



**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**

BRIGHT FROM THE START

2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SE, Suite 754, East Tower, Atlanta, GA 30334
(404) 656-5957

Brian Kemp
Governor

Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner

Dear Child Care Providers and CCR&Rs:

Happy Holidays!

It has been a busy couple of months here at DECAL. When I last wrote to you, our teams were working hard to plan procedural and policy changes to help all providers that receive CAPS funding earn a Quality Rated (QR) star rating by December 31, 2020 (the QR/CAPS 2020 Goal). Among the changes, we have streamlined processes and provided even more incentives for providers. Additionally, we have created stakeholder engagement events to vet our plans with child care programs, our state agency counterparts, advocates, community organizations, and our CCR&R partners.

Together, we've accomplished a lot. Related to stakeholder engagement, we met with all CCR&R staff in late October to review our proposed plans, and collected their ideas and feedback. We have also talked with our Quality Rated Advisory Committee, as well as our Peer Support Network Ambassadors, to get their input prior to implementing major changes. In November, we held two webinars to share information and answer questions from a broad audience of providers and stakeholders. Those webinars have been recorded and are housed on the DECAL website. We then conducted an online survey to continue receiving suggestions. Additionally, we hosted two large meetings which yielded ideas from partners of all types. In December, we held our first 2020 Community Meeting in Tifton; and we plan five more such gatherings around the state during January that will allow us to connect with individuals in each of our six regions. We have posted the common questions that came up in those encounters and the key information we want to share as FAQs on the QR website.

These outreach opportunities have helped to shape the temporary and permanent QR and CAPS policies and procedures we've recently put in place. We have extended the time frame for conducting mandatory and voluntary QR re-rates, unless programs opted out by November 30. With the help of the DECAL IT team, we instituted a cohort-based slot system for scheduling QR portfolio submissions and observations during the four quarters of the 2020 calendar year. This slot system will help us work efficiently with provider-applicants and our CCR&R partners to manage the high workflow volume we anticipate. We also collaborated with our Finance team to create incentives for CAPS providers who register for a slot in 2020 and who earn a 1-, 2-, and 3- star rating. Equally significant, we have established milestone dates after which unrated providers can no longer serve their current list of families with CAPS nor enroll new ones; and we've created a process to help the affected families find and enroll in a star-rated CAPS provider.

Our efforts are already paying off. As I write this, just days before Christmas, 55% of eligible CAPS providers have earned a star rating and 68% of children receiving CAPS scholarships are enrolled in QR programs. I'm also excited to report that since the sign-up period opened on December 1, more than 600 unrated CAPS providers have registered for a cohort slot. We expect that hundreds more will follow in the months ahead.

To further fuel our momentum, we're raising the ante on our marketing and outreach efforts. We've grown our Communications and Outreach team within the Quality Innovations & Partnerships (QIP) Division—the unit formerly known as System Reform—to design strategic messages for providers, families, and more.

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Letter from DECAL's Commissioner (continued)

On the CAPS side of the house, teams are reaching out to unrated CAPS providers, and to families receiving CAPS, so that everyone gets identical messages multiple times both about the milestone deadlines and about the transition and enrollment assistance families will receive. You may also be interested to know that colleagues from DECAL's CCS, Pre-K, QIP, CAPS, and Instructional Supports divisions meet regularly to review the information our CCR&R partners send about areas where more outreach from the agency might help to spur unrated providers to sign up.

As I've said many times, the QR/CAPS 2020 Goal is a mechanism for advancing our mission to ensure that every child, regardless of family income or location, has access to high-quality care. The systems and processes I've just described will furnish crucial supports to every impacted provider and family as we pursue that mission. Thank you for your partnership in this meaningful work.

The holiday season is a time for gratitude and joy. So, in closing, I want to express my deep appreciation to all of you for your tireless, daily efforts over the past year to deliver the highest quality care and education services to children and their families across the state. I also offer warm wishes that you share many joyous moments with those dearest to you in the coming days and throughout the new year.

Sincerely,



Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner

Georgia's SEEDS for Success



DECAL's Inclusion and Behavior Support Services Unit for Early Childhood Education Professionals and Families gives early childhood education professionals and families resources to help them better understand the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of children and reduce challenging behaviors and incidents that lead to suspension and expulsion.

Contact the SEEDS for Success Helpline to access these services:

- Referrals to community resource agencies such as Babies Can't Wait and county preschool special education departments
- Free on-site training and professional coaching on inclusion and social-emotional development
- Coaching and technical assistance on developing inclusive classroom practices and preventing and addressing challenging behavior
- Support in facilitating the behavior intervention planning process
- Help identifying inclusive childcare options

1.833.354.HELP
GEORGIA SEEDS for SUCCESS



2020 CAPS and Quality Rated Letter to Families



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Brian Kemp
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December 20, 2019

Dear CAPS Family,

We are writing to share important updates to the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program that might affect your family. The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) wants to ensure that your child(ren)...and ALL children in Georgia...receive high quality child care. To accomplish this goal, we have set a deadline that all child care providers accepting CAPS scholarships become Quality Rated by December 31, 2020.

What is Quality Rated?

Quality Rated is Georgia's system to determine, improve, and communicate the quality of child care programs. Like rating systems for restaurants and hotels, Quality Rated assigns a 1-, 2-, or 3-star rating to child care programs that meet or exceed minimum state licensing requirements. When child care programs participate in Quality Rated, they show their commitment to improving the quality of care they provide to children and families. Children thrive when in high quality child care. Georgia currently has more than 2,000 Quality Rated child care providers across the state in 155 counties.

To become Quality Rated, a child care provider follows best practices, such as:

- Employing qualified and well-trained teachers
- Providing a safe, healthy, and caring environment
- Offering a curriculum that prepares children for kindergarten
- Focusing on social-emotional development
- Engaging families
- Maintaining a lower teacher-child ratio

In addition to the educational benefits for your child, your family benefits also. CAPS provides a 15% discount to the family fee for each child enrolled in a 1-, 2-, or 3-star Quality Rated program.

To find out if your child care provider is Quality Rated, visit www.qualityrated.org, and use the search feature or call 1-877-ALL-GA-KIDS. If your provider is not star rated, ask them if they are participating in Quality Rated and, if not, if they plan to meet the Quality Rated 2020 deadline.

2020 CAPS and Quality Rated Letter to Families (continued)

Key Dates

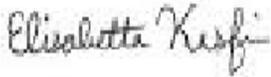
You should be aware of two key dates related to the 2020 deadline.

1. **May 1, 2020:** After this date, families cannot move their child(ren) to a child care provider who has not committed to earning their star rating by the end of 2020. A child care provider demonstrates this commitment by signing up to be evaluated.
2. **January 2, 2021:** If your provider has not received a Quality Rating by the deadline, you will have to choose a Quality Rated provider at your 2021 annual redetermination to continue receiving financial support from CAPS. CAPS program staff will help you find a Quality Rated provider.

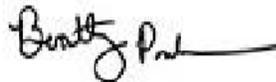
If you have questions about the 2020 Quality Rated deadline or about the CAPS program, complete the Contact Us webform at: <https://caps.decal.ga.gov/en/ContactSupport> or call us at 1833-4GACAPS (1-833-442-2277).

We look forward to continuing to support your child's early education needs.

Sincerely,



Elisabetta Kasfir
Deputy Commissioner
Federal Programs



Bentley Ponder, PhD
Deputy Commissioner
Quality Innovations & Partnerships

South East Region: Quality Rated Endorsements

Coming from educational system as an elementary school teacher to daycare director, this program was very beneficial for breaking down the differences and indicators in the books we use daily for her to comprehend what was now expected of them.

Oma's Learning Center and Daycare, Lowndes

The process has really enlightened my knowledge of child care and I really appreciate the invitation to come on by Jeneine Barlow because otherwise I wouldn't have come on. As far as the program, it has broadened my knowledge about the quality of child care and having Becky as my TA, leading me in the right direction, has been an awesome journey. Now that I know these things, I can implement them into my child care and increase my quality. It has been a pleasure and a joy to be a part of the Quality Rated family.

Jocelyn Robinson—FCC Provider, Chatham

At first it was something different as we worked through the process and finishing it we can see the difference QR has made in our program (for the better). Staff was apprehensive at first but now they are very happy they went through it.

Wee Tot's Academy, Chatham

Did you know over 20,000 people shop for child care and summer camps on DECAL's website every month? If you're a child care provider, update your profile on <https://decalkoala.com/> TODAY to make sure you're putting your best foot forward!

South East Region: Quality Rated Endorsements

My TA empowered, inspired, motivated and cared about me as a person not a number. She modeled simple and easy teaching strategies. I was not sold into the different strategies of how I had taught and interacted with my children in care. I was used to the “Old School.” Cathy Hawes would coach me through the “Old School Way” and add a twist to accomplish the new skills. She never tried to take over my program and process. She would also say, “You are the captain of your educational journey.”

Gloria Williams—FCC Provider, Liberty

We were nervous at first but the TAs were helpers to be the teachers they wanted them to be. We see more consistency in teaching and being a well rounded room. This program is necessary to get guidance to be a well rounded teacher.

Glorified Learners, Lowndes

The handouts and trainings brought out the concepts that were required for us to learn and adapt to for Quality Rated purposes. My staff learned something and I did as well that we can use daily in our center. I appreciate our TA going above and beyond to answer my questions no matter when I called or contacted her.

Tender Years Learning Center # 8, Lowndes

We are very excited about getting Quality Rated and being able to improve our quality of care each day. It was a joy to be with Jessica through out the process.

R & R Group Daycare, Effingham

Stop listening to anything negative other people say about the process and to step up and experience it yourself. Quality Rated helped our children & staff; no one is above learning. We learned and the children learned so much more through the use of materials and staff interaction. Our staff learned new techniques to make children better people.

Janice Boggs—FCC Provider, Chatham

Portfolio and classroom technical assistance was great! We couldn't have done it without you! It helped the children become more verbal going through the process. The teacher/child interactions helped the children feel more comfortable and use language. The children's behavior improved even though visitors are in the classroom.

Windy's Preschool, Chatham

I truly enjoyed the experience and enjoyed working with my people. Jeneine took her time to help with computer paperwork and she helped me to understand why we were completing the time consuming work and it's importance. Our classrooms have grown by materials, experiences and working knowledge of rules and play through learning.

Carol's Kidz Early Care and Learning, Lanier

Our time with our TA was wonderful. She always had great ideas for the classroom and for the teachers. All the information that was given was used in the classrooms and has helped my teachers to expose our students to more language throughout their day in the classroom.

YMCA A.V. Kennedy Learning Center, Ware

The whole QR process is a plus on your center. It takes you to another level on interactions with the children; just a better quality of care overall. It was a good learning experience.

Mickee's Academy, Chatham

This has been a very educational experience for me as well as my babies. My TAs have provided me with the tools to provide a better learning and play environment for my children. I am very grateful to the CCR&R for all their help and patience while going through this process.

Linda Davis—FCC Provider, Glynn

South East Region: Quality Rated Program Recognition



Congratulations to Our Newest Quality Rated Programs!

Sandra D.Berrian—Lowndes
Children's Delight Daycare & Learning Center, Inc.—
Jones
Linda M. Davis—Glynn
Glorified Learning Academy—Lowndes
Hinesville Childcare GA Pre-K & School Age Campus—
Liberty
Kids Crossing—Laurens
Kid's Place Day Care Center—Toombs
Kidz Express, Inc.—Wayne
Learning You and Me Childcare—Chatham
Mickee's Academy—Chatham
Mallory T. Mimmenger—Lowndes
Ella M. Parker—Dodge
R & R Group Day Care—Effingham
Jocelyn M. Robinson—Chatham
Smart Start Learning Center, LLC—Washington
Sweet & Tenderhearted Childcare—Bulloch
Wee Tot's Academy LLC—Chatham
Gloria J. Williams—Liberty
Windy's Preschool—Chatham

Congratulations to Our Quality Rated Programs that Maintained or Increased their Ratings!

Janice T. Boggs—Chatham
Carol's Kidz Early Care and Learning—Lanier
Doreen's Nursery School, Inc.—Chatham
Happy Hollow Christian Academy—Wilkinson
Jones Head Start—Jones
Abigail Jones—Lowndes
Maria L. Jones—Liberty
Kangaroo Pouch Child Development Center, Inc.—
Washington
Kicklighter Academy—Chatham
Carolyn M. Marks—Chatham
Keisha I. Mathis—Lowndes
My Little Darlings Child Care—Chatham
Wonda Nobles-Williams—Glynn
Oma's Learning Center and Daycare—Lowndes
Pierce County Head Start/Early Head Start—Pierce
Svetlana A. Ross—Lowndes
Tender Years Learning Center #8—Lowndes
Ware County Head Start Center—Ware
Wilkinson Head Start—Wilkinson

In December 2016, the DECAL Advisory Committee adopted the following:
*Quality Rated eligible providers must be star rated **by 12/31/2020** in order to continue to receive
Child Care and Parent Services (CAPS) funding.*

The process to become Quality Rated usually takes 15-18 months from the day you start receiving technical assistance from the CCR&R to the day you become rated. However, if you are trying to become Quality Rated in order to maintain your ability to receive CAPS funding, the process will be expedited and you will receive shorter amounts of technical assistance. Your dedication to making the necessary changes to improve your program's quality will determine your star rating.

Contact your CCR&R to get started on your *Quality Rated* journey **TODAY!**

Grant Opportunities and Child Care in the News

Chatham County child care programs currently becoming Quality Rated or not yet pursuing Quality Rated, you have an amazing grant opportunity! This is the first of its kind in the nation!!!

To learn about the Workforce Initiative funds available through Savannah Economic Development Authority and to determine eligibility, please contact Melissa Cole at 912-443-3016.



For news coverage of this grant opportunity, check out the following links!

<http://seda.org/News-Center/Workforce-Initiatives-Fund>

https://fox28media.com/news/local/new-grant-to-fund-childcare-centers-in-chatham-county?fbclid=IwAR0uTYLupkJvupia-G_A9B0ZdYNNr6ahcNdro0ezFG_1_mpqizXMbpgqgkx

<https://www.savannahnow.com/business/20191210/seda-announces-workforce-initiatives-fund>



Glynn County child care programs, your county is the first in Georgia to establish a children's reading foundation!

The Children's Reading Foundation of Georgia was launched this month! Read about it at the following link!

https://thebrunswicknews.com/news/local_news/organization-launches-effort-to-improve-early-literacy/article_1ca25aa8-7bad-5f93-923c-332e88d7a0da.html

Look what is happening for child care programs interested in increasing language and literacy in Laurens County!

The Laurens County School District and the Chamber of Commerce have partnered to ensure that language and literacy materials are provided to child care programs that want to be a part of their campaign to increase school readiness. For more information, contact the Laurens County Chamber of Commerce at (478) 272-5546 and ask about their Quality Rated Child Care Project. Check out the following link to see it all unfold!



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dT393XhtaQ&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR2GDJ2TBdzYmptbQ_r34_xOPAkOxjvzRB_aNVrKlxsKFUk96uy34v-vpE94

Did you know there are almost 100 grant opportunities listed on our website? Check out the link below to see if there are any that meet your needs!

<https://www.ccrrofsoutheastga.org/grant-opportunities-professionals>

Professional Learning Opportunities

We realize that while face-to-face training may be great for some, for others it's difficult to find time in your schedule to attend these learning opportunities. For this reason, we have created some additional professional learning opportunities in various formats for you to try out. Read below to discover some of the various methods we have created for you. See something you like? Watch our training calendar on the website for availability (see page 10 for how to register).

Independent Instruction Courses

These trainings consist of reading and completing assignments on your own time. In these classes, assignments will need to be turned in to obtain a certificate.

Training titles to look for include:

- [Language Development: Listen, Talk and Read](#)
- [Language Development: Math and Science](#)

Hybrid Courses

These trainings can have a combination of learning platforms, including visiting online resource websites, independent readings and assignments, and planning, implementing and assessing improvement projects in participant's classrooms. In these classes, assignments will need to be turned in to obtain a certificate.

- [Identifying and Improving Simple Interactions](#)

Virtual Training Courses

These trainings utilize online learning platforms to bring participants together virtually in real-time for a virtual classroom experience. Participants need camera and audio capabilities to participate.

- [Setting the Stage: Promoting Positive Behaviors](#)
- ["A" is for Access](#)
- [Three P's of Professionalism](#)

We need your help!

Please help us ensure accurate reporting by learning the legal name of the program with which you are employed. When signing in at our trainings, please use this name on the attendance sheets.

Thank you!

For information about starting a Family Child Care and LOMs:

<http://dec.al.ga.gov/CCS/FamilyChildCareLearningHome.aspx>

For information about Child Care Centers and LOMs:

<http://dec.al.ga.gov/CCS/ChildCareLearningCenter.aspx>

Professional Learning Opportunities



YOU ARE INVITED! PLEASE JOIN US!

Upcoming Online Virtual Webinar Trainings

Three P's of Professionalism

Due to the reaching effects of ECE staff behavior and the importance of upholding our field as a true profession, this webinar was written to help early care and education staff realize they can earn the title of "professionals" and continue to effect children and families in a positive manner when they act professionally.

"A" is for Access

Live virtual workshop to help clarify the meaning of accessibility of materials and identify common barriers to accessibility and solutions to ensuring access.

Setting the Stage: Promoting Positive Behaviors

This virtual-based real-time, online training will help providers gain an understanding of factors that promote positive behaviors in children and make plans to set the stage for this environment.

***Each session offers 2 BFTS Approved Training Hours**

***Each session is held from 6:00pm-8:00pm**

***Please note you will need a device (computer, laptop, or mobile device) with internet access to the Zoom website in order to participate in this training. You will also need audio capabilities (through device or you can call in via phone) and video capabilities as well in order to receive credit for these trainings.**

(Webcams on computer or laptop; mobile device permission for video.)

Virtual Training Name	Dates		
Three P's of Professionalism	1/28/20	2/25/20	3/24/20
"A" is for Access	1/21/20	2/20/20	3/12/20
Setting the Stage: Promoting Positive Behaviors	1/22/20	2/18/20	3/23/20

Visit our training calendar at ccrrofsoutheastga.org for registration links and to view additional professional learning opportunities, including face-to-face options.

How to Register for Trainings

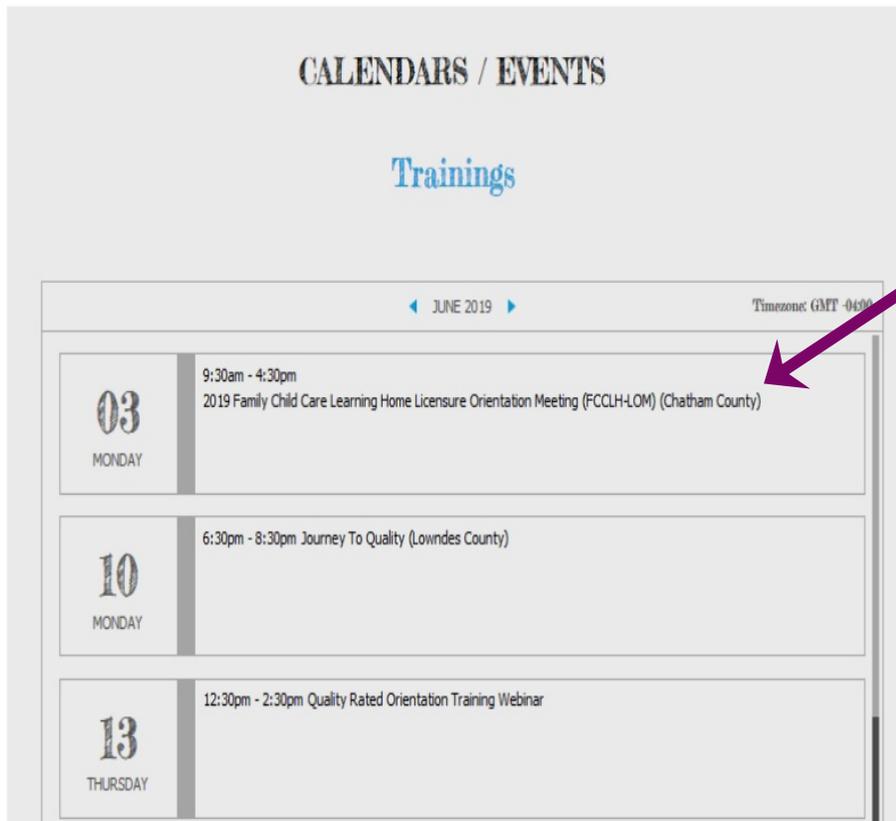
Go to: www.ccrrofsoutheastga.org

On the home page, scroll down until you see the quick menu.



Click on the *Training Calendar* link.

From there, you will be redirected to the *Calendars/ Events* page.



To register for all other trainings, please click on the time and title of the training you are interested in. The details screen will pop up with the link to GaPDS to register for the training.

**Childcare Resource & Referral of Southeast Georgia
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Savannah, GA 31407
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Kristin Goetz Professional Learning Manager 912.443.3381	Monica Natoli PLC Coordinator 912.677.3517	Pam Scalf PLC Coordinator 912.663.0100
Cynthia Akins Technical Assistance Manager 912.655.6682	Jeneine Barlow Technical Assistance Manager 912.704.8192	Jennifer McMichael Technical Assistance Manager 912.659.7454
Allison Wall Technical Assistance Manager 912.433.9577	Mandy Roe Technical Assistance Coordinator 912.663.0137	Sheila Booker Technical Assistance Coordinator 912.433.3307
Linda Reed Technical Assistance Coordinator 912.659.5263	Jessica Boshuizen Technical Assistance Coordinator 912.650.3937	Cindy Beecher Technical Assistance Coordinator 912.663.0218
Linda Taylor Technical Assistance Coordinator 912.433.1116	Cathy Hawes Technical Assistance Coordinator 912.663.1762	Letty Kinslow Technical Assistance Coordinator 912.659.6663
Becky Lehto Technical Assistance Coordinator 912.650.1303	Shelly Lawson Technical Assistance Coordinator 912.650.1777	Rosalind Neal Technical Assistance Coordinator 912.433.0461
Cantina Gandy Technical Assistance Coordinator 912.655.8143		Stephanie Rozier Technical Assistance Coordinator 912.433.0462



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