



GEEARS 3-year Strategic Framework

April 2021

Executive Summary

Over the next three years, GEEARS will build on and enhance our existing high-impact work to support Georgia's young children and their families.

GEEARS will focus on **three key issue areas** that, when taken together, offer a **holistic approach to supporting young children**.

Access to quality and affordable childcare

Healthy child development

Family wellbeing



To make progress in these issue areas, we will pursue **four organizational priorities** that **leverage our existing strengths and capacity**.

Priority 1: Broaden network of supporters and advocates

Priority 2: Advance policy, regulatory, and budgetary goals

Priority 3: Grow research influence

Priority 4: Support local systems alignment

Across this work, we will deepen our commitment to equity, ensuring equity drives the issues we prioritize, the strategies we pursue, and the metrics to which we hold ourselves accountable.

Our Vision

All Georgia students will enter kindergarten prepared to succeed and on a path to read to learn by third grade.

GEEARS will continue to make progress toward our vision through our existing mission and methods of work

Our Mission

We support high-quality early learning and healthy development for Georgia's youngest children, from birth to five, by championing policies, promoting innovative and evidence-based practices, and building public will.



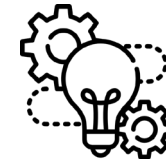
Communicate, Convene, and Collaborate

We educate, inform and mobilize stakeholders for collective action and impact to ensure all Georgia families achieve the economic, community and health benefits of setting a strong foundation prenatally and in the first five years of a child's life.



Advocate

We advocate for effective policies that support access to high-quality early learning and encourage healthy development.



Research and Innovate

We are a trusted source who brings the most promising innovation and evidence-based practices and research to the state on behalf of Georgia's youngest children.

Our Strategic Plan

Over the next three years, GEEARS will build on and enhance our existing high-impact work to support Georgia's young children and their families.

To advance our vision and mission, we will focus our resources on three complementary issue areas

GEEARS catalyzes systemic change in three areas that directly contribute to the number of students entering kindergarten ready to succeed:

Access to quality and affordable child care

Healthy child development

Family wellbeing



GEEARS will **maintain our focus** on increasing **access to quality and affordable child care**.

At the same time, we will **increase our efforts related to healthy child development and family wellbeing**. This increased effort will help ensure that families have access to the **holistic supports** needed to achieve more equitable outcomes.

In each of these issue areas, GEEARS will track and report statewide progress in aggregate and by subgroup

Access to quality and affordable childcare

- Measure 1
- Measures 2 - n

Healthy child development

- Measure 1
- Measures 2 - n

Family wellbeing

- Measure 1
- Measures 2 - n

GEEARS staff is in the process of **developing a set of proposed measures**, aligned to these three issues areas, which it will track over time to understand progress. The plan is to **track progress statewide and by subgroup (e.g., race/ethnicity) to build awareness of current priorities and outcomes** and to **build will to accelerate progress and address inequities**.

Staff will also explore the best method to communicate progress to **ensure the data reach a broad audience** (e.g. through creating an annual report or an interactive dashboard). The primary target audiences are: policymakers, funders, advocates, and the media. Secondary audiences are supporters, champions, and the general public.

Staff will create input opportunities for the board to help define the measures, and the board will be the ultimate decision-maker on what gets tracked.

See next slide for draft indicators for discussion

Draft indicators

Draft indicators for discussion and refinement

Access to quality and affordable childcare

- % of income-eligible children receiving CAPS scholarships
- % of four-year-olds enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K
- % of child care programs at each Quality Rating level (1, 2, 3 stars and unrated) (by program type)
- ECE workforce median hourly wage (by role)
- 3rd grade reading proficiency %
- # of children served by HS/EHS (annually):
 - Head Start/EHS

Healthy child development

- Low birthweight rate
- % of children 0-5 without health insurance
- % of children who received all recommended doses of the combined 7-vaccine series by age 35 months
- ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences)
 - % of children (0-17) who experienced 2+ (via NSCH)
- % children ages 2-5 with obesity OR
 - % households with children that are food-insecure
- # children served by early intervention (Babies Can't Wait) (annually)
- % children who have received preventive dental care in the past year

Family wellbeing

- % children 0-5 living in poverty
- # children 0-4 with a substantiated incident of child abuse and/or neglect (per 1,000)
- % "potential beneficiaries" ages 0-2 served by home visiting
- # children 0-5 (and pregnant women?) enrolled in WIC program (% if available)
- % children living in crowded housing
- % children 0-5 with 1 or both parents in the labor force

Yellow highlighting = priority; pink = maybe

We identified four organizational priorities that will drive our efforts to make progress on these issue areas...

Priority 1: Broaden network of supporters

Build a broader, more inclusive and diverse statewide network of advocates and champions who can advise on needs, help influence policy change, and support other GEEARS activities.

Priority 2: Advance policy, regulatory, and budgetary goals

Make progress against policy and budgetary goals that focus on high quality and affordable child care, child health, and family well being and that reduce current disparities.

Priority 3: Grow research influence

Produce high-impact research that reaches a broad range of audiences and informs the advancement of strategies that support equitable outcomes for young children and families in Georgia.

Priority 4: Support local systems alignment

Strengthen our capacity to support local stakeholders to develop, improve, and scale community-wide initiatives focused on achieving more equitable child and family outcomes.

Note: These priorities, and strategies that follow, are not meant to be inclusive of all the work that GEEARS does/will do. Instead, these pages are intended to elevate the bodies of work that we will invest additional resources, initiate, or do differently to accelerate our impact.

...and we will track and report our progress against each priority

Priority 1: Broaden network of supporters

Progress broadening and deepening the coalition of supporters
(measured against a continuum of engagement framework)

Priority 2: Advance policy, regulatory, and budgetary goals

Progress/wins against stated policy, regulatory, and budgetary priorities (which will be updated annually)

Priority 3: Grow research influence

Research reach and influence
(measured by downloads, clicks & media mentions)

Priority 4: Support local systems alignment

PAACT progress on defined outcomes

Within each organizational priority, we will focus on advancing a focused set of strategies

Priority 1: Broaden network of supporters

Strategy 1A: Develop champions beyond Atlanta

Strategy 1B: Increase grassroots (parents, providers) engagement

Strategy 1C: Increase business leader engagement

Strategy 1D: Increase K-12 system engagement

Priority 2: Advance policy, regulatory, and budgetary goals

Strategy 2A: Establish and advance annual priorities

Strategy 2B: Influence equitable systems change leveraging public funds

Strategy 2C: Explore options for expanding electoral advocacy activities

Priority 3: Grow research influence

Strategy 3A: Intensify focus on high-impact research topics

Strategy 3B: Increase efforts to ensure research reaches key influencers

Strategy 3C: Leverage external partnerships

Priority 4: Support local systems alignment

Strategy 4A: Continue to support PAACT

Strategy 4B: Develop framework for supporting systems alignment in other communities

The following pages describe each strategy in additional detail.

Our organizational priorities align with and reinforce the methods through which we currently drive positive change



**Communicate,
Convene, and
Collaborate**

Priority 1

**Broaden network of
supporters**

Priority 4

**Support local systems
alignment**



Advocate

Priority 2

**Advance policy, regulatory,
and budgetary goals**



**Research and
Innovate**

Priority 3

Grow research influence

These organizational priorities and strategies complement the work we will continue to do



Communicate, Convene, and Collaborate

- Create opportunities for stakeholders to learn from experts (e.g., Speaker Series, movie screenings, other related events)
- Engage and educate legislators (e.g., Strolling Thunder, Committee presentations, legislative briefings, personalized data and outreach)
- Participate in Committee and Advisory Council work
- Run Mayor's Summer Reading Club
- Facilitate local Parent Community Nights and Listening Sessions
- Lead Infant-Toddler Coalition
- Lead Funders' Roundtable
- Support DECAL projects (e.g., licensing reports) and evaluation (e.g., Community Grants)
- Spearhead First 2000 Days Campaign and PAACT Advocacy and Awareness Campaign
- Engage with early childhood leaders in other states and at national organizations

GEEARS will continue to...



Advocate

- Promote the establishment and utilization of home visiting programs
- Support family-friendly licensing project
- Encourage participation in Quality Rated
- Support the work to review and revise QRIS standards
- Explore strategies to improve quality of family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) care
- Leverage public and private funding to support quality improvement activities
- Fundraise to deploy affordability scholarships to target populations
- Advocate for increased funding/slots for child care subsidy
- Lead development of IECMH Association and credentialing effort
- Pursue ongoing advocacy for Pre-K funding and class size reduction



Research and Innovate

- Collect and produce polling data
- Conduct data analysis (e.g., Quality Rating by census tract) and data sharing
- Support cost modeling work with DECAL
- Develop and use communication tools
- Participate in national conferences as attendees and speakers
- Disseminate publications and resources (e.g., Readiness Radar) nationally as models for other states

We must intentionally situate GEEARS in the context of other organizations currently working in these issues

We will partner with and leverage the work of existing organizations

Government

- **GA Department of Early Care and Learning**
- GA Department of Public Health
- GA Department of Education
- GA Office of the Child Advocate

Advocacy organizations

- **Voices for Georgia's Children**
- Quality Care for Children
- Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia

Professional associations

- **GA Association for the Education of Young Children**
- **Professional Family Child Care Alliance of Georgia**
- **GA Child Care Association**

Grassroots and grasstops

- **New Georgia Project**
- **9 to 5**
- **Georgia Family Connection Partnership**
- Easterseals North Georgia

Business communities

- **Metro Atlanta Chamber**
- Georgia Chamber of Commerce
- Rotary Club of Atlanta

Researchers and think tanks

- **Georgia Budget and Policy Institute**
- **Policy Labs at Georgia State**
- Emory University
- Atlanta University Center Consortium

Health-focused organizations

- Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
- CHRIS 180
- Resilient Georgia
- Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies

TBD

- TBD

TBD

- TBD