



GEORGIA CHILDREN'S CABINET

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Strategic Plan Highlights	3
Safety	3
Health	3
Literacy	3
2Gen Approach.....	4
Prevention Focus in 2023–2024.....	4
2Gen Academy	5
Capstone Projects	6
Impact and Feedback from 2Gen Academy Participants	9
Message from the Co-Chairs	11
Appendix A: Governance and List of Members	12
Cabinet Strategic Priorities.....	14

This Annual Report summarizes the highly successful work of the Georgia Children’s Cabinet in fiscal year (FY) 2023 (July 2022 to June 2023). Using the Cabinet’s strategic priorities as a guide, the Cabinet focused on coordination and training in key areas of health, literacy, safety, and developing a shared two-generation (2Gen) approach to serving families in Georgia.

STRATEGIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The following accomplishments highlight the work done in each of the Cabinet’s four strategic goal areas in FY 2023.

Safety

- Work related to the safety goal area included presentations on “How Child Safety is Defined” by Melissa Carter, executive director of the Barton Child Law and Policy Center, and “How Georgia Cabinet Agencies Define and Assess Child Safety” by Jana Woodiwiss of the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government. These presentations, along with the Child Safety Report completed in FY 2022, accomplished the following objectives in the safety goal: (1) defining safety and how to measure it, and (2) inventorying current safety-related assessments, intake instruments, programs, and services.

Health

- In October 2022, Dr. Jack Shonkoff, founding director of the Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University, presented to the Executive Cabinet on the science of early childhood development and the impact of trauma on children. This presentation informed the Cabinet’s focus on improving health outcomes for children by creating a coordinated home-visitation strategy. (See page 4 for more information.)

Literacy

The Georgia General Assembly passed HB 538, the Georgia Early Literacy Act. The bill requires school systems to have high quality materials in the Science of Reading, teacher training in the Science of Reading, formative assessments for grades 1 and 2, and universal screeners for K-3 students. House Bill 538 also addresses new teacher training by requiring the University System of Georgia’s schools of education to train teacher candidates in the Science of Reading. Timelines for implementation are in the bill.

The Georgia General Assembly also passed Senate Bill 211, which established the Georgia Council on Literacy. Senate Bill 211 requires the Council to monitor and report on progress of

the implementation of HB 538's requirements. The Council is also tasked with learning from other states' literacy improvements, promoting community engagement in literacy improvements and holding at least four public meetings annually.

2Gen Approach

- The Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) received a cooperative 2Gen Grant focused on improving outcomes for student parents. As part of the Ascend Policy Acceleration Partnership Grant, the agencies implemented new policies related to Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program eligibility, eliminated barriers to state services by launching the Find Help Georgia (findhelpga.org/) program, and trained TCSG employees to be Gateway Partners.
- The Cabinet convened and graduated the first cohort of the Georgia 2Gen Academy, developed and facilitated by the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Twenty-seven participants from 11 agencies graduated. (See page 5 for more information on the academy.) The goal of the academy is to develop agency leaders who can execute interagency 2Gen strategies to improve outcomes for Georgia's children and families. The 2Gen Academy is critical to adopting a 2Gen mindset across the child-serving agencies in the state.

PREVENTION FOCUS IN 2023–2024

The Cabinet identified and began working on two focus areas related to prevention. The first focus area is on preventing poor health outcomes by creating a coordinated home-visitation strategy to address social determinants of health and health outcomes for children and families. The second focus area is on preventing child abuse and neglect by coordinating on preventative measures laid out in the State's Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Plan.¹ Implementing efforts in these two focus areas will continue in FY 2024.

In each meeting of the Cabinet, speakers and discussions helped coordinate efforts among the Cabinet members relating to these two focus areas.

¹ See dfcs.georgia.gov/document/publication/vision-child-and-family-wellbeing-georgia-canpp2020/download

Improving Health Outcomes for Children Through a Coordinated Home-Visitation Strategy

The Cabinet began working to address the social determinants of health and health outcomes for children and families through a coordinated home-visitation strategy. The Department of Public Health (DPH) is leading this work in conjunction with the Department of Community Health (DCH) and Department of Human Services (DHS) focusing on improving outcomes related to infant and maternal health. The Cabinet is supporting this work by coordinating resources for families and developing a systemic view of supports, incentives, and outcomes for families. Coordinating agency efforts with families through home-visitation strategies is at the core of the Cabinet's plan. This work on the home-visitation strategy will continue in FY 2024.

Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

In 2020, during the pandemic, the Department of Human Services and its partners released the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Plan. In FY 2023, the Cabinet reviewed the plan and identified the following five strategies on which most regions in the state are working:

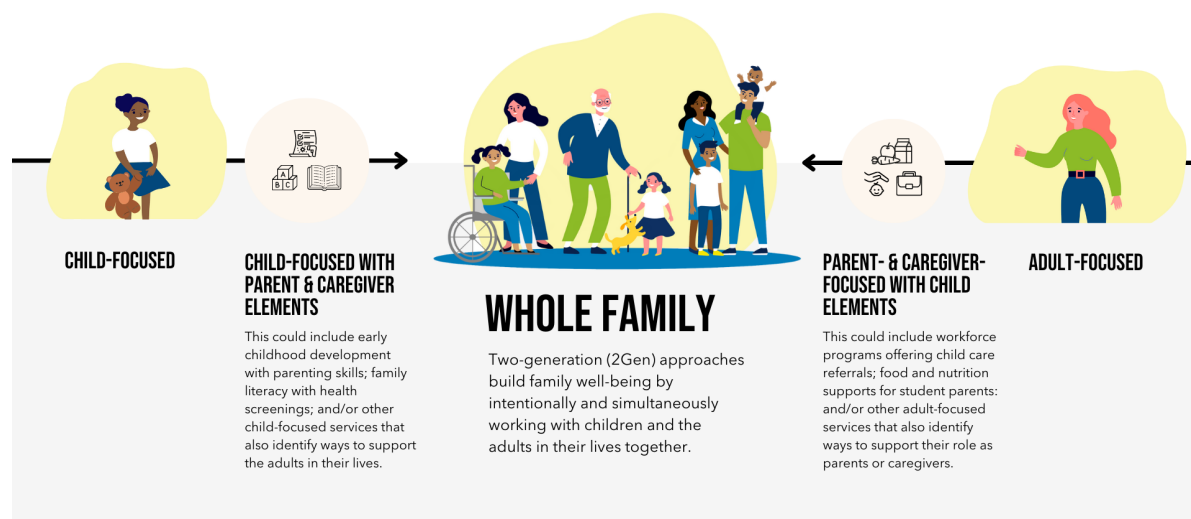
- Increasing **life-skills training** for school-aged children and youth (e.g., financial literacy as a core competency)
- Expanding efforts to develop safe and decent **affordable housing** for families
- Increasing access to evidence-based **parenting skills and education** programs
- Increasing community knowledge of how to **recognize and report child abuse and neglect (CAN)** and awareness of the incidence and impact of CAN
- Expanding **trauma-informed practices** and resources

2GEN ACADEMY

In FY 2023, the Georgia Children's Cabinet launched the Georgia 2Gen Academy. The Cabinet partnered with the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government to create and implement the academy, whose goal is to develop leaders who can execute a collaborative strategy using a 2Gen approach to improve outcomes for Georgia's children and families. The inaugural cohort of attendees was composed of 27 participants from 11 state agencies.

Instruction and group activities were delivered in 12 sessions over nine months. As part of the academy, participants learned the key tenants of the 2Gen approach, including centering family voice in decision making, designing programs around the needs of families, understanding human-centered design, using systems thinking, applying an antipoverty mindset when supporting families on their way to self-sufficiency, and understanding the importance of data when developing 2Gen program goals and communicating program outcomes.

TWO-GENERATION (#2GEN) APPROACHES CENTER WHOLE FAMILIES



(Source: Ascend at the Aspen Institute. <https://ascend-resources.aspeninstitute.org/resources/two-generation-2gen-social-graphics/>)

Capstone projects were an integral part of the 2Gen Academy, giving participants an opportunity to apply the concepts learned in each session and to develop interagency relationships. Five interagency capstone project teams were formed and paired with a family project advisor, allowing participants to put families at the center of analysis. The project teams enabled cross-learning about state programs and collaborative problem solving while fostering new connections with colleagues in sister agencies serving the same family.

CAPSTONE PROJECTS

Following are the five capstone projects completed by the first cohort of attendees to the 2Gen Academy.

Physical Healthcare

This project mapped barriers and available healthcare resources and access points for deaf and hard of hearing children and adults. The group identified challenges for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in education, communication, screening and testing, and locating services. Early intervention and adequate accessibility to services and resources are key to addressing these barriers. The group made recommendations related to coordinating across state agencies, having consistent access to diagnostic tools and trained evaluators, and improving education for families on testing and screening procedures.

Project Members: Kristi Burk (Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, DBHDD), Melinda Ford-Williams (DCH), Sian Lott (Georgia Department of Education, DOE), Janedra Jackson (DHS), Jamila Blount (DPH)

Children in Need of Services

This project identified services and interventions that would help mitigate the impact on children when their parent is incarcerated. In Georgia, approximately 62% of people incarcerated have one or more dependents. Specifically, of the women incarcerated in Georgia, 88.7% have at least one dependent. In addition, 10% of children in foster care in Georgia have “parental incarceration” as a removal reason. Having an incarcerated parent is a risk factor for depression and antisocial behavior, suspension and expulsion from school, and restricted economic resources for a child’s support. Children with an incarcerated parent are six times more likely to become incarcerated themselves. Programs that help parents and their children stay connected are critical, as are efforts to increase families’ economic wellbeing and to treat parental substance use. By looking at this issue through a 2Gen lens, the group learned that agencies must work together to address the challenges children and their parent face when the parent is incarcerated.

Project Members: Rob O’Callaghan (DECAL), Cathy Smith-Curry (Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, DJJ), Laura Beggs (Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, DFCS), Peter Baker (DBHDD), Sharon Collins (DECAL)

Postsecondary Educational Attainment

Student parents face unique barriers to postsecondary educational attainment, and a 2Gen approach offers a unique opportunity to address their concerns. This project explored how state agencies can improve a student parent’s journey into and through postsecondary education. One in five students is a parent, and parents are 11 percentage points less likely to have a credential than non-parents. Postsecondary attainment for parents increases wages, employment benefits, and opportunities for families. The group mapped the state agencies that provide supports for students with dependents and identified current gaps in services. The project produced recommendations to provide onsite and flexible child care, flexible course schedules, data collection, and student parent support groups to help address the challenges facing students with children.

Project Members: Takierra Dawson (DHS), Monica Flamini (Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, GOSA), Rebecca Ellis (DECAL), Bianca Dickson (TCSG), Harold Farmer (DJJ), Tamika Boone (DECAL)

Mental Healthcare

This project's goal was to increase awareness of and provide access to supports, services, and resources to stop the multigenerational cycle of negative impacts of unidentified or untreated mental health concerns in families. Focusing on transition points in service from birth to age 25, this project mapped available mental healthcare resources and access points for children and adults. The group reviewed the work of the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Taskforce and developed research and additional resources to support the taskforce's work. Group members reviewed and identified 82 resources for parents and families that the IECMH Taskforce will evaluate and add to the GA AIMH resource inventory to improve access for caregivers seeking assistance if they have concerns about their child.

Project Members: Kyra Jones (CJCC), Mandi Griffin (DOE), Kathy Welborn (DPH), Megan Fickes (DECAL), Dana Morrison (DECAL)

Family Voice Toolkit

Centering family voice is critical to the 2Gen work of state and local governments, allowing leaders to be responsive to the needs of client populations and inviting families to co-create solutions to the barriers and challenges they face. In this project, participants created a first version of a Georgia Family Voice Toolkit that provides best practices leaders can easily deploy to incorporate family voice into program design and implementation. The Family Voice Toolkit includes strategies to incorporate community feedback at every stage of a project as well as an agency readiness assessment to guide an agency or organization as it begins incorporating family voice into its planning and implementation.

Project Members: Amy Roys (DECAL), Shlonda Brown Smith (DPH), Fern Clarke (DJJ), Trevor Cason (GOSA), Rossany Rios (TCSG), Tacia Spooner (DFCS)

IMPACT AND FEEDBACK FROM 2GEN ACADEMY PARTICIPANTS

After each 2Gen Academy session, participants completed an evaluation survey. The following are data points and quotes from the evaluation data collected.

In the close-out evaluation, all respondents indicated they were very likely or extremely likely to recommend this course to a colleague.

The following represents feedback received from graduates:

“

I will be involving more family voice in programming.

I feel so professionally motivated and fulfilled when I leave these sessions, and I am incredibly inspired by the people in our Academy and the experts that teach us each month. The importance of this work is increasingly evident and needed, and I am so grateful that our state is championing this agenda.

This program allowed me to stretch as a leader. I enjoyed getting to know more about different state agencies and making career-long connections with my cohort.

It was a great experience! I have made friends and connections that I will maintain throughout my career!

Would do it again and again! BEST professional development experience ever.

The 2Gen Academy is providing excellent insight into the needs of families and how we can work more collaboratively to better support the families that need and depend on these services.

I appreciate the opportunity and have enjoyed my time in the Academy. Every section has helped me improve in my career and as a person.

With each session, I'm able to better understand the overall 2Gen approach. Seeing and hearing actual examples has provided a solid connection.

”

Overall, 97% of 2Gen Academy participants strongly agreed or agreed that they understood the content being taught across all sessions. Additionally, 96% strongly agreed or agreed that they feel confident in their ability to incorporate family voice in policy making. The following evaluation data from participants indicate how well they felt the academy learning objectives were met.

100%

**Understood the
Aspects of Family-
Centered Coaching**

97%

**Understood Better
How to Address
Barriers to State
Services**

100%

**Understood the
Basics of Systems
Thinking**

100%

**Understood How to
Work with Poverty
Frameworks**

87%

**Understood the
Utility of Human-
Centered Design**

98%

**Understood the
Effects of
Organizational
Culture**

95%

**Understood How to
Create and Sustain
Collaborative
Partnerships**

100%

**Understood
Legislative and
State Budgeting
Processes**



2022–2023 Georgia Children’s Cabinet 2Gen Academy Graduates

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

We are excited by the progress the Cabinet and its member organizations have made this year in our strategic priority areas. The Georgia 2Gen Academy has received national praise and is recognized as a national model for interagency 2Gen training. We look forward to another year of supporting a sustainable and comprehensive system of education and care to best serve children and families in each region of our state. Working together, we are making a difference.

Gratefully,

Joy Hawkins
Executive Director
Governor’s Office of Student Achievement

Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

APPENDIX A: GOVERNANCE AND LIST OF MEMBERS

On June 12, 2019, Georgia Governor Brian P. Kemp issued an executive order appointing the Georgia Children’s Cabinet and charged the Cabinet with supporting a “sustainable and comprehensive system of education and care to best serve children and families in each region of our state.” He named the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) as the lead fiscal agency for the Cabinet and transferred responsibility for the Cabinet to the department. First Lady Marty Kemp serves as honorary chair of the Cabinet. DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs and the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement Executive Director Joy Hawkins serve as co-chairs.

The appointed executive and full Cabinet members are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. List of Executive Cabinet Members

MEMBERS	AGENCY
JOY HAWKINS	Governor’s Office of Student Achievement
AMY JACOBS	Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
TREY BENNETT	Office of Governor Brian P. Kemp
MIRANDA BRADFORD	Office of Governor Brian P. Kemp
CANDICE BROCE	Georgia Department of Human Services
JERRY BRUCE	Georgia Office of the Child Advocate
GREG DOZIER	Technical College System of Georgia
ERIC JOHN	Council of Juvenile Court Judges
JAY NEAL	Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
CAYLEE NOGGLE	Georgia Department of Community Health
SHAWANDA REYNOLDS-COBB*	Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
KEVIN TANNER*	Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
KATHLEEN TOOMEY	Georgia Department of Public Health
RICHARD WOODS	Georgia Department of Education

Table 2. List of Full Cabinet Members

MEMBERS	AGENCY
PATTY BENTLEY	Georgia House of Representatives
MINDY BINDERMAN	Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students
AMANDA BURT	United Way of Northwest Georgia
MELISSA CARTER	Barton Child Law and Policy Center
KATIE DEMPSEY	Georgia House of Representatives
DR. CAITLIN MCMUNN DOOLEY*	Voices for Georgia's Children
JOANNA HILL	Bright Promises Children's Center
SUSAN HOLMES	Georgia House of Representatives
MICHELLE SMITH LANK	Kids World Learning Center
MILTON J. LITTLE, JR.	United Way of Greater Atlanta
GEORGE MCCANLESS	United Way of Central Georgia
NORIS PRICE	Baldwin County Schools
ALLISON SETTERLIND	Georgia Head Start State Collaboration Office
FREDDIE POWELL SIMS	Georgia Senate
GAYE SMITH	Georgia Family Connection Partnership
BLAKE TILLERY	Georgia Senate
RICHARD WARD	Georgia Chapter – American Academy of Pediatrics
VONDA WOODALL	Winder-Barrow High School
JUANITA YANCEY	Executive Officer for the Georgia Head Start Association

*New member in FY 2023

CABINET STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Georgia Children's Cabinet adopted the following strategic priorities in September 2019.

GOALS			
Safety	Healthy	Literacy	Two-Generation Approach
Children (0-18) are and feel safe	Children (0-18) have a healthy start	Children (0-18) are literate in reading and math	Whole-family and system approach to policy and service delivery
STRATEGIES / ACTIONS			
Define safety and how to measure it	Develop and deploy a messaging campaign to increase vaccine use and reduce vaccine preventable diseases	Support new teachers with strategies to address reading and math	Adopt two-generation principles across all agencies
Inventory current child safety related assessments, intake instruments, programs, and services	Meet key developmental milestones through early intervention in maternal and infant health	Educate and support parents through community partners	Identify barriers to program eligibility, access, and participation
Focus on trauma-responsive practices	Empower children to take age-appropriate responsibility for their own physical, social, and emotional health	Increase understanding around the social, emotional, and cognitive benefits of reading literacy	Ensure front-line staff are better informed about state programs and services

*Note: Prior reports and the pending FY2023 report can be found on the Children's Cabinet website at: <http://www.gachildrencabinet.org/Content/PDF/FY2021AnnualReport.pdf>