level and to create a sustainable collaborative framework for future growth.

The Lead Agency also used \$1.5 million for the operations of Community Partnerships and 2Gen Outreach team, formerly the Policy and Partnership team, in the Quality Innovations and Partnerships division. The Community Partnerships and 2Gen Outreach team works to improve the quality of child care by creating and sustaining partnerships in local communities throughout the state. This team also leads the Community Transformation Grants.

## **11.7 Progress Update**

### **11.7.1 Progress Update – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services:**

Other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.10.1 of the 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

**The state's activities related to improving the services to children, including infants and toddlers, preschool, and school-aged children, are detailed throughout this document. Other activities include:**

- **Supporting local communities' ability to access and use appropriate data. This support includes community training sessions organized by the Lead Agency's Early Education Community Coordinators where community leaders can learn more about Georgia's Early Childhood Integrated Data System. In Georgia, this integrated system is called the Cross Agency**

Child Data System (CACDS). Through this training, community members are taught how to access local data that can benefit their communities. Metrics related to this initiative include training and traffic to the CACDS website.

- Supporting families in learning about and accessing quality care for their children. In addition to efforts related to Georgia's child care search engine, (<http://www.qualityrated.org>) [www.qualityrated.org](http://www.qualityrated.org), the state also provides materials to providers to communicate their star level and how this star level indicates their quality. Ongoing stakeholder engagement helps gauge the materials that providers perceive have the greatest impact.

- The state supports families through a call center (1-800-ALLGAKIDS), through a searchable website that highlights quality (<http://www.qualityrated.org>) [www.qualityrated.org](http://www.qualityrated.org), and through ongoing family support for child care subsidy recipients offered by family support consultants. The state is also designing new licensing reports to help families more easily research a program's licensing history. Measurable indicators of progress include the number and percentage of successful referrals offered through the call center. Family support consultants also track their referrals and are creating metrics related to family-centered coaching. The Lead Agency will create metrics related to the new licensing reports.

- The Lead Agency is also offering new community-level grants, including Two-Generation Innovation Grants, Trauma-Responsive Care Grants, and Community Transformation Grants. The Lead Agency is working with an external evaluation partner, the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS), to design reports and a formal evaluation for the Two-Generation Innovation Grants and the Community Transformation Grants.

- The Lead Agency will develop professional development modules for early learning and school-age professionals in culturally relevant teaching and in supporting anti-bias classrooms.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.10.2 of the 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: Georgia's child care search engine ([www.qualityrated.org](http://www.qualityrated.org)) received 458,260 views and 175,273 users in FFY2024. The "Compliance at a Glance" page on [qualityrated.org](http://www.qualityrated.org), designed to provide easy access to programs' licensing history to families, saw increased use in FFY2024. Between October 1, 2023, and September 30, 2024, total page views were 22,888, and total users were 14,888. As part of the ongoing revisions to Quality Rated, the Lead Agency heard from stakeholders about the importance of communicating program quality to families. From October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024, Family Support Consultants and CAPS staff facilitated 1,912 referrals to community resources through the Find Help Georgia platform. Additionally,

CAPS staff may connect families to local community resources that are not yet listed on the platform. All CAPS staff receive training in Family-Centered Coaching, with Family Support Consultants receiving additional toolkit training to support parent-driven goal setting for CAPS families. During FFY2024, 124 CAPS staff members completed Mindset Training, including 52 Family Support Consultants who also completed Toolkit Training.

The 1-877-ALL-GA-KIDS call center received inquiries from 9,668 families between October 1, 2023, and September 30, 2024. The call center provided referrals for 4,877 or 55 percent of the inquiring families. The call center did not provide referrals for 2,376, or 25 percent, of the inquiring families who cited CAPS subsidy- or general affordability-related reasons for not wanting a referral. The call center also did not provide referrals for 2,415, or 25 percent, of inquiring families who either attempted to contact the call center but did not respond to follow-ups (807), gave up their search for care (10), found care on their own without a referral (113), or did not want a referral for another unspecified reason, including families who call for reasons other than referrals (1,485).

In February 2024, website metric capabilities resumed for Georgia's early childhood integrated data system (Georgia's Cross Agency Child Data System, or CACDS) dashboard. Between February 5 and September 30, 2024, the CACDS website received 3,397 page views and 1,421 active users. Community coordinator trainings related to CACDS were suspended with the launch of the new website; these will resume once a new Head Start dashboard built on the CACDS platform launches in FFY2025.

The Community Transformation Grants offered by the Lead Agency concluded in June 2024. An evaluation of the grants by the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS) will report findings in FFY2025. The Lead Agency will offer new community-level funding opportunities, including 2Gen Innovation Grants, 2Gen Community Literacy Grants, and Community Transformation Grants in FFY2025.

Finally, the Lead Agency developed three draft courses on culturally responsive teaching for the Online Learning Library Initiative (OLLI). Before launching the courses, the Lead Agency engaged with a group of 37 reviewers to provide feedback through survey and small group feedback sessions. Reviewers represented urban and rural areas of the state and included agency staff, lead and assistant teachers, program administrators, trainers, family child care providers, and support staff. Feedback from the reviewers included breaking up the courses into smaller sections to help users digest more dense information, using more interactive videos to demonstrate concepts, and creating a companion guide to support program leaders and

instructional coaches to extend learning in the classroom. The courses are currently under review by agency leaders, and final edits will be made in the coming year.

## 12) Annual Report

Lead agencies must submit an annual report, as required at 45 CFR § 98.53(f) (4), describing any changes to lead agency regulations, enforcement mechanisms, or other lead agency policies addressing health and safety based on an annual review and assessment of serious child injuries and any deaths occurring in child care programs receiving CCDF, and in other regulated and unregulated child care centers and family child care homes, to the extent possible.

### 12.1 Annual Report and Changes

#### 12.1.1 Annual Report:

Describe the annual review and assessment of serious injuries and any deaths occurring in child care programs receiving CCDF, and in other regulated and unregulated child care centers and family child care homes, to the extent possible. **The Lead Agency maintains data on all investigations of serious injuries and deaths in licensed, license-exempt, and unlicensed child care programs. A death or an incident requiring hospitalization or professional medical attention other than first aid of a child while in the care of the provider that was the result of a substantiated intentional or gross negligent act on behalf of the provider and/or staff indicates a deficiency in the operation and/or management of the program. Any case of serious injury substantiated by the Lead Agency will be deemed as Extreme Harm and Imminent Danger according to the Lead Agency's Integrated Enforcement and Compliance System. The Lead Agency analyzes all incidents deemed Extreme Harm and Imminent Danger as they occur. The Lead Agency assesses these incidents annually and based on the specifics of the incidents determines if changes in policy and/or regulation is needed.**

#### 12.1.2 Annual Report Changes:

Describe any changes to lead agency regulations, enforcement mechanisms, or other lead agency policies addressing health and safety based on the annual review and assessment. **The Lead Agency continues to thoroughly evaluate and investigate all incidents as they are reported or become known to DECAL. Discovery of an incident can come about in a variety of ways that include, but are not limited to, required reporting as outlined in licensing rules, reporting by the general public via intake, reporting from another state agency or local public entity, and the monitoring process. Through the evaluation and investigative process, if the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that an incident meets the state's definition of serious injury or abuse, that incident will be included in the annual report. The process and results are consistently evaluated, and no changes to the process were made during the reporting period.**