

primer

prim·er | \ 'pri-mər, n.

1. a small book for teaching children
2. a small introductory book on a subject
3. a short informative piece of writing

THE WHOLE CHILD PRIMER

June 2019 Edition

About Voices for Georgia's Children

Voices for Georgia's Children is the only comprehensive policy and advocacy organization committed to improving the lives of Georgia's children. Through research and analysis, public education, convening and engagement with state decision-makers, Voices seeks to help all children thrive. Our work is framed in a holistic "whole child" perspective that allows us to identify how different policies impact children and to propose solutions that benefit children on multiple levels.



For more information, visit
www.georgiavoices.org.



For more information, visit
www.afterschoolga.org.

About Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network

The Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) is a public-private collaborative that envisions a day when all communities in Georgia have the resources to provide exceptional afterschool programming. Our mission is to advance, connect, and support quality afterschool programs to promote the success of children and youth throughout Georgia.

Dear Policymaker, Child Advocate, and Friend,

Voices for Georgia's Children and the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network have teamed up to bring to you *The Whole Child Primer*, a guide for child policy in Georgia. While this is by *no means comprehensive*, we hope it is a good introduction to child policy: where Georgia stands; what we are doing that works well; what to be aware of when designing laws, rules, regulations, and funding for children and youth; and where we want to go to help our kids succeed. Please note that we have not included much detail on federal policy at this point, though if asked, we are happy to create an addendum.

We hope you find this helpful. If you would like more information or have other thoughts or queries about anything herein, please don't hesitate to contact us!

Most sincerely,

Erica, Katie, Polly, and Melissa

[Your advocates for the next generation!](#)

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Every child in Georgia can thrive when he or she is safe, healthy, educated, connected to family and community, and prepared to be a productive and responsible adult.

Policy development encompasses both the changing and development of laws and rules, and determining what activities within government and for its constituencies are funded. It is important to remember, also, that children of Georgia live in both urban and rural areas, and so, policies created for kids and their families should take both equitable access and geography into account.

In the following pages, we will talk about the areas that affect our children the most: physical and mental health; school discipline and juvenile justice; protection and safety; early childhood development, care, and learning; afterschool and summer learning; and the importance of every child in Georgia being counted in the 2020 census.

When Considering Child Policy

Ask “Is it good for children and youth?” with each policy consideration.

Determine and support policy and investments based on the best data available.

Work to eliminate inequitable treatment of children based on culture, religion, race, and gender.

Consider both adults and families when creating policies. (This is commonly referred to as a “Two-Gen” approach.)



2.5 million children live in the state of Georgia.^[1]

23% of children in Georgia were living at or below the federal poverty level in 2016 (\$24,300 per year for a family of four).^[2,3]

35% of children in Georgia lived in single-parent families in 2016.^[4]

Recommendation for the Executive Branch

Expand the current Children’s Cabinet by creating a governor’s cabinet-level position to oversee operations of the cabinet, expand its mission to include multiple generation goals, and, to that point, rename it the Georgia Family Cabinet.

Physical Health

What to Strive For

Making sure that every child in our state has access to high-quality medical and dental care in order to prevent illness and injury, assess needs, address needs, and improve the chances of a long and successful life.

THE FACTS

Nearly **200,000** Georgia children under age 19 lack health insurance.^[5]

63 of Georgia's 159 counties did not have a pediatrician in 2015.^[6]

Almost **16%** of Georgia's children did not see a dentist in 2016.^[7]

Asthma and **poor oral health** are among the leading causes of school absenteeism.^[8, 9]

1 in 5 (nearly 523,500) children in Georgia were food insecure in 2016.^[10]

Almost **one-third** of adolescents in Georgia are overweight or obese.^[11]

Over **870,000** Georgia kids participated in free or reduced-price lunch in the 2016-2017 school year, but only about **1 in 5** of those kids participated in summer meals.^[12]

More than **16%** of Georgia 2-year olds lacked the recommended immunizations in 2017.^[13]

There were more than **2,700** teen pregnancies (ages 10-17) in Georgia in 2017.^[14]

Some Things to Think About

Parents and caregivers frequently struggle to attain insurance coverage, whether public or private, and find providers who accept their insurance. Furthermore, families struggle to get children to providers. Barriers such as transportation and distance to care are significant in most of the state. When coupled with the lack of broadband connectivity, inconsistent cellphone coverage, low health literacy, and poverty, the well-being of our children and youth is at risk each and every day.

It is helpful to note that the Georgia General Assembly, including the House Rural Development Council, is actively working to address issues that hinder progress in rural areas of our state. Policy and recommendations are in process to improve the success of various communities' growth and well-being, in the areas of education, healthcare, infrastructure, and industry, among others. This work, while perhaps not directed solely at children, will serve to support advancement of all child policy.

What Works Now

In 2016, Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids®, funded by the federal Children's Health Insurance Program, insured 1.3 million children and youth in the state. The combination of state and federal funding for these programs is key to preventing more acute needs from developing. In fact, low-income (nondisabled) children are the majority of the population that Medicaid serves, but cost only a fraction of the overall amount spent. This is because when receiving timely and effective care, these children have fewer high-dollar expenses.

School-Based Health initiatives can and do improve child health in significant ways. Comprehensive School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs), often affiliated with Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), improve health outcomes by serving children (and often their siblings and families) where they are: in school. This improves health literacy for children and families.

HOW TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

General Assembly

Ensure access to healthcare for all adults caring for or living with children.

Continue to incentivize pediatric providers and specialists to make regular visits to areas of high need and support the effective implementation of telemedicine/telehealth to cover the time between those visits.

Invest in startup funding to expand comprehensive SBHCs.

Rules and Regulations

Streamline health insurance eligibility determinations and enrollment when families re-enroll their children in Medicaid, per *Voices' Barriers to Healthcare for Georgia's Children*. For instance, if income level qualifies a family for food assistance, the children would be eligible for Medicaid because they would naturally fall within the Medicaid income guideline.

Increase accountability and effectiveness for contracted Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) companies through the new contract development process in 2019.

Support planning and implementation of the Georgia Department of Education/Department of Community Health school nurse Medicaid grants.

Federal

Continue the federal match for Medicaid and CHIP.

All Stakeholders

Support access to an array of nutrition supports such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), school and summer feeding programs, as well as Farm to School and Farm to Early care and education programs.

Integrate implicit bias and trauma awareness training into degree programs and training for medical professionals.

Mental Health

What to Strive For

Making sure that every child in our state has access to effective, coordinated, community-based mental health services and supports in order to prevent and mitigate emotional trauma and behavioral health challenges. This includes mental health awareness, training, and support for those who work with children and families.

THE FACTS

Approximately **1 in 10** children in Georgia aged 12-17 experienced at least one major depressive episode in the last year.^[15]

Roughly **60%** of children in Georgia with a mental or behavioral condition did not receive the services they needed in 2016.^[16]

Suicide was the **second-leading** cause of death for Georgia children aged 10-17, in 2016.^[17]

1 in 59 8-year-olds in Georgia was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in 2014.^[18]

Prekindergarten students are expelled **more than 3 times** as often as K-12 students.^[19]

Some Things to Think About

From birth up to the age of 25, the development of a person's brain is greatly impacted by experiences, both positive and negative. Adverse childhood experiences, known as ACEs, as well as traumatic stress (if unrecognized or ignored) can lead to a lifetime of unfortunate consequences, such as delayed or hindered ability to learn, unmanaged anger, depression,

substance abuse, poor physical health, suicide, and more. Likewise, undiagnosed or untreated behavioral health conditions, such as autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit disorders, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, etc. can result in similar unfortunate consequences.

What Works Now

In recent years, with the excellent work of an array of public and private stakeholders, there is increased awareness, understanding, and funding of child and youth mental health systems, programs, and trainings. Key among this work was Gov. Nathan Deal's Commission on Child Mental Health, which put forth preliminary recommendations for increased funding and work on the subject.

Also key is the increased funding and improved systems for child/youth mental health, autism, and the like, supported by the Georgia General Assembly and agencies such as the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the Division of Family and Children Services, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Education, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (which administers the state Child Fatality Review Program), and the Interagency Directors Team (the multiagency workgroup dedicated to the implementation of System of Care for children).

HOW TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

General Assembly

Continue to invest in and support the recommendations made by Gov. Deal's Child Mental Health Commission.

Improve systems and funding to increase and improve the capacity of the child behavioral health workforce to meet the needs of all ages, per *Voices' Behavioral Health Workforce Report*.

Support access to mental health and substance abuse treatment for adults who interact with children, as their behavior may harm children in their presence.

Allow local governments increased flexibility with Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (E-SPLIST) monies to enhance school safety (e.g. hiring specially trained mental health professionals or physical security measures).

Rules and Regulations

Support the development of protocols and standards for improved and expanded provision of behavioral health telemedicine.

Adopt diagnosis guidelines specific to young children's mental health (DC: 0-5™: Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood).

Federal

Improve federal funding for pediatric primary and specialty residency programs.

All Stakeholders

Foster training for those working with children (school personnel, afterschool and summer learning professionals, school resource officers, public safety officers, juvenile court personnel, healthcare providers and staff, etc.) about recognition of trauma, behavioral challenges, and biases.

Support the development, provision, and reimbursement of behavioral health services and supports, in order to help students with emotional disorders and challenging behaviors.

Provide all adults working with children ways to connect children and families to services and supports they need, e.g. awareness of GCAL hotline.

Protection and Safety

What to Strive For

Making sure that all children have safe, loving, and permanent homes, as well as ensuring there are reliable, effective, and proactive systems in place to protect children from injury, trauma, sexual abuse, and exploitation.

THE FACTS

Nearly **14,000** children were in Georgia's foster care system as of April 2019.^[24]

Nearly **27,000** children in Georgia were victims of substantiated child abuse or neglect in 2015, of which 75% were neglected, 11% were physically abused, and 4% were sexually abused.^[25]

About **1 in 10** children will be sexually abused before they turn 18.^[26]

There were more than **61,800** reported cases of family violence in 2017, almost **20%** (12,139) had a child present.^[27]

Sleep-related deaths were the number **1** cause of death for infants aged 1 to 12 months in Georgia in 2016.^[28]

An estimated **45,500** children and youth in Georgia experience homelessness each year.^[29]

Some Things to Think About

There are a number of things that contribute to child endangerment. Recent investments and improvements in child-serving agencies, especially the DFCS, as well as growing interest and investment in various violence prevention strategies, have helped the state protect children, retain family and child caseworkers, and improve oversight of a burgeoning foster care population. The sheer volume of work in this area, however, demands continued stakeholder cooperation, funding, and vision toward a common goal.

Initiatives, like Georgia's Safe Sleep Campaign, and collaborations, such as the state Suicide Prevention Task Force and the Georgia Commission on Domestic Violence, carry great potential when it comes to reducing the number of children at risk. Additionally, the development of foster care policy with an emphasis on prevention and intervention (as required by the federal Family First Prevention Services Act), the use of federal criminal records checks, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and more effective family education and interventions, when implemented, have proven effective.

What Works Now

There has been unprecedented interagency cooperation with nongovernment stakeholders on behalf of child protection and well-being. In fact, many of the current child protection and safety plans, and campaigns are born out of interagency workgroups, such as the Child Fatality Review Program. Human resources for court-involved children, such as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs),

consistent DFCS caseworkers, and guardians ad litem, contribute to the security and safety of our most vulnerable children. Also, attention by the General Assembly to ensure effective staffing levels for agencies with oversight of children has contributed greatly to the prevention of child death, harm, and neglect.

HOW TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

General Assembly

Ensure access to mental and physical healthcare for all adults caring for or living with children.

Continue adequate reimbursement for private providers and families in the foster care system.

Continue to fund DFCS to maintain recently improved retention and commitment of caseworkers and other staff, and support interagency work to protect children.

Rules and Regulations

Support relationships between foster care providers in the private and public sectors, such as the Home in 5 coalition.

Identify and disseminate successful models of interagency coordination across child welfare, homelessness, and housing networks.

All Stakeholders

Work with DFCS and other public and private providers to maximize implementation of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act.

Fund and implement child development training and child trauma awareness for public safety officers who engage with children in any way (e.g., in schools, domestic violence and neglect situations, etc.).

Support state and federal efforts to gather and accurately assess data regarding school safety and violence. Use the data to develop effective policies and procedures to address child and family safety.

Increase the availability and equitable distribution of quality and affordable housing and support policies, including rent subsidies, which protect families and children from unsafe housing, hardship or baseless evictions, and untenable fees and penalties.

Support schools in annual age-appropriate body safety and awareness education for students K-9.

School Discipline and Juvenile Justice

What to Strive For

Making sure that children are treated fairly and responded to in a developmentally appropriate and supportive way. Court-involved children and youth must have quality representation and supports that promote healthy mental and physical development and safety. We seek to eliminate inequitable disciplinary treatment of children based on culture, religion, race, and gender.

THE FACTS

It costs taxpayers **\$90,000** to detain a child in juvenile detention for a year.^[20]

1,390 youth were diverted from out-of-home placements through the Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Program in state fiscal year 2016. Almost **70%** of these youth successfully completed the evidence-based program requirements.^[21]

More than **7,700** youth have participated in state-funded, evidence-based behavioral change programs to prevent recidivism since 2014.^[21]

Georgia has seen a **47%** reduction in delinquency-related out-of-home placements between FY2012 and FY2016.^[22]

205,900 students in Georgia (K-12) were disciplined with out-of-school suspension during the 2016-2017 school year.^[23]

Some Things to Think About

In 2013, the Legislature revised the juvenile code. Since then, systems, programs, and philosophies in juvenile courts, and those affiliated with the courts, have been evolving and improving, leading to better use of tax dollars and increased public safety. In addition, these new approaches have been

shown to reduce recidivism, improve equity in administration and implementation of the rule of law, and significantly improve the outcomes for children who come in contact with law enforcement.

What Works Now

Use of evidence-based programs by juvenile courts has proven effective in improving public safety, serving at-risk youth, and reducing incarceration of our kids. Shifting from punitive measures to intervention has proven effective in addressing the cause of misbehavior.

Increasingly widespread use of school programs and philosophies that support Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), wraparound services for children and families, and community initiatives to improve home living conditions which reduce family stressors have proven key in reducing juvenile crime and misbehavior.

HOW TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

General Assembly

Continue funding evidence-based interventions for children at high or medium risk to reoffend through the Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Program and Community Services Grants Program (see glossary).

Improve technical assistance and develop a reliable funding mechanism for all juvenile courts' Children In Need of Services (CHINS) programs.

Increase jurisdiction of juvenile courts to encompass children under 18 so those children may receive services more effective for their development.

Continue support and funding for juvenile court personnel, CASAs, DFCS caseworkers, etc.

Eliminate provisions that automatically transfer certain youth to adult courts.

Federal

Ensure complete funding and effective implementation of the 2018 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A).

All Stakeholders

Develop effective and meaningful policies to improve family stability and home environments in order to prevent children and families from resorting to criminal or risk-taking behavior.

Use restorative, developmentally appropriate responses for young offenders and address criminal manipulation of children by adults.

Eliminate the use of school, court, and detention protocols that create or exacerbate trauma to a child.

Expand and fund PBIS and family supports in schools, housing, and workforce development.

Vet school codes of conduct thoroughly to ensure they employ restorative and effective discipline, and do not impinge on child/youth self-esteem or inadvertently cause trauma.

Expand preventive programs and opportunities for youth when school is not in session, including afterschool and over the summer when juvenile crime peaks.

Early Childhood Development, Care, and Learning

What to Strive For

Making sure that from birth, children have quality healthcare and nutrition; developmental screenings; appropriate interventions; access to nurturing, safe, and engaging parenting and child care; and quality early learning in order to improve the chances for lifetime success.

THE FACTS

Approximately **795,600** 0- to 5-year-olds lived in Georgia in 2017.^[5]

57% of children served through Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program are 0- to 4-year-olds.^[31]

Nearly **80,900** children were enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program during the 2017-2018 school year.^[32]

Nearly **half** of Georgia births were paid for by Medicaid in 2014.^[1]

79 of Georgia's 159 counties lack an obstetrician/gynecologist (OB/GYN).^[6]

Georgia **leads** the nation in maternal mortality^[33] and ranks **5th** worst in the country in infant mortality.^[34]

Nearly **188,100** children aged 0-4 were enrolled in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program in Georgia in 2016.^[35]

Some Things to Think About

The human brain develops at its fastest rate between the ages of 0 and 3. This means that even from birth, environmental stimuli, both good and bad, can greatly affect the trajectory of a child's life. Providing children with quality communication; nutrition; cognitive, emotional, and physical supports; as well as minimizing stressors, are all key

to developing the brain's immediate and lifelong responses as a child grows into adulthood. What's more, early recognition and response to developmental challenges have generally proven effective in mitigating the long-term effect of such challenges on a child's ability to thrive.

What Works Now

Mother and child healthcare, before and after a child is born, are the crucial first steps to ensure that babies are born healthy and that mothers and babies remain healthy. New parent education in hospitals and at home by qualified health professionals, as with the Great Start Georgia, is effective in helping parents understand the importance of engaging the child from birth.

Quality, affordable child care is key in developing cognitive and social-emotional skills. Head Start, Early Head Start, Georgia's Pre-K Program, and child care centers participating in the Department of Early Care and Learning's (DECAL's) Quality Rated system are excellent examples of programs that have proven effective in helping children (and families) prepare for their futures.

HOW TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

General Assembly

Increase state funding for CAPS, which provides child care subsidies for high-need families.

Increase state investment in home visiting programs.

Rules and Regulations

Support the expansion and meaningful advancements in the DECAL Quality Rated system.

Federal

Maintain or increase current funding levels for early child care improvements, i.e. Child Care Development Fund.

All Stakeholders

Decrease the child-adult ratio in child care and early education settings.

Increase accessibility, accountability and reimbursement rate for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment for children 0-21 years old, and Babies Can't Wait for children 0-3 years old.

Make fresh, Georgia Grown healthy foods accessible, affordable, and easy to procure and use in all early child care settings.

Create practical systems to improve nutrition and physical activity in child care centers.

Incentivize and support childcare centers in improving their nutritional and fitness offerings for children and families.

Education and Workforce Development

What to Strive For

Making sure that children have all the necessary family, school, and community supports to attain academic and personal success in primary school, secondary school, post-secondary education, and future employment.

THE FACTS

More than **1,850,000** children aged 6-18^[37] and **952,800** aged 19-25 years lived in Georgia in 2016.^[30]

63% of Georgia children could not read proficiently by the end of third grade in 2017-2018.^[38]

82% was the overall Georgia high school graduation rate in 2018.^[39]

11% was the graduation rate for Georgia youth in foster care in 2018.^[40]

More than **200,000** children in Georgia were absent more than 15 days from school in 2017.^[41]

Only **46%** of middle school students and **34%** of high school students in Georgia attend daily physical education classes in school.^[42]

Some Things to Think About

Helping children succeed in life is an effort that goes beyond school curricula. For a child to mature and learn there are a number of factors to consider, including: how time is spent; good nutrition; exercise; post-secondary education and career training; and systems and programs where the adults in charge make sure that the engagements with children are caring (trauma responsive), equitable, and use evidence-based practices.

In short, when youth know that they are valued, listened to, and supported, they are the best to ask for what they need, perform better, and model their own actions, providing success also includes a valuable role model for other children as they mature.

What Works Now

The move to fully fund the Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula, as well as recent state and local investments in struggling schools, provided many local school districts the opportunity to bolster academic programs offered, as well as the financial security to consider and act on more nonacademic supports for students. Growing integration of quality school-based health services is also improving school attendance and, subsequently, academic outcomes.

Other successful state initiatives help teens and young adults prepare for life and career, such as dual enrollment, the Georgia REACH mentoring and college scholarship program. The Complete College Georgia initiative, implemented by the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia, helps students stay on track in post-secondary education. Of course, post-secondary funding through the Georgia Lottery for Education HOPE (and Zell Miller) scholarships and grants is crucial.

HOW TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

General Assembly

Assess all current funding streams for public education, including and beyond QBE formula, e.g. Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), Federal, state and local grants.

Consider augmenting HOPE funding to better secure college attendance and completion by students with lesser financial resources.

Support technology innovations for libraries across the state. This includes increased budget allocations for materials and technology.

Rules and Regulations

Better integrate local libraries into other child and youth policy and programming, and support technology innovations for libraries across the state.

All Stakeholders

Consider and, when possible, use the four pillars of the Get Georgia Reading Campaign (see glossary) when crafting policy across child- and family-serving agencies.

Support the work of the Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy, K-12 literacy coaches, dyslexia identification and intervention initiatives, and other reading supports for all age students.

Increase access to nutritious foods and opportunities for physical activity by expanding Farm to School programs and increasing physical education and recess opportunities.

Continue and expand support for PBIS (see glossary) implementation.

Afterschool and Summer Learning

What to Strive For

Making sure that both in school and out of school, children have all the necessary academic, social, and emotional supports to be on a path to success in college, career, and life.

THE FACTS

Only **16%** of Georgia's children participated in afterschool programs in 2014 compared to an estimated **40%** who would participate if one were available.^[43]

By the fifth grade, children from families with lower incomes fall **2.5 to 3 years** behind their peers from families with higher incomes as a result of inequity in summer learning opportunities. This is often referred to as "the summer slide."^[44]

43% of children served through CAPS are school-age (5 and older).^[45]

67% of Georgia's children aged 6 to 12 had all available parents in the labor force in 2016.^[45]

19% of juvenile violent crimes occur between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. on school days.^[46]

Children spend **80%** of their waking hours outside of formal classroom learning.^[43]

Some Things to Think About

Afterschool and summer learning programs are an essential strategy in improving outcomes for Georgia's youth, providing more opportunities for learning, addressing the nonacademic factors that impact student achievement, and supporting Georgia's working families, communities, and economy. Georgians recognize the critical need for these programs, with 94% viewing afterschool programs as very or extremely important. Plus, high-quality afterschool and summer learning programs provide youth a safe place to go outside of the classroom, as well as the opportunity to explore new interests and engage in hands-on learning. Additionally, Georgia 4-H is one of the largest 4-H programs in the country, empowering nearly 170,000 young people across Georgia with the skills to lead for a lifetime.

Afterschool programs operate at a variety of institutions, including schools, community-based organizations, recreation centers, libraries, faith-based organizations, YMCAs, Boys & Girls Clubs, 4-H, and Family Connection Partnership Collaboratives, providing a wide range of benefits to more than 280,000 of Georgia's young people. In addition, afterschool programs build upon school day learning by providing additional enrichment opportunities in high-demand topics, such as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), literacy, and social-emotional learning, helping to create Georgia's future workforce.

What Works Now

The GaDOE's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program and the Georgia DFCS Afterschool Care Program, combined, fund a total of 521 afterschool and summer learning programs serving nearly 100,000 youth each year. These locally driven, federally funded programs are the largest funding streams for out-of-school programs in Georgia.

Research shows that these programs improve academic performance, reduce grade-level retention, improve classroom behavior, decrease drug and alcohol dependence, and reduce juvenile crime. For example, students regularly participating in Georgia's 21st CCLC have higher school day attendance than both the free and reduced lunch state average and the overall state average.

In recent years, Georgia has begun to take a greater focus on educating the whole child, both in and out of school, and improving the quality of Georgia's afterschool and summer learning programs. Georgia's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan includes opportunities for school districts to focus on wraparound supports, including during afterschool and summertime. DECAL's Quality Rated system has been expanded to include afterschool programs, giving them opportunities to access quality improvement supports. Additionally, the Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development (ASYD) Quality Standards provide a framework for afterschool and summer learning providers to evaluate and continuously improve the quality of their programming.

HOW TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

General Assembly

Expand state funding to afterschool and summer learning programs to increase access and ensure affordability of care.

Increase state funding for the CAPS program.

Rules and Regulations

Support the expansion and advancements of DECAL's school-age child care programs and policies, including Quality Rated, training and technical assistance opportunities, and licensing.

All Stakeholders

Fund and expand partnerships to ensure transportation to and from afterschool and summer learning programs.

Encourage technical education, work-based learning, and apprenticeships to older youth to prepare for the jobs of tomorrow.

Leverage opportunities for afterschool and summer learning in Georgia's ESSA state plan and local district plans.

Ensure equity in opportunities for STEM learning, literacy enrichment, workforce development, and career exploration both in and out of school.

Expand trauma-informed practices and training to afterschool and summer learning professionals.

Strengthen partnerships at all levels between school districts and community-based programs to align learning experiences for children.

Counting Kids (Census 2020)

What to Strive For

Making sure that every child and young person residing in Georgia is counted in the national census of 2020.

THE FACTS

An estimated **1 million** children under 5 years old were not counted in the 2010 census.^[47]

More than **\$700 million** was lost in FY2015 federal match dollars for Federal Medical Assistance Percentages programs.^[48]

Almost **22%** of Georgia is labeled as “Hard to Count,” or low response rate by the federal government.^[49]

Some Things to Think About

The census, as required by the U.S. Constitution, counts the total number of people living in the nation every 10 years and includes all persons living in the U.S. (not just citizens). Census data are used to apportion congressional representation, draw legislative districts, and determine how funds are distributed to important programs like Head Start, Medicaid, and school nutrition, among others. Furthermore, the census drives state and local decisions on infrastructure projects, including schools, transportation, and hospitals.

Historically, children are undercounted in the census. In fact, children under 5 are the most undercounted. Sometimes this is because people think they are not supposed to be counted, they forget that they should count children, they have complicated family structures that cause children to be missed in the count, or families are anxious about telling the government anything about their lives. With the approach of the 2020 count, it is imperative that all parties work to make sure that children are counted so that they and the state can attain appropriate representation, funding, infrastructure, and other resources for the next decade.

What Works Now

Complete count committees are forming across the state to spread the word about the importance of the 2020 census. Their primary goal is to motivate every resident in their community to complete the 2020 census questionnaire. Gov. Nathan Deal created the Governor's Complete Count

Committee in November 2017, and it has been meeting regularly and strategizing since. In addition, an array of private and nonprofit organizations are likewise partnering and preparing to help get children counted.

HOW TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

General Assembly

Ensure that the implementation and communication regarding the 2020 census are adequately funded.

Rules and Regulations

Volunteer to help your local complete count committee. For more information, visit <https://census.georgia.gov/>

All Stakeholders

Ensure people know the following three things:

1. Confidentiality of survey participants is protected by federal law.
2. The number of people counted is used in formulas to calculate total amount of federal aid given to states for various federally supported programs like education, healthcare, and transportation.
3. Census data are used to apportion congressional representation and draw legislative districts at the federal, state, and local levels. The 2010 census, for example, awarded Georgia a 14th congressional district.

Glossary of Terms

21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC)

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program is the only federal funding stream dedicated to afterschool, before school, and summer learning.

Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)

Adverse Childhood Experiences are stressful or traumatic events, including abuse and neglect. They may also include household dysfunction such as witnessing domestic violence or growing up with family members who have substance use disorders.

Afterschool and Summer Learning Program

Afterschool and summer learning programs provide children aged 5-18 a safe and enriching place to go when school is not in session.

Afterschool and Youth Development (ASYD) Quality Standards

The Georgia Afterschool and Youth Development Quality Standards is a guiding framework for afterschool and summer learning providers to evaluate and improve the quality of programming. The ASYD Quality Standards have been approved or endorsed by Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, DECAL, DFCS, Department of Public Health, and GaDOE.



Afterschool Meals

Afterschool meals, including snack and supper, can be provided through the Child and Adult Care Food Program, a federally assisted meal program.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Autism spectrum disorder is a developmental disorder that affects communication and behavior. Although autism can be diagnosed at any age, it is said to be a “developmental disorder” because symptoms generally appear in the first two years of life.

Babies Can’t Wait (BCW)

Babies Can’t Wait 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 (IDEA) which guarantees all eligible children, regardless of their disability, access to services that will enhance their development.

Behavioral Health

Behavioral health is the scientific study of the emotions, behaviors, and biology relating to a person’s mental well-being, their ability to function in everyday life, and their concept of self.

Child Care Learning Center

Child Care Learning Center is any place operated by an individual or any business entity recognized under Georgia law wherein are received for pay for group care, for fewer than 24 hours per day without transfer of legal custody, seven or more children under 18 years of age and which is required to be licensed.

Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)

The Childcare and Parent Services program offers low-income families subsidies to pay for quality child care, afterschool and summer programs for children up to age 12 and for children up to age 17 with special needs.

Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)/PeachCare for Kids

The Children’s Health Insurance Program, known as PeachCare for Kids in Georgia, provides medical coverage for individuals under age 19 whose parents earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to pay for private coverage.

Children in Need of Services (CHINS)

A “Child in Need of Services” under Georgia law means a child who is in need of care, guidance, counselling, structure, supervision, treatment, or rehabilitation AND meets one of the following criteria: habitually truant from school; habitually disobedient of the reasonable commands of his or her parent, guardian, or legal custodian; runaway; committed an offense applicable only to a child; wanders or loiters about the streets, highway, or any public place between midnight and 5 a.m.; disobeys the terms of supervision contained in a court order that has been directed to such child, who has been adjudicated a CHINS; patronized any bar where alcoholic beverages are being sold (unaccompanied by his or her parent, guardian, or legal custodian) or who possesses alcoholic beverages; committed a delinquent act and is in need of supervision but not in need of treatment or rehabilitation.

Complete College GA

Complete College GA is a statewide effort to increase attainment of a high-quality certificate or degree.

Community Services Grants (CSG) Program

The Community Services Grant Program was initially funded in 2014 with a similar mission to the JJIG Program (see glossary below). Combining state and federal dollars, the two programs offer funding and technical support for a set of nationally recognized evidence-based treatment programs, including MultiSystemic Therapy, Family Functional Therapy, Thinking for a Change, and Aggression Replacement Training, in order to reduce criminogenic behavior.

Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

Court-appointed special advocates are everyday people from all walks of life who volunteer and advocate for the well-being of Georgia’s children in foster care. They are specially trained to speak up for a child’s best interests. Their sole purpose is to provide compassionate, individualized attention that will help each child in foster care find a safe, permanent home.

DFCS Afterschool Care Program

The Afterschool Care Program is a competitive grant program funded through Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and provides support to afterschool and summer learning programs.

Dual Enrollment

Dual Enrollment is a program that provides funding for students at eligible high schools that are enrolled to take approved college-level coursework for credit toward both high school and college graduation requirements.

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT)

The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit provides comprehensive and preventive health care services for children under age 21 who are enrolled in Medicaid. EPSDT is key to ensuring that children and adolescents receive appropriate preventive, dental, mental health, and developmental, and specialty services. <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/benefits/epsdt/index.html>



Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The Every Student Succeeds Act is the nation’s main education law for public schools. The main purpose is to make sure public schools provide all students a quality education. ESSA holds schools accountable for how students learn and achieve. ESSA advances equity by upholding critical protections for America’s disadvantaged and high-need students; requires - for the first time - that all students in America be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers; and maintains an expectation that there will be accountability and action to effect positive change in our lowest-performing schools, where groups of students are not making progress, and where graduation rates are low over extended periods of time.

Family First Prevention Services Act

Family First Prevention Services Act reforms the federal child welfare financing streams, Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, to provide services to families who are at risk of entering the child welfare system. The bill aims to prevent children from entering foster care by allowing federal reimbursement for mental health services, substance use treatment, and in-home parenting skill training. It also seeks to improve the well-being of children already in foster by incentivizing states to reduce placement of children in congregate care.

Glossary of Terms

Farm to School/Farm to Early Care and Education

Farm to School/Farm to Early Care and Education enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and early care and education sites.

Federal Poverty Guidelines

The federal poverty guidelines are a measure of income issued every year by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The 2018 federal poverty guideline income numbers are used to calculate eligibility for a variety of federal and state programs. For instance, an annual income for a family of four with an annual income of \$25,100, a family of three \$20,780, etc. is considered to be living at 100% of the federal poverty level. [More information on Federal Poverty Guidelines](#)

Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)

A Federally Qualified Health Center is an outpatient clinic that qualifies for specific reimbursements under Medicare and Medicaid. Health centers provide a comprehensive set of health services including primary care, behavioral health, chronic disease management, preventive care, and other specialty, enabling, and ancillary services, which may include radiology, laboratory services, dental, transportation, translation, and social services.

Food Insecure

Food insecure is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.

Foster Care

Foster care is a system in which a minor has been placed into a regular foster family home, a relative foster home, or a foster-adopt home. The placement of the child is normally arranged through the government or a social service agency.

Free and Reduced Lunch

The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. Children from families with income at or below 130% of the federal poverty guidelines are eligible for free meals.

Georgia Grown

The Georgia Grown program is a marketing and economic development program of the Georgia Department of Agriculture. It's goal is to aid Georgia's agricultural economies by bringing together producers, processors, suppliers, distributors, retailers, agritourism, and consumers in one powerful, statewide community.

Georgia's Pre-K Program

Georgia's Pre-K Program is a state lottery-funded educational program for all 4-year-old children in Georgia, regardless of parental income.

Get Georgia Reading Campaign (GGR)

Get Georgia Reading is a collaboration of more than 100 public and private partners that are finding new ways of working together across Georgia, across sectors, across agencies and organizations, and across the early years and early grades, using data to inform decision-making. The common agenda consists of four research-based pillars that work together to provide a platform for success: Language Nutrition, Access, Positive Learning Climate, and Teacher Preparation and Effectiveness. These four pillars provide a new way of looking at early literacy and learning during the first eight years of life, opening the doors to conversations that identify gaps and where to locate resources to fill those gaps.

Great Start Georgia

Great Start Georgia is Georgia's maternal and early childhood system, and represents a milestone in the development and implementation of comprehensive, community-based systems for expectant parents, children birth to age 5, and their families.

"Hard to Count" Neighborhood

A census tract is considered hard to count if its self-response rate in the 2010 decennial census was 73% or less. If 73% or fewer of the tract's households that received a census questionnaire mailed it back to the Census Bureau, it is shaded in light orange-to-dark red as a hard-to-count tract on the map. <https://www.censushardtocountmaps2020.us/>

Head Start

Head Start is a program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that provides comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families.

Early Head Start

Early Head Start is a federally funded community-based program for low-income families with pregnant women, infants, and toddlers up to age 3.

Home in 5

Home in 5 is a partnership between public and private organizations and concerned citizens who are working to make a positive change for youth in foster care and families in DFCS Region 5 (Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Green, Jackson, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Rockdale, and Walton counties). Together with local agencies, Home in 5 facilitates informational events, foster parent trainings, and recruitment. The goal of the program is not simply to increase the number of foster homes in Region 5, but also to increase the resources available to sustain them.

Home Visiting

Home Visiting offers support and comprehensive services to at-risk families through home visits and group socialization experiences. At-risk pregnant women, children age birth to 5 and their families are linked to resources and opportunities to improve well-being.

HOPE Career Grant

The HOPE Career Grant, formerly known as the Strategic Industries Workforce Development Grant, is available to HOPE Grant-qualified students who enroll in select majors specifically aligned with industries in which there are more jobs available in Georgia than there are skilled workers to fill them. These industries have been identified as strategically important to the state's economic growth.

HOPE Scholarship

The HOPE Scholarship is a merit based scholarship that provides assistance towards the cost of tuition at eligible public and private Georgia postsecondary institutions. A student must graduate from an eligible high school with a minimum 3.0 HOPE GPA (as calculated by GSFC) and meet specific rigor course requirements.

Juvenile Justice and

Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP)

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act was reauthorized in 2018 with bipartisan support. The JJDP is based on a broad consensus that children, youth, and families involved with the juvenile and criminal courts should be guarded by federal standards for care and custody, while also upholding the interest of community safety and the prevention of victimization. The JJDP creates a federal-state partnership for the administration of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention.

Juvenile Justice Incentive Grants (JJIG) Program

The Juvenile Justice Incentive Grants program was launched in 2013 because many of Georgia's regions lacked community-based programs, leaving juvenile court judges with few dispositional options short of commitment to state facilities. In addition to providing courts with alternatives to out-of-home placements, the incentive grants have helped reduce short-term program admissions and felony commitments to Department of Juvenile Justice by 56% across the participating counties. See Community Services Grants Program



Maternal Mortality

Maternal mortality is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 1 year (according to the Centers for Disease Control) of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes.

Medicaid

Medicaid in the U.S. is a joint federal and state program that helps with medical costs for some people with limited income and resources. Medicaid also offers benefits not normally covered by Medicare, like nursing home care and personal care services.

Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation (NEMT)

The Non-Emergency Medical Transportation program provides no-cost transportation to Medicaid enrollees who need to get to and from nonemergency medical services but have no means of transportation.

Obese

Body mass index (BMI) is a measure used to determine childhood overweight and obesity. Obesity is defined as a BMI at or above the 95th percentile for children and teens of the same age and sex.

Glossary of Terms

Out-of-Home Placement

Out-of-home care is a court-monitored process that encompasses the placements and services provided to children and families when children are removed from their home due to abuse and/or neglect.

Overweight

Body mass index (BMI) is a measure used to determine childhood overweight and obesity. Overweight is defined as a BMI at or above the 85th percentile and below the 95th percentile for children and teens of the same age and sex.



PeachCare for Kids

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), known as PeachCare for Kids in Georgia, provides medical coverage for individuals under age 19 whose parents earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to pay for private coverage. A family of four with an annual income of \$62,004 (247% of the federal poverty guidelines) is eligible for PeachCare.

Planning for Healthy Babies®

Planning for Healthy Babies® is a program from Georgia DCH that offers no-cost family planning services. The Planning for Healthy Babies program consists of three services: Family Planning, Inter-pregnancy Care (includes family planning and additional services for women who have delivered a very low birth weight baby), and Resource Mother (a case management service for women who have delivered a very low birth weight baby).

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports is an evidence-based, data-driven framework proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase the sense of safety, and support improved academic outcomes in schools. PBIS schools apply a multi-tiered approach to prevention, using disciplinary data and principles of behavior analysis to develop schoolwide, targeted, and individualized interventions and supports to improve school climate for all students.

Quality Basic Education (QBE) Formula

The Quality Basic Education formula is a comprehensive framework for providing a quality basic education to every student in Georgia. The formula is used to finance Georgia's public schools. The current QBE formula was established in 1985.

Quality Rated

Quality Rated is Georgia's system to determine, improve, and communicate the quality of programs that provide child care. Similar to rating systems for restaurants and hotels, Quality Rated assigns one, two or three stars to early education and school-age care programs that meet or exceed the minimum state requirements. By participating in Georgia's voluntary Quality Rated program, programs make a commitment to work continuously to improve the quality of care they provide to children and families. Quality Rated is administered by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.

REACH Georgia

REACH Georgia is the State of Georgia's first needs-based mentorship and college scholarship program. The mission is to ensure that Georgia's low income, academically promising students have the academic, social, and financial support needed to graduate from high school, access college, and achieve postsecondary success.

Recidivism

Recidivism is the tendency of a convicted criminal to reoffend within three years of release from custody.

School-Based Health Centers

School-based health centers are health clinics based inside schools, including, but not limited to, healthcare, dental, and behavioral health services.

School Code of Conduct

Codes of conduct specify behavior that is accepted or prohibited in the school as well as in any setting that is related to the school. Codes of conduct generally state the behavior expected to be demonstrated by the student.

Social Worker

Child and family social workers protect vulnerable children and support families in need of assistance. Social workers help people solve and cope with problems in their everyday lives. Clinical social workers also diagnose and treat mental, behavioral, and emotional issues.

Status Offense

Noncriminal acts that are considered law violations simply by virtue of an offender's age were once called status offenses. Typical status offenses include truancy, running away from home, violating curfew, underage use of alcohol, and general ungovernability.

Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM)

STEAM is an educational approach to learning that uses science, technology, engineering, the arts (music, visual art, drama, and dance), and mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)

STEM is a curriculum based on the idea of educating students in four specific disciplines — science, technology, engineering, and mathematics — in an interdisciplinary and applied approach. Rather than teach the four disciplines as separate and discrete subjects, STEM integrates them into a cohesive learning paradigm based on real-world applications.

Substantiated Child Abuse

A substantiated report of child abuse occurs after an assessment has been made and the reported abuse or neglect was found to exist.

Summer Feeding Programs

Summer meals are provided through the National School Lunch Program and the Summer Food Service Program to children 18 and younger during the summer when school is not in session.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program offers nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income individuals and families through electronic benefit cards.

Technical College System of Georgia

The Technical College System of Georgia is the state agency that supervises the state's 22 technical colleges, while also surveying the adult literacy program and economic and workforce development programs.

Telehealth

Telehealth refers to a broad scope of remote healthcare services, including nonclinical services, such as provider training, administrative meetings, and continuing medical education, in addition to clinical services.

Telemedicine

Telemedicine is a subset of telehealth that refers solely to the provision of health care services and education over a distance, through the use of telecommunications technology. Telemedicine involves the use of electronic communications and software to provide clinical services to patients without an in-person visit.

Traumatic Stress

Traumatic events are shocking and emotionally overwhelming situations that may involve actual or threatened death, serious injury, or threat to physical integrity.

Two-Gen Approach (2-Gen)

Two-Gen approaches focus on creating opportunities for and addressing the needs of both children and their families together, with the goal of creating economic stability for the family. This includes five key components: early childhood education, adult and post-secondary education and workforce pathways, economic supports and assets, health and well-being, and social capital.

Wraparound

The wraparound process is an intensive, individualized care management process for youths with serious or complex needs. It is community-based, culturally relevant, individualized, strength-based, and family centered. Wraparound plans are comprehensive and address multiple life domains across home, school, and community, including living environment; basic needs; safety; and social, emotional, educational, spiritual, and cultural needs.

Zell Miller Grant

The Zell Miller Scholarship is a merit based scholarship that provides full tuition at a public postsecondary institution and tuition assistance at an eligible private postsecondary institution. A student must graduate from an eligible high school as valedictorian or salutatorian (meeting the requirements of the HOPE Scholarship) or graduate with a minimum 3.7 Zell Miller GPA (as calculated by GSFC) along with a minimum combined score of 1200 on the math and reading portions of a national administration of the SAT or a minimum composite score of 26 on a single national or state/district administration of the ACT and meet specific rigor course requirements.

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This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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