

2019 GEORGIA EARLY CARE & LEARNING LEGISLATIVE ACADEMY



Hosted by GEEARS: Georgia Early Education Alliance for
Ready Students and Metro Atlanta Chamber

GEEARS:

Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose mission is to 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.

Our vision is that, by 2020, all Georgia children will enter kindergarten prepared to succeed and be on a path to “read to learn” by third grade.

To learn more, visit www.geears.org

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LAST NOVEMBER,

Georgia voters across the state elected candidates to important public offices including Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, the General Assembly, and even seats in the U.S. Congress.

As legislators, you are uniquely positioned to create and champion public policy that will directly impact the future development and well-being of Georgia's youngest children. This resource provides information regarding the importance and current landscape of early childhood education in Georgia to encourage you as public servants to drive change and create a positive impact on our youngest learners.

At GEEARS: Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students, we champion policies and promote best practices to support early learning and healthy development for Georgia's youngest children.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HIGH-QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION

Brain Development

The first **3** years of life represent the most *rapid* period of brain development, and experiences during these years



CRITICALLY shape future development. During this window, there are more than **1 million** new neural connections formed per second.

Economic Impact

Economic growth depends on smart investments. James J. Heckman, a distinguished economics professor and Nobel Memorial Prize winner, argues that early learning is a low-risk investment that guarantees a high return for individuals and society. Heckman's research shows that high-quality, comprehensive early learning programs yield an annual 13% return on investment. Moreover, early education helps reduce taxpayer expenses for remedial education, health care, and other societal problems.¹

Early childhood programs support the growth of a productive workforce now and in the future. When parents have access to high-quality early learning for their young children, employers benefit from reduced absences and employee turnover.

A recent study found a conservative estimate of \$24 billion in parents' annual earnings that are made possible by the availability of child care in Georgia. Expanded early learning access would increase these earnings and bolster Georgia's economy.



In Georgia, the child care industry provides care for an estimated **337,024** children each year and generates **\$4.7 BILLION** annually in economic activity in Georgia.

Georgia State University Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government (2016). Economic Impact of the Early Care and Education Industry. Revised.



Enduring Effect on Educational Outcomes

Research shows that access to high-quality early learning is one of the most reliable interventions available to drive student achievement. Children who attend high-quality early learning programs are more likely to read by **THIRD GRADE**,



graduate high school, attend college, and obtain employment. They are also less likely to need behavioral interventions and are less likely to become involved in the criminal justice system.



Head Start Facts and Impacts. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.nhsa.org/facts-and-impacts>



EARLY CHILDHOOD IN GEORGIA 101

Key Child-Serving Agencies in Georgia

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)

DECAL licenses, monitors, and provides support for child care providers throughout the state. The agency also administers Georgia's Pre-K program.

Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

DFCS oversees public child welfare in the state. DFCS responds to reports of abuse and neglect against children, oversees foster care placement of children, and oversees adoption services.

Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH)

DPH takes the lead in preventing disease, injury, and disability; promoting health and well-being; and preparing for and responding to disasters from a health perspective. DPH funds and collaborates with Georgia's 159 county health departments and 18 public health districts. DPH works in the area of maternal and child health, including through its *Georgia Home Visiting Program*, as well as through its early intervention services, *Babies Can't Wait*.

Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH)

DCH oversees the administration of the Medicaid program as well as PeachCare, Georgia's need-based children's health insurance program.

Georgia Department of Education (DOE)

DOE sets curriculum standards for all K-12 instruction in Georgia.



Key Early Childhood Programs and Statistics

Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)

Georgia's child care scholarship program utilized by low-income, working parents/caregivers of children under 13 years of age. CAPS is a need-based program funded mostly through the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). The program is managed in Georgia by the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL).

Georgia Pre-K

Georgia's lottery-funded, "universal" (i.e., not need-based) Pre-Kindergarten program for four-year-olds. Georgia utilizes a mixed delivery system, with classrooms in both private child care centers and public schools.

Head Start and Early Head Start

Head Start is a federal program that provides comprehensive services, including early learning, for low-income children ages 3 to 5 and their families. Head Start is administered by the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Early Head Start (EHS) programs serve infants and toddlers under the age of 3, and pregnant women.

Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)

A federal grant awarded to states to implement evidence-based home visiting for at-risk pregnant women and young children. Georgia's Home Visiting Program is operated through the Georgia Department of Public Health.



Quality Rated Child Care

Georgia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that is administered by DECAL. It is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the quality of child care providers in the state. Quality Rated assigns a rating - one, two, or three stars - to programs that go above and beyond licensing requirements to meet a set of defined program standards.

Only **11%** of eligible children receive CAPS scholarships, primarily due to a lack of funding.

72% of eligible providers are participating in **Quality Rated.***

34% of eligible providers are **Quality Rated.***

*Source: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. As of October 1, 2018.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A growing body of evidence underscores the value of early childhood education for both children and their parents, providing the former with a strong educational foundation and allowing the latter to work or obtain job training. Child care challenges, whether a result of systemic barriers to access or the cumulative impact of inconsistent or unreliable care, affect parents' participation in the workforce and can have far-reaching effects for families, employers, and the state's economy as a whole. Recent reports from two states, Louisiana and Maryland, suggest that such child care challenges lead to significant costs to families, employers, and the states' economies.

Building on the work of our partners in these states, we set out to examine such issues in Georgia. In mid-2018, a polling firm surveyed Georgia parents of children under 5 to better understand the intersection of workforce participation (including participation in work training and postsecondary programs) and child care challenges. The results are alarming. Child care challenges in Georgia are leading to significant disruptions to parental workforce participation—both in the short (e.g., missed days at work or school) and long (e.g., leaving the workforce) term—and to the state's economy.



Child care challenges lead to at least **\$1.75 BILLION IN LOSSES** in economic activity annually and an additional **\$105 MILLION** in lost tax revenue.



	Economic Loss Estimate (Millions)	State Income Tax Revenue Loss (Millions)
Absences	\$331.1	\$19.9
Turnover	\$1422.1	\$85.3
Total	\$1753.2	\$105.2



of Georgia parents of children under 5 reported a significant disruption to their or a family member's employment (quitting, not taking, or greatly changing a job) in the past year.

OPPORTUNITIES LOST:

How Child Care Challenges Affect Georgia's Workforce and Economy



There are **825,000**
children ages 0 to 5 in Georgia.

29% of Georgia children ages 0 to 5
live in **p o v e r t y**.

More than **one-third** of Georgia's
infants and toddlers live in areas of concentrated
poverty.

53%
of Georgia children ages 0 to 5 live at or below
200% of the poverty line.

10% of babies born in Georgia are
considered **low-birthweight**.

Only
36% of Georgia third graders are at a
proficient reading level.



you're my
cherry best
friend



CAPS program eligibility is set at 50% of state median income, one of the lowest in the nation.



Under this policy, only 11% of income-eligible children receive the child care subsidy.



The cost of child care for an infant or toddler in Georgia exceeds the cost of annual tuition at an in-state public college or university.



The cost of child care for a single child exceeds 40% of the earnings in a low-income family.



Parents who do not have access to child care for their children are often unable to work.



Children who do not have access to quality child care are often cared for in unhealthy, unregulated settings.

Access to high-quality, comprehensive early learning, birth to five, yields a 13% return on investment through better outcomes in education, health, social behaviors, and employment.



THE OBJECTIVES OF THE INFANT-TODDLER COALITION FOR QUALITY, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE IN GEORGIA

Work with DECAL to identify strategies to:

1

Adequately fund CAPS with a combination of state and federal dollars to serve the needs of low-income families.

2

Support the infant-toddler workforce by expanding scholarships and other supports.

3

Ensure that the social-emotional needs of infants and toddlers are supported in child care programs.

CAPS: Georgia's Child Care Subsidy Program

DECAL: Department of Early Child Care + Learning

CCDF: Child Care + Development Fund

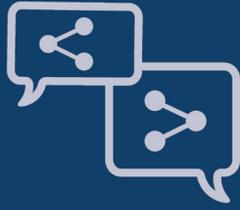


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ALLIANCE FOR READY STUDENTS



HOW WE CAN WORK TO MEET OUR OBJECTIVES FOR QUALITY, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE IN GEORGIA

IMPROVE DATA SHARING



on how families of infants and toddlers are accessing early learning, including the CAPS program.

INCREASE

the infant and toddler reimbursement rate to reflect lower ratios in care.

RE-EXAMINE

the funding needed to reduce the infant and toddler ratios as rates go up.



Add \$9.5 million to the state CAPS budget to allow for



OVER **1,000**
NEW INFANTS +
TODDLERS TO
BE SERVED

Build a strategy around the use of the new CCDF funding that

**PRIORITIZES
INFANTS +
TODDLERS**



**EXPAND
CAPS ELIGIBILITY TO**

65%

**OF STATE
MEDIAN INCOME**

to enable additional children to access the subsidy.

INCREASE

the tiered reimbursement rate so that 3-star rated programs are reimbursed at

75%

of the market rate.



Align the reimbursement rates with current market rates by 2020.

Advocate for the establishment of a

**STATE FUND
FOR CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENTS**

rewarding child care facilities dedicated to improving quality.



**PARTNER
WITH LOCAL
SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

to increase coordination and understanding of infant and toddler needs.



CAPS: Georgia's Child Care Subsidy Program

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The Brain Trust for Babies

The Brain Trust for Babies is a statewide, multi-agency, multidimensional initiative that brings together government, philanthropic, academic, and business communities to address language nutrition and developmental health in Georgia infants and toddlers.

Key thought leaders are leading a multi-pronged approach focused on early learning, physical well-being, and social-emotional health to ensure that all children enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

DECAL's Infant and Toddler Initiatives

Utilizing funds from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, DECAL created the Early Language and Literacy Project that focuses on critical early language skills for infants and toddlers. This project provides competitive grants to Quality Rated child care programs to improve their infant and toddler classroom quality by providing professional learning opportunities and funding for classroom language and literacy materials.

A new model of child care subsidy scholarships has been created to increase access to programs providing high-quality infant and toddler care. This model, based on Georgia's Pre-K model, provides a Quality Rated Subsidy Grant to two- and three-star rated programs in targeted areas of the state.

More recently, DECAL committed additional federal CCDF funding to support an increase in the infant-toddler scholarship (CAPS) rate and increase funding to support credentials for infant and toddler teachers through scholarships and stipends.



EDUCATION

Bright from the Start:
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
404-656-5957
www.dec.al.ga.gov

Georgia Department of Education
404-656-2800
www.gadoe.org

Quality Rated Child Care
1-855-800-7747
www.qualityrated.org

FAMILY

Division of Family and Children Services
404-657-3433
www.dfcs.georgia.gov

Child Care and Parent Services (CAPS)
1-833-442-2277
www.caps.dec.al.ga.gov

Maternal Infant & Early Childhood Home Visitng
Program (MIECHV)
www.gahomevisiting.org

HEALTH

Georgia Department of Public Health
404-257-2700
www.dph.georgia.gov

Georgia Department of Community Health
404-656-4507
www.dch.georgia.gov



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

EFFECTIVENESS OF EARLY EDUCATION

The United States Department of Education lists key research studies outlining the effectiveness of early learning programs.

www.ed.gov/Early-Learning/Research

HighScope Perry Preschool Study is a frequently cited evaluation of the long-term positive effects of high-quality early care learning for children living in poverty.

www.HighScope.org/Research

ECONOMICS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman has computed that every dollar invested in high-quality birth-to-five early childhood education for disadvantaged children delivers a 13% annual return on investment.

www.HeckmanEquation.org

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) summarized three reports on the impact of high-quality early education initiatives as public investment.

www.NCSL.org/Research/Early-Care-and-Education

RESEARCH AND DATA

Child Care and Early Education Research Connections houses an extensive and frequently updated collection of research on early education. The website provides free access to more than 25,000 resources, including empirical articles, government reports, fact sheets, issue briefs, datasets, and instruments.

www.ResearchConnections.org/Childcare/Welcome

The GEEARS Readiness Radar is a suite of interactive mapping tools that allows users to explore a range of data relevant to early childhood and school readiness in Georgia at the county, census tract, and legislative district levels.

www.GEEARS.org/Research/Readiness_Radar

INTERACTIVE LEARNING

- The Build My Brain course was inspired by a collaboration among GEEARS, the State of Georgia's child-serving agencies, the Rollins Center for Language and Literacy and the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University.
- BMB is part of a larger effort to identify how the science of early childhood development can be applied to policies and services for the birth-to-five population and to advance the goal of having every Georgia child reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade.
- BMB consists of three lessons featuring topics including early brain development, the role of responsive caregivers and other adults, and the effects of adverse childhood experiences and "toxic stress."
- Appropriate for use by a range of stakeholders, the course can be found on the Rollins Center's Cox Campus, a free, universally accessible online professional development platform: www.CoxCampus.org/Georgia-BMB





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