QUALITY℠ RATED CHILD CARE

Program Manual

Lasting Effects for Georgia's Children, Families, and Economy

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

www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov | 1-855-800-QRIS (7747)

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1. Introduction

Thank you for your commitment to Georgia's early care and education system. By participating in Quality Rated, Georgia's tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS), you are joining hundreds of providers who have accepted the challenge to enhance the quality of care you provide beyond minimum state licensing standards.

The *Quality Rated Program Manual* provides basic information about Quality Rated, guides you through each step, and provides information on how you can access support throughout the process.

This manual, the required Quality Rated Orientation, the Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales training, the Quality Rated Help Desk, the Quality Rated website, and the hands-on support offered by local child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&R) will help ensure a positive experience for every program that participates in this important effort.

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2. About Quality Rated

2.1 What is Quality Rated?

More and more children in the United States and in Georgia are cared for every day in out-of-home early care and education settings. A growing body of research supports the notion that the quality of care children receive in their child care settings dramatically affects their physical, mental, and academic development. Consequently, the emphasis on improving the quality of early care and education services has increased.

Quality Rated is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. Similar to rating systems for other service related industries, Quality Rated assigns a quality rating to early care and education programs that meet a set of defined program standards. By participating in Quality Rated, early care and education programs embark on a path of continuous quality improvement.

Quality Rated is intended to improve the quality of early care and education programs through aligning and coordinating system-wide initiatives. This improvement will have lasting effects for Georgia's children, families, and economy.

Quality Rated:

- o Identifies indicators that *enhance* children's development and promote school readiness.
- o Increases *quality* of early care and education services.
- o Increases *families' understanding* and *demand* for higher quality early care and education.
- o Increases *professional development* opportunities, benchmarks, and rewards for a range of early care and education practitioners and providers.
- o Creates a *cross-sector framework* that can link standards, technical assistance, monitoring, finance, and consumer engagement for a range of programs: family day care homes, group day care homes, child care centers, school-based programs, Head Start programs, and others.

Quality Rated is made up of five components:

1. *Standards* that are understandable, measurable, and can be verified lead to a zero, one, two, or three star rating that informs families and the public about the level of quality a program provides.
2. *Accountability* and transparent monitoring to determine how well programs meet the quality standards, validate the assignment of ratings, and verify ongoing compliance with quality standards.
3. *Support* for programs and professionals to encourage participation and improve quality. Supports include the professional development system, training, technical assistance, mini-grant opportunities, and mentoring.
4. *Financial Incentives* to help programs improve learning environments, attain higher ratings, and sustain long-term quality. All Quality Rated levels are supported by bonus packages that include training, materials, and equipment or financial bonuses. Information regarding the bonus packages is located on the Quality Rated website at www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov.
5. *Consumer Education* to inform families and the public about the importance of quality in early and school-age care and education. Easy and widespread access to information about ratings is important to families, businesses, and the public.

2.2 History

The movement to improve and designate levels of quality began in the 1990s when some states began rewarding programs that had achieved national accreditation with higher subsidy reimbursement rates through child care subsidy programs (like Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services program). These states found, however, that few providers were able to achieve accreditation due to the differences between licensing standards and accreditation standards. Many states realized that providers needed help to move toward quality in a focused, gradual, and step-by-step approach.

In Georgia, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) initiated the idea of developing a tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS). Following is an outline of the evolution of today's Quality Rated program.

- o From 2000-2004, the Georgia Early Learning Initiative (GELI)/Smart Start Georgia explored and piloted quality initiatives that included training, a substitute teacher program, technical assistance, and increased subsidized child care rates (through CAPS) in select Georgia counties.
- o In 2004, Governor Sonny Perdue and the Georgia General Assembly created Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning to further streamline the state's services to Georgia's children from birth to age five and their families. The department was formed by merging the Office of School Readiness with units from the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Education, and the Georgia Child Care Council.
- o In 2004, Georgia Professional Standards Commission approved the Birth through Five Teacher Certification which recognized the importance of qualified early childhood educators.
- o In 2006, DECAL gathered diverse stakeholder groups to discuss and design a systemic approach to enhance the quality of Georgia's early care and education system.
- o Between September 2006 and April 2007, the Quality Systems Indicators (QSI) Committee developed Georgia's standards and indicators of quality.
- o In 2007, the Georgia State Senate convened a committee to report on the quality of child care in Georgia.
- o In June 2007, the QSI committee recommended refinements to the standards and indicators and then identified measurement tools.
- o In September 2007, national experts reviewed the standards and indicators from a systemic approach.
- o Between October 2007 and March 2008, the Frank Porter Graham (FPG) Child Development Institute at University of North Carolina (UNC) – Chapel Hill studied the feasibility of using the standards and indicators to "rate" child care programs. The FPG feasibility study revealed a need to determine the overall quality of Georgia's family day care programs, child care learning centers, and Georgia's Pre-K programs.
- o In 2008, Georgia State University and the University of Georgia completed an Economic Impact Study revealing the impact of the early child care and education industry on Georgia's economy.
- o Between September 2008 and December 2010, FPG studied the quality of care provided in Georgia's family day programs, child care learning centers, and Georgia's Pre-K programs. The studies confirmed the need for a TQRIS in Georgia.

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- o In 2010, a team of DECAL staff designed a graphic representation of Georgia's Quality Rated and Georgia's process called Georgia Steps Up to Quality.
- o In October 2011, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal announced the launch of Georgia's TQRIS program called Quality Rated. Quality Rated was developed through a collaborative process involving representatives from other state agencies, for-profit and nonprofit child care providers, family day care providers, the philanthropic community, early childhood advocacy groups, school-age care advocacy groups, professional organizations, child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs), and higher education.
- o In January 2012, Quality Rated was launched statewide.
- o In July 2013, tiered reimbursement for CAPS was instituted for rated programs, and program ratings were made public.

2.3 Benefits

Research has found positive associations between early care and education program quality and child outcomes that promote school readiness (Vandell, 2004). The Cost, Quality, and Outcomes (CQO) study examined children's outcomes over time in elementary school in light of their participation in quality early care and education programs (Peisner-Feinberg and Burchinal, 1997, 1999, 2001). In this study, young children who attended higher quality early care and education programs had better language development, problem solving, and social skills. Most importantly, the positive effects of a quality early care and education experience continued through kindergarten into the second grade. Ongoing research supports that higher program quality is associated with better outcomes for children. The goal of Quality Rated is to increase the number of and access to high-quality early education and school-age care programs for Georgia's children.

3. Navigating Quality Rated

3.1 Getting Started – Quality Rated Eligibility

Eligibility to Participate in Quality Rated

Participation allows child care programs to gain access to an online portfolio and the training, technical assistance, and resources that will help them examine and identify quality enhancements that can be made to improve their practices. All licensed child care programs are eligible to participate in Quality Rated. In addition, other child care entities operating with the oversight from another state or federal government program, are eligible to participate in Quality Rated. Examples of programs able to Participate include:

- o Licensed Child care learning centers (including stand-alone school age programs serving children 5-12 years)
- o Licensed Family child care learning homes
- o Military child care and youth programs operated by the Department of Defense
- o Early Head Start and Head Start programs operating under federal guidelines
- o University and technical college lab schools

For information on how Georgia's Pre-K classes operating in public schools are a part of Georgia's Quality Rating and Improvement System, please see Appendix 9.1.

Eligibility to Receive a Quality Rated Star Rating

To be eligible to receive a Quality Rated star rating, participants must complete the process to submit their portfolio as described in Sections 3.2 and 5 and undergo an on-site assessment by reliable assessors utilizing the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) as detailed in Sections 3.2 and 6. In order to submit a portfolio, programs must be in good standing with all other DECAL programs and meet minimum consistent and reliable classroom enrollment requirements as described below and in Section 6.

Compliance Requirements with Other DECAL Programs for Portfolio Submission
Programs that are not in good standing with *any* of the programs listed below may only *participate* in Quality Rated. Programs will not be able to submit their portfolio until they are in good standing with all of DECAL's programs.

To submit a portfolio and receive an assessment, the program must be in good standing with the following (if applicable):

- o Child Care Services (CCS) licensing rules
- o Georgia's Pre-K Program
- o The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Services Program (SFSP)
- o The Childcare and Parent Services Program (CAPS)

If programs fall into a support or deficient compliance zone with CCS after the portfolio has been submitted (pending approval), but before the ERS assessment has occurred, the observation will be placed on hold for up to ninety (90) calendar days, during which time they will be subject to an administrative review to determine whether they may continue in the process. Programs that are unable to continue will have their portfolio returned, giving them the opportunity to update their evidence and re-submit the portfolio once good standing has been achieved.

If programs fall into a support or deficient compliance zone with CCS after the classroom assessment has occurred but before the rating has been approved, they cannot be rated until they return to good standing. The portfolio and ERS observation scores will be held for up to ninety (90) calendar days from the date of the observation, during which time they will be subject to an administrative review to determine whether they may continue in the process. During times of high volume, reviews and ratings for programs that remain in good standing will be prioritized over programs that fall out of good standing following completion of their classroom assessment. If a program returns to good standing and can continue the rating process within the 90-day window, the observation and portfolio scores remain valid and a new ERS assessment will not be required. The program can be rated, but the rating may occur outside the typical sixty (60) day rating window following the ERS assessment. Programs that do not return to good standing during this process will have their portfolio returned to update their evidence and re-submit once good standing has been achieved.

Support is available through DECAL to help providers who are not in good standing with Child Care Services by providing core rules training and technical assistance. If you have questions about licensing compliance zones for Quality Rated, contact your Child Care Services consultant at 404-657-5562.

Please refer to the chart below for clarification of the effect CCS compliance zones may have on eligibility to earn a Quality Rated star rating.

Eligibility and Child Care Services (CCS) Compliance Zones Overview

CCS Compliance Zone	Eligible to Participate in Quality Rated	Eligible for CCRR TA	Eligible to Submit Portfolio	Eligible to have Quality Rated Classroom Observation	Eligible to receive Quality Rated star rating	Eligible to maintain Quality Rated star rating	Eligible to renew or increase Quality Rated star rating
Good Standing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support	Yes	Yes, at the discretion of the CCRR.	No	No	No	Yes	No
Deficient	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes, but will be in suspension status and rating removed from quaityrated.org website	No

Consistent and Reliable Enrollment Requirements

ERS observations can only be conducted in programs where the classrooms maintain consistent and reliable enrollment. Any of the following situations could potentially affect a program's eligibility to submit their portfolio and receive a Quality Rated star rating:

- o A program or a classroom is not eligible to receive an assessment if the enrollment consists entirely of only drop-off children for whom care is provided on uncertain hours or days.

- o A program or a classroom where most of the children leave the facility for the greater part of the day to attend another program in a different facility are not eligible to receive an assessment.

- o A program will be unable to submit their portfolio if they do not meet the minimum enrollment requirements in any of their classrooms. See Section 6 for specific minimum classroom enrollment requirements to determine which classrooms can receive an observation based on enrollment numbers.

- o ERS observations can only be conducted in programs which are open 15 or more hours per week, a minimum of 3 days a week, with those hours and days occurring 6:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and having a minimum window of 2.5 consecutive hours daily for an observation to occur.

3.2 Quality Rated - Participation, Rating, and Maintenance Processes

| Create an online Quality Rated account | Eligibility and Application Participation | Orientation and Introduction to ERS | Technical Assistance and Professional Development Incentives | Portfolio Submission and Environment Rating Scales Observation | Program Rated | Annual Verification |

Application

Programs must complete the Quality Rated application online at www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov. Only a Program Director or designee can begin the application process. After the application is submitted, programs will be notified of their acceptance into the program. Programs can access Quality Rated materials, documentation, and information through their online account. Submission of the program's documentation and evidence for verification will also be completed online through the program's Quality Rated portfolio.

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Orientation

At least one administrator from programs participating in Quality Rated must attend and complete a Quality Rated Orientation and Introduction to Environment Rating Scales (ERS). These training sessions are offered regularly by each CCR&R. A list of CCR&Rs is included in this manual (Section 4.1).

Technical Assistance (TA)

Once the application is submitted, programs may choose to join the Quality Rated technical assistance track, or they may start the Quality Rated process on their own. If the program chooses to take the technical assistance track, free individualized technical assistance is provided by a TA consultant from the local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R). Programs are ineligible for CCR&R TA if a program is deficient or not in good standing with any of DECAL's programs (Child Care Services, Childcare and Parent Services, Child and Adult Care Food Program, etc.). Technical assistance from a CCR&R may include a baseline assessment conducted by a TA consultant to help the program document their strengths and make plans for ongoing program improvement. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is signed to ensure that the participating programs are aware of and agree to their role and responsibilities.

Structural Quality Assessment: Online Portfolio

Programs earn structural quality points toward a Quality Rated star rating by submitting evidence aligned to five standards, demonstrating that they have gone above and beyond minimum licensing requirements. The portfolio does not have to be completed in order. The five standards (detailed in Section 5) are:

- o   Standard 1 – Director and Teacher Qualifications and Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS) Verification
- o   Standard 2 – Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity
- o   Standard 3 – Family Engagement
- o   Standard 4 – Intentional Teaching Practices
- o   Standard 5 – Teacher: Student Ratios

REMEMBER: Keep a copy of all evidence that your program has compiled, uploaded, and submitted. Save your portfolio evidence and the online portfolio to a secure location on your computer.

When a program believes it is ready for an on-site ERS assessment it is time to submit the evidence in the portfolio to Quality Rated. Once the portfolio is completed and the program triggers the submission process, they will no longer be able to make changes to their portfolio. The evidence uploaded will be frozen while the submission process is completed. Programs will be directed to fill out the pre-observation information screens to conclude the portfolio submission process. Once the submission process is finalized, programs will receive an email confirming that DECAL has received the portfolio. A portfolio review and onsite ERS assessment will be completed within ninety (90) calendar days after the program has received the email.

If you have questions while gathering portfolio data, contact your local CCR&R, or the Quality Rated Help Desk at 1-855-800-7747 or qualityrated@decal.ga.gov.

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Process Quality Assessment: Environment Rating Scales (ERS) Observation

Programs earn process quality points toward a Quality Rated star rating by submitting to an on-site assessment of their program's environment by valid and reliable ERS Assessors. Once the program has been notified that its' portfolio has been accepted, an unannounced ERS observation will be conducted within ninety (90) calendar days.

The Environment Rating Scales (ERS) are assessment instruments that are universally accepted to be the Gold Standard for assessing global quality in early childhood programs. The scales are suitable for evaluating inclusive and culturally diverse programs and have been proven valid and reliable, both nationally and internationally. Quality Rated is committed to using the most up-to-date and validated versions of the scales as they become available.

The ERS instruments currently used in the observation phase of the Quality Rated process are:
- Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Third Edition (ITERS-3)
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Third Edition (ECERS-3)
- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale – Revised (FCCERS-R)
- School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale – Updated (SACERS-U)

Quality Rated also utilizes the Environment Rating Scale Institute (ERSI) Notes for Clarification and Georgia Additional Notes for Clarification to further clarify the intent of several indicators in each scale. These notes can be used to help programs gain a greater understanding of the requirements to score an indicator and are located under the ERS Resources Tab on the Quality Rated website: https://qualityrated.decal.ga.gov/Shared/Help.aspx?v=ers. The Georgia Specific notes were developed by veteran and experienced assessors with input from the scales' original authors.

The ERS tools selected for a program's observation will be based on the type of site and the age groups served. For programs with more than one classroom, one-third (1/3) of each type of classroom will be randomly selected to be observed. For example, if a center has three classrooms serving infants through toddler age groups and six preschool classrooms, one ITERS room and two ECERS rooms will be observed. A complete description of the Environment Rating Scales process and the policies governing observations are included in Section 6.

The ERS observations are not a Child Care Services (CCS) licensing study or monitoring visit, Georgia's Pre-K evaluation, or Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) review. The Assessor will focus only on the items in the observation instruments. However, if serious violations of any DECAL program that could lead to *endangering a child* are observed during the assessment, the observation may be suspended and the violations addressed as dictated by their severity.

To receive a three star rating, a program must have a 5.0 average ERS score for their entire program. If a program scores less than a 3.0 on the ERS in any classroom, the program cannot be rated higher than one star.

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Assessor Complaint

If, in the unlikely event an assessor fails to uphold our high standards of professional conduct in a manner that places the integrity of the rating in question, the program director should email or call the Quality Rated Help Desk at QualityRated@decal.ga.gov or 1.855.800.7747 immediately after the observation. Grievances will be shared with a member of the Quality Rated Management team who will respond to all concerns in a timely manner. All complaints or concerns will be held in the strictest confidence and will be handled accordingly. Programs can be assured that they can share their concerns without fear of retaliation or negative consequence to their rating. Programs should notify Quality Rated of their concerns prior to receiving their rating in order to allow management to take corrective action if necessary before a rating is awarded. Concerns regarding perceived assessor misconduct during an observation that are received after a rating has been determined will be addressed; however, they will not result in overturning an awarded rating.

Declared Natural Disaster Response

For child care providers located within areas impacted by a natural disaster, the Quality Rated assessment process may be adjusted as follows:

o   For Quality Rated providers working on a required reassessment, our staff may extend providers' reassessment windows until the end of the Governor's State of Emergency Declaration timeframe. Dependent on the level of damage to a provider's physical location, a provider's rating may be extended and/or the provider's portfolio may be sent back in order to have it resubmitted at a time that allows for the provider to repair structural damage, to have appropriate staff in place, or to have classrooms adequately prepared for children.

o   For providers who have been sent a 30- or 90- day notice of their Quality Rated assessment window: If you have experienced a power or water outage, or significant damage to your physical location due to a natural disaster, which impacts the ability to serve children for more than 24 hours, please notify Child Care Services intake at 404-657-5562 first and then contact the Quality Rated Help Desk at 855-800-7747. A member of the Quality Rated Management team will contact you via phone and/or email to discuss your observation window options within the timeframe established by the Governor's State of Emergency Declaration.

Notification of Star Rating

The final step of the Quality Rated process is the notification of the program's zero, one, two, or three star rating. The program's rating is determined by a point system. Points are assigned based on data collected through the portfolio and the program's average ERS score. Bonus points are awarded for certain national accreditations including, but not limited to: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (AdvancED/SACS) Accreditation, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation, and National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) Accreditation. A program can earn a maximum of 4 bonus points for national accreditations. The tabulated points will then equate to a star rating. Programs will be notified of the star rating by email within sixty (60) calendar days of their ERS observation and can review their Quality Rated online account for details. For more information regarding how Quality Rated points are earned, see the Rating Rubric in Section 5.

Guaranteeing the integrity and transparency of Quality Rated is of primary importance. To ensure there is no compromise to the system, submission of a portfolio signifies the programs agreement to completing

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the process and accepting the star-rating earned from the on-site ERS assessment and portfolio score. There is no voluntary withdrawal process following the on-site ERS assessment. After the on-site ERS assessment is conducted, voluntary withdrawal from Quality Rated is the natural expiration of the quality rating.

Star Rating Clarification Process

Programs seeking additional clarification about the portfolio and/or ERS observation scores should first discuss their Quality Rated Report with their technical assistance consultant. If that discussion fails to satisfactorily address their concerns, they can request a Star Rating Clarification Phone Call. Guidelines for submitting questions to be covered during the phone call can be found on the Quality Rated website under Additional Resources https://qualityrated.decal.ga.gov or by emailing or calling the QR Help Desk at QualityRated@decal.ga.gov or 1.855.800.7747.

To allow QR staff to respond effectively and efficiently, questions answered during the phone call will be limited to the scored items for which programs received a discount and which the TA consultant could not address. General TA questions, or questions to determine what programs could do differently next time to achieve a higher score will continue to be addressed by the TA consultants. The purpose of the Star Rating Clarification Phone Call is to provide a support to programs seeking greater understanding of their scores for their current rating. THESE PHONE CALLS WILL NOT RESULT IN A RATING CHANGE.

One and two star rated programs that are dissatisfied with their star rating and wish to improve their score are eligible to complete a Request for Reassessment application eight (8) months from their rating date. Zero star rated programs are eligible to complete a Re-application immediately following their rating.

Use of the Quality Rated Logo

Use of the Quality Rated logo helps programs communicate the level of quality of early care and education programs to parents, families, and the community. Additionally, it is a marketing tool for child care programs, and we encourage all **rated** programs to use Quality Rated in their marketing materials. In order to preserve the Quality Rated brand for families and child care programs, all Georgia child care programs must adhere to policies regarding the usage of the Quality Rated logo regardless of their participation in Quality Rated. See Section 7 for details pertaining to Quality Rated Logo usage.

Change of Program Ownership

A program's Quality Rating is not automatically transferable. When a center is sold prior to or after receiving a star rating, change of ownership requirements must be met as determined by DECAL. DECAL will request specific information to help determine if the program will maintain its rating under the new ownership. Consideration for transfer of star rating will not be considered until Permission to Operate (PTO) is granted by Child Care Services (CCS). Rating decisions are at the discretion of DECAL. Once the requirements for consideration to transfer the rating have been met, the program must request a *Change of Ownership Form* from the Quality Rated Helpdesk via email (qualityrated@decal.ga.gov) or by phone: (404-463-0956).

If it is determined that the Quality Rated star rating is maintained, it is understood that the new owner accepts the responsibility of maintaining program quality. If a program is not in good standing with all applicable departments within DECAL, transfer of the rating will not be considered.

Criteria for the transfer of rating includes:
- o Review of licensing history
- o In good standing with all applicable departments within DECAL
- o Teacher retention
- o Administration retention
- o Information provided on the Change of Ownership Questionnaire

It is the responsibility of the owner to inform Quality Rated of changes in program's ownership. No benefits of the Quality Rated star rating are guaranteed until the star rating is transferred to the new license.

Programs requesting that the Quality Rated star rating be transferred to the new ownership should not base business decisions on an assumption that DECAL will automatically approve the continuation of the Quality Rating.

Should approval of the transfer of the star rating be denied, the program has 30 days from the time of the change of ownership has been finalized to remove all Quality Rated materials from the program's facility, marketing materials, and online references to Quality Rated. The Quality Rated logo may not be used until the program has completed all requirements for receiving a new Quality Rating.

Change of Location
A program's Quality Rating is not automatically transferable. When a program changes its physical location prior to or after receiving a star rating, change of location requirements must be met as determined by DECAL. Consideration for transfer of star rating will not be considered until Permission to Operate (PTO) is granted by Child Care Services (CCS). Once the requirements for consideration to transfer the rating have been met, the program must request a *Change of Location Form* from the Quality Rated Helpdesk via email (qualityrated@decal.ga.gov) or by phone: (404-463-0956). Rating decisions are at the discretion of DECAL.

If a program is not in good standing with all applicable departments within DECAL, transfer of the rating will not be considered.

Criteria for the transfer of rating includes:
- o CCS licensing history must follow to the new location
- o Review of licensing history
- o In good standing with all applicable departments within DECAL
- o Teacher retention
- o Administration retention
- o Information provided on the Change of Location Questionnaire

Should approval of the transfer of the star rating be denied, the program has 30 days from the time that Permission to Operate (PTO) has been granted to remove all Quality Rated materials from the program's facility, marketing materials, and online references to Quality Rated. The Quality Rated logo may not be used until the program has completed all requirements for receiving a new Quality Rating.

It is the responsibility of the owner to inform Quality Rated of changes in program location. No benefits of the Quality Rated star rating are guaranteed until the star rating is transferred to the new license.

Maintenance of the Star Rating

Quality Rated star ratings are awarded for a three-year period, however providers must renew their star rating each year. The annual verification process allows providers to choose from three options. Reminder emails regarding the annual verification will begin 120 days prior to the anniversary of the program's star rating. Detailed instructions are located in the *Step-by-Step Guide* tab at the bottom of the Quality Rated home page *at www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov*.

Annual Verification Options for Star Rated Programs

Option 1 – Check-In

The Check-In option is designed for providers that wish to maintain their Quality Rating. One, two, and three star programs are eligible for this option. Providers will complete and submit only a Check-In Application. A portfolio is not required. Programs must complete this option before their annual rating anniversary date.

Option 2 – Renewal Incentive/Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Award

The CQI award application process is designed for a program that chooses to maintain its current star rating and wants to keep progressing in their program's continuous quality improvement. One, two, and three star programs are eligible for this option.

A CQI award supports program improvement in Standard 1, Director and Teacher Qualifications, Standard 2, Child Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity, Standard 3, Family Engagement, or a project that will support quality improvement based on the program's ERS report. Child care learning centers are eligible for a $1,000 award. Family child care learning homes are eligible for a $500 award. When a program's CQI award is approved, the program will receive the funds thirty (30) days after the anniversary of their Quality Rated star rating. All CQI Awards are privately funded; therefore, they are contingent upon the availability of funds and are subject to change without notice.

The program will maintain its current star rating. Although no scoring is associated with the CQI portfolio, programs are required to submit updated training verified through the GaPDS, current Professional Learning Plans, and updated nutrition and physical activity goals. The documentation for this award will be uploaded online to the CQI Portfolio. Programs must submit the CQI Award application, budget and portfolio before their annual anniversary date.

Option 3 – Request for Reassessment

Request for Reassessment option is designed for a program that requests an observation before the third-year anniversary of the program's Quality Rated star rating. Option 3 requires that a new portfolio must be submitted before the anniversary date of the program's star rating.

The portfolio will be reviewed to determine if the scores are high enough to be eligible for an ERS observation. The portfolio score must be at least 45 points for child care learning centers and 39 points for family child care learning homes. If a program does not meet the minimum requirements, they will receive an email notification and will retain their current star rating. If a program meets the minimum scoring requirements, an assessment team will be assigned, and the program will receive an email notification of the 30-day window in which to expect their observation.

The new portfolio score combined with the new ERS scores will determine whether a program's star rating is maintained, increased, or decreased. The rating from the reassessment will remain for three years.

Programs are eligible for a new bonus package only if the rating from the reassessment increases. Only one and two star programs are eligible for a reassessment. Programs must submit their new portfolio before their annual rating anniversary date to eligible for a reassessment.

Note: If a program does not complete any of the options described above by their annual rating anniversary date, the program's annual verification will automatically revert to Option 1, making them ineligible for a CQI award or a reassessment.

Annual Option for No Stars Rated Programs

Programs who received a no stars rating can immediately reapply to be Quality Rated. To reapply to Quality Rated, the program must submit a new application, new portfolio, and have a new ERS observation. The new application can be applied for immediately; however, programs are required to wait 90-days from the date of their No Stars rating to be able to submit their new portfolio. The portfolio will be reviewed to determine if the scores are high enough to be eligible for an ERS observation. The portfolio score must be at least 45 points for child care learning centers and 39 points for family child care learning homes.

Three Year Required Reassessment

A Quality Rated star rating is good for three years. All programs must be reassessed after their third year anniversary of their Quality Rated star rating.

After three years the Quality Rated process starts over. A new completed application **and** portfolio must be submitted by the program's anniversary date. If the application **and** portfolio are not submitted by the required date, the program's Quality Rated star rating and any CAPS tiered reimbursement will expire. A program is eligible to receive a new Quality Rated star rating once they have completed the Quality Rated application, portfolio process, and receive a new ERS assessment. Programs that submit their portfolio prior to the anniversary date will retain their star rating until their new Quality Rated star rating is awarded.

Quality Rated Programs that Fail to Maintain a Good Standing Compliance Zone with CCS

All Quality Rated programs who fall into support or deficient status will be able to keep their Quality Rated star rating for the remainder of the duration of the rating, but they will not be able to renew their star rating upon its expiration until they return to good standing status. Programs must attain good standing in order to renew or increase their star rating at their three-year anniversary, or to increase their star rating at their one-year anniversary. Additional CCS visits will not be scheduled to accommodate Quality Rated assessment schedules.

Programs in deficient status are considered to be on suspension and their Quality Rated star rating will be removed from the qualityrated.org website. Quality Rated suspension does not interrupt CAPS reimbursement, or any other benefit of the rating, and the suspension period ends when the program returns to support or good standing. During this time, programs are strongly encouraged to participate in training and technical assistance provided by Childcare Services. Programs in deficient status will only be eligible for the "check in" option at their yearly Quality Rated anniversary. Programs in support status will be able to use the check in option or the CQI award option at their yearly anniversary. CQI applications for programs in support should request funds to facilitate their return to good standing.

Note: Detailed information outlining how the CCS compliance zone may impact Quality Rated star ratings may be seen on the chart in Section 3.1.

All Quality Rated programs who fall into support or deficient status must attain good standing in order to renew or increase their star rating at their three year anniversary, or to increase their star rating at their one year anniversary. Additional CCS visits will not be scheduled to accommodate Quality Rated assessment schedules.

Programs in good standing and in support will be able to retain and maintain their existing Quality Rated star rating. Programs in support will be able to keep their Quality Rated star rating for the remainder of the duration of the rating, but will not be able to renew their star rating upon its expiration until they return to good standing status. Programs in support status will be able to use the check in option or the CQI award option at their yearly anniversary. CQI applications for programs in support should request funds to facilitate their return to good standing. The Quality Rated Star Rating for programs who become deficient will be suspended. The program's Quality Rated star rating will be removed from the qualityrated.org website for the duration of the suspension period. To continue to participate in Quality Rated, suspended programs must participate in training and technical assistance recommended and provided by Childcare Services. Quality Rated suspension does not interrupt CAPS reimbursement, and the suspension period ends when the program returns to good standing. It is the program's responsibility to notify Quality Rated when it returns to good standing in order for the star rating to be reinstated on the website. Programs in deficient status will only be eligible for the "check in" option at their yearly Quality Rated anniversary.

Note: Detailed information outlining how the CCS compliance zone may impact Quality Rated star ratings may be seen on the chart in Section 3.1.

Participation in DECAL Research Activities
Once a program has started an application to become Quality Rated, the program agrees and acknowledges that they may be contacted to participate in research surrounding Quality Rated. The program's participation and data collected is de-identified from the program and kept confidential to the extent allowable by Georgia law.

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Questions? Email the Quality Rated
Help Desk at qualityrated@decal.ga.gov

4. Resources and Support Services

4.1 Training and Coaching Supports

Quality Rated Orientation
Directors or owners of licensed child care centers, family child care learning homes, and other eligible entities participating in Quality Rated must complete the Quality Rated Orientation and Introduction to ERS training. These state-approved classes are offered by local CCR&Rs free of charge. The initial orientation provides critical information and support as programs work to improve quality. Schedules and registration for both trainings are available by contacting your local CCR&R.

Peer Support Network
The Peer Support Network (PSN) is a voluntary opportunity for child care providers to encourage one another to work towards the common goal of improving outcomes for Georgia's youngest learners. The PSN was created by child care providers to offer support and share ideas, success stories, and lessons learned during the Quality Rated experience.

Each meeting is facilitated by a Quality Rated ambassador who operates a 2 or 3 star rated program. Providers meet quarterly at various locations throughout the state to discuss topics chosen by PSN members. The PSN offers training and networking opportunities for child care staff, including administrators, teachers, and support personnel. A typical meeting last 2-hours and participants have a chance to network, socialize, and learn from their peers.

The Peer Support Network is open to all Quality Rated programs as well as those who are in the process of earning or increasing their Quality Rated star rating.

Peer Support Network events are posted on the agency's Facebook pages. Additional announcements are sent via email and postal mail for each event. If you would like information about a PSN in your area please email psn@decal.ga.gov

Other Recommended Training
Quality Rating recognizes and recommends programs explore the following training options when seeking to achieve a Quality Rated star rating and to engage in on-going continuous quality improvements:

   o   Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns
       This free, state approved online training course provides tools and best practices for monitoring the development of young children and communicating with their families. Go to www.decal.ga.gov/CCS/DevelopmentalMonitoring.aspx and follow instructions to complete the five modules.

   o   Georgia's SEEDS for Success Webinars
       These six FREE webinars were created to provide an introduction to the Pyramid Model framework and social emotional early development strategies for early learning professionals (both teachers

and administrators) working with children 3-5 years old. http://olli.decal.ga.gov/index.php/12-2/social-and-emotional-development/

o Free Training Through The Online Cox Campus
  The Rollins Center is committed to providing their transformative training to teachers across the state, with a goal that by 2020 all teachers of children birth to 8 in Georgia will have the capacity so that all their students will be reading proficiently by third grade.

  To remove physical and financial barriers, the Rollins Center launched the Cox Campus portal at http://www.readrightfromthestart.org to make their research-based training available to all teachers. Funded by a generous grant from the James M. Cox Foundation, the online campus is composed of coursework featuring video footage from real-world classrooms and is available at no charge.

  Courses are divided into brief lessons, usually less than 15 minutes each, and are self-paced and easy to follow so educators can fit them into their busy schedules. Their easy-to-use interface guides teachers through a series of lessons with built-in activities and simple questions and answers. They can even pause at any point during a lesson and return later. Each lesson provides techniques teachers can apply in their classrooms the very next day to help children build crucial language and literacy skills.

  Training through the online campus qualifies for Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning continuing education credits for Georgia preschool and Pre-K educators.

  Teachers become part of a community of educators and can collaborate virtually with teachers across the state and country. They also have access to videos, lesson plans, book lists and activity center ideas they can watch and download to enhance their skills.

Technical Assistance

Help Desk
Quality Rated support is available to programs through the Quality Rated Help Desk. The toll-free Quality Rated Help Desk is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Programs can call 1-855-800-QRIS (7747) or 404-463-0956 to receive Quality Rated assistance. In addition, communication is available via email at qualityrated@decal.ga.gov.

On-Site Technical Assistance
DECAL funds the work of the CCR&Rs in Georgia. The CCR&Rs help DECAL fulfill its vision and mission through an invaluable network of support for families and early care and education professionals at the local level. CCR&R agencies offer free, targeted technical assistance to eligible programs participating in Quality Rated. In addition to training on topics such as Environment Rating Scales, Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), Family Engagement, Inclusion, and Cultural Competency, CCR&Rs provide individualized technical assistance that supports programs through the Quality Rated process and prepares them for the pending ERS observations.

Technical assistance can be requested on the initial Quality Rated application by clicking "Request Technical Assistance" on the provider's Quality Rated homepage. The technical assistance consultants will work with

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each program to determine the type and level of support based on program needs. The CCR&R will sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the participating program that outlines the services, roles, and responsibilities of both parties. Quality Rated technical assistance is voluntary; however, a CCR&R may choose to discontinue technical assistance services if a program demonstrates consistent inability to comply with the guidelines set forth in the MOA.

All programs in good standing with licensing may receive Quality Rated technical assistance from their CCR&R. Programs who fall into the support category may be eligible to continue CCR&R technical assistance at the discretion of the CCR&R. The program in support will be responsible for initiating communication between technical assistance providers from the CCR&R and licensing. Programs in the deficient category are not eligible for CCR&R technical assistance.

The following map and chart identify the CCR&R regions and contact information for each. Contact the CCR&R in your region for additional information about upcoming orientation classes, training, technical assistance opportunities, and other services.

Child Care Resource and Referral Agency Regions in Georgia

REGION	CONTACT INFORMATION	COUNTIES SERVED
North West	Child Care Resource and Referral of North West Georgia – Quality Care for Children, Inc. Director: Gloria Calhoun 913 N. Tennessee Street, Suite 202 Cartersville, GA 30120 Toll Free: 1-800-308-1825, Local: (770) 387-0828 Fax (678) 721-6676 gloria.calhoun@qualitycareforchildren.org www.qualitycareforchildren.org	Bartow, Chattooga, Cherokee, Dade, Floyd, Fulton, Gordon, Haralson, Pickens, Polk, Walker
Central West	Child Care Resource and Referral of Central West Georgia – Quality Care for Children, Inc. Executive Vice President: Pam Runkle 2751 Buford Hwy NE #500 Atlanta, GA 30324 Toll Free: 1-877-722-2445, Local: (404) 479-4200 Fax (404) 479-4166 pam.runkle@qualitycareforchildren.org www.qualitycareforchildren.org	Carroll, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Douglas, Fayette, Harris, Heard, Meriwether, Paulding, Troup
Central East	Child Care Resource and Referral of Central East Georgia – Augusta University/ Leap Early Learning Partners Director: Julie Phillips 108 SRP Drive, Suite B Evans, GA 30809 Toll Free: 1-877-228-3566, Local: (706) 922-7182 Fax (706) 922-7180 jphillips@augusta.edu http://leapccrr.org/	Baldwin, Burke, Butts, Columbia, DeKalb, Glascock, Greene, Hancock, Jasper, Jefferson, Jenkins, Johnson, Lincoln, McDuffie, Morgan, Newton, Putnam, Richmond, Rockdale, Taliaferro, Walton, Warren, Wilkes
South West	Child Care Resource and Referral of South West Georgia – Albany State University Director: Soraya Miller 2429 Gillionville Rd. Albany, GA 31707 Toll Free: 1-866-833-3552, Local: (229) 317-6834 Fax (229) 317-6968 soraya.miller@asurams.edu http://www.asurams.edu/ccrr/	Baker, Ben Hill, Berrien, Bibb, Brooks, Calhoun, Chattahoochee, Clay, Colquitt, Cook, Crawford, Crisp, Decatur, Dooly, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Henry, Houston, Irwin, Lamar, Lee, Macon, Marion, Miller, Mitchell, Muscogee, Peach, Pike, Pulaski, Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Seminole, Spalding, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor, Telfair, Terrell, Thomas, Tift, Turner, Upson, Webster, Wilcox, Worth
South East	Child Care Resource and Referral of South East Georgia – Savannah Technical College Director: Melissa Cole 190 Crossroads Parkway Savannah, GA 31407 Toll Free: 1-877-935-7575, Local: (912) 443-3011 Fax (912) 966-6735 mcole@savannahtech.edu www.ccrrofsoutheastga.org	Appling, Atkinson, Bacon, Bleckley, Brantley, Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Candler, Charlton, Chatham, Clinch, Coffee, Dodge, Echols, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Glynn, Jeff Davis, Jones, Lanier, Laurens, Liberty, Long, Lowndes, McIntosh, Monroe, Montgomery, Pierce, Screven Tattnall, Toombs, Treutlen, Twiggs, Ware, Washington, Wayne, Wheeler, Wilkinson
North East	Child Care Resource and Referral of North East Georgia – Quality Care for Children, Inc. Director: Kathy Garrett 3706 Atlanta Hwy, Suite 1 Athens, GA 30606 Toll Free: 1-877-255-4254, Local: (706) 543-6177 Fax (706) 543-3077 kathy.garrett@qualitycareforchildren.org www.qualitycareforchildren.org	Banks, Barrow, Catoosa, Clarke, Dawson, Elbert, Fannin, Forsyth, Franklin, Gilmer, Gwinnett, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Jackson, Lumpkin, Madison, Murray, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, White, Whitfield

Note: CCR&Rs are not required to provide technical assistance to a program who is not in good standing with any of DECAL's programs (Child Care Services, Childcare and Parent Services, Child and Adult Care Food Program, etc.). Support is available to help providers who are not in good standing with Child Care Services to return to good standing by receiving core rules training and technical assistance through DECAL. If you have questions about licensing compliance for Quality Rated, contact your Child Care Services consultant at 404-657-5562.

4.2 Additional Support Programs and Services

SCHOLARSHIPS, INCENTIVES, and AWARDS
DECAL administers three educational assistance programs (SCHOLARSHIPS, INCENTIVES, and AWARDS) for Georgia's early care and education professionals. For more information about these programs and to find out how to qualify, call 1-800-227-3410 or visit www.decalscholars.com.

Quality Rated Incentives
Financial incentives to help programs improve learning environments, attain higher ratings, and sustain long-term quality are a key component of Quality Rated. However, all bonus packages, grants, and other rewards for participation or achievement of rated status are available through federal funding and from private foundations and are contingent on the availability of funds and subject to change without prior notice.

Bonus Packages
Bonus packages are designed to assist programs in continuous quality improvement efforts. Once rated, programs are eligible to select bonus packages based on their star rating. Bonus packages for one and two star rated programs are intended to support the program's movement to a higher rating. Bonus packages for three star programs are intended to maintain the three star rating and to support ongoing quality improvement. Information on specific bonus packages is located on the Quality Rated website. All bonus packages must be ordered within 90 calendar days from the date of receiving the Quality Rating. A program forfeits their eligibility to receive a bonus package if they do not request one within 90 calendar days of receiving their rating. All bonus packages are privately funded; therefore, they are contingent upon the availability of funds and are subject to change without notice. If a program closes after receiving their bonus package, the program may call their local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCR&R) if they are interested in donating their bonus materials to another program.

If a program closes after a star rating is awarded but before the bonus package is ordered or delivered, the bonus package is forfeited.

All bonus packages must be delivered inside and must be opened and inventoried by a Volunteer Inventory Checker (VIC). Opening a box prior to the VIC's arrival voids the warranty of the entire contents of the box. All VIC's have received a Criminal Records Check (CRC) and have been fingerprinted.

Bonus packages for three star Quality Rated Programs include financial awards for program administrators/directors, teachers, and support staff who are listed in the portfolio at the time of submission. Program administrators/directors must be identified in the portfolio as program administrators/directors to be eligible for the highest three star award. The allowable number of identified program administrators/directors for three star bonus package purposes is based on program enrollment.

Enrollment	Number of Directors
0-25 children	1 Program Administrator/Director
26-100 children	2 Program Administrators/ Directors
101 + children	3 Program Administrators/Directors

Three Year Required Reassessment Bonus Packages

Bonus packages will be awarded to programs who increase their Quality Rated star rating. Programs that maintain a three star rating will receive a bonus package designated to support and acknowledge such programs. Information on specific bonus packages are located on the Quality Rated website. All bonus packages are privately funded; therefore, they are contingent upon the availability of funds and are subject to change without notice.

5. Program Portfolio Standards and Criteria

The Quality Rated portfolio helps organize evidence of a program's commitment to quality by electronic submission. The portfolio is composed of five sections:

Standard 1 – Director and Teacher Qualifications and Georgia Professional Development System Verification
This standard focuses on the need for programs to recruit and retain highly qualified staff and support the continuous improvement of their knowledge and skills. The Georgia Professional Development System's (GaPDS) Training History is used to measure personnel qualifications and ongoing professional development. More information and instructions about the GaPDS is at www.gapds.decal.ga.gov. This requires action on the part of instructional staff (lead teachers, assistant teachers) and administrative staff (family providers, directors, and assistant directors) to register and submit their information to the GaPDS, as well as participate in individualized professional development activities, as identified on submitted Professional Learning Plans (PLP).

All instructional staff and administrative staff must be registered in the GaPDS. To earn portfolio points in Standard 1, director(s)/family providers and a percentage of teachers, as determined by the indicators in Standard 1, must have an active career level designated by the GaPDS. Director(s)/family providers and teachers who are only registered in the GaPDS or who are in pending status at the time of portfolio submission are included to determine the total number of teachers in the program. If a staff member who is in pending status at the time of submission currently has an assigned career level, this staff member's currently assigned career level will be used in scoring. For examples of how scoring is determined with assigned GaPDS Career Levels, see Appendix 9.7.

Administrators that have a classroom assignment in the portfolio are considered to have a dual role and will not be scored in Standard 1. If all of the program's administrators serve in a dual role, points will not be awarded for Standard 1, Part A. There are three exceptions to the dual role limitation: former Group Day Care Home providers that still enroll 18 or less children, family child care learning homes, and School-Age only program administrators.

Administrators, lead teachers, and assistant teachers that are in Incomplete status in the GaPDS at the time of portfolio submission will not receive credit for a Professional Learning Plan (1.2 and 1.5) or for training hours (1.3 and 1.6).

ADM and ECE Competencies for "Other" training topics are not counted unless there is an uploaded narrative or a comment on the PLP that indicates that the administrator/teacher has already taken the training topics that are listed in the indicator.

Standard 2 – Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity
This standard asks program staff to reflect on their current health, safety, and nutrition standards and identify areas that can be improved. It also addresses the need for programs to partner with families to provide ongoing developmental screenings of children and refer them to community resources that can help resolve any issues that might impede a child's readiness for school.

Standard 3 – Family Engagement
This standard supports providers in partnering with families to improve child outcomes. Georgia uses the Strengthening Families Framework and Family Engagement Task Force recommendations to build a strong foundation of family partnerships and community connections. Children with supportive home learning environments show increased literacy, better peer interactions, fewer behavior problems, and more motivation and persistence. Providers play a crucial role in strengthening families' connections to the community and to early learning settings.

Standard 4 – Intentional Teaching Practices
This standard is focused on the intentional teaching practices of providers as they align curriculum with Georgia's Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) or Georgia's Afterschool and Youth Development Standards (ASYD), lesson planning, and assessment. It is critical that programs show intention and responsiveness to the holistic developmental needs of children at each age level. Planning and practice must support the five learning domains (physical development and motor skills, social and emotional development, approaches to play and learning, communication, language and literacy, and cognitive development and general knowledge) with respect to each child's home language, traditions, and culture.

Standard 5 – Teacher: Student Ratio Requirements
This standard supports research that indicates that smaller numbers of children per adult are associated with more positive outcomes and that crowded environments may interfere with learning. Programs are encouraged to consider managing group size and ratios as a key component of providing quality care for children. Once programs have submitted an application and have reviewed the *Quality Rated Program Manual* and Rating Rubric, documentation for each standard should be compiled to complete the online portfolio. Courtesy emails will be sent every 30 days if updates are not made to the portfolio.

Documentation for Standard 5 (Teacher: Student Ratio Requirements) must be within thirty (30) calendar days of the planned portfolio submission date, therefore they should be completed toward the end of the portfolio process. For GA's Pre-K classrooms that may not be in session at the time of portfolio submission, enter ratios from a date during the last full school week.

Before gathering portfolio data, programs are encouraged to closely review the information regarding each standard in this section. All required information in each standard must be completed, saved, and uploaded before the standard will be marked as complete. Photographs and documents uploaded as evidence should be clear and legible. Policies that are submitted as evidence should be copied and have applicable portions highlighted, rather than uploading an entire policy handbook. Contact the Quality Rated Help Desk or your local CCR&R with any questions.

The Quality Rated rubric is located in the following section. The rubric for stand-alone school age programs is located in Section 5.2.

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Questions? Email the Quality Rated
Help Desk at qualityrated@decal.ga.gov

5.1 Rating Rubric for Portfolios

Points for Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes with More Than One Staff Member

Structural Quality (Portfolio Documentation)			
Items or practices in a program that create a framework or foundation that potentially allows for children to experience high quality of care			
Standards	Total Score Achieved for Each Standard	Portfolio Score to Structural Quality Points Conversion	
		Portfolio Score	Structural Quality Points
1. Director and Teacher Qualifications (Parts A & B)		0-14	0
2. Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity		15-44	5
3. Family Engagement		45-74	10
4. Intentional Teaching Practices		75-104	15
5. Teacher: Student Ratios			
Total Standards (Portfolio) Score			

Process Quality (On-Site ERS Observation)*	
Practices, interactions, and environment directly experienced by children that can be easily observed and measured	
ERS Score Range *Note: This is the program ERS average score*	Process Quality Points for ERS Score
0.0 – 2.99	0
3.0 – 3.99	10
4.0 – 4.99	20
5.0 – 7.00	30

*See section 3.2 in the Program Manual for full scoring details.

Accreditation Bonus Points**	
Accreditation	Points for Each Accreditation
NAEYC, NAFCC, AMI, AMS, COA	2
NECPA, AdvancED/SACS, NAC, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Association of Christian Schools International	1

**A program can earn a maximum of 4 bonus points. For verification of bonus points, upload your accreditation certificate to the "National Accreditation" section in Section 1 of the online portfolio.

TQRIS Components	Points Awarded
Structural Quality	
Process Quality	
Bonus Points	
Total Points	

Total Points	Star Level
0-14	No Stars
15-24	★
25-35	★★
36-45	★★★

Points for Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Providers with No Additional Staff Members

Structural Quality (Portfolio Documentation)				
Items or practices in a program that create a framework or foundation that potentially allows for children to experience high quality of care				
Standards	Total Score Achieved for Each Standard	Portfolio Score to Structural Quality Points Conversion		
		Portfolio Score	Structural Quality Points	
1. Director and Teacher Qualifications (Part A only)		0-14	0	
2. Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity		15-38	5	
3. Family Engagement		39-62	10	
4. Intentional Teaching Practices		63-86	15	
5. Teacher: Student Ratios				
Total Standards (Portfolio) Score				

Process Quality (On-Site ERS Observation)*	
Practices, interactions, and environment directly experienced by children that can be easily observed and measured	
ERS Score Range	Process Quality Points for ERS Score
0.0 – 2.99	0
3.0 – 3.99	10
4.0 – 4.99	20
5.0 – 7.00	30

*See section 3.2 in the Program Manual for full scoring details.

Accreditation Bonus Points**	
Accreditation	Points for Each Accreditation
NAEYC, NAFCC, AMI, AMS, COA	2
NECPA, AdvancED/SACS, NAC, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Association of Christian Schools International	1

**A program can earn a maximum of 4 bonus points. For verification of bonus points, upload your accreditation certificate to the "National Accreditation" section in Section 1 of the online portfolio.

TQRIS Components	Points Awarded
Structural Quality	
Process Quality	
Bonus Points	
Total Points	

Total Points	Star Level
0-14	No Stars
15-24	★
25-35	★★
36-45	★★★

Portfolio Standard 1: Director(s) and Teacher Qualifications as Verified in the Georgia Professional Development System

Points awarded in meeting Standard 1 require all administrators, including co-directors and assistant directors (if any), and instructional staff to register their education and training in the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS). In this system, education and training are verified, and registrants are assigned a "Career Level." Verification may take up to 90 days. Quality Rated points are based on the education and professional development criteria listed below as verified in the GaPDS. For more information regarding the GaPDS, go to www.gapds.DECAL.ga.gov or call 1-866-258-7737. Family child care providers with no additional staff only complete Part A of Standard 1. For Quality Rated scoring purposes, teachers must have a career level designated by the GaPDS.

Standard 1, Part A: Director(s)/Program Administrator Education and Professional Development – 18 Points Possible

Read all descriptors and award points based on the highest level of criteria met for each section.

1.1 Center Director(s) or Family Provider Education Level	Points Possible
1.1.0 Criteria not met.	0
1.1.1 The director(s)/family provider meets the criteria for **Career Level 4** or higher in the Georgia Professional Development System **and** has completed a state approved 40-hour Director Course, or an equivalent course that is a minimum of 40 hours which covers *administration of early childhood programs* **and** has 5 years of experience as a program director or family child care provider.	2
1.1.2 The director(s)/family provider meets the criteria for **Career Level 7** or higher in the Georgia Professional Development System. The director(s)/family care provider may also earn these points if he/she holds an associate degree or higher in business, management, or a related degree and has earned at least six semester hours in early childhood education or a related field.	4
1.1.3 The director(s)/family provider meets the criteria for **Career Level 8** or higher in the Georgia Professional Development System. The director(s)/family care provider may also earn these points if he/she holds a bachelor's degree or higher in business, management, or a related degree and has earned at least nine semester hours in early childhood education or a related field.	6
What to Submit for Standard 1.1	
Initial Application and Reassessment: o No documentation needs to be uploaded in this section. Information for scoring career levels will be pulled from the GaPDS at the time of portfolio submission. Any academic coursework that will be evaluated to meet the semester hour requirement for 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 must be entered into the GaPDS under ECE-Related coursework. (Note: Only the 40-hour Director Course that is approved by DECAL is accepted by licensing and accepted in the GaPDS.)	

1.2 Center Director(s) or Family Provider Professional Learning Plan (PLP)	Points Possible
1.2.0 Criteria not met.	0
1.2.1 The director(s)/family provider has a written Professional Learning Plan that includes administrative training in at least **one Administrative (ADM) Competency** area with a goal of completing a minimum of **two** hours of training in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, family engagement, and/or implementation of the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS).	2
1.2.2 The director(s)/family provider has a written Professional Learning Plan that includes training in at least **one ECE Competency** area and **one Administrative (ADM) Competency** area with a goal of completing **four** hours of training in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, family engagement, and/or implementation of the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS).	4
1.2.3 The director(s)/family provider has a written Professional Learning Plan that includes training in at least **one ECE Competency** area and **two different Administrative (ADM) Competency** areas with a goal of completing **six** hours of training in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, family engagement, and/or implementation of the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS).	6

What to Submit for Standard 1.2

Initial Application:
- o   Copy of a Professional Learning Plan

Reassessment:
- o   Documentation of completing the previous year's PLP training (verified through the GaPDS)
- o   New PLP

Required information must be completed, saved, and uploaded before this standard will be marked as complete.

1.3 Center Director(s) or Family Provider Annual Training	Points Possible
1.3.0 Criteria not met.	0
1.3.1 The director(s)/family provider has completed **14** hours of DECAL-approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio submission** (Ready to Submit).	2
1.3.2 The director(s)/family provider has completed **16** hours of DECAL-approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio submission** (Ready to Submit).	4
1.3.3 The director(s)/family provider has completed **18** hours of DECAL-approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio submission** (Ready to Submit).	6

What to Submit for Standard 1.3

Initial Assessment and Reassessment:
- o   No documentation needs to be uploaded in this section. Points for completed training hours will be awarded based on training entered and verified in the GaPDS at the time of portfolio submission (Ready to Submit).

Standard 1, Part B: Teacher Education and Professional Development – 18 Points Possible (36 Total Points Possible for Parts A and B of Standard 1)
Read all descriptors and award points based on the highest level of criteria met for each section.
See Appendix 9.7 for an example of how Standard 1, Part B is scored.
*Child Care Learning Centers and Family Child Care Providers with no additional staff do not complete this section.

1.4 Teacher Education	Points Possible
1.4.0 Criteria not met.	0
1.4.1 At least **fifty percent (50%)** of all lead teachers <u>and</u> fifty percent (50%) of assistant teachers meet the criteria for **Career Level 3** or higher.	2
1.4.2 At least **fifty percent (50%)** of all lead teachers <u>and</u> fifty percent (50%) of assistant teachers meet the criteria for **Career Level 4** or higher.	4
1.4.3 At least **seventy-five percent (75%)** of all lead teachers <u>and</u> fifty percent (50%) of assistant teachers meet the criteria for **Career Level 5** or higher.	6
What to Submit for Standard 1.4	
Initial Application and Reassessment: o No documentation needs to be uploaded in this section. Information for scoring career levels will be pulled from the GaPDS at the time of portfolio submission.	

1.5 Teacher Professional Learning Plan (PLP)	Points Possible
1.5.0 Criteria not met.	0
1.5.1 At least **eighty percent (80%)** of all **lead and assistant teachers** have an annual Professional Learning Plan that includes training in **one ECE Competency** in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, family engagement, and/or implementation of the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS).	2
1.5.2 Has completed all of criteria 1.5.1, <u>and</u> at least **seventy-five percent (75%)** of all **lead and assistant teachers** have an annual Professional Learning Plan that includes training in **two** different **ECE Competencies** in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, family engagement, and/or implementation of the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS).	4
1.5.3 Has completed all of criteria 1.5.2, <u>and</u> at least **fifty percent (50%)** of all **lead and assistant teachers** have an annual Professional Learning Plan that includes training **three** different **ECE Competencies** in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, family engagement, and/or implementation of the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS).	6
What to Submit for Standard 1.5	

Initial Application:
  o   Copy of each staff member's individual PLP with competency codes and training levels noted
Reassessment:
  o   Completion of the previous year's PLP training (verified through the GaPDS)
  o   New PLP for each staff member for the current year
 	
Required information must be completed, saved, and uploaded before this standard will be marked as complete.	

1.6 Teacher Annual Training	Points Possible
1.6.0 Criteria not met.	0
1.6.1 **Twenty-five percent (25%) of all lead and assistant teachers** have completed **14** hours of DECAL-approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio submission** (Ready to Submit).	2
1.6.2 **Fifty percent (50%) of all lead and assistan**t teachers have completed **16** hours of DECAL-approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio submission** (Ready to Submit).	4
1.6.3 **Seventy-five percent (75%) of all lead and assistant teachers** have completed **18** hours of DECAL-approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio submission** (Ready to Submit).	6
<u>What to Submit for Standard 1.6</u> Initial Application and Reassessment: o No documentation needs to be uploaded in this section. Points for completed training hours will be awarded based on training entered and verified in the GaPDS at the time of portfolio submission (Ready to Submit). *Required information must be completed, saved, and uploaded before this standard will be marked as complete.*	

Note: Program employees who have not met the minimum educational requirement for Child Care Licensing should be enrolled in a program of study leading to the award of a credential or degree in early childhood education.

Portfolio Standard 2: Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity – 18 Points Possible

For this standard, program staff will reflect on their program's current health, safety, and nutrition standards and identify areas that can be improved. Points are assigned based on the completion of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment, a written improvement plan, documentation of actions taken to complete the plan, and evidence that the program has met each of the requirements listed.

2.1 Nutrition and Physical Activity Assessment and Improvement Plan	Points Possible
2.1.0 Criteria not met.	0
2.1.1 The program has conducted the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment and has developed a written improvement plan addressing **1 criterion** for **each of the two domains** (nutrition and physical activity).	2
2.1.2 The program has conducted the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment and has developed a written improvement plan addressing **2 criteria** for **each of the two domains**.	4
2.1.3 The program has conducted the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment and has developed a written improvement plan addressing **3 or more criteria** for **each of the two domains**.	6

What to Submit for Standard 2.1
Initial Application:
   o   Completed the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment
   o   Completed improvement plan with evidence of addressing 1, 2, or 3 criteria for each of the two domains (nutrition and physical activity)
 	
Reassessment:
   o   Documentation of implementing the previous year's improvement plan and of creating a new improvement plan
 	
Required information must be completed, saved, and uploaded before this standard will be marked as complete.	

2.2 First Aid/CPR Certification	Points Possible
2.2.0 Criteria not met.	0
2.2.1 **Sixty percent (60%)** of staff have a current First Aid/CPR certification.	2
2.2.2 **Seventy percent (70%)** of staff have a current First Aid/CPR certification.	4
2.2.3 **Eighty percent (80%)** of staff have a current First Aid/CPR certification.	6
What to Submit for Standard 2.2 Initial Application and Reassessment: o First Aid/CPR certifications are entered into the GaPDS and are posted on the "Other Career Data" tab. Points will be awarded based on the information in the GaPDS at the time of portfolio submission (Ready to Submit).	

2.3 Written Health Information/Family Resources	Points Possible
2.3.0 Criteria not met.	0
2.3.1 In the past year, the program has provided culturally responsive written materials to families about the importance of **immunizations, oral hygiene, and vision and hearing screenings**.	2
2.3.2 Has completed all of criteria 2.3.1, **and** has established a policy to encourage families to submit vision, hearing, nutrition, and dental screenings for all four-year-old children within 90 days of enrollment or within 90 days of reaching their fourth birthday.	4
2.3.3 Has completed all of criteria 2.3.2, **and** developmental monitoring tools are used to provide early detection of health-related issues and developmental delays to support early intervention.	6

<div align="center">What to Submit for Standard 2.3</div>

Initial Application and Reassessment:
- o   2.3.1: Samples of written material shared with families
- o   2.3.2: Sample of health screening policies for four-year-old children from your program's Parent/Family Handbook. If four-year-old children are not enrolled in your program, and none of the enrolled three-year-old children will turn four years of age while attending, upload a statement indicating this (in lieu of the policy).
- o   2.3.3: Description and evidence of developmental monitoring tools used to detect health related issues and developmental delays (sample tools and narrative of how they are used). **Do not upload children's confidential health data.** For information about developmental monitoring, contact your Inclusion Specialist at inclusion@decal.ga.gov.

Required information must be completed, saved, and uploaded before this standard will be marked as complete.

Portfolio Standard 3: Family Engagement – 18 Points Possible

Family Engagement is the shared responsibility of families, schools and communities to actively promote, support, and sustain family wellbeing, healthy child development, strong family child relationships and lifelong learning for all children and families. Programs can play a key role in equipping families to best support their children's early learning experiences.

For this standard, points are assigned based on the percentage of program staff that have completed Strengthening Families training, the completion of the Family Engagement Self-Assessment, a written family engagement improvement plan, documentation of actions taken to complete the plan, and evidence that the program has met each of the requirements listed.

For **Initial**, **Re-Application**, and **Request for Reassessment** portfolios, credit is given for Strengthening Families training that has been completed no more than five (5) years before the portfolio submission date (Ready to Submit). For **Required Reassessment** portfolios, a different Strengthening Families course should be taken in the three-year window between the previous rating date and the date of the reassessment submission, as credit is not given for repeating the same course that was counted in the previous portfolio. A different Strengthening Families course is not required for a Re-Application or a Request for Reassessment, due to the shorter timeframe between the rating date and the submission date.

3.1 Overview of Five Protective Factors	Points Possible
3.1.0 Criteria not met.	0
3.1.1 **Fifty percent (50%)** of the staff have completed the Strengthening Families training.	2
3.1.2 **Seventy-five percent (75%)** of the staff have completed the Strengthening Families training.	4
3.1.3 **Eighty percent (80%)** of the staff have completed the Strengthening Families training.	6
What to Submit for Standard 3.1	
Initial Application:	

What to Submit for Standard 3.1

Initial Application:
  o   Strengthening Families training will be verified for all staff in the GaPDS. Points for completed training hours will be awarded based on training entered and verified in the GaPDS at the time of portfolio submission.

Reassessment:
  o   Strengthening Families training will be verified for all staff. Points for completed training hours will be awarded based on training entered and verified in the GaPDS at the time of portfolio submission.

Required information must be completed, saved, and uploaded before this standard will be marked as complete.

3.2 Family Engagement Self-Assessment	Points Possible
3.2.0 Criteria not met.	0
3.2.1 The program has conducted the Family Engagement Self-Assessment within the past year and has developed a written improvement plan to address **one goal** from one of the protective factors stated in the Family Engagement Self-Assessment.	2
3.2.2 The program has conducted the Family Engagement Self-Assessment within the past year and has developed a written improvement plan to address **three goals.** Each goal should be from a different protective factor stated in the Family Engagement Self-Assessment.	4
3.2.3 The program has conducted the Family Engagement Self-Assessment within the past year and has developed a written improvement plan to address **four goals.** Each goal should be from a different protective factor stated in the Family Engagement Self-Assessment.	6
What to Submit for Standard 3.2 Initial Application and Reassessment: o A completed Family Engagement Self-Assessment and written improvement plan addressing either 1, 3, or 4 goals. The self-assessment is located in Standard 3 of the online portfolio. *Required information must be completed, saved, and uploaded before this standard will be marked as complete.*	

3.3 Family Engagement Written Evidence	Points Possible
3.3.0 Criteria not met.	0
3.3.1 The program has policies and practices in place addressing inclusion, confidentiality of child records, and family engagement.	2
3.3.2 Has completed all of criteria 3.3.1, **and** has policies and practices that promote healthy transitions as children transition to another room or setting **and** offers **family conferences** at least **twice** a year.	4
3.3.3 Has completed all of criteria 3.3.2, **and** shows **evidence that** the program provides **a role to** strengthen family connections **and** the program receives ongoing input from families and incorporates family voice in ongoing quality improvement efforts.	6

What to Submit for Standard 3.3
Initial Application and Reassessment:
    o   If reassessment, evidence of implementing the prior improvement plan
    o   3.3.1: Evidence of written policy on inclusion and confidentiality of children's records; Evidence of policies and practices that encourage family engagement (policy, volunteer opportunities in classrooms, translated open classroom policy)
    o   3.3.2: Evidence of policies and practices that demonstrate transition activities (policy, special events, site visits, guest speaker agenda, etc.); Evidence of family conferences twice yearly (conference forms, policy, etc.)
    o   3.3.3: Evidence of family connection activities (family workshop or intergenerational event description and sign-in sheet, link to classroom website, copies of newsletters/handouts, photo of lending library, examples of community partnerships, and/or examples of at-home educational activities given to families); Evidence of ongoing family input (family advisory committee/board meetings, copies of program surveys distributed to families, evidence of suggestion box for families)
 	
Required information must be completed, saved, and uploaded before this standard will be marked as complete.	

Portfolio Standard 4: Intentional Teaching Practices – 12 Points Possible

This standard respects the right for programs to choose the curriculum they implement. Points are earned in this area based on the program's ability to show a direct alignment between a developmentally appropriate curriculum, Georgia's Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), lesson planning, and assessment. It is critical that programs show intention and responsiveness to the holistic developmental needs of children at each age level. Evidence for this standard must be descriptive and address all learning domains. Definitions of curriculum and the GELDS are in Sections 8.2 and 8.3 of the Glossary, respectively. School-Age classrooms identified in Standard 1 must upload one week of lesson plans.

4.1 Curriculum	Points Possible
4.1.0 Criteria not met.	0
4.1.1 The program uses an age appropriate curriculum that supports development across all five learning domains (physical development and motor skills, social and emotional development, approaches to play and learning, communication, language and literacy, and cognitive development and general knowledge) **and** is culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate.	2
4.1.2 Has completed all of criteria 4.1.1, **and** the program curriculum is aligned with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS).	4
What to Submit for Standard 4.1 Initial Application and Reassessment: Description of your program's curriculum used at each age level including the following: o Evidence of how curriculum supports the five learning domains (physical development and motor skills, social and emotional development, approaches to play and learning, communication, language and literacy, and cognitive development and general knowledge) o Evidence of how curriculum is culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate (lesson plans, photos, newsletters, incorporation of children's home language, etc.) o Evidence of how curriculum is aligned with the GELDS (narratives of how curriculum is aligned) *Required information must be completed, saved, and uploaded before this standard will be marked as complete.*	

4.2 Lesson Plans and Accommodations for Every Child	Points Possible
4.2.0 Criteria not met.	0
4.2.1 Lesson plans are used for all age groups and include evidence of adaptations to meet children's individual needs.	2
4.2.2 Has completed all of criteria 4.2.1, **and** the program lesson plans are aligned with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) for birth to five classrooms.	4
What to Submit for Standard 4.2 Initial Application and Reassessment: o One week (five full days) of lesson plans **per** age group that show accommodations to meet children's individual needs (equipment, materials, communication tools, visual supports, etc.) and that show alignment, when applicable, with the GELDS (GELDS codes used with the correct age correlations). For GELDS lesson plan templates, visit http://gelds.decal.ga.gov/Resources.aspx. *Required information must be completed, saved, and uploaded before this standard will be marked as complete.*	

4.3 Assessments	Points Possible
4.3.0 Criteria not met.	0
4.3.1 The program gathers instructional assessment data on at least one age group.	2
4.3.2 The program gathers instructional assessment data on more than one age group.	4
What to Submit for Standard 4.3 Initial Application and Reassessment: o Submit a paragraph describing how the program uses **instructional assessments** (an on-going process that informs planning and instruction) with each age group to measure child outcomes. Include how instructional assessment data is collected, how often the data is collected, how the data is used, and indicate the applicable age groups. *Required information must be completed, saved, and uploaded before this standard will be marked as complete.*	

Portfolio Standard 5: Teacher: Student Ratios and Group Size – 20 Points Possible

Early care and education research indicates that smaller numbers of children per adult are associated with more positive outcomes and that crowded environments associated with large group sizes may interfere with learning. This section requires a program to submit evidence for each classroom of ratios and group sizes throughout the entire day at the program. We recognize that individual programs must consider many variables when determining how to manage ratios and group sizes. This standard recognizes that a variance of both ratio and group size may be based on the time of day and staff schedules. *Ratios are scored based on the youngest age served in multi-age group settings and those ratios are used to determine the Level Rating.* **A program is assigned points based on which ratio level they maintain for 75% or more of the classroom hours and/or program day.** Definitions of ratios and group size are in Sections 8.2 and 8.3 of the Glossary, respectively.

5.1 Teacher: Student Ratios – Level Rating Scale			
Classroom Age Groups	Level 1 Ratios	Level 2 Ratios	Level 3 Ratios
Infants (6 weeks to 12 months)	1:6	1:5	1:4
Toddlers (12 months to 23 months)	1:7	1:6	1:4
Two's	1:9	1:8	1:6
Three's	1:14	1:13	1:8
Four's	1:17	1:15	1:11
Five's	1:19	1:16	1:13
School Age	1:20	1:18	1:15

Teacher: Student Ratios – Points Awarded Calculation			
Classroom Age Groups	Number of Classrooms Per Age Group Meeting Level 1	Number of Classrooms Per Age Group Meeting Level 2	Number of Classrooms Per Age Group Meeting Level 3
Infants (6 weeks to 12 months)			
Toddlers (12 months to 23 months)			
Two's			
Three's			
Four's			
Five's			
School Age			
Number of Classrooms Per Type			

Note: For programs serving children in mixed-age groups, ratios will be based on the ages of the youngest children in the group. In two-year-old classrooms, identify if the majority age range is 2 to 2 ½ years or 2 ½ to 3 years.

Percentage of Classrooms Per Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
(Total Number of Classrooms Per Level Type ÷ Total Number of Classrooms) x 100			

Highest Percentage Level Determines Overall Level
Level 1 Ratios = 8 Total Points
Level 2 Ratios = 14 Total Points
Level 3 Ratios = 20 Points

What to Submit for Standard 5

Initial Application and Reassessment:

o   Teacher: Student ratio charts for one day for each classroom within 30 calendar days of portfolio submission

Required information must be completed, saved, and uploaded before this standard will be marked as complete.

5.2 Rating Points for Stand Alone School-Age Care Programs with More Than One Staff Member

Structural Quality (Portfolio Documentation)			
Items or practices in a program that create a framework or foundation that potentially allows for children to experience high quality of care			
Standards	Total Score Achieved for Each Standard	Portfolio Score to Structural Quality Points Conversion	
1. Director/Administrator and Teacher Qualifications (Parts A & B)		Portfolio Score	Structural Quality Points
2. Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity		0-14	0
		15-44	5
3. Family Engagement		45-74	10
4. Intentional Teaching Practices		75-104	15
5. Teacher: Student Ratios			
Total Standards (Portfolio) Score			

Process Quality (On-Site ERS Observation)*	
Practices, interactions, and environment directly experienced by children that can be easily observed and measured	
ERS Score Range Note: This is the program ERS average score	Process Quality Points for ERS Score
0.0 – 2.99	0
3.0 – 3.99	10
4.0 – 4.99	20
5.0 – 7.00	30

*If any classrooms score below a 3.0 on the ERS, the program will not be able to rate higher than 1 star.

Accreditation Bonus Points**	
Accreditation	Points for Each Accreditation
NAEYC, NAFCC, AMI, AMS, COA	2
NECPA, AdvancED/SACS, NAC, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Association of Christian Schools International	1

**A program can earn a maximum of 4 bonus points. For verification of bonus points, upload your accreditation certificate to the "National Accreditation" section in Section 1 of the online portfolio.

TQRIS Components	Points Awarded
Structural Quality	
Process Quality	
Bonus Points	
Total Points	

Total Points	Star Level
0-14	No Stars
15-24	★
25-35	★★
36-45	★★★

Rating Points for Stand Alone School-Age Care Programs with No Additional Staff Members

Structural Quality (Portfolio Documentation)			
Items or practices in a program that create a framework or foundation that potentially allows for children to experience high quality of care			
Standards	Total Score Achieved for Each Standard	Portfolio Score to Structural Quality Points Conversion	
		Portfolio Score	Structural Quality Points
1. Director and Teacher Qualifications (Part A only)		0-14	0
2. Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity		15-38	5
3. Family Engagement		39-62	10
4. Intentional Teaching Practices		63-86	15
5. Teacher: Student Ratios			
Total Standards (Portfolio) Score			

Process Quality (On-Site ERS Observation)*	
Practices, interactions, and environment directly experienced by children that can be easily observed and measured	
ERS Score Range	Process Quality Points for ERS Score
0.0 – 2.99	0
3.0 – 3.99	10
4.0 – 4.99	20
5.0 – 7.00	30

*See section 3.2 in the Program Manual for full scoring details.

Accreditation Bonus Points**	
Accreditation	Points for Each Accreditation
NAEYC, NAFCC, AMI, AMS, COA	2
NECPA, AdvancED/SACS, NAC, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Association of Christian Schools International	1

**A program can earn a maximum of 4 bonus points. For verification of bonus points, upload your accreditation certificate to the "National Accreditation" section in Section 1 of the online portfolio.

TQRIS Components	Points Awarded
Structural Quality	
Process Quality	
Bonus Points	
Total Points	

Total Points	Star Level
0-14	No Stars
15-24	★
25-35	★★
36-45	★★★

Questions? Email the Quality Rated
Help Desk at qualityrated@decal.ga.gov

Portfolio Standard 1: Director(s) and Teacher Qualifications as Verified in the Georgia Professional Development System

Points awarded in meeting Standard I require all administrators, including co-directors and assistant directors (if any), and instructional staff to register their education and training in the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS). In the GaPDS, education and training are verified, and registrants are assigned a "Career Level." Verification may take up to 90 days. Quality Rated points are based on the education and professional development criteria listed below as verified in the GaPDS. For more information regarding the GaPDS, go to https://gapds.decal.ga.gov or call 1-866-258-7737. For Quality Rated scoring purposes, teachers must have a career level designated by the GaPDS.

Standard 1, Part A: Director/Program Administrator(s) Education and Professional Development – 18 Points Possible

Read all descriptors and award points based on the highest level of criteria met for each section.

1.1 Program Director(s) Education Level	Points Possible
1.1.0 Criteria not met.	0
1.1.1 The director/administrator(s) meets the criteria for **Career Level 4** or higher in the Georgia Professional Development System **and** has 2 years of experience as a program director or administrator.	2
1.1.2 The director/administrator(s) meets the criteria for **Career Level 7** or higher in the Georgia Professional Development System. The director/administrator(s) may also earn these points if he/she holds an associate degree or higher in business, management, or a related degree and has earned at least six semester hours in early childhood or elementary education or a related field.	4
1.1.3 The director/administrator(s) meets the criteria for **Career Level 8** or higher in the Georgia Professional Development System. The director/administrator(s) may also earn these points if he/she holds a bachelor's degree or higher in business, management, or a related degree and has earned at least nine semester hours in early childhood or elementary education or a related field.	6
What to Submit for Standard 1.1 Initial Application and Reassessment: No documentation needs to be uploaded in this section. Information for scoring career levels will be pulled from the GaPDS at the time of portfolio submission. Any academic coursework that will be evaluated to meet the semester hour requirement must be entered into the GaPDS under ECE-Related coursework.	

1.2 Program Director/Administrator(s) Professional Learning Plan (PLP)	Points Possible
1.2.0 Criteria not met.	0
1.2.1 The director/administrator(s) has a written Professional Learning Plan that includes administrative training in at least **one Administrative (ADM) Competency** area with a goal of completing a minimum of **two** hours of training in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, and family engagement.	2
1.2.2 The director/administrator(s) has a written Professional Learning Plan that includes training in at least **one ECE Competency** and **one Administrative (ADM) Competency** area with a goal of completing **four** hours of training in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, and family engagement.	4
1.2.3 The director/administrator(s) has a written Professional Learning Plan that includes training in at least **one ECE Competency** and **two different Administrative (ADM) Competency** areas with a goal of completing **six** hours of training in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, and family engagement.	6

What to Submit for Standard 1.2
 	
Initial Application:
   o   Copy of a Professional Learning Plan with competency codes and training topics noted
 	
Reassessment:
   o   Documentation of completing the previous year's PLP training (verified through the GaPDS)
   o New PLP	

1.3 Program Director/Administrator's Annual Training	Points Possible
1.3.0 Criteria not met.	0
1.3.1 The director/administrator(s) has completed **14** hours of DECAL-approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio submission** (Ready to Submit).	2
1.3.2 The director/administrator(s) has completed **16** hours of DECAL-approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio submission** (Ready to Submit).	4
1.3.3 The director/administrator(s) has completed **18** hours of DECAL-approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio submission** (Ready to Submit).	6
What to Submit for Standard 1.3 Initial Application and Reassessment: o No documentation needs to be uploaded in this section. Information completed training hours will be awarded based on training entered and verified in the GaPDS at the time of portfolio submission.	

Standard 1, Part B: Teacher Education and Professional Development – 18 Points Possible (36 Total Points Possible for Parts A and B of Standard 1)
Read all descriptors and award points based on the highest level of criteria met for each section.

1.4 Teacher Education	Points Possible
1.4.0 Criteria not met.	0
1.4.1 At least **50% of all lead teachers** and **50% of assistant teachers** meet the criteria for **Career Level 3** or higher.	2
1.4.2 At least **50% of all lead teachers** and **50% of assistant teachers** meet the criteria for **Career Level 4** or higher.	4
1.4.3 At least **75% of all lead teachers** and **50% of assistant teachers** meet the criteria for **Career Level 5** or higher.	6
What to Submit for Standard 1.4 Initial Application and Reassessment: o No documentation needs to be uploaded in this section. Information for scoring career levels will be pulled from the GaPDS at the time of portfolio submission.	

1.5 Teacher Professional Learning Plan (PLP)	Points Possible
1.5.0 Criteria not met.	0
1.5.1 At least **Eighty percent (80%)** of all **lead and assistant teachers** have an annual Professional Learning Plan that includes training in **one ECE Competency** and training in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, and family engagement.	2
1.5.2 Has completed all of criteria 1.5.1, **and** at least **Seventy-five percent (75%)** of all **lead and assistant teachers** have an annual Professional Learning Plan that includes training in **two** different **ECE Competency areas** and training in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, and family engagement.	4
1.5.3 Has completed all of criteria 1.5.2, **and** at least **Fifty percent (50%)** of all **lead and assistant teachers** have an annual Professional Learning Plan that includes training in **three** different **ECE Competency areas** and training in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, and family engagement.	6

What to Submit for Standard 1.5
Initial Application:
    o   Copy of each staff member's individual PLP with competency codes and training topics noted
Reassessment:
    o   Completion of the previous year's PLP training (verified through the GaPDS)
    o New PLP for each staff member for the current year	

1.6 Teacher Annual Training	Points Possible
1.6.0 Criteria not met.	0
1.6.1 **Twenty-five percent (25%) of all lead and assistant teachers** have completed **14** hours of DECAL-approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio submission** (Ready to Submit).	2
1.6.2 **Fifty percent (50%) of all lead and assistan**t teachers have completed **16** hours of DECAL-approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio submission** (Ready to Submit).	4
1.6.3 **Seventy-five percent (75%) of all lead and assistant teachers** have completed **18** hours of DECAL-approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio submission** (Ready to Submit).	6
<u>What to Submit for Standard 1.6</u> Initial Application and Reassessment: o No documentation needs to be uploaded in this section. Points for completed training hours will be awarded based on training entered and verified in the GaPDS at the time of portfolio submission.	

Note: Program employees who have not met the minimum educational requirement for Child Care Licensing should be enrolled in a program of study leading to the award of a credential or degree in early childhood or elementary education.

Portfolio Standard 2: Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity – 18 Points Possible

For this standard, program staff will reflect on their program's current health, safety, and nutrition standards and identify areas that can be improved. Points are assigned based on the completion of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment, a written improvement plan, documentation of actions taken to complete the plan, and evidence that the program has met each of the requirements listed.

2.1 Nutrition and Physical Activity Assessment and Improvement Plan	Points Possible
2.1.0 Criteria not met.	0
2.1.1 The program has conducted the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Checklist and has developed a written improvement plan addressing **1 indicator** for **each of the two domains** (nutrition and physical activity).	2
2.1.2 The program has conducted the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Checklist and has developed a written improvement plan addressing **2 indicators** for **each of the two domains**.	4
2.1.3 The program has conducted the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Checklist and has developed a written improvement plan addressing at least **3 indicators** for **each of the two domains**.	6

What to Submit for Standard 2.1
Initial Application:
    o   Completed Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Checklist
    o   Completed improvement plan with evidence of addressing 1, 2, or 3 indicators for each of the two domains (nutrition and physical activity)
 	
Reassessment:
    o Documentation of implementing the previous year's improvement plan and of creating a new improvement plan	

2.2 First Aid/CPR Certification	Points Possible
2.2.0 Criteria not met.	0
2.2.1 **60%** of staff have a current First Aid/CPR certification.	2
2.2.2 **70%** of staff have a current First Aid/CPR certification.	4
2.2.3 **80%** of staff have a current First Aid/CPR certification.	6
What to Submit for Standard 2.2 Initial Application and Reassessment: o First Aid/CPR certifications are entered into the GaPDS and are posted on the "Other Career Data" tab. Points will be awarded based on the information in the GaPDS at the time of portfolio submission.	

2.3 Written Health Information/Nutrition/Physical Activity Resources	Points Possible
2.3.0 Criteria not met.	0
2.3.1 The program administrator or director has viewed the *National Institute of Out of School Time (NIOST) Health and Safety Webinar* and completed the on-screen Webinar viewing questions.	2
2.3.2 Has completed all of criteria 2.3.1, **and** has established a policy to encourage healthy meals and snacks as demonstrated by the inclusion of nutritious weekly menus provided to parents and families.	4
2.3.3 Has completed all of criteria 2.3.2, **and** the program has provided culturally responsive written materials to families about the importance of **immunizations, oral hygiene, contagious diseases/illnesses, vision and hearing screenings, and the benefits of physical activity and healthy nutrition**.	6

What to Submit for Standard 2.3

Initial Application and Reassessment:

- o 2.3.1: Complete the on-screen NOIST Webinar viewing verification statement and questions. The webinar can be viewed at the following link: https://youtu.be/bnW_TXMTf5o
- o 2.3.2: Submit sample weekly menu shared with families
- o 2.3.3: Samples of written material shared with families relating to immunizations, oral hygiene, vision and hearing screenings, contagious diseases/illnesses, and the benefits of physical activity and healthy nutrition

Do not upload children's confidential health data.

Portfolio Standard 3: Family Engagement – 18 Points Possible

Family engagement, particularly during the early school-age years, has been proven to have a profound impact on a child's success in school and life. Programs can play a key role in equipping families to best support their children's learning experiences. For this standard, points are assigned based on program staff having completed online awareness training, the completion of the Family Engagement Assessment, a written family engagement improvement plan, documentation of actions taken to complete the plan, and evidence that the program has met each of the requirements listed.

3.1 Family Partnership Awareness	Points Possible
3.1.0 Criteria not met.	0
3.1.1 The program administrator or director has completed the interactive online survey *Assess Your Family Engagement* and has identified the number of items the program currently engages in.	2
3.1.2 In addition to 3.1.1, the program administrator or director has read the *Family Engagement Research Brief* and has completed the on-screen questions.	4
3.1.3 In addition to 3.1.2, **80%** of the staff have viewed <u>both</u> awareness videos online: *Communicate with Families* and *Benefits of Family Engagement*.	6

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">What to Submit for Standard 3.1</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Initial Application and Reassessment:

o   3.1.1: Complete the on-screen *Assess Your Family Engagement* verification statement and question. The online survey can be found at the following link:
       https://y4y.ed.gov/learn/family/family-engagement-extras/assess-your-family-engagement

o   3.1.2: Complete the on-screen *Family Engagement Research Brief* verification statement and questions. The brief can be found at the following link:
       https://www.y4y.ed.gov/tools/family-engagement-research-brief/

o   3.1.3: Complete the on-screen Staff Video Viewing table and verification statement. The online videos can be found by clicking the following links:
       https://y4y.ed.gov/learn/family/family-engagement-extras/communicate-with-families
       https://y4y.ed.gov/learn/family/family-engagement-extras/benefits-of-family-engagement
</td></tr>
</table>

3.2 Family Engagement Self-Assessment and Improvement Plan	Points Possible
3.2.0 Criteria not met.	0
3.2.1 The program has conducted the Family Engagement Self-Assessment within the past year and has developed a written improvement plan to address **one goal from one of the protective factors** stated in the Family Engagement Self-Assessment.	2
3.2.2 The program has conducted the Family Engagement Self-Assessment within the past year and has developed a written improvement plan to address **three goals. Each goal is from a different protective factor** stated in the Family Engagement Self-Assessment.	4
3.2.3 The program has conducted the Family Engagement Self-Assessment within the past year and has developed a written improvement plan to address **four goals. Each goal is from a different protective factor** stated in the Family Engagement Self-Assessment.	6
<u>What to Submit for Standard 3.2</u> Initial Application and Reassessment o Completed on-screen Family Engagement Self-Assessment and written improvement plan addressing either 1, 3, or 4 goals **from the protective factors stated in the Family Engagement Self-Assessment. Each goal must be from a *different* protective factor.**	

3.3 Family Engagement/Support	Points Possible
3.3.0 Criteria not met.	0
3.3.1 The program has policies and practices in place addressing inclusion, confidentiality of child records, family engagement, and shares resources of interest to families.	2
3.3.2 Has completed all of criteria 3.3.1, <u>**and**</u> completes a plan for **three of the strategies** for *Knowing Families and Their Culture* listed on-screen.	4
3.3.3 Has completed all of criteria 3.3.2, <u>**and**</u> completes a plan for **three of the strategies** for *Supporting and Engaging Families* listed on-screen.	6

<u>What to Submit for Standard 3.3</u>
Initial Application and Reassessment:
 	
    o   If reassessment, evidence of implementing prior improvement plan
    o   3.3.1: Evidence of written policy on inclusion and confidentiality of children's records; Evidence of policies and practices that encourage family engagement (policy, volunteer opportunities in program, special events, targeted outreach activities, etc.); Evidence of family resource sharing (samples of materials distributed to families, family handbook, picture of family resource area)
    o   3.3.2: Complete 3 strategy plans for Knowing Families and Their Culture (on-screen).
    o   3.3.3: Complete 3 strategy plans for Supporting and Engaging Families (on-screen).
    o For a reassessment, complete different strategies than previously submitted.	

Portfolio Standard 4: Intentional Teaching Practices – 12 Points Possible

This standard respects the right for programs to choose the curriculum they implement. Points are earned in this area based on the program's ability to show a direct alignment between a developmentally appropriate curriculum, lesson planning, and assessment. It is critical that programs show intention and responsiveness to the holistic developmental needs of children at each age level. Evidence for this standard must be descriptive and address all learning domains.

4.1 Curriculum	Points Possible
4.1.0 Criteria not met.	0
4.1.1 The program uses an age appropriate curriculum that supports development across all five learning domains (physical development and motor skills, social and emotional development, approaches to play and learning, communication, language and literacy, and cognitive development and general knowledge) **and** is culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate.	2
4.1.2 Has completed all of criteria 4.1.1, **and** the program curriculum is aligned with the *Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development Quality Standards*.	4
What to Submit for Standard 4.1 Initial Application and Reassessment: Description of your program's curriculum used at each age level including the following: - Results of curriculum questionnaire demonstrate how curriculum supports the five learning domains (physical development and motor skills, social and emotional development, approaches to play and learning, communication, language and literacy, and cognitive development and general knowledge) - Curriculum narrative shows how the curriculum is aligned with the *Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development Quality Standards*. These standards can be found at: http://georgiaasyd.org/quality-standards	

4.2 Activity/Lesson Plans and Accommodations for Every Child	Points Possible
4.2.0 Criteria not met.	0
4.2.1 Activity/lesson plans are used for all age/grade groups.	2
4.2.2 Has completed all of criteria 4.2.1, **and** activity/lesson plans include evidence of adaptations to meet children's individual needs.	4
What to Submit for Standard 4.2 Initial Application and Reassessment: One week of lesson plans **per** age/grade group that show accommodations to meet children's individual needs (equipment, materials, communication tools, visual supports, etc.)	

4.3 Assessments	Points Possible
4.3.0 Criteria not met.	0
4.3.1 Gathers program wide assessment data by completing the on-screen *Program Assessment Checklist* <u>and</u> develops **one goal** for **staffing practices** and **one goal** for **programming practices and operations.**	2
4.3.2 Has completed all of criteria 4.3.1, <u>and</u> distributes family and student surveys to engage families and youth in program assessment.	4

What to Submit for Standard 4.3
Initial Application and Reassessment:
   o   Complete Program Assessment Checklist (on-screen)
   o   Complete one goal for staffing practices and one goal for programming practices and operations, based on results of Program Assessment Checklist (on-screen). The two goals should not be identical.
   o Submit one copy each of a **completed** family and student survey that has been returned. Sample family and student surveys can be found in "Additional Resources" at the bottom of the Quality Rated screen: www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov.	

Portfolio Standard 5: Teacher: Student Ratios and Group Size – 20 Points Possible

Research indicates that smaller numbers of children per adult are associated with more positive outcomes and that crowded environments associated with large group sizes may interfere with learning. This section requires a program to submit evidence for each classroom or grouping of ratios and group sizes throughout the entire day at the program. We recognize that individual programs must consider many variables when determining how to manage ratios and group sizes. This standard recognizes that a variance of both ratio and group size may be based on the time of day and staff schedules. **A program is assigned points based on which ratio level they maintain for 75% or more of the classroom hours and/or program day.** Definitions of group size and ratios are in Sections 8.4 and 8.7 of the Glossary, respectively.

5.1 Teacher: Student Ratios – Level Rating Scale			
Classroom Age Groups	Level 1 Ratios	Level 2 Ratios	Level 3 Ratios
School Age	1:20	1:18	1:15

Teacher: Student Ratios – Points Awarded Calculation			
Classroom/Group Age Groups	Number of Classrooms/Groups Per Age Group Meeting Level 1	Number of Classrooms/Group Per Age Group Meeting Level 2	Number of Classrooms/Groups Per Age Group Meeting Level 3
School Age			
Number of Classrooms/Groups Per Type			

Note: For programs serving children in mixed-age groups, ratios will be based on the ages of the youngest children in the group.

Percentage of Classrooms Per Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
(Total Number of Classrooms Per Level Type ÷ Total Number of Classrooms) x 100			

Highest Percentage Level Determines Overall Level
Level 1 Ratios = 8 Total Points
Level 2 Ratios = 14 Total Points
Level 3 Ratios = 20 Points

What to Submit for Standard 5

Initial Application and Reassessment:

o   Teacher: Student ratio charts for one day for each classroom within 30 calendar days of portfolio submission

6. Quality Rated Observation Process

6.1 The Environment Rating Scales

Highly trained Assessors use the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) to evaluate **process quality** in early childhood programs. Measuring process quality allows programs to identify the practices that children actually experience on a typical day that directly impacts their development. The ERS allows programs and Quality Rated to determine the quality of interactions that occur in the classroom between the staff and children and among the children themselves. Process quality as seen in the scales also considers children's access and ability to engage with the materials, equipment, and activities in the environment, as well as classroom features, such as space, furnishings, and schedules that support these interactions.

The Environment Rating Scales were developed under the auspices of the Frank Porter Graham (FPG) Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Detailed information about each scale along with current notes for clarification, definitions, frequently asked questions about the scales, score sheets for the scales, and links to online scale training are available at http://www.ersi.info/index.html.

The ERS instruments are used when the Assessor evaluates the classrooms at a child care learning center or family child care learning home to assist in the determination of a program's Quality Rated level designation based on the scoring requirements. Quality Rated follows the observation and scoring procedures outlined in each instrument except as indicated below.

Georgia Scoring Exemptions

ITERS and FCCERS
The Parent and Staff subscales of the Environment Rating Scales are not evaluated as part of the Quality Rated evaluation process. Many of the items and indicators assessed in these sections are covered in the Standards assessed in the Quality Rated portfolio.

SACERS
The use of the SACERS is for stand-alone School Age programs only and no other age groups are included in the program. At this time, the following Items will be marked N/A and are not averaged in the final score: Items 10-13, Items 15-16, Items 33-35, Items 38-41, and Items 43-47.

Assessment in Inclusive Classrooms
In high quality child care programs, support is provided to ensure that each and every child is able to participate in age appropriate activities with their same-aged peers and have access to the full array of classroom materials, activities, and experiences. Because high quality inclusive classrooms provide equal access for all children, the ERS will be conducted and scored consistently for all programs.

A program's Quality Rated designation is determined by a program's average score from the observation(s), the portfolio score, and bonus points.

Note: To receive a three star rating, a program must have a 5.0 average ERS score for their entire program. If a program scores less than a 3.0 on the ERS in any classroom, the program cannot be rated higher than one star.

6.2 How the ERS Is Used In Quality Rated

Minimum Consistent Classroom Enrollment Requirements

To be able to submit a portfolio and receive a classroom observation, programs must have minimum consistent classroom enrollments as outlined in Section 3.1. There are different requirements for child care learning centers and for family child care learning homes, based on the licensed capacity.

Child Care Learning Centers

To be eligible to receive an assessment, classrooms in programs serving children thirty-six months (3 years) and older must have a minimum enrollment of at least five (5) children. Classrooms serving infants and/or toddlers (0-35 months) must have an enrollment of at least three (3) children. Programs are required to identify the number of children enrolled per classroom at the time of portfolio submission. If there are *no* classrooms that meet either of these minimum requirements, the program will not be able to submit their portfolio at that time. The portfolio will return to the "In Progress" status allowing programs to update their evidence and re-submit once the minimum enrollment requirements have been met. Due to scheduling constraints, any classrooms that did not meet the minimum enrollment requirements for an observation at the time of portfolio submission will not be considered for an observation at any time during the 90-day window, even if on the day of the observation the enrollment has increased to meet the minimum requirements. Additionally, new classrooms added to programs after portfolio submission will not be considered for observation providing the original number of classrooms determined for assessment is met.

On the day of the assessment, for an observation to be conducted at least 50% of the enrolled children must be present. If an ITERS room has an enrollment of 3 children, at least 2 children must be present to receive an observation. If the primary selected classroom for each scale does not meet these requirements, the alternate classroom (if available) will be assessed. In the event there is no alternate classroom, the program's star rating will be based on the classrooms able to be assessed. In the event that no classrooms meet the minimum enrollment requirements, the Assessor will contact Quality Rated leadership to determine if an additional observation date should be scheduled or if the portfolio should be returned. If an additional observation is granted and at that second visit there are still no classrooms meeting the minimum enrollment requirements, the portfolio will be returned and should only be re-submitted when regular and consistent enrollment has been achieved.

Child Care Learning Centers with a Licensing Capacity of 18 or Fewer Children Operating in One Space

To be eligible to receive an assessment, the minimum program enrollment must be three (3) children under the age of thirteen (13) years. The FCCERS scale will be used to conduct the observation. On the day of the assessment, programs are still eligible to receive an observation if only one child who is enrolled in their program is present. If no children are present, then the observation will be rescheduled. At the second attempted observation visit, if children are still not present at the program, the portfolio will be returned and should only be resubmitted when regular and consistent enrollment has been achieved.

Family Child Care Learning Homes

Family child care providers must enroll three (3) or more children under the age of thirteen (13) years to be eligible to receive an observation and a Quality Rated star rating. The provider's own or related children under the age of thirteen (13) years, who are present in the learning environment during the assessment, regardless of their pay status, are considered part of the program for ERS observation scoring guidelines and will be considered in the enrollment numbers. This means that scores will be based on the materials, interactions, and activities provided to all age groups present. The FCCERS instrument is always used during family child care learning home assessments.

Questions? Email the Quality Rated
Help Desk at qualityrated@decal.ga.gov

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On the day of the assessment, family child care providers are still eligible to receive an observation if only one child who is enrolled in their program is present. If no children are present, then the observation will be rescheduled. At the second attempted observation visit, if children are still not present at the program, the portfolio will be returned and should only be resubmitted when regular and consistent enrollment has been achieved.

Assessments Outside the Typical School Year (summer/winter holidays etc.)
ERS assessments occur year-round and Quality Rated expects that while programs may somewhat alter their structure during holiday times, programs that operate at high levels of quality do so no matter the time of year. If programs significantly alter the enrollment ages and makeup of their classrooms during the summer months or winter holidays, they should carefully consider the timing of their portfolio submission. See section below titled "When to Submit a Portfolio," to help determine the best time to submit a portfolio.

The policy of Quality Rated is that the most appropriate scale per classroom will be selected according to the age of the majority of the children enrolled at the time of the assessment. Programs are required to identify the number and ages of children enrolled per classroom at the time of portfolio submission. If a portfolio is submitted toward the end of a school year, typically April or May, enrollment may look significantly different during the summer when the observation will occur. Include any anticipated enrollment changes or classroom closures in the comment box at the time of portfolio submission.

Assessor Denied Access to Conduct an ERS Observation
If the Quality Rated Assessor is denied access to the program's facility to complete the ERS assessment, the program will not receive an ERS observation, they will receive a score of 0 for the program's process quality. The program will automatically receive a zero (0) rating for failure to allow all the required steps in Quality Rated that are necessary to becoming rated from being completed. More information about scoring is located in Section 5 of this manual.

Translation Services
If a program has any non-English speaking classrooms (the teachers do not speak English to the children) a translator will be provided to accompany the Assessor, unless the assigned Assessor is fluent in the required language. Programs will identify the potential need for translator at the time of portfolio submission.

When to Submit a Portfolio

Determining the best time to submit the portfolio is a crucial step in becoming Quality Rated. Programs are encouraged to pick the best possible 3-month period during the calendar year to suit their operational needs while adhering to the following policy guidelines:

o   Programs must be open and operational, with representation of each age group they typically provide care for (ITERS, ECERS, SACERS, and FCCERS), for 90-calendar days from the date of portfolio submission.

o   Within the 90-calendar day period, programs cannot be physically closed for more than 15 days, including the 5 black out days allowed. If the program is physically closed for more than 15 days, the portfolio will be returned to be re-submitted at a more appropriate time.

o   Child care centers that provide care for children ages 0 – 5 during the school year **must** have at least 1 operational ITERS room and 1 operational ECERS room available for observation to ensure assessment of all age groups can occur, regardless of time of year the observation will occur.

o   Summer GA's Pre-K transition classrooms will be included in the observation selection and their presence should be noted in the comment box at the time of portfolio submission.

o   When submitting a portfolio for the first time (initial) or reapplying (reapplication), there is no defined date by which to submit the portfolio. See Appendix 9.8 for a flowchart designed to help programs strategically plan portfolio submission.

o   Programs submitting a portfolio as a required reassessment or a request for reassessment, **ARE** bound by their current rating anniversary or expiration date. See Appendix 9.8 for a flowchart designed to help programs strategically plan portfolio submission.

How the Observation Is Scheduled?

Before an observation can be scheduled, the program director or administrator uploads evidence into their online portfolio and completes the electronic pre-observation information requirements for submission to DECAL. Once the portfolio has been accepted, an Assessor or team of Assessors will be assigned to conduct the required number of observations.

Pre-Observation Information On-line Documentation

When a program has completed the portfolio standards and believes they are ready for an ERS assessment, there are a few things they will need to know and have on hand to complete the electronic submission process. After selecting the portfolio submit button, programs are required to complete the on-line pre-observation documentation screens for each classroom in their program within ten (10) calendar days. While in this period, the portfolio will be frozen and no additional changes can be made to the evidence uploaded. If the pre-observation information screens for all classrooms are not completed within the ten (10) day window, the portfolio will be returned to the program and no assessment assignment will be made.

As soon as the pre-observation information screens have been completed and the portfolio fully submitted to Quality Rated, the assessor team will quickly be able to schedule the observation subject to their next available opening. Programs will receive an email notifying them that their portfolio has been accepted and that the observation(s) will occur within ninety (90) calendar days. ERS Assessors work within a ninety (90) calendar day window to schedule all observations on a first come, first served basis. This timeframe may be extended if a translator is required for programs with non-English speaking classrooms. Once the assessor team has determined a program's observation date, the program will receive an email notification of the actual thirty (30) calendar day window in which the observation is scheduled to occur, giving them the ability to better plan for the assessment within a shorter time frame.

Programs should plan to have the following information on hand when preparing to submit their portfolio to Quality Rated:

☐   **Black Out Days -** Know and be prepared to identify the five blackout dates the program would like to select during the next 90 days. During the pre-observation information submission process, the

program will be presented with a calendar interface upon which they will be able to select their black-out days. Black-out dates are days that are not typical for the program or days the regular schedule may not be followed, like school holidays/celebrations, field trips, picture day, etc. Programs can identify up to five (5) days when they do not want to receive an observation, excluding state holidays. A list of state holidays can be viewed at http://georgia.gov/popular-topic/observing-state-holidays. If a program does not want to be observed during a local school system holiday that is not a state holiday, they should use one of their blackout dates on this day(s). An observation will not be conducted on a day that the public school system or county state offices in which the program is located closes due to inclement weather conditions.

☐ **Program Closure Days -** If the entire facility will be closed for a certain time frame within the next 90 days, i.e. summer break, spring break, winter holidays etc., know and be prepared to enter these dates into the comment box that will be available under the calendar interface. If the program operates one or more GA's Pre-K classroom(s), know and be prepared to enter into the comment box below the calendar any upcoming closure dates for GA's Pre-K within the next 90 days.

☐ **Classroom Schedules -** Have a current copy of all classroom schedules on hand. Programs will be required to upload the classroom schedules so the Assessors can determine the most appropriate time to arrive to begin the three (3) hour observation. All ITERS and ECERS observations will begin no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and no later than 9:30 a.m. The only exception to this policy is for a Georgia's Pre-K class which may have a designated start of their Pre-K day that is earlier than 8:00 a.m. SACERS observations in stand-alone school age programs will start a few minutes prior to the arrival of the children into the program. FCCERS observations will start when the majority of the enrolled children arrive at the program.

☐ **Translator Required** - Know if any of the classrooms will require a translator and if so, which language will be required. A translator will be required in any classroom where the teacher speaks a language other than English to the children for a majority of the observation.

☐ **Child Data -** Know the birthdates of the youngest and oldest child in each classroom, and if any children have any identified disabilities or special needs. Know the maximum number of children your program allows in each classroom at one time (this may or may not be the licensed capacity) and know the number of children currently enrolled in each room. Family child care learning homes must know the number of children enrolled in the following age groups: infants, toddlers, preschool, and school age (6-12 yrs.)

☐ **Operating Hours –** Know and be ready to enter the operating hours of the program.

Length of ERS Observation

Each type of ERS observation takes a minimum of three (3) hours to complete. Quality Rated makes every effort to have all ERS observations conducted on one day. Assessments in child care learning centers and stand-alone school age programs, depending on the size of the site and the number of classrooms to be assessed, may require an Assessor to spend multiple days at the program to observe all the required classes. Alternatively, more than one Assessor may be assigned to observe on the same day(s). Programs

with multiple classrooms to be assessed may require up to seven (7) business days to be completed. This time period could increase due to circumstances outside the control of Quality Rated, such as severe weather or illness of an assigned Assessor. However, Quality Rated will make every effort to complete all required observations at a program within a seven (7) business day timeframe.

Number of Classes Observed

The policy of Quality Rated is to ensure that each age group is assessed. In child care learning centers, one-third of the ITERS classrooms (0 – 35 months) and one-third of the ECERS classrooms (3 – 5 years), including any Georgia's Pre-K classrooms (if the center has Georgia's Pre-K in session at the time of the observation), will be observed.

Child care learning centers must have at least 1 operational ITERS room and 1 operational ECERS room, meeting the age guidelines below, available to be assessed if they typically provide care for both age groups during the school year.

Classroom Random Drawing in Child Care Learning Centers
In child care learning centers, a computerized random drawing is made when the portfolio is accepted and the assessor team assigned. This allows the Assessor to know which of the ITERS and ECERS classrooms to observe on the day of the assessment. An alternate ITERS and ECERS room will also be randomly selected by the computerized system.

The computerized system will randomly select one third (1/3) of each age group required, for example:
   o   A child care learning center that serves children birth through age five including Georgia's Pre-K, will have a minimum of two classrooms observed – at least one ITERS classroom and at least one ECERS classroom randomly selected from all the ITERS and ECERS eligible classrooms.

For child care learning centers, (enrolling children cared for in more than 1 space) the age group selected for each classroom identified in the portfolio (Standard 1) determines the appropriate ERS assessment tool(s) to be used on the day of the observation. The ECERS-3 is intended to be used with children 3 – 5 years. If 75% of the children enrolled on the day of the observation are 36 months – 71 months, an ECERS-3 will be conducted. If 75% of the children enrolled are under 36 months, an ITERS-3 (upon request until January 1st 2019) will be conducted. It is possible that either an ITERS or ECERS observation could occur in mixed- age classrooms where both two and three-year-old children are housed, regardless of which tool was identified in the information submitted in the portfolio. Programs are advised to pay attention to children's birthdates in their classrooms housing two-year old's to determine when during the year the three-year-old 75% threshold is meet, thus switching the room to the ECERS tool. An observation **will not** be conducted in classrooms with mixed age children that include school age children, 72 months and older. If any mixed-age classrooms are identified on the classroom rosters submitted with the Pre-Observation forms, Quality Rated Management will determine if the identified ERS scale is the most appropriate scale to be used, or whether or not a classroom is eligible for assessment.

Quality Rated reserves the right to assess classrooms with the instrument most appropriate for the ages of the children enrolled in the classroom. When significant changes in enrollment in any given room drastically affect the ages of the children enrolled during the year, it may affect which instrument is used at the time of the observation.

Family child care learning homes and child care learning centers enrolling eighteen (18) or less children cared for in one space on the day of the observation will be assessed using the FCCERS Instrument. There will be no random drawing to determine which classrooms to assess.

In stand-alone school age centers serving children 5 – 12 years, the SACERS will be used to assess the program. When children are cared for in one large space, such as an elementary school cafeteria and they move about the space in smaller grade groupings, also using the outdoor space or gym, one observation will occur and the assessor will choose a group to follow throughout the observation. When a program uses multiple self-contained separate age group classrooms and the groups of children do not mix throughout the observation, each classroom will be counted toward the one third (1/3) requirement and the computerized random draw will take place to determine which room(s) will be assessed. For mixed age groupings or classes, on the day of observation, 75% of the children enrolled must fall within the SACERS-U age range of 5-12 years with no children older than 13 years for an observation to be conducted. If the ages of the children enrolled do not meet that requirement, an alternate class meeting the 75% requirement will be selected, if available. If there is no alternate class available with at least 75% SACERS age children enrolled, an observation will not be conducted, and the portfolio will be returned, to be re-submitted at a more appropriate time.

When the Assessor Arrives
It is Quality Rated policy that Assessors arrive at the program at least 15 minutes prior to beginning the observation and meet *briefly* with the program administrator or family child care provider to discuss the observation process.

In child care learning centers and stand-alone school age programs that have classrooms randomly selected for an observation, the Assessor will inform program administrators which ITERS, ECERS, or SACERS classrooms were randomly selected by the computerized drawing. Assessors will also verify the pre-observation information documentation submitted on-line by the program. In family child care learning homes and stand-alone school age programs that do not require a randomized classroom drawing, the Assessor will verify the information on the pre-observation information documentation submitted on-line by the program and begin observing the combined group of multi-aged children.

- o During the three-hour observation, the Assessor will take notes of everything that is observed.
- o The Assessor does not take part in classroom activities or interfere with the on-going program activities.
- o The Assessor may station him/herself around the perimeter of the classroom, but move often, yet discretely, to obtain better vantage points to observe interactions, routines, and materials.
- o The Assessor maintains a neutral facial expression to minimize potential interactions. If a child approaches and speaks to the Assessor, the Assessor may briefly explain that s/he is "watching the children play" or "working."
- o The Assessor will arrange a time with the teacher after the three-hour observation to ask questions about indicators that s/he was not able to observe. The teacher should be free of responsibility for the children when he or she is answering questions. *About 20 minutes will be required for questions.* ***Please note that ECERS-3 does not require a teacher interview, all indicators are scored solely with observed information.***

After the Assessment Is Completed

No technical assistance or discussion of findings is given by the Assessor(s) during or after the observation. After the assessment, an Assessor will provide the program with a card notifying what they can expect to happen next, as well as a link to a survey about the observation experience. The card also provides information about the Peer Support Network (PSN). The Assessor(s) will not share results of the observation with the program because the report scores must be combined with the portfolio scores to determine the star rating. Within a few days following the assessment, the provider will receive an email with the same link to the survey in which they are asked to evaluate the experience of the observation process. The purpose of the survey, which is voluntary on the part of the provider, is to identify ways DECAL can improve the observation process and does not impact the individual program's status in Quality Rated. The feedback is combined in a cumulative group summary to determine the effectiveness of the observation process.

The Assessor(s) will prepare a detailed written report based on the scores and notes taken during the observation for each classroom assessed. Every report undergoes a thorough review process by a scale specific expert prior to being finalized. Reports are reviewed for accuracy of scoring, content, and clarity of score rationale. To ensure the validity of ERS scoring, all Assessors undergo rigorous training to verify their reliability and scoring accuracy. After initial reliability has been achieved, Assessors submit to frequent and on-going interrater reliability testing with anchor level expert assessors, to ensure the integrity of the system.

Points from the assessment are combined with the points from the portfolio and bonus points assigned for national accreditations earned by the program. Final review of all assessments and documentation will be completed, and the site will be notified by email of the star rating within sixty (60) calendar days of the final assessment. A full facility report, individual classroom reports, and the comments and details of the portfolio score will be made available to child care programs on their Quality Rated homepage once the Quality Rated star rating has been determined.

7. Quality Rated Logo Usage

Usage When a Program is Participating in Quality Rated
Quality Rated is a marketing tool; only programs that have a Quality Rated star rating may use the Quality Rated logos and symbols. Programs who are participating in Quality Rated and a star rating has not yet been issued *may not* use the Quality Rated logo or promote their program as participating in Quality Rated to the public and prospective parents and families. If a prospective parent or family asks if your program is Quality Rated, you may say that your program is working towards a Quality Rating, but you have not been rated and therefore are not a Quality Rated program. Programs who are participating may only use Quality Rated resources provided and approved by the Department of Early Care and Learning for participating programs. These resources include a letter to parents and families of children currently enrolled in your program explaining what Quality Rated is and that your program is participating in Quality Rated and working towards your rating. These are available by contacting the Quality Rated Help Desk at 1-855-800-7747 or qualityrated@decal.ga.gov.

Usage When a Program Has Received a Zero Stars Rating
Programs who received a zero stars rating may not have the Quality Rated logo displayed in their program's facility, marketing materials, or online sources. If the program previously held a star rating and was reassessed and received a zero stars rating, the program has 30 calendar days to remove all Quality Rated material from their program's facility, marketing materials, and online sources.

Usage When a Program's Star Rating Decreases in Star Level
Programs whose star levels decreases, but not below a one star level, when a reassessment occurs have 30 calendar days from receiving the lower rating to remove all Quality Rated material with their program's previous, higher star level rating from their facility, marketing materials, and online sources. The program may still display Quality Rated materials if they remain at least a one star program, but they may not display material with a higher star level than they are currently rated.

Usage When a Program Undergoes a Change of Program Ownership
Because a program's Quality Rating is non-transferable, when a change of ownership occurs, the program has 30 calendar days from the time the change of ownership has been finalized to remove all Quality Rated material from their program's facility, marketing materials, and online sources. If a program's change of ownership request is accepted, the program may resume use of the Quality Rated logo. If the program's change of ownership request is denied, the program may not use the Quality Rated logo until the program has received a new Quality Rating under the new ownership.

Usage When a Program is Found Deficient with Child Care Licensing Rules
If a Quality Rated program is found deficient with Child Care Services licensing rules and regulations and loses their Quality Rating, the program and has 30 calendar days from the notification of the loss of their rating to remove all Quality Rated material from their program's facility, marketing materials, and online sources.

Usage When a Program is Not Participating in Quality Rated
If a program is not rated in Quality Rated, the Quality Rated logo may not be displayed in the program's facility, marketing materials, or online resources. The program also may not use messages like "Our program complies with Quality Rated guidelines." The unauthorized use of the logo and promotional materials is illegal and punishable under Georgia law. To file a complaint about a program that is falsely

advertising Quality Rated, contact the Quality Rated Help Desk at 1-855-800-7747 or qualityrated@decal.ga.gov.

Logo Usage When a Program Has Received a Quality Rated Star Rating

Once your program has been rated, we encourage you to use the Quality Rated logo to symbolize your commitment to young children and to going above and beyond minimum licensing standards. You can use this logo to promote your program through signs, web pages, social media, letterhead, advertising, and other materials.

We urge all Quality Rated programs to use the Quality Rated logo and related messages to create a consistent presentation by programs in communities around Georgia. This consistent message will help families and other stakeholders identify programs that have earned the mark of quality in Georgia and gain a better understanding of why Quality Rated programs are the right choice for children.

When promoting your Quality Rated star rating, consider using these messages:
- o Our program is Quality Rated through Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.
- o Our program is proud to have earned the Quality Rated mark of quality for early childhood education programs in Georgia.
- o Quality Rated indicates that our program goes above and beyond minimum licensing standards to support young children

By using the Quality Rated logo, you agree, acknowledge, and must comply with the following:
- o A Quality Rated logo may not be used in any way that suggests that the State of Georgia, the or the Department of Early Care and Learning approves or endorses your child care program
- o You must make any changes to your program's use of the Quality Rated logo that are requested by DECAL

When using the Quality Rated logo, you are required to follow the following design guidelines:
- o The logo should be printed in black-and-white, its original colors, all black, or all white on a solid colored background
- o The logo and type should never be redesigned
- o The logo may only be resized to scale
- o The service mark (^{SM}) of the Quality Rated logo must be used with the Quality Rated logo at all times
- o To use the Quality Rated logo, a rated provider may access logos by selecting the Marketing Resources link on their home page. You may not use a Quality Rated logo that was downloaded from the internet.
- o The logo uses the following colors:
  - o Quality: #705e46 or RGB (112, 94, 70)
  - o Rated: #ef5c46 or RGB (239, 92, 70)
  - o Right-side of the peach: #f79427 or RGB (247, 148, 39)
  - o Left-side of the peach: #ea6146 or RGB (234, 97, 70)
  - o Leaf: #478437 or RGB (71, 132, 55)

Once rated, you can also purchase a variety of products with the Quality Rated logo and your program's information online at www.QualityRatedStore.com.

Examples of Correct and Incorrect Design Uses of the Quality Rated Logo

This is the original Quality Rated logo and can be placed on any promotional materials for a program that is Quality Rated.	This is an **incorrect** usage of the Quality Rated logo because it is not resized to scale.	This is a **correct** usage of the Quality Rated logo because the logo is all white and on a solid color background.

Questions? Email the Quality Rated
Help Desk at qualityrated@decal.ga.gov

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8. CAPS and Quality Rated

8.1 Tiered Reimbursement

Tiered reimbursement is the bonus awarded to programs that have achieved a star rating and provide child care for families that participate in the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program. Quality Rated tiered reimbursements began on July 1, 2013.
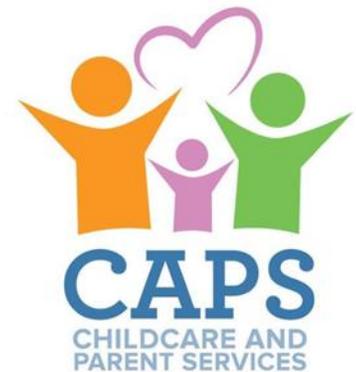
Some frequently asked questions regarding tiered reimbursement are:

1. What do I have to do to qualify for tiered reimbursement?
To qualify for tiered reimbursement, you must:
- o Be in compliance with Child Care Licensing (CCS) and in good standing with Georgia's Pre-K, Child and Adult Care Food Care Program(CACFP), and Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)
- o Comply with any repayment agreement
- o Have earned one, two, or three stars through DECAL's Quality Rated program

2. My program is Quality Rated. What is my bonus?
Tiered reimbursement is based on the number of Quality Rated stars.

- o ★ Star = 10% quality bonus
- o ★★ Stars = 20% quality bonus
- o ★★★ Stars = 40% quality bonus

The quality bonus is based on the net CAPS reimbursement multiplied by the x%. The formula is: The state rate minus the family's CAPS assessed fee = net due to the provider; the percentage is calculated on the net amount due to the provider.

3. What steps do I take to start receiving Tiered Reimbursement incentive once I am Quality Rated?

An electronic application is available via the provider management agent website, http://max.gacaps.com Additional Tiered Reimbursement guides and information is located under the Forms/Guides tab.
The approval process of the application is immediate upon receipt (within a business day). The Tiered Reimbursement is reflected the next week of billing.

A paper Tiered Reimbursement application may be mailed to a provider's physical address upon request. The application is one page in length.

4. Will there be any changes to my CAPS scholarships?

No. The CAPS scholarships will remain the same.

5. How will I receive my tiered reimbursement payment?

Once the application has been approved, a confirmation email will be sent to the address provided by the program. Payment for tiered reimbursement will happen automatically upon approval. Tiered reimbursement will be a bonus percentage added to your net subsidy payment.

For any additional questions, contact CAPS at 404-657-3434 or email questions to capstierapps@decal.ga.gov.

9. Appendices

9.1 Georgia's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System Framework – Fall 2016

Over the past 15 years, states and local governments have created Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (TQRIS). These systems are used to assess/rate, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early education programs.

TQRIS systems have been instrumental in raising early education quality. In 2012, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning created *Quality Rated* to assess, improve, and communicate quality for the state's licensed early education programs. Specifically, Quality Rated includes:

- o   a detailed process for obtaining a star rating (1, 2, or 3 stars);

- o   comprehensives supports, including financial, for programs to improve quality; and

- o   a website and public relation campaign to communicate the importance of quality and the star level of Georgia's early learning programs.

As TQRIS has evolved, it has become increasingly clear that a TQRIS system is bigger than one program. TQRIS is a framework that encompasses all programs and supports used to assess, improve, and communicate quality. Therefore, Quality Rated is one element in a framework, not a TQRIS system in and of itself.

Therefore, DECAL has re-conceptualized Georgia's TQRIS within this framework. The purpose of this reconceptualization to ensure appropriate alignment exists among all state early education programs and that public funds are not diverted to places where there are already supports. Sometimes, the type of rating, improvement, and communication utilized is more dependent on the specific setting where a program exists, whereas in other cases it is dependent on the specific program. The specific components of Georgia's Re-conceptualized TQRIS are listed below.

Components of Georgia's Re-conceptualized TQRIS

- **Ratings:**
    - o   Quality Rated (includes ERS Observations)
    - o   College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI – Georgia's School Report Card)

- **Improvement Resources:**
    - o   Quality Rated (through CCR&R)
    - o   Georgia's Pre-K Consultants
    - o   Infant/Toddler Specialists
    - o   Inclusion Specialists

- **Public Communication of Quality:**
    - o   www.qualityrated.org
    - o   www.ccrpi.gadoe.org

Of particular note, Georgia proposes that the quality of early learning settings within public elementary schools be measured and accounted for by Georgia's College and Career Readiness Performance Index

(CCRPI). The College and Career Ready Performance Index – CCRPI – is Georgia's annual tool for measuring how well its public P-12 schools and districts are preparing students in public schools for the next educational level. The CCRPI meets the state's accountability requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The CCRPI score includes Achievement, Progress, Achievement Gap, and Challenge Points that are combined for a total CCRPI score on a scale of 0 to 100. This numeric score is how the public assesses the quality of the setting of programs within public schools, and it is published on a public website as part of Georgia's public school report card. Thus, using the CCRPI as a complement to Quality Rated meets the critical elements of a TQRIS for early learning settings in a way that is meaningful, accountable, and accessible for Pre-K teachers and school leaders in a public elementary school setting.

This new conceptualization ensures that all settings and programs, especially those that are publicly funded, are included in Georgia's TQRIS framework. The following table looks at four early learning settings: 1) child care learning centers; 2) family child care learning homes; 3) local school systems; and 4) an "other" category that captures such diverse settings such as technical colleges and Department of Defense programs. Since some settings include a program that is funded as "class" and some include a funding stream that is aligned with a slot, those distinctions are detailed in the table.

Table 1: How is Quality assessed, improved, and communicated in Georgia?

Setting	Specific Program or Funding (class/slot funded)	How is it Assessed?	How is Improvement Supported? (Numeral refers to type in column 2)	How is Quality Communicated?
Child Care Learning Centers	1. Georgia's Pre-K (class) 2. Head Start (class) 3. Early Head Start (class) 4. IDEA, Part B – 619 (slot) 5. Private pay or CCDF certificate funded (slot)	Quality Rated	Child Care Resource and Referral TA (1,2,3,4,5) Georgia's Pre-K Consultants (1,2) DECAL Inclusion Specialists (1,4,5) DECAL Infant Toddler Specialist (3,5)	Quality Rated (www.qualityrated.org)
Family Child Care Learning Home	1. Early Head Start (slot) 2. IDEA, Part B – 619 (slot) 3. Private Pay or CCDF certificate funded (slot)	Quality Rated	Child Care Resource and Referral TA (1,2,3) DECAL Inclusion Specialists (1,2,3) DECAL Infant Toddler Specialist (1,2,3)	Quality Rated (www.qualityrated.org)
Local School Systems (Board of Education)	1. Georgia's Pre-K (class) 2. IDEA, Part B – 619 (slot or class) 3. Head Start 4. Early Head Start	Georgia Department of Education College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI)	Georgia's Pre-K Consultants (1, 2,3) DECAL Inclusion Specialists (1,2,3,4) DECAL Infant Toddler Specialist (4)	CCRPI Score (www.ccrpi.gadoe.org)
Other Government Oversight (Technical Colleges, DOD)	1. Georgia's Pre-K 2. Head Start 3. Early Head Start	Quality Rated	Georgia's Pre-K Consultants (1) Child Care Resource and Referral TA (1,2,3) DECAL Inclusion Specialists (1,2,3) DECAL Infant Toddler Specialist (3)	Quality Rated (www.qualityrated.org)
License Exempt Early Education Programs	1. CCDF Certificate Funded (slot)	Quality Rated	Child Care Resource and Referral TA (1)	Quality Rated (www.qualityrated.org)

In addition to assessing, improving, and communicating quality, TQRIS systems also encompass quality standards and include provisions for financial incentives. The latter are especially important in supporting early education programs in raising and maintaining quality. The following chart adds in quality standards and financial incentives for each of the above settings.

Table 2: How are different settings that serve children Birth-Five supported through quality standards and financial incentives?

Setting	Specific Program or Funding	Quality Standards	Provisions for Providing Financial Incentives
Child Care Learning Centers	1. Georgia's Pre-K (class) 2. Head Start (class) 3. Early Head Start (class) 4. IDEA, Part B – 619 (slot) 5. Private pay or CCDF certificate funded (slot)	Quality Rated (1,2, 3,4, 5) Pre-K Program Standards (1, 2) Head Start Performance Standards (1,2) Early Head Start Performance Standards (3) GELDS (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	Quality Rated offers the following financial incentives for child care learning centers and family child care learning homes participating in Quality Rated: o Free technical assistance and coaching provided by CCR&R o Mini-grants of $1,000 upon beginning technical assistance with CCR&R o Tiered reimbursement for subsidy (5%, 10%, 25%) o Bonus packages of classroom supplies and materials valued at $4,800 upon earning a one or two star rating o Cash bonuses for teachers and directors upon earning or retaining a three star rating
Family Child Care Learning Home	1. Early Head Start (slot) 2. IDEA, Part B – 619 (slot) 3. Private Pay or CCDF certificate funded (slot)	Quality Rated (1, 2, 3) Early Head Start Performance Standards (1) GELDS (1, 2, 3)	
Local School Systems (Board of Education)	1. Georgia's Pre-K (class) 2. IDEA, Part B – 619 (slot or class) 3. Head Start 4. Early Head Start	Georgia's Pre-K Performance Standards (1) Head Start Performance Standards (3) Early Head Start Performance Standards (4)	N/A
Other Government Oversight (Technical Colleges, DOD)	1. Georgia's Pre-K 2. Head Start 3. Early Head Start	Quality Rated	The above mentioned financial incentives are also eligible other government oversight and licensing exempt.

In summary, in the past three years Georgia has greatly accelerated participation in Quality Rated. This increase in the number of programs participating and, most importantly, being rated has improved quality and provided a foundation for early education programs to maintain that quality. However, only focusing on Quality Rated, as part of a TQRIS system ignores the other supports and incentives that are available to Georgia's programs. It also increases the likelihood that services could be duplicated for some programs and some critical programs may not be included in the system. This reconceptualization provides an opportunity to ensure alignment and coordination among all early learning programs working to raise and maintain quality. Georgia's next steps are to continue to engage with the stakeholders listed on this table and build out additional resources to support all setting types.

9.2 Registering in the Georgia Professional Development System

All administrators and teaching staff must be registered in the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS) for a program to participate in Quality Rated. Quality Rated points are based on the education and professional development criteria verified in the GaPDS at the time of your portfolio submission. For more information about the GaPDS, go to www.gapds.decal.ga.gov or call toll free at 1-866-258-7737 or locally at 404-334-6461.

9.3 Career Levels

Professional development in the Georgia Professional Development System takes into account training, education, and experience. By noting your achievements and number of years of experience in working with young children, you can mark your professional accomplishments using the chart below.

Professional preparation and continued professional development is vital to improving the quality of early care and learning environments. The GaPDS is designed to capture educational attainment in early childhood education (ECE), ongoing professional learning, and experience working with young children. In the framework above, these elements are combined to determine a career level on a continuum from Level I to Level XII.

While many professionals may hold degrees that are not in ECE, the Career Levels recognize specific academic preparation in ECE. Degrees that are not in ECE may be deemed ECE related if they reflect the body of knowledge valued in the field. An ECE related degree is defined as "a degree containing a minimum of 15 semester or 25 quarter hours of ECE related coursework." For more information, see the ECE Related Coursework Listing at: www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/EceRelated.pdf.

Level I
Professionals beginning their career in early care and education:
♦ High school diploma or GED; **and**
♦ 0 to 3 years of early care and education experience with young children; **and**
♦ 0 to 30 clock hours of state approved/accepted training

Level II
Professionals who have been in the early care and education field for a few years:
♦ High school diploma or GED; **and**
♦ 2 or more years of early care and education experience with young children; **and**
♦ 31 to 60 clock hours of state approved/accepted training

Level III
More experienced professionals in the early care and education field:
♦ High school diploma or GED; **and**
  ♦ 3 or more years of early care and education experience with young children; **plus**
  ♦ 61 or more clock hours of state approved/accepted training
  or
♦ 15 semester or 25 quarter hours in ECE coursework

Level IV
Professionals with a credential in the early care and education field:
♦ Unrelated Degree (Associate, Bachelor's, Masters or Doctorate in non-ECE-related field) **or**
♦ Current Child Development Associate (CDA) **or**
♦ PSC-certified Paraprofessional (FLD691)

Level V
Professionals beginning their formal education in the early care and education field:
♦ Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development

Level VI
Professionals who have earned an intermediate– level, formal, education credential in the early care and education field:
♦ Technical College Diploma (TCD) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development

Level VII
Professionals with a two-year degree in the early care and education field:
♦ Associate degree (AA/AS or AAS/AAT) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development **or**
♦ Montessori Diploma

Level VIII
Professionals with a four-year degree in the early care education field:
♦ Bachelor's Degree (BA/BS) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development **or**
♦ Bachelor of Psychology or Social Work paired with an: ECE Associate, ECE TCD, Montessori diploma, TCC, CDA or containing ECE/ECE-related coursework(15 semester or 25 qtr. hours), **or**
♦ Other Non-ECE Bachelor's, combined with an ECE Associate , ECE TCD, or containing ECE/ECE-related coursework (15 semester or 25 qtr. hours)

Level IX
Professionals with a Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) teaching certificate in the Early Care / Early Education field

Level X
Professionals with an advanced ECE degree:
♦ Masters degree (MA/MS/MEd) in ECE or Child Development **or**
♦ Non-ECE Masters with an: ECE Associate, TCD, or containing ECE/ECE-related coursework (15 semester or 25 qtr. hours) or PSC Cert Level 4 with FLD702, 708, 808 or 870

Level XI
Professionals with a Specialist ECE degree :
♦ Specialist Degree (EdS) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development **or**
♦ Non-ECE Specialist with an: ECE Associate, TCD, or containing ECE/ECE-related coursework (15 semester or 25 qtr. hours) or PSC Cert Level 5 with FLD702, 708, 808 or 870

Level XII
Professionals with Doctoral degrees:
♦ Doctoral Degree (PhD/EdD) in ECE or Child Development **or**
♦ Non-ECE Doctorate with an: ECE Associate, TCD, or containing ECE/ECE-related coursework (15 semester or 25 qtr. hours) or PSC Cert Level 6 with FLD702, 708, 808 or 870

9.4 Credential Approval Guidelines

High School Diploma/GED

A photocopy of the diploma/GED or of high school transcripts will be used to verify the credential. If transcripts cannot be obtained, a letter from the registrant's high school's district office verifying graduation is acceptable. The letter must be on the school district's letterhead. A foreign transcript verifying completion of high school is acceptable. A foreign credential evaluation is not required. If the registrant has completed college credits or has earned an associate's or higher or holds an ECE related credential resulting in a career level 4 or higher, they are not required to submit verification of the high school diploma.

Not Approved - When registrants submit documents that are not received in the approved format listed above or if they are not in English.

Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC)

A photocopy of the certificate or of the technical college transcripts reflecting the TCC statement that the technical certificate of credit was awarded will be used to verify the credential.

Not Approved - When there is no statement verifying that a TCC was awarded on the transcript. The GaPDS evaluator does not review transcripts for the prescribed courses to earn a TCC.

Technical College Diploma (TCD)

A photocopy of the diploma or of the technical college transcripts reflecting the TCD statement that the diploma was awarded will be used to verify the credential.

Not Approved - When there is no statement verifying that a TCD was awarded on the transcript. The GaPDS evaluator does not review transcripts for the prescribed courses to earn a TCD.

Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)

A photocopy of the certificate issued by the Council of Professional Recognition only will be used to verify the credential. The validity period of the certificate must be current and the Council's seal must be present on the photocopy for the credential to be valid.

Not Approved - When registrants send verification of the 120 clock hours earned to obtain the CDA in lieu of the credential; or submit an expired or illegible credential. Technical colleges in Georgia award nine different TCCs; these include a Child Development Associate I and a Child Development Associate II, but these are not CDAs; they are technical college certificates and cannot be entered as a CDA. They should be entered as a TCC and verified as described above.

Degrees

Once an associate's degree or higher is earned, an official transcript reflecting the degree statement is required for verification. The degrees must be earned at an accredited institution. Electronic transcripts can be verified if submitted directly from the college registrar's office or an official college transcript service used by the institution for this purpose. If the degree is earned outside the U.S., or in U.S. territories/commonwealths, a course-by-course evaluation must be submitted from an approved Professional Standards Commission (PSC) or GaPDS foreign credential evaluation agency.

Not Approved - Unofficial transcripts and transcripts that do not have a degree statement. The GaPDS evaluator does not review transcripts for the prescribed courses to earn a degree. If the degree statement does not match the registrant's GaPDS entry, it will not be verified.

Early Childhood Education Related Courses

ECE related courses are verified by using the GaPDS's "ECE-related" course chart located here: www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/EceRelated.pdf. If the entry is not recognized as an ECE related course, a course description can be reviewed by the GaPDS team to determine eligibility. If further research is required, the GaPDS team will collaborate with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's

Certification Division to review the course description and make the final determination. For ECE courses to be accepted, the courses must be completed and the credit earned and counted to fulfill the requirements of the conferred degree; official transcripts must be on file to verify the courses.

Not Approved - If the courses entered in the registry are not ECE-related (like many sociology courses) or performed at a letter grade level lower than a "C."

Trainings
Verified with a photocopy of the certificate of completion. The certificate must list the approved entity or trainer that provided the training. A list of verified and approved entities/trainers is located at: www.training.decal.ga.gov/bfts/findTraining.do. The certificate should include the name of the participant, the date of the training, and the signature of the trainee and trainer if applicable; all are required for verification. Trainings provided by DECAL will have a training and trainer code on the certificate.

Georgia Department of Education state-approved Professional Learning Unit (PLU) transcripts and certificates of completion are accepted. GaDOE approved PLUs can be verified at www.doe.k12.ga.us/School-Improvement/Pages/Professional-Learning.aspx.
Certificates of completions from Georgia state agencies, local and out of state colleges/universities, and Regional Education Service Agencies (RESA) are accepted.

Trainings approved by the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET) that provides Continuing Education Units (CEUs) certificates of completion are accepted.

Not Approved - The following are not accepted: trainings that have expired; trainings that have not been completed within the last three years; trainings that do not have the appropriate signatures or that do not reflect state approval or the approval from the entities listed above. Trainings that do not list the clock hours awarded cannot be approved. Conferences that are approved for a maximum of 6 hours and the registrant enters more than 6 hours on their profile cannot be approved until the registrant makes the adjustment in the number of hours. Out-of-state Professional Learning Units are not accepted. Continuing Education Units (CEU) earned outside of colleges/universities that are not IACET approved are not accepted. PLU attendance rosters and unofficial CEU transcripts are not accepted. Fire Safety and First Aid/CPR trainings are not verified by the GaPDS team.

9.5 SHAPE Award
The Georgia SHAPE Award is an initiative of the Georgia Department of Public Health and DECAL. The award honors and recognizes Quality Rated early care and learning facilities that practice exceptional nutrition and physical activity efforts that go above and beyond current licensing standards. Only child care facilities that become Quality Rated are eligible to win the award. Winning the SHAPE Award can be used for marketing purposes by the child care facility as parents will be encouraged to select "Georgia SHAPE" programs. Recognized child care programs will receive a certificate of achievement signed by the Governor, Georgia SHAPE decals which can be placed at the entrance(s) to the facility, access to the Georgia SHAPE logo, and inclusion on the Georgia SHAPE list of designated child care facilities available on the Department of Public Health and DECAL websites.

Note: All programs that receive the SHAPE Award are subject to an audit to ensure that the facility is maintaining the nutrition and physical activity practices as described in their Quality Rated portfolios.

Criteria for SHAPE Award
The Department of Public Health and DECAL use information obtained from the Quality Rated portfolio to determine which centers qualify to receive the SHAPE Award. Facilities wishing to be considered for the award must check the appropriate box in Standard Two: Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity in their portfolio. If the program receives a star and scores 85% or higher on Standard 2, then the program will qualify for the SHAPE award and will be contacted by the Department of Public Health to verify components submitted in the Quality Rated portfolio.

9.6 Instructions for Completing a Professional Learning Plan (PLP)
A Professional Learning Plan (PLP) is a way to record professional learning goals and the means by which administrators and teachers are going to achieve them. It is a structured way of improving competence and gaining skills. According to NAEYC (2011), professional learning is a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work. These opportunities lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early education professionals. Professional learning encompasses education, training, and technical assistance.

Standard 1 of the Quality Rated portfolio provides points for the completion of Professional Learning Plans (PLPs) by administrators and teaching staff. The PLP is a document that is designed to promote growth in early childhood and/or administrative competencies.

The PLP should be a *collaborative* effort between administrators and teaching staff. In its simplest form a PLP allows educators to:
- Assess their current level of professional knowledge in terms of competency areas relevant to their specific role, the children they teach, and their level of experience and training.
- Compare these with what types of professional learning might be needed for improvement in certain competency areas.
- Identify professional learning goal(s) that address any gaps between what they have and what is required.
- Plan ways of meeting their professional learning goal(s).

Quality Rated provides an Annual Professional Learning Plan as a model. Providers may use this form or may substitute other professional learning plans used by their program. If using a PLP provided by the program, please ensure that it includes the same information as the Quality Rated PLP.

The Annual Professional Learning Plan should include the following information *(administrators and teachers are referred to as educators):*

1. **Personal Information:** The educator completing the PLP will need to include their name, title/position, center/program name, date of hire, and the ages of the children they teach.

2. **PLP Start Date and PLP End Date:** The PLP should serve as an annual plan, so the start date and end date should cover a complete year of professional learning.

3. **Learning Goal(s):** In the learning goal(s) section of the PLP, the educator will write one or two goals they plan to focus on during the next twelve months. Typically, one or two professional learning goals are manageable. Some goals might be short-term. For example, a provider might need to complete specific health and safety trainings. Other goals might be long-term such as completing a two- or four-year degree in early childhood education. Another example of a goal might be to learn how to better support children's social and emotional development.

4. **Professional Learning Activity:** This section of the PLP captures the professional learning activities that the educator plans to complete to meet their goal(s). The form provides space for three professional learning activities. Examples of activities might include completion of online or face-to-face trainings or participation in coaching, mentoring or technical assistance. Administrators and teaching staff will work together to identify which professional learning activities will help them meet their goal(s).

5. **Competency Area(s):** In this section of the PLP form, educators will identify the specific Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development Competency most closely related to the professional learning activity. The PLPs for administrators and family home providers should address *at least one* Administrator (ADM) Competency. More points are awarded for plans that address both ADM and ECE competencies. PLPs for teaching staff should include *at least one* Early Childhood Education (ECE) competency. More points are awarded for plans that address more than one ECE competency.

6. **Training Level:** In this section of the PLP form, the educator will identify the desired training level of the professional learning activity. For example, a new educator will most likely need Beginner level training. Experienced educators may need to choose Intermediate or Advanced level training. This information will be useful for administrators in planning the schedule of professional learning offerings. For example, if several experienced teachers have all identified improving how they teach science as a learning goal, the administrator may wish to arrange for them to attend an Intermediate or Advanced level training.

7. **Required for Licensing**: If the activity is a training required for licensing (such as CPR) or if the training hours will go towards meeting the minimum training hours required by the state, indicate "Yes" on the drop down box in this section of the PLP form. If the activity will not meet the required training hours, indicate "No" on this section of the form.

8. **Quality Rated Topic Areas:** Throughout the Quality Rated rubric, the following training topics are recommended for maximum points:
   a. Inclusion
   b. Cultural Responsiveness
   c. Supporting Dual Language Learners
   d. Family Engagement
   e. Implementation of the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS)

   If the professional learning activity addresses one of these topic areas, indicate which topic from the drop down options. If the activity does not address one of the Quality Rated topics, then select "Other" and indicate the topic addressed.

9. **Evidence of Completion:** This section provides a place for the educator to record how the completion of this professional learning activity will be documented. For example, a certificate of completion would be considered evidence.

9.7 Portfolio Standard 1.4 Scenario

Lead Teacher 1	Lead Teacher 5
Career Level 7	Career Level 4
Lead Teacher 2	Lead Teacher 6
Career Level 7	Pending in GaPDS
Lead Teacher 3	Lead Teacher 7
Career Level 6	Pending in GaPDS
Lead Teacher 4	Lead Teacher 8
Career Level 5	Pending in GaPDS

Assistant Teacher 1	Assistant Teacher 5
Career Level 5	Pending in GaPDS
Assistant Teacher 2	Assistant Teacher 6
Career Level 5	Pending in GaPDS
Assistant Teacher 3	Assistant Teacher 7
Career Level 4	Pending in GaPDS
Assistant Teacher 4	Assistant Teacher 8
Career Level 4	Pending in GaPDS

In this scenario, *the lowest Career Level assigned by the GaPDS for both lead and assistant teachers is Career Level 4*. For the lead teachers, there are three in pending status. For the assistant teachers, there are four in pending status.

To determine the number of lead teachers who meet at least a Career Level 4, divide the number of teachers with at least a Career Level 4 by the total number of lead teachers:

5 lead teachers with an assigned Career Level of 4 or higher ÷ 8 total lead teachers = 62.5%

Therefore, 62.5% of the lead teachers meet Career Level 4 or higher.

To determine the number of assistant teachers who meet at least a Career Level 4, perform the same equation above that was done for lead teachers:

4 assistant teachers with an assigned Career Level of 4 or higher ÷ 8 total assistant teachers = 50%

Therefore, 50% of assistant teachers meet a Career Level of 4 or higher.

In this scenario, the program would receive 4 points in Standard 1.4 because at least 50% of all lead teachers and 50% of assistant teachers have an assigned Career Level 4 or higher.
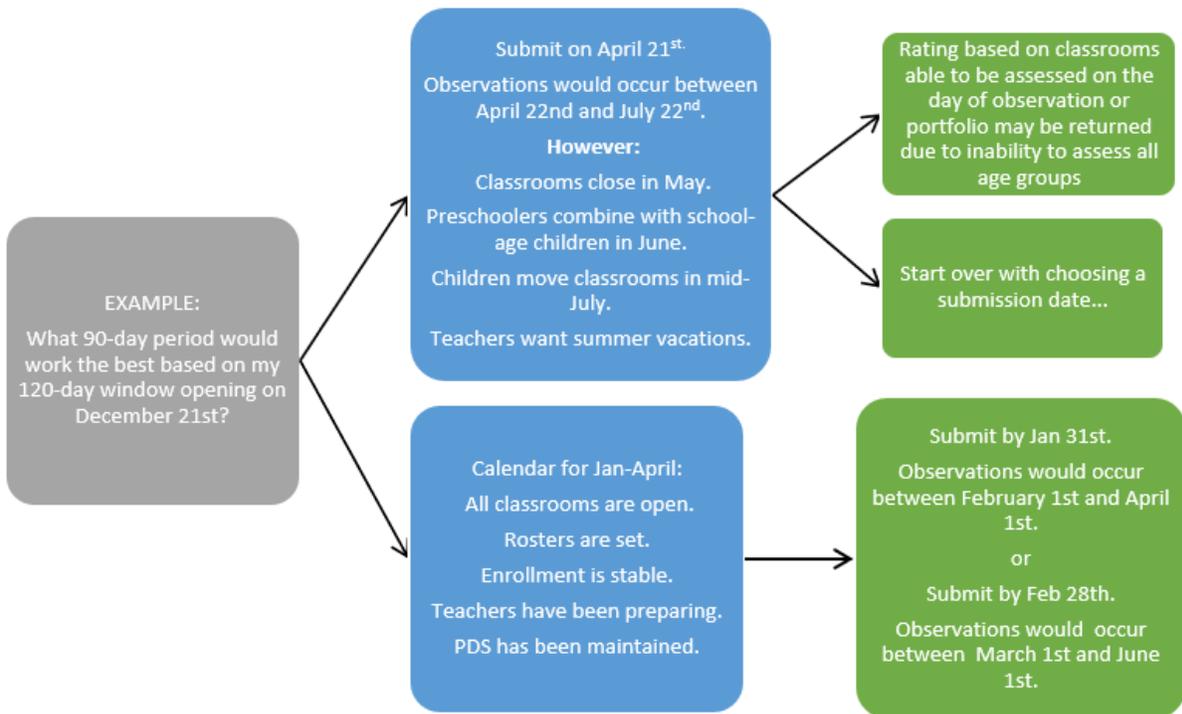
9.8 Portfolio Submission Planning Guides

Initial Application and Reapplication Portfolios
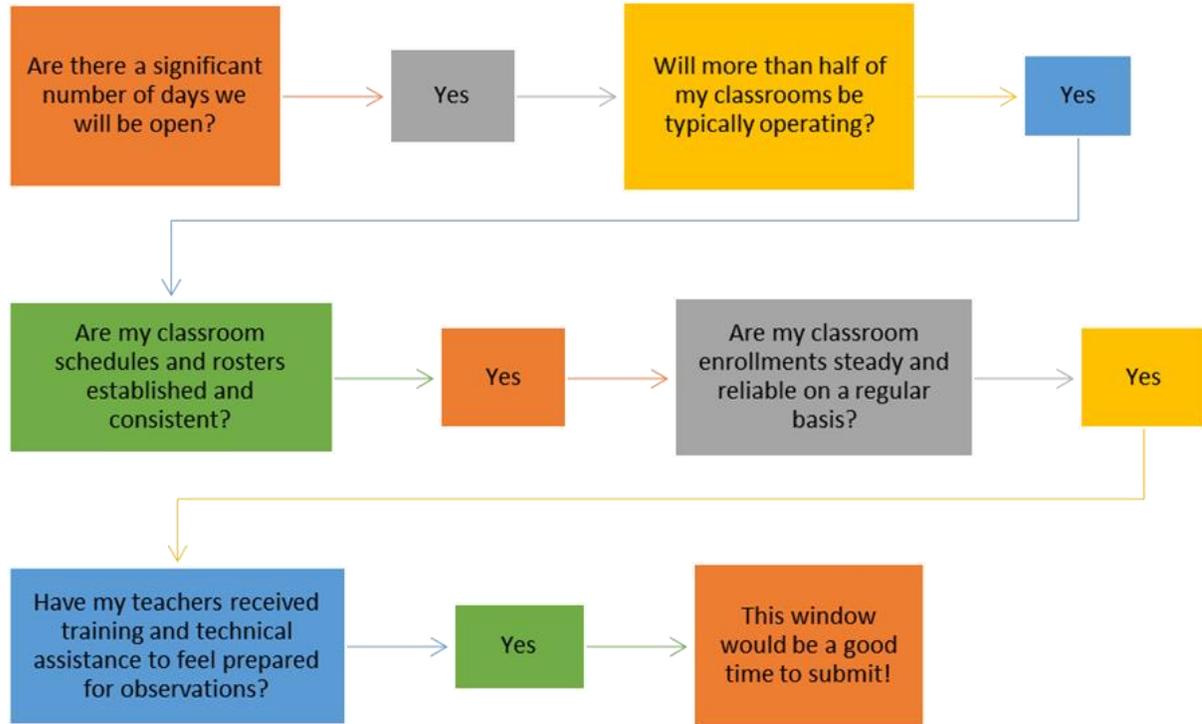
The flowchart above has been designed to help programs think through their timeline when submitting a portfolio for the first time (initial application), or when reapplying (reapplication) after allowing their rating to expire, or after receiving a No Star rating. These programs are not bound by a required submission date.

Required Reassessment and Request for Reassessment Portfolios

The flowchart above has been designed to help programs think through their timeline when submitting a portfolio for a required reassessment or a request for reassessment. It provides an example of deciding how to determine when is the best time to submit the portfolio and the consequences associated with each choice. The example is based on an anniversary date of April 21st.

10. Glossary

10.1 Cultural Competency

The term "cultural competency" refers to possessing and demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to support the full potential of every child, family, and community. Culturally competent programs, organizations, and individuals acknowledge and demonstrate respect for other individual's or group's values, preferences, and life conditions in ways that enable them to achieve equitable and inclusive outcomes.

The term "cultural" refers to an individual's or group's ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, and educational frame of reference as well as differences in family characteristics, language, dialect, gender, ability, values, sexual orientation, life conditions, religion, and community.

The early years are critical to holistic development. Every child learns and develops within the context of relationships and through meaningful interactions within their environments. Children, families, and communities benefit from education, services, and supports provided by professionals who reflect the diversity of the community and who participate in an integrated, multi-disciplinary system of professional development.

10.2 Curriculum

Curriculum is the academic content of a child's day and encompasses everything that a child learns in the classroom, including but not limited to:

- o Daily activities -- circle time, song time, active play time, story time, craft time, large group, dramatic play, etc.
- o The transitional period that exists between activities
- o Any everyday activity and routine that the children participate in and know to expect

In an ideal situation, a quality program's curriculum should be aligned with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). The curriculum, no matter what the philosophy, should promote active learning and cultural diversity while helping children meet various language, social, physical and cognitive goals. The curriculum should also provide strategies and guidance to support children with disabilities and dual language learners. 8.6 Inclusion Training

Training should provide general information on inclusion, including topics such as the definition and benefits of inclusion, legal issues surrounding inclusion of children with disabilities, and intentional practices in making adaptations to lesson plans, activities and curricula to support individual learners. Training addressing specific disabilities or behavior/classroom management would not meet this requirement.

10.3 The Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS)

The GELDS outline the key concepts and skills that young children develop from birth to age five. They form the foundation for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention within early care and education programs. They are culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate and address the essential domains of school readiness. The GELDS are research-based and are aligned with the Head Start Child

Development and Early Learning Framework and the Georgia Performance Standards for Kindergarten through 3rd grade. For more information, visit www.gelds.decal.ga.gov.

10.4 Group Size
Group size refers to the maximum number of children in a particular group, who are together regularly and interact with each other, and with one or more specific staff members, in an assigned space. This definition was adapted from the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and from Ruth A. Wilson's Group Size – A Key Indicator of Quality.

10.5 Instructional Assessment
Instructional Assessment refers to an on-going process that measures child outcomes of purposeful instruction in the five learning domains (GELDS). This information is used to help teachers plan appropriate activities to lesson plan, instructional strategies, and support. Some examples: anecdotal notes, photos, table of observable skills, and work samples.

10.6 Inclusion Training
Training should provide general information on inclusion, including topics such as the definition and benefits of inclusion, legal issues surrounding inclusion of children with disabilities, and intentional practices in making adaptations to lesson plans, activities and curricula to support individual learners. Training addressing specific disabilities or behavior/classroom management would not meet this requirement.

10.7 Ratios
Ratios refers to the number of staff at the program compared to the number of children enrolled. Low ratios ensure that there are enough staff to maintain the safety and security of the children. Appropriate ratios also help create an environment where children feel emotionally secure. When there are enough adults to supervise a given group, the staff-to-child interactions can be more meaningful. This definition was adapted from The National After-School Association (NAA) Standards for Quality School-Age Care.

10.8 Developmental Monitoring
Developmental monitoring is an ongoing process which indicates a child's health and/or developmental status over time. It also measures development based on the age of the child and can be used for referrals, if needed. Some examples: Ages and Stages and Learn the Signs Act Early Developmental Milestones.

10.9 Family Engagement Self-Assessment
Family Engagement Self-Assessment tool is a modification of the Center for Study of Social Policy's Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Tool for Center-Based Early Care and Education Programs and Family Child Care Programs. This tool should be used to help programs identify areas where they want to grow. The three categories can be identified as follows:

Beginning – is when a program is taking initial steps (activities) to meet a given indicator

Progressing – is when a program has systems in place to meet the objective.

Innovating – is when a program has creative, effective approaches to meet the unique needs of the program and family.