



Georgia Pilot of a New Family Engagement Early Care and Education Program Assessment Tool

(Report on Pilot and Tool are attached)

This packet contains:

- A draft report on a recent pilot of a new tool designed to help early care and education programs assess the strengths of their family engagement practices and identify goals and steps to strengthen these practices
- The Family Engagement Assessment and Planning Tool (FEAP-T)
- Parent Survey that is part of the FEAP-T

Please note: The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) can provide technical assistance on adapting this tool for your state, and on piloting it or using it on a wider scale to promote effective family engagement practices (e.g., incorporating it into the state’s QRIS, developing professional development and supports to help programs use the FEAP-T.) The tool, including the parent survey, will be revised soon, based on recommendations in the report on the pilot. It can be further tailored to a state’s needs. (NCCP is funded to provide this TA under the Alliance for Early Success.)

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Results of the Georgia Family Engagement Pilot Project

(Draft: 9/18/18)

INTRODUCTION

Family engagement is now recognized by early childhood educators as a critical component of early care and education (ECE) programs. This recognition stems from a body of research showing the important role of family engagement in children’s early learning and development.ⁱ While classroom quality assessments can help programs identify teaching practices in need of improvement, there are few practical tools currently available that can help ECE programs gauge the strength of supports for family engagement that matter most to family well-being and children’s early learning, and identify steps needed to improve these supports.ⁱⁱ This brief presents information about a new tool, **The Family Engagement Assessment and Planning Tool** (FEAP-T), designed to help ECE program staff engage in these tasks.

The FEAP-T was developed and piloted by the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) in partnership with the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), and with assistance from the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS). A pilot was conducted to obtain users’ views about the feasibility of the tool and evidence of its potential value in helping program staff identify specific, measurable actions they could take to strengthen family engagement practices. The following sections of this report present:

- A description of the FEAP-T
- Methods used in the pilot
- Key results
- Recommendations for using the FEAP-T

The Family Engagement Assessment and Planning Tool (FEAP-T)

The FEAP-T has two parts: A 16-item program assessment and planning tool that is completed by program staff (the program tool), and a 16-item survey that is completed by parents (the parent survey). The 16 items in the program tool describe key family engagement practices in four areas:

- 1) promoting positive, supportive relationships between program staff and families, and among other families in the program
- 2) promoting family knowledge and activities that contribute to positive parent-child relationships and early learning in key area related to school readiness
- 3) helping families meet basic needs, address challenges, and achieve goals related to education and economic security
- 4) using a variety of professional development resources and supports to help staff use the most effective family engagement strategies

Center directors and staff are instructed to rate the items as “none to minimal,” “progressing,” or “strong practices” according to their program’s current practices, and briefly describe practices that reflect their rating. At the end of each section, they are asked to identify specific improvement goals and activities that would strengthen their current practices or establish new practices.

The 16 items in the parent survey ask parents about the program’s family engagement practices. These practices are similar to those described in the program tool. Questions are worded simply in short answer formats to help parents complete the survey quickly and easily. Rating options vary by item.

METHODS

The tool was developed through a process of reviewing research on family engagement, developing items, and modifying content and format in discussion with DECAL administrators. Our goal was to develop a tool with the following features:

- items that describe a core set of critical program practices that help support and engage families in ways that are likely to benefit children’s well-being, early learning, and social-emotional competencies
- specific, simple language and brief length in both the program tool and parent survey to help make the tool practical and meaningful for program staff and parents
- alignment of program tool and parent survey items to help program staff use parent feedback in completing the program tool
- a format for the program tool that encourages program staff to consider current practices and formulate specific, measurable improvement goals and activities.

The pilot recruited early care and education programs in Georgia that were rated 2 or 3 stars in the state’s three-level Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) known as “Quality Rated.” An email invitation to participate was sent to 644 ECE center directors whose email addresses were available to DECAL. An offer to participate in a drawing for a \$100 Amazon gift card upon submission of a completed program tool and parent surveys was used to encourage participation. A total of 57 directors consented to take part in the pilot.

Following the project’s receipt of a consent email, each center director was sent instructions about inviting parents to complete the parent survey; instructions included a unique survey link on the Qualtrics on-line survey system and a model email message inviting parents to participate in the study by completing the on-line survey. A small number of directors distributed a paper version of the parent survey because not all parents at their centers used email or the directors did not have parents’ email addresses. Both electronic and paper surveys began with an information and consent page inviting parents’ voluntary participation in the pilot study. Parents were assured that their responses would be anonymous, and that their participation in the pilot would be confidential. Project staff sent two additional emails to center directors asking them to send out the invitation reminders to parents inviting them to complete the parent survey. After at least three parents from a center submitted their

completed on-line surveys, or approximately two weeks passed from the time the last reminder was sent to parents, project staff created a summary report of parent responses. The summary report, which showed average responses to each item on the parent survey, was then sent to the center director along with the program tool.

The director was asked to fill out the program tool, using the report from parent responses and input from other program staff, and to scan and return the completed program tool to research staff. Phone calls were made to assist seven center directors in the completion of the program tool. The decision to do this resulted from interest in learning whether directors could identify more specific goals and action steps if they received limited prompts, and also to secure completed program tools from centers that were slow to submit them. In total, we obtained parent data from 32 centers, and 25 of these centers had also completed the program tool. The results reported in this brief are based on responses from a sample of 25 centers that provided both parent surveys and completed program tools. The number of completed parent surveys in the 25 centers ranged from 4 to 58, with an average of 21 per center.

This report presents results of descriptive analyses using quantitative survey data (i.e., mainly item ratings). Although most of the items in the parent survey reflected similar content in the program survey (e.g., questions about program support for parents' engagement in learning activities with children in both surveys), the response formats for the program and parent survey items were different. Therefore, we present aggregated responses to items across the program and parent survey together, offering a descriptive summary of their similarity or difference.

Codes were also developed to characterize the improvement goals and activities formulated by program staff for each section of the program tool. Our main purpose in coding these responses was to capture how measurable and specific the goals and activities were since directors were asked for responses that had these features. Moreover, we reasoned that measurable and specific goals and activities can help a program more easily implement improvement activities and measure success in achieving goals over time. We created three categories to capture the measurability of goals and activities considered together:

1. "Not measurable," for responses with general language suggesting no possibility of measurement (e.g., "help parents access resources");
2. "Potentially measurable," for responses with language that suggested measurement (e.g., "increase," "add to") but needed additional language to be measurable; and
3. "Measurable," for responses with clear benchmarks (e.g., "implement a workshop every month").

We also coded whether the content of outcomes and activities was "specific" or "not specific." A response like "parent cafes" would be coded as "not specific," since the content focus is missing, whereas "workshops for parents and children to try out math games" would be "specific." In the few cases where directors said their centers were "doing enough" and would continue what they had been doing, responses were coded as "no change."

Codes that capture key themes were developed for responses on the parent survey to two open-ended questions: “What are some important ways the program has helped you as a parent and/or your family?” and “In what other ways would you like the program to support you and other families?”

Agreement among coders for the program codes was 85 percent, while agreement among coders for the parent survey responses was 94 percent. Disagreement in coding was resolved through discussion. Descriptive analyses of results are presented for the different types of responses.

RESULTS

Characteristics of participating centers

Centers in the pilot (n = 25) are from three types of settings: child care centers (72%), Head Start programs (16%), and Early Head Start programs (4%). The remaining 8 percent are in a mixed setting of Head Start and Early Head Start, or child care and Head Start/Early Head Start. There are Georgia Prekindergarten classrooms in 68 percent of the centers. Most of the programs (72%) are rated 2 stars, and the others (28%) are rated 3 stars.

Results from the program tool and parent survey

Center directors were asked to rate the status of current family engagement practices described in the program tool’s 16 items, with input from other staff. The instructions also asked directors to consider parents’ assessments of practices summarized in the report they received from the project and to briefly describe key family engagement practices they use (if any) that reflect their ratings. Results from the program tool are presented below for each section of the tool, followed by results from the parent survey that relate to the section. The complete tool is included in the appendix; items are described in abbreviated form in the report.

Section 1: The program promotes positive, supportive relationships between program staff and families, and among other families in the program.

The first section of the program tool asks directors about practices that support positive relationships between program staff and families, and among other families in the program. Over three-quarters of the directors reported that their centers have “strong practices” for the following items in this section:

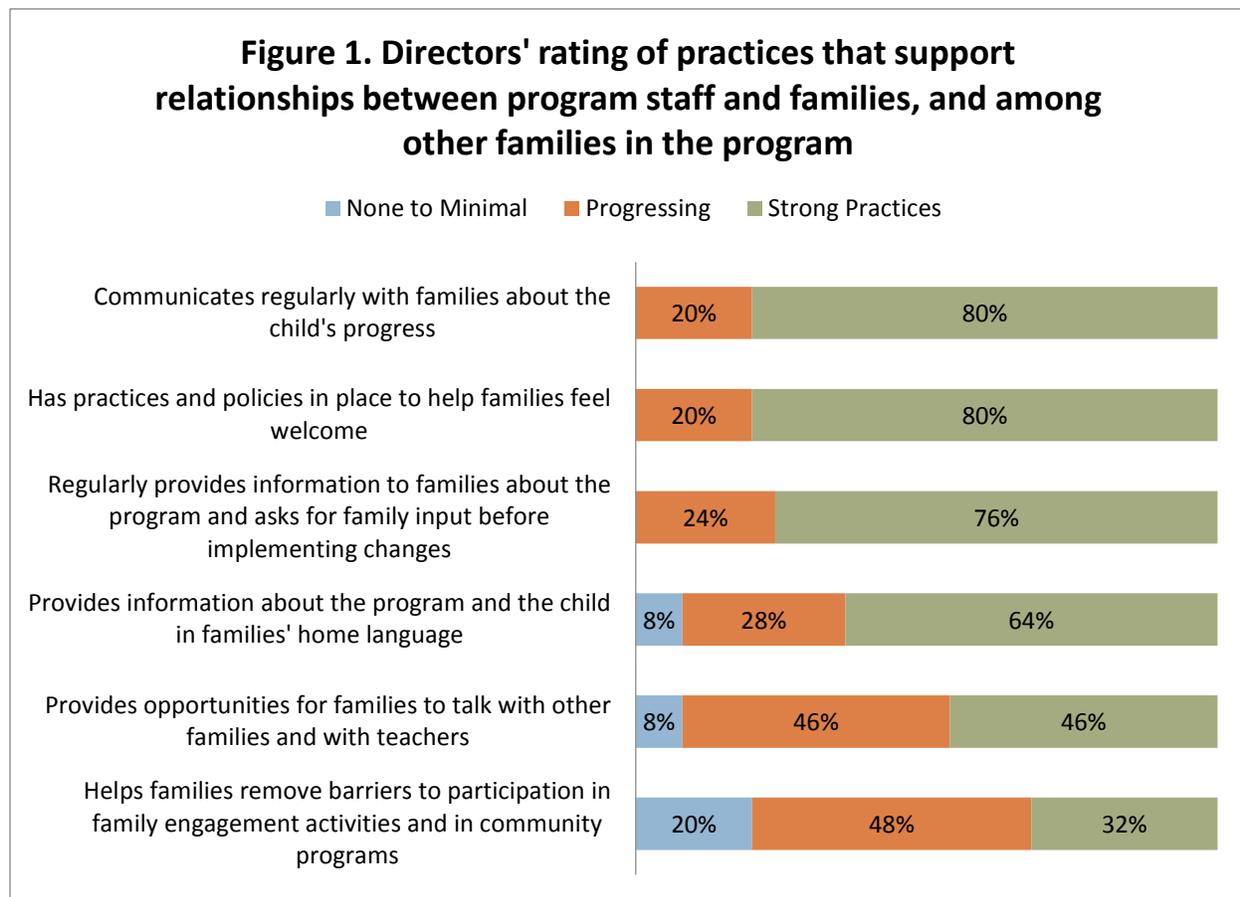
- The program has practices and policies to help families feel welcome, such as frequently engaging in positive exchanges with family members about the child’s interests (80%).
- Staff regularly communicate with families about the child’s progress, highlighting positive observations and addressing any concerns in a manner that conveys support for the child (80%).

- The program regularly provides information to families about the program and asks for family input before implementing changes (76%).

Almost two-thirds of the directors (64%) indicated “strong practices” for providing information about the program in the families’ home language.

Less than half of the directors reported “strong practices” for two items:

- The program provides opportunities for families to talk with other families and with teachers (46%).
- The program helps families remove barriers to participation in family engagement activities and in community programs (32%). See Figure 1 for complete results.



Parent assessments of program practices in this area generally aligned with those of program staff.

- About three-quarters of the parents (74%) reported that teachers are “interested” in parents’ ideas about helping their child learn; 8 percent reported that program staff are “a little interested” in parents’ ideas.
- Over three-quarters of the parents (78%) indicated that they are pleased with how often they talk with teachers about their child; 15 percent of the parents would like to “talk a little more often.”

- Over three-quarters of the parents (80%) reported that teachers “always” talk in a positive way about their child; 17 percent reported that teachers “usually” talk positively.
- A little over half of the parents reported having a chance to talk with other families and teachers in a friendly setting like a workshop “a few times a month” (39%) or “once a month” (19%).

On a few items, higher percentages of parents than directors indicated the most positive practices.

- A little more than half of the parents (54%) reported that the program offers enough information or help if families need assistance with child care, transportation, or translation to be able to attend meetings, compared to 32 percent of the directors reporting “strong practices” for the related item in the program tool.
- Almost all parents (99%) reported that the program provides written information in the language they understand best, while only 64 percent of the directors rated use of “strong practices” for the related item in the program tool.

Section 2: The program promotes family knowledge and practices that contribute to positive parent-child relationships and children’s social-emotional growth and early learning in key areas related to school readiness.

The second section of the program tool asks directors about how the program promotes family understanding and activities that foster a positive parent-child relationship and children’s social-emotional development and early learning.

Almost three quarters of the directors (72%) reported “strong practices” for the item, “staff encourage families to discuss behavioral challenges they have at home and provide information about developmentally appropriate family strategies and expectations.”

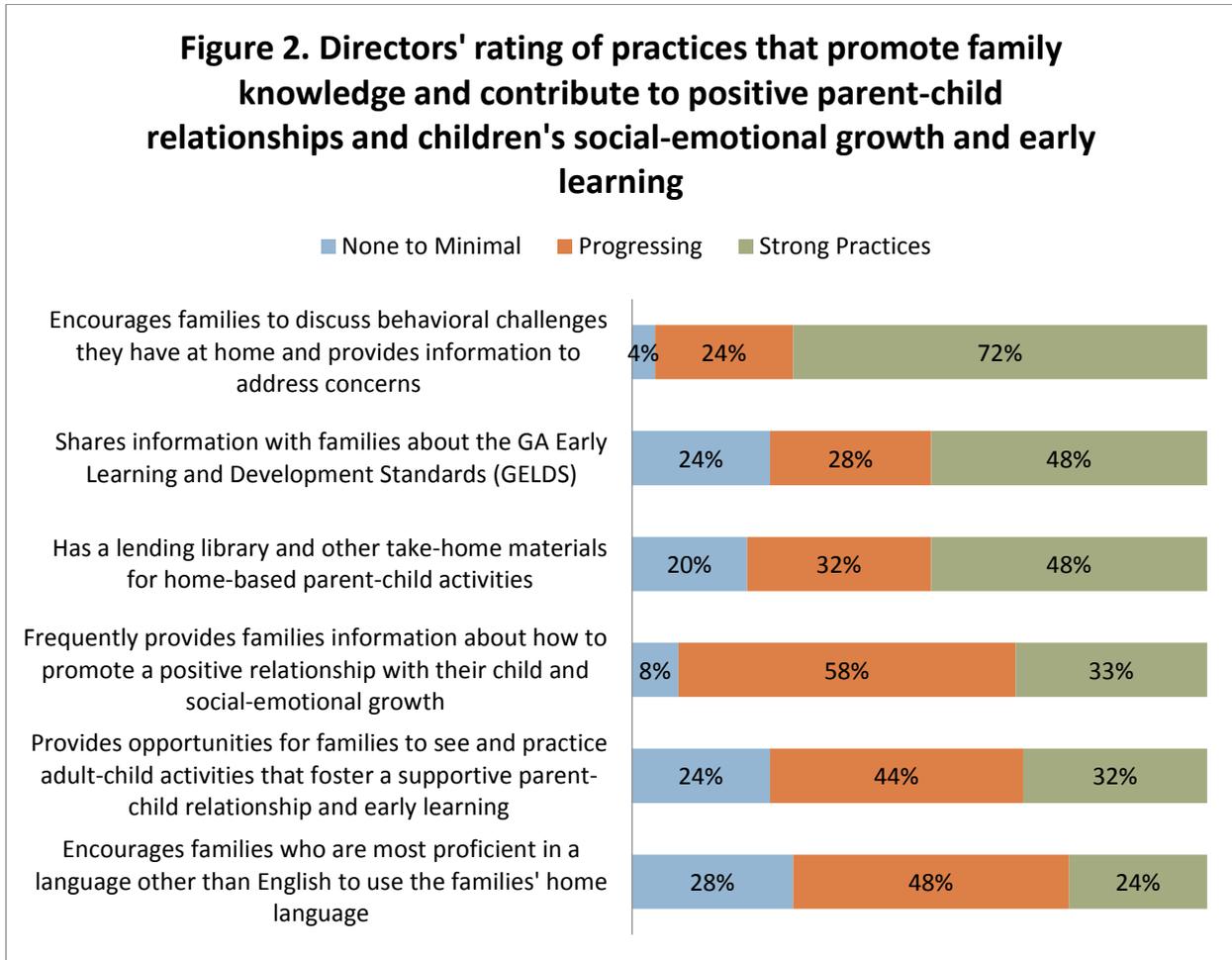
About half the directors (48%) indicated “strong practices” for two items:

- The program shares information with the families about the GELDS (Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards) and how they are incorporated in classroom activities.
- The program has a lending library and other take-home materials that encourage enjoyable home-based parent-child activities.

The items with the lowest percentage of directors reporting “strong practices” are the following three:

- Staff frequently provide information about how to promote a positive relationship with their child and promote social-emotional growth (33%).
- The program provides opportunities for families to see and practice adult-child activities that foster a supportive parent-child relationship and skills needed for later school success (32%).

- The program encourages families who are most proficient in a language other than English to use the families’ home language for conversation, read-alouds, and families activities (24%). See Figure 2 for complete results.



Parents’ responses generally aligned with directors’ ratings regarding program assistance with behavioral concerns and provision of learning materials; parents offered somewhat more positive ratings than directors when considering programs’ demonstration of activities parents can do at home to support learning and social-emotional growth.

- More than two-thirds of the parents (68%) reported that the program offers enough information and help if families or teachers have concerns about a child’s behavior; 13 percent indicated the program should offer more information and help.
- Parents reported that the program provides learning materials for home use “a few times a month” (42%) or “once a month” (16%).
- About half of the parents (49%) indicated that the program lets families know about other places or events in the community where children can enjoy learning “a few times a month;” 18 percent reported the program does this “once a month.”
- A little over half of the parents (52%) reported that the program shows families things they can do to have a positive relationship with their child and help children learn

positive behaviors “a few times a month;” 21 percent of the parents reported that the program does this “once a month.”

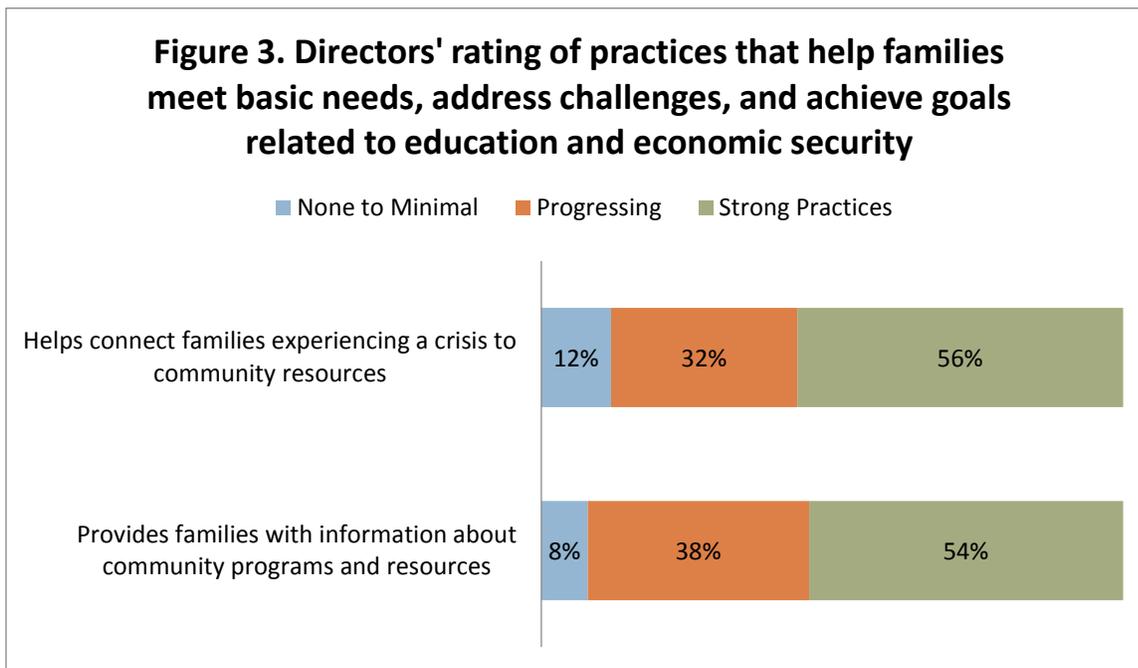
- More than half of the parents (57%) indicated that the program shows families home activities to help their children learn “a few times a month;” 21 percent of the parents reported the program does this “once a month.”

Section 3: The program helps families meet basic needs, address challenges, and achieve goals related to education and economic security.

This section asks directors about program practices that help families meet a variety of needs, including those related to education and financial security.

A little over half of the directors indicated “strong practices” for items in this section.

- Program staff help connect families experiencing a crisis to community resources and encourage families’ efforts to obtain support from community program and public agencies (56%).
- The program provides families with information about community programs and resources, and invites representatives from programs to visit and speak to staff and families (54%). See Figure 3 for full results.



Parent responses were generally aligned with directors’ ratings.

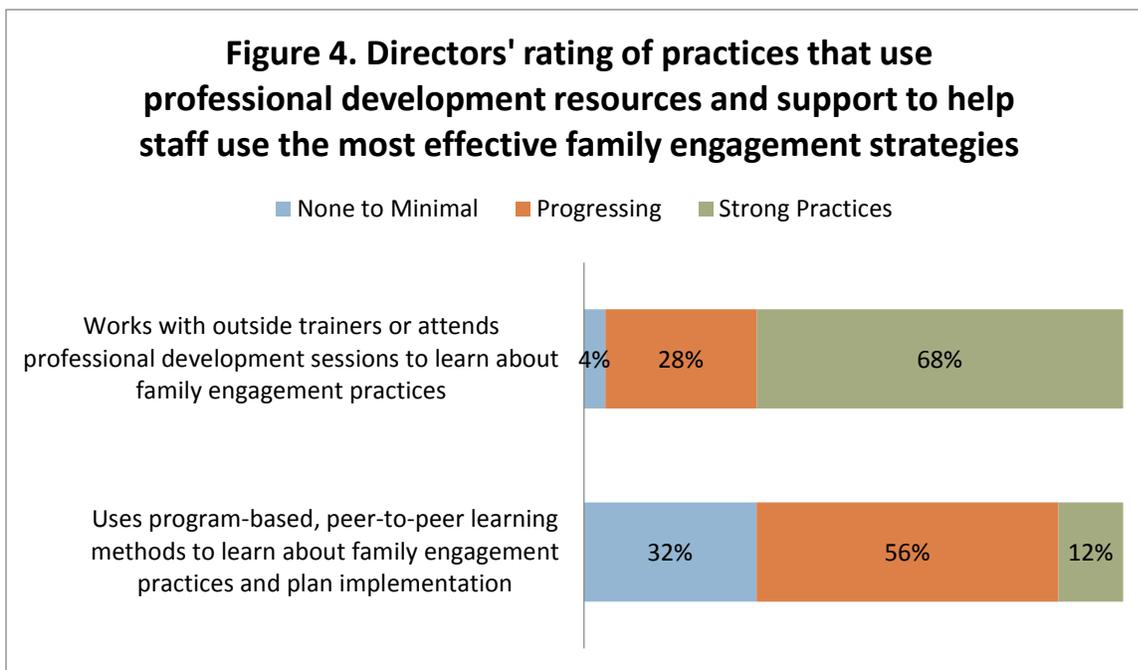
- Over half of the parents (57%) reported that the program offers enough information and help if families have health or mental health needs; 11 percent reported that the program should offer more information and help.

- A little over half of the parents (54%) indicated that they receive enough information from the program about community services such as WIC or adult education; 9 percent reported they should receive more information and help.

Section 4: The program uses a variety of professional development resources and supports to help staff use the most effective family engagement strategies.

This section of the tool asks directors about the professional development supports that the program provides. The parent survey did not include similar questions. Programs reported much stronger practices related to professional development provided by external specialists compared to professional development offered through program-based activities involving staff.

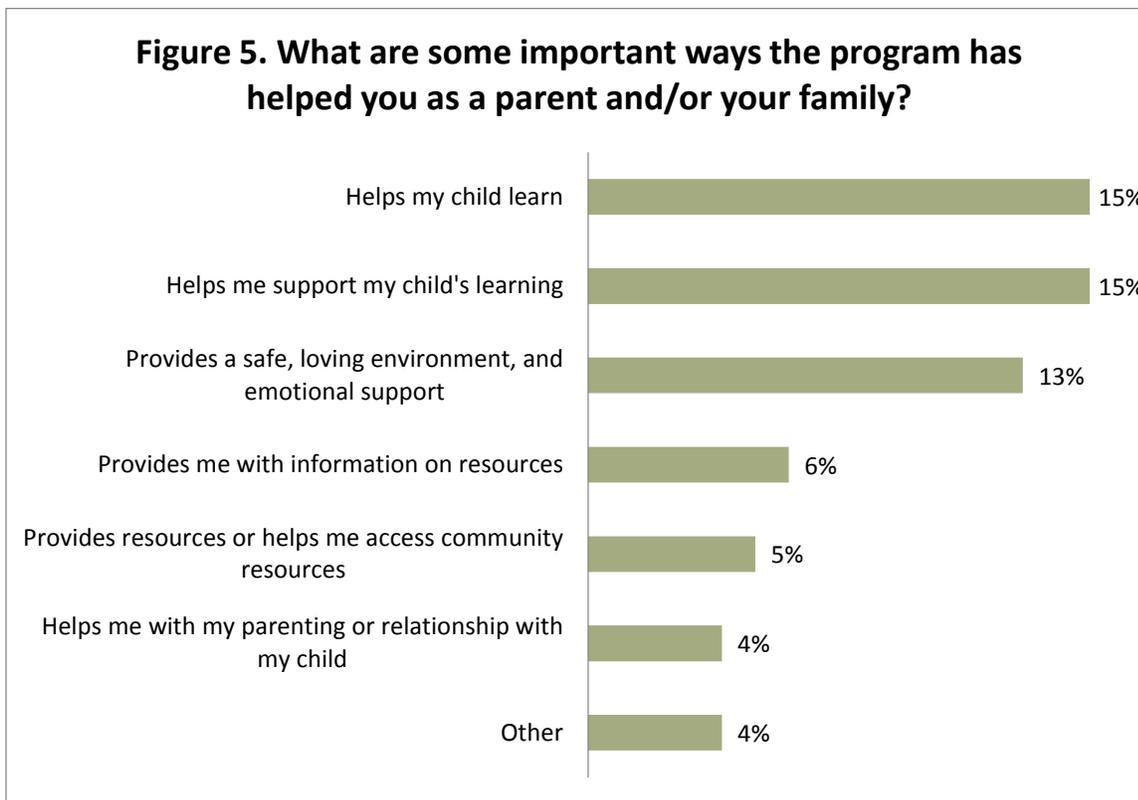
- About two-thirds of the directors (68%) reported “strong practices” in having staff work with outside trainers or attend professional development sessions to learn about research-informed family engagement practices.
- Only 12 percent of the directors reported “strong practices” in using program-based, peer-to-peer learning methods to learn about research-based family engagement practices and plan effective implementation. See Figure 4 for complete results.



Additional parents’ comments on programs’ support for family engagement

Following the parent survey items that called for ratings, an open-ended question invited parents to describe important ways the program has supported their family. Parents identified several types of support:

- Fifteen percent of the parents reported that the program has helped their child learn social-emotional skills, early literacy, and/or early language. The same percentage of parents said that the program has helped them support their child’s learning.
- Thirteen percent of the parents indicated that the program provides a safe and emotionally supportive environment for their family.
- A small number of the parents (6%) reported that the program shares information about resources; 5 percent said that the program gives them resources or helps them access community resources such as child care subsidies.
- Four percent of the parents said that the program helped them strengthen their parenting or relationship with their children. See Figure 5 for complete results.



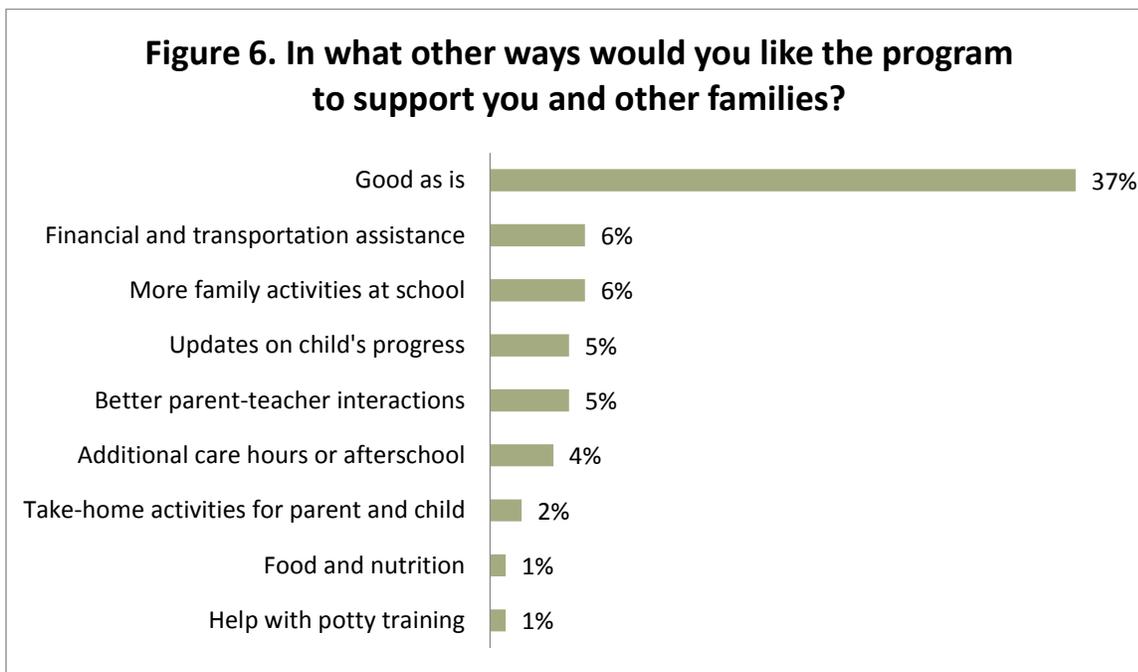
In response to an open-ended question that asked parents about any other ways they would like the program to support their families, the highest percentage of the parents (37%) indicated that the program provides enough support.

Small percentages of the parents reported they would like to see the following supports:

- Offer more financial and transportation assistance such as helping parents get child care subsidies or providing a school bus (6%).

- Hold more activities for families, especially at times working parents can attend, so that parents will be able to meet other parents, build a sense of community, and get involved in school (6%)
- Provide parents with frequent verbal or written updates on children’s progress (5%)
- Offer more opportunities to talk with teachers and improve parent-teacher interactions (5%)
- Offer additional care hours during summer or afterschool (4%)
- Send home activities for parents and children to do together (2%)
- Provide better food options and allow children to bring their own lunch (1%)
- Offer help with potty training (1%)

Six percent of the parents reported other types of support, such as having a full-time director, providing more information related to enrollment and kindergarten readiness. See Figure 6 below.



Note: 6 percent of the parents reported other types of support.

Goals and actions directors identified to strengthen parent engagement practices

Our key purpose in developing the **Family Engagement Assessment and Planning Tool (FEAP-T)** was to provide a practical tool to help ECE programs use staff and parent assessments of current family engagement practices to formulate workable plans for improvement. The tool is designed to encourage program staff to identify specific, measurable goals and activities that can guide efforts to use strong family engagement practices and gauge progress along the way. Given this purpose, we coded the extent to which the improvement goals and activities

described by directors were measurable and specific; the results of this coding are presented next.

For each center’s program tool, we calculated a summary score that reflected how measurable the goals and activities are across the four sections of the program survey. Scores could range from “0” (all responses were “not measurable” and received scores of “0”) to “8” (all responses across the four sections were “measurable”, and received section scores of “2”). The average summary score across all program tools for measurability of goals and activities was 4.1 or about in the middle of the possible range of 0 to 8. One center received a summary score of “1” across the four sections, and this was the minimum score among all centers. Six centers received a summary score of “6,” the maximum score achieved. See Table 1 for full results.

Using the “specificity” code, we calculated a summary score across the four sections for the improvement goals and activities identified by directors. A summary score of “0” for a program tool meant that each section’s goals and activities were judged to be “not specific.” In contrast, a program tool could potentially receive a summary score of “4” if each section had goals and activities coded as “specific.” The average summary score for specificity across all program tools was 3.0, with the possible range being 0 to 4. See Table 2 for full results.

Overall, 16 of the 25 centers (56%) received summary scores for “measurability” at or below the mid-point of the possible range, counting one center with missing responses. This means that many directors identified goals and activities that were not measurable. Directors gave responses that were somewhat stronger on the dimension of “specificity.” On this dimension, 7 (28%) of the centers had summary scores for goals and activities that were at or below the mid-point of the possible range.

Table 1: Distribution of Center Summary Scores for Measurability

Sum of measurability scores across 4 sections	Number of Centers	Percent
Missing responses	1	4.00
1	1	4.00
2	4	16.00
3	2	8.00
4	8	32.00
5	3	12.00
6	6	24.00

Table 2: Distribution of Center Summary Scores for Specificity

Sum of specificity scores across 4 sections	Number of Centers	Percent
Missing responses	1	4.00
0	2	8.00
2	4	16.00
3	8	32.00
4	10	40.00

Feedback on the program tool and parent survey

A final set of questions on both the program tool and parent survey asked respondents to provide feedback on the range of supports included in the tool and its ease of use. Directors were also asked about the helpfulness of the tool in setting goals for improvement. The overall feedback was positive, but also suggested areas where the program tool and parent survey could be strengthened.

- A little more than half of the directors (56%) indicated that the tool assesses “all or nearly all” important supports for family engagement. The remaining 44 percent reported that it mentions “many” of those supports. Some additional types of supports directors suggested adding to the tool included helping families obtain food assistance, and improving nutrition.
- Ninety-two percent of the directors found it “easy or somewhat easy” to understand the tool and complete ratings, while 8 percent indicated that it was “somewhat difficult.”
- Eighty-four percent of the directors found the tool “helpful” or “very helpful” in supporting their efforts to set meaningful goals for improving the program’s supports for family engagement.
- Most parents thought the survey covered all (56%) or many (44%) of the important ways that programs can support parents and families. Some other supports parents suggested adding to the survey included financial assistance, frequent communication about children’s progress, information about food choices and nutrition, support for first-time or single parents, available therapy services, and provision of a school bus.
- Almost all of the parents (99%) found the survey easy to understand.

Directors were invited to offer general feedback and suggestions in two open-ended questions. Almost all of the responses suggested that using the tool was helpful to directors and staff. Examples are:

“The tool was easy to understand and provided good starting points for discussion.”

“I didn’t find anything challenging or difficult, but I had to think through them for a bit.”

“I like the tool, it covers a lot, staff found it helpful.”

“This is a good tool to use. It took time to fill out but time was necessary to gain the information needed.”

A few responses suggested the need for clearer instructions and methods of using the tool that make it more manageable:

“Items are not hard to understand. At the end it’s hard to give one outcome. It’d be better to break it down into smaller pieces.”

“Not difficult to understand, somewhat easy. A lot of information. So much information. It was overwhelming going over it on my own.”

Other responses suggested the need to shorten and simplify the language in the program tool.

“Sentences are too long, can be shortened or broken down into smaller sentences.”

“It’s a little wordy, can be shortened.”

“Some indicators were very wordy.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

We offer two sets of recommendations based on pilot findings. The first set describes revisions of the FEAP-T that could make it easier to use and more effective in helping directors and other staff use the tool to identify measurable and specific goals and activities. The second set focuses on ways a revised tool could be used to strengthen family engagement practices in the state’s ECE programs.

Revising the FEAP-T

Based on feedback from program staff and parents, and on results related to the quality of improvement goals and activities directors identified, revisions of the FEAP-T should include the following:

- Simplify the descriptions of practices and reduce “wordiness.”
- For each section of the program tool, in the place staff are asked to provide goals and activities, add reminders to develop *specific, measurable* goals and activities. Add a final page for recording goals and activities together, along with directions that encourage users to make notes on how improvement activities can be accomplished (e.g., through a series of PD or planning sessions), and time-frame for achieving goal.
- Include a suggested process for completing one or more sections of the tool (e.g., number of meetings with staff and focus of each meeting).

Using the FEAP-T to help ECE programs strengthen family engagement practices

The following are options for using a revised FEAP-T in Georgia.

- Incorporate the FEAP-T in Georgia’s QRIS. The FEAP-T could replace the current tool used in Quality Rated. Options include:
 - Requiring that programs complete ratings in one, two, or three sections (choosing from sections 1-3) plus section 4 to earn an increasing number of points up to the total for family engagement; requiring the improvement goals and activities for sections completed.
 - Requiring what is described above *and* providing documentation of achieving indicators in previous assessment (e.g., evidence from parent survey, documentation of parent engagement activities that provide home-learning materials and demonstrations).
- Develop PD that corresponds with the tool’s sections, including training in site-based PD activities that help staff use strong family engagement practices.
 - One type of PD could be a train-the-trainer model in which PD is offered to Quality Rated TA specialists who would then be equipped to provide group training and individual TA to programs.
 - An alternative to developing a new PD series could be to create a “tool kit” of PD resources that relate to the different sections of the tool for use by programs and TA providers; resources could be drawn from the National Center on Family, Parent, and Community Engagement (<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/national-center-parent-family-community-engagement-ncpfce>) and other states’ family engagement initiatives and organizations); such a tool-kit could be used to plan training for TA providers and to support program-based PD (e.g., staff-led PD sessions).
- Provide an opportunity for programs to convene staff and receive assistance completing the FEAP-T with a TA provider (in-person or by phone) to help ensure high levels of reflection on current practice and improvement goals and activities that reflect effective practices and are specific and measurable.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

NCCP will revise the FEAP-T for use in Georgia and other states. The use of the FEAP-T in other states will require modest revisions to tailor the tool to different states' program and policy landscape. As a long-term goal, efforts to help ECE programs use the FEAP-T and other tools aimed at strengthening family engagement practices should collect information on practical challenges, the value of providing supports, such as PD aligned to the tool, and changes in family engagement practices that result from using the tool. We strongly endorse the statement in recent federal guidance on family engagement which affirms that strong family engagement practices are an integral (not supplemental) component of program quality.ⁱⁱⁱ Helping ECE programs use practical tools and resources for strengthening key family engagement practices should be a core component of state-wide supports for quality early care and education.

ⁱ US Department of Health and Human Services and US Department of Education (n.d.) Policy Statement on Family Engagement from the Early Years to the Early Grades.

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/16_0152reportclean_logos.pdf

Maria, M., Merz, E., Repka, K.R., Landers, C., Noble, K., and Duch, H. (2018) Parent involvement in the Getting Ready for School intervention is associated with changes in school readiness skills. *Frontiers in Psychology*, (9) 759. <https://www.frontiersin.org/>

Van Voorhis, F.L., Maier, M.F., Epstein, J.L., Lloyd, C.M., and Leung, T. (2013) *The Impact of Family Involvement on the Education of Children Ages 3 to 8: A Focus on Literacy and Math Achievement Outcomes and Social-Emotional Skills*. New York: MDRC.

https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/The_Impact_of_Family_Invovlement_ES.pdf

ⁱⁱ The STRENGTHENING FAMILIES™ SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR CENTER-BASED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS is a highly comprehensive, though lengthy tool that has the valuable feature of suggesting QRIS tiers for sub-items.

<https://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies/2014/CENTER-BASED-EARLY-CARE-AND-EDUCATION-PROGRAM-SELF-ASSESSMENT.pdf>

A suite of tools, with versions for directors, teachers, and parents, as well as long and short forms of some versions, is the Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality (FPTRQ) Provider/Teacher Measure; these tools are relatively brief to complete and have a strong focus on practices related to the teacher-parent relationship.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/family-and-provider-teacher-relationship-quality-fptrq-provider-teacher-measure>

ⁱⁱⁱ See “i” US Department of Health and Human Services and US Department of Education.



HOW TO USE THE GEORGIA FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING TOOL (GFEAP)

The **Georgia Family Engagement Assessment and Planning Tool** is designed to help you highlight strong family engagement practices that your program already uses, as well as practices that your program can strengthen and develop. It is intended to be used along with the **Family Engagement Parent Survey**. Please take the following steps to use the tool:

1. All staff involved in family engagement practices are encouraged to take part in the completion of this tool; this can be done through a group meeting or by requesting input from key staff.
2. Rate the status of each item and briefly describe current practices that reflect your rating. Try to be as specific and complete as possible when you describe current practices.
3. At the end of each section, review ratings and current practices to consider possible areas in need of strengthening. Develop and describe one or more specific, measurable outcomes and activities to achieve these outcomes.
4. Review the Family Engagement Parent Survey report. Note areas of agreement or disagreement between staff and parent views of current family engagement practices on the GFEAP form. Use information from both the Parent Survey and the GFEAP to modify or add to the goals you have developed.



1) Please choose your program type below.

- Child Care Learning Center
- Georgia Early Head Start
- Georgia Head Start
- Department of Defense
- University Lab School
- Other. Please describe: _____

2) For each age group you work with, please indicate the number of classrooms and the number of children per classroom below.

Age group	Number of classrooms for this age group	Number of children in this age group per classroom
Infant		
Toddler		
Preschooler		
Other. Please describe:		



GA Family Engagement Assessment and Planning Tool

The program supports positive, supportive relationships between program staff and families, and among other families in the program.	Status	Describe current practices that reflect status
Practices and policies are in place to help families feel welcome: Staff greet family members each day; often engage in positive exchanges with family members (e.g., about the child’s interests, a family or school event); and let families know they are always welcome to visit the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
Written and verbal information about the program and the child, and outreach to families, are provided in families’ home language.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
The program provides opportunities for families to talk with other families and with teachers in informal, supportive settings through workshops or family meetings; translation assistance is provided to families who need it.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
The program regularly provides information to families about the program (e.g., curriculum, special events) and potential changes in the program's overall operation, and asks for family input before implementing changes.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
Program staff communicate regularly with families about the child’s progress based on formal and informal assessments, interests, and experiences in the program through in-person, phone, and written communication; seek families’ input; highlight positive observations; and address any concerns about learning or behavior in a manner that conveys support for the child and interest in trying out strategies that can help.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
Program staff help families remove barriers to participation in family engagement activities (e.g., arranging infant-toddler care on-site for a family-preschooler workshop) and in community programs (e.g., helping find transportation).	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
<p>DESIRED OUTCOME(S):</p> <p>ACTIVITY(IES) TO ACHIEVE OUTCOME(S):</p>		



The program promotes family knowledge and practices that contribute to positive parent-child relationships and children’s social-emotional growth and early learning in key areas related to school readiness.	Status	Describe current practices that reflect status
The program provides opportunities for families <i>to see and practice</i> adult-child activities that foster a supportive parent-child relationship and skills needed for later school success. Examples are: a family workshop in which families can try out simple language and math games with their children after seeing a demonstration; a family visit to the classroom in which a teacher models read aloud strategies that promote children’s language skills and encourages the family to try out a few strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
Staff encourage families who are most proficient in a language other than English to use the families’ home language for conversation, read-alouds, and family activities; staff help families understand that children will benefit from these interactions which help build language and other school readiness skills.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
The program has a lending library and other take-home materials that encourage enjoyable home-based parent-child activities; take-home items and guidance on using them include materials in families’ home language.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
Families frequently receive information about how to promote a positive relationship with their child and their social-emotional growth, and the role of social-emotional development in early learning and later school success. For example, guidance about home-based reading and learning activities emphasizes parent-child enjoyment and responding to the child’s interests.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
The program shares information with families about the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) and how the GELDS are incorporated in classroom activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
Staff encourage families to discuss behavioral challenges they have at home and provide information about developmentally appropriate family strategies and expectations. The program offers families resources, including access to mental health consultants and referrals for evaluations or community services.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
<p>DESIRED OUTCOME(S):</p> <p>ACTIVITY(IES) TO ACHIEVE OUTCOME(S):</p>		



The program helps families meet basic needs, address challenges, and achieve goals related to education and economic security.	Status	Describe current practices that reflect status
Program staff help connect families experiencing a crisis to community resources and encourage families' efforts to obtain support from community programs and public agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
The program provides families with information about community programs and resources (e.g., health/mental health, food pantry, job training, ESL classes) and invites representatives from programs to visit and speak to staff and families.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
<p>DESIRED OUTCOME(S):</p> <p>ACTIVITY(IES) TO ACHIEVE OUTCOME(S):</p>		

The program uses a variety of professional development resources and support to help staff use the most effective family engagement strategies.	Status	Describe current practices that reflect status
Program staff work with outside trainers or attend professional development sessions to learn about research-informed family engagement practices; at least half the staff have the opportunity to engage in this type of activity each year.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
Program staff use program-based, peer-to-peer learning methods to learn about research-based family engagement practices and plan effective implementation: These methods include discussion of research-to-practice articles at team planning meetings and regular use of on-line planning and professional development resources from the Center for Family, Family, and Community Engagement and other high quality sources.	<input type="checkbox"/> None to Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Progressing <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Practices	
<p>DESIRED OUTCOME(S):</p> <p>ACTIVITY(IES) TO ACHIEVE OUTCOME(S):</p>		



Indicate the number of staff members who participated in completing the **GFEAP**:
List the roles of each staff member who participated in completing the **GFEAP**:

Please answer the questions below to give us feedback on the GA Family Engagement Assessment and Planning Tool

1. How many **important supports for family engagement** does this tool assess?

- All or nearly all important supports
- Many important supports
- Some important supports
- Hardly any or none of the most important supports

1a. Should **any other family engagement supports or types of assistance** that programs could provide be added to the family engagement assessment and planning tool?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe:

2. How easy was it to understand the items, rate the items, and provide information about your program related to each item?

- Easy
- Somewhat Easy
- Somewhat Difficult
- Difficult



2a. Please explain any ways in which using the tool was difficult or challenging, and mention any items that were hard to understand:

3. How helpful was the tool in supporting staff to establish specific, meaningful goals for improving the program's capacity to promote family engagement?

- Very helpful
- Helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Not very helpful

3a. Please explain any ways in which using the tool helped or failed to help in setting specific, meaningful goals for improving the program's capacity to promote family engagement?

Georgia Family Engagement Survey

Dear Parent:

We invite you to take a brief survey about family involvement practices at your child's early care program. The survey will take about 8 minutes. Your input will help the program improve its practices.

Your participation is voluntary. You can decide not to complete the survey or stop once you begin.

Risks of doing the survey are minimal. **We do not collect any information that personally identifies parents.** Program staff cannot see individual surveys and will use survey results only in summary form.

This survey was developed by NCCP, Columbia University and the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. Only authorized researchers at NCCP, the study sponsor (Alliance for Early Success), Columbia Institutional Review Board (the group that reviewed this research to protect your rights), and the Federal Office of Human Research Protections can access the data.

If you agree to participate, **please complete the survey below within two weeks of receiving it.**

Please contact the lead researcher, Sheila Smith, Ph.D., if you have any questions or concerns about this survey:

Sheila Smith, Ph.D.
Director, Early Childhood
NCCP, Columbia University
Tel: (646) 284-9643
Sheila.Smith@nccp.org

If you have any questions about your rights as a survey participant, or if you have a concern about the survey, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) listed below.

Institutional Review Board, Columbia
University Medical Center
154 Haven Avenue, 1st Floor, New York,
NY 10032
Tel: (212) 305-5883
irboffice@columbia.edu

You may keep this information sheet for your records.

Please turn the page over

1. Please select the statement that is most true for you.

- The teacher/provider always talks with me in a positive way about my child.
- The teacher/provider usually talks with me in a positive way about my child.
- The teacher/provider is not very positive when talking to me about my child.
- I do not have any opportunities to speak to the teacher/provider about my child.

2. Please select the statement that is most true for you.

- I am pleased with how often I talk with my child's teacher/provider about my child.
- I would like to talk a little more often with my child's teacher/provider.
- I would like to talk more often to my child's teacher/provider.

3. Please select the statement that is most true for you.

- The teacher/provider is interested in my ideas about helping my child learn.
- The teacher/provider is a little interested in my ideas about helping my child learn.
- The teacher/provider is not very interested in my ideas about helping my child learn.
- I don't share my ideas about helping my child learn with their teacher/provider.

4. Does the program provide written information in the language you understand best?

- Yes
- No

The next questions ask about how often the program provides supports to all families. Please select the answers that seem most true.

5. How often does the program show activities that families can do at home to help their child learn?

- A few times a month
- Once a month
- A few times a year
- Never

Please turn the page over

6. How often does the program provide learning materials, such as books or games that families can use at home?

- A few times a month Once a month A few times a year Never

7. How often does the program show families things they can do to have a positive relationship with their child and help children learn positive behaviors?

- A few times a month Once a month A few times a year Never

8. How often does the program let families know about other places or events in the community where children can enjoy learning, such as the library or museum?

- A few times a month Once a month A few times a year Never

9. How often does the program give families a chance to talk with other families and teachers in a friendly setting such as a workshop or family meeting?

- A few times a month Once a month A few times a year Never

10. If a child needs extra support for learning, the program

- Offers enough information/help Should offer more information/help I don't know

11. If families or teachers have concerns about a child's behavior, the program

- Offers enough information/help Should offer more information/help I don't know

Please turn the page over

12. If families have health or mental health needs, the program

- Offers enough information/help Should offer more information/help I don't know

13. If families need assistance, such as child care, transportation, or translation to be able to attend meetings at the program, the program

- Offers enough information/help Should offer more information/help I don't know

14. If families need community services (such as WIC, adult education), the program

- Offers enough information/help Should offer more information/help I don't know

The last two questions ask about your own experience in the program and your views about how it could support families.

15. What are some important ways the program has helped you as a parent and/or your family?

16. In what other ways would you like the program to support you and other families?

Please turn the page over

Please also answer the questions below to give us feedback on this survey.

1. How easy was it to understand and answer the questions?

- Easy I thought it was organized well and not overly complicated with response options.
- Somewhat easy
- Somewhat difficult
- Difficult

1a. Please explain any difficulties you had completing the survey: If possible, mention an item or phrase that caused difficulty.

2. How many of the important ways that programs can support parents and families are mentioned in this survey?

- All or nearly all of the important ways programs can support parents and families
- Many of the important ways programs can support parents and families
- Some of the important ways programs can support parents and families
- Hardly any or none of the most important ways programs can support parents and families

2a. Are there other types of assistance or information that a program could provide that the survey should ask about?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please tell us what other types of assistance or information should be added?

Thank you for taking this survey!