

## GEEARS SUPPORTS FUNDING FOR CHILDCARE AND PARENT SERVICES SUBSIDY

- Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) is Georgia's childcare subsidy program. It is funded through the federal Child Care and Development Fund and administered by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and serves to:
  - Provide access to high quality and affordable early learning environments for low-income families.
  - Support DECAL's efforts in increasing positive school readiness outcomes.
  - Assist families in achieving and maintaining self-sufficiency by providing financial supports for childcare.
- CAPS provides assistance to approximately 50,000 children (ages 0-4 and school-aged) each week.

## WHAT ARE THE FUNDING NEEDS?

- Governor Deal recently announced a recommendation for an additional \$5.5 million in state funds to help extend access to Quality Rated early education programs for eligible families. This is a meaningful first step that indicates our government's commitment to this program and advocates, providers and parents across the state are celebrating and applauding the Governor. However, we know that a much larger commitment is needed.
- The Governor's Committee for Education Reform recommended that \$10 million was needed to fully fund the tiered reimbursement model. **Therefore, GEEARS and other education advocates throughout the state are requesting the additional \$4.5 million dollars necessary to reach this threshold.**
- Georgia is currently only serving a fraction of eligible families, and over time, greater investment in CAPS will be needed to meet the growing need.

## WHY IS ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY LEARNING IMPORTANT?

- New research from Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman finds that comprehensive, 0-5 early care results in a **return on investment of 13 percent annually.**
- Childcare costs can easily account for **40 percent of a low-income family's budget.** These costs are greater than mortgage payments, utilities, and other necessities are a significant barrier to work.
- Accessible quality child care increases labor force participation, boosts local economics, and helps support a stable workforce. The early care and learning industry **generates \$4.7 billion in economic activity in Georgia each year.**
- The availability of child care in Georgia supports **annual parent earnings of at least \$24 billion**, which strengthens family economic security
- Children who attend high quality care programs are **more likely to read at grade level by third grade, go on to graduate high school, attend college and obtain employment.** They are less likely to drop out of school, depend on social services or be arrested.
  - Georgia's children are falling below – or barely meeting – the basic standard in reading by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. On the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test, **just 34 percent of 4<sup>th</sup> graders scored at or above proficient.**

## WHAT FAMILIES SAY ABOUT LIFE WITHOUT CAPS:

- "Without CAPS funding everything would crash in my life."
- [My children] "would not be in quality care. Before I had CAPS they were...not learning anything or in a healthy environment."
- [I would] "live under a bridge. I have to pay child care with what I receive from CAPS to be available to [work at] Kroger. Otherwise I would be under a bridge."

