



GEORGIA CHILDREN'S CABINET

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Strategic Plan Highlights..... | 3 |
| Safety..... | 3 |
| Health | 3 |
| Literacy | 4 |
| 2Gen Approach | 4 |
| 2Gen Academy..... | 5 |
| Learning Objectives of the 2Gen Academy..... | 6 |
| Capstone Projects..... | 6 |
| Message from the Co-Chairs | 10 |
| Appendix A. Governance and List of Members | 11 |
| Appendix B: Cabinet Strategic Priorities | 13 |

This Annual Report summarizes the work of the Georgia Children’s Cabinet (Cabinet) for fiscal year (FY) 2024 (July 2023 to June 2024). Using its 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.

In FY 2024, the Cabinet held five meetings: three executive Cabinet meetings and two meetings of the full Cabinet. Members of the executive Cabinet also attended the full Cabinet meetings. All meetings were held in-person; full Cabinet meetings were held at the Governor’s Mansion and executive Cabinet meetings were held the Department of Early Care and Learning’s (DECAL) office in Atlanta. Faculty from the Institute of Government facilitated and provided technical support for all meetings.

STRATEGIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The following accomplishments highlight the work done in each of the Cabinet’s four strategic goal areas in FY 2024.

Safety

The Cabinet supports efforts to ensure children are safe and feel safe. In FY 2024, the Cabinet promoted prevention efforts related to the state’s Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Plan. Two projects in the 2Gen Academy were based on prevention efforts in the plan: parenting skills and trauma informed care training. Additionally, Cabinet member Melissa Carter of the Barton Center extended the research on children of incarcerated parents initiated by a 2Gen Academy project team by convening a multi-agency group to identify gaps and opportunities to better support children and families when a parent is involved in the justice system.

Health

Increasing and coordinating home visiting efforts across the state is a Cabinet priority. In FY 2024, the Department of Public Health (DPH) received additional state funding to expand their Perinatal Health Partnership (PHP) program, a home visiting program for high-risk mothers and infants. DPH plans to expand PHP from 21 to 45 counties in FY 2025. DPH leveraged federal funds to increase support for their 1st Care program, a home visiting program for infants born with very low birth weight or low birth weight with a qualifying condition.

Helping coordinate programs and services for children with mental illness is also a priority for the Cabinet. The Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Taskforce, housed at DECAL, carries out recommendations from the Georgia Legislative House Study Committee on Infant and Toddler Social Emotional Health. The group serves as a cross-agency collaborative focused on early

childhood mental health policy, finance, workforce development and promotion/prevention efforts to support infant and early childhood mental health in Georgia.

Literacy

Improving literacy among children and their caregivers is a goal in the Cabinet strategic plan. Legislation passed by the Georgia General Assembly during the 2024 session furthered the state's commitment to improving 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 the progress of implementing 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 Cabinet strongly advocates that all child and family serving agencies adopt the 2Gen approach in program development and implementation. The 2Gen approach requires agencies to focus their efforts on the whole family, not just on children, adolescents, or adults who make up families, and to identify ways agencies can work together to improve outcomes for families. Following are Cabinet accomplishments in this area:

- The Cabinet convened and graduated the second cohort of the Georgia 2Gen Academy, developed and facilitated by the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Twenty-seven participants from 17 agencies and organizations graduated. (See page five for more information on the 2Gen Academy.) The goal of the 2Gen 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.
- DECAL and the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) engaged with The Prosperity Agenda to train 260 staff on the Family-Centered Coaching approach. Family-Centered Coaching allows families to work alongside practitioners in building plans to support

themselves. During the 2Gen Academy, participants learned the fundamentals of Family-Centered Coaching, how it is being used in Georgia, and the impacts of implementation in other states. Participants completed a workshop to help them better understand how to apply the principles in their agencies. Increasing the number of staff trained on Family-Centered Coaching helps ensure that families have a voice when interacting with state agencies.

- In September 2023, DECAL awarded Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery (EXPAND) grants to seven child care providers and six nonprofit and government organizations across Georgia. The awards serve families, employers, and communities by offering financial support for providers to expand their available care to offer quality child care services outside the traditional hours of Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Offering child care during non-traditional hours ensures that parents and caregivers have a safe and nurturing environment for their children when they are working. This effort allows families to be economically self-sufficient while providing safe, high-quality care for children.
- In early 2024, DECAL announced the CAPS Student Parent 2Gen Pilot. The objective of this pilot is to reduce and eliminate obstacles to successful completion and attainment of educational goals that student parents experience (e.g., access to quality child care). This pilot provides student parents with direct access to Children and Parent Services (CAPS) consultants at their respective TCSG program sites. Consultants support student parents face-to-face with system eligibility, locating family resources, and goal setting. Staff training includes, but is not limited to, Family-Centered Coaching, Find Help GA, and Georgia Gateway.

2GEN ACADEMY

In FY 2024, the Georgia Children's Cabinet continued the Georgia 2Gen Academy with a second cohort of participants. 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 second cohort of attendees was composed of 27 participants from 17 state agencies.

Instruction and group activities were delivered in 12 sessions over ten months. As part of the academy, participants learned the key tenets 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.

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-agency learning about state programs and collaborative problem solving while fostering new connections with colleagues in sister agencies serving the same family.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE 2GEN ACADEMY

Build knowledge of the 2Gen Model and its application.

Learn and apply the principles of systems thinking and human-centered design to effect organizational change.

Learn strategies to engage local partners and work across organizational boundaries.

Identify 2Gen approaches to improve collaboration among organization staff and local partners.

Understand how to create and sustain 2Gen programs.

CAPSTONE PROJECTS

Following are the five capstone projects completed by the second cohort of the 2Gen Academy.

Trauma Informed Care Guide

This project focused on the research and development of a trauma informed care training and awareness guide to equip state agencies to take an active role in preventing adversity, responding to trauma, and promoting healing and resilience for their employees. Trauma informed care is a universal framework that acknowledges and anticipates that people who

receive resources and services may have histories of trauma. Certain environments and interpersonal interactions in these agencies and organizations can exacerbate the physical, mental, and behavioral manifestations of trauma. As agencies and organizations continue to focus on programs and services using the principles of trauma informed care, it is important to develop educational materials to guide families and staff working in these agencies and organizations.

The project team presented research on workplace trauma and its impacts on Georgia's workforce, particularly for government employees. They explained the need for a trauma informed approach in the workplace and how this approach can better support employees. The group partnered with Resilient Georgia, an organization that conducts trainings and provides resources on trauma informed care and building trauma informed workplaces. As a result of this partnership, the group made recommendations for trainings and useful organizational models that can help state agencies address workplace trauma.

Project Members: Harlen Ernest (TCSG), Stephanie Moniz (CJCC), Michael Smith (DCH), DeBaja Coleman (DJJ), Tanya Thomas (Coastal Plains Area EOA Inc.), Ashley Wiggins (DBHDD)

Leveraging Community Partners to Improve Parenting Skills Training

This project focused on increasing awareness about parenting skills training programs for families across Georgia. As agencies and organizations continue to structure programs to address the needs of parents and children, innovative initiatives to increase family wellbeing center on further development of parenting education programs. Parenting skills training focuses on enhancing parenting practices, behaviors, and discipline techniques along with learning age-appropriate child development skills and milestones to promote positive interactions between parents and children. The quality and stability of young children's relationships with their parents and other primary caregivers lays the foundation for children's growth across a wide range of domains, including their cognitive, emotional, social, behavioral, and physical development.

Project team members conducted research on leading parenting skills trainings and created an introductory literature review of family support programs and resources in Georgia, focusing specifically on parenting skills resources and programs provided by the agencies and organizations that make up the Cabinet. The team also developed a brief that highlights the impact of a collaborative approach for parenting and describes how state agencies and community organizations can empower parents through the parenting skills trainings identified in the literature review. Finally, team members developed a set of recommendations for future progress: 1) increase cross-agency sharing of family support programs, 2) streamline access to family support programs through existing resource platforms, and 3) use design thinking to strengthen foundations of resource platforms.

Project Members: Stephanie Flowers (Georgia Family Connection Partnership), Stephanie Mikkelsen (CJCC), Michael Moore (GOSA), Diana Myers (DECAL), Allison Setterlind (Head Start Collaboration Office at DECAL), Heather Stanley (DBHDD)

Intergenerational Approaches to Literacy

This project researched the impact of social media videos on literacy and examined the use of a 2Gen approach for addressing learning loss and deficits in Georgia. The impact of social media on outreach and engagement on programs and initiatives has grown exponentially in recent years. Multiple social media platforms have been used to address a spectrum of issues. Agencies and organizations can use these platforms to enhance outreach efforts and increase awareness about educational initiatives that disseminate positive resources for parents and children to address generational cycles of low literacy.

Project team members conducted research about birth to adult literacy rate improvements as well as generational cycles of low literacy and developed recommendations to conduct a social media campaign to raise awareness about low literacy. The team developed a pilot social media campaign on LinkedIn consisting of short videos where individuals share personal stories about the importance of adult literacy in their lives.

Project Members: Anne Ladd (DOE), Bobby Light (TCSG), Kelvin Thomas (Enrichment Services Program), Phillip Wallace (DJJ), Miranda Williams (GOSA)

Analyzing Access and Innovative Practices for Prenatal Care in Rural Georgia

This project researched how to leverage community and education partnerships to address maternal and prenatal care issues in rural Georgia. This focus area addresses the social determinants of health for children and families to enhance health outcomes. Improving health outcomes related to prenatal care across Georgia provides a significant opportunity to create innovation and access to services for infants and women's health. The group analyzed access to and identified initiatives for prenatal and preventative healthcare for women, children, and families with direct service providers and community education.

The project team reported on current issues around maternity care in rural Georgia, including limited access to maternity care services. The project also identified existing initiatives to address some of these issues, including prenatal care workforce initiatives and strategies to increase access to services that support healthy pregnancies. The group identified a need for a cross-sector, collaborative approach to address barriers for prenatal care in Georgia and identified further opportunities to improve access to prenatal care, including creating and implementing programs in Georgia's institutions of higher education to become perinatal workers, increasing access to telehealth, improve access to transportation services, and improve outreach to expectant mothers to increase awareness of supportive services.

Project Members: Cole Edwards (DCH), JaMelle Hill (United Way of Central Georgia), NuTrelle Toodle (DHS and DFCS), Amanda Vanmeter (DECAL), Jessica Woltjen (GEEARS)

Home Visiting Resource Guide

This project focused on home visiting, a family-centered support strategy providing resources and skills for families. Through collaboration and partnership across agencies and community organizations, home visiting programs provide resources and services to help improve the health of children and families reaching children, pregnant women, expectant fathers, and caregivers. As agencies and organizations continue to enhance such programming, resources and services available across Georgia are vital for increasing access to care, identifying gaps in services, and providing resource links and screening for mental and physical health problems to improve maternal-infant health across the state.

Project group members researched current home visiting programs in Georgia and identified information and resource gaps. The group initiated research for a road map for future project teams to develop a common set of resources for home visitors. The group identified an opportunity for Georgia to consider a cross-agency collaborative approach to define and promote home visiting models and services.

Project Members: Earlisha Bibbs (DPH), Tripp Jones (DHS and DFCS), Dawn Scott (DOE), Kelcie Silvio (Voices for Georgia's Children), Mary Bennett Yancey (DHS and DFCS)



2023–2024 Georgia Children's Cabinet 2Gen Academy Cohort 2 Graduates

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Our work as a Cabinet has furthered inter-agency partnerships and collaboration in the areas of safety, health and literacy. We are proud of our highly successful 2Gen Academy graduates and the support of our Cabinet members in championing a 2Gen approach. The Georgia 2Gen Academy has received national praise and is recognized as a national model for interagency 2Gen training. In FY 2025 we will update our strategic plan with a focus on improving our collective efforts in family engagement, agency collaborations, and developing innovative approaches to improve outcomes for children and families. 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 for FY 2024 are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. List of Executive Cabinet Members

| MEMBERS | AGENCY |
|------------------------|---|
| CANDICE BROCE | Georgia Department of Human Services and the Division of Family & Children Services |
| JERRY BRUCE | Georgia Office of the Child Advocate |
| RUSSEL CARLSON* | Georgia Department of Community Health |
| GREG DOZIER | Technical College System of Georgia |
| JOY HAWKINS | Governor’s Office of Student Achievement |
| AMY JACOBS | Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning |
| ERIC JOHN | Council of Juvenile Court Judges of Georgia |
| JAY NEAL | Criminal Justice Coordinating Council |
| 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 |

*New member appointed effective July 1, 2023

Table 2. List of Full Cabinet Members

| MEMBERS | AGENCY |
|-----------------------|--|
| 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 |
| JUDY FITZGERALD* | Voices for Georgia's Children |
| JOANNA HILL | Bright Promises Children's Center |
| MICHELLE SMITH LANK | Kids World Learning Center |
| DR. SCOTT LINGRELL* | Enrollment Management & Student Affairs |
| 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 |
| PATTY STINSON | Georgia House of Representatives |
| BLAKE TILLERY | Georgia Senate |
| RICHARD WARD | Georgia Chapter – American Academy of Pediatrics |
| VONDA WOODALL | North Oconee High School |
| JUANITA YANCEY | Executive Officer for the Georgia Head Start Association |

*New member in FY 2024

APPENDIX B: 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 FY2024 report can be found on the Children’s Cabinet website at: <https://www.gachildrencabinet.org/About>