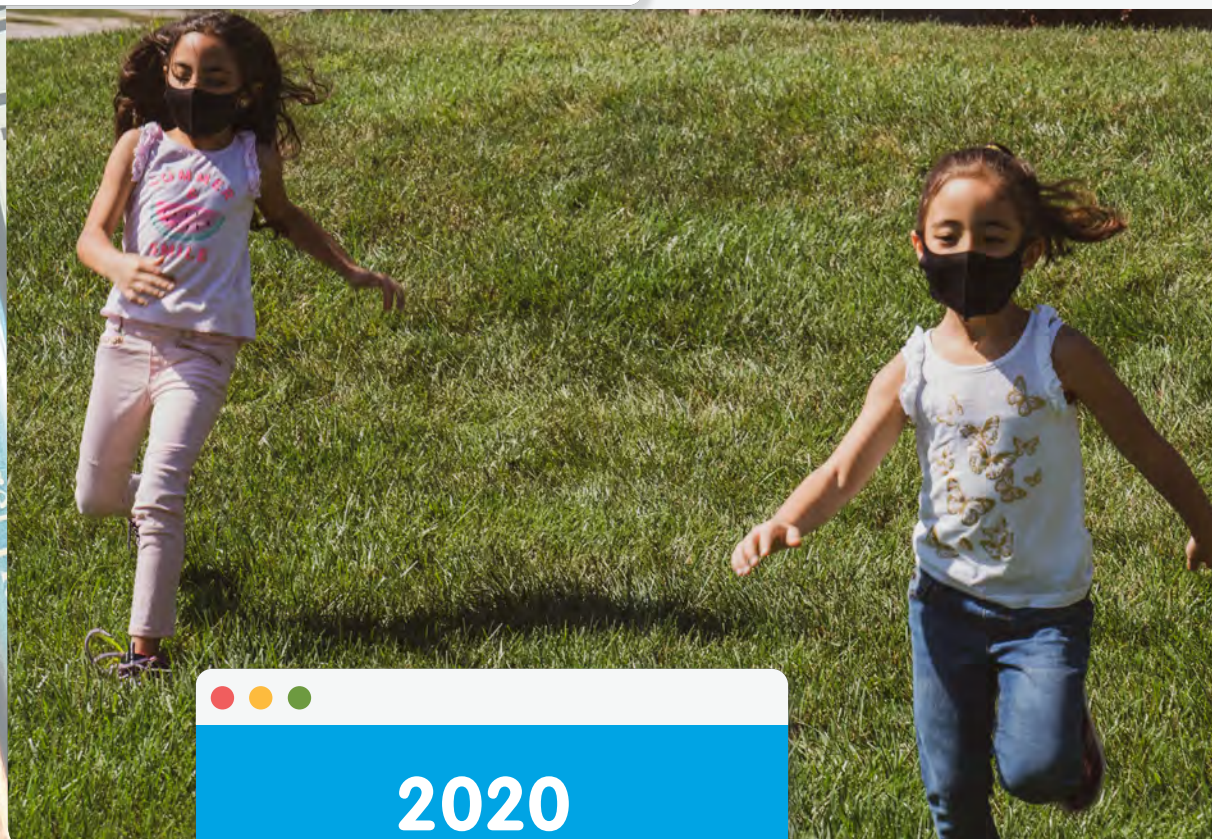





GEEARS
GEORGIA EARLY EDUCATION
ALLIANCE FOR READY STUDENTS



2020 Annual Report



GEEARS works to inspire and provide leadership for a statewide movement on quality early learning and healthy development for all children ages birth through five. Established in 2010, GEEARS helps business, civic and government leaders maximize the economic return on the state's investments in early care and learning.

Mission

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.

Vision

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



2020 Annual Report

INTRODUCTION

6

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GEEARS 2020 ADVOCACY

12

Coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic

GEEARS State Advocacy Remained Strong

Educating Georgia Voters

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY FOR BETTER BRAINS (LABB)

30

P-3 Leaders Fellowship Brings Together Leaders in Atlanta Education

Film Screenings Engage and Educate on Early Education Benefits

GEEARS Welcomes Nationally-Recognized Experts for Conversations on Early Childhood Speaker Series

PAACT: KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO ATLANTA'S CHILDREN

34

PAACT Fund for Quality Stabilization Grants

The PAACT Scholarship Powered by Quality Care for Children

Free School-Required Immunizations

Child Care Tuition Assistance

Virtual Parent Nights

Parenting in a Pandemic Conversations

Atlanta Early Ed Ambassadors Provide a Shining Light in the Darkness

Mayor's Summer Reading Club

FINANCIALS

40





MINDY BINDERMAN & STEPHANIE BLANK
Letter from Our Executive Director and Board Chair
To: Supporters of Children’s Early Education and Development

The COVID-19 crisis forced all of us to live differently in 2020. Over the past year, we have participated in weddings, celebrated birthdays (*including births of babies we have yet to meet!*), graduations, and many other major life events ... *all online*.

We learned that, although we were social distancing at home, life went on and we found new ways to stay connected to one another. That was especially true at GEEARS, where each and every one of us woke up every day committed to our connections to our work on behalf of Georgia’s youngest children and their families.

More importantly, the public health crisis taught many what GEEARS and our partners have known all along—just how critical the child care industry is to the well-being of our economy. As we continue to adapt to this new world, the GEEARS team is consistently advocating for and providing resources to families and early childhood providers. Each and every one of us at GEEARS wakes up every day committed to our connections to our work on behalf of Georgia’s youngest children and their families.

We’ll never forget 2020 as a year we lived through a global pandemic.

But one thing that this pandemic has taught us is to never miss an opportunity for sharing our gratitude. We want to thank those who have helped us fight on behalf Georgia’s youngest children and their families throughout these challenging times, including past and current members of our Board, our staff, and our funders. And to all the parents, legislators, and partners we’ve worked alongside in 2020: **thank you.**

We especially want to recognize Georgia’s early educators, who worked throughout the pandemic to lovingly care for our youngest children, and the owners of child care programs who struggle daily to keep their doors open. You are heroes one and all.

As we celebrate 10 Years of GEEARS, we look forward to working with all of you again for many more years to come.

MINDY & STEPHANIE

INTRODUCTION

2020

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

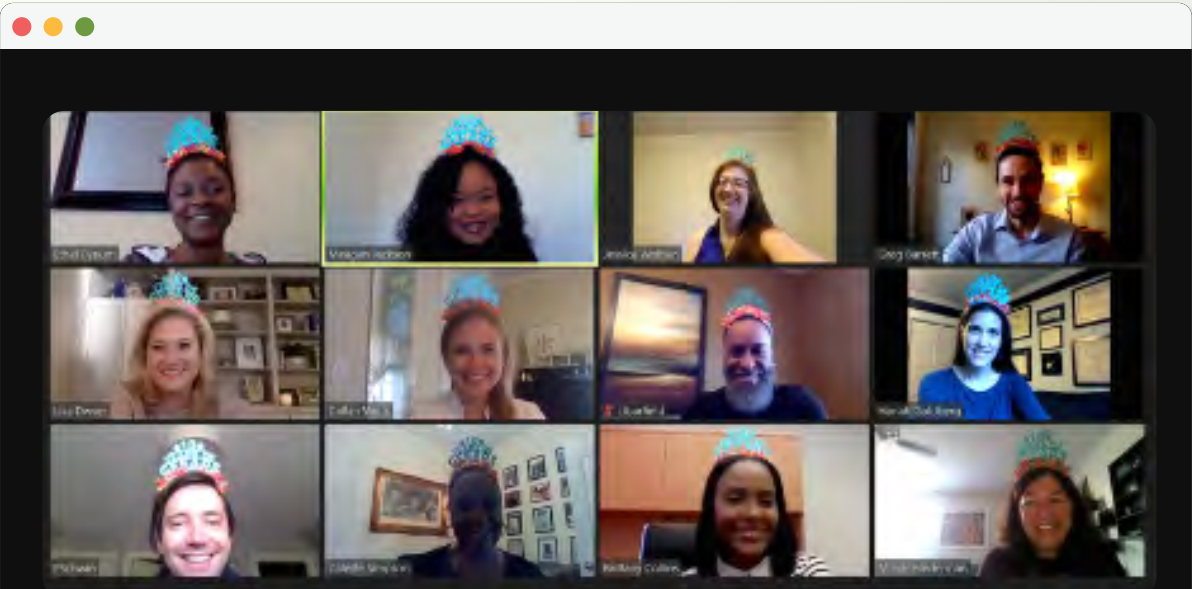
<div>1</div> <div>STOPPED BUDGET CUTS TO GEORGIA'S PRE-K</div> <div>JUNE 2020</div>	<div>2</div> <div>SECURED EXTENDED MEDICAID BENEFITS FOR NEW MOTHERS</div>	<div>3</div> <div>3RD ANNUAL STROLLING THUNDER BRINGS PARENTS TO CAPITOL</div> <div>JANUARY 2020</div>	<div>4</div> <div>MAYOR'S SUMMER READING CLUB DELIVERS 19,000 BOOKS</div> <div>JULY 2020</div>
<div>5</div> <div>WORKED TO REACH HARD-TO-COUNT POPULATIONS FOR THE CENSUS</div>	<div>6</div> <div>PAACT & QCC DEPLOY \$1M+ TO ATL CHILD CARE PROVIDERS</div> <div>APRIL 2020</div>	<div>7</div> <div>FOCUS ON EQUITY: HEATHER MCGHEE ADDRESSES EQUITY GAP</div> <div>OCTOBER 2020</div>	<div>8</div> <div>2020 ELECTION OUTREACH & VOTER GUIDE</div>
	<div>9</div> <div>SPEARHEADED EARLY CARE & LEARNING RESEARCH</div>	<div>10</div> <div>BACK-TO-BACK ATLANTA'S BEST PLACES TO WORK AWARDS</div>	

This year has been difficult for everyone, especially our youngest children, their families, caregivers, and Georgia's educators. At GEEARS, we haven't been together in our office since the spring, but we were still able to accomplish so much for Georgia's babies, young children, and those who care for them.



GEEARS

GEORGIA EARLY EDUCATION ALLIANCE FOR READY STUDENTS



OUR 10 YEAR "OFFICE" ANNIVERSARY PARTY!




100's


OF VIRTUAL STAFF MEETINGS
(WITH ICEBREAKERS!)



2020
ACCOMPLISHMENTS


\$1M
IN COVID-RELATED
EMERGENCY GRANTS
THROUGH PAACT,
SUPPORTED BY THE
UNITED WAY OF GREATER
ATLANTA AND THE
JOSEPH B. WHITEHEAD
FOUNDATION


2020 BEST PLACES TO WORK
FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW, GEEARS WAS
NAMED ONE OF ATLANTA'S BEST PLACES TO
WORK BY THE ATLANTA BUSINESS CHRONICLE IN
THE SMALL COMPANY CATEGORY.


10k
MESSAGES SENT TO
LAWMAKERS TO SAVE PRE-K

8th Mayor's Summer
Reading Club

19k
BOOKS


5.5k
BACKPACKS WITH
SUPPLIES

 **QUALITY SERVICE AWARDS**
Executive Director Mindy Binderman was awarded the Pat
Minish Advocacy Award by the Georgia Association for the
Education of Young Children. The Pat Minish Advocacy
award is given for distinguished service to quality educational
improvements for all of Georgia's children. Mindy received
the award at the GAEYC Quality Service Awards Luncheon
in September.



The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Parental paid leave makes inroads in Georgia after years of resistance

January 25, 2020

"If you had asked me two years ago about paid parental leave and the prospects in Georgia, I would have said slim to none," said Binderman, executive director of the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students, a nonprofit focused on boosting care and learning for children under 5. "I think now we're in a healthy discussion about the need for it because frankly the workforce is demanding it."

Rome News-Tribune

Rep. Dempsey gets final results of HR 421

February 27, 2020

"We work very closely with childcare providers across the state," Wells said, "and we heard this continuing narrative that one of the biggest challenges they face is the social emotional health of young children."

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Potential state cuts could mean fewer Atlanta pre-K classrooms

May 28, 2020

SAPORTAREPORT

Valued voices share insights about Atlanta and beyond

Keeping Our Promise to Atlanta's Children

May 4, 2020

SAPORTAREPORT

Valued voices share insights about Atlanta and beyond

Count Every Georgian, Especially Our Youngest Children

March 2, 2020



As Legislators Reconvene, Education Advocates Worry About Potential Cuts To Pre-K

June 15, 2020

SAPORTAREPORT

Valued voices share insights about Atlanta and beyond

Georgia Loses \$1.75 Billion in Economic Activity Annually as a Result of Child Care Challenges

January 7, 2020



Atlanta community offering free immunizations for children for school

July 29, 2020

SAPORTAREPORT

Valued voices share insights about Atlanta and beyond

Thankful for 10 Years

December 1, 2020

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Opinion: Help child care providers. They are essential in pandemic and beyond

March 31, 2020

"As the world copes with an unprecedented public health and economic crisis, we are also in the midst of a child care crisis. State and federal leaders must act quickly to support essential workers in need of child care and provide critical financial support to our state's child care providers if we are to maintain a supply of safe, quality care during this urgent time and into the future."

**GEEARS 2020
ADVOCACY**

COPING WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 crisis hit child-serving entities and underscored what GEEARS and our partners have known all along—just how critical the child care industry is to the well-being of our economy. As we adapted to the new world, the GEEARS team consistently advocated for and provided resources to families and early childhood providers. Despite various challenges, the GEEARS team is focused on being nimble and intentional.

COVID-19 INFORMATION RESOURCE

GEEARS and its partners worked together to assemble a list of financial supports for Georgia child care providers in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. This list was

updated throughout the year and offered a range of information relevant to early childhood health and education during the outbreak, including resources specifically for child care providers and families.

LISTENING TO GEORGIA'S FAMILIES PARENT SURVEY

As we all coped with the health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we knew that parents of young children faced particularly difficult circumstances. We developed a parent/caregiver survey in May and June of 2020 to give us an inside look into the lives of families of young children as they adjusted to COVID-19, and we launched a new story collection webpage providing a safe space for families to share their personal experiences.

The Family Experience Survey showed COVID-19 disruptions were “simply not sustainable” for many families. The respondents reported a range of disruptions to employment, family routines, and child care arrangements, underscoring that Georgia’s parents are making significant adjustments and sacrifices as they respond to new demands and attempt to juggle work and their children’s needs. Some highlights:


465
RESPONDENTS FROM
78 COUNTIES

Roughly

1 in 5
TOOK UNPAID LEAVE IN ORDER
TO PROVIDE CHILD CARE


\$1M
IN GRANTS TO ATLANTA
CHILD CARE PROVIDERS


70%


OF RESPONDENTS REPORTED USING
SOME TYPE OF FORMAL CHILD CARE
ARRANGEMENT (E.G., CHILD CARE CENTER,
FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME, ETC.) PRIOR TO
THE PANDEMIC, ONLY 13% INDICATED THIS
WAS THEIR CURRENT ARRANGEMENT.

Nearly

1 in 3

INDICATED THEY WERE EITHER
VERY (19%) OR MODERATELY (12%)
CONCERNED THEIR PREVIOUS CHILD
CARE ARRANGEMENT WOULDN'T BE
OPEN OR AVAILABLE IN THE FUTURE.


75%
INDICATED
THEIR CURRENT
STRESS LEVELS
WERE EITHER
SOMEWHAT OR
MUCH HIGHER
THAN USUAL.


83%

EITHER STRONGLY AGREED (43%) OR AGREED
(40%) WITH THE STATEMENT “THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC HAS DISRUPTED MY HOME AND
FAMILY LIFE.”

SECTOR SURVEY

In April 2020, GEEARS also partnered with Quality Care for Children (QCC) to survey child care centers and family child care homes across the state in an effort to understand providers' current challenges and communicate needs to funders and policymakers.

While most industries are feeling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, child care providers felt it especially hard, as most providers operate on very small profit margins. The survey results illustrated the critical need for funding to support the child care industry. Among providers' greatest reported needs were financial support for operating costs to cover lost revenue and supplies (e.g., PPE, cleaning needs, etc.).

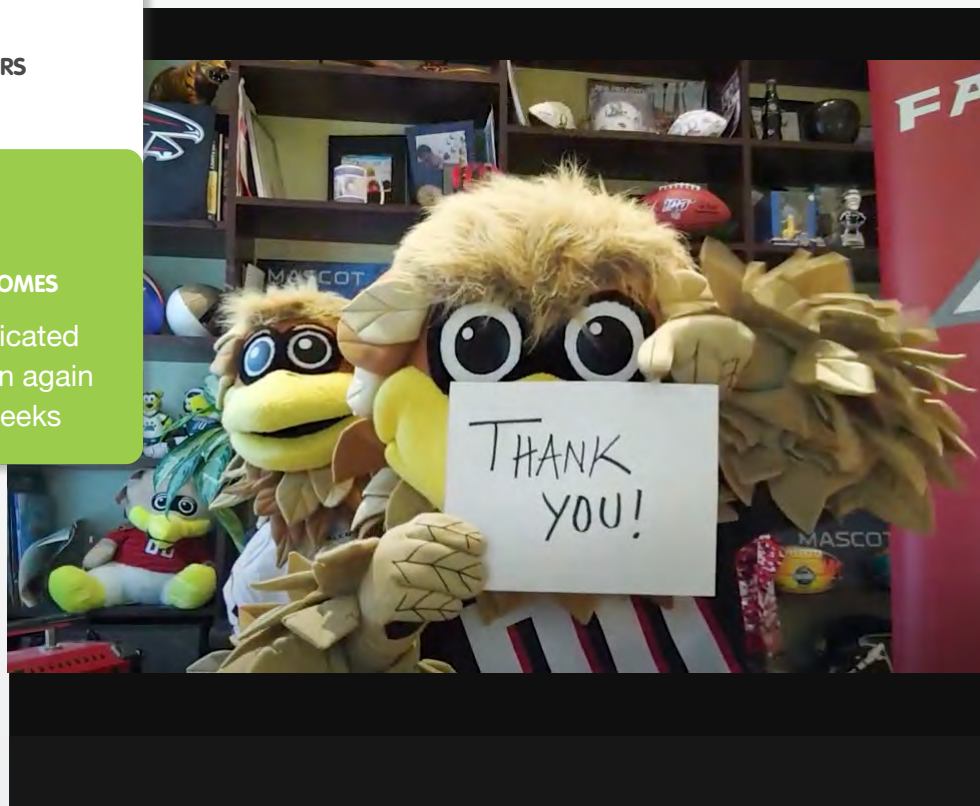
49%

CHILD CARE CENTERS
and

55%

FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES

Who responded indicated they could not reopen again if closed for two weeks



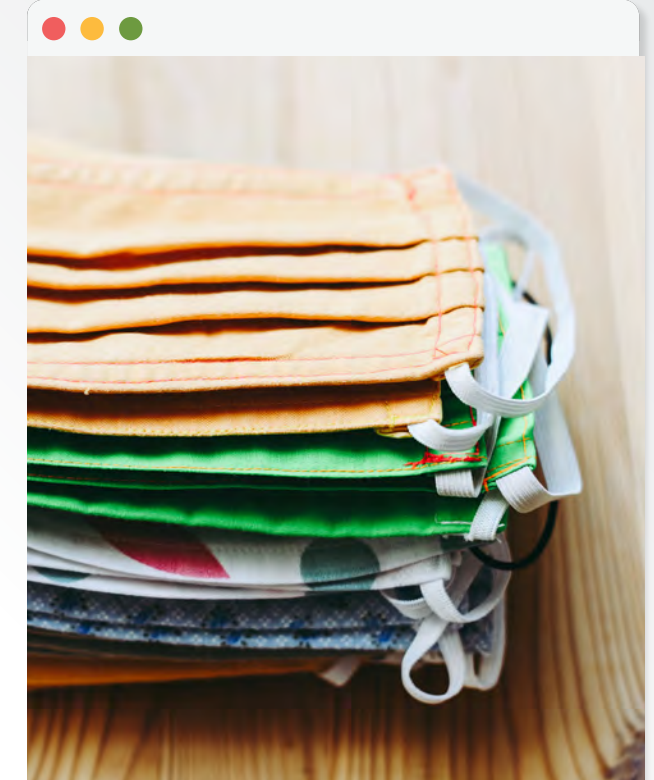
SAYING "THANK YOU" TO OUR EARLY EDUCATION HEROES

Early childhood educators across the state work tirelessly each day to teach, love, and care for Georgia's youngest learners, often without the recognition and support they deserve. These educators, many of whom served on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis, are heroes—and many of our state's leaders agreed. To express their gratitude, Freddie Falcon and Georgia leaders sent video messages of thanks to the early childhood workforce. GEEARS State Advocacy Remained Strong.

The 2020 Georgia legislative session may have looked different, with virtual committee hearings and fewer visitors allowed into the Capitol, but GEEARS continued to advocate successfully on behalf of Georgia's youngest children.

Georgia has long been proud that our universal Pre-K program is a national model. The benefits of Georgia's Pre-K are clear, yet the need to fight to improve the already outstanding quality of the program and to invest in early education remained.

In 2020, GEEARS and our partners worked tirelessly to protect Pre-K from the 14% budget cuts that had been initially proposed in the Georgia general assembly when they reconvened after a COVID break in June 2020. These \$53 million cuts would have reduced instructional days from 180 to 167 and eliminated the opportunity for 4,000 four-year-olds to enroll in the program.



10k+

MESSAGES SENT TO GEORGIA LAWMAKERS

We immediately mobilized against the proposed cuts, and 10,000 Georgians showed their support for Pre-K by sending messages to legislators speaking out on behalf of our children. In the end, legislators listened to their constituents and responded with their own show of support and ensured that the state's FY 21 budget included no cuts to Pre-K slots or classrooms.

GEEARS' STATE
ADVOCACY REMAINED
STRONG

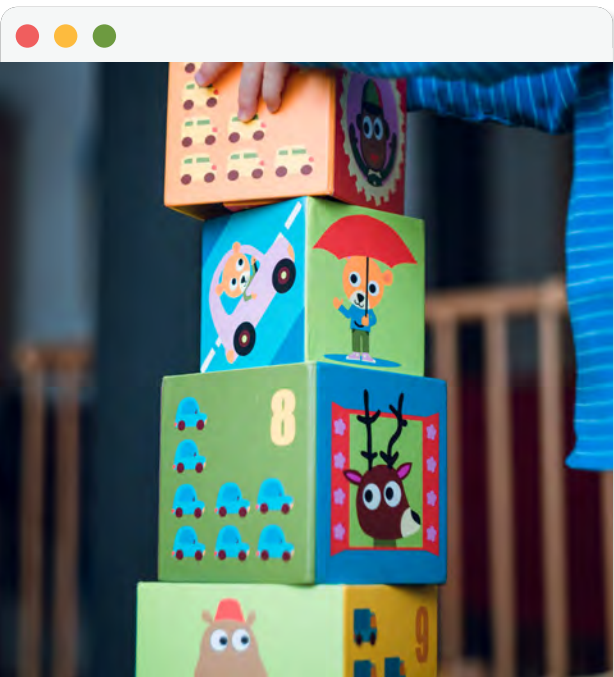
PREVENT CUTS TO PRE-K

The final state budget for FY 21 also included an additional \$1.6 million for Pre-K teacher supplements and funding for a behavioral health specialist to support Pre-K classrooms.

EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES FOR GEORGIA PARENTS

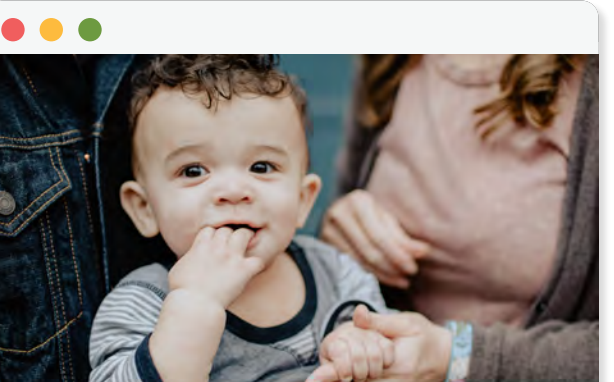
GEEARS also successfully achieved a two-generation policy change will have a huge impact on parents with low incomes who receive Childcare Assistance Program (CAPS) and want to continue their education while also helping to address the benefits cliff.

Beginning April 1st, 2020, the Georgia Department of Early Care & Learning (DECAL) began allowing pursuit of a four-year degree as an approved activity for participation in CAPS. Georgia joined 40 other states that allow student parents to access child care subsidies while working on a bachelor's degree, removing a big barrier to education and training in the state.



SECURING CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS

GEEARS and the members of our Infant and Toddler Coalition worked together to support this effort. Thanks also goes to Senator Elena Parent and the leadership at



NEW INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATOR EXTENSION TO 6 MONTHS

DECAL for making this change to improve the lives of Georgia's families and children.

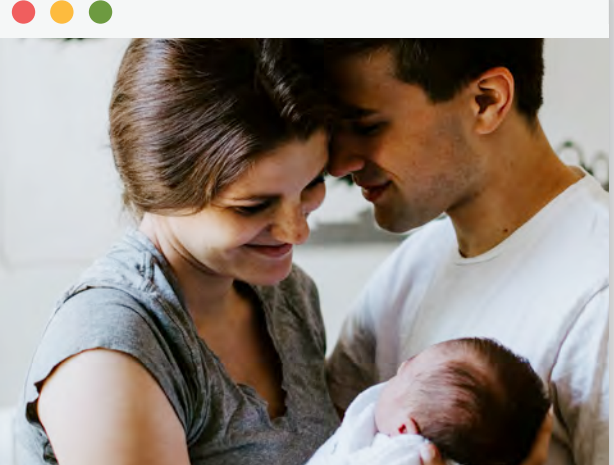
PROGRESS ON INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH POLICY

The final report of the Infant and Toddler Social and Emotional Health Study Committee was released in early 2020. GEEARS Health Policy Manager Callan Wells testified to the Committee on behalf of the Georgia Infant-Toddler Coalition and worked closely with Chairwoman Katie Dempsey to draft agendas for the Committee meetings.

The report broadly recommended establishing state-level leadership on infant and toddler social emotional health; determining Medicaid reimbursement of emotional health services for young children and their families, and; promoting workforce development for mental health professionals who work with young children.

The most direct recommendation was for the inclusion of funding in the FY 2021 budget for an infant and early childhood mental health coordinator at the State of Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL).

We were pleased that the budget included funding for this coordinator position. This person will be tasked with developing a public awareness campaign on infant and



POSTPARTUM MEDICAID COVERAGE EXTENSION TO 6 MONTHS

toddler social emotional health, creating a cross-agency leadership team with representatives from the child-serving state agencies, establishing an agreed-upon set of competencies for professionals, convening meetings with Medicaid, working with health care providers on developing touchpoints for referrals, and seeking grants to expand the workforce.

The report also suggested extending Medicaid for new moms out to one year postpartum, a recommendation that also came out of the Maternal Mortality Study Committee. The budget included funding to extend Medicaid coverage for women up to 6 months after delivery.

GEEARS will continue to advocate for the full year recommended by the study in the months and years to come.

STROLLING THUNDER 2020: A STORM OF ADVOCACY FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

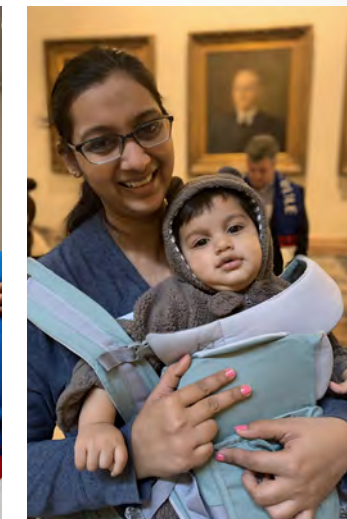
On Monday, January 27th, 2020, GEEARS, in partnership with ZERO TO THREE, brought babies and parents from around Georgia to meet their elected officials during Strolling Thunder.

For the third year in a row, we came together for advocacy training, Capitol visits, and roundtable discussions so families could share their stories about the joys and challenges of raising infants and toddlers in Georgia and encourage Georgia's leadership

to Think Babies—for stronger families, vibrant communities, and a prosperous state.

The event was free and child-friendly, with advocacy training, visits with legislators at the Capitol, lunch, entertainment, a photo booth, and more.

We came together for roundtable discussions so families could tell their stories about the joys and challenges of raising infants and toddlers in Georgia. Several Georgia Senators and Representatives joined us at lunch to deliver special greetings to those in attendance.



ADVOCATING FOR GEORGIA'S CHILDREN AT THE STATE & FEDERAL LEVEL

At the federal level, GEEARS worked to make sure the members of Georgia's congressional delegation knew **the importance of prioritizing the needs of Georgia's youngest learners** during this time to prevent profound and long-term effects on children's development. For example, GEEARS brought together families of young children and child care providers to meet the offices of Congresswoman Lucy McBath and Congressman Barry Loudermilk

to discuss the needs of Georgia's youngest children and the people who serve them.

GEEARS also worked closely with our national partners to share the impacts of COVID, to advocate for dedicated funding for child care to stabilize the child care sector, support the workforce, and ensure there is a child care system to which families can safely return.



The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), signed into law on March 18th, and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, signed by the President on March 27th, include much-needed supports for families, workers, and businesses, including the nation's child care industry. GEEARS worked to analyze and share resources with our stakeholders.

Congress passed another federal relief package that included \$10 billion to stabilize the child care industry and support the needs of working families. However, GEEARS knew that additional action from Congress would be necessary and continued to advocate on behalf of Georgia's families and child care industry.





EDUCATING

GEORGIA'S VOTERS

POLLING SHOWS STRONG SUPPORT FOR EARLY EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

GEEARS commissioned a poll of likely Georgia voters in the fall of 2020 that again found strong support for programs for our earliest learners. In a year that has seen so much division on policy issues, it was heartening and gratifying to have evidence that an overwhelming majority of Georgians—regardless of gender, party affiliation, race, age, and geography—supports early education and other issues that impact very young children and their families.

This widespread approval did not emerge from a vacuum. It is the result of a successful early education programs such as Georgia's Pre-K and tireless work on behalf of our youngest children by advocates across the state, including GEEARS.

88%

SUPPORT FUNDING TO HELP LOW-TO-MODERATE INCOME FAMILIES AFFORD CHILD CARE.

85%

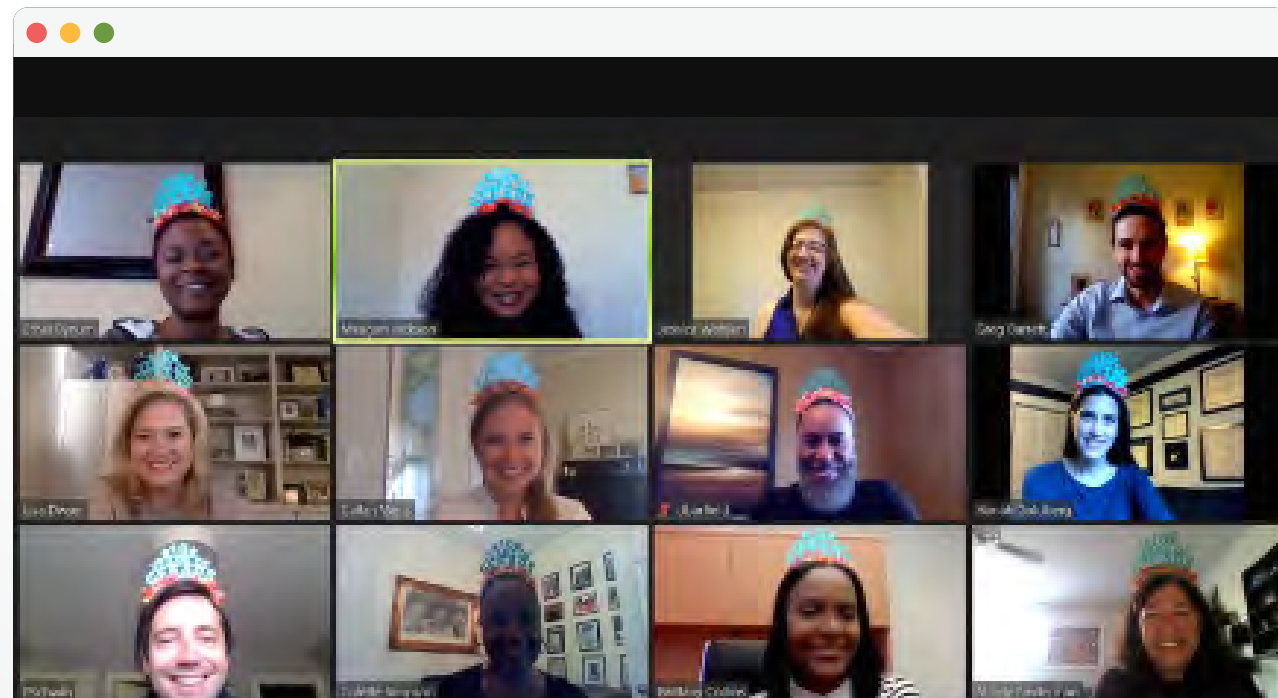
SUPPORT FUNDING TO INCREASE THE QUALITY & AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE.

91%

SUPPORT FOR THE STATE'S LOTTERY-FUNDED VOLUNTARY PRE-K PROGRAM.

86%

SUPPORT FOR THE CHILD CARE INDUSTRY RECEIVING TARGETED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.



2020 GEARS VOTER GUIDE ON EARLY CARE AND LEARNING EXCERPT FROM PAGES 8 AND 9

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK CANDIDATES

How will you help create safe and stable communities where infants and toddlers thrive, particularly as families face new challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Is high-quality early learning a priority for you? If so, why?

What skills and experiences have prepared you to lead and be a champion for infants, toddlers, and their families?

46TH

How will you invest in and champion policies, programs, and services that support all young children and families?

Rank in overall child health, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation

14.8%

Of income-eligible families receiving childcare assistance support.

Childcare makes up 40% of a low-income family's budget. How will you ensure that families have access to affordable childcare, particularly as a growing number of parents are affected by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic?

BOTTOM 10%

Rank for infant mortality, low birthweight, preterm birth, and maternal mortality.

What will you do to support healthy moms, healthy pregnancies, and healthy babies?

What will you do to promote equitable access to resources and services that support infants, toddlers, families, and schools?

What actions will you take to support and inform a comprehensive, well-funded early childhood system that connects health, education, and child welfare?

8 GEARS Voter Guide 2020

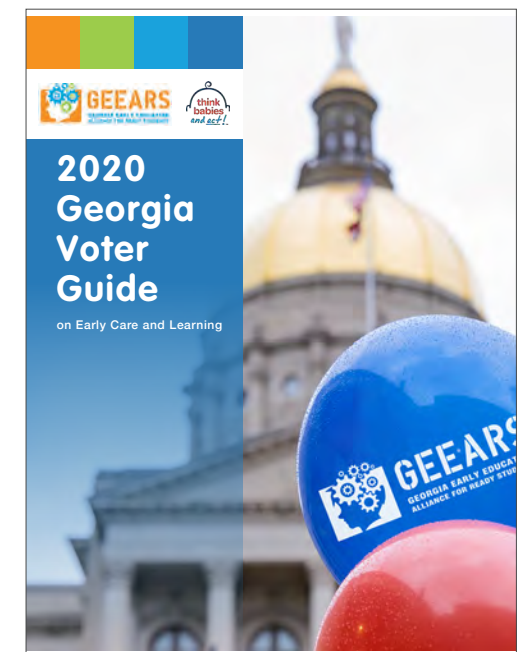
GEARS Voter Guide 2020 9

EDUCATING GEORGIA'S VOTERS

Against the backdrop of a global pandemic and widespread unrest surrounding publicized instances of racial inequity, Georgia voters across the state will elect candidates to all levels of government, including the President and the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. The winners of this year's elections will be positioned to implement equitable public policies that will directly impact the future development and well-being of Georgia's youngest children.

As the 2020 election approached, we provided tools to empower voters and educate candidates on the issues related to young children and their families. We launched our 2020 Georgia Voter Guide on Early Care and Learning to highlight the needs of our youngest learners and their families.

GEEARS also hosted a virtual storytime for early educators and parents with young children. a Special guest Jan Zauzmer, author of "If You Go with Your Goat to Vote," read her charming and entertaining book to the young children and their families in attendance to spark conversations about the importance of voting.



ABSENTEE VOTING

Voting as early as possible helps make sure that your vote gets counted. You do not need to provide a reason to vote by absentee ballot in Georgia.

Even if you received absentee ballots for the primary election in June or runoff election in August, you must complete a separate application in order to receive a ballot for the general election in November.¹

1. Request your ballot for both elections as soon as possible, as it may take a while to process. Request your absentee ballot online [here](#).
2. Once you receive your ballot, follow the provided instructions. You can submit completed ballots by hand-delivering to your county election office or returning by mail. Plan ahead! Absentee ballots must arrive at your county election office by election day.

Use Georgia's [My Voter Page](#) to track your application's and ballot's status. After you log in to My Voter Page, this information can be found by clicking "Click Here For Absentee Ballot Status" in the lower left area of the screen.

¹Some counties will be making absentee ballot applications to all registered voters ahead of November's general election. Please check to see if your county plans to do so.

[Click here to request your absentee ballot](#)

Please consider voting early or by absentee ballot this unusual election season!



GEARS Voter Guide 2020

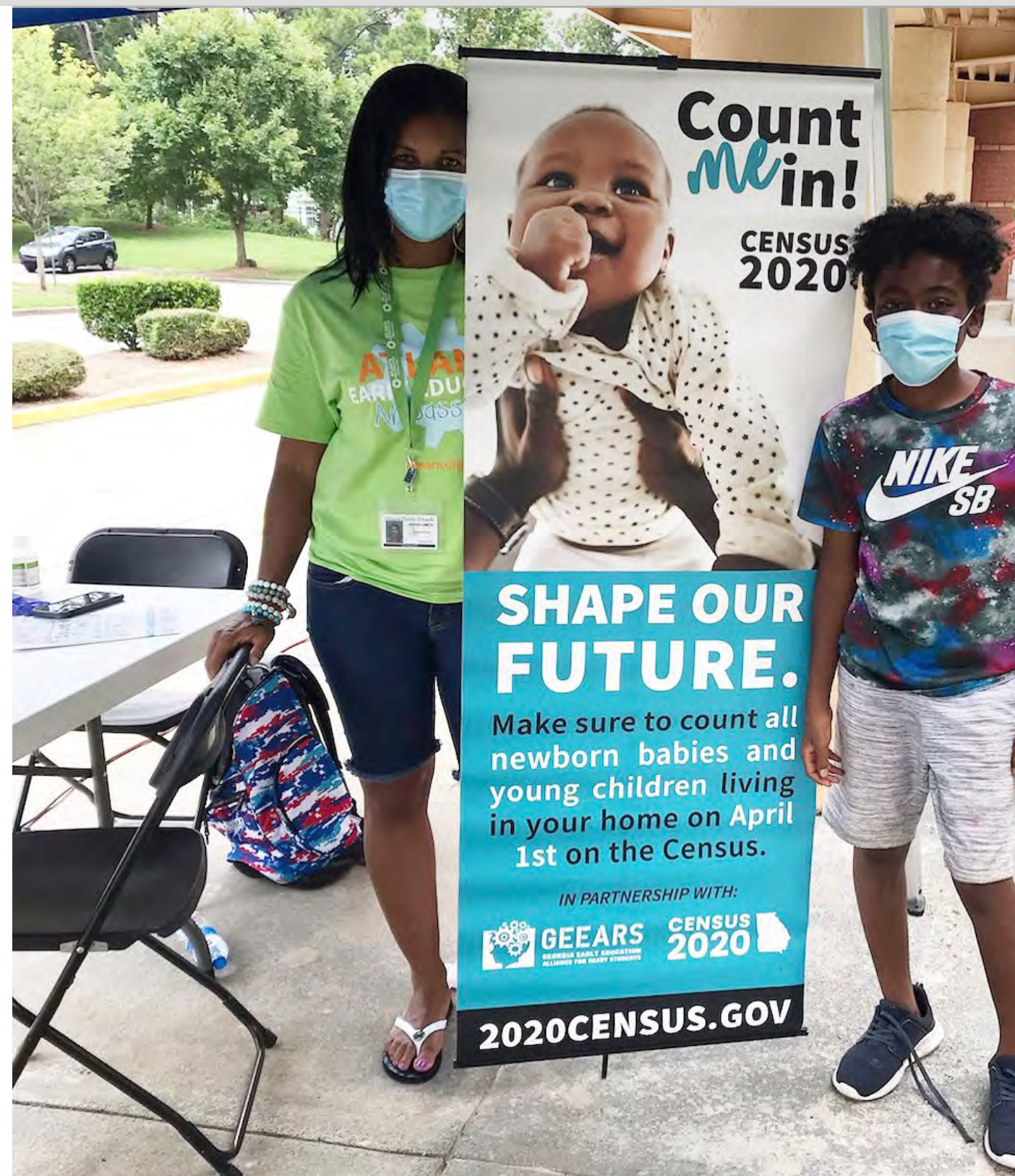
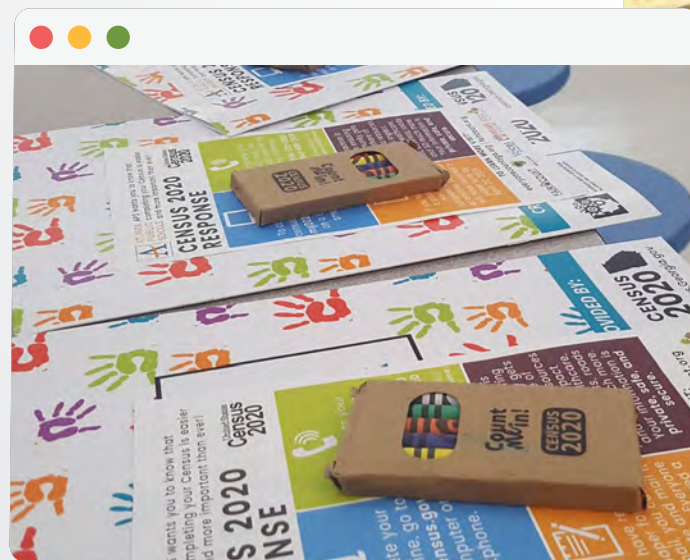
ENSURING EVERYONE WAS COUNTED DURING 2020 CENSUS

In the wake of COVID-19, an accurate count on the 2020 Census was more important than ever to make sure that Georgians get the resources they need. The Census only happens every 10 years, and its conduct was made more difficult during the pandemic.

GEEARS and our partners worked throughout 2020 to ensure everyone in our state was counted. We spread the word, both in person and online, about the Census and its importance for our state.

With support from the Community Foundation of Atlanta, GEEARS worked to reach hard-to-count populations, including

young children, in the Atlanta area. And in partnership with Atlanta Public Schools (APS), GEEARS provided the Atlanta Early Education Ambassadors Program with the training and resources they needed to reach their communities to inform them of the upcoming Census.



P-3 LEADERS FELLOWSHIP BRINGS TOGETHER LEADERS IN

The P-3 (Preschool to 3rd-grade) period of a child's life is served by a variety of systems, with different operating styles, needs, and resources. As a result, children's early experiences can often be disconnected. Educators can be unaware of what experiences came before or will come after, contributing to missed opportunities for students. To address this, GEEARS developed the P-3 Leaders Fellowship program specifically for center and school leaders, with a specialized curriculum developed with input from early learning providers, K-12 partners, and the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL).

The GEEARS Preschool to 3rd Grade (P-3) Leaders Fellowship program had a successful 2020 as Atlanta-based leaders from both early learning programs came elementary schools came together for this leadership development opportunity. Over the course of four intensive sessions

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY FOR BETTER BRAINS (LABB)

from September to March, Atlanta-area leaders from across the P-3 continuum convened to become leading P-3 voices and strengthen early childhood outcomes. opportunity to come together, develop as P-3 leaders, and better serve children and families.

GEEARS hosted multiple virtual film screenings and discussions during 2020 on the importance of investing in



FILM SCREENINGS ENGAGE AND EDUCATE ON EARLY EDUCATION BENEFITS

high-quality early education to improve outcomes for Georgia's youngest children. These screenings provided us with a way engage and connect Georgia's families of young children and early childhood professionals, even if they took place over Zoom.

"Starting at Zero," presented by the Saul Zaentz Charitable Foundation, explored the power of high-quality early childhood education so that all children and families can attain the American Dream. The film provided s an inside look at the latest

developmental brain science to demonstrate how essential the earliest years of learning are to maximize human potential. After the screening, viewers had the opportunity to participate in a live Q & A session with GEEARS' Director of Research & Policy, Hanah Goldberg, Ph.D. and Director of PAACT: Promise All Atlanta Children Thrive, Brittany Collins.

GEEARS also screened "No Small Matter," a documentary film on early childhood development and how it impacts children, families, and the wider community, multiple times in 2020. One screening event featured a talk by Early Education Specialist featured in the film, Rachel Giannini, and a panel discussion with Georgia's leaders in early education.

Another screening of the film invited Clayton County-based families to hear from local leaders, including State Representative Valencia Stovall, on how they are currently working to support young children and families, and ways that parents can continue their own advocacy and care for young children—even through the COVID-19 pandemic.



GEEARS WELCOMES
NATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED EXPERTS
FOR CONVERSATIONS ON

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPEAKER SERIES



DR. ROSEMARIE TRUGLIO, SESAME WORKSHOP

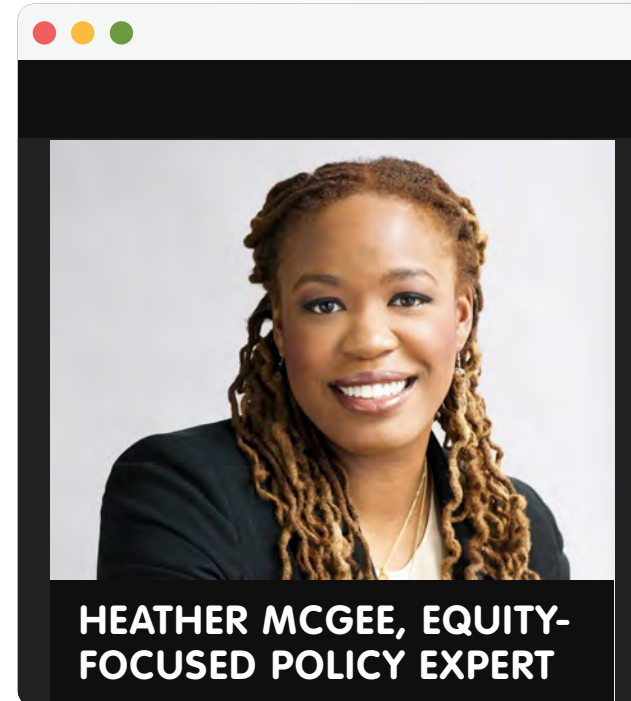
Dr. Rosemarie Truglio, Sesame Workshop’s Senior Vice President of Content and Curriculum, spoke at a virtual event on September 15, 2020, to hear her speak with GEEARS Board Chair Stephanie Blank about her latest book on parenting, her work at Sesame Workshop, and how it all ties in raising children here in Georgia.

Dr. Truglio shared her experiences from her work socializing and educating children through media, and share new ideas from her book—”Ready for School! A Parent’s Guide to Playful Learning for Children Ages 2 to 5”—that parents can use to become even better educators for their children. GEEARS also connected these ideas to resources and groups already here in our state to help parents get the support they need.

HEATHER MCGEE, EQUITY-FOCUSED POLICY EXPERT

Heather McGee, a nationally recognized equity-focused policy expert, joined us on October 23, 2020, to talk about “Transformational Equity.”

McGee helped build the non-partisan “think and do” tank Demos, serving four years as president, and her 2020 TED talk, “Racism Has a Cost for Everyone” has more than 1 million views online. A graduate of



Yale University and University of California Berkeley School of Law, Heather is the chair of the board of Color of Change, the country’s largest online racial justice organization.

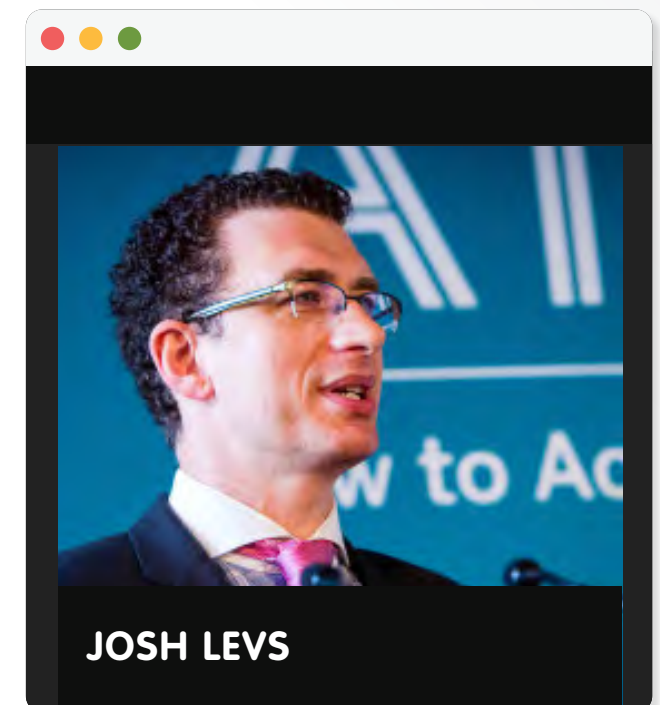
Her talk drew on research and experience to examine organizational transformations that expand opportunity for individuals, families, and organizations alike. She explained how racism produces negative impacts on the economy for everyone, and how racial healing leads to a more equitable, prosperous, and opportunity filled life for all of us and our children.

At GEEARS, we understand the role that organizational transformation plays in helping to close the equity gap for families, and we were thrilled to host this important conversation.

JOSH LEVS

At the start of 2020, GEEARS welcomed Josh Levs, the award-winning author and leading global expert on modern fathers, gender-equity, and making a better workplace for employees and businesses. Levs works with corporations, organizations, universities and more to build policies that support men as equal caregivers, a crucial step toward ensuring equal career opportunities to women.

Advocates, policymakers, and other business leaders gathered at the Buckhead Club for the event, “**Balancing Act: How Business & Policy Support Modern Parenting.**” Levs spoke about his own experiences to hear how a range of family-friendly policies can attract top talent, keep it, and help our economy thrive.



In PAACT's first year, COVID-19 created new relationships and deepened existing ones as the importance of access to affordable child care, paid leave and child care supports, and equitable health care took center stage. PAACT rallied to provide critical support to families with young children, as well as the early childhood ecosystem that cares for them.

The PAACT collaborative rose to the challenge this year with initiatives conducted alongside our incredible partners and community. Together, PAACT made smart investments in our children's early years have a positive impact on the education, health, and economic well-being of all Atlantans.

PAACT FUND FOR QUALITY STABILIZATION GRANTS

PAACT worked with Quality Care for Children and consulted with Reinvestment Fund to provide financial support to targeted child care programs in the City of Atlanta that provide early learning and care for children from birth to five. The PAACT Fund for Quality (PAACT FFQ) Stabilization Grant program deployed over \$1 million dollars to child care centers and

family child care homes located in the City of Atlanta, supporting more than 4,500 licensed child care slots.

One recipient was The Westside School, a Quality Rated inclusive child care learning center serving families in the City of Atlanta's Capitol View community. They used the grant funding to cover mortgage payments, salaries, and cleaning supplies. Owner Dr. Honey Meadows says The Westside School has remained open but had to close briefly in April because of staffing issues. The PAACT Scholarship Powered by Quality Care for Children

The program provided one-year child care scholarships for 60 to 80 children from birth until Pre-K eligible so families could access affordable, high-quality child care, prioritizing high need clusters.

FREE SCHOOL-REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS

PAACT teamed up with Atlanta community partners to bring free school-required immunizations to Atlanta's Westside. McDonald Care Mobile®, a program of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Atlanta Ronald McDonald House Charities, immunized Atlanta children and teens ages 4 and up in the Westside from July 27 to August 8. The event was a way to help Atlanta families stay on top their regular school-required immunizations to prevent the outbreak of another disease.

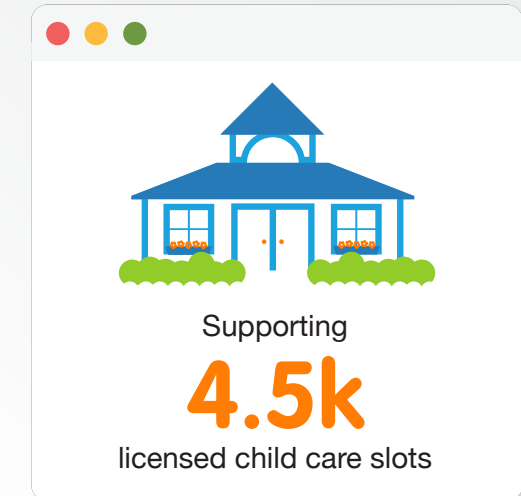
CHILD CARE TUITION ASSISTANCE

PAACT collaborated with Atlanta Public School's Caregiver Uplift Fund, in partnership with Quality Care for Children's emergency child care program, to fund approximately 20 -24 young children, ages 0-4, with short-term tuition assistance.

VIRTUAL PARENT NIGHTS

Engaged parents and raised awareness of key early childhood issues by hosting virtual parent nights featuring some of Atlanta's most engaged community-based leaders from CHRIS 180, Raising Expectations, Father's Incorporated, and Atlanta Thrive.

We heard that many of Atlanta's children are interacting increasingly more with technology and increasingly less with peers, and that challenging behaviors have escalated and are happening more frequently, potentially because their routine has been significantly



altered. Parents also voiced concerns of their own mental health challenges impacting the mental health of their children.

In the summer and fall of 2020, PAACT partnered with Civic Dinners to provide series of virtual conversations, "Parenting in a Pandemic," for Atlanta-based families of young children to share their experiences with raising children in our city in 2020, and what we need to ensure our children have the best possible start. Atlanta-based parents and caregivers of young children were invited to host their own conversation or join the table as an attendee.

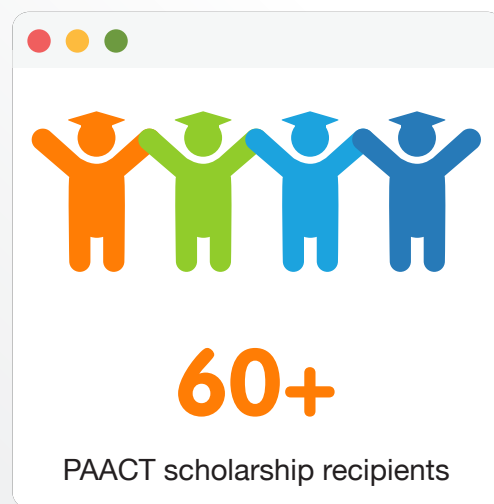
The ideas and questions from these conversations will inform recommendations designed to ensure a stronger, brighter future for all young children and those who care for them.



**PAACT: KEEPING
OUR PROMISE
TO ATLANTA'S
CHILDREN**

ATLANTA EARLY ED AMBASSADORS PROVIDE A SHINING LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

GEEARS and Atlanta Public Schools launched the third cohort of the Atlanta Early Education Ambassadors. This team of Ambassadors once again served as advocates and community leaders for early education in Atlanta Public Schools' Washington and Douglass clusters.



The program launched in early 2018, in partnership with Atlanta Public Schools. Over the last year, previous cohorts have attended community events and canvassed neighborhoods reaching over 3,000 people.

Once the pandemic hit in the spring, Atlanta Public Schools began providing emergency

student meals at designated anchor sites offering three food service supports including breakfast, grab-and-go lunches, fresh produce, and nonperishable goods. From 10 APS locations, volunteers pack the food, which is then delivered by bus daily from 7am to 12pm. Hands On Atlanta, the Atlanta Community Food Bank, Goodr, and other sponsors are managing the effort.

Many of the Atlanta Early Education Ambassadors, who throughout the school year communicate in the City of Atlanta with community members about the value and benefits of high-quality early education for young children, worked tirelessly to support the food distribution effort.

In addition, the Ambassadors also assisted by working within their communities to inform them of the 2020 Census.

MAYOR'S SUMMER READING CLUB

The Mayor's Summer Reading Club (MSRC) provided families with the books and resources they need. Now in its eighth year, this initiative promotes early literacy, family engagement, and vocabulary enrichment for children ages birth through five and their families living in the City of Atlanta. The program designates a city-wide book choice for infants and children ages three to five to share with families, at no cost to them.

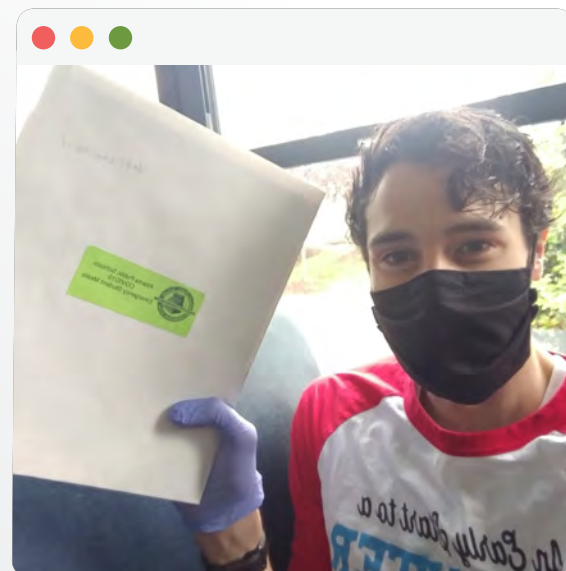


VACCINATION DRIVE ON ATLANTA'S WESTSIDE

“These funds are really invaluable. I can’t tell you how much of a relief it is to know that we have a safety net. Southwest Atlanta is underserved when it comes to quality child care options and more specifically, options for children with unique learning needs. Our programs are vital, and we will use these resources to continue the important work our educators do during this pandemic.”

—Dr. Honey Meadows,
Director of The Westside School

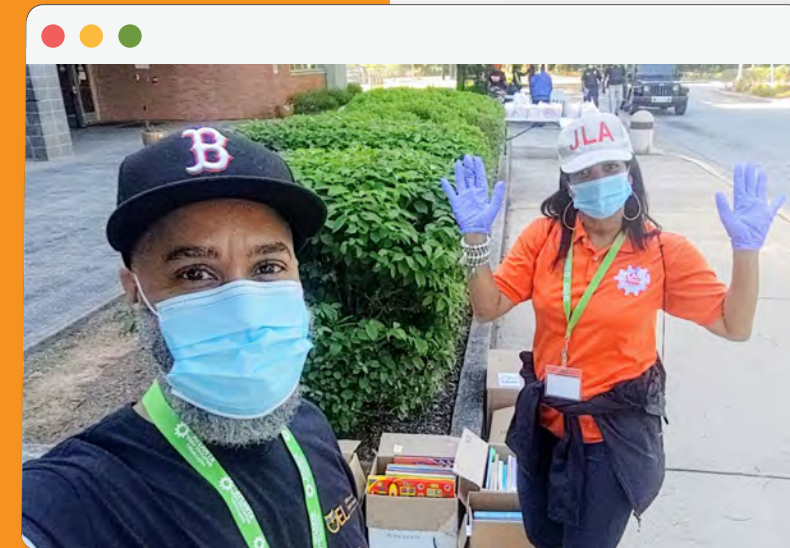
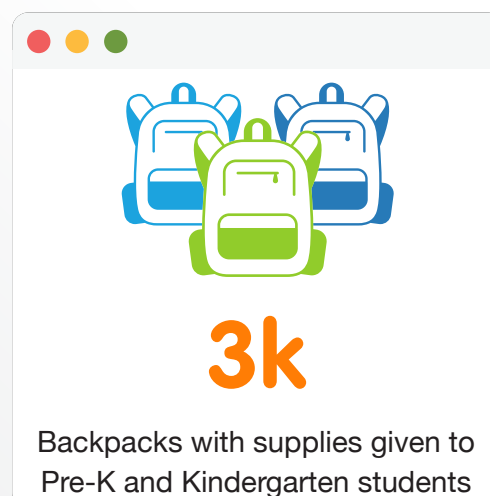
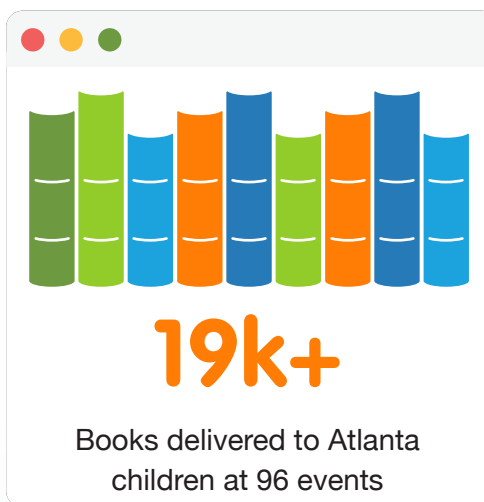
The Mayor's Summer Reading Club delivered over 19,000 books and programming to children in the metro Atlanta area in 2020. Even with COVID-19, program partners had 96 total events this summer, 46 of those were in person events! This year, MSRC and our community partners have distributed more than 19,900 books to children, including 4,000 board books for infants and 15,900 books for children aged 3 to 5.



Our featured book this summer was In the West End, another collaboration with the Alliance Theatre. Written by playwright Will Power and illustrated by R. Gregory Christie, the book follows a young boy and his mother through a shopping trip for healthy food choices in Atlanta's West End.

In lieu of in person events, many partners got creative and assembled pick up boxes of art supplies and MSRC books for their constituents and then rolled out online programming for the kids.

GEEARS Keisha Lance Bottoms launched the 8th Annual Mayor's Summer Reading Club (MSRC) with a virtual event hosted by the Alliance Theatre on Thursday.



“All of the recipients are extremely grateful, which lets me know that we are on the right path!”
– Ericka Smith, Atlanta Early Education Lead Ambassador

The event featured a story time with playwright and author Will Power reading his 2020 MSRC book to the children, families, and partner organizations in attendance.

And with the help of generous COVID-19 relief funding from PNC, MSRC found new ways to reach APS' pre-k students, kindergartners, and their families, despite kids not being in school. GEEARS distributed 3,000 backpacks to pre-k and kindergartners, complete with MSRC books, hands on activities, and the craft supplies needed to do the activities related to this summer's book selections.

FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2020

	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTION	WITH DONOR RESTRICTION	TOTAL
PUBLIC SUPPORT FUNDS			
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$530,934	\$215,027	\$745,961
FEE FOR SERVICE	439,947	-	439,947
PROGRAM REVENUE	7,735	-	7,735
IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS	4,000	-	4,000
INTEREST REVENUE	1,338	-	1,338
PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUES	983,954	215,027	1,198,981
NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS	930,099	(930,099)	-
TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUES	\$1,914,053	(715,072)	\$1,198,981
EXPENSES			
PROGRAM SERVICES	1,956,491	-	1,956,491
SUPPORTING SERVICES			
MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL EXPENSES	168,840	-	168,840
FUNDRAISING EXPENSES	69,002	-	69,002
TOTAL SUPPORTING SERVICES	237,842	-	237,842
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,194,333		\$2,194,333
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	(280,280)	(715,072)	(995,352)
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	378,634	1,690,178	2,068,812
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	\$98,354	\$975,106	\$1,073,460

FINANCIALS



GEEARS

GEORGIA EARLY EDUCATION
ALLIANCE FOR READY STUDENTS

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