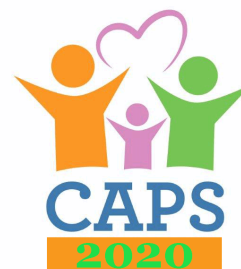
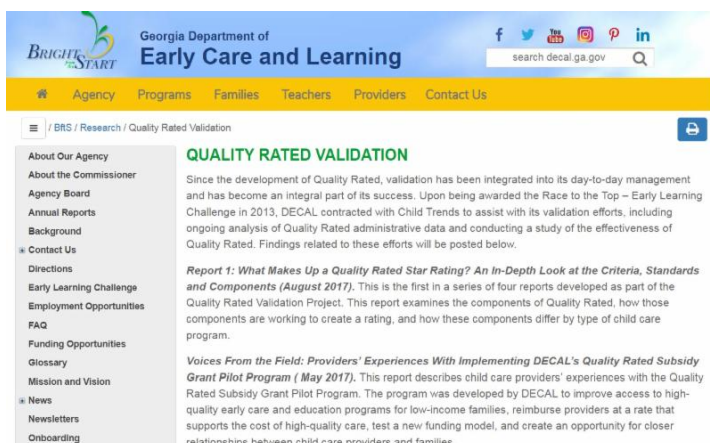




September 2017

## Quality Rated Validation Study Available Online

\*\*\* NEW \*\*\*  
CAPS 2020



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

### Quality Rated Bonus Package Deadline

Quality Rated Bonus Packages will not be awarded after **December 31, 2020.**

To be eligible for a bonus package, programs must meet all of the following guidelines:

1. Participate in Quality Rated by 6/30/18

The first official Quality Rated Validation Report is now available on the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning's website. The findings in the report are related to in-depth analyses of Quality Rated administrative data.

DECAL and its research partners Child Trends, Georgia State University and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement conducted the report.

Findings of the Quality Rated Validation Study will be published in four separate reports over the next couple of years. The next Quality Rated Validation Report will be published in early 2018.

The report can be found by clicking here: <http://www.decals.ga.gov/BftS/QRValidation.aspx>. It is the first link on the webpage.

### Is Your Playground Safe?



Whether your playground is safe or not requires more than just keeping enough resilient surfacing in place. Questions like, "what equipment should I use," "where should I place the equipment," and "how do I know if its age appropriate," are common uncertainties among providers.

Quality Rated uses two resources that are helpful in evaluating the safety of playgrounds. The Public Playground Safety Handbook, published by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Environment Rating Scale Institute's (ERSI) playground best practices summary.

The Public Playground Safety Handbook, published by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, is a comprehensive guide on all types of playground questions, including use zones, spacing of equipment, resilient surfacing, fall zones, inappropriate equipment for each age group, and much more. A free copy of the full handbook can be downloaded from the Quality Rated website by [clicking here](#).

The ERSI has provided a two-page summary of best practices compiled from the Public Playground Safety Handbook that are evaluated when using any of the Environmental Rating Scales. This two-page handout is used to aid in the evaluation of playground safety during all Quality Rated observations, and a copy can be downloaded from the QR Website by [clicking here](#).

Using these two resources, providers can evaluate the safety of their own playground and become informed consumers when purchasing and placing new playground equipment. When the best practices within these resources are implemented, providers can be assured that they do in fact have a safe playground.

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**From the Review Desk:  
"Policy, Practice and Your Portfolio"**

2. Receive a one, two, or three star rating by 12/31/2020
3. Have received less than three bonus packages

**\*\*\* NEW \*\*\*  
Quality Rated  
Program Manual**

We're happy to share that there's an updated version of the Quality Rated Program Manual. The new program manual, which is version 2.7, features the most current and up to date policy items affecting Quality Rated. You can find the updated program manual at the bottom of the [qualityrated.decal.ga.gov](http://qualityrated.decal.ga.gov) website or by clicking the link below.

**[Quality Rated 2.7 Program Manual](#)**

**Quick Links**

**[Quality Rated Website](#)**

**[Quality Rated Program Manual](#)**

**[DECAL KOALA](#)**

**[Environment Rating Scales Institute](#)**

**[Quality Rated Facebook](#)**

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**[Quality Rated YouTube](#)**

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*To support your quality improvement efforts and to help your program achieve the highest star rating possible, we will, from time to time, offer helpful tips. We will further clarify or provide additional information on the five standards, that may help you in forming your responses, or in selecting the evidence you will upload.*

### **Policy, Practice and Your Portfolio**

There are several Quality Rated Standards that require you to submit evidence of policies or practices operational in your program. This evidence is what tells us how your program lives up to the standard. Last month we looked at policies and practices as they relate to Standard 2. We learned that policies, a written set of rules or guidelines, and practices, things we do or engage in routinely on an everyday basis, work hand-in-hand when it comes to how programs operate.

This month we will look at another policy/practice requirement. Inclusion. In Standard 3, you are asked to upload your policy or to describe what practices your program adheres to in several areas.

#### **Standard 3.3.1 Family Engagement - Written Evidence**

Although Standard 3.1 (Strengthening Families Georgia (SFG) training) and 3.2. (Georgia Family Engagement Assessment) are not the focus here, many questions arise about your Strengthening Families Georgia training. Let's pause here and take a moment to look a little deeper at this required training.

As you approach your three-year Required Reassessment, it is important to note that although you and your staff may have taken a Strengthening Families course when you applied for a quality rating, you are now required to take a different module in the Strengthening Family series of courses. Your program must show that you and your staff have taken a new SFG training since your program's star-rating, or it will not count toward your score. Your star-rating is a commitment to continuous quality improvement and learning more about how to engage families is a way to demonstrate this commitment. For instance, maybe you took the course that gave a basic overview of the protective factors. You cannot repeat that course and receive credit.

There are five separate modules (trainings) in the SFG series that provide deeper knowledge of each individual protective

factor. There is also a new course, "Connections: The Foundation of Family Engagement," that can be taken to meet the criteria.

You may contact your technical assistance provider for help in selecting a course or visit the Georgia Training Approval website for information on approved training at <https://www.training.decal.ga.gov/> to find a course that can be counted.

### **Inclusion Policy and/or Practices Requirement in Standard 3.3.1 - Family Engagement**

To meet the criteria for 3.3.1, one of the things you are asked to demonstrate is that you have a written policy or that you have practices in place that show how your particular program addresses inclusion or provides an inclusive environment.

There are several resources available on the Quality Rated website that can help when writing or developing your policy. At the very bottom of the sign - in page you will find a listing for Inclusion. Here is an example of a policy statement taken from the Quality Rated website:

#### **Example of a Policy Statement:**

*"Your Program Name Here welcomes all children and is committed to providing developmentally appropriate early learning and development experiences that support the full access and participation of each and every child. We believe that each child is unique and works in partnership with families and other professionals involved with the child to provide the support every child needs to reach their full potential."*

You may add your program's name and use the policy as written above or create your own policy statement. Submitting your entire handbook is not helpful unless you highlight the evidence. Only highlighted sections are reviewed. You may also pull this section out of the handbook as a single document and upload. If you write a new policy, you may submit it as a separate document even if you have not yet had an opportunity to add it into your handbook.

It is worth noting that the terms "inclusion" and "non-discrimination" are often confused and considered the same. Though they have the same goal of treating everyone fairly or equally, they are still different.

Non-discrimination policies usually repeat the actual legal language of laws protecting a range of different classes of people, adults and children. Our Quality Rated standards, however, are designed to be very intentional and to focus on your work specifically with children. Your policy statement may want to say something about children you are prepared to serve in your program, whether and how you will honor differences (for example if children have a home language other than English), whether you are willing or unwilling to make accommodations/adaptations in your program, and what expectations you have for every child who enters your doors.

#### **Practices:**

In general, in an inclusive environment, you want to ensure that children with disabilities enjoy and have the same opportunity to participate in the same activities as children



without disabilities. This may include adapting supplies, materials, etc. However, ensuring that all children can participate to the best of their ability includes supporting every child in your classroom. Remember, adaptations in the classroom are not just for children with a diagnosed disability. Adaptations do not mean that children are given substitute or different opportunities, rather children are supported in participating in the same activities. With additional support in the form of unique adaptations, all children can participate successfully.

For information and resources to further understand inclusive environments you may use the resources available on the Quality Rated website or visit the DECAL website's Inclusion program page. In addition, for guidance or coaching in developing and writing policies, your technical assistance provider and regional Inclusion Specialist are excellent resources.

*Please feel free to call or email the Help Desk should you need assistance at  
855-800-7747 or [qualityrated@decals.ga.gov](mailto:qualityrated@decals.ga.gov).*

## Congratulations to the following Quality Rated Child Care Programs

Congratulations to the newest  QUALITY RATED™ child care programs!

- Northeast Intown YWCA, Atlanta ★★ ★★ Sandra V. Shepherd, Savannah
- The Chestnut Treehouse II, Ellenwood ★ ★ Reta K. Biggs, Calhoun
- A Brighter Day Early Learning Academy, Stone Mountain ★★ ★★ Amazing Kidz Academy, Atlanta
- Generation Kids Preschool Nursery, Brunswick ★★ ★★ Kids Like Me Childcare and Learning Center, Decatur
- Kat's Little Angels Daycare, Savannah ★★ ★★ Quinnie E. Parker, Savannah
- The Sunshine House #94, Atlanta ★ ★★ Shirley A. Mitchell, Pooler
- Twyler J. Jones, Riverdale ★★ ★★ Wright's Child Care, Savannah
- Smart Start, College Park ★ ★★ Erica Rodriguez, Stone Mountain
- Debra M. Bishop, Calhoun ★ ★★ Another Adventure Day Care, Savannah
- Felicia D. Shuman, Savannah ★★ ★★ Magic World, Lawrenceville
- Valentina L. Bailey, Macon ★★ ★★ A Thru Z Childcare & Learning Center, Atlanta
- ★ ★ ★★ Tamika R. Davis, Macon

 Congratulations to all of our  
QUALITY RATED™ child care programs  
who've increased their star rating  
in August!

- ★★★ First Steps Learning Center, Royston (1 to 3 stars)
- ★★★ Valenteena Davis, Madison (2 to 3 stars)
- ★★★ Maria D. Pichardo Batista, Hinesville (2 to 3 stars)
- ★★ Sunshine Early Learning Center, Hoschton (1 to 2 stars)
- ★★★ Sheltering Arms - Dorothy Arkwright, Atlanta (2 to 3 stars)
- ★★★ Antoinette H. Taylor, Snellville (2 to 3 stars)
- ★★ Noah's Ark Christian Academy, Hiram (1 to 2 stars)
- ★★ Khadijah Farmer, Decatur (1 to 2 stars)
- ★★★ Roma L. Anderson, Norcross (2 to 3 stars)
- ★★★ D. Scott Hudgens Jr. Early Education Center, Lawrenceville (2 to 3 stars)

*Visit [qualityrated.org](http://qualityrated.org) to find  
Quality Rated child care programs in your area!*

Forward this email

STAY CONNECTED



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