



**DECAL  
EARLY HEAD START  
PARTNERSHIP**

*Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning*  
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DECAL Early Head Start Partnership

2017 Self-Assessment Results



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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## Introduction

In 2014, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) was awarded \$3.5 million dollars per year for five years to serve as a grantee for the DECAL Early Head Start Partnership (DEHSP). The purpose of the grant was to increase access to high-quality early education, including comprehensive services, for low-income infants and toddlers and their families. Specifically, the goals centered on:

- Delivering comprehensive services to families.
- Creating early education hubs to support programs and meet Early Head Start (EHS) standards.
- Enhancing quality in the partnering child care programs to meet EHS standards.
- Monitoring the project and measuring improvements to access and quality.
- Revising the state's child care subsidy policies to support Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships statewide.

In order to understand how effective DEHSP is in meeting these goals, DECAL administers an annual self-assessment. This self-assessment, conducted and reviewed annually, is instrumental in ensuring accountability for DECAL as the lead grantee. The self-assessment process helps monitor current progress toward meeting the aforementioned goals, identify systemic issues, and consider innovative ways to improve the partnership.

In 2016, a rigorous self-assessment process was employed by the DEHSP to review the systems and services delivered to families and children. The 2016 Self-Assessment concluded that the management systems and supports had been implemented and were established to support the hubs and partner programs. Findings from the 2016 Self-Assessment provided a spring board for the DEHSP to evaluate progress and identify procedural changes that make delivering high-quality, comprehensive services to families more efficient and effective.

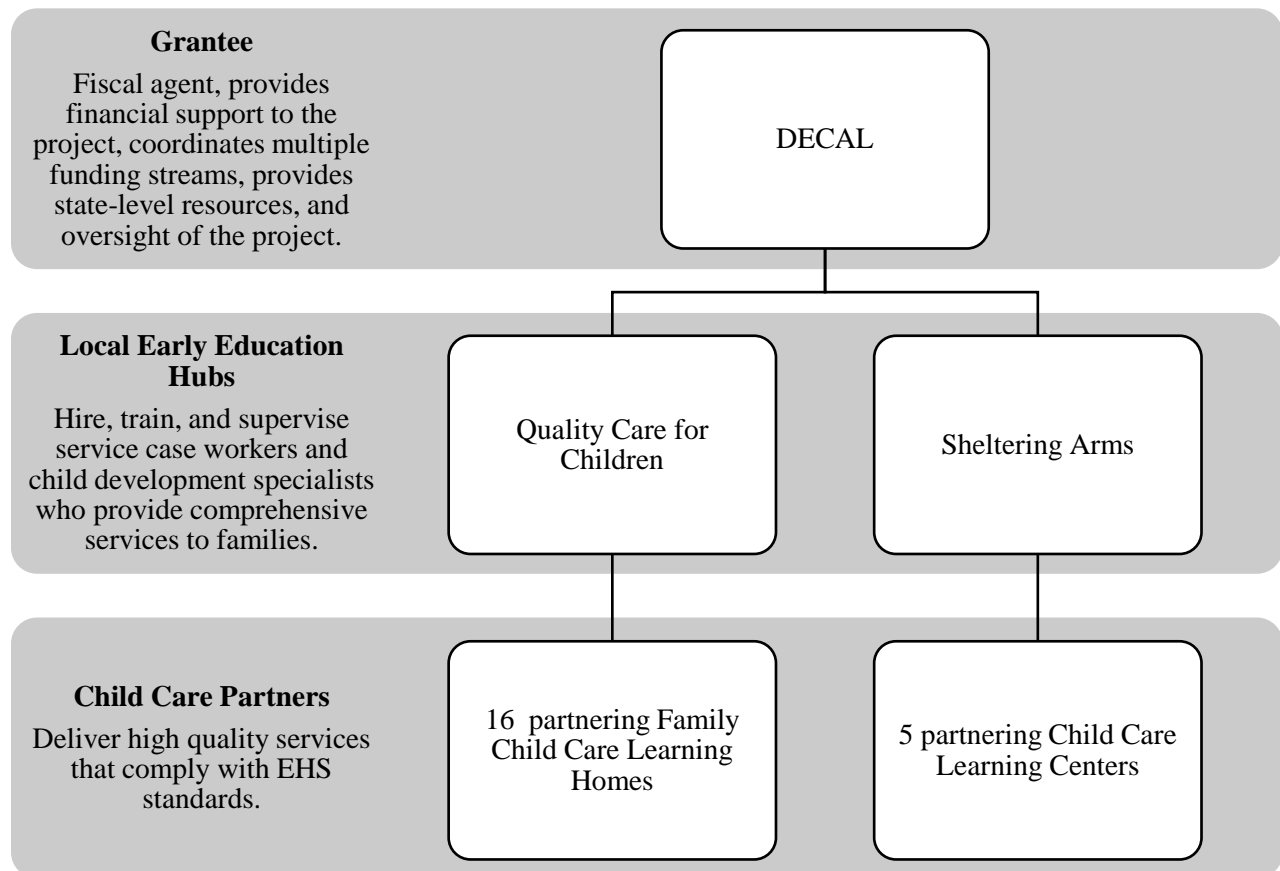
Based on the results and feedback from the 2016 Self-Assessment, the 2017 Self-Assessment process included focus groups with child care learning center directors and family child care partners and interviews with teachers. In addition, surveys gathered robust data from family child care partners, directors, teachers, and hub staff. A plan was developed for fall 2017 implementation to collect qualitative feedback from families by hosting a series of focus groups. Families with children who have participated at least one year in the DEHSP were invited to share their experiences, perceptions, and recommendations for the partnership. By employing various modes of data collection with all stakeholders involved in the project, DECAL gathered varying levels of feedback from diverse perspectives to ensure representation and accountability for the 2017 Self-Assessment. By using the results from the 2017 Self-Assessment, DECAL created an improvement plan that builds upon the 2016 and 2017 successes and updates the program improvement plan from 2016 in order to implement new strategies, develop new policies, and provide enhanced leadership of the DEHSP.

**Background**

As a first time EHS grantee, DECAL selected partners, Sheltering Arms and Quality Care for Children, with experience in providing quality early education services and created local “early education hubs.” Specifically, the goals of the hubs were to promote school readiness and provide comprehensive services to families. The comprehensive services offered by the DEHSP include providing families with financial planning and budgeting assistance, access to health care, nutrition support, and career assistance.

As a part of the current management structure, Quality Care for Children worked exclusively with 14 participating family child care learning homes (FCCLH), and Sheltering Arms worked with the five child care learning centers (CCLC) to serve 198 infants, toddlers, and their families. The partner child care programs, with the support of the hub staff, delivered high-quality child care and other services that comply with EHS standards. Figure 1 highlights the DEHSP management structure and responsibilities.

Figure 1. DEHSP Management Structure Roles and Responsibilities



## **Methodology**

The self-assessment was led by DECAL's internal Research and Policy Analysis Team. To conduct this self-assessment, DECAL utilized a multimethod, triangulated approach. This approach included compiling and analyzing results from surveys and interviews, reviewing and comparing results from the 2016 Self-Assessment, and conducting focus groups with key stakeholders from various levels of the partnership. The different data collection methods are discussed below.

### **Focus Groups.**

For the 2016 Self-Assessment, two focus groups were conducted at DECAL's headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. The purpose of the focus groups was to identify strengths and challenges associated with receiving grant funds, supporting child care partners' efforts to provide comprehensive services to families, and identifying ways to improve the self-assessment process. These focus groups included local hub representatives, family providers, directors, teachers, and parents. While the 2016 focus groups provided useful information about ways the partnership could be strengthened, the feedback was not applicable for all groups, and due to time restraints, many topics were not discussed at a deeper level. Therefore, for the 2017 Self-Assessment, it was determined that there would be targeted focus groups to allow for more time and participation on topics that were relevant to the specific group. With this intention in mind, DECAL conducted focus groups with child care learning center directors, family child care learning home partners, and families.

The center director and FCCLH partner focus groups took place on sites where directors and FCCLH partners were already receiving professional development. By coming to the location of the participants, DECAL was able to increase attendance to get greater participation from the partners. These focus groups provided opportunities to capture feedback through in-person collaboration that was more difficult to obtain through surveys or other means of data collection.

### **Teacher Interviews.**

Three teachers were interviewed by DECAL's Research and Policy Analysis Team as a part of the self-assessment process. Teachers who were interested in completing an interview filled out an index card during the DEHSP Professional Learning Institute in Clarkston, GA. Only four teachers filled out an index card, and three teachers were available to participate in an interview. The interview discussions emphasized training and professional development, classroom management, curriculum support, and delivering comprehensive services to families. Due to the low response rate, teacher interviews are embedded in the teachers' survey section to provide more detailed information and feedback from center teachers.

### **Surveys.**

Family child care partners, directors, teachers, and hub staff received paper surveys to complete during the DEHSP Professional Learning Institute, which took place from June 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in Clarkston, GA. A Spanish version of the survey was available for family child care partners.

The surveys emphasized key topics such as delivering comprehensive services to families, family engagement, perceptions of child development, training, and curriculum support. Table 1 displays the total number of surveys distributed, the number of responses, the response rate, and the response rates from the 2016 DEHSP Self-Assessment.

Table 1. Survey Response Rates by DEHSP Partner

Group	Survey Distributed	Responses	2017 Response Rate
Family Child Care Partners	14	13	93%
Directors	5	2	40%
Teachers	49	26	53%
Hub Staff	30	9	30%

Table 2. Survey Response Rate by DEHSP Partner by Year

Group	2016 Response Rate	2017 Response Rate
Family Child Care Partners	100%	93%
Directors	100%	40%
Teachers	16%	53%
Hub Staff	100%	30%

[1] The 2016 survey response rates are as reported in the 2016 DEHSP Self-Assessment report.

As evident from Table 2, nearly all family child care partners responded to both the 2016 and 2017 Self-Assessment surveys. In contrast, more than half teachers responded to the survey in 2017, which was a 37% increase from 2016. However, it is important to note that in 2017 only 30% (n = 9) of hub staff and 40% (n = 2) of directors responded to the survey, which is a 70% and 60% decrease from 2016 respectively. Upon initial sharing of survey response rates, a number of Hub Staff requested the survey online. As such, a second round of survey data collection will be conducted in October 2017. The findings will be updated in November 2017. The 2016 Self-Assessment utilized online surveys, whereas the 2017 Self-Assessment used paper surveys. The results highlighted in Table 1 would suggest that teachers may be more likely to respond to a paper survey whereas hub staff and directors may be more likely to respond to an online survey. These findings could be used to help maximize survey response rates for the 2018 Self-Assessment. It is important to note that since only two directors completed a survey, the results from the director survey were not summarized in this report.

### Conclusion

Overall, the results from the focus groups, interviews, and surveys suggested that family child care partners, child care learning centers, and hub staff had very different perspectives working within the DEHSP. Due to the unique role of each partner, it was determined that comparisons

between groups should not be made (e.g., comparing findings from family child care partners to hub staff). As such, each section is organized by partnership role: 1) family child care learning home partners; 2) child care learning center partners; 3) hub staff; and 4) families. Generally, the findings demonstrate that the DEHSP has been successful in meeting the needs of the partners and families involved in the project. However, the Self-Assessment indicates areas for growth and sheds light on ways that DECAL, as the grantee, can better support the partnership and improve service delivery. These improvements center on better communication, creating more defined roles for partners, and clarification of policies and procedures. These findings are discussed in greater detail in the subsequent sections of this report.

## **Section 1. Family Child Care Partners**

In 2017, Family Child Care Partners served 47 infants, toddlers, and their families. While both child care learning centers (CCLC) and family child care learning homes (FCCLC) serve low-income families, the FCCLH model specifically targets learners whose home language is Spanish. Since all of the FCCLH partners speak Spanish, all components of the self-assessment were offered in English and Spanish. These assessment components included completing surveys and participation in focus groups. The surveys were completed during the DEHSP Professional Learning Institute, while the focus group was conducted at Quality Care for Children headquarters on July 15th, 2017. The focus group took place during the family child care partners' monthly meeting with all fourteen of the family child care partners present.

### **Family Child Care Partner Survey Results**

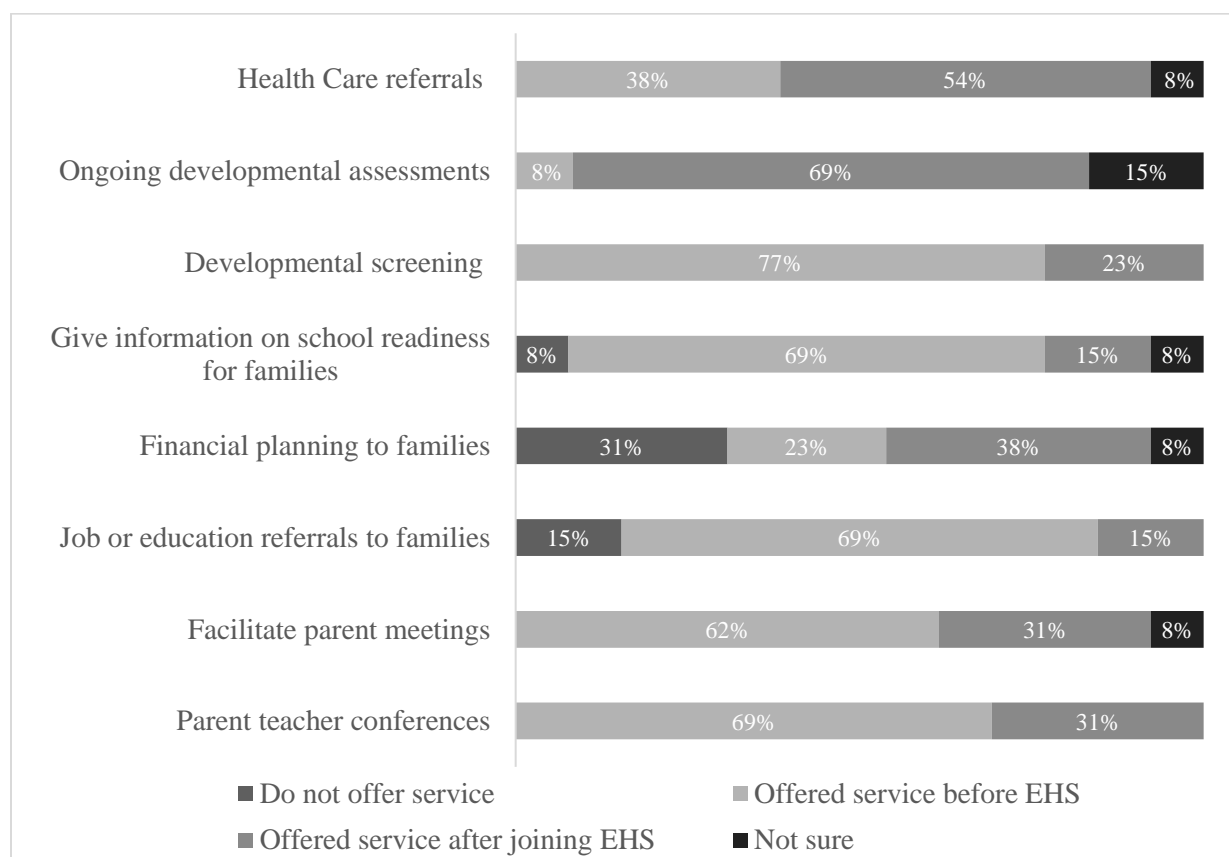
As previously mentioned, 93% (n = 13) of family child care partners completed the survey. The survey assessed family child care partners' opinions on topics such as delivering comprehensive services to families, family engagement, perceptions of child development and curriculum support. The survey results identify how the DEHSP has helped family child care partners expand the services they offer to families of children at their program. The findings suggest that the DEHSP can better support family child care partners by providing more training.

### **Delivering Comprehensive Services**

An important goal of the DEHSP is to expand the range of services that partner programs can provide to both children and families. To assess the impact of DEHSP on the services provided, family child care partners were asked if they offered a series of comprehensive services to families (e.g., health care referrals, ongoing developmental assessments, developmental screening, providing information on school readiness). If family child care partners reported offering one of the listed comprehensive services to families, they were asked if they started offering the service before or after joining the DEHSP. Figure 2 displays family child care partners' reports of when their family child care learning homes started delivering specific comprehensive services to families.



Figure 2. When did Family Child Care Partners Start Delivering Comprehensive Services to Families?



The findings from Figure 2 suggest that the majority of family child care partners reported offering all of the provided comprehensive services in 2017, despite a sample size of thirteen. The DEHSP helped most of the family child care partners expand the services they offer families through providing ongoing developmental assessments and health care referrals for families. It is important to note that a small number of family child care partners reported that joining the DEHSP has allowed them to expand services by offering financial planning assistance to families, facilitate parent leadership meetings, and host parent-teacher conferences. Since the hub facilitates financial planning and convenes the parent leadership meetings, the family child care partners engage families to promote awareness of these activities. Overall, these findings suggest that the DEHSP has helped expand the services that family child care partners offer to the children and families.

### The Process of Delivering Comprehensive Services to Families

Not only does the DEHSP aim to offer comprehensive services to families, but the DEHSP also strives to keep all partners informed in the process of delivering these services. As such, the survey asked family child care partners if they felt like the hub staff was including them in the

process of delivering comprehensive services to families. All family child care partners in a small sample reported feeling included in the process of delivering comprehensive services to families. This finding suggests that hub staff are working collaboratively with the family child care partners to deliver comprehensive services to families.

### **Family Child Care Partners' Perceptions of Family Engagement**

Families who are informed about what is occurring in their child's classroom can continue to reinforce what their child is learning outside the classroom. As a result, it is essential for the DEHSP to support programs' efforts to increase family engagement and parent participation. A strength of the DEHSP is that services are provided through DECAL and the hubs that help programs engage families in their child's EHS program. For example, Family Services Specialists are members of the hub staff. These staff members work with EHS programs to encourage parents that do not volunteer regularly to participate more or in different ways in their child's EHS program. The survey asked family child care partners if family engagement and participation has increased, decreased, or stayed the same since joining DEHSP. All family child care partners (100%, n = 13) reported that family engagement and participation has increased since joining DEHSP.

### **Parent Volunteering**

A good measure of family engagement at a particular program is how frequently parents volunteer. Family child care partners were asked how often at least one mother and one father volunteered at their program. Overall, the majority of family child care partners reported that at least one mother volunteers at least once a month in the program, and only 38% reported father volunteering at least once a month in the program.

- 54% (n = 13) of family child care partners reported mothers volunteer monthly or more frequently.
- 39% (n = 13) of family child care partners reported that fathers volunteer monthly or more frequently.

The 69% rate of agreement about mother's volunteering is up from the 58% reported in 2016. It is promising that family child care partners report one parent volunteer in their classroom at least once a month. A strong indicator of family engagement is if parents not only volunteer, but they also assist with planning activities. Therefore, family child care partners were also asked if parents assist with planning activities that support bonding and school readiness. The majority of family child care partners (69%, n = 9) reported that parents assist with planning activities that support bonding and school readiness. The DEHSP will continue to support family child care providers' family engagement efforts and promote fathers' volunteering in the programs in hopes to build on this success in 2018.

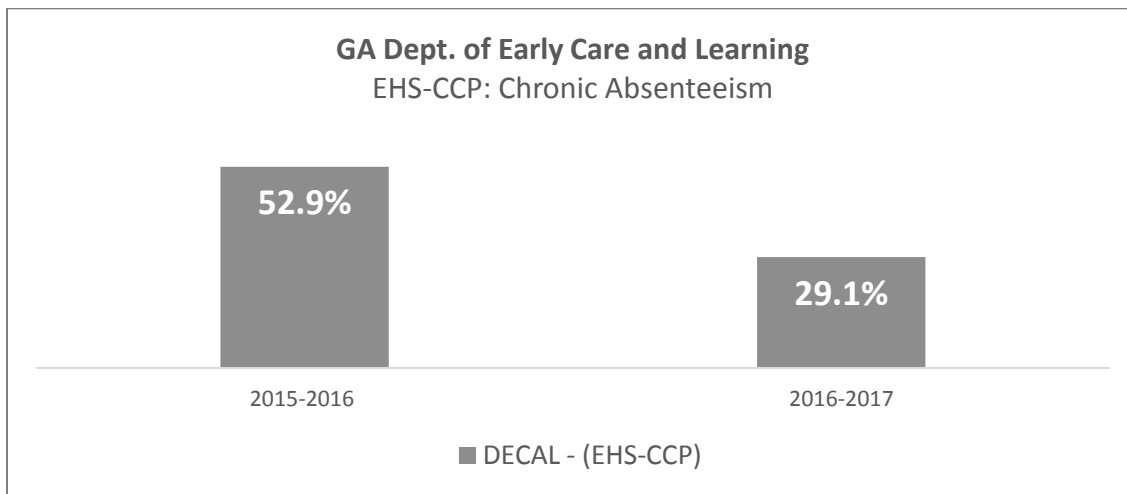
### **Attendance**

Another important indicator of family engagement is child attendance. Children who do not attend class regularly may miss important learning opportunities, have adjustment difficulties,

and be at a greater risk for developmental delays. Since attendance can be a challenge for some families, it is important that the grantee, hub staff, and family child care partners work with families to ensure children regularly attend class.

Specifically, the DEHSP struggles with chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is defined as children with patterns of absence that put them at risk of missing ten percent of program days per year. The following graph<sup>1</sup> represents the percent of children served who were reported as chronically absent by program type compared to the rate of Chronic absenteeism across Georgia by year of data collection.

Figure 3. Chronic Absenteeism



\*No state level data is available for 2015-2016

As demonstrated by Figure 3, the DEHSP had a chronic absenteeism rate of 29.1% compared to the state average of 19.9% in 2016-2017. This rate of absenteeism could be related to one of the child care learning center being housed in a homeless shelter while another child care learning center is housed at a technical college. Due to the complex needs of families experiencing homelessness and the unique schedules of families enrolled at the technical college, both of these locations may be contributing to the increased rates of absenteeism. Despite these factors, the DEHSP is committed to lowering rates of chronic absenteeism. In order to better understand how DEHSP partners feel about attendance, family child care partners were first asked if they implemented strategies to encourage attendance at their program. Overall, the majority of family

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<sup>1</sup> Chronic absenteeism data was collected voluntarily on an annual bases by the Georgia Head Start State Collaboration Office in partnership with DECAL’s Research & Policy Analysis Unit. Some programs may not have participated all 4 years. Georgia’s chronic absenteeism rates were calculated by summing the total number of reported children served and dividing it by the total number of children reported as chronically absent. This data only represent grantees who participated in data collection for the given year of reporting. 2016-2017 is the first year for EHS-CCP data collection.

child care partners (83%, n = 10) reported that they had implemented strategies to encourage attendance at their program.

Respondents were then asked if their strategies to encourage attendance have been successful. All the respondents (100%, n = 10) who indicated they use strategies to encourage attendance reported they were successful. These findings would suggest that family child care partners do believe that they can have a positive effect on child attendance.

Family child care partners were asked to describe the strategies they used to encourage attendance. Eight family child care partners (62%) responded to the question.

- 38% (n = 3) mentioned showing parents the tools (e.g., Teaching Strategies GOLD™ Milestone Reports) they use to track child development.
- 25% (n = 2) mentioned communicating to parents the importance of establishing a set routine.
- 25% (n = 2) mentioned talking with the parents about the new Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) for attendance.
- 25% (n = 2) mentioned including fun activities that capture the attention and interest of families.

In summary, the findings from the family child care partners suggest that talking to parents about their child's developmental progress, the importance of an established routine, and fun activities that capture the interest of children and families were all successful strategies to improve children's attendance. These strategies could be contributing to the decline in chronic absenteeism from 52.9% in the 2015-2016 to 29.1% in the 2016-2017 school year. Absenteeism will continue to be monitored in 2018 with continued efforts to encourage increased rates of attendance.

## **Section 2. Perceptions of Child Development**

Families with varying access to resources present different sets of challenges for family child care partners. In order to understand family child care partners' perceptions of a child's development, family child care partners were asked how many of their children were bathed and fed each day when they arrived to the program. All family child care partners (100%, n = 13) reported that all or almost all of the children in their classroom were physically healthy, rested, and well-nourished when they arrived to class each day.

Since each child is unique in his or her developmental progression, it is important that the DEHSP provide family child care partners with ongoing developmental assessments to track progress and identify supports needed for children who are falling behind their peers in targeted domains of development. The survey asked family child care providers about children's development and motor skills, social and emotional development, approaches to play and learning; communication, language, and literacy; cognitive development and general knowledge.

All family child care partners (100%, n=13) reported that all or almost all of the children in their classroom were developmentally on track in all of the aforementioned domains. This is supported by the 2016-2017 Child Outcome Assessment data that is collected using the Teaching Strategies GOLD™ assessment tool. Children’s progress on indicators within five developmental domains is assessed and compared with the Widely Held Expectations for children at the same age. The domains are social-emotional, physical, language, cognition, literacy, and mathematics. The table below provides an example of the growth experienced in each of the five domains.

Table 3: Growth Experienced by Children Ages One to Two

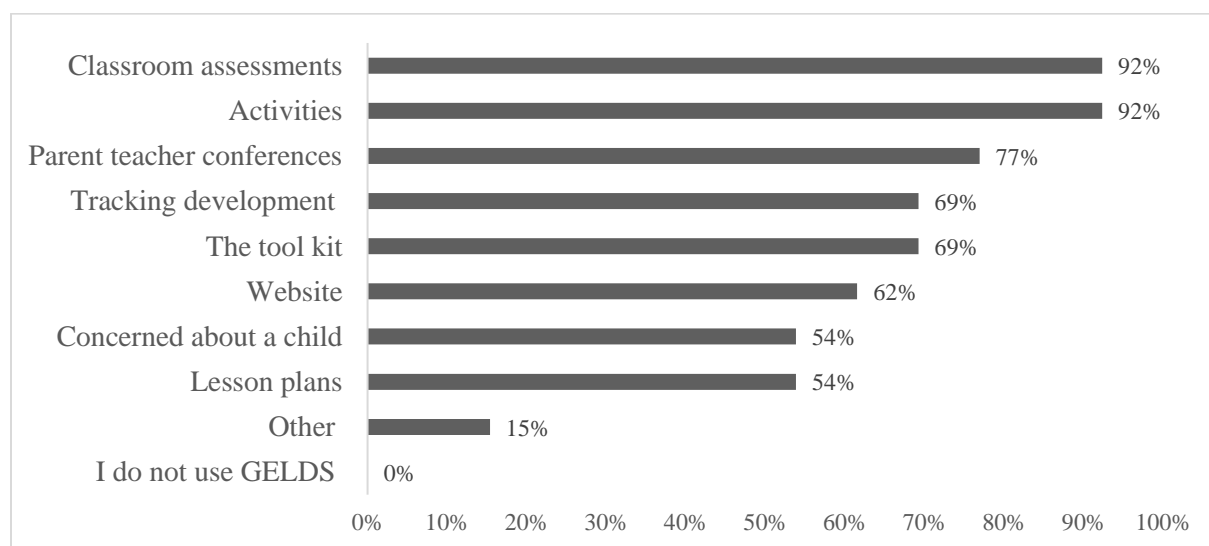
Domain	Average Amount of Growth	% Children Below Growth Range	% Children Meeting or Above Growth Range	Type of Growth
Social-Emotional	3.6	33%	67%	Meeting
Physical	3.1	33%	67%	Meeting
Language	11.9	8%	92%	Meeting
Cognitive	8.9	17%	83%	Meeting
Literacy	6.8	8%	92%	Meeting
Mathematics	4.1	0%	100%	Meeting

The fact that all family child care partners reported being able to support all or almost all of the children in meeting school readiness goals across the five developmental domains is encouraging news for the DEHSP. It is likely that family child care partners have benefitted from the curriculum and assessment supports provided by the DEHSP, and the children have benefitted from the family child care partners instruction.

**Perceptions of Curriculum Support**

The Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) is one of the curriculum supports provided to DEHSP program staff. The GELDS provides teachers with online training and resources that help teachers and family child care partners design lesson plans that are consistent with EHS standards. Family child care partners were asked to select from a list of ways that they use the GELDS in their family child care learning home. The options included assessments, help with lesson planning, assistance individualizing instruction, help conducting parent-teacher conferences, tracking developmental milestones, using the GELDS tool kit (a process that helps teachers’ design and organize classroom activities for future use), using the website for ideas, how to identify developmental delays, and designing lesson plans. The results are displayed in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Family Child Care Partners Reported Use of GELDS for Classroom Instruction



First, it is important to note from Figure 4 that none of the family child care partners reported that they did not use GELDS for classroom instruction. Second, the majority of family child care partners use GELDS for classroom assessments, activities, parent-teacher conferences, tracking child development, the GELDS tool kit, the website for ideas, and when they are planning instructional activities for each child. Overall, these findings suggest that the family child care partners used a variety of the GELDS resources to assist with lesson planning, working with parents, and tracking child development.

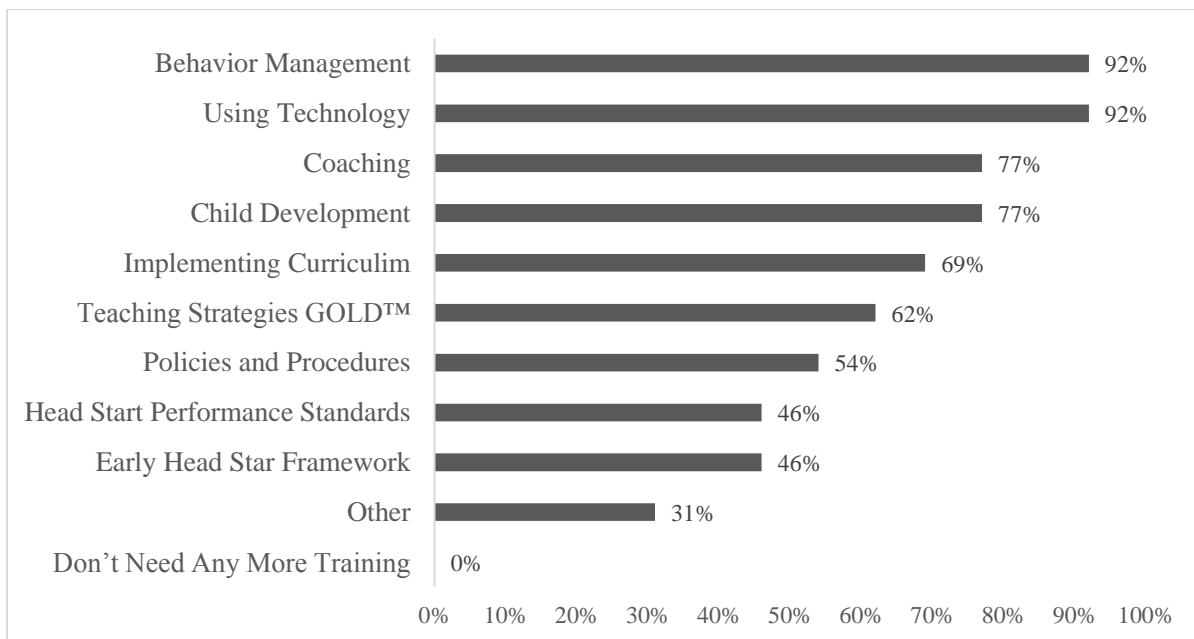
### Time Allocated for Lesson Planning

During the 2016 Self-Assessment process, partners indicated that they had little time for lesson planning. Since family child care providers are expected to plan lessons that are intentional, individualized, and developmentally appropriate for all children in the classroom, it is recommended that they allocate a sufficient amount of time during their regular work day for lesson planning. In order to get a baseline for the amount of time family child care partners allocated to lesson planning, family child care partners were asked approximately how much time they have for lesson planning and preparation during a typical work week. The majority of family child care partners (85%, n = 11) reported that they had three to five hours for lesson planning, 8% (n = 1) reported one to two hours a week, and 8% (n = 1) reported that they do not have time (planning is done before or after work). Based on these results, the majority of family child care partners are given time to plan during their work day. However, a small number (n=2) still need to find strategies that allow for lesson planning and preparation during their work week.

## Training

In addition to time designated for lesson planning, family child care partners are required to attend trainings as a DEHSP child care provider. The DEHSP provides formalized training opportunities for family child care partners in areas where there is a need. Based on the 2016 Self-Assessment topics, a number of training suggestions were frequently mentioned. As such, the 2017 Self-Assessment compiled the most frequently mentioned trainings and asked partners to choose among the most beneficial. The topics included Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), policies and procedures, child development, curriculum for infants and toddlers, coaching, behavior management, EHS framework, using technology, and Teaching Strategies GOLD™. The results are displayed in Figure 5.

Figure 5. What topics would you like to receive more training in?



As evident from Figure 5, the majority of family child care partners would like more training in behavior management, using technology, child development, coaching, HSPPS, curriculum implementation, Teaching Strategies GOLD™, and policies and procedures. Four (31%) of the respondents selected the “other” option. Of the four respondents that selected other, three (21%) indicated that they would like more training for finding qualified assistants. Overall, the findings from Figure 5 suggest that the DEHSP needs to continue to provide family child care partners more training, especially in behavior management, using technology, child development, and coaching. Additionally, the DEHSP can brainstorm ways to find qualified assistants. By providing these supports, the DEHSP can help ensure they are giving the training and tools family child care partners need to be successful.

### **Additional Supports Needed by Family Child Care Partners**

In order to gauge if family child care partners are receiving the support they need to participate fully as a partner in the DEHSP, they were asked if there were any supports that would make teaching their EHS classroom easier that weren't already provided. Eight (62%) of family child care partners responded to the question. The responses are summarized below.

- 50% (n = 4) reported that they have the support they need.
- 50% (n = 4) reported that they would like the training to be started before the program starts.

Based on these responses, DECAL should make a concerted effort to include training on identified topics prior to the start of the program year. Overall, family child care partners are happy with the supports they received from the DEHSP.

### **Family Child Care Partners' Overall Perception of the DECAL Early Head Start Partnership**

For the DEHSP to be successful, all partnering organizations need to be united in their commitment to the DEHSP's vision of providing high-quality child care and comprehensive services to children and their families. To foster this commitment, each employee needs to feel supported in their role by all partnering organizations.

Family child care partners were asked if they agreed with two statements regarding their connection to the goals of the DEHSP. All family child care partners responding to this question agreed with the statement that they felt connected to and supported by the DEHSP in their role.

- 100% (n = 10) agreed that they felt connected to the goals of the DEHSP.
- 100% (n = 7) agreed that they felt supported by the DEHSP in their role as a family child care partner.

Another primary aim of the DEHSP is not only to provide services to families but to help raise the quality of partner child care programs. Family child care partners were asked if their participation in the DEHSP has helped increase the quality of their family child care learning home.

- 100% (n = 8) reported that the DEHSP had a positive impact on the overall quality of their program.

### **Conclusion**

Findings from the 2016 Self-Assessment found similar trends for family child care partners. These findings speak to the commitment of family child care partners to the mission of the DEHSP and the job that DECAL and the hub staff have done to support them. These trends are encouraging and the DEHSP plans to build on this success in 2018. While the overall survey results are positive, family child care partners did report some challenges running their EHS program which are highlighted in the focus group section below.



### Section 3. Family Child Care Partner Focus Group

DECAL’s Research and Policy Analysis Team conducted a focus group with family child care partners at Quality Care for Children headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Participants included all 14 family child care providers participating in the DEHSP. The topics family child care partners highlighted included program changes, training, family engagement, and overall support received from the DEHSP. The following section includes summaries of the strengths, challenges, and proposed strategies to overcome challenges for each of the topics that were discussed.

#### Program Changes Since Joining DEHSP

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family child care partners reported that the home visits were positive experiences that improved the quality of their program. Home visits allowed family child care partners to get to know each child in his/her home while allowing them to help parents reinforce what the child is learning in the classroom.</li> </ul>	
Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>EHS standards do not allow family child care partners to transport the children.</i> Family child care partners felt like this rule forced them to miss opportunities to take the children to the library or to the park.</li> <li>Family child care partners reported they no longer take Good Friday and Columbus Day off.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family child care partners suggested providing more clarification around the rules for transporting children. DECAL will meet with the family child care partners to explain that transportation services for infants and toddlers require stringent safety measures (passenger restraints and additional staff to supervise children during travel) and cost-prohibitive liability insurance.</li> <li>Family child care partners recommend having Good Friday and Columbus Day reinstated.</li> </ul>

#### Training

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family child care partners reported that the DESHP trainings and curriculum support helped them improve the overall quality of their classroom instruction. Specifically, they liked the overall structure of the curriculum and learned how to implement daily activities that foster child development.</li> </ul>

Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family child care partners reported challenges applying both EHS and DECAL licensing standards together.</li> <li>Even though the rules were translated to Spanish, family child care partners reported language barriers understanding the rules.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family child care partners would like to have some more training focused on applying EHS standards in conjunction with DECAL licensing standards.</li> <li>Family child care partners would like a readily accessible list of frequently asked questions surrounding licensing rules and HSPPS that they can quickly reference during work hours.</li> </ul>

### Attendance and Family Engagement

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most family child care partners did not report having trouble with child attendance or family engagement. They reported that the Family Support Specialist assisted them by helping to design and implement activities to promote family engagement such as assigning homework and inviting parents to volunteer by reading to the class.</li> </ul>	
Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A small number of family child care partners reported challenges getting parents to participate and volunteer at their program. They reported that the strategies offered by the Family Support Specialist did not help as much as they would have liked.</li> <li>Family child care partners reported challenges on documenting parent volunteer hours. They were not sure what activities would constitute as volunteering.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family child care partners would like DECAL and the hub staff to find new ways to help them motivate families to volunteer at their child's program.</li> <li>Family child care partners also recommended that hub staff avoid explicitly telling parents in the parent meetings that they are not required to volunteer in the classroom. Strategies should be given on different ways parents can support their children.</li> <li>Family child care partners would like some training and/or technical assistance on how to document parent volunteer hours.</li> </ul>

## Overall Support Received from DEHSP

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### Strengths

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- Family child care partners reported that the technical assistance they received at their program helped improve the quality of their classrooms, playgrounds, and provided an improved learning environment for the children. Specifically, the developmental assessments provided by the DEHSP have helped them document their success which, in turn, has helped them feel more professional.

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### Challenges

- *Family child care partners reported challenges finding qualified substitutes.* A substitute teacher must have a CDA (Child Development Associate credential with an Infant Toddler Endorsement or Family Child Care Home Endorsement) to teach in an EHS classroom when the family child care partner is away from the classroom. Family child care partners reported that candidates with a CDA with a Family Child Care Home Endorsement open their own businesses; those with an Infant Toddler Endorsement and would rather find a full-time job as a lead teacher than take less pay to be an assistant.

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### Strategies to Overcome Challenges

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- DECAL and the hub staff need to help family child care partners find qualified substitute teachers.

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## Conclusion

Overall, the focus group identified several ways that the DEHSP helps support family child care partners. For example, family child care partners reported that the training/technical assistance, the renovations to their classroom and playground, the home visits, and the other tools provided to them by the DEHSP helped them raise the quality of their family child care learning home. Family child care partners did report several challenges. First, family child care partners would like to be able to transport children, but this is not allowed under the current EHS rules and regulations. Second, they would like to have more training on how to keep up with HSPPS standards in conjunction with DECAL licensing standards. Third, family child care partners would like hub staff to provide more support motivating families to volunteer. Fourth, they reported challenges finding qualified substitute teachers.

## Section 4. Family Child Care Partner Focus Groups for Families

DECAL’s Research and Policy Analysis Team conducted a focus group with families who have been participating in the Family Child Care Partnership for at least one year. This focus group was held at Quality Care for Children headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia on November 16, 2017 before the start of the monthly Parent Leadership Organization meeting. Participants included all 6 families from with children enrolled in partnering family child care learning homes in the DEHSP. The topics families highlighted included resources and support received from the partnership, communication with DEHSP partners, and suggestions for DEHSP program improvement. The following section includes summaries of the strengths, challenges, and proposed strategies to overcome challenges for each of the topics that were discussed.

### Overall Support Received from DEHSP

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#### Strengths

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- Most families reported overall satisfaction with the support they received from the partnership. Families reported that they trusted the providers to give their child a supportive and positive learning environment. Specifically, families said their children enjoyed going to school, that their children were able to receive speech services when requested for their children, and that the food was similar to the food served in the home. Families reported satisfaction in knowing that their children were receiving healthy meals that are consistent with their culture.

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#### Challenges

- A small number of family child care partners reported challenges determining whether or not his/her child had a speech issue or if his/her child was shy.
- Families did not report services that they personally received from the Partnership. When prompted, families still did not report receiving services other than services provided to their children.

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#### Strategies to Overcome Challenges

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- Families reported that these issues were usually resolved as the provider got to know the child better. Providing ample time to get to know the child helped ameliorate these issues.
  - In the future, the DEHSP can provide more targeted services for the families or be more explicit about what services are directed to the whole family rather than the individual child.
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## Communication with DEHSP Partners

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Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most families reported good communication between themselves and their child's teacher. Families discussed trusting their provider due to the positive and constant communication about what was occurring during the day.</li></ul>	

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Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Families reported having little to no communication with curriculum consultants. With the exception of the Family Services Case Managers, families reported only having contact with the providers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providers and other DESHP partners should make it a point to introduce themselves to families when they are in the classroom. Providers can help with these introductions or let families know why these partners are in the classroom.</li></ul>

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## Suggestions for DEHSP Improvements

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Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall, families reported being extremely happy with the education and support their child is receiving. All families said they would participate again if given the opportunity. When prompted with ways to improve the program, only one suggestion was provided.</li></ul>	

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Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Three families wished their child would receive more Spanish input throughout the day. Parents wanted their child to be spoken to in Spanish throughout the day.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providers should make it a point to talk to families about their child's language preference prior to starting the program. Efforts should be made to provide Spanish and English instruction when requested. Parents should be informed about reasons for using one language over another.</li></ul>

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## Conclusion

The 2017 DEHSP Self-Assessment results for family child care partners are positive. The majority of family child care partners reported that the DESHP helped improve the overall quality of their family child care learning home. Specifically, family child care partners reported that since joining the DEHSP family engagement has increased and they can offer more comprehensive services to families.

The Self-Assessment survey and focus group helped identify some ways that the DEHSP can better support family child care partners in their role within the DEHSP. These supports included targeted trainings prior to the start of the program year, more focused training on applying HSPPS standards in conjunction with DECAL licensing standards, clarification on the rules regarding transporting children, and more technical assistance on how to measure and document parent participation. The DEHSP has implemented pre-service training to address these needs. For example, a three-day intensive Professional Learning Institute on June 26-29, 2017, provided training on topics that were requested based on the 2016 Self-Assessment results. We intend to offer similar trainings in the future to provide the continued support and professional development requested by the DEHSP partners.

Families in the partnership reported high levels of satisfaction with the program. All families said if given the opportunity they would participate in the program again.

Family child care partners remain committed to the DEHSP's mission and vision and continue to feel supported in their role as family child care partners. The DEHSP hopes to continue to build on this success as family child care partners work with hub staff to deliver services in 2018.

## **Section 5. Child Care Learning Center Partners**

The 2017 Self-Assessment process for child care learning centers included a teacher survey, a director survey, teacher interviews, and a director focus group. Since there were only two responses to the director survey, the results were not summarized in this report. Focus groups and surveys were completed during the DEHSP Professional Learning Institute training in Clarkston, GA from July 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017. As previously mentioned, due to the low response rate, teacher interviews are embedded in the teachers' survey section to provide more detailed information and feedback from center teachers.

### **Teacher Surveys**

Five child care learning center partners served 152 infants, toddlers, and their families in 22 Early Head Start classrooms in 2017. Twenty-six (53%) of teachers at partner child care learning centers completed a survey during the 2017 DEHSP Professional Learning Institute. As mentioned previously, the 53% response rate for teachers is 37% higher than the response rate from 2016. Items from the 2017 survey were selected based on feedback from the 2016 Self-Assessment results. Survey items highlighted important topics such as delivering comprehensive services to families, family engagement, perceptions' of child development, training and curriculum support, and overall perception of the DEHSP. It is important to note that while many of the questions on the teacher survey were the same as the questions asked on the family child care survey, the data from these surveys is reported separately. The 14 family child care partners operate their own businesses; teachers are employees of the child care learning centers. Therefore, the data from the teacher surveys is not compared directly with the data from the family child care partners. The results are summarized in the following sections.

## **Perceptions of Family Engagement**

A pillar of the DEHSP mission is to help programs increase family engagement and participation. A good measure of family engagement at a particular program is how frequently parents volunteer and assist with planning activities. As such, teachers were asked how often at least one mother and one father volunteer at their program.

- 46% (n = 11) of teachers reported that they have at least one parent volunteer in their classroom at least once a month or more frequently.

Overall, the results indicate that half the teachers in the sample had parents volunteer less than once a month. The previous finding would suggest that a significant percentage of teachers may need help encouraging or finding ways for parents to volunteer in the classroom.

## **Attendance**

Similar to the family child care partners, teachers were asked if they implemented any strategies to encourage attendance in their classroom. The majority of teachers (71%, n = 17) reported that they use strategies to encourage attendance. Second, teachers were asked if they were successful in implementing strategies to improve child attendance. The majority of the teachers (76%, n = 13) who indicated they used strategies to improve attendance in the classroom reported that they were successful. It is encouraging that teachers believe that they have some control of the attendance of their classroom.

## **Perceptions of Child Development**

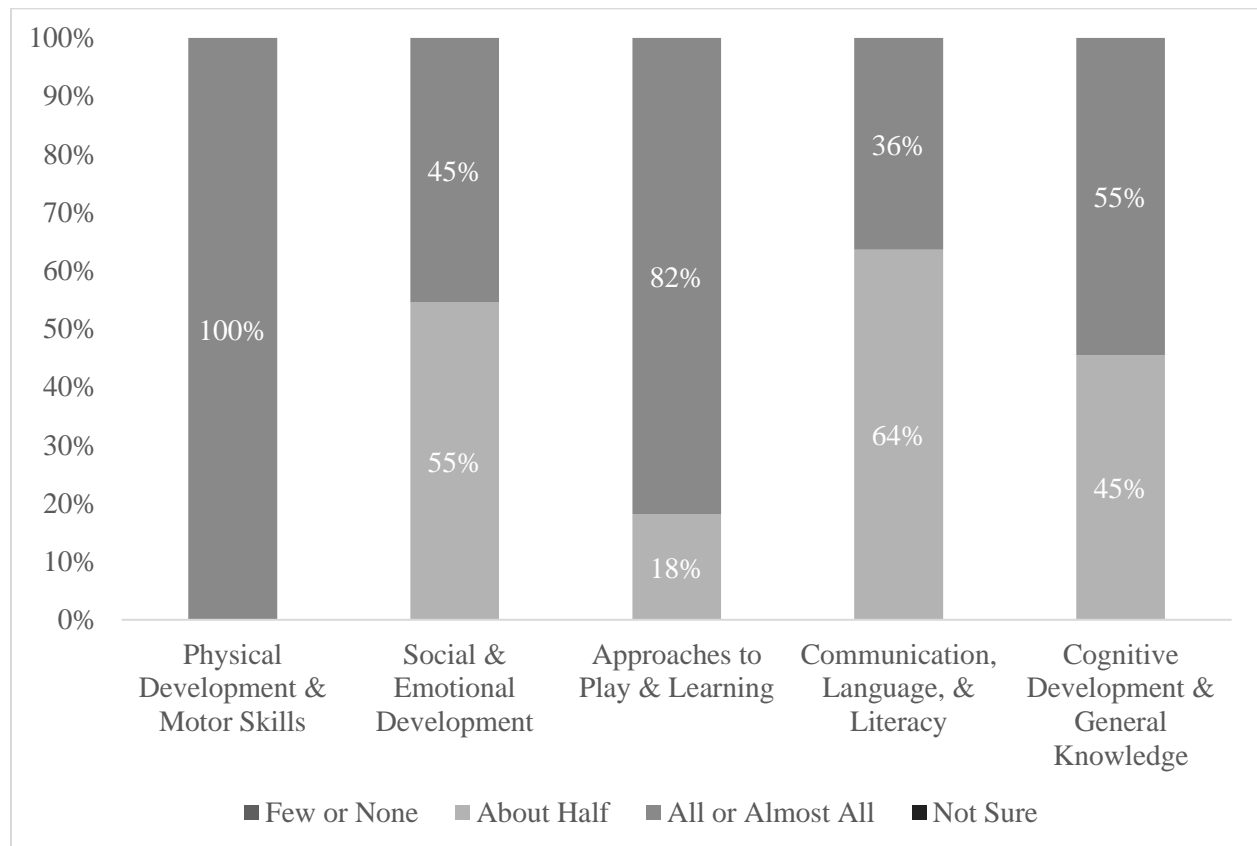
Teachers were asked how many children in their classroom were physically healthy, rested, and well-nourished when they arrived to class each day. The possible responses were few or none, about half, and all or almost all. The majority of teachers (58%, n = 15) reported that all or almost all of the children in their classroom were physically healthy, rested, and well-nourished when they arrived to class each day. These findings suggest that most teachers and parents have been able to work together to ensure that most children's basic needs are being met outside the classroom.

It is important to note, however, that more than 42% (n = 11) of teachers reported that at least some of their children are not healthy, rested, and well-nourished when they arrive to class each day. This finding presents the challenge for teachers, who must ensure that a child's basic needs are met, while at the same time helping them get developmentally on track in language/literacy and social/emotional development. Teachers must refer the family to the Family Services Specialist who works with family to address any issues, provide resources, and track referrals. While challenging for the teachers, it is important to note that the comprehensive service array available to children and families through the DEHSP provide the resources and supports to help ensure that children's needs are met so that they are able to learn and grow.

An important goal of the DEHSP is to help all children get developmentally on track in domains of physical and cognitive development. As a result, teachers are provided with ongoing

developmental assessments to track progress and identify supports needed for each child participating in Early Head Start. The survey asked teachers if: few or none, about half, or all/almost all of their children were developmentally on track in the following areas; physical development and motor skills; social and emotional development; approaches to play and learning; communication, language, and literacy; cognitive development and general knowledge. Figure 6 outlines teachers’ report of approximately how many children in their classroom are developmentally on track in targeted domains.

Figure 6. In your opinion, how many of the children in your classroom are developmentally on track in the following domains?



As evident from Figure 6, the majority of teachers reported that all or almost all of their children are on track in physical development/motor skills, approaches to learning and play, cognitive development, and general knowledge. However, the majority of teachers reported about half or less of their children are on track in social/emotional and language/literacy development. These findings suggest that the DEHSP should expand their ongoing curriculum support that emphasizes social/emotional development and language/literacy development. It is important to note that the survey question did not specify whether or not children were on track based on any specific developmental delays they may have. In next year’s self-assessment, the survey will



differentiate based on being on track for age verses on track for age and taking into consideration any developmental delays.

#### Perceptions' of Training and Curriculum/Instruction.

When examining teachers typical work week and lesson planning, teachers were asked approximately how much time they have for lesson planning and preparation during a typical work week. Slightly more than half of teachers reported they have at least an hour to plan, while close to half reported they had less than an hour a week.

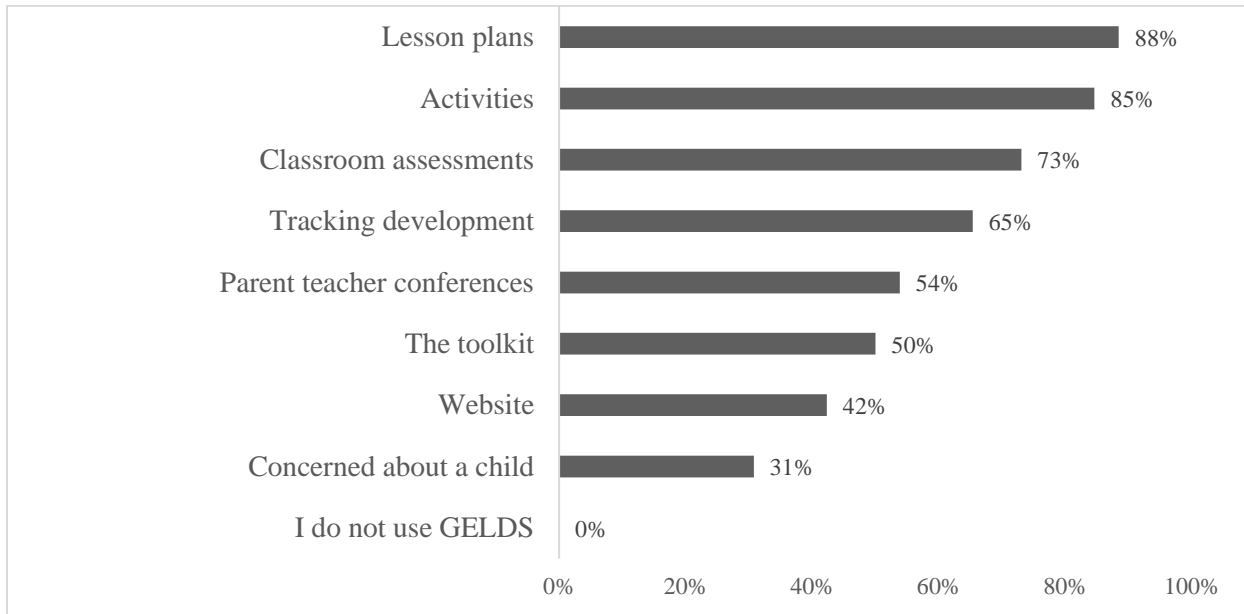
- 38% (n = 9) of teachers reported that they were not given time to plan during regular work hours.
- 46% (n = 11) of teachers reported they were given less than an hour a week for planning.
- 54% (n = 13) of teachers reported they were given at least an hour a week for planning.

Although most teachers are given an hour or more to plan during a typical work week, a significant portion of teachers are not being provided time during regular work hours for lesson planning. This finding was supported by teacher interviews and undergirds the need for the DEHSP to work with program staff to ensure that all partner programs are providing teachers with time for lesson planning and preparation.

#### GELDS (Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards).

Teachers were asked to select from a list of ways that they use the GELDS in their classroom. The options included assessments, help with lesson planning, assistance coming up with class activities, help conducting parent-teacher conferences, tracking developmental milestones, using the GELDS tool kit (a process that helps teachers' design and organize classroom activities for future use), using the website for ideas, how to identify developmental delays, and designing lesson plans. Figure 7 displays teachers' reported use of the GELDS in the classroom.

Figure 7. Teachers' Reported Use of GELDS for Classroom Instruction

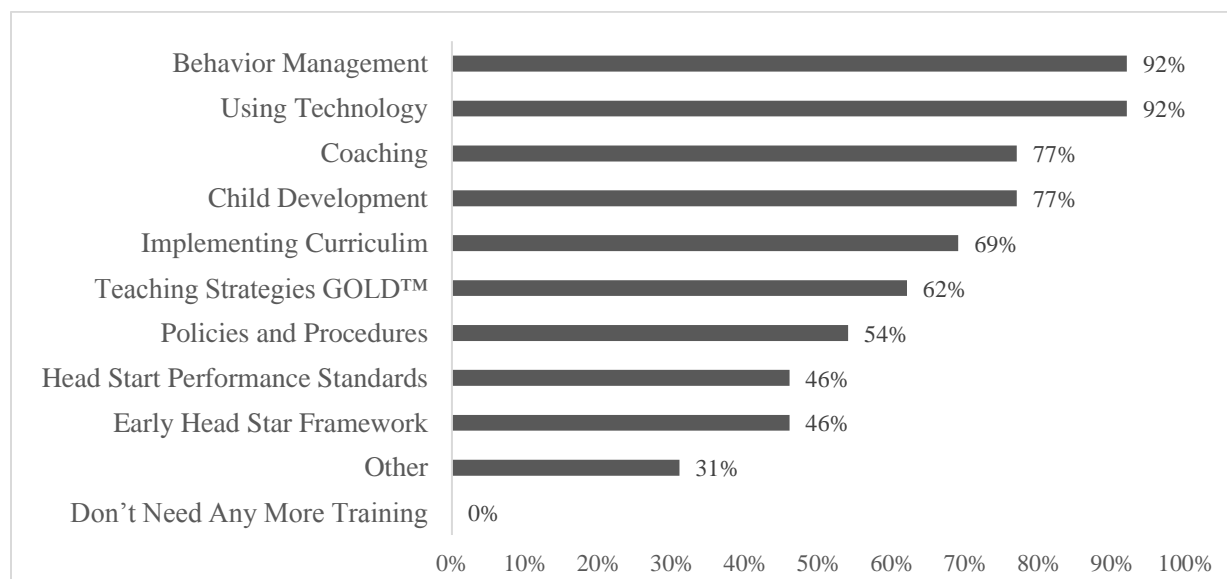


As evident from Figure 7, the majority of teachers used the GELDS for parent-teacher conferences, tracking child development, classroom assessments, activities, and lesson plans.

#### Training.

The DEHSP provides teachers with regular training to foster professional development and keep them informed on the ongoing changes to HSPPS standards and curriculum. Teachers were asked what topics they would like to receive more training in. The topics included Head Start Program Performance Standards, policies and procedures, child development, curriculum for infants and toddlers, coaching, behavior management, EHS framework, using technology, and Teaching Strategies GOLD™. The results are displayed in Figure 8.

Figure 8. What topics would you like to receive more training in?



As evident from Figure 8, there was no topic that the majority of the teachers wanted more training in. However, there were a variety of topics that many teachers were interested in receiving training on. These topics include training in Teaching Strategies GOLD™, Head Start Performance Standards, and behavior management. Two teachers (8%) selected the “other” option, and one reported they would like training on finding grants and the other reported they would like training on children with special needs.

#### Teachers’ Overall Perception of the DECAL Early Head Start Partnership.

An important aim of the DEHSP is to increase the quality of all partner programs. Teachers were asked if their participation in the DEHSP has helped increase the quality of their classroom. The majority of teachers (80%, n= 20) who responded to the question reported that the DEHSP had a positive impact on the overall quality of their classroom.

In order to have successful implementation of quality improvements in the classroom, teachers need to feel supported and connected to the mission of the DEHSP. Teachers were asked if they agreed with two statements stating a connection to the goals of the DEHSP and if they felt supported by the DEHSP in their role as a teacher. Overall, the majority of teachers who responded to the question agreed with the statement that they felt connected to and supported by the DEHSP in their role.

- 82% (n = 11) agreed that they felt connected to the goals of the DEHSP.
- 73% (n = 11) agreed that they felt supported by the DEHSP in their role as a teacher.

Teachers were asked if there were any supports that would make teaching their EHS classroom easier that weren’t already provided. Nine (25%) teachers responded to the question. The responses are summarized below.

- 44% (n = 4) reported that there was not enough staff. They suggested that two teachers is not enough for an EHS classroom.
- 22% (n = 2) reported they do not have enough time for lesson planning.
- 11% (n = 1) reported that they would like more training.

### **Conclusion**

The 2017 teacher surveys echoed many of the themes found in the family child care partners' surveys. These themes centered around a strong connection to the DEHSP partnership, the belief that many of their children are developmentally on track, the need for providing teachers with adequate planning time, and a need for targeted training. It is interesting to note that while 92% of family child care partners desired training in technology, only 8% of teachers were interested in receiving more training in technology. This difference in training reiterates the need to address these two groups of child care educators differently as their framework and needs vary greatly.

## **Section 6. Additional Focus Groups**

### **Director Focus Groups**

A focus group was held during the DEHSP Professional Learning Institute for the five child care learning center directors. The purpose of the focus group was to understand positive changes that occurred as a result of center directors' participation in the DEHSP, the challenges directors faced participating in the DEHSP, and to discuss strategies that would help them overcome the aforementioned challenges. The topics directors highlighted were renovations to the facility, communication with teachers and the hub staff, recruiting children, and transitioning children in and out of the program. The strengths, challenges, and strategies to overcome each challenge for each topic are highlighted below.

### **Facility Renovations**

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<b>Strengths</b>	
Overall, most directors agreed that the facility renovations had a positive impact on the overall quality of their program. The renovations provided program staff with an environment that is more conducive to fostering learning and development.	

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<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Strategies to Overcome Challenges</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Directors mentioned that the renovations required programs to vacate their facility for much longer than anticipated.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Renovations projects can be divided so they do not require programs to relocate for several months. Note; all renovation projects have been completed.</li></ul>

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**Communication**

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**Strengths**

Since joining the DEHSP, directors said teachers have been more likely to support one another's efforts to improve quality in the classrooms. They have noticed that EHS teachers are offering strategies and support to non-EHS teachers. Directors also reported that teachers are more likely to share various learning materials across classrooms, diversifying the amount of learning materials available for the children in a given classroom.

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**Challenges**

- *Directors reported challenges communicating with the hub staff.* Specifically, hub staff and directors were not communicating frequently about the hub staff's role in the child care center. In some cases, directors did not have notice that hub staff were holding meetings. As a result, directors had challenges allocating enough space for the hub staff to work in conjunction with the program staff. Directors were also unable to answer parents' questions about the hub staffs' work at their center.

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**Strategies to Overcome Challenges**

- *Directors and hub staff should use a shared calendar application such as Microsoft Outlook to schedule meetings at the centers.* The invitation should include who will attend the meeting, what the purpose of the meeting is, how long it will be, and what will be discussed.
- DECAL, the hub staff, and program staff should provide a more detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of the hub staff members. A clearer description of the roles of the hub staff would help directors understand how to support them in their role.
- Hub staff should check in with directors at arrival to let directors know they are at the program.
- DECAL, hub staff, and directors will meet to identify strategies to improve communication and will implement the strategies and processes.

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**Recruitment / Transitions**

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not only is EHS free for qualifying families, but families know that it is a high-quality program. As a result, the directors report that offering an EHS classroom has helped attract families to their program.</li> </ul>	
Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hub staff are primarily recruiting children from families that are already enrolled in partner programs rather than recruiting other children from the community. If children are already enrolled in the partner program, adding them on to their EHS roster does not support the partner programs' business.</li> <li>Partner programs that offer a pre-school classroom, but not a Head Start classroom, often lose children transitioning out of EHS to programs that do offer a Head Start (HS) classroom. Families are often recommended to transition from EHS to a HS program, even if they have to transition out of a partner program. The rationale is that in a HS program the family would continue to receive similar funding that they received in their child's EHS program. However, when families transition out of EHS to another program, the partner program loses a child that they may have expected to transition to the pre-school classroom.</li> <li>Directors suggest that families are not informed about alternate funding to HS (e.g., child care subsidies) that may allow them to keep their family enrolled in the same program for preschool. Directors reported that after discussing transition options with families, some families preferred to accept alternate funding to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hub staff and directors should initially set goals on how many children they can recruit from the community. The director and the hub staff should then work together to meet their recruitment goals.</li> <li>The transition coach's process should allow directors of partner programs to present care options at their center to families' transitioning out of Early Head Start. The transition coach's process should include a meeting with the director and the family. During the meeting, the director and transition coach will outline the advantages of staying at the partner program. The meeting will also discuss alternative funding streams to HS that may make it possible for the family to stay at the partner program. The transition coach will then meet with families at a separate time to discuss options of transitioning to an alternate program. In this process, the transition coach is supporting both the director and the family.</li> <li>Transition coaches should inform directors on family's decisions to stay at the partner program or transition to a different program. The transition coach should provide the director with regular updates on which families have made a decision to stay or leave the program, and which families are undecided. The</li> </ul>

<p>HS to keep their child enrolled in the same partner program for pre-school. Directors reported that the hub staff did not present these options to families.</p>	<p>directors should, in turn, agree to respect families’ decisions by not approaching them once they have had a chance to present their option to families.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Directors do not feel informed about the process of transitioning families out of their EHS program.</i> In some cases, the directors were unaware of which families were leaving the program and which families were staying.</li> </ul>	

## Family Engagement

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, directors reported significantly more family engagement than they had prior to joining the DEHSP. Directors also acknowledged that once they were able to identify how the Family Support Specialist can best support their program, they were able to work together to get a desirable turnout at parent meetings.</li> </ul>	
Challenges	Strategies to Overcome Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The role of Family Support Specialists was unfamiliar to Child Care Partner, so they were unsure of how someone in that role would assist their program.</i> Directors reported that the Family Support Specialist had trouble getting desirable turnouts for parent meetings on their own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DECAL should work with directors to provide a clear description of the family engagement adviser’s daily roles and responsibilities. The description should focus on how the Family Support Specialist will work with the program staff to support family engagement.</li> </ul>

The focus group helped identify ways that joining the DEHSP has supported directors. For example, the directors recognized that the renovations, the EHS program and funding, and overall support of the hub staff has had a positive impact on the overall quality of their program. However, the directors reported several challenges communicating with the hub staff. For example, directors were often unaware of when the hub staff were coming to their center, what they were doing, and who they were working with. Directors also felt left out of the process of transitioning families out of EHS. There was also some challenges around the responsibilities of the different hub staff positions and family engagement responsibilities.

Based on the findings from the focus group, DECAL plans to facilitate a meeting with directors and hub staff to discuss communication and the roles and responsibilities of the hub staff.

### **Conclusion**

The 2017 DEHSP Self-Assessment teacher survey, teacher interviews, and the director focus group identified several ways the DEHSP supported partner child care learning centers. For example, teachers reported that the curriculum support provided by the DEHSP helped them implement daily activities that supported the growth and development of the children. As a result, directors noted that since joining the DEHSP teachers were more likely to support one another's efforts to improve quality by offering technical assistance or sharing various learning materials across classrooms. Teachers and directors both agreed that the support from the DEHSP has improved the overall quality of their child care center.

The self-assessment process identified several challenges in delivering services to families. The concerns raised by teachers and directors have led DECAL to facilitate a meeting with directors and hub staff to develop communication processes that help hub staff keep teachers and directors informed about their activities supporting teachers and families. The meeting will also discuss and highlight the hub staff's specific roles and responsibilities, which will be discussed in the following section.

### **Family Focus Groups for Child Care Learning Centers**

In efforts to solicit feedback from families with children attending child care learning centers, families who have been participating in the program for at least one year were invited to participate in a focus group. This focus group was held at Atlanta Technical College on November 21, 2017, prior to the start of their Parent Leadership Organization Meeting. However, only two parents showed up to the meeting, and one parent was also a teacher in the program. Therefore, information gathered during the focus group is not shared in this report. It was deemed inappropriate to use the information since it would represent a limited view of the families participating and would not be able to provide the anonymity ensured by the research team. The lack of participation is a demonstration that DECAL needs to strengthen its communication and expectations with partnering hubs to ensure better communication and expectations with families.

## **Section 7: Hub Staff Survey**

The Hub Staff also completed paper surveys during the 2017 DEHSP Professional Learning Institute. All 30 hub staff members were given a survey and only nine hub staff members responded which is a 30% response rate. The hub staff response rate was 70% higher in 2016 suggesting that hub staff maybe more likely to respond to an online survey. The survey highlighted hub staffs' roles and responsibilities, communication with the program staff, and providing comprehensive services to families. The results of the hub staff survey are summarized in the section below.



## **Hub Staff's Roles and Responsibilities**

The survey asked respondents to identify their role with the hub. The majority of the respondents were either curriculum/ECE specialists, hub coordinators, a director, or a manager. It is important to note that no Family Service Specialists identified their role on the survey. As a result, any of the responses discussed in this summary may not reflect the opinions of Family Service Specialists. A breakdown of the respondents' positions within the hubs are displayed below.

- 44% (n = 4) identified as Curriculum/ECE Specialists
- 22% (n = 2) identified as a Hub Coordinator/Director or Manager
- 11% (n = 1) identified as a Quality Assurance Specialist
- 11% (n = 1) identified as a Transition Coach
- 11% (n = 1) did not identify

The hub staff play an important role in the DEHSP by assisting with delivering comprehensive services to families, supporting family engagement, and helping ensure classrooms are safe and of high quality. The survey asked hub staff how their role in the DEHSP supports school readiness and comprehensive services. Eight (89%) of the hub staff members responded to the question. A breakdown of the responses by role within the hub are outlined below.

### **Curriculum Specialists**

Three of the four (75%) Curriculum Specialists responded to the question. Curriculum Specialists reported their job entails ensuring quality in the classroom through overseeing day-to-day operations through supporting individualized learning experiences, Creative Curriculum, assessments, and modeling teacher-child interactions.

### **Hub Coordinators**

Both (100%) of Hub Coordinators/Directors/Managers that responded to the question identified their role within the DEHSP was to ensure that all families are informed and invited to all meetings and events and through providing data and information on the benefits and impact of including families at the program.

### **Transition Coach**

The Transition Coach indicated that his/her role within the DEHSP is to ensure that children and families are physically, mentally, socially, and cognitively ready to move on to the next learning environment for the child.

### **Quality Assurance Specialist**

The one Quality Assurance Specialist indicated that he/she supports the DEHSP mission to provide comprehensive services by ensuring that all programs and staff are providing a safe and healthy learning environment.

### **Communication with Program Staff**

Hub staff must communicate regularly with program staff to be able to effectively perform their job. The survey asked hub staff how frequently they communicate with partner program staff. The majority of hub staff reported they communicate with partner programs at least once a week.

- 78% (n = 7) of hub staff reported they talk with partner programs at least once a week.

These findings would suggest that most hub staff in the sample communicate with program staff regularly on a weekly basis. As mentioned, regular communication between the hub staff and the program staff is essential to delivering high-quality comprehensive services to families.

### **Providing Comprehensive Services to Families**

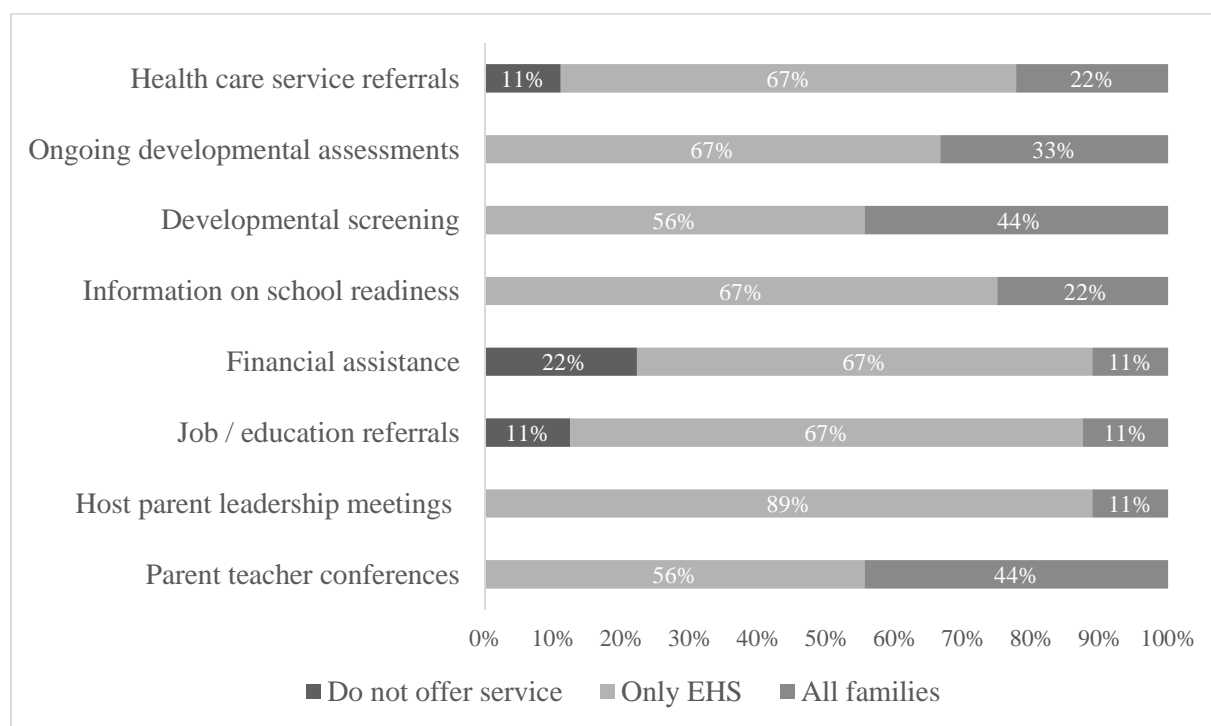
An ongoing goal of the DEHSP is to continuously support improvements in the process of delivering high-quality comprehensive supports to families. As a result, hub staff members were asked, “What supports would make delivering high-quality comprehensive services to families more effective?” Four (44%) of respondents answered the question. A summary of the results is outlined below.

- 50% (n = 2) mentioned ongoing professional development training and identified training on including children with disabilities as a need.
- 25% (n = 1) mentioned providing comprehensive services for all families, not just those receiving EHS funding.
- 25% (n = 1) mentioned applying EHS safety, health, and education practices to other early childhood education initiatives such as Quality Rated.

### **Comprehensive Services Offered to Families in Early Head Start Only**

Hub staff were asked to identify whether certain comprehensive services are offered to only families receiving EHS at partner programs or to all children in the program. The comprehensive services included health care referrals, ongoing developmental assessments, developmental screening, distribute information on school readiness, financial assistance, job/education referrals, hosting parent leadership meetings, and parent-teacher conferences. The results are displayed in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Comprehensive Services Provided to All Families and Families Receiving EHS only.



As evident from Figure 9, the majority of services are provided only for families receiving EHS. These findings would suggest that the DEHSP has some work to do in expanding the delivery of comprehensive services to all families attending partner programs, as these services should be available to all families in the program. It is important to note that eight (89%) hub staff members reported that parent leadership meetings are only designed for families receiving EHS which is discussed in the following section.

### Implementing Parent Leadership Organizations

Since parent leadership meetings are a huge tool to engage families and include them in decision-making for the program, the survey asked hub staff how they can support partner programs to implement a parent leadership organization. Four respondents (44%) answered the question. The responses are outlined below.

- One respondent (25%) mentioned holding parent leadership meetings regularly.
- One respondent (25%) mentioned including all families not just those receiving Early Head Start.
- One respondent (25%) mentioned by providing parents incentives to attend the meeting.
- One respondent (25%) mentioned selecting parents to be a representative for the policy council or parent committee.

The findings suggest that parent leadership organizations can be implemented by holding meetings regularly. In turn, families can be recruited by offering incentives and leadership positions such as being a representative for the policy council or parent committee. Hub staff also reported that including all families of partner programs, not just those in Early Head Start, may be an important component of successfully implementing a parent leadership organization. If all families are allowed to participate instead of just families in Early Head Start, the organization may have more parents participating overall. The more parents that participate, the more likely they are to help with the recruitment efforts and offer meaningful contributions to the organization.

### **Connection to and Support from the DEHSP**

When hub staff were asked if they agreed with the two statements stating a connection to the goals of the DEHSP and whether they felt supported by the DEHSP in their hub roles, the majority of the hub staff responding agreed.

- 67% (n = 6) agreed that they felt connected to the goals of the DEHSP.
- 78% (n = 7) agreed that they felt supported by the DEHSP in their role as a hub staff member.

Although these findings are encouraging, there is room for improvement to ensure all members of the hub staff feel connected and supported to the DEHSP. It is important to note that Curriculum Specialists made up two of the three (67%) of respondents who did not feel connected to the goals of the DEHSP, and both respondents reported that they did not feel supported by the DEHSP in their role as a hub staff member. While most hub staff members feel supported, the DEHSP should make it a priority to understand how to better support Curriculum Specialists.

## **Conclusion**

The results from the 2017 Self-Assessment are positive. First, the majority of partners in the DEHSP report feeling connected to the goals of the DEHSP and supported by the DEHSP to perform their roles in delivering comprehensive services to children and families. Second, all family child care partners stated that all or almost all children were developmentally on track for all five domains, and more than half of the teachers reported that all or almost all of their children were developmentally on track for four out of five domains. The one domain scoring lower; communication, language, and literacy, was also identified as a requested area for training for teachers. To date, Bilingual Curriculum Specialists have put systems and supports in place to ensure that language modeling through everyday activities are in place for providers. However, we continue to support that the primary language is how children learn best. The fact that the teachers recognize children's current abilities and have a desire to find ways to improve their teaching to meet children's needs is encouraging. Third, directors report that the positive impacts of the DEHSP are influencing the way non EHS classrooms are operating. Fourth, 78% of the Hub Staff report communicating with partnering programs at least once a week.

While the Self-Assessment yields positive results, it also informs DECAL in ways that the partnership, program systems, and processes can be improved. The challenges listed in the Self-Assessment support the notion that delivering EHS services is more complex than delivering services in regular childcare. Despite these challenges, the DEHSP is committed to finding innovative ways to better support partners in this process. Such improvements center on a clarification of HSSPS, responsibilities, and roles. Further information is outlined in the Plan of Improvement below.

Figure 10. DECAL’s Plan of Improvement for Family Child Care Partners



Figure 11. DECAL’s Plan of Improvement for Teachers

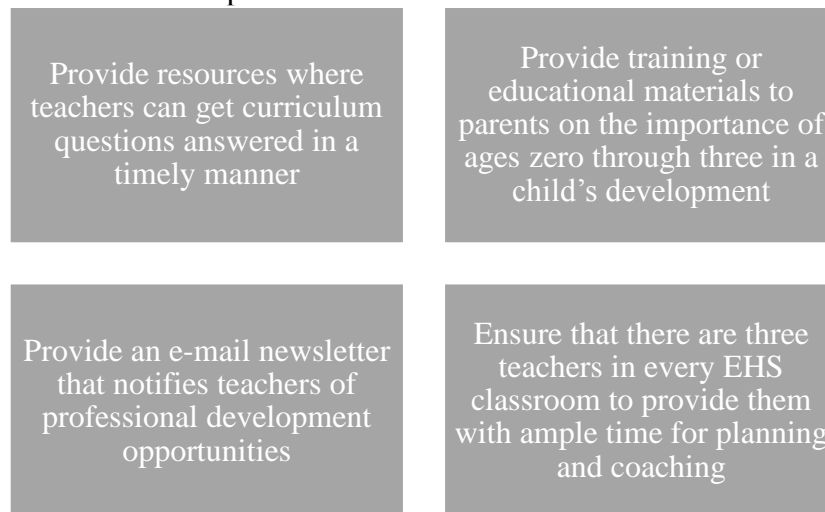
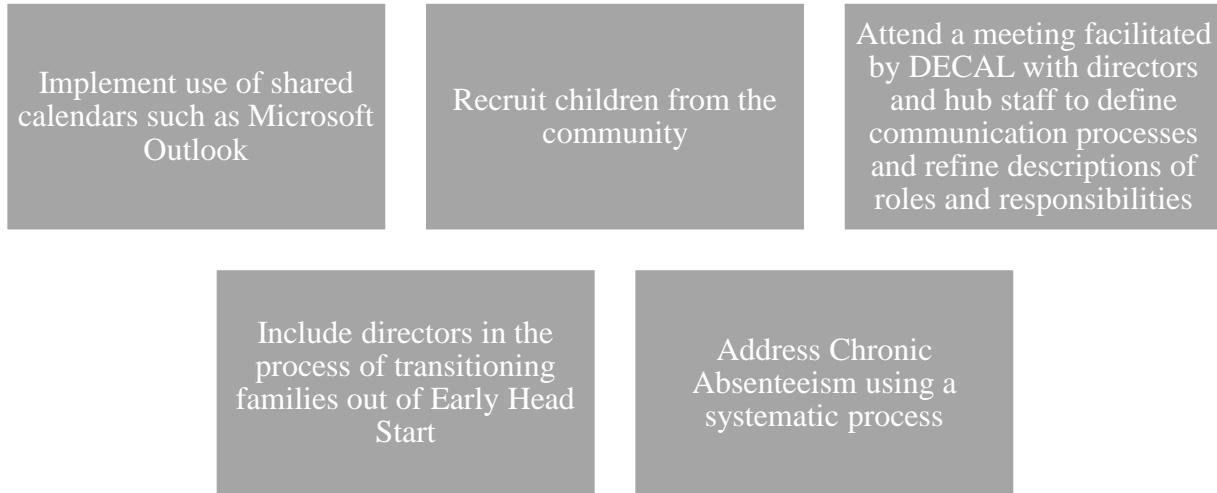


Figure 12. DECAL’s Plan of Improvement for Directors and Hub Staff



Overall, the DEHSP Self-Assessment results suggest child care providers and hub staff are proud of their continued work in 2017. DECAL looks forward to updating the Self-Assessment to include ways the DEHSP is currently serving families and ways that the partnership can improve its delivery of services. The DEHSP would like to thank all partners who contributed to the self-assessment process.