

**Georgia State Advisory Council on  
Early Childhood Education and Care  
Grant Application**

Submitted to  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
CFDA #93.708

Submitted by  
Bright from the Start:  
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**

Version 02

**\* 1. Type of Submission:**

- Preapplication
- Application
- Changed/Corrected Application

**\* 2. Type of Application:**

- New
- Continuation
- Revision

**\* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):**

**\* Other (Specify)**

**\* 3. Date Received:**

4.29.10 LA

**4. Applicant Identifier:**

**5a. Federal Entity Identifier:**

**\* 5b. Federal Award Identifier:**

**State Use Only:**

**6. Date Received by State:**

**7. State Application Identifier:**

**8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:**

**\* a. Legal Name:**

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

**\* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):**

(b) (4)

**\* c. Organizational DUNS:**

090327136

**d. Address:**

**\* Street1:**

10 Park Place South

**Street2:**

Suite 200

**\* City:**

Atlanta

**County:**

Fulton

**\* State:**

GA

**Province:**

**\* Country:**

USA: UNITED STATES

**\* Zip / Postal Code:**

30303

**e. Organizational Unit:**

**Department Name:**

**Division Name:**

**f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:**

**Prefix:**

Mr.

**\* First Name:**

Mark

**Middle Name:**

**\* Last Name:**

Waits

**Suffix:**

**Title:**

Grants Specialist

**Organizational Affiliation:**

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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404-657-9961

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**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**

**Version 02**

**9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:**

State Government

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

\* Other (specify):

**\* 10. Name of Federal Agency:**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:**

93.708

CFDA Title:

ARRA of 2009 -- Head Start Expansion

**\* 12. Funding Opportunity Number:**

\* Title:

**13. Competition Identification Number:**

Title:

**14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):**

State of Georgia

**\* 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:**

Georgia State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**

Version 02

**16. Congressional Districts Of:**

\* a. Applicant GA-all

\* b. Program/Project

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

**17. Proposed Project:**

\* a. Start Date:

\* b. End Date:

**18. Estimated Funding (\$):**

\* a. Federal \$3,476,312.00

\* b. Applicant \$8,111,395.00

\* c. State

\* d. Local

\* e. Other

\* f. Program Income

\* g. TOTAL \$11,587,707.00

**\* 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

- a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on
- b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.
- c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

**\* 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes", provide explanation.)**

Yes  No

21. \*By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications\*\* and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances\*\* and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)

\*\* I AGREE

\*\* The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

**Authorized Representative:**

Prefix:  \* First Name:

Middle Name:

\* Last Name:

Suffix:

\* Title:

\* Telephone Number:  Fax Number:

\* Email:

\* Signature of Authorized Representative:  Date Signed:

**BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs**

OMB Approval No. 0348-0044

**SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY**

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. State Adv. Council	93.708	\$	\$	\$ 1,377,518.00	\$	\$
2.						0.00
3.						0.00
4.						0.00
5. Totals		\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 1,377,518.00	\$	\$

**SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES**

6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY						Total (5)
	(1)	Year 1	(2)	Year 2	(3)	Year 3	
a. Personnel	\$	0.00	\$	0.00	\$	0.00	\$ 0.00
b. Fringe Benefits		0.00		0.00		0.00	0.00
c. Travel		0.00		0.00		0.00	0.00
d. Equipment		6,000.00				0.00	10,000.00
e. Supplies		7,400.00				8,490.00	24,890.00
f. Contractual		1,274,000.00				613,000.00	3,214,000.00
g. Construction		0.00		0.00		0.00	0.00
h. Other		0.00		0.00		0.00	0.00
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)		1,287,400.00				621,490.00	3,248,890.00
j. Indirect Charges		90,118.00				43,504.30	227,422.30
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	\$	1,377,518.00	\$		\$	664,994.30	\$ 3,476,312.30
7. Program Income	\$	0.00	\$	0.00	\$	0.00	\$ 0.00

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SECTION C - NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES					
(a) Grant Program	(b) Applicant	(c) State	(d) Other Sources	(e) TOTALS	
8. State Advisory Council Grant	\$ [REDACTED]	\$	\$	\$ [REDACTED]	
9.				0.00	
10.				0.00	
11.				0.00	
12. TOTAL (sum of lines 8-11)	\$ [REDACTED]	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ [REDACTED]	
SECTION D - FORECASTED CASH NEEDS					
	Total for 1st Year	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
13. Federal	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
14. Non-Federal	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
15. TOTAL (sum of lines 13 and 14)	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
SECTION E - BUDGET ESTIMATES OF FEDERAL FUNDS NEEDED FOR BALANCE OF THE PROJECT					
(a) Grant Program	FUTURE FUNDING PERIODS (Years)				
	(b) First	(c) Second	(d) Third	(e) Fourth	
16. State Advisory Council Grant	\$ 1,377,518.00	\$ 1,433,800.00	\$ 664,994.30	\$ 0.00	
17.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
18.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
19.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
20. TOTAL (sum of lines 16-19)	\$ 1,377,518.00	\$ 1,433,800.00	\$ 664,994.30	\$ 0.00	
SECTION F - OTHER BUDGET INFORMATION					
21. Direct Charges:		22. Indirect Charges: Figured at 7%; approved indirect cost rate = 17.12%			
23. Remarks:					

**ASSURANCES - NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS**

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0348-0040), Washington, DC 20503.

**PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET. SEND IT TO THE ADDRESS PROVIDED BY THE SPONSORING AGENCY.**

**NOTE:** Certain of these assurances may not be applicable to your project or program. If you have questions, please contact the awarding agency. Further, certain Federal awarding agencies may require applicants to certify to additional assurances. If such is the case, you will be notified.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant:

1. Has the legal authority to apply for Federal assistance and the institutional, managerial and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the non-Federal share of project cost) to ensure proper planning, management and completion of the project described in this application.
2. Will give the awarding agency, the Comptroller General of the United States and, if appropriate, the State, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the award; and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards or agency directives.
3. Will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or presents the appearance of personal or organizational conflict of interest, or personal gain.
4. Will initiate and complete the work within the applicable time frame after receipt of approval of the awarding agency.
5. Will comply with the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. §§4728-4763) relating to prescribed standards for merit systems for programs funded under one of the 19 statutes or regulations specified in Appendix A of OPM's Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration (5 C.F.R. 900, Subpart F).
6. Will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to: (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin; (b) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C. §§1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; (c) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. §794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; (d) the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§6101-6107), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; (e) the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-255), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of drug abuse; (f) the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-616), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of alcohol abuse or alcoholism; (g) §§523 and 527 of the Public Health Service Act of 1912 (42 U.S.C. §§290 dd-3 and 290 ee-3), as amended, relating to confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records; (h) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. §§3601 et seq.), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing; (i) any other nondiscrimination provisions in the specific statute(s) under which application for Federal assistance is being made; and, (j) the requirements of any other nondiscrimination statute(s) which may apply to the application.
7. Will comply, or has already complied, with the requirements of Titles II and III of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646) which provide for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced or whose property is acquired as a result of Federal or federally-assisted programs. These requirements apply to all interests in real property acquired for project purposes regardless of Federal participation in purchases.
8. Will comply, as applicable, with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§1501-1508 and 7324-7328) which limit the political activities of employees whose principal employment activities are funded in whole or in part with Federal funds.

9. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. §§276a to 276a-7), the Copeland Act (40 U.S.C. §276c and 18 U.S.C. §874), and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. §§327-333), regarding labor standards for federally-assisted construction subagreements.
10. Will comply, if applicable, with flood insurance purchase requirements of Section 102(a) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-234) which requires recipients in a special flood hazard area to participate in the program and to purchase flood insurance if the total cost of insurable construction and acquisition is \$10,000 or more.
11. Will comply with environmental standards which may be prescribed pursuant to the following: (a) institution of environmental quality control measures under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) and Executive Order (EO) 11514; (b) notification of violating facilities pursuant to EO 11738; (c) protection of wetlands pursuant to EO 11990; (d) evaluation of flood hazards in floodplains in accordance with EO 11988; (e) assurance of project consistency with the approved State management program developed under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. §§1451 et seq.); (f) conformity of Federal actions to State (Clean Air) Implementation Plans under Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act of 1955, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§7401 et seq.); (g) protection of underground sources of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended (P.L. 93-523); and, (h) protection of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (P.L. 93-205).
12. Will comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. §§1271 et seq.) related to protecting components or potential components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.
13. Will assist the awarding agency in assuring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. §470), EO 11593 (identification and protection of historic properties), and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. §§469a-1 et seq.).
14. Will comply with P.L. 93-348 regarding the protection of human subjects involved in research, development, and related activities supported by this award of assistance.
15. Will comply with the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-544, as amended, 7 U.S.C. §§2131 et seq.) pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of warm blooded animals held for research, teaching, or other activities supported by this award of assistance.
16. Will comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. §§4801 et seq.) which prohibits the use of lead-based paint in construction or rehabilitation of residence structures.
17. Will cause to be performed the required financial and compliance audits in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and OMB Circular No. A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations."
18. Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies governing this program.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED CERTIFYING OFFICIAL 	TITLE Commissioner
APPLICANT ORGANIZATION Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning	DATE SUBMITTED April 21, 2010

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## PROJECT ABSTRACT

The state of Georgia is applying for funds (\$3,476,312) to support the critical work of the Georgia State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (Council). The Council, building on the state's existing, significant early childhood efforts, will focus on developing a plan for a comprehensive system of early childhood education and care to serve Georgia's children and families in a more coordinated, efficient manner. The Council's plan will focus on improving program quality, empowering parents, and unifying data. The Council will also undertake projects to articulate a vision for Georgia's early childhood system; design an improved system for training personnel; improve the coordination and quality of monitoring and oversight; connect young children screened for health and mental health issues to services that can help them; inform parents about developmental practices and available programs; and design a coordinated data system to improve service to young children.

The overarching goal of the Council is that all children enter kindergarten ready to learn – a goal best supported by the coordinated efforts of the state's public and private partners, rather than government agencies and other entities working in isolation. The three primary objectives under this goal are:

1. *Improving program quality.* Children in Georgia spend millions of hours in programs like pre-k, child care, and Head Start. Research clearly supports that the quality of their experience in those hours will affect their later success;
2. *Empowering parents.* Parents are a child's primary educators and caregivers. All Georgia parents must understand the important developmental needs of young children and should know the services the state can provide to help them meet those needs. Parents should also know what quality service means and how to recognize it in a child care and early education provider; and

3. *Unifying and coordinating data.* A unified early childhood data system will support parents, educators, policymakers, and researchers by helping them obtain information and data – and answer key questions – about the progress of and services for young children in Georgia. The Council will work closely with parents, early care and learning professionals, and other stakeholders to identify key questions data can help answer. The appropriate data will help solve fundamental issues of coordinating care, following up on health and developmental screenings, assessing quality, and developing strategies to improve quality. Key questions will include what services children are currently accessing; what needs they have that could be met by other existing programs through improved coordination and follow-up; whether existing programs are of sufficient quality and how best to approach program improvement; and how children who received services fare in the K-12 system.

## **PROJECT NARRATIVE**

### **I. The Need for Assistance and Objectives**

#### **A. The Need**

Georgia's population is younger, lower-income, and more mobile than the population of most states. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the state has an overall population approaching 10 million, making it one of the largest states in the nation. Significantly, 7.65% of its population is under the age of five, the fifth-highest percentage among the 50 states (and the highest of any state east of the Mississippi River).

Poverty is a real challenge for Georgia's children. Twenty-six percent of Georgia's young children live below the poverty line, a higher percentage than for the nation as a whole (24%). Financial issues in Georgia are urban, suburban, and rural; indeed, in all three areas the percentage of children who are low income is higher than the national average. In urban areas,

58% of Georgia's young children are low income (compared to 52% nationally); in suburban areas, 38% (36%), and in rural areas, 67% (53%). Many of these children are children of the working poor – 55% of Georgia's low income parents have full-time, year-round employment, higher than the 47% national average.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, Georgia's mobility rate is high. Georgia ranks 7<sup>th</sup> among states in sending residents to other states and 4<sup>th</sup> in receiving residents from other states.<sup>2</sup> All told, 28% of Georgia's low-income young children have moved recently – well above the national average of 21%.<sup>3</sup>

The conditions facing Georgia's young children compel us to act to improve the services provided them and their families.

#### B. The Council's Thesis Statement

The goal of the Georgia State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (Council) is to improve outcomes for children so that they enter school ready to learn. Accomplishing this goal will require the coordinated, focused efforts of parents and the state's public and private partners. The Council will create a comprehensive plan – a roadmap to strengthen Georgia's existing infrastructure, to identify and fill gaps in services, and to coordinate and link programs.

To improve outcomes for children, the Council will focus on three primary objectives: 1. Improving the quality of care; 2. Empowering parents with relevant, accessible information; and 3. Unifying and coordinating child-centered data.

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<sup>1</sup> All data in this paragraph comes from the National Center on Children in Poverty's state data profile on low-income young children, available at <http://www.nccp.org/profiles/>.

<sup>2</sup> Pew Research Center, Social & Demographic Trends, reports on population movement, available at <http://pewsocialtrends.org/maps/migration/>.

<sup>3</sup> National Center on Children in Poverty's state data profile.

Research shows that the quality of service children receive in early education and care programs impacts their social, emotional, and academic development, including entering school ready to learn and on track to read at or above grade level by the end of third grade. The Council's work will help parents better understand what constitutes quality care and education and will support improving the quality of early education and care at the individual provider and system level.

Parents are a child's first teacher, and one way to empower parents is to provide them with appropriate, relevant, and timely information to help assure that the needs of children are identified and served. The Council is committed to providing parents with useful and relevant information to help them support and advocate for their child. The Council will also work to ensure that parents have high-quality options and services that benefit their child.

The Council's objective of unifying and coordinating child-centered data is critical for improving program quality and empowering parents. Georgia needs a unified early learning data system that provides parents with the information they need to advocate on behalf of their children; educators with the information they need to serve those children; and policymakers with the information they need to manage the state's resources. Having accurate data from Georgia's early care and education stakeholders will also help solve fundamental issues like care coordination, filling gaps in services, follow-up on children's health and developmental screenings, assessing quality in child care and early education programs, and developing strategies to improve quality.

By the end of the grant period, Georgia will have a roadmap for a coordinated, accessible system that improves the quality of early education and care, empowers parents, and unifies and

coordinates child-centered data. The system will enhance the well-being of and improve outcomes for Georgia's children so that they enter school ready to learn.

## **II. The Availability of Early Childhood Education in Georgia**

### **A. Available Programming**

The three primary education and care programs serving Georgia's children are state pre-k, child care, and Head Start; a description of each is provided below.

Another important funding stream for young children is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), only two states serve a lower percentage of three and four year olds through special education preschool than the 3.2% served in Georgia. Better service to children identified for special education is an important element of the Council's work.

Each of these programs plays a major role in school readiness and will be a full partner in the work of the Council. The Council recognizes that these programs will need to work not only with each other but with many other health and human services provided through federal and state funding. The Council is also committed to appropriately supporting those parents who choose not to enroll their children in government-funded programming or programming outside the home.

#### *1. State Pre-K*

Georgia's Pre-K Program is one of the nation's oldest, largest, and best. According to the annual survey by NIEER, only two other states serve a higher percentage of their four year olds in state pre-k. Children are served for 6.5 hours per day, five days a week, and the program is open to all children regardless of income. Programs are provided in a mixed delivery system,

including the public schools and a range of private providers.<sup>4</sup> The program serves 81,136 children; 32,401 (39.9%) are white, 30,688 (37.8%) are black, and 10,542 (13%) are Hispanic. More than half of the children (54.9%) are considered economically at risk. Unlike child care and Head Start (discussed below), state pre-k has no restrictions based on income; its demographic statistics are much more reflective of the state's overall population than child care or Head Start, although the population of state pre-k still has higher percentages of black and Hispanic children than the overall population.

Georgia has long been aware of the need to provide infrastructure supporting the local delivery of quality pre-k. The state has done substantial work to develop content standards that all providers must use that are directly correlated to Georgia's kindergarten standards. Georgia also has piloted and is now implementing a statewide Pre-K Child Assessment based on the Work Sampling System, and teachers have been trained in the assessment's use. In addition, the state's efforts to improve inter-rater reliability have led to better and more consistent state oversight. Unique identifiers are assigned to children in state pre-k (both public and private settings) that follow the child through the state's longitudinal data system. Georgia's Pre-K Program currently meets nine of the 10 quality benchmarks developed by NIEER; as of July 1, 2010, Georgia will meet all 10 of NIEER's quality benchmarks.

Georgia recently received the results of an evaluation of the pre-k program performed by the FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.<sup>5</sup> The evaluation found that almost all of the classes evaluated met or exceeded Georgia's operating guidelines for the pre-k program. The overall quality was rated "medium," meaning that

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<sup>4</sup> *The State of Preschool 2008*, National Institute for Early Education Research, Barnett et al., available online at <http://nieer.org/yearbook/>, at pp. 48-49 (Georgia profile).

<sup>5</sup> Maxwell, K.L., Early, D.M., Bryant, D., Kraus, S. Hume, K. & Crawford, G. (2009). *Georgia Study of early care and education: Findings from Georgia's Pre-K Program – Executive summary*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, FPG Child Development Institute.

environments were generally safe and there was access to good quality materials, but activities and interactions could have been more enriching and purposeful. The quality of emotional support in classrooms and the quality of classroom organization were rated as high, but the quality of instructional support was generally low. The evaluation found that the existing program provides a strong foundation for improvement; based on the evaluation's recommendations, changes have already been initiated.

## 2. *Child Care*

Child care in Georgia is provided primarily by licensed, center-based caregivers. Of young children enrolled in subsidized child care programs in Georgia, the percentage in center-based care (85%) and licensed care (97%) is substantially higher than the national averages (61% and 76%, respectively).<sup>6</sup> The population of preschool children in child care also skews young with 35% of birth to two year olds enrolled (compared to a national average of 30%) and 33% of three to five year olds enrolled (compared to a national average of 35%).<sup>7</sup> The great majority of children in Child Care & Development Fund subsidized child care are from single-parent families – 92.6%, according to September 2009 data from the Department of Human Services. The Department also reported that the vast majority of children in subsidized child care are black (78.9%).

While a high percentage of Georgia's subsidized child care is in centers and offered by licensed providers, historically Georgia's requirements for licensed care have been among the nation's least restrictive. The staffing ratios and maximum group sizes allowed in Georgia have been among the most permissive in the 50 states, and Georgia has also been behind other states

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<sup>6</sup> *Child Care Participation State Profile*, Georgia state profile, Center for Law and Social Policy, available online at [http://www.clasp.org/in\\_the\\_states?id=0010](http://www.clasp.org/in_the_states?id=0010).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

in its pre-service requirements for providers.<sup>8</sup> Recently the state has undertaken administrative changes to its child care quality requirements with the goal of providing a better experience and quality for the children enrolled.

Georgia recently received the results of an evaluation performed by the FPG Child Development Institute at UNC-Chapel Hill on the quality of care provided by Georgia child care centers.<sup>9</sup> The evaluation found that centers met or exceeded state licensing requirements but that care was generally of low to medium quality, with infants and toddlers receiving the lowest quality care. Two-thirds of infant/toddler classrooms and one-third of preschool (non Georgia Pre-K) classrooms were rated as low quality. The evaluation points out the need for improved quality of care in Georgia, particularly for infants and toddlers.

### 3. *Head Start*

Head Start is a federal-to-local program with a long history of serving children in the greatest need and providing comprehensive services beyond classroom education. Since 1965, it has provided comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families; in its 45 years it has served nearly 25 million children nationwide. Studies have shown that Head Start has a positive impact on children in both the short and the long term with benefits cutting across more than one developmental domain.

The profile of Head Start enrollees in Georgia is rather unusual in that Georgia is one of only a handful of states to serve a higher percentage of its three-year-old cohort than of its four-year-old cohort.<sup>10</sup> The percentage of three year olds served is slightly above the national average,

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<sup>8</sup> *The State of Preschool 2008f*, at pp. 246-247.

<sup>9</sup> Maxwell, K.L., Early, D.M., Bryant, D., Kraus, S. Hume, K. & Crawford, G. (2009). *Georgia Study of early care and education: Child care center findings – Executive summary*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, FPG Child Development Institute.

<sup>10</sup> *The State of Preschool 2008*. Georgia's profile is on pages 48-49, and comparative data were derived from a review of profiles for the nation as a whole and other states. The NIEER data shows 9% of Georgia three year

but the percentage of four year olds served has been low by national standards.<sup>11</sup> The success of the state's preschool program for four year olds and its successful partnering with Head Start through a collaborative delivery model is a major factor in that percentage as it affects the provision of services needed to accommodate four year olds through Head Start.

Recent national data shows that Head Start in Georgia serves a population that is disproportionately black compared to other states. In Georgia 69% of Head Start enrollees are black, compared to 29% nationally.<sup>12</sup> On the flip side 21% of Georgia's Head Start children are white (compared to 39% nationally), and 19% are Hispanic (36%).<sup>13</sup> The percentage of children in Georgia Head Start who are primarily Spanish speakers is also much lower than the national percentage – 12% to 26%.<sup>14</sup> Georgia for many years has had one of the nation's highest percentages of black residents, and while in the 1990s Georgia had one of the nation's fastest-growing Hispanic populations, the state as a whole still has a lower-than-average percentage of Hispanic residents.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, the percentage of Head Start enrollees in Georgia from a single-parent family (74%) is markedly higher than the national percentage (57%).<sup>16</sup>

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olds enrolled in Head Start and 7% of four year olds; in fact, more recent data from Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning shows that the percentage of three year olds enrolled has jumped to 9.8%, and the percentage of four year olds has increased to 8%.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> *Head Start by the Numbers*, Georgia state profile, Center for Law and Social Policy, available online at [http://www.clasp.org/in\\_the\\_states?id=0010](http://www.clasp.org/in_the_states?id=0010), at p.2. The percentages do not add up to 100% because in the data collected children considered Hispanic can also be counted as white or black.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* at p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> United States Census data, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

<sup>16</sup> *Head Start by the Numbers*, Georgia state profile, n. 6 above, at p. 2.

B. Status of Current Collaboration and Governance

Georgia's State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care is new, created by executive order of Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue on September 30, 2009. However, the Council builds on a tradition of collaboration in Georgia's government and on a recognition that agencies and programs must work together to improve outcomes for children.

Georgia is one of only a few states to have a stand-alone agency with authority over early childhood programs. In 2004, Governor Perdue and the Georgia General Assembly created Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning to serve the needs of children ages birth through five and their families. Its services include state pre-k, child care for young children, federal nutrition programs (the Child and Adult Care Food Program [CACFP] and the Summer Food Service Program [SFSP]), and Georgia Head Start Collaboration Office (Head Start itself is administered by the federal Department of Health and Human Services). Bright from the Start is the lead agency in Georgia's State Advisory Council funding application.

In addition to focusing on the special needs of young children, Georgia has recognized that education is a lifelong process beginning at birth and continuing through higher education. Governor Perdue created an Alliance of Education Agency Heads, which addresses the educational needs of students throughout their careers. The Alliance is chaired by Kathy Cox, Georgia's elected State Superintendent of Schools; it also includes Dr. Holly Robinson, Commissioner of Bright from the Start, and the five other education agency heads in Georgia.

Georgia has also recognized that to serve children properly requires an effort beyond traditional education agencies, and the First Lady's Children's Cabinet has brought together representatives from education, health, human services, and juvenile justice agencies to work

together on behalf of Georgia's children. First Lady Mary Perdue has made children her primary policy focus for the last seven years. Governor Perdue's executive order creating the Council requires that its work be aligned with that of the First Lady's Children's Cabinet, and several members of the cabinet are active participants in the Council. The Council members who also serve on the First Lady's Children's Cabinet are Superintendent Cox; Commissioner Robinson; B.J. Walker, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS); Dr. Frank Shelp, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Studies; Jen Bennecke, Executive Director, Governor's Office for Children and Families; and Dr. Carladenise Edwards, Interim Commissioner, Department of Community Health.

DHS and Commissioner B.J. Walker have also played a leadership role in serving young children. The agency supports a wide range of services for families and children, including child care. The participation of DHS in the Council's work will help solidify the Council as a forum for collaboration among education and human services agencies and providers.

The Council's work will build on the progress already made in Georgia. One new dimension that the Council will bring is more formal collaboration between state government and its outside partners. Parents are the most important force in the life of a young child, and while state government can play a valuable role in supporting parents and children, it cannot and should not do that alone. The Council brings together a diverse group of leaders from multiple professional fields and from all across the state, united by a common passion: improving outcomes for young children in Georgia.

C. Status of State Early Learning Standards and Professional Development

Governor Perdue is a national leader in the effort to develop common and internationally benchmarked state K-12 learning standards. He has served as co-chair of the Common Core State Standards Initiative, a key element of the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top competition. His national leadership builds on the work already undertaken in Georgia – led by Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox and the State Board of Education – to improve the rigor of K-12 standards and develop new curriculum. With almost every state in the nation poised to adopt new K-12 standards developed through the Common Core process, it is critical that early learning standards be appropriately connected to those K-12 standards – while remaining age- and developmentally-appropriate. Georgia's commitment to learning standards has been strong, and as the entire nation moves toward a generation of standards far more rigorous and articulated than the generation before, Georgia will continue to be on the cutting edge.

To improve student outcomes, it is essential that learning standards provide a smooth continuum anchored by age-appropriate standards for young children at one end and college- and career-readiness at the other. The goal for Georgia should be to have the following progression of research-based standards:

- Age-appropriate learning standards for our youngest children, ages birth through five, that ensure their readiness for kindergarten.
- Reading standards articulated from birth through third grade.
- Early elementary standards that build on the early learning standards while preparing children for the rigorous work ahead in middle and high school.
- High school standards anchored to college and career readiness with an aligned progression of standards in middle school that prepare students for a rigorous high

school experience. Work underway in the Common Core State Standards initiative will identify a model for state college- and career-ready standards. Georgia has signed on to the common core initiative.

Georgia's commitment to standards-based reform has already been extended to early learning. Georgia has initiated work to articulate learning standards from birth through age five defining age-appropriate standards for children before pre-k and kindergarten entry. The review includes Georgia Early Learning Standards, Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards, Head Start Child Outcomes, and Georgia Performance Standards for kindergarten through third grade; the project will also study alignment between the pre-k content standards and the work sampling assessments used in Georgia's Pre-K Program. The purpose is to ensure deep alignment that starts with birth-to-five programs and continues through the early elementary grades based on developmentally-appropriate practices for young children and the revised early elementary standards based on the common core. These efforts will help establish Georgia as a national leader in providing a seamless progression of learning standards for children throughout their academic careers.

Georgia has already done major work to create appropriate, research-based learning standards for early learning. At this time, however, Georgia – like most states – is committed to adopting the Common Core State Standards. The early learning standards must be high-quality and age appropriate, but because it is important that they be articulated to the K-12 standards, any revisions to the K-12 standards will naturally trigger some review at the early learning level.

Professional development has been a significant area of focus for Georgia. Georgia has expended significant resources developing a Professional Development System, including a teacher registry for early childhood care and education professionals and a trainer/training

approval system. Ultimately, the system will be a tool for teachers to identify the professional development that suits their needs and for the state to help ensure program quality. The trainer approval system ensures that trainers are competent to provide instruction and assigns trainers to levels based on their credentials. Professional development is approved if the trainer is qualified and the professional development satisfies the needs of the provider. In addition, Georgia has identified "career levels" that can help inform teacher professional development choices.

While it is essential to plan for the early childhood workforce of the future, the state's professional development offerings must recognize and support the many talented and hard working early childhood personnel currently in place. Georgia has already made strides to improve professional development, including implementing the SCHOLARSHIPS program, the INCENTIVES program, and the FIRST (First-time Incentive to Raise Standards for Teachers) program, all of which support and reward early childhood personnel for enhancing their credentials. The state should, however, continue to evaluate how professional development should look for multiple programs, potentially using that opportunity to push for greater consistency across programs.

### **III. The Council's Action Agenda: Strategies for Increasing the Number of Children Ready for Kindergarten**

Georgia's action agenda recognizes that improving outcomes for children will demand a collaborative approach and a commitment of time and energy. The implementation of this agenda may be decelerated by Georgia's current fiscal crisis, and the sustainability of the Council's efforts may also be affected by the state's economic situation. On the other hand, the implementation of this agenda may be accelerated if the federal government provides additional

financial support focusing on early childhood education and care, or if the state's budget situation improves more rapidly than anticipated.

The Council's overarching goal for the grant is that all children enter kindergarten ready to learn. The primary objectives under this goal are: (1) Improving program quality; (2) Empowering parents; and (3) Unifying and coordinating our data. All of the plans identified in this application are meant to increase the number of children who enter kindergarten ready to learn. However, given the need for improved data and Georgia's commitment to a needs assessment process, the Council expects that better defined goals for improving kindergarten readiness will be a product of its work yet to come.

A. Improving Program Quality

1. *The Needs Assessment*

Our needs assessment will begin by articulating a vision of a coordinated system, with actionable recommendations for better policies in a range of areas that affect children from birth through school entry. The birth to five system will be the first stage of a seamless progression for children from birth through elementary school with the full range of early learning programs aligned with K-12. Developing a meaningful vision will require the Council's high-level leadership and the engagement of a range of key stakeholders. Our vision will focus on the needs of young children and families; we will look at the population of young children in Georgia and will make recommendations for how their needs can best be met. The vision will begin and end with the importance of parents, but it must also include a discussion of the appropriate role of government and what the government's programs will look like when the Council's vision is realized.

One of the first important actions in the needs assessment process will be to provide a strong definition of program quality. While there are numerous elements of quality, those elements are best considered in the context of a comprehensive plan; none of the elements on their own are sufficient to guarantee program quality, and a comprehensive plan can discuss how they interrelate. The Council's commitment is to define quality in a manner that recognizes the many developmental needs of young children and the fact that both cognitive and non-cognitive development are essential to a child's ultimate success in school and beyond. This definition should be developed in consultation with key stakeholders but must be designed to lead to positive outcomes for children (including school readiness and reading at grade level by third grade). The definition will help to operationalize the key concepts of program quality.

One suggested definition (based on work by the Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University) is as follows:

Quality is the convergence of factors in a child's environment and/or experiences that promote the child's optimal physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. In an out-of-home program setting, this requires:

- Highly skilled staff
- Small class sizes; high adult to child ratios
- Language rich environment
- Developmentally appropriate curriculum
- Safe physical setting
- Warm, responsive interactions between children and staff
- Sensitivity to a child's individual needs
- High levels of child participation

Building on this key initial step of defining quality, the Council can design systems to ensure that providers understand the definition of quality and can develop a plan for ensuring that government-funded providers ultimately have the support needed to reach the agreed-upon threshold. The Council's definition of quality should also guide its parental outreach efforts to inform parents about what quality programming is and how they can look for it. Ultimately the Council will recommend a "quality continuum" that gives parents and providers meaningful and useful information about program offerings.

The Council's vision will focus on early education and care but will also address how best to support parents in fulfilling the health, nutrition, and care needs of the youngest Georgians. The responsibility of parents to their children will be of primary importance to the Council, and discussions of government programs will be in the context of how to support parents in fulfilling their responsibilities. Among government programs, Head Start provides a range of support services, and the partnership between Head Start and pre-k has helped to expand the scope of service provision, but more could be done to make comprehensive services portable – so they follow the child who needs them across programs. We also know that many of our youngest children would benefit from high-quality comprehensive services that are currently unavailable, particularly given research showing that the most significant brain development occurs in the first 18 months of life. So while our vision will incorporate all of the Council's objectives, we will have a special focus on improving the quality of the services available to Georgia parents for their young children.

Once our vision has been articulated, we can assess Georgia's need by comparing the vision to the current reality. Georgia has already established itself as a leader in self-evaluating its current reality, including the release of a study by the FPG Child Development Institute

regarding the quality of Georgia's child care. Our needs assessment will include a thorough review of where we currently stand based in large part on research that has already been completed. We know that we have some real strengths, including Georgia's Pre-K Program, and that many children receive quality education and care – but we also know that we have farther to go, and our needs assessment will honestly inform where we have work to do.

After we establish the vision and the current reality, we will articulate a roadmap for getting from where we are to where we want to go. We will build upon our progress and the lessons we have learned, including our successes and challenges in implementing pre-k statewide. The comprehensive plan will identify the resource levels needed to achieve the stated goals, recognizing that the current fiscal climate does not allow for the immediate infusion of additional resources. Because of that, the plan will address the utilization of existing resources, and may suggest repurposing funds where they can more effectively serve the state's goals. Our discussion of resources will also identify the proper role for parents, as well as federal, state, and local governments. Our plan will identify federal and state barriers that must be overcome to achieve the long term vision, and will suggest legal and regulatory changes necessary for the plan to be implemented.

The comprehensive plan is meant to provide a long-term vision for Georgia, but we know that for the long term vision to be realized, a lot of work needs to happen immediately. For the Council's recommendations to have an impact on the lives of young children, they need to be translated into policy change; where we identify policies that are not consistent with our vision for young children, we will recommend changing the policies to improve child outcomes.

The needs assessment should complement – and build upon – other state policy initiatives, including the recently-filed Race to the Top application. (Georgia finished third in the first round of the competition.) The process will include the following steps:

- The Council should lead a statewide conversation about the needs of young children and their families. As part of that conversation, the Council should identify which needs are appropriately served by government-funded programs. This discussion will involve public meetings in different parts of the state with invitations sent to a wide range of constituents to participate.
- To ensure that the conversation builds on existing efforts to obtain feedback from parents and families, Council staff will coordinate with existing parent advisory councils for agencies and programs. Council staff will develop an inventory of existing parent advisory council activities to help inform Council members and will invite parent advisory groups to participate in the Council's process. The Council will also coordinate with the Georgia Council on Aging and the National Center on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren to ensure that grandparents and seniors have the opportunity to participate in the Council's work.
- Based on its expertise and the feedback received from the public, the Council should outline a vision for providing service to young children in Georgia. The plan will be aspirational and long-term (five to 10 years) with the idea that, while resources may not be currently available to implement major elements of the plan, having the plan will allow the state to make better decisions about its current use of resources.

- On a parallel track to the conversations contemplated in the preceding bulleted paragraphs, the state will establish baselines of which children are participating in which programs and the quality of those programs.
- With the vision and baseline data in hand, the Council will develop a roadmap for getting from where the state is to where it plans to be. That roadmap will include recommendations for yearly benchmarks to ensure the state is progressing toward its vision.
- Based on the agreed-upon definition of quality, the Council will make recommendations for developing and maintaining a Georgia quality continuum; for providing supports to providers to reach the expected level of quality; and for providing public information about the state's quality improvement efforts. The Council will specifically discuss the level of resources needed to implement the definition of quality given the state's goals for child access to existing programs.
- The Council will identify any barriers in federal or state law to the implementation of its vision.
- The Council will also design a process for continually updating the comprehensive plan and needs assessment in future years.

The Council's role will be to drive high-level policy conversation. The comprehensive plan and needs assessment will not ultimately be a series of program-centered wish lists but will instead be a parent- and child-focused document. Federal grant funding will be used to support the process of holding public hearings around the state, preparing a report, and ensuring that the report is disseminated. The budget of \$125,000 for the needs assessment will allow the Council to hire a consultant or firm to support the following:

- Planning and organizing the needs assessment;
- Determining the needs assessment methodology;
- Collecting needs assessment data; and
- Summarizing and disseminating needs assessment results and developing a strategic action plan.

The Council will ultimately present a long-term vision for providing service to young children in Georgia.

- The conversation will build on existing efforts to obtain feedback from parents and families, including parent advisory groups and grandparent-focused groups.
- Staff will work to establish baselines of which children are participating in which programs, and the quality of those programs. The final report will include a roadmap for getting from where the state is to where it needs to be.

The report will include recommendations for a quality continuum and will identify barriers in state or federal law.

## 2. *Key Elements of Program Quality*

Not all children are enrolled in programs outside the home – but for those who are, the quality of their experiences in those programs plays a significant role in determining whether they enter school ready. A successful quality early childhood program is composed of many key elements, and in recent years Georgia has focused increasingly on these key elements. The following elements meet two important criteria for inclusion in our federal grant application: one, they make a major contribution to school readiness on a system-wide basis; and two, they are areas where the Council's expertise and focus can make the most difference with regard to improving policy and child outcomes. The application describes three projects the Council will

undertake to improve program quality, and then other key policy areas where quality improvement projects are already underway.

a. Council Grant-Funded Projects to Improve Quality

i. Staff Qualifications and Higher Education Capacity

Georgia recognizes that the most important determinant in the experience of young children is the engagement of adults around them. When those adults are employees in government-funded programs, the government has an obligation to help ensure that those adults are qualified and trained to perform their jobs properly. This requires state agencies to partner with higher education institutions and providers – among others – to ensure that educators and caregivers are in a position to succeed.

The state has already taken numerous steps to change regulations in ways that lead to improved personnel quality. The state's efforts to date have focused on raising the qualifications floor. On an ongoing basis, Georgia needs to consider the appropriate minimum requirements for personnel in programs for young children, and the Council should remain abreast of the implementation of new rules with an eye toward the evolution of those rules. The Council can also play a cross-agency role in helping to bring consistency to the requirements for providers in multiple programs.

The Council will also go beyond discussions of minimum quality. With state agencies, private providers, and higher education at the same table, the conversation should move beyond "floor" and into how Georgia can create a market where quality personnel are properly valued. In the future, providers should have a much easier time identifying and hiring quality personnel, and higher education should be training those quality personnel. But providers alone cannot build

this system, nor should higher education be expected to mobilize in support of a market that does not yet exist. Only through working together can systemic personnel change be brought about.

The Council will identify the staff qualifications needed to successfully execute the comprehensive plan. The Council's work will seek to bring coherence to the staff qualifications in multiple programs while recognizing that different programs play different roles and at this time will appropriately have some differences in provider qualifications. Once the Council has identified the qualifications of the Georgia early childhood workforce needed to implement its vision, it will use the existing, updated professional development registry (see Section II.C above) to determine how much of the vision has been realized. The baseline information in the registry can be used to develop a gap analysis. Based on the gap analysis, the Council will work with its provider partners to understand what market conditions are needed to bring the right personnel into the early childhood field.

The Council will, on a parallel track, measure the higher education pipeline producing qualified personnel for the field. Assuming a gap between the end-goal needs of the field and the current capacity of higher education, the Council will work with its higher education partners and others to plan for an increase in higher education capacity.

As with the needs assessment, the Council's role will be to drive high-level conversation. We expect that, from a process standpoint, the issue of staff qualifications will be largely included in the overall needs assessment discussion, because quality personnel are so central to any goals the Council might wish to achieve in the comprehensive plan. This will be a high-priority area within the planning process. The Council is allocating \$100,000 to contract with a consultant or firm to facilitate the strategic planning process in this area. While initial discussions can begin while the needs assessment is going on, we expect this work to be

incubated within the larger needs assessment discussion, and then emerge in later stages of the grant after the state's overall needs have been better defined.

ii. Program Oversight and Monitoring

Each state agency works to ensure that local programs serving young children are properly fulfilling their responsibilities. Done correctly, monitoring can be a valuable way for the state and local programs to communicate how best to serve children and is the process by which the state tracks the impact of its investment in a range of programs. Done incorrectly, monitoring is a series of disconnected visits from state inspectors that take on a punitive tone and can leave providers in a tangle of overlapping and inconsistent mandates. In a time of limited resources, the state must ensure not only that programs use state funds effectively but that the state connects with those programs in a way that uses everyone's time efficiently and that communicates effectively about serving children.<sup>17</sup>

In Georgia, the current scope of monitoring is often limited and does not adequately support some of the service providers that might need the most assistance. In some instances the state has difficulty finding and retaining qualified personnel to perform monitoring. In other instances quality personnel are available, but the state simply has no resources to hire personnel and provide oversight.

Georgia has begun improving its oversight and monitoring. In a state as large as Georgia, one significant issue is inter-rater reliability, and the state has done extensive work to ensure reliability in its pre-k program; that work is already underway in child care and other programs. In addition the state has redone the mapping of child care services and completed a revised child

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<sup>17</sup> Head Start is monitored directly by the federal government, although providers who offer Head Start may be subject to state-level monitoring if they also offer state-funded programs.

care resource and referral system based on performance measures. These measures help ensure that program offerings are part of a system, not just a series of unconnected services.

Improving monitoring is not simply a matter of hiring more personnel and sending them to observe programs. Improved monitoring will start with improved data analysis to identify programs with issues that need to be addressed. Then the state – in a manner coordinated across agencies and funding streams – should identify those programs with the greatest need, and mobilize monitoring by trained personnel who address the specific issues identified. That way, monitoring personnel will utilize their time more effectively, and the time spent with individual programs will have a greater impact on child outcomes. For that reason local programs should be involved in the design of new monitoring protocols to ensure that the process is not an adversarial compliance exercise but is a tool for driving needed improvement. Bright from the Start and the Department of Human Services are currently involved in a project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide specialized, intensive technical assistance to subsidized child care entities not in compliance with basic child care rules and regulations.

The state's successful execution of its oversight role will be a critical part of the success of any comprehensive plan. As part of the state's needs assessment, the Council will identify the state's role in ensuring program quality and articulate what resources the state will need to deploy to ensure quality as programs evolve and expand. This will include recommendations for cross-agency partnerships that best leverage state funding and personnel.

Georgia is allocating \$576,562 for this work, part of which will be used for Bright from the Start to hire a consultant to design an improved monitoring and oversight plan. The work will include as much of the following as possible, depending on bids:

<u>Phase I: Analysis</u>	Provide overall assessment of monitoring programs, develop proposal for unified monitoring, and facilitate discussions to establish feasibility
<u>Phase II: Detailed Analysis</u>	Evaluate technology implications, prepare detailed cost/benefit analysis, deliver final proposal with detailed work plan, and facilitate negotiations among key stakeholders
<u>Phase III: Mobilization</u>	Develop implementation plan in coordination with other projects, launch pilot program, evaluate pilot results, and adjust implementation plans based on pilot
<u>Phase IV: Implementation</u>	Mobilize resources for full implementation, monitor and evaluate performance of full implementation, transition to on-going operations

### iii. Health Screening and Healthy Development

Health and developmental screenings for children enrolled in early care and education programs is a widely acknowledged best practice. State pre-k and Head Start offer screening, including physical, mental, and developmental screenings that measure or test vision, hearing, fine and gross motor skills, propensity for congenital diseases, and cognition. The state should work with local providers and parents to ensure that screening is offered in the most coordinated and efficient manner. This could include expanding screening for infants and toddlers, who are typically the most in need of developmental screening and the least likely to be enrolled in programs that offer it.

More importantly, Georgia should develop plans to help parents follow up on the results obtained in health screenings, particularly to improve access to the services needed for children to achieve their developmental milestones. Children identified through screening as requiring follow-up services are not necessarily provided with those services, and the state can help provide parents with the information and resources necessary to translate screening results into appropriate health and developmental care. Additionally, Georgia currently has no data that

captures the results of the existing screening to identify what resources are needed. Improved data could lead to better mobilization of resources at the state and local level and could involve a mix of government agencies and private service providers.

Georgia recommends allocating \$574,750 for activities that include:

- Hiring a Statewide Manager for Early Childhood Health to oversee support efforts; a specialist to provide technical assistance; and several part time local advocates to help parents navigate health resources at the local level.
- Training early childhood mental health consultants and child care health consultants on using an evidenced-based best practice model. These consultants will then provide consultation to entities serving children ages birth to five.
- Conducting early childhood health resource mapping and supporting existing efforts to include focus on early childhood health and mental health resources in Georgia.
- Partnering with Georgia's "211" United Way referral service to ensure that parents have easy access to information about programs for young children. Expanding the Georgia crisis line to include early childhood mental health. Hiring contractor to develop protocols and training for handling early childhood mental health situations. Hiring a contractor to enhance existing technology network to handle increased call demand and documentation. Both contractors will provide ongoing technical assistance/technical support for early childhood mental health and technology.

b. Other Related Work to Improve Quality

i. Standards and Professional Development

Georgia's work on standards and professional development is described more fully in Section II.E above. Georgia is currently spending \$1,378,000 on professional development. Building on the work described in II.E, the Council – through the needs assessment and other avenues – will consider ways to improve Georgia's standards and professional development and to fit those efforts into larger quality improvement plans.

ii. Curriculum

While Georgia's standards represent a baseline expectation for what students are expected to know and do, quality curriculum is what really drives classroom instruction. Curriculum should be aligned to the standards and should help teachers guide their students in developmentally appropriate ways. Early learners develop in multiple domains and at different paces, and ideally, teachers will be able to provide instruction that reaches children where they are and helps them to grow to the best of their ability. Programs in Georgia should have access to good choices of research-based curricula that allow teachers to educate young children in developmentally appropriate ways.

iii. Assessment

Georgia uses a work sampling assessment in Georgia's Pre-K Program, and Head Start also uses research-based assessment tools. State leadership in developing and implementing assessment is critical at this time; early learning assessment is a powerful tool for improving child outcomes but only if it is implemented properly and if the results are used for appropriate purposes. The rollout of assessment in the state pre-k program has been successful, but the state could now consider how to use research-based assessments in a wider range of settings.

Additionally, work is underway to correlate work sampling with Georgia's GKIDS (Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills) kindergarten assessment. Children and

educators will benefit from state assessments that are an integrated part of a coherent assessment plan, and in the coming years Georgia will have the opportunity to build on its initial efforts in that important work.

With the implementation of the Pre-K Child Assessment underway, major changes in assessment policy are not a priority for the Council at this time. However, under the Council's auspices, the agencies responsible for implementing assessment will convene experts and stakeholders to discuss how assessments could best be implemented and aligned. Georgia is currently spending \$449,388 to support its early learning assessment program, and the Council will focus on ways to leverage other available funding to support the state's investment.

#### iv. Coordination and Integration

A theme that runs through many of the elements of a quality early childhood education and care system is that of coordination and integration. Ultimately, this requires coordination among providers, collaboration among public and private resource providers, and a shared set of goals that individual entities can work together to achieve.

Georgia's state agencies recognize that they must work together to improve their services. Some of the state's policies and practices might benefit by rethinking them from the perspective of the provider, the local school superintendent, or the parent. Our action agenda recognizes the need to provide service in a consistent and seamless manner.

B. Empowering Parents

Parents are a child's first teacher, and parental primacy and responsibility are important values for the Council. Parents play the most important role in the development of their children, and to improve school readiness statewide will require improving support for parents. Many parents are eager to do everything they can for their children but are unaware of how a child's brain develops and what they can do to encourage their child's well-being. Several state agencies and many local providers have focused on improving parent engagement and family outreach. Programs outside the home can play an important role in supporting child development; for parents who do enroll their children in programs, the most successful programs will be those that help parents improve their ability to become lifelong advocates for their children.

In Georgia, we recognize that parent engagement needs to occur on at least two levels:

- One is informing all parents about resources available to them as they raise their child, resources that include, but are not limited to, government programs. Many parents want to be involved but suffer either from not having enough information about the services they can access or from having so much information they cannot make sense of it. The action agenda should develop plans to ensure that parents have *useful* information to help guide their choices. (Ultimately, the Council's goal is to make recommendations that not only support parents by helping them navigate existing programs but that also suggest ways the system as a whole can be most responsive to the actual needs of parents; this work will be advanced through the comprehensive plan.)
- Another is to ensure that in government-funded programs parents work with program providers to ensure that children receive high-quality and consistent

support. If parents and providers work as a team focused on the child's development, the child's long-term outcomes improve.

Informing parents about available resources can occur in several dimensions and build on the work of existing Georgia programs. For example, Georgia's Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies play a key role in connecting parents to the right services for their children, and Georgia's Pre-K Program resource coordinators serve more than 50,000 children. Family services were provided to another 28,000 families through Head Start. Bright from the Start funds a statewide parent referral system through which parents can locate child care programs anywhere in Georgia by calling one number or visiting one website. Also, Bright from the Start's website contains relevant and useful data in an easily accessible format, and is used by parents across the state to view reports from licensing and Pre-K visits to child care centers.

The state should provide some resources developed across agencies that provide simple and complete information to all parents in a relevant and well-organized manner. These resources will ultimately include information about the quality ratings of programs and how parents can choose programs that are high-quality and will support their child's development. In addition, other resources could be targeted by region or community, or to parents of children with particular needs (for example, parents in homes where the primary language is not English). Finally, when the state has improved its ability to use data, it can design targeted outreach to parents based on the specific needs of their children – as long as that outreach is sensitive to the role of the parent and is in accordance with all relevant privacy laws.

A critical element of successful parental empowerment is cultural competency. In a diverse state like Georgia, we must be sensitive to the need to reach many different kinds of parents where they are; a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to be successful. Many parents

will never choose to enroll their children in center-based education or care, but even those parents could benefit from thoughtful information and support provided by the state. Engaging parents who are not connected to programs – and not likely to connect to programs on their own – will require innovative thinking, and the Council can help to develop specific strategies for appropriate outreach to those parents.

Once children are enrolled in programs, the state can partner with parents on issues relating to child development. Many programs have a parental support component, but those components may not be consistent within programs, let alone across programs. Working collaboratively, the state can design high-quality outreach to parents of young children that will be consistent across programs (and coordinated for parents whose children are in multiple programs). Improved outreach will help parents ensure that their children are in the right programs; help them understand how their children can best benefit from the program or programs they are in; and help them learn how to advocate for their children in future programs and the public schools.

We know that our many efforts have had some success, but from our rich experience in working with parents, we know that there are many parents that we simply have not had the tools or resources to support. Accordingly, our grant request includes funds to help provide parents with better information. Based on the identified strategies, activities to improve the empowerment of parents include the following:

- The Council will request that state agency staff inventory existing parent outreach efforts through multiple programs. With that inventory the Council will set a policy direction for staff to design an improved and aligned system of parent communication across multiple programs.

- The Council will consult with existing parent advisory councils for government agencies and programs to ensure that their ideas are incorporated into the Council's plans for parental outreach.
- The Council will develop a plan to inform all parents of publicly-funded services. Federal grant funds will be used to help create and disseminate these resources.
- The Council will identify particular populations in Georgia that might need specific kinds of programs or parental outreach and define a small set of priority populations for targeted resources. Federal funds can then be used to develop the outreach resources needed to reach those parents.
- The Council will ensure that the data work (described below) recognizes the need to support parental outreach.
- The Council will coordinate with the Early Education Commission's plans to build public awareness, so that the efforts can be aligned as part of a larger strategy.

The Council proposes to use \$500,000 for parental empowerment, which will allow

Bright from the Start to hire a consultant to undertake the following:

- Research focus groups – campaign planning
- Creative – print, online applications
- Print materials – printing/distribution
- Campaign targeted at parents, caregivers, and the general population
- Print/PSA placement costs

This budget will cover an initiative's startup costs, but the initiative's ultimate success will be dependent on partners taking a leadership role in distribution, including electronic media

(television, radio, Internet, etc.), print media (brochures, newsletters, billboards, etc.), and other effective forms of significant outreach.

C. Unifying and coordinating our data

Georgia needs a unified early learning data system that provides parents with the information they need to advocate on behalf of their children; educators with the information they need to serve those children; and policymakers with the information they need to manage the state's resources. Better data will allow Georgia to target its limited resources to strategies most likely to improve school readiness and to support educators and parents in their efforts to use resources most efficiently.

Linking data across agencies can have many positive outcomes:

- For parents, connecting data can make it easier for them to access services. For example, linked data could be used to create a "Children's Passport" (see following paragraph for more information) that gives parents information about their child's health. Beyond that, secure web portals could be designed that would allow parents to not only access data about their child but to use that data to identify programs and services that might benefit their child. Access to personalized information is a critical element of parental empowerment.
- For educators and providers, linked data could help them understand the needs of the children they serve. Better understanding children's needs will allow educators and providers to serve children more effectively – and potentially connect children to other available resources.
- For many others – including state policymakers and researchers – bringing disparate data sources together can provide information about what is needed and

what is available from a resource or policy level. This information can be used to manage resources more efficiently, to better understand the impact of early childhood education, and more.

Accordingly, the state's use of data should focus on identifying what it wants to use data to accomplish and then on building data supports that help the system meet its operating goals. For example, one major challenge in early childhood is identifying which children are being served by which programs. The First Lady's Children's Cabinet has been exploring the idea of a voluntary "Children's Passport" that would provide basic information about children across agencies and domains – health information (such as immunizations), information about enrollment in public supports and social services (such as Medicaid or WIC), and enrollment in early education and care. The use of a Passport and web portal would make it easier for parents to access programs and understand the opportunities available to their child.

Improving school readiness will require improvements in the state's use of data about children, providers, and programs. Linking data among state agencies will allow us to answer some key questions that right now the state simply cannot answer. While federal law obligates the Council to prepare a recommendation for a "unified" early childhood data system, it is important to note that "unified" does not have to mean "unitary." States are focusing on fulfilling this obligation by linking existing systems rather than attempting to create new systems that would require major upheaval in numerous state agencies.

A unified early learning data system should have horizontal and vertical dimensions. First, the state can connect data horizontally across agencies for children in the same age cohort to give a much richer understanding of what is actually happening with children prior to school entry (particularly in the critical infant-toddler years). That information should then be connected

vertically to K-12 longitudinal data that flows into higher education and workforce data – so that information from early childhood will follow the child. The vertical connection will depend on the use of a unique student identifier, which children are currently assigned in Georgia’s Pre-K Program. Georgia has long been a leader in developing its longitudinal data system, and strengthening the connection of early learning data to the K-12 system will significantly benefit parents, educators, researchers, and policymakers.

In addition to data that helps mobilize resources on behalf of children, the state’s early learning workforce has a different set of data needs. Improved workforce data could help identify system needs but should also help individual providers. For example, improved statewide data collection about personnel could benefit programs by allowing for greater certainty in the hiring process and tracking ongoing professional development. Georgia is currently updating its professional development registry for early care and education professionals, which will meet some of these needs in a user-friendly fashion.

Unifying and coordinating data is a policy area where the Council's convening role can be used effectively. Data linkages require partnerships among multiple agencies to serve multiple audiences; designing a unified system must be a collaborative enterprise. The Council's purpose will be to build linkages that allow parents and the entire early learning community to use data most effectively. Multi-agency data partnerships also require new governance structures, and Georgia has already launched work on a new governance structure as part of its obligations under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund of the ARRA; the Council's work can build on what has already been accomplished. The Alliance of Education Agency Heads has played a leadership role in improving linkages among state education agencies, and the Council can coordinate with and build on that work to include social service agencies.

In addition to governance issues, important privacy issues will need to be addressed in a linked data system. From a technical standpoint states have looked at ways to give different users different levels of access to data systems to ensure that users only can see data that is legal and appropriate for them to see. As the Council identifies its policy goals for a data system and designs a linked system with the technical capabilities to meet Georgia's needs, it should undertake a legal analysis to ensure that the system properly protects the privacy of children with data in the system; the final system implementation must include the safeguards needed to protect that data.

Ultimately, the measure of a state data system is not what it collects but what it produces. The state's early learning data system should be designed to meet the needs of the people who are (and should be) using it to improve outcomes for young children. Indeed, an improved data system is necessary for the Council to develop and complete its own work – without better cross-cutting data about enrollment, programs, and personnel than Georgia has today, it is simply not possible to systematically plan for and implement improved quality and access across programs. The unified data system's implementation must also address the privacy and security concerns that must be dealt with for any data system.

Georgia anticipates using federal grant funds to support its efforts to coordinate data about children, providers, and programs. In doing so, the Council will ensure that its work is aligned with other statewide data initiatives and commitments, including Georgia's commitments under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund of the ARRA, its longitudinal data systems grant from the Institute of Education Sciences, and its Race to the Top application. The action steps the Council plans include:

- Identifying key end users, including parents, educators, providers, researchers, and state policymakers.
- Once key end users have been identified, the Council will encourage staff to work with those end users to develop key questions that end users have that could be answered through early learning data linkages. This effort will build on national and other state efforts to identify the key questions that a unified data system should be able to answer. The process should recognize that different audiences will need different kinds of data to help them make decisions.
- After a preliminary set of key questions have been identified, staff will present that list to the Council for discussion. Staff will include in that presentation a list of the data elements needed to answer those questions.
- The primary use of federal funds in this area would be to answer the technical question of how data could be linked across agencies. While multi-agency data linkages raise many policy, governance, and technical issues, the Council has the policy expertise to work on resolving those issues. However, technical expertise will be needed to identify how data could be linked across agencies and what elements would need to be added to a linked system. As part of that effort, the state can also look for opportunities to reduce overlapping data burdens on those who help populate the system. Federal grant funds would be used to hire technical experts to analyze the state's existing data infrastructure and begin designing the technical infrastructure needed for the unified system contemplated by federal law.

- As the technical information is provided, the Council can address the policy and governance issues raised by a unified system and design a roadmap for the state to implement a system that is useful to end users, technically sound, practical to administer at the state level, not unduly burdensome to local providers, and complies with all appropriate privacy laws.

It is clear that with the amount of money provided through the state advisory council grant, Georgia cannot design AND implement a unified early childhood data system. Thus, the focus of the grant proposal is on the design work. While it is unlikely that state funds will be available for implementation any time soon, a variety of federally-funded data initiatives in both education and human services have been available; having a plan for a well-designed system would allow Georgia to identify funding opportunities from federal and private sources and use those funds as part of a larger plan, rather than as stand-alone initiatives. Ideally, the unified data system in its final form will be no more expensive to maintain than Georgia's current data systems and may even be less expensive; however, there will undoubtedly be some transition costs to a redesigned system, and federal funds may help make the transition possible.

Grant funds would be used primarily for Bright from the Start to hire a consultant or staff to assist with the technical work and with managing the process, including coordinating with other data grants in the state. The project can build on governance structures and data sharing agreements in place through Georgia's longitudinal data system project. The Council proposes to spend \$1,338,000 on data unification efforts. The work will be accomplished in three phases, described in the table below.

<b>Activities Funded</b>	
<i>Phase I: Gap Analysis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify which data systems, if any, capture requested elements</li> <li>• Analyze existing data systems for potential linkages</li> <li>• Analyze opportunities to reduce data collection burden on providers</li> </ul> <p>Grant funds would be used to hire technical experts (2) and to fund costs of staff time across agencies</p>
<i>Phase II: Designing Technical Architecture</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design technical architecture for linkages, including matching capability across multiple agencies</li> <li>• Document user reporting needs and functionality for all types and levels of users</li> <li>• Provide initial design for portals for multiple end users, including parents, researchers, and providers</li> <li>• Design training and technical assistance plan for agencies and providers contributing to system</li> </ul> <p>Grant funds would be used to hire additional technical experts (technical architect, business analyst) and to fund costs of staff time across agencies</p>
<i>Phase III: Planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop cost estimate for implementing integration plan, including training and technical assistance</li> <li>• Provide recommendations for pilot test</li> </ul>

D. Conclusion

The goal of the Georgia State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care is that Georgia's children enter school ready to succeed. Through its focus on improving quality, empowering parents, and unifying and coordinating data, the Council will work collaboratively toward this goal. By working together, key stakeholders in early childhood education and care can lay a solid foundation for the future of Georgia.

#### IV. Personnel, Budget, and Work Plan

##### A. Name/Agency Affiliation of Council Members

Name	Title	Agency
<b>Jen Bennecke</b>	Executive Director	Governor's Office for Children and Families
<b>Dr. Katie W. Brochu</b>	Superintendent	Whitfield County Schools *(Local education agency)
<b>Dawn Coleman</b>	Flight Chief	Moody Air Force Base; Department of Air Force, Family Member Programs *(Child care)
<b>Kathy Cox</b>	State Superintendent of Schools	Georgia Department of Education *(State education agency)
<b>Dr. Arlinda Eaton</b>	Dean, Bagwell College of Education	Kennesaw State University *(Higher education)
<b>Dr. Carladenise Edwards</b>	Interim Commissioner	Department of Community Health *(Health care)
<b>Kevin Fletcher</b>	Vice President	Georgia Power Community and Economic Development
<b>Laucenia Frasier</b>	Children & Youth Services Family Child Care Program Director	U.S. Army-Fort Stewart *(Child care)
<b>Tony Foskey</b>	Pre-K Director	Children's Friend Learning Centers *(Local provider)
<b>Janice Haker</b>	Head Start Collaboration Director	Bright from the Start *(Head Start State Collaboration)
<b>Dr. Carolyn Ormsby</b>	Retired Principal	Bright from the Start Board Member
<b>Dr. Holly Robinson</b>	Commissioner	Bright from the Start *(Child care)
<b>Dr. Frank Shelp</b>	Commissioner	Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Studies *(Mental health care)
<b>Gaye Smith</b>	Executive Director	Georgia Family Connection Partnership, Inc.
<b>Justine Strickland</b>	Assistant Commissioner	Bright from the Start *(Child care)
<b>B.J. Walker</b>	Commissioner	Department of Human Services *(Programs under sec. 619 or Part C of ADA)
<b>Susie Wilcher</b>	President, Georgia Head Start Association	Washington County Head Start/Georgia Pre-K Program; Georgia Head Start Association; Head Start Migrant/Seasonal Program *(Head Start agencies)
<b>Stephanie Blank</b>	Trustee	The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation
<b>Lauren Wright</b>	Education Policy Advisor	Governor's Office

\*Membership on Council mandated by statute

B. Goals, Objective, Activities, and Timelines for Each Year of Grant (Three Years; Projections of Accomplishments)

The following chart explains the timeline (beginning July 2010), activities, and accomplishments for the work described in this application.

Year 1

Quarter 1: July – September 2010

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Improving Program Quality	Needs Assessment	Hold public hearings (three CCR&R regions) Begin creating needs assessment document Determine needs assessment methodology	Draft of needs assessment document and plan for methodology
	Staff Qualifications/ Higher Ed. Capacity	(Begins Year 1, Qtr. 3)	
	Program Oversight/ Management	(Begins Year 2, Qtr. 5 of grant)	
	Health Screening	Create and convene subcommittee of existing collaborative partners including early childhood health and development stakeholders Advertise, interview, and hire Statewide Manager for Early Childhood Health and Development and Early Childhood Health Specialist and Parent Advocates Begin process for data collection and evaluation Engage wide range of partners in the development of a state plan and ongoing effective joint planning	Committee formed and meets Personnel hired Planning begins Data collection begins
Empowering Parents	Public Awareness	Contract with PR firm to lead work Convene focus groups Inventory parent outreach of ECE entities in Georgia, e.g., Strengthening Families Research/engage existing parent advisory groups Investigate/coordinate work with Early Education Commission's	Contract w/PR firm Contacts made re: parent outreach of ECE entities, existing parent advisory groups; and Early Education Commission

		public awareness campaign	
Unifying/ Coordinating Data	Data	Phase 1: Gap Analysis Hire technical experts (project manager and business analyst) Identify which data systems in state capture requested data Analyze data systems for potential links Explore opportunities to reduce data collection burden on providers	Technical experts hired Work begun on identifying and analyzing data systems and elements

**Quarter 2: October – December 2010 (Council Meeting)**

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Improving Program Quality	Needs Assessment	Hold remaining public hearings (three CCR&R regions). Present needs assessment document and methodology to Council, including outline of draft vision statement Finalize needs assessment document and plan for methodology	Final draft of needs assessment document and plan for methodology Presentation to Council
	Staff Qualifications/ Higher Ed. Capacity	(Begins Year 1, Qtr. 3)	
	Program Oversight/ Management	(Begins Year 2, Qtr. 5 of grant)	
	Health Screening	Conduct interviews and focus groups with parents and early childhood providers to gain input and ideas for program operation Seek advice from other states and national technical assistance Complete data collection and program evaluation design Begin planning to enhance Georgia's crisis line to include early childhood health and development experts Create opportunities for families to work in partnership with public and private organizations to design effective health and development services and supports Develop a social marketing plan Develop program information	Parents and providers engaged Data collection completed Social marketing plan developed Program information developed Begin enhancing crisis line
Empowering	Public Awareness	Develop PR plan/campaign	Completed PR plan

Parents		Identify populations with specific needs, e.g., ELL; recognize/allow for cultural competencies/diversity	Populations of parents/families with specific needs identified
Unifying/ Coordinating Data	Data	Continue implementing Phase 1: Gap Analysis	Technical experts continue working on identifying and analyzing data systems and elements

**Quarter 3: January – March 2011 (Council Meeting)**

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Improving Program Quality	Needs Assessment	Council proposes and solidifies broader vision for Georgia system Begin collecting assessment data	Council approves broader vision
	Staff Qualifications/ Higher Ed. Capacity	Issue an RFP for a consultant/firm to facilitate this process Contract with appropriate consultant/firm Begin strategic planning process Use existing Professional Development Registry to develop gap analysis Survey providers to understand market conditions Begin reviewing/measuring higher ed. pipeline for producing qualified ECE staff	Consultant/firm hired Gap analysis completed Better understanding of market conditions and of higher ed. capacity to prepare ECE professionals
	Program Oversight/ Management	(Begins Year 2, Qtr. 5 of grant)	
	Health Screening	Develop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) specifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations for involved agencies and departments Identify resources, gaps, and barriers in health/developmental services for children ages birth to five Increase efforts to inform families, providers, practitioners, and general public on the importance of early childhood health and development and developmental	MOU developed and signed Training begins Work on crisis line continues

		<p>screening</p> <p>Continue to enhance Georgia's crisis line to include early childhood health and development experts</p> <p>Continue to create opportunities for families to work in partnership with public and private organizations to implement effective health and development services and supports</p> <p>Create program policies</p> <p>Provide training to child care, DFCS case managers, diversion families and parents, foster parents, and public health staff</p> <p>Create provider resource information for early childhood social emotional development</p>	
Empowering Parents	Public Awareness	Expand PR efforts to radio/television	PR efforts broadcast via electronic media
Unifying/Coordinating Data	Data	Continue implementing Phase 1: Gap Analysis	Technical experts continue working on identifying and analyzing data systems and elements

**Quarter 4: April – June 2011 (Council Meeting)**

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Improving Program Quality	Needs Assessment	Release draft of broader vision for public comment Compile and analyze data	Draft report released to public Council begins receiving comments
	Staff Qualifications/Higher Ed. Capacity	Continue strategic planning process Continue conversations with higher ed to determine ways to increase capacity to prepare early education professionals	Presentation to Council on gap analysis, market conditions, and higher ed. capacity to prepare ECE professionals
	Program Oversight/Management	(Begins Year 2, Qtr. 5 of grant)	
	Health Screening	Refine/finalize all forms, policies,	Forms, policies, and

		<p>and procedures</p> <p>Create operations manual</p> <p>Convene meeting of collaborative partners to share information on program's progress to date and to obtain feedback</p> <p>Meet with evaluator to finalize program evaluation plan</p> <p>Continue to enhance Georgia's crisis line to include early childhood health and development experts</p> <p>Share information with state government and the public regarding the association between adult and child relationships, neuroscience, social and emotional development in young children, and competence and resilience</p> <p>Develop a clearinghouse for early childhood health and development data and resources</p> <p>Continue to create opportunities for families to work in partnership with public and private organizations to design effective health and development services and supports</p>	<p>procedures for health/developmental screenings finalized</p> <p>Collaborative partners meet</p> <p>Evaluation plans finalized</p> <p>Early childhood health/development data and resources clearinghouse created</p>
Empowering Parents	Public Awareness	Expand geographical scope and duration of PR efforts	Expanded coverage of PR efforts
Unifying/Coordinating Data	Data	Continue implementing Phase 1: Gap Analysis	Technical experts continue working on identifying and analyzing data systems and elements

Year 2

Quarter 1 (5<sup>th</sup> quarter of grant period): July – September 2011

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Improving Program Quality	Needs Assessment	Finalize draft of vision and roadmap Hold public hearing to discuss finalized needs assessment and potential future changes and directions	Final report of vision and roadmap to vision prepared in draft form for Council consideration
	Staff Qualifications/ Higher Ed. Capacity	Continue strategic planning process to resolve issues identified in gap analysis and to increase higher ed. capacity to prepare ECE professionals	Prepare recommendations to Council to resolve personnel needs and to increase higher ed. capacity to prepare ECE professionals
	Program Oversight/ Management	Draft and issue an RFP for a management consultant to oversee work regarding program oversight and management	RFP issued for management consultant
	Health Screening	Begin implementing client level services Modify policies and procedures Continue to enhance Georgia's crisis line to include early childhood health and development experts Continue to create opportunities for families to work in partnership with public and private organizations to design effective health and development services and supports	Service delivery begins Policies/procedures modified if necessary
Empowering Parents	Public Awareness	Continue PR efforts	Expanded coverage of PR efforts
Unifying/ Coordinating Data	Data	Phase 2: Designing Technical Architecture. Hire additional experts (technical architect and business analyst) Design architecture for links Document user reporting needs Provide initial design for portals for multiple end users	Additional personnel hired Work on Phase 2 begun

		Design training and TA plan for agencies contributing to system Develop cost estimate for implementing plan including training and TA Make recommendations for pilot	
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**Quarter 2 (6<sup>th</sup> quarter of grant period): October – December 2011 (Council Meeting)**

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Improving Program Quality	Needs Assessment	Council adopts final initial needs assessment	Council takes action to approve vision/needs assessment, which is then distributed to the public
	Staff Qualifications/ Higher Ed. Capacity	Finalize strategic plan dealing with staff qualifications and higher ed. capacity	Council hears and discusses strategic plan
	Program Oversight/ Management	Hire management consultant	Consultant hired and begins to review processes for program oversight and management
	Health Screening	Evaluate quarterly data Continue project implementation, including links to services, training, and evaluation activities Continue to enhance Georgia's crisis line to include early childhood health and development experts Continue to create opportunities for families to work in partnership with public and private organizations to design effective health and development services and supports	Data evaluated and analyzed Services to children, training, improvements to crisis line continue
Empowering Parents	Public Awareness	Continue PR efforts	Expanded coverage of PR efforts
Unifying/ Coordinating Data	Data	Continue implementing Phase 2: Designing Technical Architecture	Work continues on Phase 2

**Quarter 3 (7<sup>th</sup> quarter of grant period): January – March 2012 (Council Meeting)**

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Improving Program Quality	Needs Assessment		
	Staff Qualifications/ Higher Ed. Capacity		
	Program Oversight/ Management	Begin Phase 1: Analysis Provide assessment of monitoring programs; begin developing proposal for coordinated monitoring; and facilitate discussions to determine feasibility	Draft of proposal for monitoring programs Discussions among monitoring agencies
	Health Screening	Continue project implementation, including links to services, training, and evaluation activities Collect and analyze families served satisfaction surveys Continue to enhance Georgia's crisis line to include early childhood health and development experts Continue to create opportunities for families to work in partnership with public and private organizations to design effective health and development services and supports	Customer satisfaction surveys collected and reviewed Services continued
Empowering Parents	Public Awareness	Continue PR efforts	Expanded coverage of PR efforts
Unifying/ Coordinating Data	Data	Continue implementing Phase 2: Designing Technical Architecture	Work continues on Phase 2

**Quarter 4 (8<sup>th</sup> quarter of grant period): April – June 2012 (Council Meeting)**

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Improving Program Quality	Needs Assessment	Begin developing package of legislative and regulatory proposals based on vision/needs assessment	
	Staff Qualifications/ Higher Ed. Capacity		
	Program Oversight/ Management	Begin Phase 2: Detailed Analysis Evaluate technology implications; prepare detailed cost/benefit analysis; complete final proposal	Present to Council: technology implications; cost/benefit analysis;

		with work plan; and begin negotiations with key stakeholders	final proposal Negotiations begun
	Health Screening	<p>Convene meeting of collaborative partners to share information on program's progress to date and to obtain feedback</p> <p>Evaluate quarterly data</p> <p>Disseminate data to stakeholders in annual report</p> <p>Continue project implementation, including linkage to services, training, and evaluation activities</p> <p>Collect and analyze families served satisfaction surveys</p> <p>Continue to enhance Georgia's crisis line to include early childhood health and development experts</p> <p>Continue to create opportunities for families to work in partnership with public and private organizations to design effective health and development services and supports</p>	Collaborative partners meet Annual report produced and distributed
Empowering Parents	Public Awareness	Continue PR efforts	Expanded coverage of PR efforts
Unifying/Coordinating Data	Data	<p>Finalize Phase 2: Designing Technical Architecture</p> <p>Create report of design for Council</p>	Phase 2 finalized Report to Council

### Year 3

**Quarter 1** (9<sup>th</sup> quarter of grant period): July – September 2012

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Improving Program Quality	Needs Assessment	<p>Hold public hearing on needs assessment to discuss updated needs</p> <p>Continue developing package of legislative and regulatory proposals based on vision/needs assessment</p>	<p>Public hearing held</p> <p>Draft package of legislative and regulatory proposals developed</p>
	Staff Qualifications/ Higher Ed. Capacity		
	Program Oversight/	Begin Phase 3: Mobilization.	Implementation.

	Management	Develop implementation plan; launch pilot; evaluate pilot results; modify implementation plan based on pilot results	plan Pilot begun and evaluated Implementation plan modified Consultant pre- pares report for Council with recommendations re: oversight/moni- toring
	Health Screening	Continue project implementation, including links to services, training, and evaluation activities Collect and analyze families served satisfaction surveys Continue to enhance Georgia's crisis line to include early childhood health and development experts Continue to create opportunities for families to work in partnership with public and private organizations to design effective health and development services and supports	Program evaluation and customer satisfaction continued and services are modified accordingly
Empowering Parents	Public Awareness	Continue PR efforts	Expanded cover- age of PR efforts
Unifying/ Coordina- ting Data	Data	Phase 3: Planning Retain one contractor to begin planning: develop cost estimates for implementation plan, including training and technical assistance Begin planning process	

**Quarter 2 (10<sup>th</sup> quarter of grant period): October – December 2012 (Council Meeting)**

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Improving Program Quality	Needs Assessment	Council acts to recommend package of legislative and regulatory proposals based on vision/needs assessment	Legislative and regulatory proposals recommended to legislature and agencies
	Staff Qualifications/ Higher Ed. Capacity		

	Program Oversight/ Management	Begin Phase 4: Implementation Mobilize resources for full implementation and monitor/evaluate progress of full implementation. Transition to on-going operations	Consultant reports to Council on progress of implementation
	Health Screening	Continue project implementation, including links to services, training, and evaluation activities Collect and analyze families served satisfaction surveys Continue to enhance Georgia's crisis line to include early childhood health and development experts Continue to create opportunities for families to work in partnership with public and private organizations to design effective health and development services and supports	Program evaluation and customer satisfaction continued and services are modified accordingly
Empowering Parents	Public Awareness	Continue PR efforts	Expanded coverage of PR efforts
Unifying/ Coordinating Data	Data	Work continues on Phase 3	

**Quarter 3 (11<sup>th</sup> quarter of grant period): January – March 2013 (Council Meeting)**

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Improving Program Quality	Needs Assessment	Legislation reflecting Council recommendations introduced in Georgia legislature	Council sees vision for Georgia early childhood considered by legislature
	Staff Qualifications/ Higher Ed. Capacity		
	Program Oversight/ Management		
	Health Screening	Continue to enhance Georgia's crisis line to include early childhood health and development experts Continue project implementation, including links to services, training, and evaluation activities	Program evaluation and customer satisfaction continued and services are modified accordingly

		Collect and analyze families served satisfaction surveys Continue to create opportunities for families to work in partnership with public and private organizations to design effective health and development services and supports Develop a strategy around appropriate codes for Medicaid billing)	Appropriate codes for Medicaid billing created
Empowering Parents	Public Awareness	Continue PR efforts	Expanded coverage of PR efforts
Unifying/ Coordinating Data	Data	Work continues on Phase 3	

**Quarter 4 (12<sup>th</sup> quarter of grant period): April – June 2013 (Council Meeting)**

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Improving Program Quality	Needs Assessment	Follow up on results of legislative session	
	Staff Qualifications/ Higher Ed. Capacity		
	Program Oversight/ Management		
	Health Screening	Convene meeting of collaborative partners to share information on program's progress to date and to obtain feedback Evaluate quarterly data Disseminate data to stakeholders in annual report Collect and analyze families served satisfaction surveys Increase joint program standards and collaborative monitoring efforts around early childhood social emotional development Enhance Georgia's crisis line to include early childhood health and development experts	Collaborative partners meet Annual report produced and distributed
Empowering Parents	Public Awareness	Continue PR efforts	Expanded coverage of PR efforts
Unifying/ Coordinating Data	Data	Finalize plan for implementing coordinated data system	Final report presented to

ting Data		Create final report for Council Provide recommendations for proof of concept/pilot test	Council
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C. Plans for Needs Assessment, Public Hearings, SAC Meetings

The Council held its first public hearing on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, to give interested parties an opportunity to respond to the *Outline of Application for Federal Funds*, which served as Georgia's statewide strategic report referred to in the RFP. (The *Outline of Application for Federal Funds* is included in the Appendices.) Notice of the public hearing and a copy of the *Outline of Application for Federal Funds* were posted on the websites of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning and the Georgia Family Connection Partnership.

The hearing was held at Clayton State University in Morrow, Georgia, just south of Atlanta at 4 p.m. Twelve (12) members of the public, three Council members, and support staff from Bright from the Start and Georgia Family Connection Partnership attended the hearing. Only one attendee, the Executive Director of the Georgia Association on Young Children, made a formal public statement, a copy of which is included in the Appendices.

The chart below provides a general timeline for the needs assessment(s), public hearings, and meetings of the Council for the three years of the grant. (The Council is defining "year" as the state fiscal year, July 1 through June 30.) The initial needs assessment will be developed, conducted, and analyzed during the first year. The needs assessment process will be informed by public hearings held during the first two quarters of the year: one hearing in each of the state's six child care resource and referral regions (which are aligned with the state's child care licensing regions).

Additional public hearings to update the initial needs assessment and review the overall progress of the work will be conducted in the second and third years of the grant period. The needs assessment and action plan will be modified if necessary based on the outcomes of these public hearings.

The Council will meet three times per year (generally October, February, and June).

While the Council is committed to the level of public engagement described in this application, the exact scheduling of public hearings and Council meetings may be modified slightly during the course of the project to ensure optimal use of human and financial resources.

Activity	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
	July-Sept. 2010	Oct.-Dec. 2010	Jan.-Mar. 2011	Apr.-June 2011	July-Sept. 2011	Oct.-Dec. 2011	Jan.-Mar. 2012	Apr.-June 2012	July Sept. 2012	Oct.-Dec. 2012	Jan.-Mar. 2013	Apr.-June 2013
Needs Assessment Discussed by Council	X	X	X	X		X				X		
Public Hearings on Needs Assessment	XXX	XXX			X				X			
SAC Meetings		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X

D. Partner Organizations, Entities, Consultants

The work described in this application, which will be informed and overseen by the Council, will be accomplished primarily by:

- Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
- Georgia Department of Community Health
- A public relations firm

- A management consultant
- A data consultant
- Advisor to the Council

Bright from the Start, designated by Governor Perdue as the lead agency for the Council, will be responsible for coordinating the work of the Council. The responsibilities of the other partners are described in more detail in the chart under “Goals, Objectives, and Activities.”

#### E. Sustainability Plan

The needs assessment will produce a comprehensive plan for service to young children in Georgia, including numerous elements focused on increasing quality and enrollment; the results of pilots to improve coordinated professional development; and a plan to provide health supports for children identified through screening in early learning programs. The Council itself will commit to an ongoing process of keeping the needs assessment up to date. The same is true of the assessment of higher education's ability to provide the state with the necessary personnel to support a high-quality system. The two projects funded under improving program quality both are designed to lead to sustainable change. The improvements in monitoring and oversight will be built into the system permanently, allowing the funds currently spent on monitoring and oversight to be utilized more effectively. The mental health funding includes a substantial training component, to ensure that the impact of the spending continues beyond the grant period.

Our plan under parental empowerment will lead to the development of materials for parents that will be distributed by agencies and partners throughout Georgia. Because the focus of the Council's work will be on the initial development of high-quality resources, our expectation is that state, local, and private agencies will be responsible for carrying out and sustaining the outreach.

Finally, our activities toward developing a unified data system will be focused on the development of an operable plan, which the state will then need to identify resources to support. Those resources could include both federal grant opportunities and state funds. The Council's grant funds will be used to complete an essential and discrete phase in of the system's development.

F. Staff and Position Data

1. *Existing Staff Assigned to the Council*

Staff who will support the Council include Bright from the Start staff members: Mary Mazarky, Craig Detweiler, Janice Haker, and Mark Waits. Biographical information about these staff members is included in the Appendices. These staff will assist with the Council's continued operations, the coordination of multiple projects, and the generation of the comprehensive plan.

2. *Staff and consultants to be hired using grant funds*

a. Improving Quality

i. Needs Assessment (\$125,000)

Bright from the Start will contract with a consulting firm to carry out the following activities: Planning and organizing the assessment (in conjunction with key stakeholders, existing parent advisory groups, and parents/general public by holding community forums around the state); determining the needs assessment methodology; collecting needs assessment data; compiling, summarizing and disseminating needs assessment results; creating a strategic action plan based on the needs assessment results; and revisit/update the needs assessment at least once a year. The contract will be filled through a competitive RFP issued by Bright from the Start.

ii. Higher Education Capacity (\$100,000)

Bright from the Start will contract with a consultant or firm to carry out the following activities related to staff qualifications and higher education capacity: Identify the qualifications needed by early care and education professionals to execute the Council's comprehensive plan; use the existing professional development registry to develop a gap analysis; review the capacity of higher education to produce the needed early care and education professionals; collaborate with higher education partners on ways to increase capacity to educate/train/prepare early care and education professionals and develop an strategic action plan accordingly. The contract will be filled through a competitive RFP issued by Bright from the Start.

iii. Monitoring & Oversight (\$576,562)

A contract management consultant will be responsible for making recommendations for an improved monitoring and oversight plan for early childhood care and education providers in Georgia. Specific responsibilities for this contractor are detailed in the chart found under "Goals, Objectives, and Timelines for Each Year of the Grant." The contract will be filled through a competitive RFP issued by Bright from the Start.

iv. Health Screening (\$574,750)

The following consultants will be contracted through the Department of Community Health:

- Statewide Manager for Early Childhood Health and Development: This consultant will be responsible for coordinating and overseeing the Council's efforts to ensure that children ages birth to five who have health and developmental issues identified through health screening receive appropriate follow-up care. The consultant will manage the staff members listed below.

- Health and Development Specialist: This consultant will be responsible for providing training and technical assistance to local early childhood/child care health and development consultants who work with entities serving children ages birth to five, e.g., child care centers.
- Local Advocates: These part-time staff will be responsible for helping parents/families and providers who have children with health and developmental issues to navigate local service systems to ensure that children receive appropriate care. The budget allows for up to three local advocates per health district (six districts).
- Crisis Line Training Contractor: This contractor will be responsible for developing protocols and training for handling calls to the crisis line involving early childhood health and developmental issues, e.g., questions, referrals, crisis situations, etc. This contractor will also be responsible for training existing crisis line call center employees and for providing on-going technical support for crisis line staff.
- Crisis Line Technical Contractor: This contractor will be responsible for enhancing the existing crisis line technology network to handle increased call demand and documentation. The contractor will also provide on-going technical support for crisis line staff.

b. Empowering Parents (\$500,000)

A public relations consultant or firm will be responsible for coordinating and implementing the Council's efforts to empower parents through parent outreach and awareness. Specific responsibilities for this contractor are detailed in the chart found under "Goals,

Objectives, and Timelines for Each Year of the Grant.” The contract will be filled through a competitive RFP issued by Bright from the Start.

c. Unifying and Coordinating Data (\$1,338,000)

All of the following data staff will be contractors hired by and housed at Bright from the Start.

- **Technical Project Manager:** The Technical Project Manager will develop and manage the project plan, supervise the project team, and provide updates to the Executive Sponsor. The Technical Project Manager will serve as liaison to the state agencies and key early childhood stakeholders identified in the needs assessment and will oversee and coordinate day-to-day project activities.
- **Business Analyst (2 positions):** The Business Analysts will determine and locate the data necessary to answer key questions identified at the data roundtable. The Business Analyst will work to understand the structure of each key stakeholder’s data and how it can best be utilized. This position will analyze business flow processes; recommend how data should be collected and organized in the context of security and privacy regulations (HIPAA, FERPA); and recommend how data should be presented on a web portal and in reports available to stakeholders. This position will be responsible for clearly defining requirements provided to the Technical Architect.
- **Technical Architect:** The Technical Architect will design the technical architecture including proposed data links, databases, web portal, report delivery, and hardware recommendations. This position may design, develop, build and modify prototype databases as necessary for the solution to the needs assessment. This position will also design and build secure processes for the transfer of data from the appropriate agencies and processes for data integrity and error checking. This position will work with the

appropriate contacts to design a scalable, secure hardware infrastructure and will design appropriate access controls.

G. Organizational Profile of Lead Agency

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is the department of state government that will manage the Georgia State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. Bright from the Start is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. The department administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs. The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education.

Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue designated Dr. Holly A. Robinson, Commissioner of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, to chair and coordinate the activities of the Georgia State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. Dr. Robinson was appointed commissioner in 2007. Dr. Robinson represents Bright from the Start on the First Lady's Children's Cabinet and on the Governor's Alliance of Education Agency Heads. During her career, Dr. Robinson has worked extensively in curriculum, instruction, and leadership with corporations, schools (P-12), community colleges, technical colleges, and universities across the country.

The Governor's letter designating Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning as the department responsible for spearheading the efforts of the Council and naming Dr. Robinson as chair and coordinator of the Council is included in the Appendices. In his letter and in the Executive Order establishing the Council (also included in the Appendices), Governor Perdue specifies that the work of the Council will be informed by and closely aligned with the First Lady's Children's Cabinet.



## State Advisory Council - Contract List

Contracts	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	Total
Needs assessment	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ -	\$ 125,000.00
Higher ed capacity	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ -	\$ 100,000.00
Monitoring	\$ -	\$ 288,000.00	\$ 288,000.00	\$ 576,000.00
Health screening	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 215,000.00	\$ 575,000.00
Empowering parents	\$ 500,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500,000.00
Unifying Data				\$ -
IT Resource	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 330,000.00
Technical Project Manager	\$ 208,000.00	\$ 208,000.00		\$ 416,000.00
Business Analyst	\$ 166,000.00	\$ 166,000.00		\$ 332,000.00
Technical Architect	\$ -	\$ 180,000.00		\$ 180,000.00
Business Analyst	\$ -	\$ 80,000.00		\$ 80,000.00
	<b>\$ 1,274,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,327,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 613,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 3,214,000.00</b>

### BUDGET NARRATIVE

#### 1. Equipment

Funds totaling \$10,000 will be used to purchase laptop computers and other office equipment for IT contractors.

#### 2. Supplies

Funds totaling \$24,890 will be used to purchase supplies for IT contractors and to pay for printing of annual and final IT reports.

#### 3. Contracts

Funds totaling \$3,214,000 will be used to contract with consultants/firms to carry out the various functions of the Council. A list of contracts is attached to the budget spreadsheet. The item titled "IT Resource" under Unifying Data does not refer to a position but rather refers to a source of funding for data collection and analysis performed by existing IT personnel in the various early childhood agencies.

#### 4. Total Direct Costs

\$3,248,890

5. Indirect Costs

The indirect cost rate for the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is 17.12% as approved by our cognizant agency, the United States Department of Agriculture.

However, for this grant proposal Bright from the Start figured indirect costs at 7% for a total of \$227,422.30.

6. TOTAL COST

Total cost including direct and indirect costs is **\$3,476,312.30**.

The table below provides the level of matching funds expected through state spending on several projects identified as important to the Council's work. These projections all assume flat funding of the state's FY 2009 commitment. The state's total required match is \$8,111,394.67.

Matching Funds*	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Teacher Training	\$1,378,000	\$1,378,000	\$1,378,000	\$4,134,000
Child care licensing and monitoring	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$3,600,000
Assessment	\$449,388	\$449,388	\$449,388	\$1,348,164
Maintaining data	\$845,272	\$845,272	\$845,272	\$2,535,816
Total	\$3,872,660	\$3,872,660	\$3,872,660	\$11,617,980

\* All figures here include only expenditures by Bright from the Start.

# Certifications

## CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

### Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

### Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning  
Organization

**CERTIFICATION REGARDING MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT**

In accordance with the applicable program statute(s) and regulation(s), the undersigned certifies that financial assistance provided by the Administration for Children and Families, for the specified activities to be performed under the Georgia State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, will be in addition to, and not in substitution for, comparable activities previously carried on without Federal assistance.



Signature of Authorized Certifying Official  
Commissioner

Title

April 21, 2010

Date

**Certification of Filing and Payment of Federal Taxes**

As required by the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, 2008 (Public Law 110-161, Division G, Title V, section 523), as a prospective financial assistance recipient entering into a grant or cooperative agreement of more than \$5,000,000, I, as the duly authorized representative of the applicant, do hereby certify to the best of my knowledge and belief, that:

1.  The applicant has filed all Federal tax returns required during the three years preceding this certification;

AND

2.  The applicant has not been convicted of a criminal offense pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (U.S. Code – Title 26, Internal Revenue Code);

AND

3.  The applicant has not, more than 90 days prior to this certification, been notified of any unpaid Federal tax assessment for which the liability remains unsatisfied, unless the assessment is the subject of an installment agreement or offer in compromise that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service and is not in default, or the assessment is the subject of a non-frivolous administrative or judicial proceeding.

  
Signature of Authorized Certifying Official

Holly A. Robinson, Commissioner

Printed Name and Title

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning April 22, 2010

Name of Applicant

Date

CFDA#93.708

Grant/Cooperative Agreement Reference Number



## CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS

### Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters--Primary Covered Transactions

#### Instructions for Certification

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective primary participant is providing the certification set out below.

2. The inability of a person to provide the certification required below will not necessarily result in denial of participation in this covered transaction. The prospective participant shall submit an explanation of why it cannot provide the certification set out below. The certification or explanation will be considered in connection with the department or agency's determination whether to enter into this transaction. However, failure of the prospective primary participant to furnish a certification or an explanation shall disqualify such person from participation in this transaction.

3. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when the department or agency determined to enter into this transaction. If it is later determined that the prospective primary participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency may terminate this transaction for cause or default.

4. The prospective primary participant shall provide immediate written notice to the department or agency to which this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective primary participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.

5. The terms covered transaction, debarred, suspended, ineligible, lower tier covered transaction, participant, person, primary covered transaction, principal, proposal, and voluntarily excluded, as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of the rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the department or agency to which this proposal is being submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.

6. The prospective primary participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency entering into this transaction.

7. The prospective primary participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include the clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transaction," provided by the department or agency entering into this covered transaction, without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.

8. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Nonprocurement Programs.

9. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.

10. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 6 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency may

terminate this transaction for cause or default.

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#### Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters--Primary Covered Transactions

(1) The prospective primary participant certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it and its principals:

(a) Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded by any Federal department or agency;

(b) Have not within a three-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;

(c) Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1)(b) of this certification; and

(d) Have not within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (Federal, State or local) terminated for cause or default.

(2) Where the prospective primary participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

#### Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion--Lower Tier Covered Transactions

##### Instructions for Certification

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective lower tier participant is providing the certification set out below.

2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the prospective lower tier participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

3. The prospective lower tier participant shall provide immediate written notice to the person to which this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective lower tier participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or had become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.

4. The terms covered transaction, debarred, suspended, ineligible, lower tier covered transaction, participant, person, primary covered transaction, principal, proposal, and voluntarily excluded, as used in this clause, have the meaning set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the person to which this proposal is submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.

5. The prospective lower tier participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, [[Page 33043]] should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency with which this transaction originated.

6. The prospective lower tier participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include this clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transaction," without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.

7. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Nonprocurement Programs.

8. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.

9. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

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**Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility an Voluntary Exclusion--Lower Tier Covered Transactions**

(1) The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.

(2) Where the prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

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## CERTIFICATION REGARDING DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE REQUIREMENTS

This certification is required by the regulations implementing the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988: 45 CFR Part 76, Subpart, F. Sections 76.630(c) and (d)(2) and 76.645(a)(1) and (b) provide that a Federal agency may designate a central receipt point for STATE-WIDE AND STATE AGENCY-WIDE certifications, and for notification of criminal drug convictions. For the Department of Health and Human Services, the central point is: Division of Grants Management and Oversight, Office of Management and Acquisition, Department of Health and Human Services, Room 517-D, 200 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20201.

### Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Instructions for Certification)

1. By signing and/or submitting this application or grant agreement, the grantee is providing the certification set out below.
2. The certification set out below is a material representation of fact upon which reliance is placed when the agency awards the grant. If it is later determined that the grantee knowingly rendered a false certification, or otherwise violates the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act, the agency, in addition to any other remedies available to the Federal Government, may take action authorized under the Drug-Free Workplace Act.
3. For grantees other than individuals, Alternate I applies.
4. For grantees who are individuals, Alternate II applies.
5. Workplaces under grants, for grantees other than individuals, need not be identified on the certification. If known, they may be identified in the grant application. If the grantee does not identify the workplaces at the time of application, or upon award, if there is no application, the grantee must keep the identity of the workplace(s) on file in its office and make the information available for Federal inspection. Failure to identify all known workplaces constitutes a violation of the grantee's drug-free workplace requirements.
6. Workplace identifications must include the actual address of buildings (or parts of buildings) or other sites where work under the grant takes place. Categorical descriptions may be used (e.g., all vehicles of a mass transit authority or State highway department while in operation, State employees in each local unemployment office, performers in concert halls or radio studios).
7. If the workplace identified to the agency changes during the performance of the grant, the grantee shall inform the agency of the change(s), if it previously identified the workplaces in question (see paragraph five).
8. Definitions of terms in the Nonprocurement Suspension and Debarment common rule and Drug-Free Workplace common rule apply to this certification. Grantees' attention is called, in particular, to the following definitions from these rules:

*Controlled substance* means a controlled substance in Schedules I through V of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812) and as further defined by regulation (21 CFR 1308.11 through 1308.15);

*Conviction* means a finding of guilt (including a plea of nolo contendere) or imposition of sentence, or both, by any judicial body charged with the responsibility to determine violations of the Federal or State criminal drug statutes;

*Criminal drug statute* means a Federal or non-Federal criminal statute involving the manufacture, distribution,

dispensing, use, or possession of any controlled substance;

*Employee* means the employee of a grantee directly engaged in the performance of work under a grant, including: (i) All direct charge employees; (ii) All indirect charge employees unless their impact or involvement is insignificant to the performance of the grant; and, (iii) Temporary personnel and consultants who are directly engaged in the performance of work under the grant and who are on the grantee's payroll. This definition does not include workers not on the payroll of the grantee (e.g., volunteers, even if used to meet a matching requirement; consultants or independent contractors not on the grantee's payroll; or employees of subrecipients or subcontractors in covered workplaces).

### Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements

#### Alternate I. (Grantees Other Than Individuals)

The grantee certifies that it will or will continue to provide a drug-free workplace by:

- (a) Publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the grantee's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibition;
- (b) Establishing an ongoing drug-free awareness program to inform employees about --
  - (1) The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;
  - (2) The grantee's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace;
  - (3) Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and
  - (4) The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace;
- c) Making it a requirement that each employee to be engaged in the performance of the grant be given a copy of the statement required by paragraph (a);
- (d) Notifying the employee in the statement required by paragraph (a) that, as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will --
  - (1) Abide by the terms of the statement; and
  - (2) Notify the employer in writing of his or her conviction for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction;
- (e) Notifying the agency in writing, within ten calendar days after receiving notice under paragraph (d)(2) from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction. Employers of convicted employees must provide notice, including position title, to every grant officer or other designee on whose grant activity the convicted employee was working, unless the Federal agency has designated a central point for the receipt of such notices. Notice shall include the identification number(s) of each affected grant;
- (f) Taking one of the following actions, within 30 calendar days of receiving notice under paragraph (d)(2), with respect to any employee who is so convicted --
  - (1) Taking appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; or
  - (2) Requiring such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a Federal, State, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency;

(g) Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f).

(B) The grantee may insert in the space provided below the site(s) for the performance of work done in connection with the specific grant:

Place of Performance (Street address, city, county, state, zip code)

---

---

Check if there are workplaces on file that are not identified here.

Alternate II. (Grantees Who Are Individuals)

(a) The grantee certifies that, as a condition of the grant, he or she will not engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance in conducting any activity with the grant;

(b) If convicted of a criminal drug offense resulting from a violation occurring during the conduct of any grant activity, he or she will report the conviction, in writing, within 10 calendar days of the conviction, to every grant officer or other designee, unless the Federal agency designates a central point for the receipt of such notices. When notice is made to such a central point, it shall include the identification number(s) of each affected grant.

[55 FR 21690, 21702, May 25, 1990]



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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### CERTIFICATION REGARDING ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE

The Pro-Children Act of 2001, 42 U.S.C. 7181 through 7184, imposes restrictions on smoking in facilities where Federally-funded children's services are provided. HHS grants are subject to these requirements only if they meet the Act's specified coverage. The Act specifies that smoking is prohibited in any indoor facility (owned, leased, or contracted for) used for the routine or regular provision of kindergarten, elementary, or secondary education or library services to children under the age of 18. In addition, smoking is prohibited in any indoor facility or portion of a facility (owned, leased, or contracted for) used for the routine or regular provision of federally funded health care, day care, or early childhood development, including Head Start services to children under the age of 18. The statutory prohibition also applies if such facilities are constructed, operated, or maintained with Federal funds. The statute does not apply to children's services provided in private residences, facilities funded solely by Medicare or Medicaid funds, portions of facilities used for inpatient drug or alcohol treatment, or facilities where WIC coupons are redeemed. Failure to comply with the provisions of the law may result in the imposition of a civil monetary penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation and/or the imposition of an administrative compliance order on the responsible entity.

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Administration for Children and Families • 370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W. • Washington, D.C. 20447

[Last Reviewed: April 22, 2010](#)

# Appendices

# STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL BUDGET

		Year 1 Amount	Year 2 Amount	Year 3 Amount	Total All 3 Years Amount
a	Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
b	Fringe	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
c	Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
d	Equipment	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00
		Laptop and office equipment (2 contractors in IT)	Laptop and office equipment (2 new contractors in IT)		
e	Supplies	\$ 7,400.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 8,490.00	\$ 24,890.00
		Supplies for 2 contractors in IT; printing for one yearly report	Supplies for 4 contractors in IT; printing for one yearly report	Supplies for 1 contractor in IT; printing for one final report in year three	
f	Contracts	\$ 1,274,000.00	\$ 1,327,000.00	\$ 613,000.00	\$ 3,214,000.00
g	Construction				
h	Other				
i	<b>Total</b>	<u>\$ 1,287,400.00</u>	<u>\$ 1,340,000.00</u>	<u>\$ 621,490.00</u>	<u>\$ 3,248,890.00</u>
		Sub-total	Sub-total	Sub-total	
j	Indirect	\$ 90,118.00	\$ 93,800.00	\$ 43,504.30	\$ 227,422.30
k	<b>Total</b>	<u>\$ 1,377,518.00</u>	<u>\$ 1,433,800.00</u>	<u>\$ 664,994.30</u>	<u>\$ 3,476,312.30</u>

Fringe benefit rate 0.40055

	Year 1	Quarterly Forecast		Year 2	Quarterly Forecast		Year 3	Quarterly Forecast
Q1	\$	344,379.50	Q1	\$	358,450.00	Q1	\$	166,248.58
Q2	\$	344,379.50	Q2	\$	358,450.00	Q2	\$	166,248.58
Q3	\$	344,379.50	Q3	\$	358,450.00	Q3	\$	166,248.58
Q4	\$	344,379.50	Q4	\$	358,450.00	Q4	\$	166,248.58
	<u>\$</u>	<u>1,377,518.00</u>		<u>\$</u>	<u>1,433,800.00</u>		<u>\$</u>	<u>664,994.30</u>
							\$	3,476,312.30

### State Advisory Council - Contract List

Contracts	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	Total
Needs assessment	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ -	\$ 125,000.00
Higher ed capacity	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ -	\$ 100,000.00
Monitoring	\$ -	\$ 288,000.00	\$ 288,000.00	\$ 576,000.00
Health screening	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 215,000.00	\$ 575,000.00
Empowering parents	\$ 500,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500,000.00
<b>DATA Project</b>				\$ -
IT Resource	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 330,000.00
Technical Project Manager	\$ 208,000.00	\$ 208,000.00		\$ 416,000.00
Business Analyst	\$ 166,000.00	\$ 166,000.00		\$ 332,000.00
Technical Architect	\$ -	\$ 180,000.00		\$ 180,000.00
Business Analyst	\$ -	\$ 80,000.00		\$ 80,000.00
	<b>\$ 1,274,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,327,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 613,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 3,214,000.00</b>

## **Biographical Information on Key Support Personnel**

**Craig Detweiler**: Craig Detweiler is Chief Officer of Operations and Information at Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (Bright from the Start). He is responsible for the department's operations and information technology, especially ensuring that technology aligns with strategic direction of the department. He oversees the selection, acquisition, installation, maintenance, and support of the department's hardware infrastructure and oversees internal and vendor technology development projects. He also maintains business continuity and security plans.

Before joining Bright from the Start in 2008, Detweiler served in lead management roles for information technology companies in which he managed large projects and large numbers of people. Projects have included developing and maintaining human resources and legal applications and developing and implementing a plan to transition part of a major IT company's knowledge and personnel to a country outside the U.S.

Detweiler earned a B.S. in Computer Information Systems from Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia and an M.B.A. from the University of Miami in Florida.

**Mary Mazarky**: Mary Mazarky is Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K at Bright from the Start. Her primary responsibility is administering Georgia's nationally recognized, state funded Pre-K program that currently serves 82,000 children statewide. Georgia's Pre-K Program has achieved 10 out of 10 benchmarks for excellence in Pre-K education established by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

Before joining Bright from the Start in 2006, Ms. Mazarky spent 32 years in public education where she served as a classroom teacher before becoming involved in administration,

early childhood curriculum development, professional development for teachers, and standards based reform. Throughout her career she has been a strong advocate for public kindergarten and, later, for free Pre-K education for all children in Georgia. Mazarky earned an M.A. in Teaching from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Janice M. Haker:** Janice M. Haker is director of the Head Start State Collaboration Office at Bright from the Start. Before being named Head Start State Collaboration Director, Haker was the department's Training and Professional Development Manager and worked on the Georgia Early Childhood Professional Development System.

Haker has held positions with both profit and nonprofit organizations. She was the first executive director of the Georgia Association on Young Children and the first executive officer of the Georgia Head Start Association. Haker served as deputy director for DeKalb Economic Opportunities Agency, now the Partnership for Community Action Head Start; vice president of operations for Prodigy Child Development Centers; and executive director of the Covington YMCA.

During her career, Haker developed and taught in a program for gifted and talented three, four, five, and six year olds; taught physical education in elementary school; and served as a community school director. She taught graduate-level nutrition courses for elementary educators through a project sponsored by South Carolina's State Department of Education and Clemson University.

She has served as a National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) validator as well as a conference presenter. Haker has also provided technical assistance to Head Start programs seeking NAEYC accreditation in Alabama and Georgia. In addition, she played a significant role in the Georgia Head Start child care licensing project.

Haker received a B.S. in Education from Bowling Green State University and an M.S. in Physical Education from the University of Florida.

**Mark Waits:** Mark Waits is a grants specialist at Bright from the Start. Since joining Bright from the Start (originally the Office of School Readiness) in 1997, he has served as director of training services; manager of public relations; and special assistant to the Commissioner.

He has over 20 years experience writing, editing, and proofreading for state government and non-profit organizations. Other experience includes project management; cultivating and maintaining public and customer relations; and teaching English to international undergraduate and graduate students at Georgia State University and Emory University. He also lived and worked abroad for seven years in a cross-cultural/intercultural environment.

Waits earned a B.A. in English from LaGrange College, LaGrange, Georgia and an M.S. in Applied Linguistics from Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia.



STATE OF GEORGIA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
ATLANTA 30334-0900

Sonny Perdue  
GOVERNOR

April 1, 2010

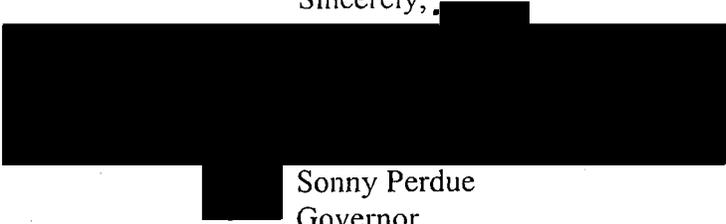
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,

I am writing to officially designate Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (Bright from the Start) as the lead agency in applying for and coordinating the work of the Georgia State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. In an Executive Order dated September 30, 2009, I have already designated Dr. Holly A. Robinson, Commissioner of Bright from the Start, to chair the Council and to coordinate the Council's critically important work.

I thank the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for making these funds available to better coordinate Georgia's efforts in meeting the early childhood education and child care needs of Georgia's youngest citizens and their families.

Sincerely,



Sonny Perdue  
Governor



# THE STATE OF GEORGIA

## EXECUTIVE ORDER

---

BY THE GOVERNOR:

**WHEREAS:** The State of Georgia is deeply committed to the education and care of our youngest citizens; and

**WHEREAS:** In 2008, there were more than 700,000 children ages birth to five throughout all 159 counties; and

**WHEREAS:** The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) has made funds available for a State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (Council); and

**WHEREAS:** The Council is needed for planning better coordinated systems, facilitating working relationships among essential partners, and moving towards integrated delivery of services to young children and their families, and will also reinforce and strengthen statewide management among existing programs such as pre-kindergarten, child care, Head Start, and other early childhood care and education programs.

**NOW, THEREFORE, PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME AS GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA, IT IS HEREBY**

**ORDERED:** That the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care is hereby created.

**IT IS FURTHER**

**ORDERED:** That Dr. Holly Robinson shall chair the Council, and the other members of the Council shall be Jen Bennecke, Stephanie Blank, Dawn Coleman, Kathy Cox, Arlinda Eaton, Carla Denise Edwards, Kevin Fletcher, Tony Foskey, Janice Haker, Carolyn Ormsby, Frank Shelp, Gaye Smith, Justine Strickland, BJ Walker, and Susie Wilcher.

**IT IS FURTHER**

**ORDERED:** That the Council shall be directly aligned with The First Lady's Children's Cabinet.

**IT IS FURTHER**

**ORDERED:** That the Council shall work together to plan better coordinated systems, facilitate working relationships among essential partners, and move towards integrated delivery of services to young children and their families. The Council shall also work to

- reinforce and strengthen statewide management among existing programs such as pre-kindergarten, child care, Head Start, and other early childhood care and education programs;
- prepare a needs assessment and comprehensive plan recommending a direction for early learning policy in Georgia, that includes recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in high-quality early learning and care programs;
- prepare recommendations for
  - improving early learning standards and assessment,
  - improving oversight and monitoring of early learning programs,
  - developing a unified data collection system,
  - improving outreach to the parents of young children,
  - improving the ability of higher education to train early childhood educators and strengthening overall teacher and provider quality,
  - improving statewide professional development and career advancement plans,
  - coordinating health screenings and programs supporting healthy child development with early learning and care programs, and
  - whatever other issues the Governor or the Council find necessary to address in order to improve the quality of education and quality care for young children in Georgia.

This 30<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2009.

  
**GOVERNOR**

**ATTEST**

  
Executive Secretary

**Sharon McPherson - Indirect Cost Rate**

---

**From:** "Spears, Otis" <Otis.Spears@fns.usda.gov>  
**To:** <leslie.lowe@mail.osr.state.ga.us>  
**Date:** 5/4/2004 11:43 AM  
**Subject:** Indirect Cost Rate  
**CC:** "Spears, Otis" <Otis.Spears@fns.usda.gov>

---

Hi Leslie,

We have reviewed your proposed SFY Indirect Cost Rate of [REDACTED] that you submitted on April 9, 2004. Based on our review, this rate is approved.

Otis Spears  
USDA - FNS - SERO  
Regional Audit Coordinator  
(404) 562-1916

# Other Supporting Documentation

The following document titled *Outline of Application for Federal Funds* is the Georgia State Strategic Report. This outline, to which the public responded at a public hearing on March 3, 2010, created the framework for the completed grant application.

**Georgia State Advisory Council on  
Early Childhood Education and Care**

**Outline of Application for Federal Funds**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) allocates \$3,476,312 to Georgia to aid the work of its State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. The Council's purpose, as articulated in the Executive Order creating it, is to serve the more than 700,000 children under the age of five in Georgia by "planning better coordinated systems, facilitating working relationships among essential partners, and moving toward integrated delivery of services to young children and their families." To access the federal funding, Georgia must prepare and submit an application to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) articulating its plans to use the funds. Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning has been designated as the lead agency for purposes of the application.

In the initial briefing paper provided to Council members, we outlined the application process and described some of the issues that applications must address. Based on the discussions at the Council's initial meeting November 16, we have prepared an outline of the application for federal funds. This outline draws on the briefing paper for the November 16 meeting but is also based on the Council's articulated directions and is organized around the requirements of the federal grant application. It also includes more detailed action steps for the Council's follow-up. While there are numerous technical requirements that the application will ultimately have to meet, our initial focus here is on identifying the major categories of work, including some proposed activities that the \$3.476 million should be used to fund.

A separate document will propose a more detailed budget for the Council's activities, nesting the proposal within a host of other initiatives already underway in Georgia that serve the same population. The Council's funds are limited but significant and can have their greatest impact if they help the state build on work currently in progress.

**I. Executive Summary**

This paper is intended to serve as a blueprint for the application Georgia will file with HHS. The key points in this paper include the following:

Federal Application Requirements

- Federal law has defined a set of application requirements for Georgia to access its allocated \$3.476 million, which include the creation of a strategic report to guide the work, a plan to complete a needs assessment, and a set of specific outcomes and activities that the grant would fund.

## Young Children and Services in Georgia Today

- Georgia is a state with a high percentage of young children, who are – compared to other states – disproportionately low-income and mobile.
- Georgia has had great success braiding the funding streams for state pre-k and Head Start, and hundreds of providers offer the programs in blended classrooms. This allows for more children to receive service, and has helped lead to Georgia being one of the few states where Head Start serves a higher percentage of three year olds than four year olds (a configuration responsive to Head Start's needs assessment). Child care in Georgia is primarily center- and family-based and licensed, and the state recently has moved to upgrade the quality requirements for providers.

## Georgia's Action Agenda for Young Children

- Georgia plans to use the grant to achieve three primary objectives: (1) Improving program quality; (2) Empowering parents; and (3) Unifying and coordinating our data.
- Georgia will develop a comprehensive plan for service to young children that will define a vision for serving young children and their families in Georgia, assess the ability of current programs to meet that vision, and articulate a roadmap for getting from where the state is to where it wants to go.
- Georgia will work to empower parents by providing them more information about available services and to help them understand how best to work with program providers.
- Georgia will design a unified early learning data system that will capture appropriate information about young children served by federal and state funded programs – and appropriate information about the providers and programs that serve them. The system will be able to provide parents, providers, researchers, and policymakers with the information they need to answer their most important questions about child outcomes.

## II. Federal Application Requirements

### A. *The Council's Statutory Obligations*

The Head Start Act requires the Council to undertake the following activities:

- conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry, including an assessment of the availability of high-quality pre-kindergarten services for low-income children in the State;
- identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among Federally-funded and State-funded child development, child care, and early childhood education programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among State agencies responsible for administering such programs;
- develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing Federal, State, and local child care and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations;
- develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the State;
- develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the State;
- assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education in the State toward supporting the development of early childhood educators, including the extent to which such institutions have in place articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time in a Head Start or prekindergarten program; and
- make recommendations for improvements in State early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high-quality comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate.

42 U.S.C. § 9837b(b)(1)(D)(I)-(VII). These will be the responsibilities of the Council throughout its lifetime, including after all initial grant funds have been expended.

## B. *The Application for HHS Funds*

### 1. Statutory Requirements

The Head Start Act authorizes grants to:

facilitate the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early childhood education and care designed to improve school preparedness through one or more of the following activities:

- (i) promoting school preparedness of children from birth through school entry, including activities to encourage families and caregivers to engage in highly interactive, developmentally and age-appropriate activities to improve children's early social, emotional, and cognitive development, support the transition of young children to school, and foster parental and family involvement in the early education of young children;
- (ii) supporting professional development, recruitment, and retention initiatives for early childhood educators;
- (iii) enhancing existing early childhood education and development programs and services (in existence on the date on which the grant involved is awarded), including quality improvement activities authorized under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990; and
- (iv) carrying out other activities consistent with the State's plan and application[.]

42 U.S.C. § 9837b(b)(2)(A). The statute requires the state to create a strategic report guiding the work, and to identify goals for increasing the number of children entering kindergarten ready to learn.

### 2. HHS Application Requirements

In addition to numerous technical requirements, the following are the key points made by the HHS Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in its guidance on applying for the federal funds:

- *Project Description*: "ACF is particularly interested in specific project descriptions that focus on outcomes and convey strategies for achieving intended performance. Project descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length."
- *Objectives and Need for Assistance*: "Clearly identify the physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, and/or other problem(s) requiring a solution. The need for assistance must be demonstrated and the principal and subordinate objectives of the project must be clearly stated. Any relevant data based on planning studies or needs assessments

already conducted should be included or referred to in the endnotes/footnotes. In the absence of such data, describe the current status of the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry in the State; the existing need for coordination and collaboration among early childhood development programs and services for children from birth to school entry in the State, as well as the existing status of State early learning standards, governance, professional development, and data systems. Incorporate demographic data and participant/beneficiary information, as needed."

- *Approach:* "Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished. . . . Address each of the three years of the grant period and describe goals, objectives, activities and timelines for accomplishing each responsibility of the State Advisory Council. . . . Provide a plan for conducting the required periodic needs assessment, for holding public hearings to provide opportunities for public input in the activities of the State Advisory Council, and for holding State Advisory Council meetings for each year of the three-year grant period."

The purpose of this document is to outline how Georgia will file an application that fulfills all of these requirements while defining a Georgia-specific vision for improvement that will maximize the leverage of the federally allocated funds.

### **III. Background: Young Children and Services in Georgia Today**

#### *A. Young Children in Georgia*

Georgia's population is younger, lower-income, and more mobile than the population of most states. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the state has an overall population approaching 10 million, making it one of the largest states in the nation. Significantly, 7.65% of its population is under the age of five, the fifth-highest percentage among the 50 states (and the highest of any state east of the Mississippi River).

Poverty is a real challenge for Georgia's children. Twenty-six percent of Georgia's young children live below the poverty line, a higher percentage than for the nation as a whole (24%). Financial issues in Georgia are urban, suburban, and rural; indeed, in all three areas the percentage of children who are low income is higher than the national average. In urban areas, 58% of Georgia's young children are low income (compared to 52% nationally); in suburban areas, 38% (36%), and in rural areas, 67% (53%). Many of these children are children of the working poor – 55% of Georgia's low income parents have full-time, year-round employment, higher than the 47% national average.<sup>i</sup>

In addition, Georgia's mobility rate is high. Georgia ranks 7<sup>th</sup> among states in sending residents to other states and 4<sup>th</sup> in receiving residents from other states.<sup>ii</sup> All told, 28%

of Georgia's low-income young children have moved recently well above the national average of 21%.<sup>iii</sup>

Our knowledge of the conditions facing Georgia's young children compels us to act to improve the services provided them and their families.

*B. Services for Young Children in Georgia*

The three primary education and care programs serving Georgia's children are state pre-k, child care, and Head Start; a description of each is provided below.

Another important funding stream for young children is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), only two states serve a lower percentage of three and four year olds through special education preschool than the 3.2% served in Georgia. Better service to children identified for special education is an important element of the Council's work.

Each of these programs plays a major role in school readiness and will be a full partner in the work of the Council. The Council recognizes that these programs will need to work not only with each other but with many other health and human services provided through federal and state funding. The Council is also committed to appropriately supporting those parents who choose not to enroll their children in government-funded programming or programming outside the home.

1. State Pre-K

Georgia's Pre-K Program is one of the nation's oldest, largest, and best. According to the annual survey by NIEER, only two other states serve a higher percentage of their four year olds in state pre-k. Children are served for 6.5 hours per day, five days a week, and the program is open to all regardless of income. Programs are provided in a mixed delivery system, including the public schools and a range of private providers.<sup>iv</sup> The program serves 81,136 children; 32,401 (39.9%) are white, 30,688 (37.8%) are black, and 10,542 (13%) are Hispanic. More than half of the children (54.9%) are considered economically at risk.

Georgia has long been aware of the need to provide infrastructure supporting the local delivery of quality pre-k. The state has done substantial work to develop content standards that all providers must use. Georgia also has piloted and is now implementing a statewide Pre-K Child Assessment based on the Work Sampling System, and teachers have been trained in the assessment's use. In addition, the state's efforts to improve inter-rater reliability have led to better and more consistent state oversight. Unique identifiers are assigned to children in state pre-k (both public and private settings) that follow the child through the state's longitudinal data system. Georgia's Pre-K Program currently meets nine of the 10 quality benchmarks developed by NIEER.

## 2. Child Care

Child care in Georgia is provided primarily by licensed, center-based caregivers. Of young children enrolled in fee for service or subsidized child care programs in Georgia, the percentage in center-based care (85%) and licensed care (97%) is substantially higher than the national averages (61% and 76%, respectively).<sup>v</sup> The population of preschool children in child care also skews young with 35% of birth to two year olds enrolled (compared to a national average of 30%) and 33% of three to five year olds enrolled (compared to a national average of 35%).<sup>vi</sup> The great majority of children in Child Care & Development Fund subsidized child care are from single-parent families – 92.6%, according to September 2009 data from the Department of Human Services. The Department also reported that the vast majority of children in subsidized child care are black (78.9%).

While a high percentage of Georgia's subsidized child care is in centers and offered by licensed providers, historically Georgia's requirements for licensed care have been among the nation's least restrictive. The staffing ratios and maximum group sizes allowed in Georgia have been among the most permissive in the 50 states, and Georgia has also been behind other states in its pre-service requirements for providers.<sup>vii</sup> Recently the state has undertaken administrative changes to its child care quality requirements, with the goal of providing a better experience and quality for the children enrolled.

## 3. Head Start

Head Start is a federal-to-local program with a long history of serving children in the greatest need and providing comprehensive services beyond classroom education. The profile of Head Start enrollees in Georgia is rather unusual in that Georgia is one of only a handful of states to serve a higher percentage of its three-year-old cohort than of its four-year-old cohort.<sup>viii</sup> The percentage of three year olds served is slightly above the national average, but the percentage of four year olds served has been low by national standards.<sup>ix</sup> The success of the state's four year old preschool program and its successful partnering with Head Start through a collaborative delivery model is a major factor in that percentage as it has an effect on Head Start's needs assessment.

Recent national data shows that Head Start in Georgia serves a population that is disproportionately black compared to other states. In Georgia 69% of Head Start enrollees are black, compared to 29% nationally.<sup>x</sup> On the flip side 21% of Georgia's Head Start children are white (compare to 39% nationally), and 19% are Hispanic (36%).<sup>xi</sup> The percentage of children in Georgia Head Start who are primarily Spanish speakers is also much lower than the national percentage – 12% to 26%.<sup>xii</sup> Georgia for many years has had one of the nation's highest percentages of black residents, and while in the 1990s Georgia had one of the nation's fastest-growing Hispanic populations, the state as a whole still has a lower-than-average percentage of Hispanic residents.<sup>xiii</sup>

Finally, the percentage of Head Start enrollees in Georgia from a single-parent family (74%) is markedly higher than the national percentage (57%).<sup>xiv</sup>

#### 4. Coordination of Services

Georgia's State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care is brand new – it was created by executive order of Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue on September 30, 2009. However, the Council builds on a tradition of collaboration in Georgia's government and on a recognition that agencies and programs must work together to improve outcomes for children.

Georgia is one of only a few states to have a stand-alone agency with authority over early childhood programs. In 2004, Governor Perdue and the General Assembly created Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. Bright from the Start is designed to serve the needs of children aged birth through five and their families. Its services include state pre-k, child care for young children, federal nutrition programs (the Child and Adult Care Food Program [CACFP] and the Summer Food Service Program [SFSP]) and Head Start. Bright from the Start is the lead agency in Georgia's State Advisory Council funding application.

In addition to focusing on the special needs of young children, Georgia has recognized that education is a lifelong process beginning at birth and continuing through higher education. Governor Perdue created an Alliance of Education Agency Heads, which addresses the educational needs of students throughout their careers. The Alliance is chaired by Kathy Cox, Georgia's elected State Superintendent of Schools; it also includes Commissioner Dr. Holly Robinson of Bright from the Start and the five other education agency heads in Georgia.

Georgia has also recognized that to serve children properly requires an effort beyond traditional education agencies, and the First Lady's Children's Cabinet has brought together representatives from education, health, human services, and juvenile justice agencies to work together on behalf of Georgia's children. First Lady Mary Perdue has made children her primary policy focus for the last seven years. Governor Perdue's executive order creating the Council requires that its work be aligned with that of the First Lady's Children's Cabinet, and several members of the cabinet are active participants in the Council.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) and its Commissioner, B.J. Walker, have also played a leadership role in serving young children. The agency supports a wide range of services for families and children, including child care. The participation of DHS in the Council's work will help solidify the Council as a forum for collaboration among education and human services agencies and providers.

The Council's work will build on the progress already made in Georgia. One new dimension that the Council will bring is more formal collaboration between state government and its outside partners. Parents are the most important force in the life of a young child, and while state government can play a valuable role in supporting parents and children, it cannot and should not do that alone. The Council brings together a diverse group of leaders from multiple professional fields and from all across the state, united by a common passion: improving outcomes for young children in Georgia.

#### IV. Georgia's Action Agenda for Young Children

Georgia's action agenda recognizes that improving outcomes for children will demand a collaborative approach and a real commitment of time and energy. The purpose of this action agenda is to provide a framework for that commitment of time and energy and to ensure that our efforts lead to real policy change. This outline of the action agenda is divided into three sections: (A) The Council's objectives for the grant; (B) Georgia's strategies for increasing the number of children entering school ready to learn; and (C) the activities the Council can undertake in support of its strategies, including the activities to be funded through the HHS grant.

##### A. *The Council's Objectives for the Grant*

##### 1. What the Council Intends to Accomplish

The Council's primary objectives for its grant fall into three broad categories: (1) Improving program quality; (2) Empowering parents; and (3) Unifying and coordinating our data. These objectives are deeply interrelated. Improving program quality helps to support parents, and, in turn, empowering parents can help drive the improvement of program quality. Meaningful and useful data is a foundational element of the quality improvement process and is also a critical tool for parents.

- *Improving program quality.* Young children in Georgia spend tens of millions of hours with program providers in Head Start, pre-k, and child care. Extensive research tells us that the quality of their experience during those hours will have a major effect on their later success. In Georgia we know that many of those hours are being spent in positive environments with supportive adults – but we also know that too many of those hours are not. Georgia has work to do in: (a) defining what quality is in a manner that ensures good outcomes for children, is widely agreed upon, and is easily understood by parents and providers; (b) ensuring that the provider community has the support necessary to achieve quality as defined by the state; and (c) providing oversight in a consistent and efficient manner, including building on the state's prior efforts to improve inter-rater reliability.
- *Empowering parents.* Parents are a child's primary educators and caregivers. Resources can be provided to all Georgia parents to help them understand the importance of the early years and the developmental needs of young children with information about what services are available for parents to help meet those needs. Parents also can benefit from being informed about what quality service means and how to look for it from a provider. The state can work to improve the coordination of its outreach to parents, which will provide more efficient service through consistent and comprehensive messaging and information.

- *Unifying and coordinating our data.* A unified early childhood data system could support parents, educators, policymakers, and researchers by helping them obtain information and data – and answer key questions – about the progress of and services for young children in Georgia. Key questions include what services children are currently accessing; what needs they have that could be met by other existing programs; and how children who received services fare in the K-12 system. In developing the system, the state's focus should be on how to make data a useful tool for those working on behalf of young children while respecting parent choice and complying with relevant privacy laws.

Georgia is currently providing some quality programming, empowering some parents, and collecting a great deal of data. But the state's program quality and outreach to parents is inconsistent, and we are deeply concerned that the children and parents requiring the most assistance from the state are often the ones least likely to receive quality service and good information. We have made strides in improving the coherence and consistency of our services, and we intend to use our grant to do more. Moreover, to truly understand the impact of our work, we must connect our various stockpiles of data in ways that make meaningful and useful information readily available.

## 2. The Needs Assessment

Our needs assessment will begin by articulating a vision of a coordinated system addressing the range of policies affecting children ages birth to five; the birth to five system will be the first stage of a seamless progression for children from birth through elementary school with alignment among the full range of early learning programs and K-12. Developing a meaningful vision will require the Council's high-level leadership and the engagement of a range of key stakeholders. Our vision will focus on the needs of young children and families; we will look at the population of young children in Georgia and will determine how their needs can best be met. The vision will begin and end with the importance of parents, but it must also include a discussion of the appropriate role of government and what the government's programs will look like when the Council's vision is realized.

One of the first important actions in the needs assessment process will be to provide a strong definition of program quality. This definition should be developed in consultation with key stakeholders but must be designed to lead positive outcomes for children (including school readiness and reading at grade level by third grade). The definition will help to operationalize the key concepts of program quality. One suggested definition (based on work by the Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University) is as follows:

Quality is the convergence of factors in a child's environment and/or experiences that promote the child's optimal physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. In an out-of-home program setting, this requires:

- Highly skilled staff
- Small class sizes; high adult to child ratios
- Language rich environment
- Developmentally appropriate curriculum
- Safe physical setting
- Warm, responsive interactions between children and staff
- Sensitivity to a child's individual needs
- High levels of child participation

Building on this key initial step, the Council can design systems to ensure that providers understand the definition of quality and can develop a plan for ensuring that government-funded providers ultimately have the support needed to reach the agreed-upon threshold. The Council's definition of quality should also guide its parental outreach efforts to inform parents about what quality programming is and how they can look for it. Ultimately the Council will recommend a "quality continuum" that gives parents and providers meaningful and useful information about program offerings.

The Council's vision will focus on early education and care but will also address how best to support parents in fulfilling the health, nutrition, and care needs of the youngest Georgians. The responsibility of parents to their children will be of primary importance to the Council, and discussions of government programs will be in the context of how to support parents in fulfilling their responsibilities. Among government programs, Head Start provides a range of support services, and the partnership between Head Start and pre-k has helped to expand the scope of service provision, but more could be done to make comprehensive services portable – so they follow the child who needs them across programs. We also know that many of our youngest children would benefit from high-quality comprehensive services that are currently unavailable, particularly given research showing that the most significant brain development occurs in the first 18 months of life. So while our vision will incorporate all of the Council's objectives, we will have a special focus on improving the quality of the services available to Georgia parents for their young children.

Once our vision has been articulated, we can assess Georgia's need by comparing the vision to the current reality. Georgia has already established itself as a leader in self-evaluating its current reality, including the forthcoming release of a study by the Frank Porter Graham Center at the University of North Carolina regarding the quality of Georgia's child care. Our needs assessment will include a thorough review of where we currently stand based in large part on research that has already been completed. We

know that we have some real strengths, including Georgia's Pre-K Program, and that many children receive quality education and care – but we also know that we have farther to go, and our needs assessment will honestly inform where we have work to do.

After we establish the vision and the current reality, we will articulate a roadmap for getting from where we are to where we want to go. We will build off of our progress and the lessons we have learned, including our successes and challenges in implementing pre-k statewide. The comprehensive plan will identify the resource levels needed to achieve the stated goals, recognizing that the current fiscal climate does not allow for the immediate infusion of additional resources. Because of that, the plan will address the utilization of existing resources, and may suggest repurposing funds where they can more effectively serve the state's goals. Our discussion of resources will also identify the proper role for parents, as well as federal, state, and local governments. Our plan will identify federal and state barriers that must be overcome to achieve the long term vision, and will suggest legal and regulatory changes necessary for the plan to be implemented.

The comprehensive plan is meant to provide a long-term vision for Georgia, but we know that for the long term vision to be realized, a lot of work needs to happen immediately. For the Council's recommendations to have an impact on the lives of young children, they need to be translated into policy change; where we identify policies that are not consistent with our vision for young children, we will recommend changing the policies to improve child outcomes.

*B. Strategies for Increasing the Number of Children Entering Kindergarten Ready to Learn*

For each of our objectives, the policy changes needed to improve conditions in Georgia will involve multiple elements, and strategies will be needed for each of those elements. The following discussion describes the elements we see as critical and where Georgia policy currently stands on each element.

1. Improving Program Quality

Not all children are enrolled in programs outside the home – but for those who are, the quality of their experience in that program can play a significant role in determining whether they enter school ready. There are many elements of a successful early childhood program, and in recent years Georgia has focused increasingly on the key elements of a quality early learning system. The following elements meet two important criteria for inclusion in our federal grant application: one, they make a major contribution to school readiness on a system-wide basis; and two, they are areas where the Council's expertise and focus can make the most difference with regard to improving policy and child outcomes.

a. Staff Qualifications and Higher Education Capacity

Georgia recognizes that the most important determinant in the experience of young children is the engagement of adults around them. When those adults are employees in government-funded programs, the government has an obligation to help ensure that those adults are qualified and trained to perform their jobs properly. This requires state agencies to partner with higher education institutions and providers – among others – to ensure that educators and caregivers are in a position to succeed.

The state has already taken numerous steps to change regulations in ways that lead to improved personnel quality. The state's efforts to date have focused on raising the qualifications floor. On an ongoing basis, Georgia needs to consider the appropriate minimum requirements for personnel in programs for young children, and the Council should remain abreast of the implementation of new rules with an eye toward the evolution of those rules in the future. The Council can also play a cross-agency role in helping to bring consistency to the requirements for providers in multiple programs.

The Council will also go beyond discussions of minimum quality. With state agencies, private providers, and higher education at the same table, the conversation should move beyond "floor" and into how Georgia can create a market where quality personnel are properly valued. In the future, providers should have a much easier time identifying and hiring quality personnel, and higher education should be training those quality personnel. But providers alone cannot build this system, nor should higher education be expected to mobilize in support of a market that does not yet exist. Only through working together can systemic personnel change be brought about.

#### b. Professional Development

Professional development has been a significant area of focus for Georgia. Georgia has spent extensive effort developing a Professional Development System, including a teacher registry. Ultimately, the system will be a tool for teachers to identify the professional development that suits their needs and for the state to help ensure program quality. The state has in place a trainer approval system that ensures that trainers are competent to provide instruction and assigns trainers to levels based on their credentials. Professional development is approved if the trainer is qualified and the professional development satisfies the needs of the provider. In addition, Georgia has identified "career levels" that can help inform teacher professional development choices.

While it is essential to plan for the early childhood workforce of the future, the state's professional development offerings must recognize and support the many talented and hard working early childhood personnel currently in place.

#### c. Learning Standards

Governor Perdue is a national leader in the effort to develop common and internationally benchmarked state K-12 learning standards, a key element of the U.S. Department of Education's "Race to the Top" initiative. His national leadership builds on the work already undertaken in Georgia – led by Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox and the State Board of Education – to improve the rigor of K-12 standards and

develop new curriculum. To improve student outcomes, it is essential that learning standards operate in a smooth continuum anchored by age-appropriate standards for young children at one end and college- and career-readiness at the other. The end goal for Georgia should be to have the following progression of research-based standards:

- Age-appropriate learning standards for our youngest children, ages birth through five that ensure their readiness for kindergarten.
- Early elementary standards that build on the early learning standards while preparing children for the rigorous work ahead in middle and high school.
- High school standards anchored to college and career readiness with an aligned progression of standards in middle school that prepare students for a rigorous high school experience. Work underway in the common state standards initiative will identify a model for state college- and career-ready standards. Georgia has signed onto the common core initiative.

Georgia's commitment to standards-based reform has already been extended to early learning. Georgia has initiated work to articulate learning standards from birth through age five defining age-appropriate standards for children before pre-k and kindergarten entry. In addition, Georgia is initiating work to articulate reading standards from birth through third grade. The review includes Georgia Early Learning Standards, Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards, Head Start Child Outcomes, and Georgia Performance Standards for kindergarten through third grade; the project will also study alignment between the pre-k content standards and the work sampling assessments used in Georgia's Pre-K Program. The purpose is to ensure deep alignment that starts with birth-to-five programs and continues through the early elementary grades based on developmentally-appropriate practices for young children and the revised early elementary standards based on the common core. These efforts will help establish Georgia as a national leader in providing a seamless progression of learning standards for children throughout their academic careers.

#### d. Curriculum

While the standards represent a baseline expectation for what students are expected to know and do, quality curriculum is what really drives classroom instruction. Curriculum should be aligned to the standards and should help teachers guide their students in developmentally appropriate ways. Early learners develop in multiple domains and at different paces, and ideally, teachers will be able to provide instruction that reaches children where they are and helps them to grow to the best of their ability. Programs in Georgia should have access to good choices of research-based curricula that allow teachers to educate young children in developmentally appropriate ways.

#### e. Assessment

Georgia uses a work sampling assessment in Georgia's Pre-K Program, and other research-based assessment tools are used in Head Start programs. State leadership in

developing and implementing assessment is critical at this time; early learning assessment is a powerful tool for improving child outcomes but only if it is implemented properly, and the results are used for appropriate purposes. The rollout of assessment in the state pre-k program has been successful, but the state could now consider how to use research-based assessments in a wider range of settings.

Additionally, work is underway to correlate work sampling with Georgia's GKIDS (Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills) kindergarten assessment. Children and educators will benefit from state assessments that are an integrated part of a coherent assessment plan, and in the coming years Georgia will have the opportunity to build on its initial efforts in that important work.

f. Program Oversight and Monitoring

Each state agency works to ensure that local programs serving young children are properly fulfilling their responsibilities. Done correctly, monitoring can be a valuable way for the state and local programs to communicate how best to serve children and is the process by which the state tracks the impact of its investment in a range of programs. Done incorrectly, monitoring is a series of disconnected visits from state inspectors that take on a punitive tone and can leave providers in a tangle of overlapping and inconsistent mandates. In a time of limited resources, the state must ensure not only that programs use state funds effectively but that the state itself connects with those programs in the manner best calculated to use everyone's time effectively and to communicate effectively about serving children.

In Georgia, the current scope of monitoring is often limited and does not adequately support some of the service providers that might need the most assistance. In some instances the state has difficulty finding and retaining qualified personnel to perform the monitoring. In other instances quality personnel are available, but the state simply has no resources to provide oversight.

Georgia has begun improving its oversight and monitoring. In a state as large as Georgia, one significant issue is inter-rater reliability, and the state has done extensive work to ensure reliability in its pre-k program; that work can be extended to include child care and other programs. In addition the state has redone the mapping of child care services and completed a revised child care and referral system based on performance measures. These measures are meant to ensure that program offerings are part of a system, not just a series of unconnected services.

Improving monitoring is not simply a matter of hiring more personnel and sending them to observe programs. Improved monitoring will start with improved data analysis to identify programs with issues that need to be addressed. Then the state – in a manner coordinated across agencies and funding streams – should identify those programs with the greatest need, and mobilize monitoring that is undertaken by trained personnel and addresses the specific issues identified. That way, monitoring personnel will utilize their time more effectively, and the time spent with individual programs will have a greater impact on child outcomes. For that reason local programs should be involved in the design of new monitoring protocols to ensure that the process is not an adversarial compliance exercise but is a tool for driving needed improvement.

g. Health Screening and Healthy Development

Health screening for children enrolled in early care and education programs is a widely acknowledged best practice. State pre-k and Head Start are among the existing programs that offer screening, and Georgia should work to ensure that screening is offered in the most coordinated and efficient manner. This could include expanding screening for infants and toddlers, who are typically the most in need of developmental screening and the least likely to be enrolled in programs that offer it.

More importantly, Georgia should develop plans for following up on the results obtained in health screenings. Children who are identified through screening as requiring health services are not necessarily provided with those services, and the state should develop plans for ensuring that screenings lead to care. Additionally, Georgia currently has no data that captures the results of the existing screening to identify what resources are needed. Improved data could lead to better mobilization of resources at the state and local level and could involve a mix of government agencies and private service providers.

h. Coordination and Integration

A theme that runs through many of the quality elements here is that of coordination and integration. Georgia recognizes that agencies must work together to improve their services. Some of our policies and practices might benefit from a rethinking that starts from the perspective of the provider, the local superintendent, or the parent. Our action agenda will recognize the need to provide service in a consistent and seamless manner.

2. Empowering Parents

Programs outside the home play an important role in supporting child development but not the primary role. Parents play the most important role in the development of their children, and to improve school readiness statewide will require improving support for parents. Many parents are eager to do everything they can for their children but are unaware of how a child's brain develops and what they can do to encourage their child's well-being. Several state agencies and many local providers have focused on improving parent engagement and family outreach. For parents who do enroll their children in programs, the most successful programs will be those that help parents improve their ability to become lifelong advocates for their children.

In Georgia, we recognize that parent engagement needs to occur on at least two levels:

- One is informing all parents about resources available to them as they raise their child – resources that include but are not limited to government programs. Many parents want to be involved but suffer either from not having enough information about the services they can access or from having so much information they cannot make sense of it. The action agenda should develop plans to ensure that parents have *useful* information to help guide their choices.
- Another is to ensure that in government-funded programs parents work with the program providers to ensure that children receive high-quality and consistent support. If parents and providers work as a team focused on the child's development, the child's long-term outcomes improve.

Informing parents about available resources can occur in several dimensions and build on the work of existing Georgia programs. For example, Georgia's Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies play a key role in connecting parents to the right services for their children, and Georgia's Pre-K Program resource coordinators serve more than 50,000 children. Family services were provided to another 28,000 families through Head Start. The state should provide some resources developed across agencies that provide simple and complete information to all parents. These resources will ultimately include information about the quality ratings of programs and how parents can choose programs that are high-quality and will support their child's development. In addition, other resources could be targeted by region or community, or to parents of children with particular needs (for example, parents in homes where the primary language is not English). Finally, when the state has improved its ability to use data, it can design targeted outreach to parents based on the specific needs of their children as long as that outreach is sensitive to the role of the parent and is in accordance with all relevant privacy laws.

Once children are enrolled in programs, the state can partner with parents on issues relating to child development. Many programs have a parental support component, but those components may not be consistent within programs, let alone across programs. Working collaboratively, the state can design high-quality outreach to parents of young children that will be consistent across programs (and coordinated for parents whose children are in multiple programs). Improved outreach will help parents ensure that their children are in the right programs; help them understand how their children can best benefit from the program or programs they are in; and help them learn how to advocate for their children in future programs and the public schools.

### 3. Unifying and coordinating our data

Improving school readiness will require improvements in the state's use of data about children, providers, and programs. Better data will allow Georgia to target its limited resources to those strategies most likely to improve school readiness and to support

educators and parents in their efforts to use resources most efficiently. Linking data among state agencies will allow us to answer some key questions that right now the state simply cannot answer. While federal law obligates the Council to prepare a recommendation for a "unified" early childhood data system, it is important to note that "unified" does not have to mean "unitary" – states are focusing on fulfilling this obligation by linking existing systems rather than attempting to create new systems that would require major upheaval in numerous state agencies.

Linking data across agencies can have numerous positive outcomes:

- For parents, connecting data can make it easier for them to access services. For example, linked data could be used to create a "passport" that parents could use in working with state agencies and funded programs (an idea discussed at the first Council meeting).
- For educators and providers, linked data could help them understand the needs of the children they serve. That allows them to serve the children more effectively – and potentially connect children to other available resources.
- For state policymakers, linked data can help them manage resources more efficiently and better understand the impact of their actions.
- For researchers, early learning data connected to the longitudinal data system will allow for greater exploration of the effects of early experiences on later outcomes.

Accordingly, the state's use of data should focus on identifying what it wants to use data to accomplish and then building data supports that help the system meet its operating goals. For example, in early childhood, one major challenge is identifying which children are being served by which programs. The First Lady's Children's Cabinet has been exploring the idea of a voluntary "Children's Passport" that would provide basic information about children across agencies and domains – health information (such as immunizations), information about enrollment in public supports and social services (such as Medicaid or WIC), and enrollment in early education and care. The use of a passport would make it easier for parents to access programs and help programs better understand the needs of children and the opportunities to serve them.

A unified early learning data system should have horizontal and vertical dimensions. First, the state can connect data horizontally across agencies for children in the same age cohort to give a much richer understanding of what is actually happening with children prior to school entry (particularly in the critical infant-toddler years). That information should then be connected vertically to K-12 longitudinal data that then flows into higher education and workforce data. The vertical connection will depend on the use of a unique student identifier, which children are currently assigned in Georgia's Pre-K Program. Georgia has long been a leader in developing its longitudinal data

system, and strengthening the connection of early learning data to the K-12 system will significantly benefit parents, educators, researchers, and policymakers.

In addition to data that helps mobilize resources on behalf of children, the state's early learning workforce has a different set of data needs. Improved workforce data could help identify system needs but should also help individual providers. For example, improved statewide data collection about personnel could benefit programs by allowing for greater certainty in the hiring process and tracking ongoing professional development. Georgia is currently updating its professional development registry, which will meet some of these needs in a user-friendly fashion.

Unifying and coordinating data is a policy area where the Council's convening role can be used effectively. Data linkages require partnerships among multiple agencies to serve multiple audiences; designing a unified system must be a collaborative enterprise. The Council's purpose must not be to take away agency control of existing data but to build linkages that allow agencies (and university partners) to use data most effectively. Multi-agency data partnerships also require new governance structures, and Georgia has already launched work on a new governance structure as part of its obligations under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund of the ARRA; the Council's work can build on what has already been accomplished. The Alliance of Education Agency Heads has played a leadership role in improving linkages among state education agencies, and the Council can coordinate with and build on that work in an effort that will also include numerous social service agencies.

In addition to governance issues, important privacy issues will need to be addressed in a linked data system. From a technical standpoint states have looked at ways to give different users different levels of access to data systems to ensure that users only can see data that is legal and appropriate for them to see. Once the Council identifies its policy goals for a data system and designs a linked system with the technical capabilities to meet Georgia's needs, it should undertake a legal analysis to ensure that the system properly protects the privacy of children with data in the system; the final system implementation must include the safeguards needed to protect that data.

Ultimately, the measure of a state data system is not what it collects but what it produces. The state's early learning data system should be designed to meet the needs of the people who are (and should be) using it to improve outcomes for young children. Georgia needs a unified early learning data system that provides parents with the information they need to advocate on behalf of their children; educators with the information they need to serve those children; and policymakers with the information they need to manage the state's resources. Indeed, an improved data system is necessary for the Council to map out and complete its own work, as the improved data system will help track the state's progress toward quality improvement. The unified data system's implementation must also address the privacy and security concerns that must be dealt with for any data system.

C. *Activities Planned By the Council to Increase the Number of Children Entering Kindergarten Ready to Learn*

Having identified the critical elements needed to achieve each objective, we turn to the activities we believe are needed in Georgia to advance policy in those areas. For each activity, we have identified what the federal funds will be used for, what the Council's role will be, and how other resources will be leveraged to achieve policy change.

1. Improving Program Quality

The definition of quality will be designed to ensure positive outcomes for children, such as entering school ready to learn and reading at grade level by third grade. While there are numerous elements of quality, those elements are best considered in the context of a comprehensive plan; none of these elements on their own are sufficient to guarantee program quality, and a comprehensive plan can discuss how they interrelate. The Council's commitment is to define quality in a manner that recognizes the many developmental needs of young children and the fact that both cognitive and non-cognitive development is essential to a child's ultimate success in school and beyond.

a. The Needs Assessment: A Comprehensive Plan

Federal law requires the Council to produce a "needs assessment," and to truly assess the state's needs requires the Council to articulate a vision for the level and nature of service that should be provided. The needs assessment should be complementary to – and build off of – other state policy initiatives, including the recently-filed Race to the Top application.

i. The Council should lead a statewide conversation about the needs of young children and their families. As part of that conversation, the Council should identify which needs are appropriately served by government-funded programs. This discussion will involve public meetings in different parts of the state with invitations sent to a wide range of constituents to participate.

ii. To ensure that the conversation builds on existing efforts to obtain feedback from parents and families, Council staff will coordinate with existing parent advisory councils for agencies and programs. Council staff will develop an inventory of existing parent advisory council activities to help inform Council members and will invite parent advisory groups to participate in the Council's process. The Council will also coordinate with the Georgia Council on Aging and the National Center on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren to ensure that grandparents and seniors have the opportunity to participate in the Council's work.

iii. Based on its expertise and the feedback received from the public, the Council should outline a vision for providing service to young children in Georgia. The plan will be aspirational and long-term (five to 10 years) with the idea that, while resources may not be currently available to implement major elements of the plan, having the plan will allow the state to make better decisions about its current use of resources.

iv. On a parallel track to the conversations contemplated in paragraphs i-iii., the state will establish baselines of which children are participating in which programs and the quality of those programs.

v. With the vision and baseline data in hand, the Council will develop a roadmap for getting from where the state is to where it plans to be. That roadmap will include recommendations for yearly benchmarks to ensure the state is progressing toward its vision.

vi. Based on the agreed-upon definition of quality, the Council will make recommendations for developing and maintaining a Georgia quality continuum; for providing supports to providers to reach the expected level of quality; and for providing public information about the state's quality improvement efforts. The Council will specifically discuss the level of resources needed to implement the definition of quality given the state's goals for child access to existing programs.

vii. The Council will identify any barriers in federal or state law to the implementation of its vision.

viii. The Council will also design a process for continually updating the comprehensive plan and needs assessment in future years.

The Council's role will be to drive high-level policy conversation. The comprehensive plan and needs assessment will not ultimately be a series of program-centered wish lists but will instead be a parent- and child-focused document. Federal grant funding will be used to support the process of holding public hearings around the state, preparing a report, and ensuring that the report is disseminated.

b. Key Elements of Quality to Address

Many of the essential elements of program quality will naturally be discussed as part of the comprehensive planning process described in IV.C.1 above. The state's overall work to develop a quality continuum will impact each of the areas described below, and as part of its work on each of these areas, the Council will develop specific recommendations to guide future policy change.

- *Staff Qualifications and Higher Education Capacity:* The Council will identify the staff qualifications needed to successfully execute the comprehensive plan. The Council's work will seek to bring coherence to the staff qualifications in multiple programs while recognizing that different programs play different roles and at this time will appropriately have some differences in provider qualifications. Once the Council has identified the qualifications of the Georgia early childhood workforce needed to implement its vision, it will use the updated professional development registry to determine how much of the vision has been realized. The baseline information in the registry can be used to develop a gap analysis. Based on the gap analysis, the Council will work with its provider partners to understand what market conditions will be needed to bring the right personnel into the early childhood field.
  - The Council will, on a parallel track, measure the higher education pipeline producing qualified personnel for the field. Assuming a gap between the end-goal needs of the field and the current capacity of higher education, the Council will work with its higher education partners and others to plan for an increase in higher education capacity.
  - As with the needs assessment, the Council's role will be to drive high-level conversation. We expect that, from a process standpoint, this particular issue will be largely included in the overall needs assessment discussion, because quality personnel are so central to any goals the Council might wish to achieve in the comprehensive plan. This will be a high-priority area within the planning process.
- *Professional Development:* Georgia has already made strides to improve professional development but can continue to evaluate how professional development should look for multiple programs, potentially using that opportunity to push for greater consistency across programs. There may also be opportunities to coordinate professional development for early learning personnel with professional development for teachers in the early elementary grades, so each group can learn from each other.
- *Learning Standards:* Georgia has already done major work to create appropriate, research-based learning standards for early learning. At this time, however, Georgia – like most states – is awaiting the results of the Common State Standards initiative, which may involve the state making meaningful changes to its K-12 standards. The early learning standards must be high-quality and age appropriate, but because it is important that they be articulated to the K-12 standards, any revisions to the K-12 standards will naturally trigger some review at the early learning level. The Council should ensure that the junction point between early learning and K-12 standards is at the appropriate place and that the progression of

standards that begins with early learners continues on an appropriate trajectory through the early elementary grades.

- At this time, the full impact of the Common State Standards initiative is not clear. Accordingly, the state will develop a more specific plan for updating its standards when the timeline for the Common State Standards has crystallized further to ensure that the standard review process is as efficient as possible. In the meantime the needs assessment will include attention to the implementation of learning standards in multiple programs with the expectation that the state will continue to maintain high-quality early learning standards. As part of that process, the state will identify ways to ensure that providers have access to high-quality curricula based on the most up-to-date standards.
- *Assessment:* With the implementation of the Pre-K Child Assessment underway, major changes in assessment policy are not a priority for the Council at this time. However, under the Council's auspices, the agencies responsible for implementing assessment will convene experts and stakeholders to discuss how assessments could best be implemented and aligned.
- *Program Oversight and Monitoring:* The state successfully executing its oversight role will be a critical part of the success of any comprehensive plan. As part of the state's needs assessment, the Council will identify the state's role in ensuring program quality and articulate what resources the state will need to deploy to ensure quality as programs evolve and expand. This will include recommendations for cross-agency partnerships that best leverage state funding and personnel.
- *Health Screening and Healthy Development:* The most critical issue facing Georgia in health screening is not in performing the initial screening – it is in ensuring that child needs identified through the screening are acted upon. Part of the data work described below will be to identify ways to capture information from screenings and in a legal and appropriate manner ensure that parents are connected to health care providers who can act on the results of those screenings. The Council will help design a unified data system and plan that can support work to improve the outcomes from health screening.
- *Coordination and Integration:* Coordinating and integrating offerings from the state is a key Council responsibility, and one that must be woven into each element of the Council's plans. No specific federal funds will be earmarked for this task, but the Council will approach all of its work with an eye toward parent- and child-centered plans for state service delivery.

## 2. Empowering Parents

Based on the identified strategies, activities to improve the empowerment of parents include the following:

- a. The Council will request that state agency staff take an inventory of existing parent outreach efforts through multiple programs. With that inventory in hand, the Council will set a policy direction for staff to design an improved and aligned system of parent communication across multiple programs.
- b. The Council will engage in outreach to existing parent advisory councils for government agencies and programs to ensure that their ideas are incorporated into the Council's plans for parental outreach.
- c. The Council will develop a plan to inform all parents of the services offered by the state. Federal grant funds will be used to help create and disseminate these resources. A fuller description of how the Council might approach this work is included in a separate memorandum.
- d. The Council should identify particular populations in Georgia that might need specific kinds of programs or parental outreach and define a small set of priority populations for targeted resources. Federal funds can then be used to develop the outreach resources needed to reach those parents.
- e. The Council will ensure that the data work (described below) is cognizant of the need to support parental outreach.
- f. The Council will coordinate with the United Way of Metro Atlanta's Early Education Commission's plans to build public awareness, so that the efforts can be aligned as part of a larger strategy. The Commission's initiative should then be counted as part of Georgia's local match in its application for state advisory council funds.

## 3. Unifying and coordinating our data

Georgia anticipates using federal grant funds to support its efforts to coordinate data about children, providers, and programs. In doing so, the Council will ensure that its work is aligned with other statewide data initiatives and commitments, including Georgia's commitments under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund of the ARRA, its longitudinal data systems grant from the Institute of Education Sciences, and its Race to the Top application. The action steps the Council plans include:

- a. Identifying key end users, including parents, educators, providers, researchers, and state policymakers.
- b. Once key end users have been identified, the Council will encourage staff to work with those end users to develop key questions that end users have that could be answered through early learning data linkages. This effort will build on national and other state efforts to identify the key questions that a unified data system should be able to answer. The process should be cognizant of the fact that different audiences will need different kinds of evidence to help them make decisions.
- c. After a preliminary set of key questions have been identified, staff will present that list to the Council for discussion. Staff will include in that presentation a

list of the data elements needed to answer those questions, which agencies collect any of those elements in any form, and which elements the state does not currently collect.

d. The primary use of federal funds in this area would then be to answer the technical question of how data could be linked across agencies. While multi-agency data linkages raise many policy and governance and technical issues, the Council has the policy expertise to work on resolving those issues. However, technical expertise will be needed to identify how data could be linked across agencies and what elements would need to be added to a linked system. As part of that effort, the state can also look for opportunities to reduce overlapping data burdens on those who help populate the system. Federal grant funds would be used to hire technical experts to analyze the state's existing data infrastructure and begin designing the technical infrastructure needed for the unified system contemplated by federal law.

e. With the technical information in hand, the Council can address the policy and governance issues raised by a unified system and design a roadmap for the state to implement a system that is useful to end users, technically sound, practical to administer at the state level, not unduly burdensome to local providers, and complies with all appropriate privacy laws.

It is clear that with the amount of money provided through the state advisory council grants, Georgia cannot design AND implement a unified early childhood data system. Thus, the focus of the grant proposal is on the design work. While it is unlikely that state funds will be available for implementation any time soon, there have been a variety of federally-funded data initiatives in both education and human services; having a plan for a well-designed system would allow Georgia to identify funding opportunities from federal and private sources and use those funds as part of a larger plan, rather than as stand-alone initiatives. Ideally, the unified data system in its final form will be no more expensive to maintain than Georgia's current data systems and may even be less expensive; however, there will undoubtedly be some transition costs to a redesigned system, and federal funds may help make the transition possible.

## V. Conclusion

Our action agenda defines specific objectives for the Council, specific strategies to achieve those objectives, and specific activities to support our strategies. As shown on the following table, this action agenda will comply with all of the substantive requirements of the Head Start Act and the supporting application materials from HHS. If the Council approves this outline, staff will prepare a full draft application based on its contents.

The action agenda contemplates the following primary expenditures of federal grant funds:

- *Supporting the process by which the Council develops and disseminates a comprehensive plan for early childhood services in Georgia.* The plan will fulfill several statutory requirements, including the requirement to conduct a needs assessment, to make recommendations to improve the preparedness of children for kindergarten entry, to make

recommendations to enhance existing services, and to make recommendations for increasing overall participation (including outreach to underrepresented and special populations). The process will be driven primarily by time spent by Council members, agency staff, and members of the early childhood field and public, which will not be paid for by grant funds. However, grant funds will assist with the hard costs of the process and with paying outside experts who can support the process.

**GRANT OUTCOME:** A comprehensive plan for service to young children in Georgia, including numerous elements focused on increasing quality and enrollment; the results of pilots to improve coordinated professional development; and a plan to provide health supports for children identified through screening in early learning programs.

- *Supporting parental outreach.* While the Council's volunteer members will approve the messages and scope of an outreach plan, federal funds will be used to help support communication with parents, and the development of tools to support that communication.  
**GRANT OUTCOME:** More parents informed about how to recognize quality programs and about the reasons for enrolling their children in a program that will lead to increased school readiness.
- *Supporting the process of linking data.* Because better data is so central to so much of what the state needs to accomplish, federal grant funds will be used to hire technical experts to ensure that it is technically feasible to accomplish Georgia's policy goals.  
**GRANT OUTCOME:** The design of a plan to implement a unified data system that is sound from a policy standpoint and is technically feasible – and the pilot-testing of that plan.

All of these expenditures can be utilized within the grant period, and in each instance, if the state is unable to continue funding beyond the grant period, no services to children will be affected or reduced. Clearly if these efforts are successful, Georgia will need to consider how best to sustain them, but all of the grant expenditures can nonetheless be treated as discrete activities to be completed within three years.

Throughout the process, the Council's role will be to set high-level direction for the work; to drive the comprehensive planning process; and to approve detailed implementation plans presented by staff as needed. The application requires a detailed plan for the Council's activities, which will be presented at the next meeting and will incorporate feedback from the Council's comments on this outline.

**Summary Table: Application Requirements and Georgia's Action Agenda<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Required Element</b>	<b>Georgia's Action Agenda</b>
<i>Statutory Requirements of the Council</i>	
Conduct a needs assessment	IV.A.2; IV.C.1
Identify opportunities for collaboration	IV.B.1.a,b,f,g,h; IV.C.2.b,d,e,f,g; IV.C.2; IV.C.3
Increase overall participation, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations	IV.A.1; IV.B.2; IV.C.1; IV.C.2
Unified data system	IV.A.1; IV.B.1.f; IV.B.3; IV.C.1.b; IV.C.3
Statewide professional development	IV.B.1.b; IV.C.1.b
Assess higher ed capacity	IV.B.1.a; IV.C.1.b
Improve early learning standards	IV.B.1.c; IV.C.1.b
<i>Statutory Requirements for the Grant</i>	
Promote preparedness of children for school entry	IV.A.1; IV.B.1; IV.B.2; IV.C.1
Support professional development, recruitment, and retention initiatives	IV.B.1.b; IV.B.1.a; IV.C.1.b
Enhance existing services	IV.A.1; IV.B.1,2; IV.C.1,2
<i>Requirements in the HHS Application</i>	
Focus on outcomes and convey strategies for achieving performance	IV.B
Clearly identify the need requiring a solution and articulate objectives with reference to current conditions	IV.A
Have a plan of action explaining how the work will be conducted	IV.C

<sup>1</sup> This table does not address each of the procedural requirements of the application – instead, it summarizes what policy steps must be called for in the state's action agenda, and the policy steps Georgia would take to fulfill that requirement. The draft application provided at the next meeting will include the supporting materials necessary to address the statutory and administrative filing requirements.

## ENDNOTES

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- i All data in this paragraph comes from the National Center on Children in Poverty's state data profile on low-income young children, available at <http://www.nccp.org/profiles/>.
- ii Pew Research Center, Social & Demographic Trends, reports on population movement, available at <http://pewsocialtrends.org/maps/migration/>.
- iii National Center on Children in Poverty's state data profile, n. 1 above.
- iv *The State of Preschool 2008*, National Institute for Early Education Research, Barnett et. al., available on-line at <http://nieer.org/yearbook/>, at pp. 48-49 (Georgia profile).
- v *Child Care Participation State Profile*, Georgia state profile, Center for Law and Social Policy, available on-line at [http://www.clasp.org/in\\_the\\_states?id=0010](http://www.clasp.org/in_the_states?id=0010).
- vi *Id.*
- vii *The State of Preschool 2008*, n. iv above, at pp. 246-47.
- viii *The State of Preschool 2008*, n. iv above. Georgia's profile is on pages 48-49, and comparative data was derived from a review of profiles for the nation as a whole and other states. The NIEER data shows 9% of Georgia three year olds enrolled in Head Start, and 7% of four year olds; in fact, more recent data from Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning shows that the percentage of three year olds enrolled has jumped to 9.8%, and the percentage of four year olds has increased to 8%.
- ix *Id.*
- x *Head Start by the Numbers*, Georgia state profile, Center for Law and Social Policy, available on-line at [http://www.clasp.org/in\\_the\\_states?id=0010](http://www.clasp.org/in_the_states?id=0010), at p.2.
- xi *Id.*
- xii *Id.* at p. 1.
- xiii United States Census data, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).
- xiv *Head Start by the Numbers*, Georgia state profile, n. vi above, at p. 2.