

# 2023-24 Policy Priorities



Policy priorities are public facing legislative and/or administrative policy priorities of the Coalition.

## Policy Priorities

### Full Coalition

**Priority #1:** Help families with young children afford diapers, a basic necessity that keeps babies clean and healthy, by eliminating the state sales tax on diapers.

**Priority #2:** Ensure that Georgia is well-positioned to take advantage of federal opportunities, such as meeting the state match for relevant programs serving young children and their families.

### Child Care Affordability Committee

**Priority #1:** Plan to mitigate the effects of the end of federal pandemic relief funding, which has been a historic and critical lifeline for Georgia child care providers and families by preventing program closures and improving families' access to Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services Program (CAPS).

**Priority #2:** Advocate for significant, long-term federal child care funding—similar to the bill considered but not passed in '21-'22—to ensure that every family who needs affordable care can access it and that early childhood educators are adequately compensated for their skilled, essential work.

**Priority #3:** In light of the early care and education workforce shortage, explore and advocate for compensation strategies (e.g., ongoing supplements, bonuses) and support systems (e.g., educational pathways, recruitment strategies/incentives, benefits, professional and classroom supports) for infant and toddler teachers.

**Priority #4:** Adequately fund CAPS with a combination of state and federal dollars to serve the needs of families with low incomes, particularly those with infants and toddlers. Investments should balance improving access for families and strengthening program quality. We applaud the

## Child Care Affordability Committee (Continued)

recent enhancements made to CAPS, many of which were made possible through federal relief dollars, including: increasing the number of children served, covering the cost to families, and increasing reimbursement rates for providers.

**Priority #5:** In order to promote alignment and continuity of services, support adequate funding for programs and educator pay in the broader 0-5 space (e.g., Georgia's Pre-K Program) and school-age child care to promote positive outcomes for children and families.

**Priority #6:** Support the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) in improving Quality Rated during the upcoming revision process, such as by better incorporating cultural responsiveness and identifying and addressing bottlenecks in the process that slow down or even prevent providers from receiving a star rating.

## Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Committee

### Systems

**Priority #1:** Ensure that the needs of infants, toddlers, and their families are appropriately included in mental health legislation.

**Priority #2:** Advocate for state funding for evidence-based IECMH services, such as IECMH Consultation, screening, dyadic treatment, and parent skills training, and for additional state agency staff positions focused on IECMH.

### Programs

**Priority #3:** Ensure adequate funding for maternal and child health programs by advocating for:

- Additional funding for Children 1st, evidence-based Home Visiting, and Babies Can't Wait
- Greater clarity, transparency, and regularity of reimbursement for Babies Can't Wait service coordination by CMOs

**Priority #4:** Advocate for Medicaid reimbursement for evidence-based Home Visiting.

### Medicaid

**Priority #5:** Enact multi-year continuous eligibility for children birth to five years old on Medicaid, in order to support continuity of preventive and sick care in the critical early years.