



Georgia's **Preschool Development Grant**

BIRTH THROUGH FIVE

**STRENGTHENING
GEORGIA'S EARLY
CHILDHOOD CARE AND
EDUCATION SYSTEM
STRATEGIC PLAN**

INTRODUCTION

In December 2018, Georgia was awarded an initial Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five (PDG B-5) by the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, and the US Department of Education. This initial grant provided Georgia with a unique opportunity to strengthen the early childhood care and education (ECCE) system-level framework and to better align and further expand critical services and programs for children ages birth through five.

A key component of Georgia's initial PDG B-5 grant was developing a comprehensive Needs Assessment to analyze the state's existing mixed-delivery system of programs and services to determine how well Georgia was meeting the needs of families of children ages birth through five. In December 2019, Georgia was awarded a three-year renewal PDG B-5 through December 2022 to continue the activities started with the initial PDG B-5 and to address the gaps identified through the Needs Assessment, including developing a statewide strategic plan.

To carry out the work of the PDG B-5 and to develop a strategic plan, a Cross Agency Child Council (CACC) was formed. The CACC is made up of senior-level staff from state agencies and partner organizations that serve children ages birth through five. The CACC also includes representatives from the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning's (DECAL) Family Ambassador initiative. CACC membership is listed in the table on the following page.





POPULATIONS IDENTIFIED AS VULNERABLE AND UNDERSERVED

Children Living in Poverty

Children in poverty; defined as children residing in households at the poverty (<100% FPL) and low income (100%-199% FPL) levels

Dual Language Learners

Children whose home language is a language other than English

Children with Developmental Delays and Disabilities

Children identified with developmental delays or disability. Children screened for or receiving services through IDEA Part C and Part B, Section 619

Children in Foster Care and Protective Services

Children in foster care placement and children who remain in their home but with an active protective services case

Children Experiencing Homelessness

Homelessness as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act. Additional information about the McKinney-Vento Act can be found at <https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento/>

Infants and Toddlers

Children ages birth to 36 months. A 2016 economic impact study of Georgia's ECCE industry^a found that only 15% of infants and 22% of toddlers are receiving formal early education. Additionally, a 2008 study of ECCE program quality found that two-thirds of infant and toddler classrooms are low quality.^b Current analyses regarding the availability of infant and toddler care indicate that areas of the some state have little or no access to high-quality infant and toddler care.

Children and Families in Rural Areas

Georgia has a significant rural population, often with limited access to high-quality ECCE and therefore more likely to be underserved. Specifically, 120 (75%) of Georgia's 159 counties are classified as rural.^c Approximately 132,005 (20%) children ages 0-4

Note: FPL = federal poverty line

a. Georgia State University; Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, & The University of Georgia; Carl Vinson Institute of Government. (2016). *Economic Impact of the Early Care and Education Industry in Georgia*. Retrieved from <http://www.dec.state.ga.gov/documents/attachments/EconImpactReport.pdf>

b. Maxwell, K. L., Early, D. M., Bryant, D., Kraus, S., Hume, K., & Crawford, G. (2009). *Georgia Study of Early Care and Education: Child Care Center Findings*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, FPG Child Development Institute. Retrieved from www.dec.state.ga.gov/documents/attachments/ChildCare_Report.pdf

c. State Office of Rural Health | Georgia Department of Community Health

STRENGTHENING GEORGIA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

All children in Georgia from birth to five years of age, particularly children from vulnerable and underserved populations, will have equitable access to high-quality early childhood experiences through an integrated and coordinated mixed-delivery system that will provide a strong foundation for success in school and throughout life.

MISSION

Provide every child in Georgia access to high-quality, affordable early childhood care and education and services through partnerships with families and the coordination, integration, and alignment of a strong, statewide birth through five mixed-delivery system. The PDG is particularly focused on the developmental needs of children in underserved and vulnerable populations.

STRATEGIC GOALS



System Building

Ensure alignment, integration, and coordination in Georgia's B-5 mixed-delivery system to better meet the needs of each and every child, especially in underserved and vulnerable populations.



Data & Research

Establish a data and research agenda that enhances informed decision-making to support the effective and efficient delivery of early childhood programs and services in Georgia, especially to children in underserved and vulnerable populations.



Workforce

Recruit, retain, and diversify a professional early learning workforce that supports high-quality early childhood programs and services in Georgia.



Access & Quality

Provide access to high-quality programs to meet the unique developmental and familial needs of each and every child in Georgia, especially in underserved and vulnerable populations.



Family Engagement

Foster authentic family engagement to strengthen family voice and engage families in their children's care and education.



System Building

Ensure alignment, integration, and coordination in Georgia's B-5 mixed-delivery system to better meet the needs of each and every child, especially in underserved and vulnerable populations.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Increase understanding of Georgia's early childhood B-5 mixed-delivery system to better serve families and meet the full and unique needs of each and every child
- ✓ Ensure alignment of early childhood care and education priorities and efforts across state agencies



Data and Research

Establish a data and research agenda that enhances informed decision making to support the effective and efficient delivery of early childhood programs and services in Georgia, especially to children in underserved and vulnerable populations.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Encourage the alignment and availability of birth through five data across state and local agencies
- ✓ Promote continued quality improvement and program accountability using data, research, and evaluation
- ✓ Enhance data literacy to promote the use of data and research by state and local governments



Workforce

Recruit, retain, and diversify a professional early learning workforce that supports high-quality early childhood care and education services in Georgia.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Support career pathways and aligned credentials
- ✓ Enhance training and job-embedded supports
- ✓ Support community leaders in understanding best practices



Access and Quality

Provide access to high-quality programs to meet the unique developmental and familial needs of every child in Georgia, especially in underserved and vulnerable populations.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Ensure access to quality services and programs for focal populations
- ✓ Update and strengthen Quality Rated, Georgia's quality rating and improvement system, to reflect current research and the diverse needs of families and children



Family Engagement

Foster authentic family engagement to strengthen family voice and engage families in their children's care and education.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Help families better understand childhood development and how they can support their child's development
- ✓ Help families select and connect to early learning programs and services that best fit the needs of their children through better understanding of the early childhood mixed-delivery system in Georgia
- ✓ Ensure the voices of families, especially those from focal populations, are heard during improvements to the birth through five mixed-delivery system

CACC MEMBERS

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Additional information on the PDG B-5 grant can be found at www.decal.ga.gov/BftS/PreschoolDevelopmentGrant.aspx