



**CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND PLAN  
FOR GEORGIA  
FFY 2008-2009**

This Plan describes the CCDF program to be conducted by the State for the period 10/1/07 – 9/30/09. As provided for in the applicable statutes and regulations, the Lead Agency has the flexibility to modify this program at any time, including changing the options selected or described herein.

The official text of the applicable laws and regulations govern, and the Lead Agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to them regardless of the fact that, for purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text.

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Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 165 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

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**PART 1**  
**ADMINISTRATION**

The agency shown below has been designated by the Chief Executive Officer of the State (or Territory), to represent the State (or Territory) as the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency agrees to administer the program in accordance with applicable Federal laws and regulations and the provisions of this Plan, including the assurances and certifications appended hereto. (658D, 658E)

**1.1 Lead Agency Information** (as designated by State chief executive officer)

Name of Lead Agency: **Georgia Department of Human Resources**

Address of Lead Agency: **Two Peachtree St., NW, Suite 29-250  
Atlanta, GA 30303-3142**

Name and Title of the Lead Agency's Chief Executive Officer:

**B. J. Walker, Commissioner**

Phone Number: **404-651-6314**

Fax Number: **404-651-8669**

E-Mail Address: [bjwalker@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:bjwalker@dhr.state.ga.us)

Web Address for Lead Agency (if any): <http://www.dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov>

**1.2 State Child Care (CCDF) Contact Information** (day-to-day contact)

Name of the State Child Care Contact (CCDF): **Mona Jackson**

Title of State Child Care Contact: **Unit Manager**

Address: **Division of Family and Children Services**

**Child Care Unit**

**Two Peachtree St., NW, Suite 21-293**

**Atlanta, GA 30303-3142**

Phone Number: **404-657-3434**

Fax Number: **404-657-3489**

E-Mail Address: [mdjackso@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:mdjackso@dhr.state.ga.us)

Phone Number for child care subsidy program information (for the public) (if any): **404-657-3434**

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**1.3 Estimated Funding**

The Lead Agency estimates that the following amounts will be available for child care services and related activities during the 1-year period: October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008. (§98.13(a))

CCDF: **\$168,606,502**

Federal TANF Transfer to CCDF: **\$0**

Direct Federal TANF Spending on Child Care: **\$0**

State CCDF Maintenance of Effort Funds: **\$22,182,651**

State Matching Funds: **\$33,231,109**

Total Funds Available: **\$224,020,262**

**1.4 Estimated Administration Cost**

The Lead Agency estimates that the following amount (and percentage) of Federal CCDF and State Matching Funds will be used to administer the program (not to exceed 5 percent): \$ **10,091,881** ( **5%**). (658E(c) (3), §§98.13(a), 98.52)

**1.5 Administration of the Program**

Does the Lead Agency directly administer and implement all services, programs and activities funded under the CCDF Act, including those described in Part 5.1 – Activities & Services to Improve the Quality and Availability of Child Care, Quality Earmarks and Set-Aside?

Yes.

**X** No. If no, use the table below to **identify** the name and type of agency that delivers services and activities. (If the Lead Agency performs the task, mark “n/a” in the box under “Agency.” If more than one agency performs the task, identify all agencies in the box under “Agency,” and **indicate** in the box to the right whether each is a non-government entity.)

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Service/Activity	Agency	Non-Government Entity (see Guidance for definition)	
Determines individual eligibility:			
a) TANF families	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
b) Non-TANF families	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Assists parents in locating care	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Makes the provider payment	<b>Non-governmental for profit agency (Maximus)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Quality activities	<b>Non-TANF State/County Agency (DECAL)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Other:		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

If the Lead Agency uses outside agencies to deliver services and activities, **describe** how the Lead Agency maintains overall control.

**The Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) will maintain administrative control by following the regulations set forth in 658D(b)(1)(A), §98.11).**

**Within the Department of Human Resources, the DFCS State Child Care Unit manages the subsidized child care program, Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS), at the state level. County Departments of Family and Children Services determine eligibility for the CAPS program.**

**Fiscal management of the CAPS' program responsibilities remains at the state level. A private for-profit contractor issues payments to providers and delivers child care provider services.**

**In order to obtain a more streamlined early care and education system in Georgia, in May 2004, Governor Sonny Perdue signed into law Senate Bill 456 creating Bright From The Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). This department is responsible for child care licensing, management of the CCDF quality set-aside and earmarked funds; and coordination of statewide early care and education initiatives. As a recipient of federal funds, DECAL will comply with the approved plan and all federal requirements .**

**1.6 Use of Private Donated Funds**

Will the Lead Agency use private funds to meet a part of the matching requirement of the CCDF pursuant to §98.53(e)(2)?

Yes. If yes, are those funds:

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Donated directly to the State?

Donated to a separate entity or entities designated to receive private donated funds?

How many entities are designated to receive private donated fund?

\_\_\_\_\_

Provide information below for each entity:

Name:

Address:

Contact:

Type:

**X** No.

**1.7 Use of State Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Expenditures for CCDF-Eligible Children**

1.7.1 During this plan period, will State expenditures for Pre-K programs be used to meet any of the CCDF maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement?

Yes, and:

( ) The State assures that its level of effort in full day/full year child care services has not been reduced, pursuant to §98.53(h)(1).

(\_\_ %) Estimated percentage of the MOE requirement that will be met with pre-K expenditures. (Not to exceed 20%.)

If the State uses Pre-K expenditures to meet more than 10% of the MOE requirement, the following **describes** how the State will coordinate its Pre-K and child care services to expand the availability of child care (§98.53(h)(4)):

**X** No.

1.7.2 During this plan period, will State expenditures for Pre-K programs be used to meet any of the CCDF Matching Fund requirement? (§98.53(h))

Yes, and

(\_\_%) Estimated percentage of the Matching Fund requirement that will be met with pre-K expenditures. (Not to exceed 30%.)

If the State uses Pre-K expenditures to meet more than 10% of the Matching Fund requirement, the following **describes** how the State will coordinate its Pre-K and child care services to expand the availability of child care (§98.53(h)(4)):

No.

- 1.7.3 If the State answered yes to 1.7.1 or 1.7.2, the following **describes** State efforts to ensure that pre-K programs meet the needs of working parents: (§98.53(h)(2))

## **1.8 Improper Payments**

- 1.8.1 How does the Lead Agency define improper payments?

**Improper payments are defined as services or payments received incorrectly that caused an overpayment or underpayment to a client or provider.**

**Overpayments to providers occur when: a provider receives payments for care that was not provided; care was not authorized; a provider receives payments for care and they did not meet CAPS requirements; or the agency makes a payment error.**

**A client overpayment occurs when: a client fails to report accurate information; changes affecting eligibility are not processed timely; or the agency misapplies policy. Overpayments are categorized as suspected intentional program violation, administrative errors, or inadvertent errors.**

**Underpayments exist when the agency reimburses providers less than the family's authorized subsidized payment.**

- 1.8.2 Has your State implemented strategies to prevent, measure, identify, reduce and/or collect improper payments? (§98.60(i), §98.65, §98.67)

Yes, and these strategies are:

**The State Child Care Unit works closely with the Department of Human Resources, Office of Investigative Services (OIS). All clients and providers who are suspected of intentional program violations (SIPV) are referred to OIS. The results of the OIS investigation are sent to the county office or to the contractor managing provider payments. All claims negotiated by OIS are pursued, tracked,**

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**collected and reported. The following are strategies used to prevent, measure, and reduce improper payments:**

- **CCDF funds are used to staff two positions with the OIS. These staff positions are used exclusively for investigating suspected child care overpayments.**
- **County staff and the contractor managing provider payments refer all suspected intentional program violations to OIS.**
- **Repayment by providers occurs by offsetting claims by one-half (50%) of future payments until the claim has been recouped in full. Authorization may be given to offset amounts lower than one-half of the monthly reimbursement in hardship cases. Client repayments can be negotiated as low as \$10 per month.**
- **Reports are issued by OIS, indicating the number of referrals per county. Regional Program specialists provide training and technical assistance to counties about the referral process.**
- **The State Child Care Unit will establish a process during the period covered by the FFY 2008-2009 State Plan period to routinely monitor child care cases and provider payments. This process will help to identify errors and trends that need to be addressed with training.**
- **Regional Program Specialist and county supervisory staff select samples from active and recently closed cases to conduct Child Care Case Accuracy Reviews.**
- **Positive outreach activities, such as newsletters, inform providers of the importance of accurate invoicing procedures.**

**Two reports are used to measure and track improper payments and referrals. The *OIS Referral Report* tracks the number of referrals made to OIS by county. The *Child Care Error and Overpayment Report* tracks the number of errors and intentional program violations, as well as the total dollar amount for each overpayment in each county.**

- No. If no, are there plans underway to determine and implement such strategies?
- Yes, and these planned strategies are:
- No.

**PART 2**  
**DEVELOPING THE CHILD CARE PROGRAM**

**2.1 Consultation and Coordination**

2.1.1 Lead Agencies are required to *consult* with appropriate agencies and *coordinate* with other Federal, State, local, tribal (if applicable) and private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services (§98.12, §98.14(a),(b), §98.16(d)). **Indicate** the entities with which the Lead Agency has consulted or coordinated (as defined below), by checking the appropriate box(es) in the following table.

*Consultation* involves the meeting with or otherwise obtaining input from an appropriate agency in the development of the State Plan. At a minimum, Lead Agencies must consult with representatives of general purpose local governments (noted by the asterisk in the chart below).

*Coordination* involves the coordination of child care and early childhood development services, including efforts to coordinate across multiple entities, both public and private (for instance, in connection with a State Early Childhood Comprehensive System (SECCS) grant or infant-toddler initiative). At a minimum, Lead Agencies must coordinate with (1) other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and/or private agencies responsible for providing child care and early childhood development services, (2) public health (including the agency responsible for immunizations and programs that promote children's emotional and mental health), (3) employment services / workforce development, (4) public education, and (5) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and (6) any Indian Tribes in the State receiving CCDF funds (noted by the asterisks in the chart below).

	<b>Consultation in Development of the Plan</b>	<b>Coordination with Service Delivery</b>
Other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services.	<b>X</b>	<b>X *</b>
Public health	<b>X</b>	<b>X *</b>
Employment services / workforce development		<b>X*</b>
Public education		<b>X*</b>
TANF		<b>X*</b>

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	<b>Consultation in Development of the Plan</b>	<b>Coordination with Service Delivery</b>
Indian Tribes/Tribal Organizations, when such entities exist within the boundaries of the State	n/a	n/a
Representatives of local government	X *	
State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for		
State pre-kindergarten programs		X
Head Start programs		X
Programs that promote inclusion for children with special needs		X
Other*(See guidance):		X

*Required.*

**For each box checked above, (a) identify the agency providing the service and (b) describe the consultation and coordination efforts.** Descriptions must be provided for any consultation or coordination required by statute or regulation.

Other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services.

**The DFCS Office of Family Independence (OFI) Youth Development Unit administers the DHR Youth Initiative. This Initiative was launched to expand out-of-school services for school age youth in Georgia. TANF and state funds are used to expand afterschool and summer programs throughout the State of Georgia for youth ages 6-19 who come from low to moderate income families. The DHR Youth Development Unit partners with community-based organizations and public schools throughout the state of Georgia to provide year-round afterschool and summer services to youth ages 6 – 19 years old. The DHR Youth Initiative has funded over 200 programs and over 19,000 youth have benefited from these funded programs.**

**The Youth Development Unit in collaboration with the State Child Care Unit established a referral process through local county DFCS that provides eligible families access to services available through the DHR Youth Initiative. This collaboration is expected to strengthen Georgia families and expand services available to school age youth.**

State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for Public Health

- **Division of Public Health -**  
<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/index.asp>

**DECAL in collaboration with DHR facilitates work with the Division of Public Health, as well as other entities, through the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) planning grant. Key partners in this initiative include the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Georgia Academy of Pediatrics, Family Connection Partnership, Georgia Association on Young Children, Head Start, Smart Start Georgia, and the Georgia Department of Education. This grant is funded to the state through the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau, in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.**

**Georgia is in the fourth year of a 5-year strategic planning process, utilizing the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) planning grant, funded to the state through the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau, in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of the grant is to create a blueprint for the development of a comprehensive, high quality early childhood program of services to all children birth through 5 and their families.**

State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for Employment Services and Workforce Development

**Coordination between the Office of Family Independence (OFI) units responsible for TANF/Employment Services and the Childcare and Parent Services program is ongoing. Both the OFI Child Care Unit and TANF Unit work together to provide TANF customers access to seamless child care services to support state approved work, education, and training activities.**

**The TANF Unit outlines policy regarding work requirements for TANF customers. The Child Care Unit develops policy for the CAPS program that can support TANF work requirements. The units establish common requirements and regulations to the extent possible. Consultation between the units is constant to resolve any conflicting policy that would negatively affect the work participation requirements. TANF customers who need child care to comply with their personal work plans receive priority when funds are limited; these families are not placed on a waiting list for child care assistance.**

**This collaboration is expected to yield:**

- **Affordable child care services for TANF customers who need child care to meet the TANF work participation requirements.**
- **Seamless child care services for families as they transition from TANF to self-sufficiency.**
- **Integrated service delivery between CAPS, TANF, and Food Stamps programs. This provides clients with easy access to the programs and facilitates communication between case managers who handle the client's related cases.**
- **Child care services for TANF eligible clients who choose not to use their TANF months but still need child care in support of employment activities.**

State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for Public Education

- **Georgia Department of Education - <http://www.georgiastandards.org/index.asp>**

**In cooperation with the National Association of Boards of Education (NASBE), DECAL and the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) have been working to create a seamless education system through the development of a Pre-K through third grade model. This model would build on existing work to further align the curriculum, assessment, and performance standards for children from birth through the third grade.**

**Georgia offers universal pre-kindergarten to four year olds throughout the state. The Pre-K program has content standards that guide curriculum and instruction. Georgia also offers universal public kindergarten in the public schools to five year olds. DOE is required by the Quality Basic Education Act of 1985 to maintain a curriculum that specifies what students are expected to know in each subject and grade. DOE is implementing Georgia Performance Standards that drive both instruction and assessment for Georgia's teachers and students from kindergarten through high school. The performance standards provide clear expectations for assessment, instruction and student work. The Georgia Performance Standards include Math, English/Language Arts, Science and Social Studies.**

Representatives from DECAL participated in the development of the Georgia Performance Standards. In June 2006, DECAL revised the Content Standards of Georgia's Pre-K Program to reflect current educational research and align with Georgia's Quality Core Curriculum. The Content Standards provide the foundation for instruction in all Georgia Pre-K classrooms and include seven curriculum areas: Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Creative Expression, Social and Emotional Development, and Physical Development. By coordinating with the DOE, DECAL has aligned the Pre-K Content Standards and the voluntary Early Learning Standards for children birth through three with the Georgia K-12 Performance Standards.

- Georgia Department of Adult and Technical Education (DTAE)

DECAL coordinates with the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE) to increase access to formal post-secondary education. DTAE's statewide network of 34 degree-granting institutions allows early care and education professionals in all 159 counties to access post-secondary educational opportunities in their communities and to access the Georgia HOPE grants ([http://www.gsfc.org/Main/dsp\\_main.cfm](http://www.gsfc.org/Main/dsp_main.cfm)). DOE supports, enhances, and expands statewide coordinated childhood care and education efforts and professional development initiatives. This collaboration yields increased access for child care providers to educational opportunities that enhance their ability to provide high quality care and education for Georgia's children through user-friendly course scheduling, pre-admission assessment and support, and remedial support for non-traditional students.

- Georgia Professional Standards Commission - <http://www.gapsc.com/>

The Professional Standards Commission (PSC) directs the preparation, certification, professional discipline and recruitment of educators in Georgia. Georgia offers certification in a variety of fields with specific subjects or grade levels assigned to each field. Among the teaching fields are Early Childhood Education (Preschool- 5<sup>th</sup> grade) and Preschool -12<sup>th</sup> grade fields (Special Education, Art, Music, etc.). Service fields and Leadership fields allow the educator to serve at all grade levels (Preschool-12<sup>th</sup> grade). In addition to full certification fields, endorsements to certificates are offered in teaching, service, and leadership areas.

**The commission provides a Birth-Five Early Childhood Teacher Certification available for participating colleges and universities. The curriculum for this degree is guided by Georgia's Early Learning Standards. To ensure coordination, members of the PSC participate on the Georgia Early Guidelines Advisory Group (Refer to Section 5.2).**

- **Georgia Board of Regents - <http://www.usg.edu/>**

**The Board of Regents oversees 34 institutions: four research universities, two regional universities, 13 state universities, two state colleges, and 13 two-year colleges. These institutions enroll more than 233,000 students and employ more than 9,000 faculty and 35,000 employees to provide teaching and related services to students and the communities in which they are located. DECAL leads the effort to foster a seamless transition from the DTAE institutions to Board of Regents institutions through a system-wide articulation agreement. DECAL is partnering with organizations to implement a professional development system that is comprehensive and articulates. Collaboration with the Board of Regents is expected to yield increased access for child care providers to educational opportunities that will enhance their ability to provide high quality care and education for Georgia's children.**

- **Alliance of Education Agency Heads**

**Governor Sonny Purdue formed the Alliance of Education Agency Heads in 2006. The purpose of the alliance is to bring all of Georgia's seven education agency heads together to collaboratively develop strategies that will improve the educational outcomes for Georgia's children and to streamline Georgia' educational system. DECAL serves as a member of the alliance.**

State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for TANF

**The OFI State Child Care and TANF units are both housed in the Division of Family and Children Services. This enables both the TANF and Child Care programs to establish common requirements and regulations to the extent possible. TANF staff outline policy regarding work requirements for TANF customers. Child Care staff develop policies in the subsidized child care program (CAPS) to support TANF work requirements. Consultation between TANF and CAPS is constant to resolve any**

**conflicting policy that would negatively affect the work participation requirements. TANF applicants and recipients who need child care to comply with their work requirements receive priority when funds are limited; these families are not placed on a waiting list for child care assistance.**

Representatives of local government

**Collaborative child care partners and agencies, child care providers, local DFCS office representatives statewide, and DFCS regional staff were given preliminary notice of the development of the draft of the State Plan. The 2008-2009 State Plan draft and pre-print were posted on the CAPS web site for easy access. In addition a link was posted on the CAPS web site for users to submit comments directly to the Lead Agency. Input was received from DECAL and DFCS agencies, as well as partners outside of government. These recommendations were incorporated into the draft of the plan when feasible.**

State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for State Pre-Kindergarten programs

- **Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) -**  
<http://www.dec.state.ga.us/PreK/PreKMain.aspx>

**DECAL coordinates with the DFCS State Child Care Unit to fund extended-day services for four-year olds enrolled in Georgia's 6.5 hours per day Pre-K program. The Pre-K funds are used to subsidize the care for children enrolled in Pre-K who need before/after care, thereby increasing the number of high quality child care settings available to eligible families, and expanding the availability of services to eligible children. This collaboration yields cost-effective utilization of funding streams; a higher quality of care and education with comprehensive services for children and their families; and enhanced developmental outcomes for children enrolled in these programs.**

**Parent engagement is a critical component of the Pre-K program. "At-risk" Pre-K children are eligible to receive family support services through the Pre-K Resource Coordinators who ensure that the child's health needs are met, that child development/family engagement opportunities are provided, and that community resources are available to parents upon request. The Pre-K Resource Coordinators collaborate with community**

**partners like Family Connection programs and Child Care Resource and Referral agencies to improve service delivery at the local level.**

State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for Head Start

- **Head Start Collaboration Office at DECAL -**  
<http://www.dec.state.ga.us/HeadStart/HeadStartMain.aspx>

**The Head Start Collaboration Office is housed at DECAL enabling the state and federal leaders to promote coordination, collaboration and partnerships to improve the quality of services to low-income children and their families in Georgia. These partnerships are intended to facilitate the involvement of DECAL and the Georgia Head Start Association in developing state policies and plans which affect preschool children and their families; create significant cross-agency initiatives on behalf of children and their families; help build a more integrated and comprehensive service delivery system to improve families' access to services and promote a high level of programmatic quality; and encourage local community collaboration among Pre-K, Head Start and other early care and learning programs.**

**DECAL provides competitive grants to Head Start programs wishing to provide extended day educational and instructional services for four year olds to expand the core Head Start day to match the length of the Pre-K day (6.5 hours of instructional services), five days per week, 36 weeks (180 days), per year.**

**The CAPS program coordinates with the local Head Start grantees and the Head Start Collaboration Office to increase the number of high quality child care settings available to eligible families. Service delivery is coordinated with the federally funded Head Start program to expand the availability of services to more eligible children (<http://www.georgiaheadstart.org/>). This collaboration yields cost-effective utilization of funding streams; a higher quality of care and education with comprehensive services for children and their families; and enhanced developmental outcomes for children enrolled in these programs.**

Programs that promote inclusion for children with special needs

- **Babies Can't Wait -**  
<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/index.asp>

**Babies Can't Wait (BCW) is Georgia's statewide interagency service delivery system for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. BCW is established by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which guarantees all eligible children, regardless of their disability, access to services that will enhance their development. The Georgia DHR Division of Public Health is the lead agency administering the Babies Can't Wait Program in Georgia. The Division ensures that services are provided in accordance with federal guidelines; families have access to the services that are needed to enhance their child's development; and training is available to ensure that professionals who work with children and families have up-to-date information. Babies Can't Wait is administered through 19 District offices throughout the state. Through the 19 offices, children and families in every county in Georgia can access early intervention services. Inclusion Coordinators at the child care resource and referral agencies coordinate and collaborate with Babies Can't Wait to link child care providers and families to training and appropriate services.**

- **Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies - [www.gaccrra.org](http://www.gaccrra.org)**

**The Child Care and Development Fund supports the Inclusion Project through a contract between DECAL and each child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agency. Inclusion Coordinators are on staff in each child care resource and referral district. They are guided and supported by the state-level Inclusion Coordinator at DECAL. This project is the result of earlier planning by and funding from the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (<http://gcdd.georgia.gov>) and the Babies Can't Wait program within the Family Health Branch of the Division of Public Health. The goal of this coordination is to increase the number of high quality, inclusive child care settings available to families. This collaboration is expected to yield an increased number of referrals to child care providers, including family child care homes, child care learning centers and school age care programs for parents of children with disabilities; an increased number of referrals to community resources that link parents to support services, financial aid information, medical equipment, and other information; an increased distribution of materials on finding child care, inclusive child care programs, benefits of inclusion, Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individual with Disabilities Education Act; accessible free technical assistance to providers through telephone consultation and site visits; training on a variety of topics related to children with special needs and the**

**legal requirements for service provision; and access to a lending system of toys, books, posters, and curriculum kits that can be checked out by providers and parents of children with disabilities.**

Other:

- **The Governor's Council for Developmental Disabilities - [www.gcdd.org](http://www.gcdd.org)**

**The Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities for Georgia (GCDD), authorized under Public Law 106-402, the [Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act Amendments of 2000](#), is one of 55 entities of its type in the United States and territories that report to the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities](#). The GCDD is an independent agency, attached to the [Georgia Department of Human Resources](#) for administrative purposes.**

**The GCDD serves as an advocate for all persons with developmental disabilities. The Council is charged with creating systems change for people with developmental disabilities and their families to: Increase independence, inclusion, integration, productivity and self-determination for people with developmental disabilities through such activities as public policy research, analysis, reform, project demonstrations, and education and training. The mission of the GCDD is to collaborate with citizens, public and private advocacy organizations, and policymakers to positively influence public policies that enhance the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities and their families. The Council achieves its mission through public policy research and analysis, promoting advocacy, public relations and funding programs that support best practices and capacity building.**

- **Voices for Georgia's Children - <http://www.georgiavoices.org/>**

**Voices for Georgia's Children is an independent, non-profit organization whose mission is to substantially improve Georgia's 44<sup>th</sup> ranking in meeting its children's needs according the *Kids Count* report issued annually by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. This will be accomplished by engaging lawmakers and the public into building a sustained, comprehensive, long-term agenda to impact the lives of our kids in five distinct areas: health, safety, education, connectedness and employability.**

Through advocacy, original research and analysis, Voices assists leaders and citizens of Georgia in making sound decisions on policy, investment, and systems that serve children and youth to produce better outcomes through supportive public policies and adequate public and private resources.

- Georgia Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies - [www.gaccrra.org](http://www.gaccrra.org)

The Georgia Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (GACCRRRA) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3), membership organization composed of 14 regional Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies serving the entire state of Georgia. GACCRRRA supports the work of CCR&Rs to improve child care in Georgia. GACCRRRA promotes accessibility, affordability, and quality of care for all children in Georgia. In collaboration with families, community, and state partners, GACCRRRA advocates to support the early care and education community by responding to their needs in building capacity for safe, healthy, and nurturing community environments for child development.

The long-standing relationships each CCR&R agency has in its community positions them to support the development of quality child care in Georgia. The local CCR&Rs offer services to families such as consumer education, parent referrals, inclusion services, parenting education and parent newsletters. The local CCR&Rs offer services to child care professionals such as licensing/registration information for new providers, professional development training, technical assistance, and a lending library. The local CCR&Rs host licensure or registration orientation meetings for prospective providers and offer training to support informal providers. The local CCR&Rs provide assistance to employers and the community with child care issues; coordinate statewide child care programs and resources; provide statistics on child care supply and demand; provide information on child development, early childhood education and quality child care; and support professional organizations.

GACCRRRA and the local CCR&Rs coordinated the CCDF Public Hearings on behalf of the DHR, reaching parents, providers, local government officials, and the public to solicit input on Georgia's 2008-2009 CCDF State Plan.

- Family Connection Partnership - <http://www.georgiafamilyconnection.org/>

The Family Connection Partnership is a public/private partnership created by the State of Georgia and funders from the private sector. Family Connection Partnerships assist communities in addressing the serious challenges facing Georgia's children and families and serves as a resource to state agencies that work to improve the conditions of children and families. The partnerships work jointly with Family Connection community collaboratives, state, and national partners to improve results for Georgia's children and families. Each collaborative serves as the local decision-making body for its community and develops a plan with strategies to improve results in five areas: healthy children, children ready for school, children succeeding in school, strong families, and self-sufficient families. Collaboratives provide training and technical assistance customized to meet their communities' common and unique needs and support efforts in making better decisions locally; build and maintain relationships with public and private agencies and communities to share and combine resources, promote public policy, and improve services and supports for families; enhance public awareness, understanding, communication and commitment to improve results for children and families, and promote "what works" using research and evaluation practices that have proven to be effective in communities, while showcasing community successes. State partners include DHR/DFCS, and DECAL. Local partnerships include the county Departments of Family and Children Services.

- Georgia Chambers of Commerce & Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education - <http://www.gachamber.com/>

The Georgia Chamber of Commerce is the unified voice of the business community, aggressively advocating the business viewpoint in the shaping of public policy, encouraging ethical business practices and ensuring the state's future as economically prosperous, educationally competitive and environmentally responsible. The Georgia Chamber works to ensure the future health and strength of Georgia business through pro-active economic development programs and initiatives. The Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education is an affiliate of the Georgia Chambers of Commerce. The Georgia Chamber works with the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (<http://www.gpee.org/>) to raise awareness of and find solutions for improving education in the state by focusing on the critical issues facing education including early learning.

- **Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy - <http://www.wgrl.org/Children/Ferst%20Foundation.htm>**

The Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy, in conjunction with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, strives to improve early childhood learning and school readiness by mailing a free age-appropriate, hard cover book monthly to each enrolled child under age five years and by encouraging parents to read to their young children daily. Each book includes a book guide for parents and a child activity page. DECAL coordinates with the Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy and the Family Connection Partnerships to expand the number of communities participating in the program. The Ferst Foundation collaborates with local organizations, such as CCR&Rs, Family Connection Partnerships, Rotary Clubs, United Way, and schools, to register children and to identify local financial support.

- **Head Start Association - <http://www.georgiaheadstart.org/>**

DECAL coordinates with the Head Start Association to deliver joint professional development opportunities to Pre-K program staff members and Head Start program staff members. For example, the Head Start Family Service Coordinators and Pre-K Resource Coordinators attend joint training using the nationally recognized *Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education* model developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy. Head Start and Pre-K teachers attend an advanced summer training institute. These efforts encourage comprehensive service delivery to families and promote relationships between programs.

DECAL works closely with local school districts and child care learning centers offering Pre-K services (private providers, Head Start agencies, military child care providers, YMCA programs, etc.) to develop stronger partnerships, facilitate transitions and coordinate inclusion services. This initiative supports teachers through specialized training, mentoring, and developing collaborations within the county schools that can be replicated in other areas of the state. During the 2005-2006 school year, 11 counties had these collaborative initiatives lead by DECAL staff members. The initiative will continue at the local level with state support.

In addition, the Pre-K program is developing a framework for preparing children for successful transition into kindergarten. In

partnership with the Georgia Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids (SPARK) initiative, Pre-K has worked in targeted communities- DeKalb, Gwinnett, Muscogee, and Camden counties, to develop model county/system transition programs and policies. Pre-K is also exploring the most effective method of delivering information on best practices in transition and supporting local programs in developing these practices.

The Division of Public Health and DECAL co-lead the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant funded by the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau to develop a comprehensive system of early care and education services in Georgia. Participants in this effort include representatives from the medical groups of the Georgia Academy of Pediatrics and the Georgia Association of Family Practitioners.

- Georgia Optometric Association - <http://www.infantsee.org/>

The Georgia Optometric Association coordinates with the Lead Agency and DECAL to promote InfantSEE, a free vision screening program targeting infants ages six months through twelve months to promote early detection of eye conditions. InfantSEE is a public health program designed to ensure that eye and vision care becomes an integral part of infant wellness care to improve a child's quality of life. The Lead Agency and DECAL share information about InfantSEE child care practitioners with families.

- Smart Start Georgia - <http://www.smartstartga.org/home.php>

Smart Start Georgia is a partnership among DECAL, the Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation, United Ways of Georgia and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce that is dedicated to improving the quality of early childhood education programs in Georgia. The Smart Start Georgia's early learning programs include: the Play Smart and Smart Tots initiatives to help Georgia child care facilities create high quality outdoor play spaces for young children and the Substitute Teacher program designed to train and provide qualified teachers to work with children up to age five years when their regular teachers are absent.

- Child and Adult Care Food Program & Summer Food Services Program  
<http://www.BFTS.state.ga.us/NS/NutritionServicesMain.aspx>

The Nutrition Services Division of DECAL is responsible for administering the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) for the state of Georgia. The goal of these programs is to ensure that children and adults throughout Georgia have access to nutritious meals while they are in a child care setting and during the summer when school is not in session. CACFP and SFSP assist low-income families that struggle to provide nutritious meals to their dependents by assuring that children receive meals that meet the meal requirements established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) while they are in child settings. These programs help to address the issues of hunger and malnutrition and the negative effects that they can have on an individual's health and educational development and growth. Informal providers are allowed to participate in the CACFP.

The Healthy Eating for Life project, funded in part by the USDA Team Nutrition Grant, works to improve lifelong healthy eating habits and increase physical activity among children between birth and five-years old and their families and their caregivers. DECAL Nutrition and Physical Activity initiative collaborates with DHR, the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness, and child care resource and referral agencies to offer consistent nutrition and physical activity information and training to parents and early care and learning practitioners ([www.healthyeatingforlife.org/default.aspx](http://www.healthyeatingforlife.org/default.aspx)).

Increased participation in these programs should result in the overall improvement of the nutritional status of Georgians.

- **First Lady's Children's Cabinet -**  
<http://www.opb.state.ga.us/safekids/>

Georgia's First Lady, Mrs. Mary Purdue, launched The First Lady's Children's Cabinet. The First Lady's Children's Cabinet collaborates actively in sharing resources and removing barriers to service delivery. Many departments and agencies of state government play vital roles in promoting the welfare of Georgia's children. Therefore, the cabinet membership includes leaders from every state agency responsible for serving children including the Commissioner of the DHR; the Commissioner of the Department of Community Health; the Commissioner of DECAL; the Director of the Children and Youth Coordinating Council, and the State Superintendent of Schools.

**The cabinet develops and implements a strategic plan for coordinating policy making and planning for all state agencies and programs that are responsible for children and their families. The cabinet focuses on eliminating service gaps, eliminating service duplication, and reducing unnecessary expenditures by emphasizing prevention. The cabinet will be accountable for the outcomes for Georgia's children as tracked in the *Annie E. Casey Kids Count*.**

2.1.2 State Plan for Early Childhood Program Coordination. *Good Start, Grow Smart* encourages States to develop a plan for coordination across early childhood programs. **Indicate** which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts in this area. **Note: Please check only ONE.**

- Planning.** Indicate whether steps are under way to develop a plan. If so, describe the time frames for completion and/or implementation, the steps anticipated, and how the plan is expected to support early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.
- Developing.** A plan is being drafted. The draft is included as **Attachment 2.1.2**.
- Developed.** A plan has been written but has not yet been implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment 2.1.2**.
- Implementing.** A plan has been written and is now in the process of being implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment 2.1.2**.
- Other (describe):**

**Georgia is in the fourth year of a five-year strategic planning process and the second year of implementation utilizing the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) planning grant, funded to the state through the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau, in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of the grant is to create a blueprint for the development of a comprehensive, high quality early childhood program of services to all children birth through 5 and their families.**

**This strategic planning process is facilitated by DECAL in collaboration with the DHR. Key partners in this initiative include the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Georgia Academy of Pediatrics, Family Connection Partnership, Head Start, Smart Start Georgia, Georgia Division of Public Health, and the Georgia Department of Education.**

**Implementation plans have been developed in each of the five ECCS areas. From those specific implementation plans, a process was used to select and prioritize the top strategies. The top strategies include: implementing the navigator teams in each county to direct families to resources (medical, dental, prevention and developmental services, and adequate health insurance coverage); creating an early childhood clearing house to provide access to evidence-based practices that provide high-quality information for parents and professionals; designing and coordinating training related to medical/dental homes, social-emotional development, family support, and other content areas; expanding the developmental screenings conducted by Medicaid providers to a systematic statewide process of universal screening of children at birth, two years, and school entry; and implementing social marketing statewide to disseminate information. The plan is included as Attachment 2.1.2.**

**Indicate** whether there is an entity that is responsible for ensuring that such coordination occurs. Indicate the four or more early childhood programs and/or funding streams that are coordinated and describe the nature of the coordination.

**Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning ([www.dec.state.ga.us](http://www.dec.state.ga.us)) was created to develop, implement, and sustain a system of early care and education; to infuse a culture of education and learning in child care; to reduce bureaucracy; eliminate duplication of services, and coordinate early childhood efforts between early childhood advocates and providers. To meet these objectives, DECAL uses and/or coordinates the resources from multiple funding streams to help provide families with high quality comprehensive services that promote the healthy development of their preschool and school age children. These funding streams include the lottery-funded Pre-K program; the state of Georgia; the federally funded Head Start program, the federally funded USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program; earmarks and quality set-aside of CCDF, and private sector funding through Smart Start Georgia. This coordinated effort allows Georgia to focus its resources for children and their families in a manner that promotes high quality services coupled with rigorous oversight and accountability.**

**Describe** the results or expected results of this coordination. Discuss how these results relate to the development and implementation of the State's early learning guidelines, plans for professional development, and outcomes for children.

**The expected results of this coordinated effort are to ensure that all preschool children enter school with the necessary skills and abilities to be successful. A broad range of services that help support the healthy development of children and their families will be provided to accomplish these results.**

**Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards for four-year olds reflect current educational research and align with the Georgia Department of Education kindergarten Performance Standards. The Georgia Early Learning Standards give teachers and parents a set of guidelines to provide appropriate educational experiences that promote the cognitive, physical, social and emotional development of children birth through 3-years-old. These Early Learning Standards provide the foundation for a set of seamless standards that link to the Pre-K Standards, the Head Start Standards and the Georgia Performance Standards for K-12<sup>th</sup> grade that underpin Georgia's comprehensive system of early childhood education for children birth through 5-years-old. (Refer to Section 5.2.)**

**The Georgia Professional Development System supports practitioners in the field of early care and education by providing quality professional development experiences. Nine levels of professional development based upon education and experience have been identified. The purpose of these levels is to inform early care and education practitioners of a path that will lead to further development. The Competencies, the Georgia Training Approval System, and the Professional Development Registry support this system. (Refer to Section 5.2.5.)**

**Describe how the State's plan supports or will support continued coordination among the programs. Are changes anticipated in the plan?**

**In the process of developing the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) strategic plan, DECAL and its collaborative partners will develop a comprehensive early childhood service system that integrates the critical components of children having accessible medical/dental homes; mental health and social emotional resources; quality early care and education; and family support and education services. The ECCS strategic plan will identify a set of core indicators for early childhood health and development in Georgia.**

## **2.2 Public Hearing Process**

**Describe the Statewide public hearing process held to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under**

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this Plan. (658D(b)(1)(C), §98.14(c)) At a minimum, the description must provide:

Date(s) of statewide notice of public hearing: **March 30, 2007**

Manner of notifying the public about the statewide hearing:

**A public notice was sent to newspapers statewide to announce public hearings would be held regarding Georgia's 2008-2009 CCDF State Plan. The notice included the web address where individuals could view and download a draft of the state plan as well as all the dates and sites of the hearings. In addition, an article announcing all the public hearings dates and sites was included in the monthly GACAPS newsletter distributed to all providers who care for children subsidized through the CAPS program.**

**All resource and referral (R&R) agencies and county Department of Family and Children Services received notice of the hearings and flyers to post that advertised the public hearings. These agencies also received electronic versions of the state plan draft to print and distribute as needed. Staff at the R&R agencies and county DFCS offices were encouraged to inform parents, providers, and others who may be interested in child care issues about the public hearings in their areas. R&R and DFCS staff were also advised to notify parents, providers, and others that Spanish interpreters would be available at the public hearings in Atlanta, Gainesville, and Macon.**

**Letters and e-mails were sent to collaborative partners, government agencies, advocacy groups, etc. announcing the hearing dates and sites. Attached to the e-mails was an electronic version of the draft of the state plan. The hearing notice and dates were also posted on the Childcare and Parent Services web site (<http://www.dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/caps>).**

Date(s) and site(s) of public hearing(s):

<b>4/17/2007</b>	<b>Augusta, GA</b>
<b>4/19/2007</b>	<b>Rome, GA</b>
<b>4/23/2007</b>	<b>Savannah, GA</b>
<b>4/24/2007</b>	<b>Gainesville, GA</b>
<b>4/26/2007</b>	<b>Macon, GA</b>
<b>4/30/2007</b>	<b>Atlanta, GA</b>
<b>5/1/2007</b>	<b>Valdosta, GA</b>
<b>5/2/2007</b>	<b>Columbus, GA</b>
<b>5/3/2007</b>	<b>Albany, GA</b>

How the content of the plan was made available to the public in advance of the public hearing(s):

**The hearing notices and flyers included the web address where a draft of the plan could be downloaded and reviewed as well as contact information to request a hard copy of the state plan draft. R&R agencies and local county DFCS offices received electronic versions of the draft of the plan to print and distribute as needed.**

A brief summary of the public comments from this process is included as **Attachment 2.2.**

### **2.3 Public-Private Partnerships**

Does the Lead Agency conduct or plan to conduct activities to encourage public-private partnerships that promote private-sector involvement in meeting child care needs?

- Yes. If yes, **describe** these activities or planned activities, including the results or expected results.
- No.

**Georgia continues to pursue creative approaches to involve the private sector in meeting child care needs. DECAL promotes public-private sector collaboration on child care issues and encourages partnerships by:**

- **Funding the statewide network of Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies. The CCR&Rs ([www.gaccerra.org](http://www.gaccerra.org)) expand partnerships through their outreach efforts in the communities where they are located. These efforts include corporate lunch- and-learns, work site exhibits, and presentations to educate and provide resources to help meet the child care needs of a company's employees. CCR&Rs schedule community advisory committee meetings where representatives from their region's corporate community provide advice, learn about resources, and offer other resources to support their communities. In addition, there are scheduled annual collaborative luncheons bringing the regions' private and public partners together to discuss broader child care challenges and to work collaboratively to meet those challenges. The expected result of these efforts is to provide a comprehensive and coordinated effort to serve the community.**
- **Partnering with and contracting with private child care learning centers to provide Pre-K services; 57% of the Georgia Pre-K Program providers are private. Georgia's Pre-K Program is offered free to all four-year-old children regardless of parental income. A variety of organizations**

provide Pre-K services, among them are private non-profit and for-profit child care learning centers, public and private elementary schools, Head Start sites, military bases, and postsecondary vocational-technical institutions. The public-private partnerships enable parents to choose the most appropriate settings for their children

- Participating on boards such as the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education ([www.gpee.org](http://www.gpee.org)), which is comprised of private sector representatives including the statewide Chambers of Commerce, to inform the business and educational communities on the importance of quality early learning.
- Participating on the Governor's Workforce Investment Board (<http://gowfd.org/02/gowfd/home/0.2575,59756011,00.html>). The board brings business, labor, education and the public sector together to develop strategies and support efforts to meet the needs of the state's workforce and employers, thereby enhancing Georgia's competitiveness in the global economy. The Board is charged with developing a comprehensive Workforce Development Strategic Plan that links workforce development to education and aligns this effort with economic development in the state, its regions, and communities.
- Promoting the state's corporate tax credit provisions (<http://www.georgia.org/Business/Child+Care+Tax+Credit.htm>), which allow companies to take 75% of their investment in employer-sponsored child care as a tax credit. The provision also allows companies to take as a tax credit 100% of their investment in construction of on-site facilities.
- Collaborating with programs participating in the Smart Start Georgia public-private partnership ([www.smartstartga.org](http://www.smartstartga.org)). Smart Start Georgia is a public-private partnership among the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, the Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation, the United Ways of Georgia, the Georgia Chambers of Commerce, and more than 40 additional supporting organizations.

### PART 3 CHILD CARE SERVICES OFFERED

#### 3.1 Description of Child Care Services

##### 3.1.1 Certificate Payment System

**Describe** the overall child care certificate process, including, at a minimum:

(1) a description of the form of the certificate (98.16(k));

**All counties utilize an automated system to issue certificates that authorize subsidized child care. The certificates are computer-generated and coupled with a rights and responsibilities form signed by the provider, detail the conditions and terms of the agreement for carrying out the child care plan selected by the family.**

(2) a description of how the certificate program permits parents to choose from a variety of child care settings by explaining how a parent moves from receipt of the certificate to choice of the provider; (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii), 658P(2), 98.2, 98.30(c)(4) & (e)(1) & (2)) and

**Parents/guardians may choose care from licensed or commissioned centers; licensed or commissioned group homes; registered family day care providers; legally exempt centers or group homes; neighbors, relatives, or friends. Informal providers may care for the child in their home. However, care in the child's home is limited to relatives of the child. Relatives are defined as aunts, uncles, grandparents, great-grandparents, and adult siblings. (Adult siblings who are reimbursed for providing child care must live outside the child's home).**

**It is the parent/guardian/responsible person's responsibility to select the provider that best meets the family's child care needs. County caseworkers offer information to assist families in making informed child care choices. Case managers may also refer parents to their local R&R agency for assistance in selecting a child care provider. The family's choice of provider prevails if the provider meets program requirements.**

**The child care certificate is issued to the parent/guardian on the day that the family is determined eligible for services. A copy of the certificate is also sent to the selected provider. Registration fees are reimbursed up to a maximum of \$50 per child, per provider, per year. A private for-profit contractor manages payments to providers.**

(3) if the Lead Agency is also providing child care services through grants and contracts, estimate the proportion of §98.50 services available through certificates versus grants/contracts, and explain how it ensures that parents offered child care services are given the option of receiving a child care certificate. (98.30(a) & (b)) This may be expressed in terms of dollars, number of slots, or percentages of services.

**Not Applicable**

**Attach** a copy of your eligibility worker's manual, policy handbook, or other printed guidelines for administering the child care subsidy program as **Attachment 3.1.1**.

If these materials are available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address (materials must still be attached to Plan):

**The child care policy manual can be viewed online at [www.odis.dhr.state.ga.us/3000\\_fam/3540\\_caps/caps.htm](http://www.odis.dhr.state.ga.us/3000_fam/3540_caps/caps.htm).**

Note: Eligibility worker's manuals, policy handbooks, or other printed guidelines for administering a child care subsidy program will be held for reference purposes only. Documents provided by Lead Agencies pursuant to this section will not be uniformly or comprehensively reviewed and will not be considered part of the Plan. All information required to be part of the Plan must continue to be set forth in the Plan.

- 3.1.2 In addition to offering certificates, does the Lead Agency also have grants or contracts for child care slots?

Yes, and the following **describes** the types of child care services, the process for accessing grants or contracts, and the range of providers that will be available through grants or contracts: (658A(b)(1), 658P(4), §§98.16(g)(1), 98.30(a)(1) & (b))

No.

- 3.1.3 The Lead Agency must allow for in-home care but may limit its use. Does the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?

Yes, and the limits and the reasons for those limits are: (§§98.16(g)(2), 98.30(e)(1)(iv))

**Georgia permits relatives to care for children in the children's homes. These relatives must be grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles or adult siblings of the child. The adult siblings must reside outside of the child's home. Care in the child's home is limited to relative caregivers to comply with the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act.**

No.

- 3.1.4 Are child care services provided through certificates, grants and/or contracts offered throughout the State? (658E(a), §98.16(g)(3))

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Yes.

No, and the following are the localities (political subdivisions) and the services that are not offered:

### **3.2 Payment Rates for the Provision of Child Care**

The statute at 658E(c)(4) and the regulations at §98.43(b)(1) require the Lead Agency to establish payment rates for child care services that ensure eligible children equal access to comparable care.

These rates are provided as **Attachment 3.2A**.

The attached payment rates were or will be effective as of 7/2006.

**Provide** a summary of the facts relied on by the State to determine that the attached rates are sufficient to ensure equal access to comparable child care services provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive child care assistance under the CCDF and other governmental programs. Include, at a minimum:

- The month and year when the local market rate survey(s) was completed: 1/2006. (§98.43(b)(2))
- A copy of the **Market Rate Survey instrument** and a **summary of the results** of the survey are provided as **Attachment 3.2B**. At a minimum, this summary should include a description of the sample population, data source, the type of methodology used, response rate, description of analyses, and key findings (**See Guidance for additional information.**)
- Does the Lead Agency use its **current** Market Rate Survey (a survey completed within the allowable time period –10/1/05 -9/30/07) to set payment rates?

Yes.

No.

**At what percentile of the current Market Rate Survey is the State rate ceiling set?** If you do not use your current Market Rate Survey to set your rate ceilings or your percentile varies across categories of care (e.g., type of setting, region, age of children), please describe and provide the range of variation in relation to your current survey. (**Please see Guidance for additional information.**)

**Reimbursement rates to providers in the CAPS program are set at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of Georgia's 2005 Market Rate Survey.**

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- How the payment rates are adequate to ensure equal access to the full range of providers based on the results of the above noted local market rate survey (i.e., describe the relationship between the attached payment rates and the market rates observed in the survey): (§98.43(b))

**Rates for all providers are set at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of the 2005 Market Rate survey. However, Georgia has widely differential child care rates statewide. In urban and suburban areas, the cost of care is higher than in small towns and in rural areas. Georgia has divided the state into three payment "zones." Child care reimbursement rates are highest in the zone where the market rate has demonstrated that care is more expensive.**

**Georgia reimburses the DFCS portion of the cost of care directly to the providers. In many areas of the state, providers accept the reimbursement rate from DFCS without charging families additional amounts. This allows equal access to child care services for parents who receive child care subsidies.**

- Does the Lead Agency consider any additional facts to determine that its payment rates ensure equal access? (§98.43(d))

Yes. If, yes, **describe.**

**Child care costs vary by the type of child care setting and the age group of the child. Rates are higher for infants and toddlers; moderate for preschoolers; and lower for school age children. Georgia has structured the reimbursements to providers so that care for infants and toddlers is reimbursed at the higher rates, for preschoolers at the moderate rate, and for school age children at the lower rate. Families are required to pay an assessed fee and any portion of the provider's rate that exceeds the DFCS rate directly to the provider.**

No.

- Does the State have a tiered reimbursement system (higher rates for child care centers and family child care homes that achieve one or more levels of quality beyond basic licensing requirements)?

Yes. If yes, **describe:**

No.

**3.3 Eligibility Criteria for Child Care**

3.3.1 Age Eligibility

Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children above age 13 but below age 19 who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care? (Physical and mental incapacity must then be defined in Appendix 2.) (658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

Yes, and the upper age is 18.

No.

Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children above age 13 but below age 19 who are under court supervision? (658P(3), 658E(c)(3)(B), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

Yes, and the upper age is 18.

No.

3.3.2 Income Eligibility

**Complete** columns (a) and (b) in the matrix below. Complete Columns (c) and (d) **ONLY IF** the Lead Agency is using income eligibility limits **lower** than 85% of the SMI.

If the Lead Agency does not use the SMI from the most current year, **indicate** the year used:

If applicable, the date on which the eligibility limits detailed in column (c) became or will become effective:

Family Size	(a) 100% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month)	(b) 85% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month) [Multiply (a) by 0.85]	IF APPLICABLE	
			Income Level, lower than 85% SMI, if used to limit eligibility	
			(c) \$/month	(d) % of SMI [Divide (d) by (a), multiply by 100]
1	\$2,619	\$2,226	\$1,307	50%
2	\$3,425	\$2,912	\$1,760	51%
3	\$4,231	\$3,597	\$2,213	52%
4	\$5,037	\$4,282	\$2,667	53%
5	\$5,843	\$4,967	\$3,120	53%

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**Georgia links eligibility for child care to the federal poverty level (FPL). Families are considered income eligible if their applicable income is equal to or below 160% of the FPL. (The Lead Agency uses Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 33, February 18, 2005, pp. 8373-8375, for FPL.)**

How does the Lead Agency define “income” for the purposes of eligibility? Please describe and/or include information as **Attachment 3.3.2.** (§§98.16(g)(5), 98.20(b))

- Is any income deducted or excluded from total family income (for instance, work or medical expenses; child support paid to, or received from, other households; Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments)?

Yes. If yes, **describe** what type of income is deducted or excluded from total family income.

**Gross Income includes gross wages/salary and unearned income, such as child support. Garnishments are included when considering gross income.**

**Gross wages/salary includes income earned from work/employment, including base pay, and tips, commissions, piece rate payments and cash bonuses, which equal minimum wages prior to deductions.**

**Incomes from TANF, SSI, Adoption Subsidy, Housing Assistance, etc. are not included when calculating the family’s gross income.**

**See Attachment 3.3.2, identified as Applicable and Non-Applicable Income for a detailed description of the applicable incomes that are included and the non-applicable incomes that are excluded from computation of monthly gross income in subsidized child care.**

No.

Is the income of all family members included?

Yes.

No. If no, **describe** whose income is excluded for purposes of eligibility determination.

**The income of family members from TANF, SSI, Adoption Subsidy, Housing Assistance, etc. is not included when calculating the family’s**

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**gross income. See Attachment 3.3.2 (Applicable and Non-Applicable Income) for a detailed description of the incomes that are included and incomes that are excluded from computation of monthly gross income in subsidized child care.**

3.3.3 Eligibility Based Upon Receiving or Needing to Receive Protective Services

Does the State choose to provide child care to children in protective services, as defined in Appendix 2? (§§98.16(f)(7), 98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A) & (B))

Yes.

No.

Has the Lead Agency elected to waive, on a case-by-case basis, the fee and income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services, as defined in Appendix 2? (658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3)(C)(ii), §98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A))

Yes.

No.

Not applicable. CCDF-funded child care is not provided in cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services.

Does the State choose to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care whose foster care parents are not working, or who are not in education/training activities? (§§98.20(a)(3)(ii), 98.16(f)(7))

Yes. (NOTE: This means that for CCDF purposes the State considers these children to be in protective services.)

No.

3.3.4 Additional Eligibility Conditions

Has the Lead Agency established additional eligibility conditions? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.16(g)(5), §98.20(b))

Yes, and the additional eligibility conditions are: (Terms must be defined in Appendix 2)

**In January 2006, all children who receive subsidies through the CAPS program were required to be a United States citizen or have established United States Citizenship and Immigration status as a lawfully admitted qualified alien. Only the children being subsidized must have their citizenship or alien status verified. The parent, guardian, or responsible person's statement indicating their U.S. citizenship or alien status is accepted as their proof of citizenship.**

**In efforts to strengthen families and encourage self-sufficiency, all adults will be required to participate in state approved activities for a minimum of 30 hours per week.**

No.

**3.4 Priorities for Serving Children and Families**

3.4.1 Please complete the table below regarding eligibility conditions and priority rules. For columns (a) through (d), check box if reply is "Yes". Leave blank if "No". Complete column (e) if you check column (d).

Eligibility Category	(a) Guarantee subsidy eligibility	(b) Give priority over other CCDF-eligible families	(c) Same priority as other CCDF-eligible families	(d) Is there a time limit on guarantee or priority?	(e) How long is time limit?
Children with special needs	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
Children in families with very low incomes			<b>X</b>		
Families <u>receiving</u> Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
Families transitioning from TANF	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	12 Months
Families at risk of becoming dependent on TANF			<b>X</b>		

- 3.4.2 **Describe** how the State prioritizes service for the following CCDF-eligible children: (a) children with special needs, (b) children in families with very low incomes, and (c) other. Terms must be defined in Appendix 2. (658E(c)(3)(B))

**Georgia has established service priorities to ensure that certain families, if eligible, receive subsidized child care without regards to funding. Families who are not placed on a waiting list and receive service priorities are:**

- **TANF applicants/recipients participating in state approved, activities;**
- **TANF applicants/recipients whose TANF is denied or terminated for employment related reasons who need transitional child care;**
- **Families with a critical active child protective services (CPS) case and child care addresses eminent risk as determined by CPS staff;**
- **Children under court-ordered supervision case;**
- **Children in DFCS custody whose custody has been transferred to a relative or who are ineligible for child care from a free funding source;**
- **Minor parents attending middle school, high school, or GED programs full time;**
- **Adults 18-21 attending high school full time**
- **Families whose children have special needs;**
- **Children in Family Foster Homes when the foster parent is working.**
- **Grandparents raising grandchildren under age 5 who are 60+ or under 60 receiving SSI or RSDI disability and receiving TANF payee/child only for their grandchildren under age 5.**
- **New children in an existing CAPS case except siblings to a Pre-K only child when no other children in the family are being served**
- **Families who are victims of a natural disaster as defined by the State**

- 3.4.3 **Describe** how CCDF funds will be used to meet the needs of: (a) families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), (b) those attempting to transition off TANF through work activities, and (c) those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF. (658E(c)(2)(H), Section 418(b)(2) of the Social Security Act, §§98.50(e), 98.16(g)(4))

**Georgia requires all adults included in a TANF grant to participate in employment services unless they meet the exemption criteria. Child care is available to all TANF applicants and recipients when needed to participate in a work activity.**

**Families leaving TANF for employment related reasons can receive transitional child care for one year if they continue to meet program requirements. After one year of transitional care, they can continue to receive subsidized child care as long as funds are available and they meet program requirements.**

**In addition, TANF eligible families who choose not to use their TANF months can receive child care if they are working as long as funds are available and they meet program requirements. These families are diverted from applying for TANF and can save their TANF months for a later time.**

**Families who are at risk of becoming dependent on TANF can receive subsidized care if funds are available and they meet program requirements. Often families are referred to other resources, such as Pre-K sites, Head Start sites, and their local child care resource and referral agency. The local child care resource and referral agencies links families with programs that meet their needs.**

3.4.4 Has the Lead Agency established additional priority rules that are not reflected in the table completed for Section 3.4.1? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.16(g)(5), §98.20(b))

**X** Yes, and the additional priority rules are: (Terms must be defined in Appendix 2)

**Georgia has established service priorities to ensure that certain populations receive subsidized child care, if eligible, without regards to funding. These populations are:**

- **Families with a critical active child protective services (CPS) case where child care addresses eminent risk as determined by CPS staff;**
- **Children under court-ordered supervision case;**
- **Children in DFCS custody whose custody has been transferred to a relative or who are ineligible for child care from a free funding source;**
- **Minor parents attending middle school, high school, or GED programs full time;**
- **Adults 18-21 attending high school full time**
- **Families whose children have special needs;**
- **Children in Family Foster Homes when the foster parent is working.**

- 
- **Grandparents raising grandchildren under age 5 who are 60+ or under 60 receiving SSI or RSDI disability and receiving TANF payee/child only for their grandchildren under age 5.**
  - **New children in an existing CAPS case except siblings to a Pre-K only child when no other children in the family are being served**
  - **Families who are victims of a natural disaster as defined by the State**

**Families who do not meet the above criterion for priority services will receive subsidized child care based on funding availability.**

No.

3.4.5 Does the Lead Agency serve all eligible families that apply?

Yes.

No

3.4.6 Does the Lead Agency maintain a waiting list?

Yes. If yes, for what populations? Is the waiting list maintained at the State level? Are certain populations given priority for services, and if so, which populations? What methods are employed to keep the list current?

**Families needing subsidized child care are screened at county DFCS offices to determine if they meet the criteria for priority services (see section 3.4.1). Families who meet the criteria for receiving priority services are not placed on a waiting list. Families who do not meet the criteria for priority services are placed on a waiting list if funds are not available.**

**As funds become available, families placed on the waiting list are contacted in chronological order and served on a first-come, first-serve basis, if eligible. Some families may be referred to local Resource and Referral agencies for information about other placements that offer scholarships or reduced fees based on a sliding income scale.**

**Each county DFCS office is responsible for monitoring and managing their waiting list. County DFCS offices submit waiting list data to the State office for compilation. To keep waiting list current, county DFCS offices routinely purge their waiting list.**

No.

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**3.5 Sliding Fee Scale for Child Care Services**

- 3.5.1 A sliding fee scale, which is used to determine each family's contribution to the cost of child care, must vary based on income and the size of the family. A copy of this sliding fee scale for child care services and an explanation of how it works is provided as **Attachment 3.5.1**.

The attached fee scale was or will be effective as of **8-1-06**.

Will the Lead Agency use additional factors to determine each family's contribution to the cost of child care? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.42(b))

Yes, and the following **describes** any additional factors that will be used:

No.

- 3.5.2 Is the sliding fee scale provided in the attachment in response to question 3.5.1 used in all parts of the State? (658E(c)(3)(B))

Yes.

No, and other scale(s) and their effective date(s) are provided as **Attachment 3.5.2**.

- 3.5.3 The Lead Agency may waive contributions from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size, (§98.42(c)), and the poverty level used by the Lead Agency for a family of 3 is: **\$ \$24,440 annually**

The Lead Agency must **select ONE** of these options:

- ALL families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee.
- ALL families, including those with incomes at or below the poverty level for families of the same size, ARE required to pay a fee.
- SOME families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee. The following describes these families:

**Fees are not assessed when the:**

- **children receiving care are in DFCS custody**
- **responsible adult is a TANF applicant/recipient participating in an approved state activity**

- **families income is less than \$3,601.00.**
- **only care authorized is part time care.**

3.5.4 Does the State allow providers to charge parents the difference between the maximum reimbursement rate and their private pay rate?

Yes.

No.

3.5.5 The following is an explanation of how the copayments required by the Lead Agency's sliding fee scale(s) are affordable: (§98.43(b)(3))

**Family co-payments are based on the family's gross annual income and family size. The co-payments for eligible families range from 4% - 10% of the families gross annual income. Families with a responsible adult applying or receiving TANF are not assessed a fee. Additionally, families with a gross annual income less than \$3,601 are not required to pay a fee.**

#### **PART 4 PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **4.1 Application Process / Parental Choice**

4.1.1 Please **describe** the process for a family to apply for and receive child care services (658D(b)(1)(A), 658E(c)(2)(D) & (3)(B), §§98.16(k), 98.30(a) through (e)). At minimum, the description should include:

- How parents are informed of the availability of child care services and about child care options
- Where/how applications are made
- What documentation must parents provide
- How parents who receive TANF benefits are informed about the exception to individual penalties as described in 4.4
- Length of eligibility period including variations that relate to the services provided, e.g., through collaborations with Head Start or pre-kindergarten programs
- Any steps the State has taken to reduce barriers to initial and continuing eligibility for child care subsidies

**Attach** a copy of your parent application for the child care subsidy program. If the application is available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address (application must still be attached to Plan):

Families are informed of their child care options and their eligibility for the CAPS program by case managers in the county DFCS office. The DFCS web site, <http://www.dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/caps>, provides information about the subsidized child care program and contact information for the county DFCS offices. Social Service Case Managers also inform families of the availability of subsidized child care. Additionally, child care resource and referral agencies distribute pamphlets, literature, and child care information to families.

Applications for subsidized child care are available and made in each county DFCS office. Applications are not available online. Families complete an application for child care only when funds are available. If funds are not available, families complete an inquiry form and are screened for placement on a waiting list. Families who meet the criteria for priority services complete an application and are not placed on a waiting list.

The child care case managers determine eligibility based on the need for care (whether the adult is participating in a state approved activity), income, and residence. Families must provide documentation of their income and that all children needing subsidized child care meet citizenship requirements. Additionally, families must provide documentation that each responsible adult required to participate in a state approved activity meets participation requirements. For example, working responsible adults must provide documentation of their wages and work hours and responsible adults attending school or training programs must provide documentation of their enrollment and attendance.

Families can choose their own child care providers. The choice is limited if the chosen provider has an active child protective services case, or does not meet state regulatory or health and safety requirements. DFCS case managers assist families in choosing child care services that meet their needs upon the families' request. Child care resource and referral agencies also offer assistance to families.

TANF applicants or recipients who need child care to participate in state approved employment, training or education activities receive priority child care services when funds are limited. These adults are not placed on a waiting list for subsidized child care.

The TANF/Employment Services case manager is responsible for informing single custodial parents that they may be exempt from work requirements if they have a child less than 12 months of age in

**their care. Similarly, the TANF/Employment Services case manager is responsible for informing single custodial parents with children under six years of age that they cannot be sanctioned for failing to work if they cannot locate accessible, affordable, appropriate child care services. Georgia has had no reports of single custodial parents who have been unable to obtain accessible, affordable and appropriate child care for a child under 6 years of age.**

**Families are certified for the CAPS program for up to one year. The case manager monitors each case at six-month intervals to ensure continued eligibility. Families can mail in documentation of income at the six-month review. This process reduces barriers and allows families to comply with program requirements without taking time off from work or other approved activities.**

4.1.2 Is the application process different for families receiving TANF?

Yes. **Describe** how the process is different:

No.

4.1.3 The following is a detailed description of how the State ensures that parents are informed about their ability to choose from among family and group home care, center-based care and in-home care including faith-based providers in each of these categories.

**Child care case managers encourage customers to consider various types of child care options (center based, family child care, informal care, etc.) in the community based on the type of care and the amount of care needed by the family. The customer will then choose a provider who best meet the needs of their child(ren).**

**Child care case managers also inform customers of other resources that may be available, such as Early Head start, Head Start, Pre-K program, after school programs in public schools or city recreation departments, etc. Child care case managers may refer clients to local child care resource and referral agencies to obtain information about providers in their area and the provider's rate.**

4.1.4 Does the State conduct outreach to eligible families with limited English proficiency?

- Yes. Describe how the State reaches out and provides services to eligible families with limited English proficiency, including how the State overcomes language barriers with families and providers.

**DHR conducts outreach to families with limited English proficiency by contracting to provide communication assistance utilizing interpreters, translators, and other necessary communicative resources. These services are available statewide in local county DFCS offices. In addition to these services, the child care application as well as other forms have been translated into Spanish.**

No

## **4.2 Records of Parental Complaints**

The following is a detailed description of how the State maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and how it makes the information regarding such parental complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C), §98.32))

**State law requires the state licensing agency, DECAL, to investigate complaints of all regulatory violations in family day care homes, group day care homes, child care learning centers, and in child care programs that are exempt from licensure, and programs that may be operating illegally.**

**When there are rule violations and pending adverse action, the legal action could include revoking or suspending the facility's license to operate, requiring restrictions such as limiting admission, or imposing a civil monetary penalty.**

**DECAL maintains information regarding complaint investigations in state licensure files. Under the provisions of the Georgia Open Records Law, O.C.G.A. Sections 50-18-70 through 50-18-77, this information is available to the public. State and federal laws consider all licensure files open records except for that specific information otherwise protected. Persons may review files by appointment. The request can be by telephone followed with a written request or in writing.**

**DECAL posts reports of the recent monitoring visits to child care programs on the Internet (<http://www.dec.state.ga.us/CCS/CCSMain.aspx>). Families can access the site, enter the name of the child care program and other**

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**identifying information to view the recent inspections. Information about rule violations and adverse actions are also posted on this web site.**

**DECAL also provides a “Consultant of the Day” who is available from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. to provide parents and other interested individuals verbal information regarding the licensure history of a child care facility.**

#### **4.3 Unlimited Access to Children in Child Care Settings**

The following is a detailed description of the procedures in effect in the State for affording parents unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds. (658E(c)(2)(B), §98.31))

**State licensing and registration rules require unlimited access by parents to their children while in child care settings. Rules require that a sign be posted in a public place stating that parents have access to all child care areas. Informal providers, while not required to be licensed or registered, must also allow parents unlimited access to their children. DFCS notifies informal providers of this requirement during enrollment.**

#### **4.4 Criteria or Definitions Applied by TANF Agency to Determine Inability to Obtain Child Care**

The regulations at §98.33(b) require the Lead Agency to inform parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the work requirement for any single custodial parent who has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care for a child under 6 years of age.

In fulfilling this requirement, the following criteria or definitions are applied by the TANF agency to determine whether the parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care:

NOTE: The TANF agency, not the Child Care Lead Agency, is responsible for establishing the following criteria or definitions. These criteria or definitions are offered in this Plan as a matter of public record. The TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions is:

**The DFCS TANF Unit in consultation with the DFCS Child Care Unit.**

- "appropriate child care":

**Care that meets the state's licensing/minimum health and safety standards, is available, and meets the needs of the family and child.**

- "reasonable distance":  
**Care that is within a forty-five minute radius of the parent's home or work activity.**
- "unsuitability of informal child care":  
**Care that does not meet the state's licensing/minimum health and safety standards.**
- "affordable child care arrangements":  
**Care in which the state participates at a minimum of 50% of the cost of care for the family and the provider accepts up to the maximum DFCS rate.**

**PART 5  
ACTIVITIES & SERVICES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND  
AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE**

**5.1 Quality Earmarks and Set-Asides**

- 5.1.1 The Child Care and Development Fund provides earmarks for infant and toddler care and school-age care and resource and referral services as well as the special earmark for quality activities. The following describes the activities; identifies the entities providing the activities; and describes the expected results of the activities. **For the infant and toddler earmark, the State must note in its description of the activities what is the maximum age of a child who may be served with such earmarked funds (not to exceed 36 months).**

**DHR as the Lead Agency transfers funds to DECAL to administer the state's CCDF quality set-aside and earmark funds. DECAL administers the Infant/Toddler Earmark and the School-Age Care/Child Care Resource and Referral Earmark by working collaboratively with other state agencies and organizations to develop a comprehensive system of early care and education.**

**DECAL is the state agency charged with developing and maintaining a comprehensive system of early care and education. This system includes the governance and an infrastructure that will build the capacity of the state and its schools and communities to prepare children to succeed in school.**

**DECAL, by state law, is responsible for licensing child care programs; administering Georgia's Pre-K program; administering the CCDF quality set-aside and earmarked funds; administering the Title I Even Start Family Literacy program; and coordinating statewide early care and education initiatives in order to obtain a more streamlined early care and education system in Georgia. In addition, DECAL houses the Head Start Collaboration Office and oversees the federal Child Care and Adult Food Program and the Summer Food Services Program.**

Infants and toddlers:

- **Georgia Early Learning Standards -**  
<http://www.dec.state.ga.us/documents/child%20care%20services/gels%20complete%20book.pdf>

**DECAL, in collaboration with its partners, has completed the development and initial distribution of the early learning standards for children birth through three years of age. The standards answer the question, "What should children from birth through three years of age know or be able to do?" The standards are aligned with the Pre-K Content Standards, which align with the Georgia Department of Education's Kindergarten standards, creating a seamless system of learning from birth through grade 12. This seamless system of learning standards is the foundation for building a comprehensive and coordinated state system for school readiness. Two additional documents, an activity guide for parents and an activity guide for teachers, are currently being developed to accompany the Georgia Early Learning Standards. Once completed, the documents, which will offer specific activities that align with the standards, will be widely distributed to parents and to early care and education professionals.**

- **Standards of Care Program -**  
<http://www.dec.state.ga.us/SoC/SocMain.aspx>

**DECAL developed the statewide Standards of Care Program to improve the quality of services to children and families receiving services in child care learning centers, group day care homes, and family day care homes. The voluntary Standards of Care program provides training, quality enhancement grants and technical assistance. Before technical assistance begins, a baseline is conducted using the appropriate nationally recognized instruments to measure quality in early care and education programs- the *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R)*, *Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS)*, and the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-***

*Revised (ECERS).* Technical assistance, provided by DECAL consultants, Child Care Resource and Referral consultants or contracted consultants, is based on these scales. Programs completing Standards of Care and meeting scoring requirements as measured by the instruments earn the Center of Distinction, Center of Recognition, Home of Distinction or Home of Merit designation. Data from the pre-observations and post-observations with the rating scales show that these programs have made significant improvements in the quality of the infant, toddler, and preschool environments in Georgia.

Child care resource and referral:

- Child Care Resource and Referral Services- [www.gaccrra.org](http://www.gaccrra.org)

DECAL is mandated by state law to “promote consumer education to parents to help them select child care through the expansion of child care resource and referral agencies.” Each of Georgia’s child care resource and referral agencies provides high-quality, family friendly consumer education and referrals; develops and maintains a computer database for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data; builds upon and supports the system of early care and education, including school age care; collaborates and develops local partnerships; and operates a resource room and lending library.

Through a competitive bid process, DECAL awards and manages the state contracts with the each of the child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&R). The network of 14 child care resource and referral agencies serves all 159 counties in the state. The geographic regions reflect the economic development and correspond to the DHR service regions. This assists the CCR&Rs in their collaborative work with the Lead Agency, the Georgia Department of Economic Development, and DECAL.

Each CCR&R supports the improvement of quality, availability, and affordability of child care. The child care resource and referral agencies link families to providers. The CCR&Rs provide a database for parents who are seeking child care for typically developing children as well as inclusive environments for children with special needs. The CCR&Rs provide training, technical assistance, and quality improvement funds for child care professionals working with young children in their homes, group homes or child care learning centers. In addition, resource and referral agencies furnish services to individuals who are seeking to operate licensed child care learning centers and individuals seeking to open registered family or licensed group day care homes. Each CCR&R offers a lending library for use

by the community. In working to accomplish its mission, each CCR&R collaborates with early childhood and school age programs to meet the needs of children and families in their regions.

Currently, DECAL contracts with not-for-profit agencies, colleges and universities to provide child care resource and referral services. Presently, six of the 14 CCR&R contracts are with non-profit agencies: Community Connections/211, Inc.; Concerted Services, Inc.; Kids Advocacy Coalition, Inc.; and Quality Care for Children, Inc. (holds 3 contracts). Eight of the contracts are held by state colleges and universities: Columbus State University, Darton College, Flint River Technical College, Gainesville College, Medical College of Georgia, Savannah Technical College, South Georgia Technical College and Swainsboro Technical College. A request for proposal is available and new contracts will be issued by July 1, 2007 to successful offerors. The Georgia Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies ([www.gaccrra.org](http://www.gaccrra.org)) is a non-profit membership organization that supports the work of each CCR&R.

In an on-going effort to ensure a high level of quality, DECAL requires all funded CCR&Rs to be “Quality Assured” through the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies ([www.naccrra.org](http://www.naccrra.org)). Newly funded entities must achieve certification within one year of receiving the contract. DECAL monitors each CCR&R for compliance with the contract. Monitoring includes two site visits per contract period and monthly reviews of each CCR&R’s programmatic, statistical, and fiscal reports. Each CCR&R is expected to provide the contracted services to their assigned regions based on a common set of deliverables.

School-age child care:

Through a competitive bid process, DECAL administers contracts to purchase services that will increase the capacity, supply and quality of services for school-age children. The following describes the currently funded activities, identifies the entities providing the activities, and describes the expected results of the activities:

- School-Age Program Improvement and Accreditation Support initiative through the Georgia School Age Care Association ([www.gsaca.com](http://www.gsaca.com)), a non-profit agency, provides intensive training, on-site technical assistance, and mini-grants to approximately 25-30 school-age care programs seeking to increase quality and/or attain National Afterschool Association accreditation. Each

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**participating program will achieve measurable quality improvements.**

- **School-Age Workforce Initiative through Care Solutions, Inc. ([www.caresolutions.com](http://www.caresolutions.com)), a for-profit agency, offers four six-hour conferences and six Saturday workshops for up to 600 providers statewide. Conference participants are eligible for a \$225 mini-grant package to support the initiative. Participants learn how to create and/or enhance learning environments, identify strategies to help children connect to learning, and encourage children to make good choices.**
- **Creating Statewide Capacity for School-Age Quality Improvement- Phase II through the National Black Child Care Development Institute, Inc. - Atlanta Affiliate (<http://www.bcdi-atl.org/>), a non-profit agency, offers accreditation support to eight model school-age programs and enhances the capacity of 20 school-age care advisors to train school-age care professionals in the regions. Each participating program will achieve measurable quality improvements. Each school-age care advisor will be prepared to provide technical assistance and training to school-age care programs in their regions.**

5.1.2 The law requires that not less than 4% of the CCDF be set aside for quality activities. (658E(c)(3)(B), 658G, §§98.13(a), 98.16(h), 98.51) The Lead Agency estimates that the following amount and percentage will be used for the quality activities (not including earmarked funds) during the 1-year period: October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008:

**\$8,073,506 (4%)**

5.1.3 **Check** each activity the Lead Agency will undertake to improve the availability and quality of child care (include activities funded through the 4% quality set-aside as well as the special earmark for quality activities). (658D(b)(1)(D), 658E(c)(3)(B), §§98.13(a), 98.16(h))

GEORGIA'S STATE PLAN FOR CCDF SERVICES  
FOR THE PERIOD 10/1/07 – 9/30/09

Activity	Check if undertaking/ will undertake	Name and type of entity providing activity	Check if this entity a non-governmental entity?
Comprehensive consumer education	<b>X</b>	<b>CCR&amp;Rs</b>	<b>X</b>
Grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting State and local standards	<b>X</b>	<b>CCR&amp;Rs</b>	<b>X</b>
Monitoring compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements	<b>X</b>	<b>DECAL</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional development, including training, education, and technical assistance	<b>X</b>	<b>DECAL</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving salaries and other compensation for child care providers	<b>X</b>	<b>DECAL</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development	<b>X</b>	<b>DECAL</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities to promote inclusive child care	<b>X</b>	<b>DECAL CCR&amp;Rs</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>X</b>
Healthy Child Care America and other health activities including those designed to promote the social and emotional development of children	<b>X</b>	<b>DECAL</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other quality activities that increase parental choice, and improve the quality and availability of child care. (§98.51(a)(1) and (2))	<b>X</b>	<b>DECAL</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.1.4 For each activity checked, **describe** the expected results of the activity. If you have conducted an evaluation of this activity, please **describe**. If you have not conducted an evaluation, **describe** how you will evaluate the activities.

**DHR is the Lead Agency and manages the child care subsidy program and DECAL leads the state's efforts in providing early care and education services by administering the state's CCDF quality set-aside. DECAL administers these funds working collaboratively with other state agencies and organizations to develop a comprehensive system of early care and education.**

Comprehensive consumer education:

**Child Care Resource and Referral Services - [www.gaccrra.org](http://www.gaccrra.org)**

**DECAL is mandated by state law to “promote consumer education to parents to help them select child care through the expansion of child care resource and referral agencies.” Each of Georgia's child care resource and referral agencies provides high-quality, family-centered consumer education and referrals; develops and maintains a computer database for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data; builds upon and supports the system of early care and education, including school age care; collaborates and develops local partnerships; and operates a resource room and lending library.**

**Through a competitive bid process, DECAL awards and manages the state contracts with each of the child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&R). The network of 14 child care resource and referral agencies serves all 159 counties in the state.**

**Each CCR&R delivers high-quality, family-centered education and referral services to consumers and the public. Consumer education includes child care referrals, parent consultations, parent workshops, media campaigns, and distribution of education materials. Some services are provided for consumers whose primary language is not English.**

**The CCR&Rs assist families in locating child care that meets their needs by operating a telephone referral line, providing face-to-face referrals, offering consumer education at locations convenient to families, and offering information through the agencies' websites.**

**The CCR&Rs develop and maintain computer databases that include all licensed, registered, and exempt child care programs in their regions. This enables the CCR&Rs to provide free referral information to parents and the public.**

**CCR&Rs distribute quarterly newsletters for parents and host parent workshops. The CCR&Rs collaborate with DECAL to reach families**

and implement statewide initiatives. For example, the CCR&Rs are assisting with the distribution of the voluntary Georgia Early Learning Standards for children ages birth through three years, providing resources to parents related to the Georgia Early Learning Standards, and collaborating with DECAL to provide training on the implementation of the standards. The CCR&Rs work with DECAL's Nutrition Services Division to provide nutrition education for parents and children through the parent workshops and parent newsletters.

In addition, each CCR&R operates a lending library and resource room offering materials and equipment for parents to use with children at home. These materials are available to borrow for use with children of all ages and abilities.

CCR&Rs collaborate and partner with other community groups in their regions. The CCR&Rs facilitate meetings with community members, business leaders, and stakeholders such as Pre-K and Head Start programs. The CCR&Rs participate in promotional events and activities in the community to increase public awareness about CCR&R services.

The expected outcome of these activities and services is that parent referrals, workshops and material distribution will reach 15% or more of the region's consumers.

- **Engaging Parents to Support School Readiness Initiative**

DECAL developed this initiative, in partnership with key early care and education leadership in Georgia, to outline a list of evidence-based criteria that may be used by parents of children ages birth to five to assist them in selecting appropriate parent education programs. "Family Engagement" includes all the ways in which parents are involved in supporting the overall development of children. The expected outcome is a comprehensive list of evidence-based criteria for use in selecting parent education programs.

Consumer education activities are evaluated through a monthly reporting process. Grantees report progress on meeting the goals and outcomes set forth in their contract with DECAL. Reports are reviewed before reimbursements are approved for payment. DECAL staff conduct on-site monitoring visits to ensure contract goals are met.

Grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting standards:

- **Quality Environment Grants**

DECAL administers Quality Environment Grants to support child care learning centers and school age care programs wishing to receive grant funds to strengthen their programs. Programs apply for the Quality Environment Grant through an annual “Request for Application” process. Depending on their licensed capacity, applicants may apply for up to \$30,000.00 for items and/or services to improve the overall quality of their early care and education program and/or school age program and their environments. Funding is available for equipment, materials, furnishings and supplies for children’s learning environments, including the playgrounds, and for professional development for personnel working with children on a daily basis in those environments. Funded programs may be provided with a baseline evaluation and technical assistance during the contract period. Each funded program must commit to achieve measurable improvements in the quality of the program’s environment by the end of the contract year.

- **Family Child Care Homes and Group Child Care Homes Mini-Grant Project**

Each child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agency administers a family child care homes and group child care homes mini-grant project for the agency’s region. These mini-grants range from \$1,000 to \$4,000. This is a competitive process entered into by an application and guided by an assessment tool. Materials are purchased to support start-up, quality improvement, expansion, and state regulatory compliance. Each grantee is provided technical assistance and professional development assistance by a quality improvement coordinator employed by the CCR&R. The CCR&R also provides technical assistance and compliance support for child care learning centers through the services of a CCR&R technical assistance coordinator. The anticipated outcome of this project is an increase in the number of family and/or group child care homes in the region that meet licensing standards.

- **Non-Profit Child Care Project -**  
[www.qualitycareforchildren.org/nonprofit.htm](http://www.qualitycareforchildren.org/nonprofit.htm)

DECAL funds the statewide Non-Profit Child Care Project through a contract with Quality Care for Children, Inc. This project provides start up mini-grants for 10 to 20 new early care and education or school-age programs that are sponsored by faith-based and non-profit groups in Georgia to assist in the final stages of their start-up process.

**Grants are awarded to groups that have received technical assistance from the Non-Profit Child Care Project. Eligible expenses include toys and equipment needed to complete the licensing process; training for staff, especially as required by licensing rules; and minor renovations required by the Fire Department or by licensing rules. The anticipated outcome of this project is an increase in the number of faith-based and non-profit early care and education or school-age programs in the state that meet licensing standards.**

**Grant activities to assist providers in meeting standards are evaluated through a monthly reporting process. Grantees report progress on meeting the goals and outcomes set forth in their contract with DECAL. Reports are reviewed before reimbursements are approved for payment. DECAL staff conduct on-site monitoring visits to ensure contract goals are met.**

Monitoring for compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements;

- **Monitoring and Training Informal Providers**

**DHR collaborates with the Child Care Services Division of DECAL, to monitor all informal (e.g. unregulated) child care providers who care for children subsidized through the CAPS program. The Child Care Services Division facilitates criminal background checks on each new informal provider. A Child Care Services consultant visits each site where child care is provided to ensure that the site meets basic health and safety requirements. A health and safety packet specifically designed for informal providers is delivered at the initial monitoring visit; smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are furnished if not present in the home.**

**In addition, the Child Care Services Division monitors all new family day care homes. Consultants monitor 20% of existing family day care homes annually.**

**DHR collaborates with DECAL to administer informal provider training. DECAL manages a contract with Care Solutions, Inc. to deliver free training to providers who care for children subsidized through the CAPS program. The training helps the informal providers obtain the skills and knowledge necessary to establish and maintain a safe and developmentally-appropriate in-home child care setting. This free training enables Informal child care providers to satisfy the CAPS annual requirement of eight state-accepted training hours. The anticipated outcome of these projects is an increase in the**

**number of informal providers that meet CAPS health and safety standards.**

- **Focused Licensing Visits**

**DECAL began the Focused Licensing Visits initiative to increase its effectiveness in monitoring child care learning centers. Focused licensing visits means that child care licensing consultants will focus on a set of identified rules that, when not adhered to, pose the greatest risk to children. Eleven “core” rule categories that are more critical for children’s health and safety have been identified. DECAL will direct resources, staff time, knowledge, technical assistance and training to support child care learning centers in providing safe, high-quality learning environments particularly in these core rule categories.**

- **Orientation for Directors of Early Care and Learning Facilities**

**As of October 1, 2005, state licensing rules require that, prior to the issuance of an initial license to operate a child care learning center; the director must complete a 40-hour director’s training course that has been approved by DECAL. To meet the need for director’s training, DECAL coordinates the Orientation for Directors of Early Care and Learning Facilities initiative. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that all future directors of child care learning centers have a minimum of a 40-hour orientation that will include basic early childhood concepts and small business procedures. Consultants with the University of Georgia are soliciting applications from providers statewide who plan to conduct the orientations and are reviewing the applications to ensure that the proposed orientation meets the identified competencies.**

Professional Development, including Training, Education and Technical Assistance.

- **Georgia Early Care and Learning Professional Development System - [www.training.decal.state.ga.us](http://www.training.decal.state.ga.us)**

**The purpose of the Georgia Early Care and Learning Professional Development System is to support practitioners in the field of early care and education by providing a statewide professional development system with a career ladder. Administered by DECAL, the system’s goal is to improve the professional development of Georgia early care and education professionals who work with children and their families.**

The foundation of the system is the Professional Development Competencies. The competencies for professionals in early care and education, school-age care, and administration have been reviewed and updated by a group of practitioners, subject-matter experts, and stakeholders. Competencies for Trainers, based on the National Association for the Education of Young Children trainer competencies, are being drafted.

The second component of the system is the Georgia Training Approval System. This component promotes quality professional development by ensuring that qualified instructors deliver training based on adult learning principles. The training content is based on current theory and best practices in early childhood care and education and school age care.

The third component of the system is the Professional Development Registry. The registry will allow practitioners to access an on-going transcript of their professional development and be able to identify their training needs based on the level of professional development they have achieved. Once fully implemented, the registry will allow DECAL to identify workforce characteristics and training needs in order to effectively plan and strategically fund professional development activities.

The fourth component of the system is the Georgia Technical Assistance Model. The purpose of the model is to maximize technical assistance investments and resources, provide a coordinated technical assistance delivery system, and establish professional standards for technical assistance consultants in order to create and sustain positive change in all early care and education and school age programs. The *Art of Technical Assistance* training provides the framework for technical assistance as an on-going, customized process that enables programs to achieve measurable and sustainable results. To standardize and promote high-quality technical assistance services, consultants providing technical assistance through the child care resource and referral agencies and through Quality Initiatives contracts with DECAL complete the *Art of Technical Assistance Training*. Similarly, DECAL consultants in the Child Care Services, Pre-K, Nutrition and Standards of Care divisions and program have completed this intensive training.

Please refer to Section 5.2.5 for full discussion of the evaluation of the components of the professional development system.

- **Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies - [www.gaccrra.org](http://www.gaccrra.org)**

Each child care resource and referral agency furnishes professional development training and technical assistance to early care and education professionals within the CCR&R regions. Each CCR&R offers state approved/accepted training for parents, providers and foster parents to assist them in meeting the needs of the children in their care.

The professional development training provided by each of the CCR&Rs is based on the Georgia Professional Development System's Professional Development Competencies. The CCR&Rs promote awareness of and participation in Georgia Professional Development System's Professional Development Registry by helping child care professionals to submit their information to the registry. The CCR&Rs market professional development training in their regions in the newsletters.

The CCR&Rs coordinate with local technical colleges and universities to link child care professionals interested in earning credentials or degrees to educational opportunities within the community. They promote awareness of the HOPE Grant program, HOPE Scholarship program, and the SCHOLARSHIPS program which offer financial aid.

Using the Georgia Technical Assistance Model, each child care resource and referral agency offers technical assistance services to current and potential providers seeking to improve the quality of care being provided, to individuals interested in opening a new child care program, and to providers seeking to achieve state or national accreditation. Each CCR&R also offers technical assistance and training to support child care professionals and families in order to include children with special needs into child care settings with typically developing children.

- **SCHOLARSHIPS – [www.caresolutions.com](http://www.caresolutions.com)**

SCHOLARSHIPS is Georgia's statewide educational assistance program for eligible early care and education professionals pursuing credentials or degrees in early childhood education. DECAL administers, in collaboration with Smart Start Georgia, the SCHOLARSHIPS program to advance the credentials of staff who work in early childhood education programs with children ages birth to five years. SCHOLARSHIPS provides tuition assistance and a support stipend to approved professionals who work in a licensed

center, a registered family care or group care home, and work at least 25 hours a week as a teacher/assistant teacher or 40 hours per week as a director or an assistant director, and earn less than \$14.45 per hour, and enroll in an eligible institution in an approved program of study.

*The Shining Brighter: SCHOLARSHIPS and INCENTIVES Annual Program Summary* is included as Attachment 5.1.2. The report is available on-line at [www.caresolutions.com/content/page.cfm/112/](http://www.caresolutions.com/content/page.cfm/112/).

- **Quality Initiatives Grants**

DECAL distributes a portion of the federal Child Care and Development Fund through a Quality Initiatives “Request for Proposal” process. DECAL solicits proposals which focus on services that will enable child care programs to meet standards; increase the professionals’ knowledge of effective instructional practices by offering professional development training; and encourage professionals to apply research-based practices in the child care setting by offering technical assistance. Grants are awarded to organizations that have the capacity to provide statewide services to support early care and education and school-age care programs in making and sustaining quality improvements and/or to achieve state or national accreditation. Services include professional development training based on the Georgia Professional Development Competencies, technical assistance based on the Georgia Technical Assistance Model, and career counseling. The services support a comprehensive and coordinated early care and education system that focuses on accountability and measurable results.

- **Child Care Resource and Referral Early Care and Education Initiative**

The purpose of this initiative is to build a statewide technical assistance system at the community level. Staff members will provide technical assistance to early care and education professionals, support DECAL field consultants, provide training, and coordinate professional development opportunities through the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education and the University System of Georgia colleges and universities. Refer to Section 5.2.5.

Professional development activities, including training, education and technical assistance, offered through grants are evaluated through a monthly reporting process. Grantees report progress on meeting the goals and outcomes set forth in their contract with DECAL. Reports are reviewed before reimbursements are approved for payment.

**DECAL staff conduct on-site monitoring visits to ensure contract goals are met.**

Improving salaries and/or other compensation for providers

- **INCENTIVES** – [www.caresolutions.com](http://www.caresolutions.com)

**INCENTIVES** is Georgia's statewide salary supplement program designed to enhance the compensation of early care and education professionals to reduce turnover in the workforce and to improve the professional qualifications for all staff working with children ages birth to five years. DECAL administers, in collaboration with Smart Start Georgia, INCENTIVES to encourage and reward eligible early care and education professionals for earning a credential or degree in the field and for tenure with their employer. The annual awards range from \$200 to \$1,000.

*The Shining Brighter: SCHOLARSHIPS and INCENTIVES Annual Program Summary* is included as Attachment 5.1.2. The report is available on-line at [www.caresolutions.com/content/page.cfm/112/](http://www.caresolutions.com/content/page.cfm/112/).

Activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development:

**DECAL is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. DECAL oversees a wide range of programs and initiatives to prepare Georgia's children to succeed.**

**Georgia defines school readiness, or how prepared a child is to learn in school, by focusing on the nature of young children and how they learn. The definition encompasses families and how they live; communities and the services they provide; and schools and their readiness for children. Each of these factors affects a child's school readiness. A child is ready for school when: possible health barriers that block learning have been detected, suspected physical or mental disabilities have been addressed; enthusiasm, curiosity, and persistence toward learning is demonstrated, feelings of self and others are recognized; social and interpersonal skills are emerging; communication with others is effective; early literacy skills are evident; and a general knowledge about the world, things, places, events, and people has been acquired.**

**As the state agency charged with developing and maintaining a comprehensive system of early care and education, DECAL administers programs and initiatives to support early language,**

**literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development in young children.**

- **Pre-K Program - [www.decal.state.ga.us/PreK/PreKMain.aspx](http://www.decal.state.ga.us/PreK/PreKMain.aspx)**

**Georgia's Pre-K Program was established in 1993 to provide four-year-old children with high-quality preschool experiences. This voluntary program, funded by the Georgia Lottery for Education, is expected to serve over 75,000 children during the 2007-2008 school year.**

**Georgia's Pre-K Program is offered free to all four-year-old children regardless of parental income. A variety of organizations provide Pre-K services, among them are private non-profit and for-profit child care learning centers, public and private elementary schools, Head Start sites, military bases, and postsecondary vocational-technical institutions. Consistent quality standards apply across all types of program settings and programs are monitored at least twice a year. The public-private partnerships enable parents to choose the most appropriate settings for their children.**

**Pre-K is successfully preparing children for school by providing an opportunity for them to develop school readiness skills in an environment that encourages them to have fun while learning. An evaluation by Georgia State University, *The Georgia Early Childhood Study*, (<http://avsps.gsu.edu/epg/index.htm>) found that children who attended pre-kindergarten have higher academic and social ratings by their kindergarten teachers and better kindergarten attendance than children who did not attend preschool programs. Participation in a high-quality preschool program also helps children develop social and pre-academic skills that will help them succeed in kindergarten and throughout their educational experiences.**

**The Georgia Pre-K program anchors the state's development of a seamless, coordinated system of early care and learning and influences the state's other activities to support early learning.**

- **The Work Sampling System**

**Although not supported with CCDF, the Work Sampling System (WSS) has been implemented on a statewide basis as part of the Pre-K Program. This system is used to assess four-year olds in Georgia. The WSS, along with other sources of data, is used to provide an emerging picture of a child's learning and development in relation to school readiness and the Georgia Pre-K Content Standards. The WSS**

domains that are assessed include language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, physical development and health, approaches to learning, and personal and social development.

The Work Sampling System is administered continuously during the school year in the classrooms as children and teachers engage in natural classroom activities. Teachers observe and document children's performance through a variety of documentation methods including, but not limited to, writing anecdotal notes, taking pictures, and selecting children's work samples. Children's performance is assessed on 55 performance indicators across seven domains.

Teachers use assessment results to plan instruction for the whole class, for small groups of students, and to meet the needs of individual students. They also use the assessment results on a daily basis to make adjustments to their lesson plans so that the needs of all children are met and to regularly inform parents of their child's progress.

- Standards of Care Program – [www.decal.state.ga.us/SoC/SocMain.aspx](http://www.decal.state.ga.us/SoC/SocMain.aspx)

The Standards of Care Program offers support and services to child care learning centers, group day care homes, and family day care homes seeking to improve the quality of services to children and families. The voluntary program provides training, quality enhancement grants and technical assistance. Before technical assistance begins, a baseline is conducted using the appropriate nationally recognized instrument to measure quality of interactions and activities that influence the development of the children's language and reasoning, literacy, pre-reading and early math skills—the *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R)*, *Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS)*, and the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS)*. Technical assistance, provided by DECAL consultants or Child Care Resource and Referral consultants, is based on these scales.

Programs completing Standards of Care and meeting scoring requirements as measured by the instruments earn the Center of Distinction, Center of Recognition, Home of Distinction or Home of Merit designation. Data from the pre-observation and post-observations with the rating scales show that these programs have made in significant improvements in the quality of the infant, toddler, and preschool environments in Georgia.

Activities to promote inclusive child care

- **Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies - [www.gaccrra.org](http://www.gaccrra.org)**

**An inclusion coordinator is on staff at each of the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies as provided in the contract with DECAL. The inclusion coordinator is responsible for providing services to families who have children with special needs and the child care providers who care for them. Each of the inclusion coordinators provides technical assistance to child care professionals who are caring for children with special needs. Technical assistance is offered on the telephone, on site at a child care program, and at trainings. This project is able to furnish on-going assistance to staff until they are comfortable including a child. Technical assistance varies from room arrangement to creating schedules to behavior management in the classroom. Technical assistance is also offered to families or others who are involved with a child with special needs. This service is provided to help others understand the importance of inclusion and give them the guidance and support needed in order to be successful.**

**The inclusion coordinators continually promote inclusive child care through training they provide, meetings they attend in their community, drop-in visits to child care programs, different community groups and agencies (i.e. Kiwanis, Local Interagency Coordinating Councils, Family Connections, county Department of Family and Children Services offices), at health fairs, community events and local school systems. Through collaborative efforts in the communities around the state, children with special needs are able to access programs and services as designated by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The expected outcome of the Inclusion Project is increased access for families to child care settings that provide appropriate services to children with special needs.**

**Activities to promote inclusive child care, which are funded through CCDF grants to the CCR&Rs, are evaluated through a monthly reporting process. Grantees report progress on meeting the goals and outcomes set forth in their contract with DECAL. Reports are reviewed before reimbursements are approved for payment. DECAL staff conduct on-site monitoring visits to ensure contract goals are met.**

- **Working Together for Young Children Inclusion Initiative**

**The Georgia Pre-K Program has initiated a collaborative partnership with the Georgia Department of Education, Division of Exceptional**

**Students to increase the number of successful inclusion classrooms for Pre-K children with special needs. Special education teachers and Pre-K teachers receive training and support in “best practices” for early childhood inclusion. This collaborative has expanded to more classes and to involve local Inclusion Coordinators and the Mentor Teachers in identifying best practices for providing local support and technical assistance. Along with teaching four year old children in the Pre-K classroom, these Mentor Teachers share their expertise with other staff within the child care setting. Although not supported with CCDF, this initiative will increase the number of successful inclusion for four-year old children enrolled in Georgia’s voluntary Pre-K program.**

Healthy Child Care America and other health activities including those designed to promote social and emotional development in children

- **Child Care Health Consultants**

**Inclusion coordinators on staff at the child care resource and referral agencies have completed the Healthy Child Care Georgia Health Consultant training which focuses on social and emotional development in young children. This training has provided guidance for the inclusion coordinators when they are in child care programs observing young children with possible social and emotional issues. The inclusion coordinators offer health input in planning for both the development of child care programs and for the inclusion of children with special needs.**

Similarly, many DECAL licensing consultants have completed the Health Consultant training. This increases the capacity within the current child care infrastructure and enhances linkages between the child care providers and the resources available to them. The consultant, as a regular monitor of the child care programs, can offer information and refer providers to existing services.

- ***Behavior Intervention Program Training***

**The *Behavior Intervention Program* is specialized training that addresses the needs of young children with behavior problems. This nationally recognized training has been used to train Pre-K consultants and Inclusion Coordinators on using “functional behavior analysis” techniques when working with Pre-K programs on behavior management issues of children enrolled in the Pre-K program. This training has enabled the consultants and Inclusion Coordinators to**

**work effectively with providers and families who have children with behavior issues.**

- **Family Support-Resource Coordination**

**Resource coordinators work in many of Georgia's Pre-K Programs to involve parents in their child's educational development process. Parents are provided with opportunities to obtain needed health services for their children and attend child development seminars. Parents themselves are provided with referrals to community resources, as needed, such as GED classes, employment counseling, literacy classes, assistance on obtaining Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) payments, access to substance abuse services, etc. Resource Coordinators are also responsible for helping families transition from Pre-K into kindergarten through the Kindergarten Readiness Initiative. Although not funded by CCDF, resource coordination services in Georgia Pre-K programs assist families by focusing on child development, health resources, transition activities, and links to community resources using the Strengthening Families approach. Pre-K sites apply through a competitive grants process for funding. Georgia Pre-K programs receiving grants for resource coordination services serve about 50,500 families annually.**

**Resource coordinators are integrating Strengthening Families ([http://www.cssp.org/doris\\_duke/index.html](http://www.cssp.org/doris_duke/index.html)) strategies into their work with families. The Strengthening Families framework provides the resource program coordinators with a strong foundation for providing intentional opportunities to promote family capacity to help their children. Strengthening Families is a strategy to prevent child abuse and neglect. It involves working with families to build protective factors around children.**

**The Strengthening Families training is offered through CCDF to child care resource and referral staff members and other practitioners in order to infuse the communities with individuals who can support families. Strengthening Families focuses on building protection for children within their homes and communities, and seeks to overcome or mitigate manageable causes of child neglect and abuse instead of removing children from their homes.**

**Activities to assist to promote health and social and emotional development, which are funded with CCDF grants, are evaluated through a monthly reporting process. Grantees report progress on meeting the goals and outcomes set forth in their contract with DECAL. Reports are reviewed before reimbursements are approved**

**for payment. DECAL staff conduct on-site monitoring visits to ensure contract goals are met.**

Other quality activities that increase parental choice, and improve the quality and availability of child care

- **Quality Systems Indicator Committee**

**DECAL is sponsoring a statewide Quality Systems Indicator Committee (QSIC). The objective of the QSIC is to develop indicators that would have the subsequent impact of: 1) improving the quality of child care provided to children; 2) increasing the number of and percentage of “at-risk” children who are served in higher quality child care programs; and 3) providing parents with better choices for the placement of their children in child care programs. Developing a systematic approach to quality will require the commitment of all pertinent stakeholders; to this end, DECAL is committed to working with all partners to develop a systematic approach to early care and education that benefits all of Georgia’s children.**

- **Economic Impact Analysis**

**DECAL has funded a joint proposal between the Carl Vinson Institute at the University of Georgia ([www.cviog.uga.edu](http://www.cviog.uga.edu)) and the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University (<http://aysps.gsu.edu/>) to conduct an Economic Impact Analysis for the state and regional areas. This analysis will demonstrate the economic impact of the child care industry on state and local economies. This analysis includes impact in the form of wages and revenues, state and federal contributions, and parent contributions supported by the child care industry. The expected outcome of this activity is to increase public awareness of the importance of child care services to Georgia’s economy and to increase local and state funding and support for the early care and education system.**

- **Workforce Development Study**

**In conjunction with the Economic Impact Analysis, DECAL has also commissioned a Workforce Development Study. The study will allow DECAL to target relevant quality initiatives to the areas, both in content and geography, most in need. Relevant quality initiatives include teacher education, teacher compensation, and retention data. The study will be done concurrently with the Economic Impact Analysis conducted by Georgia State University and the University of Georgia.**

- **Customer Service Satisfaction Survey**

**Governor Sonny Perdue created the Governor's Office of Customer Service to create a report card for measuring Georgia state government services and become the nation's best-managed state. Employees all over the state joined this effort, proving that we are one organization, with one goal - "Team Georgia. Ready to Serve." In January 2007, DECAL joined with the Governor's Office of Customer Service to develop and launch a Customer Service Improvement Plan. DECAL was already focused on providing customer service excellence. However, it formally began to work with the Office of Customer Service and Georgia State University to embed process improvement, cultural development methodologies and develop a system for measuring results. As part of this effort, DECAL will better understand and improve our service to our customers whether providing that service in person, by telephone, or through the internet.**

**DECAL has developed a survey instrument to gauge customer satisfaction with specific services provided by DECAL staff. This initiative is overseen by DECAL's accountability team and implemented by staff from the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University. Preliminary results are positive.**

## **5.2 Good Start, Grow Smart Planning and Development**

This section of the Plan relates to the President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative which is envisioned as a Federal-State partnership that creates linkages between CCDF, including funds set-aside for quality, and State public and private efforts to promote early learning. In this section, each Lead Agency is asked to assess its State's progress toward developing voluntary guidelines on language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts and a plan for the education and training of child care providers. The third component of the President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative, planning for coordination across at least four early childhood programs and funding streams, was addressed in Section 2.1.2.

**5.2.1 Status of Voluntary Early Learning Guidelines. Indicate** which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts to develop, implement, or revise research-based early learning guidelines (content standards) for three to five year-olds. **NOTE: Check only one box to best describe the status of your State's three-to-five-year-old guidelines.**

- Planning.** The State is planning for the development of early learning guidelines. Expected date of plan completion: \_\_\_\_\_
- Developing.** The State is in the process of developing early learning guidelines. Expected date of completion: \_\_\_\_\_
- Developed.** The State has approved the early learning guidelines, but has not yet developed or initiated an implementation plan. The early learning guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.1.**
- Implementing.** In addition to having developed early learning guidelines, the State has embarked on implementation efforts which may include dissemination, training or embedding guidelines in the professional development system. The guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.1.**
- Revising.** The State has previously developed early learning guidelines and is now revising those guidelines. The guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.1.**
- Other (describe):**

**Describe** the progress made by the State in developing, implementing, or revising early learning guidelines for early learning since the date of submission of the 2006-2007 State Plan. Efforts to develop early learning guidelines for children other than those addressed in *Good Start, Grow Smart* (i.e., children birth to three or older than five) may be described here.

**The President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative encourages states to set quality criteria for early childhood education in exchange for federal CCDF funds. According to *Good Start, Grow Smart*, the voluntary state guidelines for children ages three to five should align with the state K-12 standards and include literacy, language and pre-reading activities that can be adapted to various child care settings.**

**DECAL has assumed leadership for aligning the state's early learning guidelines for four-year-olds with the state's K-12 educational standards. Since the 2006-2007 state plan was submitted, DECAL has revised the Pre-K Content Standards for four-year-old children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program to align with the Georgia Department of Education's new Performance Standards for Kindergarten.**

- **Georgia offers universal public kindergarten in the public schools to five year olds. The Georgia Department of Education has developed new Performance Standards for five-year-old children attending public school (<http://www.georgiastandards.org/>). The Performance Standards for Kindergarten include Language Arts,**

**Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Representatives of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning have participated in the development of the Kindergarten Performance Standards.**

- **DECAL has revised the Content Standards of Georgia's Pre-K Program to reflect current educational research and align with the Georgia Department of Education's new Kindergarten Performance Standards. Released in July 2006, the Pre-K standards provide the foundation for instruction in all Georgia Pre-K classrooms and include seven curricular areas: Language and Literacy Development; Mathematics Development; Science Development; Social Studies Development; Creative Development; Social and Emotional Development, and Health and Physical Development.**

**Feedback received from a national review by experts in the field of early care and education informed the revision of the Pre-K Content Standards. The revised Pre-K Content standards include adaptations for inclusive environments, resources for each domain for teachers, and a children's booklist for each learning domain. The Pre-K Content Standards are available to download from DECAL's website:**  
**<http://www.decal.state.ga.us/PreK/PrekServices.aspx?Header=5&SubHeader=34&Position=11&HeaderName=Teachers>** .

- **In addition to revising the Pre-K Content Standards, DECAL has developed the voluntary Georgia Early Learning Standards for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. The standards are intended to guide teachers and parents in offering meaningful educational opportunities for children birth through three. The standards address the question, "What should children from birth through three years of age be able to do?"**

**The Georgia Early Learning Standards (GELS) are aligned with the Pre-K Content Standards and the Kindergarten Performance Standards as demonstrated in Appendix B of the GELS, "Alignment of Georgia Early Learning Standards with Georgia Pre-K and Kindergarten Performance Standards." The Georgia Early Learning Standards are available to download from DECAL's website at:**  
**<http://www.decal.state.ga.us/CCS/CCSServices.aspx?Header=67&SubHeader=&Position=18&HeaderName=Georgia%20Early%20Learning%20Standards>**.

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If developed, are the guidelines aligned with K-12 content standards or other standards (e.g., Head Start Child Outcomes, State Performance Standards)?

Yes. If yes, name standards.

No.

**The Georgia Early Learning Standards are aligned with the Head Start Child Outcomes framework, the Pre-K Performance Indicators and the Georgia Department of Education's Kindergarten Performance Standards (e.g. state's K-12 content standards, <http://www.georgiastandards.org/>).**

If developed, are the guidelines aligned with early childhood curricula?

Yes. If yes, **describe**.

No.

Have guidelines been developed for children in the following age groups (check if guidelines have been developed):

Birth to three. Guidelines are included as Attachment 5.2.1

Birth to five. Guidelines are included as Attachment 5.2.1

Five years or older. Guidelines are included as Attachment 5.2.1

If any of your guidelines are available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address (guidelines must still be attached to Plan):

**The new Kindergarten Performance Standards are available to download from the Department of Education's website:**

**<http://www.georgiastandards.org/>.**

**The Pre-K Content Standards are available to download from DECAL's website at:**

**<http://www.dec.state.ga.us/PreK/PrekServices.aspx?Header=5&SubHeader=34&Position=11&HeaderName=Teachers>.**

**The Georgia Early Learning Standards are available to download from DECAL's website at:**

**<http://www.dec.state.ga.us/CCS/CCSServices.aspx?Header=67&SubHeader=&Position=18&HeaderName=Georgia%20Early%20Learning%20Standards>**

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5.2.2 **Domains of Voluntary Early Learning Guidelines.** Do the guidelines for three-to-five-year-olds address language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts?

Yes.

No.

**Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards for four-year olds include seven curricular areas: Language and Literacy Development; Mathematics Development; Science Development; Social Studies Development; Creative Development; Social and Emotional Development, and Health and Physical Development. The Content Standards are used for planning instruction, assessing growth and development, and sharing information with families.**

**The Georgia Early Learning Standards for children ages birth through three-years old are a set of appropriate, attainable learning standards for Georgia's youngest children. At the same time, they are designed to be flexible enough to support children's individual rates of development, approaches to learning and cultural context. The standards address five domains: Physical Development, Emotional and Social Development, Approaches to Learning, Language and Literacy Development, and Cognitive Development.**

Do the guidelines for children three-to-five-year-olds address domains not specifically included in *Good Start, Grow Smart*, such as social/emotional, cognitive, physical, health, creative arts, or other domains?

Yes. If yes, **describe.**

No.

**Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards for four-year olds include domains not specifically included in *Good Start, Grow Smart*: Creative Development; Social and Emotional Development, and Health and Physical Development.**

**The Georgia Early Learning Standards for children ages birth through three-years old include domains not specifically included in *Good Start, Grow Smart*: Emotional and Social Development, Approaches to Learning, and Physical Development.**

**5.2.3 Implementation of Voluntary Early Learning Guidelines. Indicate the strategies the State used or expects to use in implementing its early learning guidelines.**

**Check all that apply:**

- Disseminating materials to practitioners and families
- Developing training curricula
- Partnering with other training entities to deliver training
- Aligning early learning guidelines with licensing, core competencies, and/or quality rating systems
- Other. Please describe:

<b>Indicate</b> the stakeholders that are (or expect to be) actively supporting the implementation of early learning guidelines.	<b>Indicate</b> the programs that mandate or require the use of early learning guidelines.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Publicly funded (or subsidized) child care
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Head Start	<input type="checkbox"/> Head Start
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education/Public pre-k	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education/Public pre-k
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Early Intervention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Early Intervention
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child Care Resource and Referral	<input type="checkbox"/> Child Care Resource and Referral
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Higher Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Higher Education
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parent Associations	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent Associations
<input type="checkbox"/> Other. Please describe:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other. Please describe:

How are (or will) cultural, linguistic and individual variations (be) acknowledged in implementation?

**The Georgia Early Learning Standards (GELS), which are voluntary, adhere to guiding principles that support children's individual development and encourage caregivers to acknowledge and honor children's cultural, linguistic and individual variations. GELS guiding principles are:**

- 1. Young children learn best when all aspects of development are treated as interconnected parts;**
- 2. Young children learn through active play and interaction with others which lay the foundation for school success and lifelong learning;**
- 3. Each child develops at an individual rate and exhibits personal approaches to learning;**

4. **Early learning experiences must support the diverse culture, home language and individual ability of each child;**
5. **Learning and development are influenced by a child's relationship to family, educational setting, community and culture;**
6. **Early learning experiences must strengthen the connections between each family and the early childhood program;**
7. **Quality educational experiences for children are informed by research-based knowledge and practice; and**
8. **Early childhood teachers play a powerful role in the education of the youngest learners and deserve respect and dignity from the community at-large.**

**Similarly, Georgia's Pre-K Program Content Standards support individual development and encourage caregivers to acknowledge and honor children's cultural, linguistic and individual variations. The Pre-K Content Standards help practitioners plan instruction, assess growth and development, and share information with families. Instruction is individualized to meet each child's needs.**

**The standards incorporate strategies to support English language learners. Teachers reinforce language development by observing children and by creating environments that set the stage for language use. The classroom environment provides multicultural literature, pictures, music, and props. Classrooms that support English language learners have appropriate language-rich curriculum that includes parental involvement, supports the emotional development of children, and incorporates multicultural understanding.**

**The standards incorporate strategies to support children with differing abilities. Within each domain in the standards, suggestions are provided for adapting the domain to include and accommodate children with varying ability levels. The Georgia Department of Education is planning to use standards in the early intervention program.**

Materials developed to support implementation of the guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.3**. If these are available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address:

**DECAL is developing activity guides for the Georgia Learning Standards. The two guides, one for teachers and one for parents, will focus on each domain and each age group in the standards. Each section will consist of an overview of the standard, activities and strategies for development, inclusion tips (cultural, linguistic and special needs), and teacher or parent tips. The easy to use, spiral**

**bound activity guides will be widely distributed to parents and child care programs. In addition, the activity guides will be available on the DECAL website to download ([www.decal.state.ga.us](http://www.decal.state.ga.us)).**

**5.2.4 Assessment of Voluntary Early Learning Guidelines.** As applicable, describe the State's plan for:

**(a) Validating the content of the early learning guidelines**

**Representatives from DECAL participated in the development of the Georgia Performance Standards. In June 2006, DECAL revised the Content Standards of Georgia's Pre-K Program to reflect current educational research and align with Georgia's Quality Core Curriculum. By coordinating with the Department of Education, DECAL is aligning the Pre-K Content Standards and the voluntary Early Learning Standards for children birth through three with the Georgia K-12 Performance Standards.**

**The Pre-K Content Standards and the Georgia Early Learning Standards have been reviewed by a national panel of experts in the field of early care and education. Feedback from the national review informed the revision of the Pre-K Content Standards and the Georgia Early Learning Standards.**

**(b) Assessing the effectiveness and/or implementation of the guidelines**

**DECAL consultants monitor and provide technical assistance and training to each Pre-K program. Monitoring visits occur at least twice annually. The Program Quality Assessment (<http://www.decal.state.ga.us/PreK/PrekServices.aspx?Header=5&SubHeader=157&Position=11&HeaderName=Teachers>) is completed annually to monitor compliance with the Pre-K guidelines (<http://www.decal.state.ga.us/PreK/PreKMain.aspx>).**

**The results of the Program Quality Assessment are posted on the Governor's Office of Student Achievement website (<http://www.gaosa.org/>). The assessment provides a "snapshot" of the Pre-K program and assists with the identification of program strengths and areas in need of improvement. The assessment is used to improve and maintain program quality.**

**Embedded within the Program Quality Assessment are indicators that link to the domains in Pre-K Content Standards. For example, the Program Quality Assessment indicators, "The environment and instruction promote language development" and artifacts/evidence for this indicator link to the "Language and Literacy Development" domain in the Pre-K Content Standards.**

- (c) Assessing the progress of children using measures aligned with the guidelines.

**The Pre-K Content Standards are linked to on-going assessments used to document children's progress, guide instruction, and inform parents. Georgia's Pre-K Program is starting statewide implementation of the Georgia Assessment using the Work Sampling System, along with additional school readiness indicators, to assess children's progress, individualize instruction, and increase families' participation in their children's educational experience. Pre-K lead teachers, assistant teachers and directors have received training on the Georgia Pre-K Assessment and use of the assessment is required during the 2007-2008 school year.**

**A year of work led to the selection of the Work Sampling System (WSS), developed by Dr. Samuel J. Meisels and distributed by Pearson Early Learning, as a core component of Georgia's Pre-K Assessment. WSS best combined a measure of all of the domains within the Georgia Pre-K Content Standards and the guidelines established by the advisory committee. WSS was piloted in select Pre-K programs around the state during the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years. Changes were made to the program based on the pilot program results, and Georgia's Pre-K Assessment was implemented statewide during the 2006-2007 school year:**

**<http://www.dec.state.ga.us/PreK/PrekServices.aspx?Header=5&SubHeader=112&Position=11&HeaderName=Teachers>**

- (d) Aligning the guidelines with accountability initiatives

**In cooperation with the National Association of Boards of Education (NASBE), DECAL and the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) have been working to create a seamless education system through the development of a Pre-K through third grade model. This model would build on existing work to further align the curriculum, assessment, and performance standards for children from birth through the third grade. DOE is developing, in collaboration with DECAL, a new kindergarten assessment, the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developmental Skills (GKIDS), that will correlate with the Georgia Pre-K Assessment. Kindergarten teachers will receive training in the Georgia Pre-K Assessment as part of their GKIDS training. DOE and DECAL are exploring options for conducting cross-training between kindergarten and Pre-K teachers.**

**DECAL is implementing a Balanced Scorecard to develop measures that will show how effective DECAL's initiatives are in meeting the stated objectives.**

Written reports of these efforts are included as **Attachment 5.2.4**. If these are available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address (reports must still be attached to Plan):

**Not applicable.**

5.2.5 **State Plans for Professional Development. Indicate** which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts to develop a professional development plan for early childhood providers that includes all the primary sectors: child care, Head Start, and public education. **NOTE: Check ONLY ONE box to best describe the status of your State's professional development plan.**

- Planning.** Indicate whether steps are under way to develop a plan. If so, describe the entities involved in the planning process, time frames for completion and/or implementation, the steps anticipated, and how the plan is expected to support early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.
- Developing.** A plan is being drafted. The draft or planning documents are included as **Attachment 5.2.5**.
- Developed.** A plan has been written but has not yet been implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment 5.2.5**.
- Implementing.** A plan has been written and is now in the process of being implemented, or has been implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment 5.2.5**.
- Revising.** The State previously developed a professional development plan and is now revising that plan, or has revised it since submitting the 06-07 State Plan. The revisions or the revised plan are included as **Attachment 5.2.5**.
- Other (describe):**

**Describe** the progress made by the State in planning, developing, implementing, or revising the professional development plan since the date of submission of the 2006-2007 State Plan.

**DECAL provides an infrastructure for professional development and technical assistance to support high quality, consistent service delivery across the state. Stakeholders representing all sectors of the early care and education community joined DECAL in developing the plan for the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development System. The statewide system includes competencies, a career ladder for early care and education professionals, a professional development registry, and a training approval system. DECAL is implementing the plan. The plan is included as Attachment 5.2.5.**

**The Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development System includes the following components:**

- 1. The Georgia Professional Development Competencies provide a blueprint for individual professional growth as well as guidelines for training and education programs that will meet the needs of professionals in the field. Professional development and training activities must be based on the Georgia Professional Development Competencies. The competencies for early care and education professionals, school-age care professionals, program administrators and trainers have recently been reviewed by a group of practitioners, subject-matter experts, and stakeholders. To ensure that the competencies include recent research in the field of early care and education and support nationally recognized standards of excellence within the field of early childhood care and education and school age care, the competencies are undergoing revision. A draft of the competencies is included as Attachment 5.2.5 and is available on the web at: <https://www.training.decal.state.ga.us/gccta/information.do?page=pd>.**
- 2. The Georgia Child Care Training Approval System promotes quality professional development by ensuring that qualified instructors deliver training based on adult learning principles. The training content is based on current theory and best practices in early childhood care and education and school age care. The Georgia Child Care Training Approval System ([www.training.decal.state.ga.us](http://www.training.decal.state.ga.us)) has been developed with statewide input from individuals involved in training and experts in the field of early care and education and school age care. All professional development and training must be state approved by the Georgia Child Care Training Approval System or state accepted. Biannually, an Advisory Group is convened to evaluate the training system and the processes for approving trainers and training.**
- 3. The Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development Registry is a statewide system that guides, tracks and recognizes the professional growth and development of individuals working in early care and education. The registry will allow practitioners to access through the internet an on-going transcript of their professional development and be able to identify their training needs based on the level of professional development they have achieved. Once fully implemented, the registry will allow DECAL to identify workforce characteristics and training needs in order to**

effectively plan and strategically fund professional development activities. The registry allows practitioners to submit information by mail or to enter information on-line at: <https://www.training.decal.state.ga.us/pdr/welcome.do>.

4. The Georgia Technical Assistance System maximizes technical assistance investments and resources, provides a coordinated technical assistance delivery system, and establishes professional standards for technical assistance consultants in order to create and sustain positive change in all early care and education and school age programs. The *Art of Technical Assistance* training provides the framework for technical assistance as an on-going, customized process that enables programs to achieve measurable and sustainable results. The process is based upon mutually agreed upon strengths, needs, goals and diverse strategies. To standardize and promote high-quality technical assistance services, consultants providing technical assistance through child care resource and referral agencies, and through Quality Initiatives contracts with DECAL must complete the *Art of Technical Assistance* training. Similarly, DECAL consultants in Child Care Services, Pre-K, Nutrition and the Standards of Care divisions and programs have completed this intensive training.

If your State has developed a plan for professional development, does the plan include (Check EITHER yes or no for each item):

	Yes	No
Specific goals or desired outcomes	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
A link to Early Learning Guidelines	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuum of training and education to form a career path	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulation from one type of training to the next	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance through approval of trainers	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance through approval of training content	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
A system to track practitioners' training	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment or evaluation of training effectiveness	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
State Credentials – Please state for which roles (e.g. infant and toddler credential, directors' credential, etc.)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialized strategies to reach family, friend and neighbor caregivers	X	<input type="checkbox"/>

For each **Yes** response, **reference** the page(s) in the plan and briefly **describe**.

Specific goals and desired outcomes:

**The plan has been developed and it includes timelines for implementation. The purpose of the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development System is to support practitioners in the field of early care and education by providing quality professional development experiences. The goal of the system: Practitioners are highly qualified professionals supported by an effective professional development system. The outcome will be a comprehensive statewide workforce development system for early care and education that will lead to increased credentials of providers. (Refer to page 1 of the plan.)**

A link to early learning guidelines:

**Georgia Professional Development System is based upon competencies for early care and education professionals, school-age care professionals, program administrators and trainers. The Early Childhood Educator-3 includes competencies that support intellectual competence specifically supporting early language, pre-reading skills and math concepts. The plan also incorporates the state's Pre-K Content Standards for four-year olds as well as the voluntary Early Learning Standards for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers through age three years.**

Continuum of training and education to form a career path:

**All competencies have been reviewed to designate beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of competencies in each area. In addition, nine levels of professional development have been delineated. These levels are based on education and experience providing multiple entry points and career progressions for professionals. (Refer to page 1 of the plan.)**

Articulation from one type of training to the next:

**The Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE), through a system of 34 technical colleges, 31 branch campuses, as well as technical programs at four university system institutions, provides a variety of programs for early care and education professionals. There are associate's degree and diploma programs in Early Childhood Care and Education and Pre-School Care and Education**

and technical certificate of credit programs in Child Development Associate, Child Development Specialist, Early Childhood Exceptionalities, Early Childhood Program Administrator, and School Age and Youth Care. The DTAE curriculum and the bachelors-level Birth-Age 5 certification program approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission have been aligned through an initiative funded by DECAL. Articulation agreements that build on the work at the technical colleges have been developed. As a result of this initiative, at least one university accepts for transfer the associate's degree hours from DTAE to the university's Early Care and Education and Early Childhood-Special Education bachelors program.

In addition, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) convened a Teacher Preparation Consortium for children birth to age five. The goals of the consortium are to develop the outline and delivery models for the program, consistent with the new PSC certification standards and aligned with the new curriculum standards developed by DECAL, and to lay out a timeline for start-up of a full complement of baccalaureate programs as well as an articulation agreement with DTAE. (Refer to page 1 of the plan.)

Early care and education professionals may access Georgia's HOPE Scholarship and HOPE Grant programs ([www.gsfc.org](http://www.gsfc.org) or <http://gacollege411.org/>) that offer forgivable loans and grants for tuition and other educational expenses for students to attend colleges and technical schools. All Georgia residents are eligible for the HOPE Grant for up to 63 semester or 95 quarter hours of study toward a certificate or diploma at public institutions regardless of high school graduation date or grade point average. To qualify for HOPE Grant funding, the certificate or diploma program must be approved by the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education or be a comparable program of study approved by the Board of Regents. The grant provides full tuition, HOPE-approved mandatory fees, and a book allowance of up to \$300 per academic year at public institutions. Full-time enrollment is not required, but students must be making satisfactory academic progress to maintain eligibility. The HOPE Grants and HOPE Scholarships are funded by the Georgia Lottery for Education.

Quality assurance through approval of trainers:

To become state approved, trainers must meet educational requirements, have experience in the field of early care and education

**and have knowledge of adult learning principles. The trainer completes and submits the Trainer Qualifications Application with a resume, transcripts, and letters of recommendation, prior to being approved to conduct trainings. The University of Georgia manages the Training Approval System on behalf of DECAL. (Refer to page 1 of the plan.)**

Quality assurance through approval of training content:

**Once state-approved, the trainer completes and submits the Training Approval Application, the training content outline, the instructional plan including handouts, copies of transparencies, etc. for each training requiring approval. The Training Approval Coordinator reviews these materials to determine if they meet the criteria for approval. Since topic areas related to early childhood care and education may require knowledge and expertise beyond that of the Training Approval Coordinator, a diverse panel of experts in child development, early childhood education, special education, and related fields has been established to review training applications and ensure that content is accurate and based on sound theories and principles of child development and child care. When training is submitted for approval/renewal, the trainer's qualifications are audited and the file is updated as needed. (Refer to page 1 of the plan.)**

**Trainings are approved for a period of five years. At any point, should the content be altered, revised or changed in any way, the training must be submitted for renewal.**

A system to track practitioners' training:

**The Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development Registry guides, tracks and recognizes the professional growth and development of individuals working in early care and education. Teachers, assistant teachers, administrators, family-based providers, trainers, consultants, and technical assistance providers may use the registry. Professionals may participate in the registry by completing information on line or submitting information via mail. (Refer to page 1 of the plan.)**

Assessment or evaluation of training effectiveness:

**Staff members from the Training Approval System at the University of Georgia monitor approximately 30 state-approved trainings annually for quality assurance. Trainings to be monitored are**

**randomly selected or may be selected if a complaint is received. The staff member sends a letter to the trainer to announce that a monitoring visit will occur. A monitoring tool is completed during the visit. At the end of the training, the staff member debriefs the trainer and provides technical assistance.**

State credentials- Please state for which roles (e.g. infant and toddler credential, directors' credential, etc.

**The Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE) offers Technical Certificates of Credit for individuals who have completed 21-35 hours of post-secondary education at one of the technical colleges. The following Technical Certificates of Credit are available: Child Development Associate I, Child Development Associate II, Child Development Specialist, Early Childhood Care and Education Assistant, Early Childhood Exceptionalities, Early Childhood Program Administrator, and School Age and Youth Care.**

**Through previous CCDF grants, many of the courses required for these Technical Certificates of Credit programs are available on-line; for example, all courses for the Child Development Associate I credential are available on-line. This two-quarter sequence of courses is designed to provide the formal training needed for early care and education professionals to apply for the CDA credential from the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition.**

Specialized strategies to reach family, friend and neighbor caregivers:

**The child care resource and referral agencies collaborate with local county DFCS to identify informal providers who receive child care subsidies through the CAPS program. The CCR&Rs mail newsletters and information about programs and services and furnish training to informal child care providers. Informal providers are encouraged to use the resource rooms and lending libraries at the CCR&Rs. The CCR&Rs assist any of these individuals who are seeking to register to operate a family day care home. CCR&Rs work with the informal providers who are interested in obtaining registration from DECAL by offering technical assistance and start-up funding, if available.**

**Informal providers who care for children subsidized by the DHR CAPS program are monitored DECAL. The DECAL consultants link the informal caregivers to the Child and Adult Care Food Program sponsors and the local CCR&Rs. The consultants explain the CAPS annual training requirements. Informal providers must complete eight clock-hours of state-approved training annually, which they may receive from the CCR&Rs.**

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For each **No** response, **indicate** any plans the Lead Agency has to incorporate these components.

**Not applicable.**

Are the professional development opportunities described in the plan available:

**Note: Check either yes or no for each item):**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Statewide	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Center-based Child Care Providers	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Group Home Providers	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Family Home Providers	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To In-Home Providers	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe):	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Describe** how the plan addresses early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development.

**The Georgia Professional Development System is based on competencies for early care and education professionals, school-age care professionals, program administrators and trainers. The Early Childhood Educator-3 includes competencies that support intellectual competence specifically supporting early language, pre-reading skills and math concepts. The plan also incorporates the state's Pre-K Content Standards for four-year olds as well as the voluntary Early Learning Standards for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers through age three years.**

Are program or provider-level incentives offered to encourage provider training and education?

**X** Yes. **Describe**, including any connections between the incentives and training relating to early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.

**Both the SCHOLARSHIPS and INCENTIVES programs assist child care professionals working with children ages birth to five years to increase their education in early childhood education or child development by attending Georgia's technical colleges, colleges or universities. The Board of Regents of the University System of**

**Georgia and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) have convened a Teacher Preparation Consortium for children birth to age five. The goals of the consortium are to develop the outline and delivery models for the program, consistent with the new PSC certification standards and aligned with the new curriculum standards developed by DECAL and to lay out a timeline for start-up of a full complement of baccalaureate programs as well as an articulation agreement with DTAE.**

**The SCHOLARSHIPS program assists early care and education professionals with tuition and mandatory fees and provides a support stipend directly to them as they pursue credentials or degrees in early childhood education or child development. The INCENTIVES program supplements the compensation of early care and education professionals to improve the professional qualifications for all staff working with children ages birth to five years and to reduce turnover in the workforce. DECAL oversees these programs.**

- No. If no, **describe** any plans to offer incentives to encourage provider training and education, including any connections between the incentives and training relating to early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts?

As applicable, does the State assess the effectiveness of its professional development plan, including the achievement of any specified goals or desired outcomes?

- Yes. **Describe** how the professional development plan's effectiveness/goal is assessed.
- No. **Describe** any plans to include assessments of the professional development plan's effectiveness/goal achievement.

**DECAL is implementing the professional development plan and an evaluation of the professional development system is integrated with the Balanced Scorecard, the Quality Systems Indicator Committee, etc. Evaluations for individual system components are planned and outlined below.**

Does the State assess the effectiveness of specific professional development initiatives or components?

- Yes. **Describe** how specific professional development initiatives or components' effectiveness is assessed.

- **Georgia Child Care Training Approval System**

The Georgia Child Care Training Approval System promotes quality professional development by ensuring that qualified instructors deliver training based on adult learning principles. An advisory group is convened bi-annually to evaluate the training system and the processes for approving trainers and training.

- **Technical Assistance**

In the fall of 2006, DECAL designed a three to five year evaluation plan that will measure the short-term and long-term impacts in the early childhood education profession of the technical assistance provided by consultants in the field who have completed *The Art of Technical Assistance* and who have offered technical assistance to child care programs. Thus far, the evaluation plan includes the implementation of a knowledge assessment tool, submission of a portfolio by those providing technical assistance. Furthermore, a tool using both quantitative and qualitative measures will be developed to gauge the impact of the technical assistance on individual early childhood education programs. A copy of the plan is included as Attachment 5.2.5.

- **SCHOLARSHIPS and INCENTIVES**

Extensive data is gathered and maintained about the early care and education professionals who participate in the SCHOLARSHIPS and/or INCENTIVES programs. The annual report outlines the programs' purposes and goals and summarizes data about program participation, trends, educational progress, educational completion, program retention and compensation. A copy of the report for 2006 is included as Attachment 5.1.2 and may be downloaded at [www.caresolutions.com](http://www.caresolutions.com).

- No. **Describe** any plans to include assessments of specific professional development initiatives or components' effectiveness.

As applicable, does (or will) the State use assessment to help shape or revise its professional development plan?

- Yes. **Describe** how assessment informs the professional development plan.

- No. **Describe** any plans to include assessment to inform the professional development plan.

**DECAL is implementing the professional development plan and an evaluation of the professional development system is integrated with the Balanced Scorecard, the Quality Systems Indicator Committee, etc. Evaluations for individual system components are planned.**

**PART 6  
HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS**

*(Only the 50 States and the District of Columbia complete Part 6.)*

The National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care (NRCHSCC) of DHHS's Maternal and Child Health Bureau supports a comprehensive, current, on-line listing of the licensing and regulatory requirements for child care in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. In lieu of requiring a State Lead Agency to provide information that is already publicly available, ACF accepts this compilation as accurately reflecting the States' licensing requirements. The listing, which is maintained by the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center School of Nursing, is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/>.

**6.1 Health and Safety Requirements for Center-Based Providers** (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, §98.16(j))

- 6.1.1 Are all center-based providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation?

Yes. Answer 6.1.2, skip 6.1.3, and go to 6.2.

No. **Describe** which center-based providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.1.2 and 6.1.3.

- 6.1.2 Have center licensing requirements as relates to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2)&(3))

Yes, and the changes are as follows:

No.

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6.1.3 For center-based care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

**Not Applicable**

**6.2 Health and Safety Requirements for Group Home Providers** (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.2.1 Are all group home providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation? If:

Yes. Answer 6.2.2, skip 6.2.3, and go to 6.3.

No. **Describe** which group home providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.2.2 and 6.2.3.

6.2.2 Have group home licensing requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

Yes, and the changes are as follows:

No.

6.2.2 For group home care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

**Not Applicable**

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**6.3 Health and Safety Requirements for Family Providers** (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.3.1 Are all family child care providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation? If:

Yes. Answer 6.3.2, skip 6.3.3, and go to 6.4.

No. **Describe** which family child care providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.3.2 and 6.3.3.

6.3.2 Have family child care provider requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

Yes, and the changes are as follows:

No.

6.3.3 For family care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

**Not Applicable**

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**6.4 Health and Safety Requirements for In-Home Providers** (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.4.1 Are all in-home child care providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under the State law reflected in the NRCHSCC's compilation referenced above?

Yes. Answer 6.4.2, skip 6.4.3, and go to 6.5.

No. **Describe** which in-home child care providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.4.2 and 6.4.3.

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**Informal providers are not legally required to be licensed or registered with DECAL.**

**There are two types of informal providers:**

1. ***Relative providers* - child(ren)'s aunts, uncles, grandparents, great-grandparents, or older siblings. These providers may provide child care services in the child's home or in the relative's home. Relative providers may keep up to six children who are related to them for pay without registering with DECAL.**
2. ***Non-relative providers* - child care providers who keep one or two children, who are not related to them, for pay. Non-relative providers must provide care outside of the child's home. Non-relative providers must register with DECAL if they care for more than two children for pay.**

**Informal providers are monitored for health and safety compliance within six to eight weeks of initial enrollment with the county and thereafter as part of a 10% random sample group.**

- 6.4.2 Have in-home health and safety requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

Yes, and the changes are as follows:

No.

- 6.4.3 For in-home care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)

**Parents are required to have their child's immunizations current. Caseworkers verify immunizations status at the time they determine the family's eligibility for child care services if the child is not enrolled in school or another setting that verifies immunization status. DECAL monitors all newly enrolled in-home providers. A 20% sample of existing providers is monitored annually. Monitors share information regarding Georgia's immunization law, as well as other health and safety information with providers at this visit.**

- Building and physical premises safety

**DECAL monitors in-home providers to ensure they meet requirements of having a working smoke detector and a working fire extinguisher in the place where they provide care. Additionally, information related to fire drills, proper storage of poisons, guns, matches, etc., covered outlets, safe outdoor play area, covered fireplaces, overall clean and safe area are evaluated and discussed during the monitoring visit.**

- Health and safety training

**In-home providers are required to complete eight hours of child care related health and safety training during the first six months of each enrollment period. In-home providers may attend health and safety training offered by child care resource and referral agencies, community based agencies, technical schools, hospitals, county extension agencies, Head Start, etc. In-home providers who fail to meet the requirements are dismissed from the program.**

### **6.5 Exemptions to Health and Safety Requirements**

At Lead Agency option, the following relatives: grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, or siblings (who live in a separate residence from the child in care) may be exempted from health and safety requirements. (658P(4)(B), §98.41(a)(1)(ii)(A)) Indicate the Lead Agency's policy regarding these relative providers:

- All** relative providers are subject to the same requirements as described in sections 6.1 - 6.4 above, as appropriate; there are **no exemptions** for relatives or different requirements for them.
- All** relative providers are **exempt** from all health and safety requirements.
- Some or all** relative providers are subject to different health and safety requirements from those described in sections 6.1 - 6.4. The following describes those requirements and identifies the relatives they apply to:

### **6.6 Enforcement of Health and Safety Requirements**

Each Lead Agency is required to certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided comply with all applicable health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(E), §§98.40(a)(2), 98.41(d)) The following is a description of how health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

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- Are child care providers subject to routine unannounced visits (i.e., not specifically for the purpose of complaint investigation or issuance/renewal of a license)?

Yes, and the following indicates the providers subject to routine unannounced visits and the frequency of those visits:

**All family child care homes are visited initially and randomly at 20% thereafter. All follow-up and complaint investigations are unannounced.**

**All child care centers are visited an average of three times a year. Annual licensing inspections by DECAL to licensed child care programs are unannounced. All follow-up and complaint investigations are unannounced. Technical assistance visits to child care centers are typically announced.**

No.

- Are child care providers subject to background checks?

Yes, and the following types of providers are subject to background checks (indicate when such checks are conducted):

**All family child care homes are visited initially and randomly at 20% thereafter. All follow-up and complaint investigations are unannounced.**

**All child care centers are visited an average of three times a year. Annual licensing inspections by DECAL to licensed child care programs are unannounced. All follow-up and complaint investigations are unannounced. Technical assistance visits to child care centers are typically announced.**

No.

- Does the State require that child care providers report serious injuries that occur while a child is in care? ( Serious injuries are defined as injuries requiring medical treatment by a doctor, nurse, dentist, or other medical professional.)

Yes, and the following **describes** the State's reporting requirements and how such injuries are tracked (if applicable):

**Child care providers are required to report, within 24 hours, any serious injury requiring medical care. An incident report**

**is entered in the computer system for tracking. The investigator completes an investigation to determine if there is a rule violation. Serious health and safety violations require a corrective action plan. DECAL staff make follow-up visits to assure compliance.**

No.

- Other methods used to ensure that health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

**Child care providers that participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) are reviewed to ensure that the participant is operating the program properly and to provide technical assistance as needed. This review is an analysis of the provider's compliance with program rules and regulations. A corrective action plan will be developed to address any program violations discovered during the course of the review. In addition to scheduled reviews, CACFP sponsors or DECAL staff may visit a program participant to provide technical assistance, follow-up on violations discovered in a previous review or conduct an investigation due to a complaint of the program. Program participants who have repeat violations and are unable to correct the deficiencies may be terminated from the program.**

**Child care providers are linked to local agencies that can offer on-site technical assistance to meet standards. The local agencies include child care resource and referral agencies, Child Care Health Consultants, and various technical assistance projects that assist programs working to meet standards.**

## **6.7 Exemptions from Immunization Requirements**

The State assures that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendations for childhood immunizations of the State public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))

The State exempts the following children from immunization (check all that apply):

- Children who are cared for by relatives (defined as grandparents, great grandparents, siblings (if living in a separate residence), aunts and uncles).

- 
- 
- Children who receive care in their own homes.
- Children whose parents object to immunization on religious grounds.
- Children whose medical condition contraindicates immunization.

**PART 7**

**HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS IN THE TERRITORIES**

*Part 7 is not applicable to Georgia*

*(Only the Territories complete Part 7)*

**7.1 Health and Safety Requirements for Center-Based Providers in the Territories** (658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all center-based care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

**7.2 Health and Safety Requirements for Group Home Providers in the Territories** (658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all group home care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

**7.3 Health and Safety Requirements for Family Providers in the Territories** (658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all family child care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety

- 
- Health and safety training

#### **7.4 Health and Safety Requirements for In-Home Providers in the Territories**

(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all in-home care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

#### **7.5 Exemptions to Territorial Health and Safety Requirements**

At Lead Agency option, the following relatives may be exempted from health and safety requirements: grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, or siblings (who live in a separate residence from the child in care). (658P(4)(B), §98.41(a)(1)(ii)(A)). Indicate the Lead Agency's policy regarding these relative providers:

- All relative providers are subject to the same requirements as described in sections 7.1 - 7.4 above, as appropriate; there are **no exemptions** for relatives or different requirements for them.
- All relative providers are **exempt** from all health and safety requirements.
- Some or all** relative providers are subject to **different** health and safety requirements from those described in sections 7.1 - 7.4 and the following describes those different requirements and the relatives they apply to:

#### **7.6 Enforcement of Territorial Health and Safety Requirements**

Each Lead Agency is required to certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided comply with all applicable health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(E), §§98.40(a)(2), 98.41(d)) The following is a description of how Territorial health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

Are child care providers subject to routine unannounced visits (i.e., not specifically for the purpose of complaint investigation or issuance/renewal of a license)?

- Yes, and the following **indicates** the providers subject to routine unannounced visits and the frequency of those visits:
- No.

Are child care providers subject to background checks?

- Yes, and the following types of providers are subject to background checks (indicate when such checks are conducted):
- No.

Does the Territory require that child care providers report serious injuries that occur while a child is in care? ( Serious injuries are defined as injuries requiring medical treatment by a doctor, nurse, dentist, or other medical professional.)

- Yes, and the following **describes** the Territory's reporting requirements and how such injuries are tracked (if applicable):
- No.

Other methods used to ensure that health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

### **7.7 Exemptions from Territorial Immunization Requirements**

The Territory assures that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendations for childhood immunizations of the Territorial public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))

The Territory exempts the following children from immunization (check all that apply):

- Children who are cared for by relatives (defined as grandparents, great grandparents, siblings (if living in a separate residence), aunts and uncles).
- Children who receive care in their own homes.
- Children whose parents object to immunization on religious grounds.
- Children whose medical condition contraindicates immunization.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**PROGRAM ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS**

The Lead Agency, named in Part 1 of this Plan, assures that:

- (1) upon approval, it will have in effect a program that complies with the provisions of the Plan printed herein, and is administered in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 as amended, Section 418 of the Social Security Act, and all other applicable Federal laws and regulations. (658D(b), 658E(a))
- (2) the parent(s) of each eligible child within the State who receives or is offered child care services for which financial assistance is provided is given the option either to enroll such child with a child care provider that has a grant or contract for the provision of the service; or to receive a child care certificate. (658E(c)(2)(A)(i))
- (3) in cases in which the parent(s) elects to enroll the child with a provider that has a grant or contract with the Lead Agency, the child will be enrolled with the eligible provider selected by the parent to the maximum extent practicable. (658E(c)(2)(A)(ii))
- (4) the child care certificate offered to parents shall be of a value commensurate with the subsidy value of child care services provided under a grant or contract. (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii))
- (5) with respect to State and local regulatory requirements, health and safety requirements, payment rates, and registration requirements, State or local rules, procedures or other requirements promulgated for the purpose of the Child Care and Development Fund will not significantly restrict parental choice among categories of care or types of providers. (658E(c)(2)(A), §98.15(p), §98.30(g), §98.40(b)(2), §98.41(b), §98.43(c), §98.45(d))
- (6) that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendation for childhood immunizations of the State public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))
- (7) that CCDF Discretionary funds are used to supplement, not supplant, State general revenue funds for child care assistance for low-income families. (P.L. 109-149)

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The Lead Agency also certifies that:

- (1) it has procedures in place to ensure that providers of child care services for which assistance is provided under the Child Care and Development Fund afford parents unlimited access to their children and to the providers caring for their children during the normal hours of operations and whenever such children are in the care of such providers. (658E(c)(2)(B))
- (2) it maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and makes information regarding such complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C))
- (3) it will collect and disseminate to parents of eligible children and the general public, consumer education information that will promote informed child care choices. (658E(c)(2)(D))
- (4) it has in effect licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided in the State. (658E(c)(2)(E))
- (5) there are in effect within the State (or other area served by the Lead Agency), under State or local law, requirements designed to protect the health and safety of children; these requirements are applicable to child care providers that provide services for which assistance is made available under the Child Care and Development Fund. (658E(c)(2)(E))
- (6) procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided under the Child Care and Development Fund comply with all applicable State or local health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(G))
- (7) payment rates under the Child Care and Development Fund for the provision of child care services are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible children to comparable child care services in the State or sub-State area that are provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive assistance under this program or under any other Federal or State child care assistance programs. (658E(c)(4)(A))

## APPENDIX 2 ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY TERMINOLOGY

For purposes of determining eligibility and priority for CCDF-funded child care services, lead agencies must **define** the following *italicized* terms. (658P, 658E(c)(3)(B))

- *attending* (a job training or educational program; include minimum hours if applicable) - **active participation in an education or training activity. Full time attendance in high school or GED is defined by the agency/institution where the activity is offered. Adults enrolled in other education programs and training activities are required to participate in the activity or a combination of activities an average of 30 hours per week.**
- *in loco parentis* - **adult who has assumed responsibility for the care of a minor child.**
- *job training and educational program* - **state approved activities that lead to obtaining an employment skill. These are: work experience, on-the-job training, job skills training, secondary school or equivalent, job search/job readiness, vocational training, and English as a second language.**
- *physical or mental incapacity* (if the Lead Agency provides such services to children age 13 and older) - **that which prevents, impairs, interferes with, or impedes life activities by placing limitations on an individual's ability to fully engage in skills, such as self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, breathing, mobility, seeing, and self-direction.**
- *protective services* - **social services for children who are maltreated (neglected, abused, or exploited) or who are at risk of maltreatment, or who are in state custody/foster care.**
- *residing with* - **the person needing child care and the children for who care is requested live in the same household.**
- *special needs child* - **a child with a documented physical and or mental condition who is not capable of self care and/or a child who is in foster care with a documented socio-economic need.**
- *very low income* – **at or below 100% of the federal poverty level.**
- *working* (include minimum hours if applicable) - **employment of at least 30 hours per week for all adults in exchange for at least federal minimum wages.**
- Additional terminology related to conditions of eligibility or priority established by the Lead Agency: **Not Applicable.**

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## List of Attachments

Number	Agency	Title
2.1.2	DECAL	Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Draft
2.2	DHR	Public Hearing Comments
3.1.1 A	DHR	Policy Manual
3.1.1 B	DHR	Provider Handbook
3.2 A	DHR	Child Care Subsidy Rates
3.2 B	DHR	Child Care Market Rate Survey
3.3.2	DHR	Definition of Income
3.5.1	DHR	CAPS Sliding Fee Scale
4.1.1 A	DHR	CAPS Application
4.1.1 B	DHR	CAPS Application - Spanish
5.1.2	DECAL	SCHOLARSHIPS and INCENTIVES Programs Report for 2006
5.2.1 A	DECAL	Georgia Early Learning Standards (GELS)
5.2.1 B	DECAL	Pre-K Content Standards
5.2.1 C	DOE	Kindergarten Performance Standards
5.2.5 A	DECAL	State Plan for Professional Development
5.2.5 B	DECAL	Georgia Professional Development Competencies
5.2.5 C	DECAL	Evaluation Plan for <i>The Art of Technical Assistance</i>