The Early Childhood Landscape in GEORGIA

OVERVIEW

School readiness is shaped by many factors, each with the power to influence learning and development—both for better and for worse—from the days young children are born. For this reason, policymakers interested in promoting the long-term academic and life success of children must be prepared to consider their needs on a holistic basis—addressing not just access to high-quality early learning environments, but their health, safety, social-emotional development, and the economic and other stressors facing their families. While far from comprehensive, this state data profile is intended to provide a snapshot of both risk and reach. That is: what are the significant risk factors experienced by the children of my state, and how well are services reaching the children and families for whom they are intended?

Number of Children Age 8 and Younger, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 0-8</th>
<th>Total Children, Age 0–8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1 yr</td>
<td>1,208,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 yr</td>
<td>1,203,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 yr</td>
<td>1,203,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 yr</td>
<td>1,203,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 yr</td>
<td>1,203,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 yr</td>
<td>1,203,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 yr</td>
<td>1,203,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 yr</td>
<td>1,203,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 yr</td>
<td>1,203,818</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children with All Available Parents in the Labor Force Age 0–5 (2018) 68%

Children in Poverty* Age 0–5 (2018) 21%

Children in Low-Income Working Families* Age 0–5 (2018) 29%

Children in Poverty, by Race, 2018

- White: 11% (Georgia), 11% (United States)
- Black: 29% (Georgia), 32% (United States)
- Hispanic: 30% (Georgia), 26% (United States)
- Asian/Pac. Islander: 8% (Georgia), 11% (United States)
- American Indian: 31% (Georgia), N/A (United States)
- All: 20% (Georgia), 18% (United States)

*The federal poverty level for a family of four was $24,600. “Low income” is defined as having a family income less than twice the federal poverty level.
INFANT AND TODDLER SUPPORT

The first three years of life are a unique and critical period of development, during which up to 1 million new neural connections are formed in the developing brain each second. Infants and toddlers develop and learn at exponential rates as they explore and engage with the environments and adults around them. In order to best support their health and development, families need access to information and services.

Questions To Consider

Are women and children receiving health care services before and after birth?

Maternal and Child Health Grant

The federal government allocates the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Block Grant to states. Georgia provides additional funding to the MCH program (as shown below).

The state has identified eight national performance measures to focus on:

- Well-Woman Visit
- Risk-Appropriate Perinatal Care
- Breastfeeding
- Developmental Screening
- Physical Activity
- Bullying
- Transition (Children with Special Needs)
- Preventive Dental Visit

Georgia MCH Funds by Source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>$16,870,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>$110,765,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Income</td>
<td>$6,662,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$149,036,298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Georgia MCH 2017 Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION SERVED</th>
<th>INDIVIDUALS SERVED</th>
<th>2017 EXPENDITURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant Women</td>
<td>14,353</td>
<td>$23,237,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants</td>
<td>533,440</td>
<td>$95,284,033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (Age 1-22)</td>
<td>1,392,801</td>
<td>$128,016,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with Special Needs</td>
<td>8,664</td>
<td>$30,453,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$5,611,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,949,258</td>
<td>$282,602,830</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prenatal Care and Birth Outcome, By Race

Receiving appropriate prenatal care helps reduce the likelihood of negative birth outcomes, including low birthweight and premature births, which are often linked to developmental delays and elevated rates of early school failure. Furthermore, births to teenage mothers increase risk for both children (increasing the likelihood of being born at a low birthweight and infant mortality) and their mothers (who are less likely to graduate from high school, maintain steady employment).

Often these outcomes vary significantly across demographic groups, which results in systematic inequities in infant and maternal health and well-being.

Births to Women Receiving Late or No Prenatal Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian/Pac. Islander</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia United States</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teen Births

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian/Pac. Islander</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia United States</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Low Birthweight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian/Pac. Islander</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia United States</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Paid Family Leave

Paid family leave policies support employees requiring time off to bond with a newborn baby, adopted or foster child – or to care for a seriously ill family member. **Georgia** does not have a statewide paid family leave policy.

States with Paid Family Leave Policies

Nine states (reflected on the map below) have implemented universal paid family leave policies, while eight additional states have enacted paid family leave provisions for state employees only. These are: Arkansas, Delaware, Indiana, Kansas, New Mexico, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th># Weeks</th>
<th>Benefit (% Income)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Up to 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Up to 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Up to 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Up To 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJ</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Up to 66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Up to 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>2023</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Up to 100%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Up to 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Up to 90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Up to 100%, not to exceed 120% of state average weekly wage

Home Visiting

Home visiting is a type of service targeted to expectant parents and parents with children ages 0-5 to support healthy child development. Though models and programs vary, home visits typically allow trained experts to provide services, share best practices, and connect families to other resources all within the home setting.

**Georgia** uses the following evidence-based models for home visiting programs:

- Early Head Start Home-Based Option
- Healthy Families America
- Nurse-Family Partnership
- Parents as Teachers

[VIEW DATA RESOURCE]
Price and Affordability of Infant Care

Licensed child care is delivered in both center-based and home-based settings. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this care is affordable if it costs no more than 10 percent of a family’s income, with efforts underway in some states to ensure subsidized child care costs are capped at no more than 7 percent.

- **Average Annual Price of Infant Care in Georgia**: $7,644
- **Infant Care Price as a Share of Median Family Income in Georgia**: 14%
- **Families in Georgia that can Afford Infant Care (10% standard)**: 38%

Federal Expenditures on Infants and Toddlers

While many states have invested heavily in prekindergarten programs serving three- and four-year-olds, services to children aged zero to three are most commonly underwritten through a pair of federal programs: the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), a federal block grant that supports both child care subsidies and quality enhancement initiatives, and Early Head Start (EHS). Compared to preschool programs for older children, the infant and toddler slots funded by these programs are typically available to fewer children. CCDF subsidies for infants and toddlers often reimburse providers for less than the actual cost of care.

**CCDF & EHS | Number of Children Served 0-2**

- CCDF: 15,631
- EHS: 4,402

**CCDF | Number of Children Served By Age**

- Ages 0: 2,695
- Ages 1: 5,929
- Ages 2: 7,007

**CCDF | Average Per Child Expenditure, Ages 0-2**

- $4,555

**EHS | Average Per Child Expenditure, Ages 0-2**

- $12,537

**Percentage of All Children Ages 0-2 Receiving CCDF Subsidy Supports**

- 4.0%

**Percentage of All Children Ages 0-2 Receiving Early Head Start Services**

- 1.1%

*Head Start programming includes both the Head Start preschool program for children ages three and four and Early Head Start, which serves children under three. The figures above depict enrollment and investment in Early Head Start.*

**Questions To Consider**

- Are state funds used to supplement federal investments in children aged birth to three?
- Does your state draw down its full share of CCDF funding? Are Early Head Start services aligned with the state’s child care regulations and early learning guidelines?
- Are services within the state’s CCDF-funded programming prioritized for use by infants and toddlers?
- Are mechanisms in place to support the successful transition of Early Head Start students into either Head Start preschool services or state prekindergarten?
- Is CCDF spending on infants and toddlers sufficient to address the higher costs of their care?
At ages three and four, children may be eligible to enroll in one or more types of publicly-funded pre-kindergarten. This includes state-funded pre-K, often delivered in both public and private settings, and Head Start, a federally-funded preschool program operated by local grantees. State funded pre-K programs generally incorporate child eligibility and provider quality requirements. These programs are typically not compulsory.

**Questions To Consider**

How many children are attending pre-K, public or private?

Are certain populations more likely to attend pre-K?

How expensive is child care for 4-year-olds?

Do the wages depicted for the early childhood workforce permit for the hiring and retention of highly-qualified early childhood educators?

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### Pre-Kindergarten Trends Within Publicly Funded Programs

- **8%** 3- and 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in Head Start Program (Estimated **20,063** children)
- **30%** 3- and 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in State Funded Pre-K Program (Estimated **80,536** children)

### Parent-Reported Percentage of 3- and 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in Any Type of Preschool Program

*Including Both Public Programs and Private Programs Supported by Parent Tuition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>54.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following group(s) have enrollment rates in preschool programs that are below the state average: Hispanic

### Wages and Price

- **$19,660** Median Annual Wage Child Care Worker (2018)
- **$28,750** Median Annual Wage Preschool Teacher (2018)
- **$7,132** Average Annual Price of Child Care for 4-Year-Old (2018)

- **55%** Median Wage for Child Care Worker as Percent of State Median Income (2018)
- **80%** Median Wage for Preschool Teacher as Percent of State Median Income (2018)
# Pre-Kindergarten Policy

**GEORGIA’S PRE-K PROGRAM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCESS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Income - Eligibility</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Risk Factors - Eligibility</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Age</td>
<td>4 by September 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required District Participation</td>
<td>Not required, but funding is awarded on a competitive basis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNDING</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Agency</td>
<td>State Office of School Readiness or Early Childhood: Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Spending (2016-17)</td>
<td>$355,281,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds by Source</td>
<td>State: $355,281,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated Revenue Source for State Funds?</td>
<td>Yes: Lottery Revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agencies Eligible to Receive Funding</td>
<td>Public schools, Head Start, Private agencies, Faith-based centers, University and Technical Schools, Military Bases, Charter Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permitted Subcontracting Agencies</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Daily Hours</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Days Per Week</td>
<td>5 days per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Operating Schedule</td>
<td>School year or academic year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Class Size</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Screenings</td>
<td>Vision; Hearing; Height/weight/ BMI; Immunizations; Dental</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### THREE- AND FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

#### Questions To Consider

**Are pre-K standards aligned with goals of the K-12 system?**

**Does my state require pre-K teachers to have a certain degree? If so, what?**

**Has my state developed a system to assess the quality of pre-K and child care providers? Is participation mandatory for state pre-K programs?**

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#### GEORGIA’S PRE-K PROGRAM – CONTINUED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARDS</th>
<th>Early Learning and Development Standards</th>
<th>Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Revised</td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment with College and Career Ready Standards for Early Grades</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATORS</th>
<th>Teacher Degree</th>
<th>BA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required Specialization in ECE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Elementary Education, Preschool Special Education, Special Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Teacher Degree</td>
<td>CDA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VIEW DATA RESOURCE

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**Quality Ratings of Child Care Programs**

In recent years, many states have designed Quality Ratings and Improvement Systems (QRIS) to provide parents with information about the quality of individual child care providers. The QRIS rating is often a reflection of various measures such as teacher-child interactions, classroom environment, family engagement, and staff educational attainment. Typically voluntary, QRIS systems are meant to help improve the quality of child care providers and help families choose the right provider for their children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCOUNTABILITY</th>
<th>Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)</th>
<th>Quality Rated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provider Participation</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Licensed center-based programs, Head Start/Early Head Start, Licensed family child care, School-operated early childhood programs, Military Child Care Programs</td>
<td>Programs with children receiving CCDF subsidies (by Programs with children receiving CCDF subsidies Programs with children receiving CCDF subsidies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Levels</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiered Reimbursement</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Financial Incentive</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Child Care Providers By QRIS Level**

- Level 1: 486
- Level 2: 662
- Level 3: 253
- Unrated: 1,811

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### FIVE- TO EIGHT-YEAR-OLDS

At age five, children are eligible to begin kindergarten—generally considered the start to their formal education. In these early grades, there is a strong focus on learning to read due to research indicating that 3rd-grade literacy is crucial for success in school and life.

### Questions To Consider

- Are districts required to offer full-day kindergarten?

### At what age are children eligible to attend school? At what age is attendance compulsory?

### How are children assessed in grades K-3? What are assessment results used for?

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### K–3 Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K–3 COMPONENT</th>
<th>GEORGIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory Age of Attendance¹</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Entrance Age¹</td>
<td>5 by 9/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-Required Full-Day Kindergarten¹</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-Required Half-Day Kindergarten¹</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Kindergarten Attendance¹</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Kindergarten Entrance Assessment (KEA)²</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEA Results Use²</td>
<td>Not specified in statute, rules or regulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Language Learner (DLL) Assessment</td>
<td>ACCESS for ELLS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of States Using DLL Assessment</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3⁴-Grade Reading Retention Law²</td>
<td>Third grade retention is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education License Required for Kindergarten Teachers³</td>
<td>Educator preparation rules include separate content standards for approving endorsement programs that prepare individuals to work and teach children from birth through kindergarten and from grades P-5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science of Reading Test Required for Elementary Teachers³</td>
<td>Partially. Teachers must pass a test that includes multiple topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-to-Student Ratio Requirement²</td>
<td>1:15 for Kindergarten. 1:17 for grades 1-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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¹ VIEW DATA RESOURCE
² VIEW DATA RESOURCE
³ VIEW DATA RESOURCE
⁴ VIEW DATA RESOURCE