



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

SEEDS for Success Pyramid Model Grants
Operating Guidelines
2019-2020

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the requirements and regulations for operating a SEEDS for Success Pyramid Model (SEEDS) grant. To ensure program compliance and quality service, all SEEDS grant providers must be familiar with and implement these guidelines. This document is intended to provide clarity and to offer guidance Bright from the Start makes all funding decisions for the SEEDS grants. Inclusion Specialists make site visits periodically during the grant period to review compliance and provide support. Providers who do not comply with the SEEDS Guidelines may have the existing grant agreement terminated and will not be eligible for the grants in the future.

1.0 General Program Information

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the SEEDS grants is to support teams of early learning professionals in improving pre-k and preschool classroom climate, preventing and reducing challenging behavior and reducing the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary discipline practices through evidence-based training and onsite supports.

1.2 Program Requirements and Responsibilities

Programs that receive the SEEDS Pyramid Model Implementation Grant must:

- be a licensed child care center in good standing with DECAL;
- have a minimum of 2 preschool and/or pre-k classrooms;
- achieve and maintain a 2 or 3-star rating in Quality Rated;
- be a current Georgia's Pre-K Program provider; and
- cannot simultaneously participate in year one of DECAL's Project LITTLE grant.

Early learning programs receiving a SEEDS grant will:

- identify and support a site leadership team which includes both an internal and external coach;
- implement pyramid strategies in pre-k and preschool classrooms;
- participate in all professional learning activities including off-site trainings and meetings, onsite trainings, meetings and coaching sessions;
- participate in all evaluation measures; and
- maintain or increase the program's Quality Rated star rating.

1.3 Program Administration

All programs must designate one center director as the SEEDS Grant Administrator who will be responsible for all aspects of the project. The Grant Administrator will serve as the primary point of contact for the grant and should be located onsite at the child care program. The Grant Administrator may have other duties but should be able to focus ample time on the operation of the grant program during the work day. Persons with other responsibilities such as teaching in another classroom or preparing meals may not serve as the grant administrator.

1.4 Grant and Site Leadership Team Roles and Responsibilities

Contract Signatory: The legal signatory (CEO, COO, CFO, President, Sole Proprietor) who has apparent authority or legal authority for the program/ company applying for the grant must sign the grant agreement. The contract signatory communicates the expectations of the SEEDS grant, including the guidelines, to the center director and staff to ensure successful grant participation.

SEEDS Grant Administrator: This role is filled by an identified director who attends all professional learning sessions, participates as part of the site leadership team and oversees the day to day work of the grant. The SEEDS Grant Administrator chairs the Site Leadership Team.

Internal Coach: This is a full or part-time paid position hired or promoted from within. The grant pays the Internal Coach's salary, and they receive intensive training and supports in coaching and mentoring. The Internal Coach is a member of the Site Leadership Team and acts as a support and coach to the preschool and pre-k staff implementing the model. The Internal Coach is a member of the Site Leadership Team. ***The Internal Coach may not fulfill any other job duties or roles during the hours they are being paid as a coach.***

External Coach: This role can be filled by a regional curriculum director or other regional TA support staff. Programs that are unable to provide an External Coach may work with DECAL to identify a DECAL Inclusion Specialist to fill this role. The External Coach does not have to work on site but must dedicate at least 8 hours per week to supporting the program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model strategies in Preschool or Pre-K classrooms. The External Coach must ensure that the site leadership team meets regularly and work with the grant administrator to ensure that all data requirements are met, and that data is collected and submitted to DECAL as required by the grant. The External Coach attends all Site Leadership team meetings as a support.

Behavior Support Staff: This role can be filled by an assistant director, education specialist, other staff member or the internal coach or multiple staff can share duties. The Behavior Support Staff collaborates with the Internal Coach, teachers, and other members of the Site Leadership Team to collect behavior data to use in determining individualized prevention, replacement, and response strategies. The Behavior Support Staff is a member of the Site Leadership Team.

Data Coordinator: This role can be filled by an Assistant Director, education specialist, or other staff member. The person in this role ensures that data are collected, compiled and shared with the Site Leadership Team to use in data-informed decision making. The Data Coordinator is a member of the Site Leadership Team.

Teacher Representatives: The teaching staff is represented on the Site Leadership Team by a teacher or teaching assistant from each age-level participating in the grant.

Teachers: Preschool and Pre-k teachers whose classrooms are identified to participate in the grant will participate in all professional development sessions, coaching sessions, observations, and assessments. Individual teachers do not attend the Site Leadership Team meetings.

2.0 Personnel

2.1 Teachers

Programs must include all preschool and pre-k teachers in all professional development opportunities and other grant activities. The teachers identified should work primarily in the classrooms participating in the implementation. Grant classrooms must be staffed with teaching personnel to meet the minimum required ratios and credentials under Georgia's Child Care Learning Center licensing rules. Program administrators should review credentials and certifications of teaching staff and provide encouragement and resources for teachers to increase their credentials.

2.2 Internal Coaches

Programs must select one Internal Coach to serve as a support in grant classrooms. The Internal Coach may be chosen from the program's current administrative staff or classroom teachers or may be hired from outside. The Internal Coach must be employed in that role for the period specified in the individual program's grant agreement (full or part-time) and cannot fulfill job duties ***in any other capacity*** including classroom teacher, substitute teacher, curriculum director, bus driver, or floater during the hours they are being paid as a coach. Internal Coaches must be paid at the rate specified in the grant.

The ideal Internal Coach will be a demonstrated leader in the program with extensive experience as a classroom teacher. Experience providing training, technical assistance or coaching is preferred. Internal Coaches will provide mentoring, coaching and support to teachers and will provide administrative support for data collection activities. Internal Coaches must be hired no later than August 31, 2019.

3.0 Professional Development

3.1 Required Professional Development Opportunities

All personnel participating in grant activities must attend required professional development opportunities as listed below.

	Location				Who is required to attend?							
	Atlanta	Regionally	On-Site	Telephone	Director	Internal Coach	External Coach	Behavior Specialist	Data Coordinator	Full SLT	Center staff	Other ¹
Grant Overview and Orientation Sessions	X				X							
Grant Administrator Check In Calls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly one-hour calls scheduled from September 2019 through August 2020 				X	X							
Pyramid Model PS Practices Training (on-site) ² <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 training modules (up to 16 hours) scheduled over time from Jun 2019-Sept 2019 			X		X					X	PS PK	
Monthly Site Leadership Team Meetings			X							X		
Initial Site Leadership Team Meeting (2 days)		X			X					X		
Behavior Incident Report/Data Entry Training (4 hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly data PLC (4 hours) 		X			X	X	X*		X			
Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) Reliability Training (2 days)	X					X						X
Practice Based Coaching Training (2 days)	X					X	X*					
Essentials of Coaching Training Series (1 day/mon)		X			X	X	X*					
Site Leadership Team Mid-Year Meeting (1 day)		X			X					X		
Behavior Specialist/PTR-YC Training (2 days)	X				X			X				
Site Leadership Team End of Year Meeting (1 day)		X			X					X		

¹ Another staff member, chosen by the Director/SLT, that is critical to ensuring the work is carried out and increases the center's capacity to implement practices with fidelity

² All admin staff and all PS/PK staff are required to have all Preschool Pyramid Practices training within the last year. If staff was trained less than 1 year ago, refreshers may be scheduled as needed.

* External Coach attends this training only as needed, if he/she has not already completed the training.

3.2 Professional Development System

Teachers, Internal Coaches and Directors must be enrolled in the Georgia Professional Development System (PDS). PDS combines education, experience and training and assigns all registrants a Career Level. Supporting documentation must be submitted to confirm educational attainment and training. Supporting documents include official transcripts, training certificates, copies of CDAs and technical college credentials. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) reviews transcripts and credentials for the PDS to verify an individual teacher's credentials and degrees. Grant Administrators should confirm that teachers have registered in the PDS, submitted required documentation to the PDS, and that the PDS has verified the credential. Failure to have credentials current and verified in the PDS may affect grant payments.

3.3 Registration for Professional Development Opportunities

Registration for professional development sessions will be done through the PDS. The Grant Administrator is responsible for distributing professional development and training information to all grant personnel and registering the staff through DECAL. For help with professional development needs, SEEDS grant administrators should contact their assigned Inclusion and Behavioral Support Specialist or inclusion@decals.ga.gov

4.0 Materials and Supplies

Grant administrators must complete an inventory of social emotional materials in each grant classroom. DECAL will provide an inventory form as well as lists of suggested materials. Programs should plan to spend a **minimum of \$600 per classroom** for materials to support social and emotional learning.

5.0 Funding

Funds must be utilized for approved grant activities. No funds may be budgeted for program administration or capital improvements. Failure to follow guidelines or to obtain written approval for expenditures outside the guidelines will result in owing SEEDS funds back to DECAL, termination of grant agreement and ineligibility for participation in future grant opportunities.

Each grantee will be required to develop a written budget for SEEDS funds. Programs may use the budget worksheet provided by DECAL or may use any other standard budgeting worksheet. Programs are encouraged to review this document with their assigned Inclusion and Behavioral Support Specialist to ensure their spending is on track.

5.1 Internal Coach Salary

Funding must be utilized to employ an Internal Coach. Internal Coaches must be employed full or part-time as specified in the individual program's grant agreement. A minimum salary of \$15.00 per hour for a 40-hour work week must be met. Programs must spend a minimum of \$28,800 (40 hours X \$15 X 48 weeks) on the Internal Coach salary. If programs cannot meet the minimum salary requirement due to vacancies or absences, requests can be made to DECAL for approval to spend the funds for other grant purposes. **The Internal Coach may not fulfill any other job duties or roles during the hours they are being paid as a coach.**

5.2 Classroom Materials, Equipment and Supplies

A minimum of \$600 must be spent in each classroom for materials to support social emotional learning, equipment and supplies. Current materials, equipment and supplies should be inventoried using the DECAL form and appropriate items identified for purchase. Programs may order from any vendor. Copies of paid invoices and receipts must be retained for record keeping.

5.3 Travel Costs

Grant funds must be utilized to cover the costs of travel including mileage, meals, and overnight stays incurred due to professional development activities. Programs must follow the state of Georgia travel regulations when determining mileage and per diem reimbursement rates. Reimbursement for transportation expenses incurred when using personally owned vehicles is at the rate per mile of actual miles traveled in the performance of official duties. Documentation of travel costs paid must be retained for record keeping. The state of Georgia travel regulations can be found at <https://sao.georgia.gov/state-travel-policy>. The state mileage rate may increase or decrease during the grant period. It is the responsibility of the grantee to have knowledge of and apply all state travel regulations.

5.6 Substitutes

Grant funds may be utilized to pay for additional staff such as a substitute teacher or “floater” teacher to support a lead or assistant teacher’s participation in professional learning including workshops, coaching sessions, or other identified professional learning activities. Grant funds can only be utilized when teachers are participating in professional learning activities approved for the grant. Documentation of substitute salary paid must be retained for record keeping.

5.7 Other pre-approved items

Funds may be utilized for other items such as a laptop or desktop computer for the Data Coordinator and coaches’ use, or other items not specified in the guidelines. Programs must complete the request form found in appendix A of this document and submit it to inclusion@decals.ga.gov for approval.

6.0 Fiscal Procedures

6.1 Payment Process

All payments will be made quarterly through PANDA. Funds will be deposited in the provider’s bank account via an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) process. Appropriate forms and instructions to allow for EFT were included in the SEEDS grant application package. Providers are responsible for the correct routing of their payments by promptly notifying DECAL of changes in bank account information or ownership. Providers are responsible for reviewing their quarterly payments and payment documentation.

6.2 Schedule of Payments

Equal payments, based on the number of classes funded, will be processed quarterly. See Appendix B for the funding chart. Please note that no payment can be made until the grant agreement is fully executed.

Payments will be made no later than:

- August 31st
- October 31st
- January 31st
- April 30th

6.3 Record Keeping

SEEDS grant recipients are required to keep all receipts and other records necessary to support figures reported on the annual reconciliation statement. If a SEEDS grant recipient provider is audited and receipts and other records are not available to support these amounts, funds must be returned to DECAL. Examples of such records include, but are not limited to:

- SEEDS signed grant agreement
- Canceled check copies (front and back)
- Bank statements
- Paid invoices
- Federal and state payroll records
- EFTPS or other evidence of taxes remitted to regulatory agencies
- Timesheets
- Original receipts for equipment, materials, and supplies for SEEDS grant classrooms
- Approved waiver forms

7.0 Audit and Accounting Requirements

7.1 Reconciliation Report

SEEDS grantees must provide Bright from the Start with a reconciliation report spanning the dates of the grant agreement. The purpose of the reconciliation report is to provide an actual accounting of all the provider's expenditures related to the SEEDS grants. This report shall demonstrate that funds were spent in appropriate categories for their intended uses. Supporting documentation must be maintained and provided upon request from DECAL.

The SEEDS Grant Reconciliation Report is due by August 31, 2020. Failure to submit the SEEDS Grant Reconciliation Report by the due date may impact a program's eligibility to apply for future grant opportunities.

7.2 Right to Audit/ Agreed Upon Procedures Review

Bright from the Start reserves the right to require an independent, certified financial audit of the program at the provider's expense. Bright from the Start reserves the right to conduct Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) reviews.

Bright from the Start may conduct audits and AUP reviews as specified in the SEEDS Grant Agreement.

Grantee agrees to cooperate fully with Grantor auditors and/or agents providing Audit or Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) review services. Grantee will coordinate with auditors/reviewers to have appropriate staff available during the scheduled audit/review period. Grantee will make advanced preparations for scheduled audits/reviews to make available for auditors or reviewers all identified documents, records, and entity related materials requested by the auditors/reviewers for the current grant year, as well as for prior grant years in which Grantee participated in the SEEDS grants as requested by the Grantor. Grantee's failure to substantially prepare for a scheduled audit engagement or provide requested documentation or information to an auditor/reviewer during the scheduled audit period may result in the withholding of grant payments. The failure of Grantor to review and/or inspect the services provided or to discover a breach of this Grant or any amendment thereto shall not subsequently operate as a waiver of any remedies available to the Grantor.

7.3 Record Keeping Findings and Adverse Findings

Findings noted during the course of the AUP review that do not result in a balance of funds due back to Bright from the Start are considered Record Keeping Findings. Examples include:

- Understatements of reported expenses compared to the SEEDS Grant Reconciliation Report.
- Overstatements of reported expenses compared to the SEEDS Reconciliation Report.
- Variances between the expenditures reported on the SEEDS Reconciliation Report and the allowable SEEDS expenditures supported during field work.

Findings noted during the course of the AUP review that result in a balance of funds due back to Bright from the Start are considered Adverse Findings. Examples include:

- Failing to meet Internal Coach salary requirements.
- Failing to support that payroll taxes were forwarded to the relevant taxing authorities.
- Failing to support that the use of all monies received from Bright from the Start were used in accordance with applicable regulations and guidelines.

7.4 Balances Due to Bright from the Start

If a SEEDS grant recipient is unable to support its expenditures with receipts and other records, as a result of having its financial records reviewed (AUP, audit, investigation), funds may be required to be returned to Bright from the Start. There are three options regarding these outstanding funds:

- Remit the balance in full by the deadline date
- Submit a payment plan proposal with a 10 percent good faith payment by the deadline date
- Submit all source documentation by the deadline, disputing the results of the AUP review findings.

7.5 Reconsideration- Audit, Agreed Upon Procedures Review (AUP), or Investigation

In order for an Audit, AUP review or investigation to be reconsidered, providers must submit a formal request. The request:

- Submitted along with the Repayment Agreement document, provided by Bright from the Start
- Submitted in writing
- Must be made within 15 days of the notice of balance due letter from Bright from the Start
- Must include a detailed audit trail including all source documents necessary for Bright from the Start to make a final decision in a timely manner.

7.6 Random Reviews

The SEEDS grant recipient is subject to random, unannounced expenditure reviews by Bright from the Start or Bright from the Start contract auditors during the program year. All records (programmatic and financial) must be retained for a minimum of three years as stated in the grant agreement.

7.7 Tracking of SEEDS Grant Funds

The provider must maintain financial records to track SEEDS grant expenditures in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). All records must be retained for a minimum of three years as stated in the grant agreement.

The provider is required to keep all receipts and other records necessary to support figures reported on the SEEDS Grant reconciliation statement. If a program is audited and receipts and other records are not available to support these amounts, funds must be returned to Bright from the Start. Examples of such records include federal and state payroll records to verify payment of Internal Coach salaries, original receipts for equipment, supplies, and materials for grant classrooms, and original receipts for expenses for travel to professional development activities.

7.7 Lost, Stolen, or Destroyed Records

In the event of natural or man-made disasters, i.e. flooding, fire, hurricane, tornado, theft, etc., the SEEDS provider is responsible for providing third-party verification to substantiate the disaster. Verification includes police reports, insurance company claims, photos, or other proof that support the disaster and must also include detail of the property impacted. Claims related to man-made disasters must be made and files within 30 calendar days of the incident. Claims related to natural disasters must be filed as soon as possible in accordance with insurance company regulations.

Lost, stolen or destroyed records will not exclude an organization selected for an audit, AUP review, or investigation from undergoing the scheduled review. DECAL reserves the right to request other supplementary documentation in lieu of supporting records that have been lost, stolen or destroyed.

7.7 Fraudulent/ Inappropriate Use of Funds

The provider shall ensure that expenses charged to the SEEDS grant funding source are not concurrently charged to another program funding source.

The provider must ensure that no SEEDS grant funds are used to pay penalties associated with adverse actions imposed by licensing or governmental agencies. SEEDS grant expenditures should be identifiable as separate from other federal expenditures (e.g, CACFP).

Misuse of funds may result in repayment of funds and denial of current and future participation in other Bright from the Start programs and/or in prosecution.

Providers that participate in any federal programs operated by DECAL and who are terminated from a federal program because of fraudulent or misrepresentative submission of records and/or inappropriate use of funds as determined by the federal program, shall also have their SEEDS grant terminated.

8.0 Data Collection and Evaluation Activities

All grantees must participate in activities designed to evaluate program effectiveness. Participation in these activities includes completion of surveys and interviews, participation in classroom observations, structured assessments, and teacher practice observations.

SEEDS Pyramid Model Implementation Grant Operating Guidelines, Appendix A

SEEDS Prior Approval for Purchase

Program Name: _____ Date: _____

Requested By: _____ Email _____ Phone _____

Item Description: (including vendor, item name, and cost)

Justification/Explanation (How does it support or improve participation in the SEEDS grant or impact social and emotional development in your center?):

_____ Approved _____ Denied

Person Reviewing Form: _____ Date: _____

Reconciliation Line to Record Expense : _____

SEEDS Pyramid Model Implementation Grants Operating Guidelines, Appendix B
2019-2020 SEEDS Grants Budget Detail

Funding by # of Classrooms

2 Classrooms

Program: \$21,400

2 X \$600= \$1200

Total: \$22,600

3 Classrooms

Program: \$21,400

3 X \$600=\$1800

Total: \$23,200

4 Classrooms

Program: \$21,400

4X \$600= \$2400

Total: \$23,800

5 Classrooms

Program: \$21,400

5X \$600=\$3000

Total: \$24,400

6 Classrooms

Program: \$40,800

6X \$600= \$3600

Total: \$44,400

7 Classrooms

Program: \$40,800

7 X \$600=\$4200

Total: \$45,000

8 Classrooms

Program: \$40,800

8X \$600= \$4800

Total: \$45,600

9 Classrooms

Program: \$40,800

9X \$600= \$5400

Total: \$46,200

10 Classrooms

Program: \$40,800

10X \$600= \$6000

Total: \$46,800

SEEDS Pyramid Model Implementation Grants Operating Guidelines, Appendix C
2019-2020 SEEDS Grants Budget Detail – Head Start

Funding by # of Classrooms

2 Classrooms

Program: \$12,000

2 X \$600= \$1,200

Total: \$13,200

3 Classrooms

Program: \$12,000

3 X \$600=\$1,800

Total: \$13,800

4 Classrooms

Program: \$12,000

4X \$600= \$2,400

Total: \$14,400

5 Classrooms

Program: \$12,000

5X \$600=\$3,000

Total: \$15,000

6 Classrooms

Program: \$12,000

6X \$600= \$3,600

Total: \$15,600

7 Classrooms

Program: \$12,000

7 X \$600=\$4,200

Total: \$16,200

8 Classrooms

Program: \$12,000

8X \$600= \$4,800

Total: \$16,800

9 Classrooms

Program: \$12,000

9X \$600= \$5,400

Total: \$17,400

10 Classrooms

Program: \$12,000

10X \$600= \$6,000

Total: \$18,000