

# PROFESSIONAL FAMILY CHILD CARE ALLIANCE OF GEORGIA



## MEETING THE NEED FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE IN METROPOLITAN ATLANTA: A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

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## Executive Summary

**Purpose.** The purpose of this *Blueprint for Action* is to document the important role Family Child Care (FCC) plays meeting child care needs, explain why the number of homes is declining, describe barriers and challenges to reversing this decline, and propose a bold plan to increase the number of FCC homes in metropolitan Atlanta by 2024.

**Hard Reality.** In the last 10 years, the number Family Child Care (FCC) providers opening in Georgia has not kept pace with the number of FCC homes closing, let alone increasing. **In fact, the number FCCLH homes declined from 5265 in 2010 to only 1333 in 2020**<sup>1</sup>. This contrasts with the dramatic and significant growth in FCC homes in the 70s through the 90s. The Professional Family Child Care Alliance of Georgia (PFCCAG) believes it is difficult and expensive to obtain a license and there is little or no coordinated sustained strategy to promote FCC as a career or assist applicants become licensed. The time to reverse the decline is now!

This *Blueprint* describes the community and corporate support process which led to so many FCC homes opening in the 70s thru 90s, identifies factors which led to a decline continuing to this day, presents a detailed description of the challenges and barriers making it difficult to open a FCC home, reviews what other communities have done to increase the number of homes, and describes a plan to start 130 FCC homes in metropolitan Atlanta by 2024.

**Definition.** In Georgia, Family Child Care (FCC) is generally defined as licensed care for pay of six or fewer children by one provider in a private home. Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) licenses FCC homes. DECAL uses the term “Family Child Care Learning Home (FCCLH)” and defines this business as “a program that operates in a private residential home for less than 24 hours per day. It provides care for three children, but no more than six, under the age of 18 for pay”<sup>2</sup>. In this publication, the terms “Family Child Care Learning Home and Family Child Care and the acronyms “FCCLH” and “FCC” are used interchangeably

The decline of FCCLH homes is a **canary in the coal mine**, signifying a critical weakness in the child care availability, affordability, quality, and delivery systems in Georgia. The continued decline in FCC homes will result in:

- A lack of parental choice that fits a family’s culture, language, backgrounds, and values which is especially needed to support Atlanta’s increasingly diverse communities.
- An increase in child care deserts, especially for rural communities where FCC may be the only option.
- Hardships on families who need non-traditional care such as night and /or weekend care.
- A dramatic decrease in the availability of care for infants and toddlers.

- States not meeting federal requirements to permit parents to choose from a variety of child care categories <sup>2</sup>, and
- An increase in the number of children in unlicensed care which can avoid health and safety requirements placed on licensed care

**A Beginning Step.** In September 2020, PFCCAG received funding from United Way of Greater Atlanta (UWGA) / Joseph B Whitehead Foundation to take the first step toward reversing the decline of FCCLH homes in the 13 UWGA counties\*. This step involved establishing the **Explore-FCC** Project to provide one-on-one coaching for up to 20 Individuals exploring FCC as a career. Simultaneous with that step, PFCCAG was asked to create a *Blueprint for Action* to reverse the decline by developing a plan that “is comprehensive, inclusive, welcoming, and supportive”.

**Family Child Care in Metropolitan Atlanta.** While the number of FCC homes in the United Way of Greater Atlanta (UWGA area did not decline from 2010 to 2020, it also did not keep pace with the increase in population as FCC homes increased slightly based on data provided by DECAL. However, the increase is not proportionate to the population change in Atlanta during the last 10 years. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) kept track of 10 of the 13 UWGA counties (ARC does not count Butts, Coweta, Paulding). In the 10 counties, there are currently 4.7 million people, and growth from 2010 to 2020 added 585,000 new residents.<sup>3</sup>

**Scarcity in Neighborhoods with “Very Low” or “Low” Child Well Being (CWB) Scores.** United Way of Greater Atlanta uses a “Child Well Being” scoring process as the way to put children on an equitable path to fulfilling their potential. Of the 12 zip codes scoring “Very Low,” there were only 30 FCCLH homes, including 3 with no FCCLH homes. Yet these 12 zip codes included over 92,000 children and represented a percent of children in poverty between 40% to over 62%. Of the 37 zip codes scoring “Low,” there were only 261 FCCLH homes, including 7 with no FCCLH homes. Yet these 37 zip codes included over 290,000 children and a percent of children in poverty between 19% to over 69%.<sup>4</sup>

**Barriers and Challenges.** Barriers and challenges exist, which make it difficult and sometimes impossible to open an FCC home in metropolitan Atlanta. Given the issues involved, it is a welcome surprise when a new FCC home opens, especially when the provider masters the challenges with little or no help from the community.

**Licensing Requirements.** There are barriers inherent in the licensing process. PFCCAG estimates that 90% of the time and 95% of the money an applicant spends preparing to open is spent on reading/understanding requirements, securing required supplies and equipment, making minor/major home repairs, attending required trainings, acquiring the required credential-degree, developing policies, forms, and records, obtaining local government approvals, and, arranging the child care space--all of which are addressed in licensing requirements. And this is done in preparation for the all-important Initial Licensing Visit which ultimately decides whether an applicant can or cannot open.

DECAL is legally charged with safeguarding the health, safety, and developmental well-being of children in licensed care. Given the level of evidence-based research about these issues and tragic consequences when requirements are ignored or overlooked, licensing standards must be detailed and the licensing process thorough. And while DECAL offers several mechanisms to help applicants through the licensing process, the process can be confusing, and applicants benefit when a coach is available to explain requirements and offer suggestions for how to comply.

**Local Government Approval Maze.** Requirements for local government approval of an FCC home (zoning, business permit, fire inspection) are included in DECAL requirements but are established, and administered separately by the 159 counties and 535 cities in GA. These jurisdictions can and often do layer their own set of regulations and requirements on top of those established by DECAL. At least 2 cities prohibit FCC outright, several others prohibit FCC in Multifamily Residential Districts (where apartment complexes and attached houses are located), and others place conditions for approval that contradict or exceed DECAL licensing requirements. This means dreams are denied and dreams derailed by a confusing, inconsistent, and often costly set of local laws and procedures. PFCCAG and other partners work to help applicants through the local requirement maze. This support work is critical to needs to expand.

**Other Challenges.** *Blueprint for Action* describes other local barriers, including landlord and homeowner association resistance, the difficulty and cost involved in making minor or major repairs to comply with licensing, and the substantial cost of start-up in general. The *Blueprint* shines a particular spotlight on equity issues concerning racial, cultural, and language diversity of existing providers, and equity issues to be addressed when ensuring FCC is available to underserved populations and neighborhoods and recognizes the previous initiatives by CDF-Action in central DeKalb and Gwinnett to serve refugee and Spanish speaking providers.

**Lessons Learned from Other Communities.** Even with the many barriers and challenges identified, the *Blueprint* documents how other communities and programs turn the corner and increase the number of FCC homes. Starting first with a discussion of start-up cost issues, the *Blueprint* describes how projects offer help with start-up costs. This information is followed by detailed descriptions of 4 programs (General program characteristics, common services offered, unique characteristics or accomplishments, and organizational sponsorship and funding). The 4 programs are: California Child Care Resource and Referral Network (CCCR&RN) Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP), US Army Child, Youth, and School Services (CYSS) Family Child Care System, All Our Kin (AOK) Family Child Care Network, and Montgomery County MD, Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Services (DHHS-ECS) Growing Family Child Care Opportunities. Finally, **Explore-FCC's** first year's accomplishments are described as well as the potential to partner with the parallel work of Quality Care for Children's recently established Staffed Family Child Care Network (SFCCN).

**Explore-FCC 2020-2024.** The final chapter of *Blueprint for Action* addresses head-on the question of how metropolitan Atlanta can meet the need for FCC homes. The *Blueprint* proposes three goals to be achieved by 2024. They are

**Goal One:** *Increase the number of Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLH) by 130 homes in Atlanta in target neighborhoods and metro-wide by 2024.*

**Goal Two:** *Strengthen and expand the coaching and technical assistance services offered by the **Explore-FCC** project aimed at a continuum from welcoming individuals interested in becoming licensed FCCLH providers to supporting them becoming sustainable businesses, operating at a high level of quality, and part of an ongoing community support process.*

**Goal Three:** *Strengthen PFCCAG's capacity to administer and evaluate the **Explore-FCC** Project.*

**Strategy and Objectives.** The chapter presents a strategy consisting of 19 objectives and a series of comments explaining how each objective will be addressed. Objectives address meeting the timetable for achievement, targeting specific CWB neighborhoods, providing substantial help with start-up costs, refining the coaching and technical assistance process, developing innovative ways to help applicants obtain training including a credential-degree, expanding partnerships with key professional and community organizations, defining a post-opening strategy, continuing to research start-up models in other communities, strengthening PFCCAG's management and board capacities and conducting a thorough evaluation of the project.

**Cost.** PFCCAG developed a working budget for the three year Explore-FCC project of from \$1.1 to \$1.2 M. This includes \$436K in direct financial assistance to the 130 providers receiving a license. The assistance consists of Health and Safety Start-Up Kits, partial reimbursement of supply and equipment costs, assistance with minor repair and renovation costs, and other direct support.

Staffing for the project includes 3 full time positions, Project Director, FCC Coach, Administrative Assistant, and significant part time support from the PFCCAG Executive Director, Senior Coach, and Accountant. Consultant help is included for interpreter/translation and evaluation. The budget is available upon request. Address inquiries to [info@pfccag.org](mailto:info@pfccag.org).

\*UWGA 13 Counties are Butts, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale.

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## Introduction

The purpose of this Blueprint for Action is to offer recommendations to address the decline in the number of new FCCLH homes in metropolitan Atlanta.

In Georgia, Family Child Care (FCC) is generally defined as licensed care for pay of six or fewer children by one provider in a private home. Bright from the Start Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) licenses FCC homes. DECAL uses the term “Family Child Care Learning Home - FCCLH” and defines this business as “a program that operates in a private residential home for less than 24 hours per day. It provides care for three children, but no more than six, under the age of 18 for pay”<sup>6</sup>. In this publication, the terms “Family Child Care Learning Home and Family Child Care and the acronyms “FCCLH” and “FCC” are used interchangeably

In the last 10 years, the number FCCLH providers opening in Georgia has not kept pace with the number of FCCLH homes closing, let alone increasing. **In fact, the number FCCLH homes declined from 5265 in 2010 to only 1333 in 2020.**<sup>7</sup>

From an economic and parent consumer perspective, that may not be a problem. Perhaps parent preference has shifted away from FCCLH homes and swung toward the use of Child Care Learning Centers (CCLC’s), in-home providers, or other categories of individuals caring for children but not required to be licensed, i.e., Nannies and Family Friends and Neighbor (FFN) care.

But from another perspective, the decline of FCCLH homes is a **canary in the coal mine**, signifying a critical weakness in the child care availability, affordability, and/or delivery systems in Georgia. The continued decline in FCC homes will result in:

- A lack of parental choice that fits a family’s culture, language, backgrounds, and values which is especially needed to support Atlanta’s increasingly diverse communities.
- An increase in child care deserts, especially for rural communities where FCC may be the only option.
- Hardships on families who need non-traditional care such as night and /or weekend care.
- A dramatic decrease in the availability of care for infants and toddlers.
- States not meeting federal requirements to permit parents to choose from a variety of child care categories <sup>8</sup>, and
- An increase in the number of children in unlicensed care which can avoid health and safety requirements placed on licensed care.

One organization that can address this weakness is the Professional Family Child Care Alliance of Georgia (PFCCAG). PFCCAG represents FCCLH providers and child care advocates. PFCCAG's mission is to create a solid early education foundation, so all Georgia's children are nurtured and educated to become happy, healthy, and prepared to succeed. We join all stakeholders in enhancing the professionalism of family child providers and creating an environment that allows the profession to thrive. PFCCAG believes it is difficult and expensive to obtain a license and there is little or no coordinated sustained strategy to promote FCC as a career or assist applicants become licensed.

In September 2020, PFCCAG received funding from United Way of Greater Atlanta (UWGA) / Joseph B Whitehead Foundation to take the first step toward reversing the decline of FCCLH homes in the 13 UWGA counties\*. This initial step involved establishing an **Explore-FCC** Project (**Explore-FCC**) to provide one-on-one coaching for up to 20 Individuals exploring FCC as a career.

Simultaneous with that step, PFCCAG was asked to create a Blueprint for Action to reverse the decline by implementing a program that "is comprehensive, inclusive, welcoming, and supportive until new FCCLH homes are financially stable, high quality, and part of an ongoing community support process."

To develop the Blueprint for Action, PFCCAG employed an approach involving several mechanisms to gather data and solicit ideas. Advisory and decision making groups included a Greater Atlanta Provider Steering Committee (5 currently operating FCCLH homes), DECAL Liaison Team (3 DECAL staff), Friends of Family Child Care Advisory Group (representatives of 19 organizations), Family Child Care Marathon Project, and UWGA Early Learning Professional Development grantee inputs with final review by a UWGA Contract Officer and the PFCCAG Board of Directors. For a list of organizations and individuals involved, see Appendix A.

\*UWGA 13 Counties are Butts, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale.

## Chapter 1: Why Are Family Child Care Learning Homes Important in Georgia?

FCCLHs are important because they serve many children and meet the unique needs of working parents. Additionally, FCCLHs are important because they occupy a strategic position between licensed Child Care Learning Centers (CCLCs) on the one side, and on the other, Nannies and Family Friends and Neighbor (FFN), both of which represent unlicensed care.

**The Family Friendly Style Child Raising Experience.** FCCLH represents a "family" style child care experience and is often selected because the provider has similar child-rearing values as the parent. Many providers share the same culture and language as the

parent. FCCLHs allow a sibling group to stay together and experience child development in the “multi-age grouping” technique, an approach seldom available in a CCLC. FCCLH’s small size and home-like atmosphere are a good fit for a shy child or one who finds a larger group, such as that in a CCLC, too stimulating.

**Neighborhood atmosphere.** The neighborhood atmosphere of a FCCLH is also important. It starts with the practical reality the FCC home may be near the child’s home and means a less complicated journey to work for the parent. But it extends to how the child in care experiences their day. Family child care gives life and character to a neighborhood. The family child care provider and the children served, take mini field trips to the store, post office, fire station, or other points of educational interest in the community. In some neighborhoods, the family child care provider is the last “at home mom” on the block since all the other neighbors are away at work.

**Flexibility.** Another feature of FCC is flexibility. Because providers are at home and because they tend to forge close bonds with families in care, providers often show flexibility in their hours of operation and are forgiving of family situations and challenges. That does not mean parents can or should take advantage of providers, but providers have a reputation of accommodating families they know well when unexpected demands from work or financial stress arise.

**Less costly.** Most FCC cost less than center care. This may drive parents to choose FCC, but it is uniqueness and quality which keep parents using the provider. In 2019, the average cost of care for a child aged 0-1, was \$163 a week in a CCLC and \$131 in a FCCLH.<sup>9</sup> The same pattern of lower rates for FCC care continues in older age groups.

To sum it up, “There may be no place like home for your child but finding a quality in-home family child care provider can be the next best thing.”<sup>10</sup>

## Family Child Care (FCC) Defined

In Georgia, Family Child Care (FCC) is generally defined as licensed care for pay of six or fewer children by one provider in a private home. The Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) licenses FCC homes. DECAL uses the term “Family Child Care Learning Home”. In this publication, the terms “Family Child Care Learning Home and Family Child Care and the acronyms “FCCLH” and “FCC” are used interchangeably.

DECAL defines an FCCLH as “a program that operates in a private residential home for less than 24 hours per day. It provides care for three children, but no more than six, under the age of 18 for pay.” The definition further recognizes a FCCLH home may also be caring for “related children” not for pay and “two additional children three years of age or older for two designated one-hour periods daily upon approval by the Department.”

These latter permissions are concessions to practical realities, one to acknowledge the presence of the provider’s own children or her near relative’s children attending at no cost, and the other to allow up to two school-age children who are only present for a short period before

or after school. As a further qualifier, the regulations state: “Whenever Related Children or Children who reside in the Home are present in the Home, the total number of children present under the age of thirteen years may not exceed twelve”.<sup>11</sup>

## **Why So Many FCCLH Homes in Georgia? What Is the Backstory?**

The year 2010 was chosen as a benchmark, but it is not the high-water mark for FCCLHs in GA. It is estimated that, at one point, there was a combination of 7500 “Family Day Care” and “Group Day Care Homes” in Georgia.<sup>12</sup>

**Licensing initiatives and the birth of CCR&Rs.** In the ‘70s and ‘80s,” Georgia used a licensing option called “registration,” which made it easy to start an FCC home. The Child and Adult Care Food Program allowed all children enrolled in FCC to receive two meals and a snack at no cost to the family, and many advocates encouraged individuals in low-income areas to become providers. Community-based Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&Rs) were established, which emphasized training and support to FCC as well as CCLCs. Quality Care for Children, founded by Nancy Travis in 1979, began with expertise about FCC and created the Family Child Care Technical Assistance Conference, a national conference, which operated for over twenty years.

**Numerous start-up projects.** In the ‘80s and ‘90s, private sector funders (foundations and employers) recognized the increasing need for quality child care and invested in starting and supporting FCC. Projects in Georgia aimed at starting FCC and later, starting FCC support groups and associations, included Mervyns Family to Family Project (Mervyns-Target Department Stores), Neighborhood Child Care Network (Ford Foundation), Work/Family Directions CCR&R Start-Up Project (IBM and other employers), and the Refugee Child Care Assistance Project (HHS Office of Refugee Assistance). In addition, Lutheran Services of Georgia (aka In Spiritus) operated a start-up project in the Savannah area which helped many providers get started.

There was also a “How to Start a Family Child Care Home” introduction session taught monthly and rotated to various metro counties. These sessions were sponsored by Quality Care for Children but co-taught with Extension Agents from Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett counties and the Small Business Development Center in Gwinnett. The initiative ended due to funding limitations and changes in job roles.

**Long-term results are fading.** In a November 2018, data call by PFCCAG, DECAL identified there were 172 FCCLH providers in operation at the same location for 25 years or more, including several in operation for 30 or more years<sup>13</sup>. This institutional longevity is a tribute to the intense recruitment and training activities of the ‘80s and ‘90s and demonstrates the potential long-lasting impact of a renewed recruitment campaign called for by this Blueprint for Action. It also highlights a population of providers who will likely retire soon.

**CCR&Rs: One step forward and one step back.** In addition, PFCCAG hoped the momentum developed by the private sector projects developed in the 80s and 90s could be

institutionalized through the publicly-funded system of Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies authorized in the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act and administered in GA by DECAL. For several years, providing training and technical assistance to individuals seeking to start a FCCLH home or CCLC center was included in CCR&R agencies contract with DECAL. At some point prior to 2010, DECAL eliminated this contract task. Given the many challenges DECAL faces and the demands on its financial resources, hard choices are a fact of life. In this case, PFCCAG understands the funds were reprogrammed toward helping existing programs achieve Quality Rated (QR) status. PFCCAG has no quarrel with the intent of DECAL's decision but believes the unintended consequence was to leave individuals exploring family child care without a vehicle to get questions answered, learn from the mistakes of others, or receive encouragement when faced with a challenge. To be sure, the DECAL licensing technical assistance process continues to improve (see Chapter 2) but licensing must be impartial and the CCR&Rs served as coaches and cheerleaders.

### **Why Did the Number of FCC Homes in Georgia Decline and Who Is Working to Reverse the Decline?**

PFCCAG has been aware of a decline in the number of providers since it was founded in 2011. In 2015, PFCCAG developed *Position Paper # 1-2015, Where Have All the Flowers Gone? Factors Contributing to a Serious Decline in Registered/ Licensed Family Child Care Providers in Georgia*. This was an issues paper designed to express concern and propose solutions to specific problems. The paper recognized that overarching trends probably influenced the decline. The identified trends included: the recession of 2008, public perception that CCLS are the only or best child care option, widening job opportunities for women, perceived or real low take-home pay, and an increase in the number of underground providers. PFCCAG pointed out that some of these factors may be immutable, but others could be influenced to reverse the trend.

**A second look.** PFCCAG continued to address the decline and, in May 2020, issued a second report, *Comprehensive Plan to Address the Decline of Family Child Care Learning Homes in Georgia*. That plan offers 8 recommendations concerning starting new FCCLH homes and 7 recommendations toward retaining existing homes. Unfortunately, COVID-19 overshadowed the report and adversely impacted PFCCAG's ability to implement the recommendations.

**Public-private partners.** While this section looks primarily through a PFCCAG lens, it should be acknowledged that momentum to reverse the decline is building through partner organizations as well. The work of several partners will be discussed in this document, but the long-standing dedication of Quality Care for Children to family child care and a renewal of efforts to support new providers deserves special recognition. More recently, the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS) Infant-Toddler Coalition adopted the position to "Examine and address the reasons behind the decrease in Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLH) in Georgia to maintain the existing supply of child care, particularly for vulnerable populations such as infants and toddlers."<sup>14</sup>

## How Does the Decline Apply to the UWGA 13 Counties?

While the number of FCCLH homes in the UWGA area did not decline from 2010 to 2020, it also did not keep pace with the increase in population as FCCLH homes increased slightly based on data provided by DECAL. See Figure 1.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 1. FCCLH Homes in UWGA Counties**

County	Number of FCCLH Homes 2010	Number of FCCLH Homes 2020
Butts	1	1
Cherokee	19	21
Clayton	59	84
Cobb	56	82
Coweta	3	6
DeKalb	116	143
Douglas	8	12
Fayette	7	12
Fulton	61	103
Gwinnett	72	115
Henry	17	29
Paulding	7	14
Rockdale	8	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>632</b>

**Keeping up with the population increase.** However, the increase is not proportionate to the population change in Atlanta during the last 10 years. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) kept track of 10 of the 13 UWGA counties (ARC does not count Butts, Coweta, Paulding). In the 10 counties, there are currently 4.7 million people, and growth from 2010 to 2020 added 585,000 new residents.<sup>16</sup>

### **Meeting child care needs in Very Low and Low Child Well-Being neighborhoods.**

From another vantage point, the number of FCCLH homes located in zip codes scoring “Very Low” and “Low” on UWGA measures of Child Well Being (CWB) is small. See Figures 2 and 3.

**Scarcity in Very Low Neighborhoods.** Of the 12 zip codes scoring “Very Low,” there were only 30 FCCLH homes, including 3 with no FCCLH homes. Yet these 12 zip codes included over 92,000 children and represented a percent of children in poverty between 40% to over 62%<sup>17</sup>. This paper does not look at comparable data for CCLC’s in those zip codes, but PFCCAG speculates children are being cared for in unlicensed unsafe settings. The number of children in these neighborhoods receiving child care subsidized by the Child and Parent Services (CAPS) program is another question worth exploring.

**Figure 2. FCCLH Homes in Zip Codes Scoring Very Low on Child Well-Being Measures**

CWB Year 2018	Total Number of Zip Codes	Total Population	Total Children	Overall CWB Score Range	Percent of Children in Poverty Range	Overall Score Very Low	Number of Family Child Care Learning Homes (April 2021)
TOTAL	12	342,031	92,263	23.5 to 35.4	42.5% to 62.6%	All	30

**Population Density and Poverty Issues in Low Scoring Neighborhoods.** Of the 37 zip codes scoring “Low,” there were only 261 FCCLH homes, including 7 with no FCCLH homes. Yet these 37 zip codes included over 290,000 children and a percent of children in poverty between 19% to over 69%. <sup>18</sup>

**Figure 3 FCCLH Homes in Zip Codes Scoring Low on Child Well-Being Measures**

CWB Year 2018	Zip Codes	Total Population	Total Children	Overall CWB Score Range	Percent of Children in Poverty Range	Overall Score Color (Low)	# Family Child Care Learning Homes (April 2021)
TOTAL	37	1,049,660	290,438	29.9 to 53.3	19.9% to 69.7%	All	261

## Chapter 2: What Are the Barriers and Challenges to Opening a FCCLH Home? Licensing Requirements

Barriers and challenges exist, which make it difficult and sometimes impossible to open a Family Child Care Learning Home (FCCLH) in metropolitan Atlanta. Given the issues discussed in this and the next chapter, it is a welcomed surprise when a new FCCLH home opens, especially when the provider masters the challenges with little or no help from the community. The barriers and challenges identified here emerged from talking to many family child care applicants. Thus, while this chapter examines barriers inherent in the licensing process, the next chapter looks at other kinds of barriers.

### DECAL Regulations and Processes.

There is no question the most important step in opening a FCCLH home is meeting DECAL licensing requirements. PFCCAG estimates that 90% of the time and 95% of the money an applicant spends preparing to open is spent on reading/understanding requirements, securing required supplies and equipment, making minor/major home repairs, attending required trainings, acquiring the required credential-degree, developing policies, forms, and records, obtaining local government approvals, and, arranging the child care space--all of which are addressed in licensing requirements. And this is done in preparation for the all-important Initial Licensing Visit (ILV), which ultimately decides whether an applicant can or cannot open.

From one perspective, that makes DECAL's role the most critical role in helping providers open. That is, if the licensing requirements are clear and realistic and if the process is simple and efficient, it should be easier to help applicants open. DECAL is legally charged with safeguarding the health, safety, and developmental well-being of children in licensed care. Given the level of evidence-based research about these issues and tragic consequences when requirements are ignored or overlooked, licensing standards must be detailed and the licensing process thorough.

**Licensing Requirements.** For example, *Rules and Regulations Family Child Care Learning Homes Chapter 290-2-3, October 1, 2020*, is a 47-page document, so not lengthy or complicated. But other documents add length and additional requirements to flesh out the Rules and Regulation document. The DECAL publication *Applicant's Guide to Licensing for Family Child Care Learning Homes (Revised July 2020)* is an 83-page document and, while full of helpful sample forms and guidance, is also the first-place where local government zoning, business permits, and fire inspection requirements are identified.

The *INDICATOR MANUAL Family Child Care Learning Homes Chapter 290-2-3 January 7, 2021*, is a 244-page document "created to ensure consistent application and enforcement of the rules, fair and equitable delivery of services and to determine a program's compliance with the Family Child Care Learning Home rules and regulations. This manual was also created to assist Family Child Care Learning Home providers and staff in understanding and meeting the rules and regulations."

**A delicate balance.** So how does DECAL balance the speed/simplicity vs. detailed/thorough continuum? It probably depends on who you ask. From a PFCCAG perspective, it appears to take a long time for any single provider to make it through the licensing process. But it is unclear if applicants pause or take multiple pauses between completing steps in the process, are stymied by zoning or other local regulations, need to save up before completing supply and equipment purchases or if the detailed regulations and process can and should be streamlined.

**Process improvements.** At the same time, PFCCAG is aware of recent actions by DECAL to create a better licensing approval process. DECAL restructured its required Family Child Care Licensing Orientation Meeting (FOM) (aka LOM), so it is no longer offered in-person and only periodically, to where it is an online course available anytime an applicant wants to start. NOTE: This course was formerly called the Licensing

Orientation Meeting (LOM) course. Another important move is the creation of the Applicant Services Unit with staff specifically dedicated to answering questions and offering support to FCCLH and CCLC applicants.

The DECAL website section on starting a FCCLH offers an extensive list of sample forms and policies in English and Spanish, and the FOM (aka LOM) course is in English and Spanish.

It should also be noted that coordination between the **Explore-FCC** project and the DECAL Liaison group (3 staff) is working well, including joint problem solving to help specific applicants.

**Continuing to look at process and technical assistance Issues.** Two general themes are explored in the Blueprint for Action. One has to do with the difficulty of meeting FCCLH licensing requirements. This theme will emerge in sections of the plan credential-degree requirements, dealing with local government barriers, and elsewhere.

The other theme addresses technical assistance to help applicants meet licensing requirements as well as the other 10% of time/tasks involved in opening. The Applicant Services Unit has legal and other constraints on the technical assistance it offers. As previously stated, CCR&Rs are not authorized to offer start-up training or technical assistance. Given these factors, is there a need for another kind of start-up technical assistance and training, what should it look like, and who should offer it? This Blueprint for Action affirms the need for a start-up program parallel and complementary to the DECAL licensing effort.

### **Licensing requirements with a focus on personnel and professional preparation.**

As a precondition to receiving a license, applicants spend a significant amount of time and money competing training and credential/degree requirements. There are strong justifications for those requirements but navigating the path to attainment is not easy.

**Pre-service training requirements.** There are three types of pre-service training requirements. In the *Rules and Regulations* document it states:

“Pre-Service Training. Prior to the submission of the License application, the applicant who will be responsible for the day-to-day operations shall complete the pre-service training listed below that has been approved by the Department and which will include:

1. Licensure orientation that provides, at a minimum, instruction on the application process and gives an overview of the Department's rules and regulations that relate to the operation of the Family Child Care Learning Home.
2. Pre-licensure training course on Provider competencies that serve as a framework for professional development, which includes, but is not limited to, early learning standards, communication, developmentally appropriate practices, professional and leadership development, business management, and advocacy for the Family Child Care Learning Home, Parents, Children, and Staff.

3. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid training programs offered by certified or licensed health care professionals or trainers and approved by the Department, which include emergency care for infants and children.”<sup>19</sup>

**FOM course.** The “licensure orientation” referred to is the FOM course (aka LOM course) described previously. It is a self-paced online course, so it is easily available. Because of the orientation nature of the content, it is best if the applicant completes this course first.

**Pre-licensure training.** DECAL requires that applicants receive pre-licensure training on provider competencies, serving as a framework for professional development. The training must have been completed within 12 months of the application for a license. They include two hours of each content standard:

- Early Learning Standards
- Communications
- Professional Leadership & Development
- Business Management
- Advocacy for Parents & Children, and Staff in the FCCLH

**Options to obtain the training.** These trainings topics can be found by visiting the GaPDS website and entering the topics in the search engine. Many organizations offer some or all these trainings, some are free, and some involve a fee. Some trainers offer a “bundle,” which includes all 10 hours as a single course. Having said that, it would help if there was an online version of the courses and funding available to underwrite the cost to applicants.

It is also important to recognize that 2 of the 10 hours are devoted to business management. FCC providers are both business owners/managers and child care educators. Because of the dual role, they need a good introduction to business management concepts as well as early childhood concepts. In that sense, 2 hours is probably not enough. Compare this, for example, to the DECAL requirement that CCLC Directors must attend a 40-hour Director’s Training course prior to issuance of the initial license<sup>20</sup>. It is possible to treat the 2 hours of preservice training as a “crash course” and then expand the content during the required 10 hours of yearly training. PFCCAG expects to explore these options in the future.

**Infant, Child, and Adult Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid training.** CPR and First Aid training are critically important but sometimes difficult to find and somewhat expensive. DECAL says, “The CPR training must be in person.... These trainings can be found in local resources such as American Red Cross, American Heart Association, National Safety Council, American Safety and Health institute, technical colleges, and emergency service personnel”<sup>21</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic added to the challenge since the courses need to be taught in person.

**Credential-degree requirement and the variance option.** In the *Rules and Regulations* document at 290-2-3-.07 Staffing and Supervision (2), it states:

“Providers must possess and submit valid evidence/documentation of one of the following credentials/degrees issued by either the organizations listed below, an accredited educational institution or another organization approved/recognized by the Department:

- a. Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (issued by the Council for Professional Recognition and kept current); or
- b. Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC) in Early Childhood Education; or
- c. Technical College Diploma (TCD) in Early Childhood Education; or
- d. Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education (AA, AAS, AAT); or
- e. Paraprofessional Certificate (issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and kept current); or
- f. Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education; or
- g. Master's degree in Early Childhood Education.”

The credential-degree requirement went into effect on July 1, 2009. Providers licensed before that date are exempt. The belief underscoring this requirement is that “providers who have received formal education from an accredited college or university have been shown to provide a better quality of care thus improving the child care program’s outcome.”<sup>22</sup>

**Importance of the variance option.** The credential-degree requirement was initially established as a prerequisite to licensing. PFCCAG did not question the validity of the research basis of the requirement but was concerned about the high bar it raised and the potential for reducing new FCCLH homes. It meant an expensive and long delay while the potential applicant obtained the credential-degree. But for other prospective FCC providers, PFCCAG believes the credential requirement tipped the cost/benefit scale to a level where they could not afford to consider this profession

In 2015 PFCCAG addressed this concern in *Position Paper # 1* described previously. The paper pointed out that as of 2015, “the credential/degree prerequisite requirement is the highest being used by any state”. After further research and dialogue, DECAL authorized applicants to request a hardship-based variance which allows applicants to complete the credential-degree within 24 months of earning a license.

The Variance is described as follows: “In lieu of possessing one of these valid credentials prior to licensure, an applicant may request a variance submitted with the licensure application to enroll in a program to obtain one of the credentials within six months of licensure and complete within two years. Assistance may be available at [DECALScholars.com](http://DECALScholars.com).” This information and the Variance Application Form are on the DECAL website<sup>23</sup>. The Variance Application Form adds some additional information when it asks the applicant to declare:

“The family child care provider has been unable to complete the credential requirement prior to submitting an Application for License due to financial or other life circumstances. Without either the credential or variance approval, the applicant will not be licensed and therefore may be unable to financially support herself and/or her family.

The applicant agrees to (a) enroll in a program of study to obtain one of the credentials listed in the above rule within a maximum of six months from the date permission-to-operate is granted and to complete the program and obtain the credential within 24 months of the date permission-to-operate is granted; or (b) complete the program of study in which already enrolled and to obtain the credential within 18 months of the date permission-to-operate is granted....”<sup>24</sup>

**Variance can increase FCCLH applications!** PFCCAG believes the Variance option is practical way for many applicants to get started, begin earning money, and obtain an appropriate credential degree within a reasonable time. As more individuals exploring family child care learn about this route to opening, we expect more will want to open. We also expect a host of new issues will need to be addressed about how to smooth the way to completing the 24-month requirement.

The CDA, TCC, TCD, and possibly other options can be achieved within 24 months while also operating a FCCLH home, but each presents a challenge. There is great potential to coordinate with credential and degree-granting institutions, DECAL Scholars, and other partners, so the variance option runs smoothly, is affordable, and meets mutual goals.

## Chapter 3: What Are Barriers and Challenges to Opening a FCCLH Home? Other Factors

### Local Government Approval Requirements Create Significant Barriers

Requirements for local government approval of a FCCLH home are established in the DECAL *Applicants Guide* book where it states:

“Contact the local Fire Marshall to determine if there are local ordinances that apply to operating a Family Child Care Learning Home in your area.

Submit with the application a letter from the local zoning department indicating your residence is zoned for a Family Child Care business or a letter stating there are no zoning regulations.

Submit with the application a valid business license with the facility address or a letter stating a business license is not required/or will be issued upon completion of the Bright from the Start licensing process.”

DECAL is pointing out it cannot issue a license unless the applicant meets all requirements established by the city or county where the home is located. That makes sense from a legal

perspective and serves a preventative purpose making sure there are no unexpected problems obtaining the required approvals.

But it also means dreams are denied, and dreams are derailed by a confusing, inconsistent, and often costly set of laws and procedures established by Georgia's 159 counties and 535 cities.

**Zoning laws.** Take, for example, the simplest question involved in complying with zoning laws. The applicant needs to know, "does the city or county zoning law where I reside have any requirements related to opening a FCCLH?" That might be easy to find out, but you first need to know what term your law uses to describe a FCCLH. That is where it begins to get complicated. "*Family child care*" or "*family child care learning home*" seldom appears as a term in a GA zoning law. Instead, a variety of outdated or vague terms are being used, such as "*In-home day care*," "*day care home*," and "*family home nursery*."

The term used to define or include family child care may overlap with other types of child care programs addressed by the law, such as "*day nurseries*," "*child care centers*," and "*group homes*" offering care longer than 24 hours. This may lead to the law treating family child care as if it is a large business with multiple customers. Or it may lead to errors where even zoning staff tell family child care applicants incorrect information about zoning requirements. To add to the word search dilemma, sometimes, family child care, or words that are equivalent, are included in the category as a "home-based business" and may only be part of a list under that heading, with or without a definition.

**Key sections of a zoning law.** To carry the case further, consider that, in addition to the difficulty finding where family child care fits in given zoning laws, the applicant must also research and understand at least four other sections of zoning law, namely what district (zone) do I live in, is family child care permitted or prohibited in my district, if permitted, are there conditions (conditional requirements) I must meet in order to be allowed to operate a FCCLH home, and what is the approval process and cost of obtaining zoning approval.

**Barriers abound.** Finally, some conditional requirements in zoning laws are expensive, unnecessarily restrict operation, exceed DECAL requirements, or are just wrong. DeKalb County has a conditional requirement calling for a "Boundary Survey showing the structure of home—prepared and sealed by a professional engineer or land surveyor registered in the State of Ga and is consistent with the plats on Official Tax Records." To state the DeKalb requirement in plain language, it costs big bucks to meet our family child care zoning requirements.

Some City-Counties permit FCCLH homes in districts zoned as "Single Family Residential" but not in districts zoned as "Multifamily Residential". Multifamily districts are where apartment complexes and townhomes are located. Examples where this exists are Chamblee, Decatur, Johns Creek, and Kennesaw. Zoning laws restrict hours and days of operation. Some examples are Atlanta (6 AM to 7 PM), Johns

Creek (Monday through Saturday from 6 A.M. to 7 P.M.), Macon-Bibb (Monday thru Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.), and South Fulton (Monday through Saturday 6 AM to 7 PM). The City of Johns Creek says, “Sec. 4.12. - Home Occupation A. The smaller of 25% or 750 square feet of the gross floor area of a dwelling unit may be used for activities devoted to the home occupation.” In the wrong category, the FCC Marathon Project researched the Gwinnett County zoning law requirement, which limits family child care homes to a maximum of 5 children and concluded the Gwinnett requirement is based on incorrect information and an outdated reference.<sup>25</sup>

**FCC Marathon Project.** As indicated, the definition problem is just the tip of the iceberg. PFCCAG began addressing local barriers in 2015 when it established the FCC Marathon Project. The goal of the project is to “Increase the number of high-quality, affordable family child care in Georgia. It does so by addressing local government policies (zoning, business permit, Fire Marshall) and property owner (landlord, homeowner association) requirements creating cost, time, and regulatory roadblocks.” The motto of the project is: “It should not be a marathon uphill all the way.” The FCC Marathon Project is a standing committee of PFCCAG with participation from community partner organizations including CDF Action, Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students Infant-Toddler Coalition (GEEARS), 9to5 National Association of Working Women-Georgia, Quality Care for Children (QCC), and the United Way of Greater Atlanta.

***How does the FCC Marathon project work?*** The project depends on the work of volunteers to research FCCLH related zoning issues in a specific city -county. This may be based on the expressed interest of an applicant or while looking at a possible trend among cities and counties. So far, the project has researched 33 Georgia cities and counties and will do more as time and resources allow.

While helping individual applicants, PFCCAG is aware of applicants who gave up because of a barrier imposed in the zoning law. For example, one applicant was unable to obtain zoning approval because her home is an attached townhouse located in a district designated as “multifamily residential.” That city, Kennesaw, prohibits FCC in multifamily residential districts. Another applicant gave up after purchasing a home only to learn the home was within 1000 feet of an existing FCCLH home. In that city, Johns Creek, the zoning law bars approval if another FCC home has been approved within 1000 feet. In several instances, the project was unable to help and served only to document a quiet kind of failure that usually takes place totally unnoticed.

Except for the few applicants the FCC Marathon project works with, all other applicants pursue zoning approval on their own. And of this group, nothing is known about how many give up their dream due to a zoning barrier. There is information about the difference between individuals who explore opening a home and those who open. In the years 2015-2019, 2598 applicants attended a FOM training, an initial step in becoming licensed. In that same period, only 321 homes were granted a FCCLH license.<sup>26</sup> There can be many reasons the FOM attendance to licensing ratio is so low, but the case against zoning barriers is a strong one.

**Opportunities for advocacy.** The FCC Marathon Project is slowly building a case for reducing the confusing, costly, and inconsistent application of zoning laws to family child care. To help individual applicants, the project issued *An Advocates Guide to Helping Family Child Care Applicants Meet Zoning Requirements for A Georgia City or County*.<sup>27</sup> The guide explains how to research the zoning-business permit-Fire Marshall laws for any GA city-county and is useful to both advocates and applicants. Realistically it takes someone willing to get deep in the technical weeds of a zoning law and that is not the assignment most child care volunteers crave. But without such help applicants flounder, stall, or give up. At some point, this research and advocacy task needs to be backed-up by a dedicated staff position.

On a higher level, there are several examples of states adopting a statewide strategy and passed an “override” law which essentially says local governments cannot pass local laws with requirements that are more stringent than the state child care licensing law.

**Business Licenses.** While it is usually hard to find correct zoning-related information, most cities and counties go out of their way to be sure anyone seeking to open a business knows how to apply for a business license. Issues confronting an FCC applicant usually involve coordination and cost. The coordination issue can be between DECAL and the business license requirements of a specific city or county. That is, DECAL says “submit with the application a valid business license,” whereas the business license requirement requires proof the business complies with all state and local requirements and may go so far as to even mention DECAL. Or the law cites the prior state child care licensing organization DEFACS, e.g., City of Atlanta, Chatham County).

There can also be an internal coordination issue between the departments responsible for zoning, business permit, and fire inspection. That issue is addressed below.

**Cost.** The cost issue is a reality and a cost of doing business. There is usually a fixed fee for a business license in the first year and then a tax” the following years based on the business reported revenue. For example, in Gwinnett County, the business license is called a “Business Occupation Tax Certificate.” The initial fee to obtain the certificate is \$80, and the yearly fee to renew the certificate is based on six (6) tax classes with the rates ranging from \$0.65 per thousand dollars of gross revenues to \$1.30 dollars of gross revenues.

**Fire Marshall (Fire inspection and certificate of occupancy).** DECAL is correct to tell applicants to “Contact the local Fire Marshall to determine if there are local ordinances that apply to operating a Family Child Care Learning Home in your area.” The “if there are ordinances” issue may be because a “Certificate of Occupancy” is required either for zoning approval or as part of the business license process. A “Certificate of Occupancy” may sometimes involve additional building inspections (e. g., electrical, plumbing) but usually involves a fire inspection. At the same time, there

appear to be cities and counties where the Fire Marshall (aka Fire Chief) has the discretion of declining to inspect a unit as small as a single-family residence applying to be a family child care business. That is not an unreasonable decision given the DECAL licensing standards include significant fire safety requirements and are reviewed by licensing staff as part of the initial licensing visit and on a regular basis after the FCCLH license is issued.

PFCCAG/FCC Marathon project is only aware of a few instances where fire inspector requirements or approval created a barrier to opening. But at the same time, PFCCAG's limited volunteer resources have not given this matter the kind of attention aimed at zoning law issues. There may be issues that surface when PFCCAG shines a spotlight in this direction. Issues identified relate to confusion over whether a fire inspection is required and, if so, what does it cost?

### **How Do Zoning, Business Permits, And Fire Inspection Requirements Interconnect Locally?**

Cities and counties implement their zoning, business permit, and fire inspection laws usually through three different organizational units. The family child care applicant must decide where to start and how to ensure approvals from all three units are coordinated. Cities and counties can smooth the process through coordination among the three departments and offering information about the process, usually through information on their website. From a PFCCAG/FCC Marathon project perspective, the best order to follow is to start with zoning, then address business permit requirements but follow information learned from zoning and/ business permit to decide when to seek Fire Marshall input. Since each city-county is different, this advice may not hold in all places but is a good general rule.

The FCC Marathon Project traced the process in Cobb County and developed a visual representation of the *process* to simplify the path for FCC applicants in Cobb County.<sup>28</sup> PFCCAG gives kudos to the Cobb County website for providing the needed information and, ironically, for saying on its business license application form, "The Business License application requires that you be in possession of, or in the process of obtaining, a certificate of Occupancy, so both processes can be started simultaneously."

### **Family child care in a rented home or apartment.**

In the DECAL *Applicant's Guide* publication, when describing steps to complete a licensing application, it states, "If you do not own the residence, submit a copy of a current lease indicating you are allowed to operate a family child care in the residence."

While this requirement passes the common-sense test and ensures liability issues are addressed between landlord and tenant, it triggers concerns about how to obtain landlord agreement and how to make family child care available in low-income neighborhoods where a high percentage of rental homes and apartments exist.

The importance of this question was driven home recently. The federal Office of Refugee Resettlement offers a grant opportunity every few years for a Refugee Family Child Care Microenterprise Development Program grant. Recognizing that so many refugees and recent immigrants live in leased or rented housing, grant guidelines issued for a 2021 round of grants require applicants to serve refugees “Who if not homeowners, have a signed agreement from the rental property owner allowing the operation of a FCC business in the residence, if required by local regulation...”<sup>29</sup>

**Single-family leased or rented homes.** If the applicant lives in a rented or leased single-family home, the essential question is how to gain landlord approval. PFCCAG/FCC Marathon project volunteers know of several instances where the current landlord issued a firm “No.” The applicant then searched for a landlord who would be willing to rent, knowing the home would serve residence and FCCLH purposes. Responses from other landlords were mixed, but most said no. After being turned down by several potential landlords, applicants either gave up, continued searching, or began saving for a down payment on a home purchase, the latter option implying a long period of a dream deferred.

**Addressing landlord objections.** There may not be a lot a PFCCAG can do to help applicants persuade a landlord who adopts a “firm no” mindset, but it helps if the applicant is prepared before initiating the request. Landlord objections commonly involve concerns about liability, extra wear and tear on the property, and possible changes needed to meet licensing requirements (e.g., fenced backyard).

Concerning the liability issue, applicants can offer to include the landlord as a named insured in an applicant's purchased liability policy. DECAL licensing requirements do not require liability insurance, but if the applicant chooses not to purchase such insurance, they must post a notice to that effect and have parent/guardians sign a form acknowledging “...this child care facility does not carry liability insurance sufficient to protect my children in the event of an injury, etc.”. Connecting the dots on this issue-- applicants in low-income areas and in rented or leased housing might have to incur an extra expense for liability insurance in the hope of securing approval of their landlord. This is a costly longshot but needs to be pointed out to applicants while they are still exploring whether to seek a license.

**Apartment complexes.** In some respects, it might be easier for an applicant who is a tenant in an apartment complex to gain landlord approval, but this depends on several factors, some involving DECAL licensing standards and others involving the attitude of the organization/individual that owns/manages the apartment complex. There are challenges to meeting DECAL outdoor grounds and play area requirements, and there are challenges addressing licensing and local fire code requirements for apartments above or below the ground floor (aka level of exit discharge).

Like the landlord of a single-family residence, apartment complex owners may have objections related to wear and tear, and liability, and there may be an added concern if other tenants are negatively affected by the family child care business. On the other

hand, there are advantages to an apartment complex when there is a convenient source of safe, affordable, state-licensed child care available for tenants. The family child care home becomes an amenity provided by the apartment complex at little cost and serves as a marketing selling point to tenants and prospective tenants. So, the glass may be half empty or half full. PFCCAG knows of examples where an FCCLH home is or has been licensed in an apartment complex, so it can be done. PFCCAG is currently documenting the details of how licensing and apartment owner concerns were satisfied.

**Homeowner Association (HOA) approval.** While not in the *Rules and Regulations* and *Applicant's Guide* documents, the subject of HOA approval is addressed in *A Course Guide for Family Child Care Orientation (FOM)* where it states, "...if you live in a neighborhood governed by an HOA, you must verify that there are no restrictions from operating a home business. Your neighbors may object to the traffic and activity arising from a child care business. If there are no restrictions, you can submit a letter from the HOA stating that an FCCLH is approved." Again, DECAL takes a preventative approach to a potential problem. In some instances, the HOA has no problem because they are used to requests from owners to have a "home based business" and/or they welcome a child care program as a neighborhood amenity. But in other cases, approval becomes an ordeal with homeowners fretting in advance over lowering of home values, traffic, noise, signage etc. In the latter situations, the would be provider is often blindsided and may not be prepared to answer perceived problems.

### Start-Up Costs

It is an expensive proposition to start an FCC home, made more so by increasing pressure to offer consistent and safe high-quality care as well as by confounding and costly local government barriers. From PFCCAG's perspective, the question of whether public or private sector money should offset some or much of the start-up costs deserves a resounding **YES!**

Adding a start-up fund component has useful benefits. It means some low-income individuals exploring FCC as a career can now "afford" to pursue FCC, where previously they did not have the upfront costs to open. It means applicants who have some savings set aside to open can apply for a license because they now have a chance to fill in the gap. And it represents a community commitment to increase FCC spaces by making a strategic investment addressing that need.

**From an applicant's perspective.** If there are no grant funds to assist the applicant, these questions need to be addressed to help the applicant make decisions about opening. The help comes in the form of coaching discussions, written materials bulletins, and coordination/connecting with vendors. Even with a start-up grant component, some of this work will still be necessary.

- How much money will I need to open?
- What are all the types (i.e., categories) of costs I can expect to have?
- What do I already own which can be used in my family child care business?
- Where can I purchase some or all the items needed to meet licensing and other requirements?

- Is there an economical way to acquire everything I need?
- Should I buy some equipment brand new vs. used, and why?
- Will I eventually be able to pay myself back for the money I spent opening my FCC business?

**Examples of start-up fund initiatives.** Little is known about the average cost to start a family child care home in Georgia. Few organizations can ask, and most providers are reluctant to share this information. So, defining start-up costs is an approximation process, but there is a need to target funding to applicants in priority Child Well-Being neighborhoods, and there is a need to address repair and renovation costs in targeted neighborhoods.

The following is a chart describing 5 start-up fund initiatives reflecting diverse policies and amounts.

Organization and State	Pays for	Amount	Comment
<b>Child Care Aware of MN</b>	Can apply after the first visit with licensing worker but then says. "Please include documentation from your licensor that the items in your grant application are needed to meet licensing requirements prior to opening."	Up to \$2000	Does not allow for expenditures it considers "cost of doing business" such as "accounting and legal fees, advertising, banking service charges, cleaning, food, insurance, licenses, taxes, rent or mortgage, transportation, utilities."
<b>MD State DOE, Division of Early Childhood</b>	Grant funds may be utilized as reimbursement to family child care providers for compliance-related expenses, which include: Fees for: a medical examination, medical testing, or Immunization, the cost of training courses (up to six hours of health-related and up to six hours of non-health-related); Criminal background investigations; Meeting local: zoning; health and safety; and fire requirements, Water testing or sanitarian inspection, if required, Lead paint or asbestos abatement, testing, or control, Small household repairs or alterations necessary to allow child care activities to take place or to ensure the safety of children in care, Toys; Educational materials; Arts and craft supplies.	Up to \$1000	Income is a base for eligibility (must include latest federal income tax form)

	Other costs which are identified and approved by the Office of Child Care - Licensing necessary for the applicant to meet the requirements.		
<b>Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP) CA</b>	Reimbursement for expenses required to start an FCC Home	Up to \$1000	See Description in Next Chapter.
<b>Office of Refugee Resettlement-Refugee Family Child Care Microenterprise Grant</b>	RFCCMED programs are required to provide a stipend of no less than \$500 and not to exceed \$3,000 per enrolled refugee participant for the full project period to assist with business startup costs. Costs must be directly related to preparing the participant's home for FCC business operation. Participants must not receive stipend funds until the program implementer has verified that the participant is fully prepared to begin the process of establishing their business or obtaining a required child care license or certification. Eligible costs include, but are not limited, to the following: educational materials for children, furniture, toys, business equipment, office supplies, home improvements or repairs for the purpose of meeting child care or business regulations, safety equipment, and cleaning supplies.	\$500 to \$3000	
<b>Office of Refugee Resettlement-Refugee Family Child Care Microenterprise Grant</b>	Licensing-Related Fees RFCCMED funds may be used to cover participants' costs for meeting FCC licensing requirements. These may include Licensing application fee, required orientation, background check/fingerprinting, required immunizations and health screenings, Required CPR/First Aid training, Costs associated with transportation to training- and licensing-related activities, and other fees required for licensing by local regulation. Program funds may also be used during the project period to cover costs of FCC business insurance for up to 1 year in total	As proposed by the grantee	Costs associated with the items outlined in this section are not considered part of the participant stipend described in that section

**Challenges to making minor or major repairs.** To varying degrees, the start-up grants described above recognize that start-up costs can include repairs and improvements to the home itself. However, assisting with major or even minor repairs involves a more complex and costly strategy than any other form of start-up assistance. To be sure, applicants living in very low incomes areas will likely need to make home repairs to meet licensing requirements. But from a funder’s perspective, there are legal, technical, and philosophical challenges paying for the improvement of a personal residence that happens to be the site of a sole-proprietor-owned for-profit business.

And there are challenges in helping family child care providers secure loans to pay repair and improvement costs. Consider that “Minority-owned businesses account for 60% of the child care and early learning industry and of the 2 million early childhood educators in the country, at least one-fifth are immigrants.” These business owners, especially women of color, are more likely to be declined for loans to improve their businesses and receive smaller loans and pay higher interest rates than white-owned businesses.”<sup>30</sup> There are partners with expertise in small business grants and loans that could help applicants address their facility needs, and there are examples of a third party, such as a “shared services alliance” organization, using foundation funds to offer loans to applicants to complete minor repairs. For example, Promise All Atlanta Children Thrive (PAACT) , a citywide alliance convened by GEEARS in partnership with the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF), in August 2021 announced a grant program—the PAACT Fund for Quality: Atlanta Family Child Care Relief Grant—exclusively for family child care learning homes located within the city limits of Atlanta. These grants address COVID-19 Economic rescue needs. LIIF works in New York City, San Francisco, and Washington D.C. to provide both grants and facility loans to FCC providers and is a potential partner to address these needs in GA.<sup>31</sup> Similarly PFCCAG is pursuing partnerships with University of Georgia Small Business Development Center (UGA SBDC) and Small Business Majority. It will take time and expertise to coalesce partners in metropolitan Atlanta, but it can be done.

**Family Child Care Equity Issues.**

There are equity issues concerning racial, cultural, and language diversity of existing providers, which can be addressed during recruitment and FCCLH start-up efforts. In a similar sense, there are equity issues to be addressed when ensuring FCC is available to underserved populations and neighborhoods and their diverse child care needs are met.

The Early Care and Education Industry Study provides baseline information for considering these issues.

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Early Care and Education Staff, by Percentage Family Child Care Learning Homes <sup>32</sup>

Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic Black	Non-Hispanic Asian	Hispanic	Multi-Racial	Other Races
38%	53%	2%	3%	2%	2%

Table 3.4 Racial Composition of Child Population Served by Georgia’s Early Care and Education Industry  
Family Child Care Learning Homes

Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic Black	Non-Hispanic Asian	Hispanic	Multi-Racial	Other Races
39.9	51.7	4.3	1.7		4.2

The Industry Study further states, “Of the family child care home owners who responded 53% are Non-Hispanic Black and 38% Non-Hispanic White. Approximately 81% of the responding Non-Hispanic Black owners care mostly for Black Children (4.9 on average) and 81% of the Non-Hispanic White care mostly for Non-Hispanic White children (5.4 on average). This may reflect the geographic distributions of the early care and education programs since families tend to select programs in the communities where they live.” <sup>33</sup>

**Metropolitan Atlanta.** While the Industry Study is statewide and based on 2016 data, it helps to compare this information to metropolitan Atlanta data. For example, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) reports that in 2019, the racial composition in the 10 county ARC service area consists of:

Race	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other	White
Percent	6.9%	39.2%	12.1%	2.3%	39.4%

<sup>34</sup>

Comparing the three tables, the number of Hispanic providers and the number of Hispanic families served by FCCLH providers is low. The same appears to be true for Asian and Other families. A focus on neighborhoods with Very Low and Low CWB scores helps balance the scale while also serving black and white populations.

**Language diversity.** According to the Language Center at Emory University, “Atlanta is increasingly seen as a vibrant multilingual and multicultural metropolitan area. According to the latest US census data, at least 146 different languages are spoken in the metro Atlanta area, and 17 percent of the metro area population aged 5 or over speak a language other than English at home.” <sup>35</sup>

The ten most common languages, other than English, spoken at home in Metropolitan Atlanta are.

Language	Percent	Number of Speakers
Spanish	7.9%	749K
Chinese	.5%	45.7K
Korean	.5%	45.2K
Vietnamese	.5%	44.7K
French	.4%	39.6K
Hindi	.3%	28.2K
Western African	.3%	27.6K

German	.2%	23.4
Gujarti	.2%	23.0K
Portuguese and French (tie)	.16	15.0K

36

Helping applicants whose primary language is other than English requires a support effort that combines expertise in opening a FCCLH home with expertise in the primary language and culture of the applicant. Fortunately, there are precedents to build on. CDF-Action serves refugee and Latinix families in central DeKalb and in Gwinnett County. CDF-Action pioneered actions supporting individuals interested in child care as a career. One initiative aimed at increasing the number of multilingual early learning teachers who speak the languages of children in Central DeKalb. This initiative, described as an “Enhanced CDA” helped refugees achieve an English or monolingual CDA credential and was successful helping Arabic, Nepali, and Somali speaking CDA candidates. A second version of the training helped refugees in Clarkston and Spanish speaking CDA candidates in Norcross. Both efforts featured interpreter/coaches who attended the 120 class hours and worked with the group between sessions as well as helping participants navigate the CDA process

Several of the CDA candidates subsequently expressed interest in becoming FCC providers. CDF-Action invited DECAL to offer an in person version of the FOM with interpreters in Spanish, Arabic, and Somali paid for by CDF-Action, held at Georgia Piedmont Technical College. With assistance from the Spanish speaking CDA instructor and coaches, 10 FCC homes opened by providers whose primary language is Spanish.

A unique spin-off of this effort is an Early Head Start program involving 16 Spanish speaking FCC providers. The program operates in DeKalb and Gwinnett counties; it is funded to DECAL and managed by Quality Care for Children. Early Head Start programs have some of the highest quality standards in the country and are the model of providing comprehensive services to children and their families. Having this program in Metropolitan Atlanta is an inspiration and a rich source of information to help other providers.

In addition, PFCCAG has long supported the efforts of the 2 Latinix FCC associations, the Asociacion Latina de Educadores Infantiles (ALEI) and the Association of Child Care Professionals (ACCP) and PFCCAG is converting several **Explore-FCC** bulletins into Spanish, as well as have a Spanish translator available.

PFCCAG also supports CDF-Action’s latest initiative, an application to the Office of Refugee Resettlement to initiate a refugee family child care microenterprise project. The proposal was submitted in June with a decision to be made shortly.

Ultimately PFCCAG recognizes “that equal opportunity for all has eluded many Americans and has never been realized for many communities of color” and that “any

policy agenda to dismantle systemic racism in this country must include bold reforms to the ECE system that concretely address access, experiences, and outcomes.”<sup>37</sup> This statement from *Start with Equity: 14 Priorities to Dismantle Systemic Racism in Early Care and Education* require ongoing self-examination and full participation in community and professional efforts to achieve equity

**Hard to find care options and underserved populations.** A third filter when considering equity issues is the potential for family child care to offer hard-to-find care options to underserved populations. Child care during non-traditional hours, infant and toddler care, serving children with disabilities, and serving dual language learners, are hard to find in most neighborhoods. FCC providers often offer these services, and with the right support system, additional providers are likely to do so. Digging into best practices for serving a specific care need takes time and often requires specialized training and resources to be available to providers.

## Chapter 4: Lessons Learned: How Have Other Communities Increased the Number of Family Child Care Learning Homes?

### Insight and Inspiration.

During the development of this Blueprint for Action, **Explore-FCC** staff, and partners, especially Quality Care for Children, researched start-up projects or the start-up component of a larger project such as a staffed family child care network (SFCCN) or military child care program. The intention was to identify:

- General program characteristics such as target area, demographic and language, eligibility/screening criteria, recruitment process, strategic partners, length of time applicant received services,
- Common services offered such as training and training content, coaching, start-up supplies, and equipment, marketing support, etc.,
- Unique characteristics or accomplishments, and,
- Organizational sponsorship and funding.

This information would be used as lessons learned from other efforts and benchmarks for the further development of the **Explore-FCC** project serving Metro Atlanta.

Several projects were reviewed, of which 4 initiatives are discussed in this chapter. They are the family child care start-up work of:

- California Child Care Resource and Referral Network (CCCR&RN) Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP).
- US Army Child, Youth, and School Services (CYSS) Family Child Care System
- All Our Kin (AOK) Family Child Care Network

- Montgomery County MD Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Services (DHHS-ECS) Growing Family Child Care Opportunities

### **California Child Care Resource and Referral Network (CCR&RN): Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP)**

CCCR&RN first implemented CCIP in 1985; by 2002, CCIP had expanded to all 58 counties in California. The project builds home-based child care (new and additional child care spaces) and improves the quality of care through assessment and analysis of child care supply and demand; recruitment of home-based child care providers; technical assistance (family child care application assistance and pre-licensing visits, health & safety requirements, etc.); and facilitation of educational opportunities (playgroups, caregiver cafes, training, and conferences).

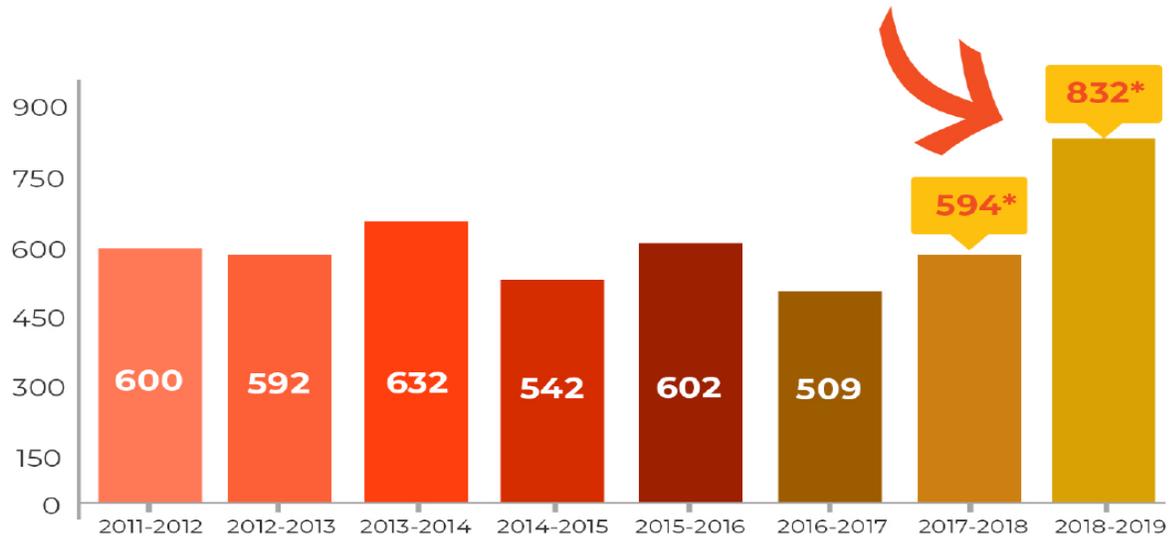
Due to the limited availability of infant and toddler spaces and the unique strengths that home-based child care providers bring to their work, CCIP places emphasis on the recruitment and support of home-based care providers serving infants and toddlers.

From 2011– 020, CCIP recruitment efforts:

- Helped to establish 46,000 new family child care spaces for children, 75% of which were for infants/toddlers or preschool-age children.
- Recruited 5,750 new licensed family child care (FCC) providers.
- Provided support to 798 FCC providers who expanded their licensed capacity from small to large, 514 that expanded to non-traditional hours of care, and 436 expanded to serve additional infants and toddlers. <sup>38</sup>

**Special funding for start-up costs.** Between 2018 and 2020, California allocated \$4 million of one-time federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) carryover to CCIP to address the state's child care shortage and improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers. During that time, 1,679 new licensed family child care home (FCCH) providers received up to \$1K each in reimbursements for expenses required to start a FCCH. The availability of “expansion funds” produced a 40% increase in child care spaces from FY 17-18 to FY 19-20. The chart below shows the steady increase in new family child care homes and the significant increase during the period when start-up funds were available/

## \*40% increase in FCCH w/ Expansion Funds



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**Current status.** The exact start-up support services offered by (CCIP) have evolved over time. Currently, CCIP projects at the CCR&R level offer a training series with two areas of focus: 1) capacity building to increase the quantity of licensed family child care homes and 2) improving the quality of care provided to young children in family care homes. They do this by offering an intensive training series to participants going through the process to become licensed family child care providers as well as existing family child care providers. To qualify for the CCIP Project, applicants must be planning to include infants and toddlers in their child care home and complete the 25 hours of Quality Improvement Training, and complete 3 extracurricular activities (e.g., Toy Library visit, Licensed FCC home tour).

As a separate activity, CCR&Rs offer licensing orientation sessions throughout the year for anyone interested in opening a Family Child Care Home Business. <sup>40</sup>

### US Army Child, Youth, and School Services (CYSS) Family Child Care System

The Army FCC System is based on Department of Defense requirements for the four Service Branches. For the Army FCC Program, this means a detailed certification process (equivalent to licensing in civilian settings) and a comprehensive pre-opening training program, which transitions effectively to post-opening training and CDA credential opportunities. The FCC system at the installation level is staffed so that, for every 30-45 homes, there is an FCC Director, Training and Curriculum Specialist, Administrative Assistant, Food Program Specialist, and sometimes FCC mentors. <sup>41</sup>

**Certification.** The Army requires certification for anyone who provides child care for more than 10 hours per week on a regular basis in their on-post housing to children who are not related to the provider. The certification process is somewhat different than

licensing in that the provider obtains “Provisional Certification” in order to open and then continues the certification process in order to obtain “Full Certification.”

The Provisional Certification process, while equivalent to the DECAL Permission to Operate step and process, has some additional features, including in-home screening interview with the applicant and her/his family, completion of Orientation Briefing and Orientation Training (see below), satisfactory background checks, completion of written policies, and separate inspections by a fire inspector, safety inspector, community health nurse, and Army FCC director.

Full certification is usually obtained about 6 to 12 months after opening and includes completion of training requirements, additional home inspections to verify the acceptable level of care, and completion of a child abuse risk assessment tool. Full Certification must be renewed every 3 years and involves additional requirements, including additional training and satisfactory scores on the FCC environmental rating scale.

**Training plan.** The commitment to have a Training and Curriculum Specialist (TACS), whose sole responsibility is training and supporting quality for every 30-45 family child care homes, is a dramatic demonstration of the importance of training in the Army FCC system. The comprehensive training plan for Army FCC providers gives them both basic information and needed skills at each point in their career path. The training curriculum is based on the CDA competencies.

**Individual Development Plan (IDP).** There is a standardized plan for content, but TACS customize the training to accommodate different provider adult learning styles. The standardized plan is called an Individual Development Plan (IDP). The IDP, in turn, is divided into FCC Orientation Training (12 training units) and Entry Level Training, Part 1 (8 training units), both of which are required prior to Provisional Certification. Once open, the provider proceeds to Entry Level Training Part 2 (8 training units completed in the first 3 months after opening), Skill Level Training (22 training units completed within the first 9 months), Intermediate Level (16 training units within the first 18 months). It is only at this point that Army providers begin an Annual Inservice Requirement of 24 training units.

**Knowledge Assessment and Competency Assessment.** During the first 18 months, providers complete a Knowledge Assessment and a Competency Assessment for each of 13 CDA competencies. The Knowledge Assessments are administered by the TACS; the Competency Assessments are based on TACS observations in the FCC home.

**Resource Library.** During the process of obtaining Provisional Certification, applicants receive a “Start-Up Kit” that typically includes safety items, including a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, safety locks for cabinets, etc. But of even greater value is the “Resource Library,” a unique component of the Army FCC System. The Resource Library offers toys, books, games, resource files, and kits to support the provider’s developmental program. There is a mix of items available suitable for children from infant to school-

age. In addition, there are expendable supplies such as paints and paper plus a laminator machine and other teaching equipment.

The Resource Library is especially helpful to providers serving infants and toddlers as there are usually cribs, strollers, safety gates, and other items which can be costly for applicants to purchase and often require conformance with the latest Consumer Product Safety Commission guidance. Army FCC Directors are allocated funds to add/update the Resource Library yearly, and this accumulation of resources becomes an asset Provisional and Fully certified providers know they can depend on.

There are practical questions about extending the Resource Library concept to UWGA communities since the library requires dedicated space and staff available to manage the library as well as be present when providers visit.

### **All Our Kin (AOK) Family Child Care Network**

All Our Kin's Family Child Care Network serves communities in Connecticut and New York. The organization started in 1999 in response to the welfare reform law passed during the Clinton administration and in support of single mothers of young children who struggled to find both decent work and affordable, high-quality child care in their communities. AOK offers several programs, including the Family Child Care Network. Like the Army FCC System, AOK starts with providers prior to licensing and becomes a source of ongoing support throughout the provider's career. AOK is unique, however, in that they begin with family, friends, and neighbors caring for children informally and unlicensed and help them become licensed. One outcome of this work is reflected in the following statement from the AOK website.

"Between 2000 and 2011, Connecticut lost nearly 34 percent of its family child care programs. This translates into 8,100 fewer child care spaces for Connecticut's families. In New Haven, the story is very different. Thanks to All Our Kin's efforts, the number of licensed family child care programs increased by 74 percent in New Haven during the same period."<sup>42</sup>

**Start-up Assistance.** AOK describes its start-up work as the "Tool Kit Program." It is a collaboration with the Connecticut Children's Museum, in which All Our Kin provides materials, mentorship, and support to help unlicensed family, friend, and neighbor caregivers meet health and safety standards, fulfill state licensing requirements, and become part of a professional community of child care providers. The Tool Kits include application materials, health and safety supplies, vouchers for first aid training, and curriculum materials such as educational toys and high-quality children's books. All Our Kin also provides caregivers with mentorship, counseling, and support as they complete the licensing process.

A 2011 study of the Tool Kit Program operating in New Haven, Connecticut, determined that "66 percent of All Our Kin graduates have a higher income now than they did before getting licensed and completing the program. Nearly 60 percent of participants reported earning at least \$5000 more the first year after licensure, 45 percent reported earning at

least \$10,000 the second year, and 86 percent of graduates saw an increase of \$5000 or more the third year.” In addition, “...55 percent of graduates were able to pay down debt, 42 percent had opened a savings account, and 31 percent had moved to a larger apartment or house.” The study also found 50 percent of participants were already providing unlicensed child care services when they began the program. <sup>43</sup>

**Cultural and linguistic continuity.** The New Haven study identified that nearly 50 percent of the children All Our Kin graduates care for do not primarily speak English at home and that 80 percent of All our Kin graduates spoke Spanish. All Our Kin services are bilingual in Spanish and English. This is part of a wider commitment to providing cultural and linguistic continuity for the children and families being served. “Cultural and linguistic continuity helps children develop their cultural identity, supports the development of their home or primary language, and shapes young children’s social and emotional development. Parents and caregivers may feel more comfortable discussing certain issues in their primary language, and parents may prefer to leave their children in the care of someone who understands and values their customs and traditions.” <sup>44</sup>

**Ongoing support.** Both before and after opening, “All Our Kin’s Family Child Care Network offers educational mentorship, professional development, advocacy, and leadership opportunities, and a network of relationships with other family child care providers. The Network is a high-touch program built on best practices in early childhood consultation and teacher mentoring. Early childhood consultants visit family child cares to lead model lessons, demonstrate new strategies, and reflect with providers on their work. Consultants bring books and materials, professional articles, curriculum ideas and offer suggestions to enhance children’s learning. Providers in the Network also come together for monthly meetings, workshops, and trainings, including Child Development Associate training and college courses, and an annual professional development conference. They have access to a “warm line” they can call for advice at any time.” <sup>45</sup>

**Loan program.** After an applicant becomes licensed, All Our Kin has zero-interest loans available for projects that will improve the quality and/or profitability of a family child care home. The loan can be up to \$2000 and, in special circumstances, up to \$5000. Examples of projects that could be funded include purchasing child-sized furniture to furnish child care space, fencing in a backyard, or purchasing a computer to manage business information. Loans awarded are zero interest, so the provider only pays back the amount they were awarded. Qualifications to receive a loan are described on the AOK website.

**Evaluation.** The AOK Family Child Care Network has participated in several evaluation and research efforts, and that itself is a unique contribution to supporting FCC in other communities, including in metropolitan Atlanta. The study by the University of Connecticut’s Center for Economic Analysis is discussed above. Other studies were conducted by Toni Porter et al. (*Examining Quality in Family Child Care: An Evaluation*

of *All Our Kin*) and by leading research and advocacy organizations, including Yale University Schools of Nursing and Medicine and Opportunities Exchange.

### **Montgomery County (Maryland) Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS-ECS), Growing Family Child Care Opportunities**

The Montgomery County MD DHHS-ECS describes Growing Family Child Care Opportunities as a “Recruitment and Retention Effort for Family Child Care.” and has a goal to recruit and support 50 new family child care providers each year, particularly in 5 targeted zip code neighborhoods. The initiative also seeks to increase the number of family child care homes participating in the MD EXCELS (Quality Rating Improvement System, QRIS) program at the highest levels (levels 3-5 of a 5-level system) and to improve the business sustainability of family child care homes. <sup>46</sup>

**Advantage of county operation.** DHHS-ESC is an arm of the Montgomery County Government and, as such, has an advantage in helping applicants complete the licensing approval process so much so that the initiative works on a four-month schedule.

- Month 1 includes an orientation and initial application, a personal and business assessment, and attendance at a “GO FCC! Training Course.”
- Month 2 includes Inspections and Appointments, Business Counseling, Development of an Initial Business Plan, and submission of a licensing application packet.
- Month 3 includes the assignment of a peer mentor, purchase and set-up of environment, selection of a curriculum, and development of program policies and procedures.
- Month 4 includes finalization of any outstanding tasks, final licensing inspection, licensing approval, and implementation of the business plan, i.e., open the home. <sup>47</sup>

**Key partnerships.** DHHS-ESC coordinates internally with fire, health, and zoning staff who are aware that increasing family child care homes is a county-wide goal. In addition, the agency contracts with the Maryland Women’s Business Center to provide 10 hours of individualized consultation and to deliver 3 core business classes on developing a business plan, start-up basics, and marketing strategies. And DHHS-ESC collaborated with local family child care associations to establish a mentoring program, including the development of a mentor course.

**Outcomes.** DHHS-ESC Growing Family Child Care Opportunities established 100 new family child care homes each in Montgomery County during fiscal years 20 and 21. This accomplishment was particularly challenging due to the COVID pandemic. The initiative is ongoing and reports significant progress in helping providers obtain Maryland Child Care Credential and QRIS ratings. There are even 3 providers who qualified and obtained homes through a county-operated “Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit” program. <sup>48</sup>

## Chapter 5: What Is Happening in Atlanta to Set the Stage?

Two recent developments strengthen the potential for a large-scale family child care start-up initiative in metropolitan Atlanta. First, PFCCAG's **Explore-FCC** Career Success Project lays the groundwork for a wider effort. Second, Quality Care for Children, through "QCC Works," is establishing a Staffed Family Child Care Network with a complimentary start-up component.

### **EXPLORE-FCC Career Success Project**

The project began in November 2020 with a goal to help 20 individuals either exploring FCC as a career or current applicants for FCCLH licensing by offering one-on-one coaching and other forms of help. Under this program, priority support is provided to individuals living in zip codes scoring Very Low or Low on the UWGA Child Well Being (CWB) Index. Referrals come primarily from UWGA Early Childhood Professional Development Grantees. PFCCAG contracted with Joe Perreault to serve as Project Manager and Patricia Sullivant to serve as Assistant Project Manager. Both have considerable experience helping family child care applicants meet licensing requirements and open their doors to children.

While it was therefore possible to hit the ground running, the project nevertheless spent time creating building blocks for success. The project developed an applicant screening tool and an applicant agreement to receive coaching, written materials, and a website devoted to helping individuals explore FCC as a career.

**Practical Help Bulletin Series.** The project initiated a series of "Practical Help" bulletins aimed at individuals who are in the early stage of exploring family child care as a career. These bulletins are honest about the pros and cons of becoming a provider but also offer tips and reassurance about completing the licensing process and opening. To date, there are 6 Practical Help bulletins with others planned. The bulletins are:

- *Family Child Care Learning Home (FCCLH): Evaluating Yourself and Involving Your Family in The Decision to Open*
- *Family Child Care Learning Home (FCCLH): What is a License and When Do I Need One?*
- *Family Child Care Learning Home (FCCLH): What Kind of Training is Required Prior to Obtaining a License?*
- *Is My Home Suitable as a Family Child Care Learning Home?*
- *Caring for Children as a Support to Families and Source of Income*
- *Starting a Family Child Care Learning Home (FCCLH): How Much Can I Expect to Earn?*

**"Start Your Business" webpage.** The **Explore-FCC** project created a new Section of the PFCCAG webpage entitled "Start Your Business" (See <https://www.pfccag.org/explore-fcc>). The section includes links to the Practical Help bulletin series, offers important information about zoning requirements and other local barriers, and provides links to other useful resources. The site acknowledges DECAL as the primary source for information

about licensing and many other resources but creates a “Go To” space for applicants to learn from the experience of current providers and examine other start-up issues beyond licensing. Available by late summer 2021 is an “FCC-At-Home” component. This initiative develops short video vignettes from 2, and 3 Star Quality Rated FCCLH homes that demonstrate or discuss questions applicants face when meeting DECAL licensing requirements or work on specific start-up questions.

**One-on-one coaching.** The one-on-one coaching component is picking up momentum and ripe for expansion. At the time of this writing, there are 27 individuals referred to the **Explore-FCC** project. Of those, 20 were ready to begin the coaching process, and of those, one obtained her license and is open, 4 submitted all required information and are awaiting a licensing inspection, and 6 are in the process of completing training or local requirements.

In some respects, the remaining 9 have the most to teach about the exploration process. After discussions with **Explore-FCC** staff, 2 decided to withdraw and instead pursue opening a Child Care Learning Center (CCLC), 2 withdrew after a landlord refusal, 4 decided to hold off but remain in contact until they had appropriate housing (live in rented or leased homes or apartments and cannot get landlord approval) one is saving up to afford a fire department safety requirement that she install a sprinkler system.

Of the initial 27, 6 live in zip codes which scored Very Low on CWB scores and 6 live in neighborhoods which scored Low in CWB scores. Some of the 27 are still exploring and need more time to gather facts.

There has also been a challenge to accommodate applicants whose primary language is Spanish. The project received assistance from volunteer translators, but this delays communication to such applicants. The project requires consistent interpreter support and is working to address this challenge. Overall, the referral experience suggests that a wide applicant pool needs some level of information and support, and some applicants need time before they are ready to apply for a license.

**Planning and coordination activities.** **Explore-FCC** uses a wide-ranging process to ensure many perspectives are included in the planning and coordination of the project as well as in the development of this Blueprint for Action. The project is also working to create a “welcome to the profession” recognition experience for newly opened homes and is perfecting its ability to research innovative ideas from around the country.

### **Quality Care for Children (QCC): “QCC Works” Staffed Family Child Care Network**

QCCworks offers programs, tools, and resources focused on the success of child care businesses for both centers and family child care (See <https://www.qualitycareforchildren.org/prh>). In 2020, QCCworks established a Staffed Family Child Care Network (SCCN) with the goal of serving 30 homes in 2021, 90 in 2022, and 170 in 2023. Of those homes, 10 homes each year (30 total) will be newly licensed homes. QCCworks describes the purpose of the network by saying the network “helps family child care

providers market their programs online and manage their businesses efficiently. While the network ensures that family child care providers are linked to all available programs that support quality, the network's primary aim is to help quality providers operate sustainable businesses. We help you spend less time on administrative tasks, make more money, and focus on what you do best: caring for and educating children.”

The fact that both **Explore-FCC** and QCCworks serve applicants is complementary rather than competitive. **Explore-FCC** serves the 13 UWGA counties, SFCCN serves 49 counties, only 11 counties overlap. And while the need is greater than either project can handle, the projects have worked out a cross-referral plan. In addition, the projects share materials and expertise regularly. QCC Works has special expertise in business development and coaching and will be involved in co-authoring some of the upcoming Practical Help bulletins. QCC Works is developing an evaluation plan and evaluation tools. Explore-FCC staff had input into evaluation questions and expect to use a similar evaluation process.

Louise Stoney pinpointed “iron triangle metrics” of full enrollment, full fee collection and that revenue covers the cost per child as critical to the financial success of FCCLH homes. QCC Works incorporates iron triangle metric concepts in all its coaching and training activities.

QCC Works is also at the forefront, helping providers use technology for record-keeping efficiency and manage all financial matters. QCC Works examined several platforms and currently uses Kidcare to support providers with business functions, including online enrollment; tracking of attendance, meals, and immunizations; online billing and fee collection processing; and parent engagement (contactless check-in and out, share photo/videos, create share newsletter). QCC Works tracks provider time saved using the platform. Providers are especially appreciative of the online billing and fee payment feature.

**The Provider Resource Hub.** QCC Works also operates The Provider Resource Hub (PRH), a free web portal that provides business and administrative tools and resources to help child care programs save both time and money. PRH includes a section, The Family Child Care Toolkit, which pulls together all the resources needed to operate an FCC home. Providers are eligible for PRH once they obtain a license. Explore-FCC refers providers to this valuable resource as soon as they become eligible.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion - How Can Metropolitan Atlanta Meet the Need for Family Child Care Homes?**

Increasing the number of FCC homes in metropolitan Atlanta is part of a larger picture to create high-quality, affordable, available child care for all children and families in Georgia from birth through school-age. Historically our country, and the state of Georgia, has not been able to create and finance a system that achieves these goals. At present, due to COVOD relief and pending federal child care legislation, the entire delivery system is up for reexamination, and the crucial role family child care plays is finally being recognized.

As important as this federal opportunity is, it does not by itself answer critical questions concerning who, what, when, and how to increase family child care supply in Metropolitan Atlanta. That takes community-level insight and cooperation. It takes applying lessons learned from other communities while addressing lessons learned from our own effort. And it takes someone to exercise leadership to rally partners and make things happen. PFCCAG is committed to being that leader.

In this chapter, PFCCAG spells out a plan to meet the need for family child care in metropolitan Atlanta. The plan calls for starting 130 FCCLH homes by 2024, a size large enough to return FCC to a prominent position in the child care delivery system serving metropolitan Atlanta and especially in underserved neighborhoods. The plan calls for sufficient staff and resources to coach applicants, guide applicants through the barriers and challenges described earlier, continue researching innovative support and problem-solving strategies and expand mutually beneficial organizational partnerships. The plan is not in itself a funding proposal but recognizes that securing funding is the next logical step and will be pursued by PFCCAG.

There are 3 goals, including an overarching goal proposing a substantial increase in the number of FCCLH homes during 2022-2024. Each goal is supported by objectives reflecting process, methods, partnership opportunities, and/or other critical areas of focus.

This section states the goals for the **Explore-FCC** Project in 2022-2024. The section after it includes specific objectives, rationale, and additional comments for the goals and objectives. The final section addresses staffing and budget considerations.

## Goals

**Goal One:** *Increase the number of Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLH) by 130 homes in Atlanta in target neighborhoods and metro-wide by 2024.*

**Goal Two:** *Strengthen and expand the coaching and technical assistance services offered by the **Explore-FCC** project aimed at the continuum from welcoming individuals interested in becoming licensed FCCLH providers and to supporting them become sustainable businesses, operating at a high level of quality, and part of an ongoing community support process.*

**Goal Three:** *Strengthen PFCCAG's capacity to administer and evaluate the **Explore-FCC** Project.*

## Objectives, Rationale, and Comments

What should a plan to meet the need for family child care homes in metropolitan Atlanta look like? What are the moving parts, who should be involved, what are the constraints placed by available resources, time, and regulatory challenges? The following plan addresses these questions and more. The goals and objectives are presented followed, where appropriate, by comments addressing implementation issues.

**Goal One:** *Increase the number of Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLH) by 130 homes in Atlanta in target neighborhoods and metro-wide by 2024.*

**Objectives.**

*1.1 For 2022, open 30 FCCLH homes (15 in target neighborhoods with Very Low/Low Child Well Being Scores and 15 metro-wide).*

*1.2 For 2023, open 50 FCCLH homes (30 in target neighborhoods with Very Low/Low CWB scores and 20 metro-wide).*

*1.3 For 2024, open 50 homes (30 in target neighborhoods with Very Low/Low CWB scores and 20 metro-wide).*

**Comment.** One important takeaway for the initial year of operation of **Explore-FCC** is the significance of UWGA's strategy to support neighborhoods that score Very Low and Low on the CWB scoring system. The number of children in poverty in those combined zip codes alone affirms the critical need to concentrate all kinds of resources on those neighborhoods. At the same time, there is a need for FCC throughout metropolitan Atlanta. A dual strategy giving priority to CWB neighborhoods while serving other neighborhoods through partnerships, written materials and the website, offers visibility to the needs of the target CWB neighborhoods but flexibility to respond to broader barriers facing FCC applicants.

**Comment.** Is there a need for 130 additional FCCLH homes in the 13 counties? The data regarding population growth combined with the scarcity of FCCLH homes, especially in Very Low/Low CWB neighborhoods, constitutes one rationale for increasing FCCLH homes.

**Comment.** Are there people out there willing to become FCCLH providers? The number of applicants identified during the first year of the Explore-FCC project just scratched the surface. There are outreach opportunities through community partnerships, targeted neighborhood outreach, DECAL contacts, plus a robust "Start Your Business" website is easily accessible, so prospects look good to reach the proposed goals. At the same time, staff will continue to screen applicants and not promote unrealistic expectations.

*1.4 Add communication and input from target CWB neighborhoods, including parents, with the initial focus on 4 Very Low CWB neighborhoods in 4 counties (Cobb, Clayton, DeKalb, Fulton) and expand as appropriate.*

**Explore-FCC** will establish roots in targeted CWB neighborhoods beginning with 4 that scored Very Low and from 4 different counties. The intent is to engage community leaders, parent-led organizations, and other trusted community messengers to assist with outreach efforts; and by actively recruiting applicants from those neighborhoods. The **Explore-FCC** project will also focus on understanding child care issues unique to

the neighborhood such as zoning and other barriers, per cent of rented vs owned homes, supply and demand data, CAPS and other scholarship availability, and whether the neighborhood is considered a child care desert. This same effort can function as a word of mouth promotion of family child care to parents seeking child care and even promote individual homes that recently opened. To capitalize on this synergy, **Explore-FCC** will develop marketing materials for use by staff during meetings with community leaders and for distribution through local and social media.

*1.5 Create a “Health and Safety Start-Up Kit” of basic items and distribute them to applicants prior to their Initial Licensing Study visit.*

**Comment.** The licensing process emphasizes health and safety requirements and practices to ensure children are safe when under the supervision of family child care providers. Some of these requirements involve a modest cost (e.g., first aid kit), while others may involve a higher cost (e.g., fenced outdoor play area). It is fair to say that most people when reading the licensing standards for the first time, will learn about a best practice they had not considered before. The **Explore-FCC** project will furnish a “Health and Safety Start-Up Kit” to each applicant prior to their ILV to emphasize the importance of healthy and safe practices, to ease the burden of these costs, and to create an incentive to achieve a FCCLH license. The kit will contain a variety of items including a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, safety latches for drawers, outlet covers, etc. Items will be purchased centrally and at a discount whenever possible.

*1.6 Create a “Start-Up Grant” fund addressing the supply and equipment needs of applicants, weighted to providers in target CWB neighborhoods, and reimburse applicants for those costs after permission to operate is granted.*

**Comment.** FCC applicants have substantial start-up costs that are more than the items in the Health and Safety Start-Up Kit. The supply and equipment requirements for a FCCLH home are formidable. For example, licensing requirements specify there must be areas for Dramatic Play/Home Living, Creative Art/Writing, Music and Movement, Math and Science, Reading/Language Art/Literacy, Cozy Area, Blocks, Circle Time, Manipulative Center/Table Toys, Sand and Water, and Outdoor Activity. The cost to purchase materials to support these areas and activities can be considerable. To ease this cost and serve as a substantial incentive to open, **Explore-FCC** will offer start-up grants. The grants will be based on receipts primarily for an allowable fee or supply and equipment costs. The grant would be reimbursable after the FCC home is open. Providers living in target CWB neighborhoods will be reimbursed at a higher amount than providers living outside target neighborhoods, but all would be eligible for some assistance.

*1.7 Create a “Minor Repair and Improvement Fund” for applicants in target CWB neighborhoods and Identify opportunities for major repair and home loans..*

**Comment.** Although most applicants will need to make some minor repairs, the **Explore-FCC** project will concentrate on the needs of applicants living in Very Low

and Low CWB neighborhoods. This strategy ensures resources are concentrated where they are most needed while also creating a focal point to work out complex policy and financing questions involved. The initial design is to offer grants to applicants in the target neighborhoods for specified minor repairs and improvements (e. g., repair steps, install fencing, add a touchless sink or toilet). The design process will also explore small business grant and loan opportunities up to and including major repairs and home loans aimed at helping providers in leased or rented homes achieve homeownership or helping providers who own a home expand their business by purchasing a larger home

**Goal Two:** *Strengthen and expand the coaching and technical assistance services offered by the **Explore-FCC** project aimed at the continuum from welcoming individuals interested in becoming licensed FCCLH providers and to supporting them become sustainable businesses, operating at a high level of quality, and part of an ongoing community support process.*

**Comment.** To help applicants, the project must continue to add capacity and services, dig up and root out barriers to opening, create or join vehicles for collaboration, gain further insight into the needs of individuals exploring FCC as a career, and insight into the needs of providers once they open their doors to children. From all these perspectives, the processes used by the **Explore-FCC** project is extremely important. Process issues may not be as important as the product of opening FCC homes but are inextricably linked. The continued evolution of coaching and technical assistance services helps current applicants, lays the groundwork to serve more applicants, and ensures sustainability when initial funding is expended.

## **Objectives**

*2.1 Refine the one-on-one coaching process and add group training opportunities.*

**Comment.** Many applicant questions are specific to their individual situation and/or need to be answered at the specific schedule the applicant is following to meet licensing or other deadlines. For those reasons, one-on-one coaching is important. There is also a need to offer a home visit to view the home and program arrangements prior to the ILS visit. At the same time, group training opportunities are also needed. There are benefits to bringing applicants together so they can exchange information and offer mutual support, Peer-to-peer learning is an efficient way to support multiple applicants, and it takes advantage of technology we are growing comfortable with because of the pandemic.

**Comment.** While the FOM course offers a thorough introduction to FCCLH licensing, there is also a need for a brief introduction to family child care as well. The class would introduce participants to family child care as a career and point to avenues for exploring further, including the FOM course and the **Explore-FCC** project. The class should be offered on a regular basis (e.g., every 2 months) so its availability is predictable, and applicants eager to begin exploration do not have to wait too long. Several partners have the expertise to help develop and teach the class, and this will be worked out. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff from DECAL Community Partnerships and

Resources Unit began offering a class briefly introducing concepts on how to start a CCLC center or FCCLH home. If this effort resumes, the **Explore-FCC** project will coordinate with DECAL

*2.2 Expand technical assistance materials and consolidate on the “Start Your Business” site.*

**Comment.** The *Practical Help* bulletin series is an effective way to look at specific questions or concepts piece by piece, and several more will be developed and translated into other languages. The *Start Your Business* website compliments licensing content on the DECAL website and is another must-see place for applicants. Furthermore, the process of research and writing these materials sharpens the focus of **Explore-FCC** coaching activities.

*2.3 Develop information and support to meet local requirements and barriers (zoning, business permit, fire inspection, landlord, and homeowner association).*

**Comment.** Streamlining the applicants' process of complying with local requirements, and other barriers, requires an advocate with knowledge of those requirements and the compliance process involved for the many cities and counties in metropolitan Atlanta. In addition, there needs to be a strategy to reduce landlord and homeowner association resistance. The **Explore-FCC** project will support *FCC Marathon Project* research activities and serve as the advocate for applicants at each step in the process.

*2.4 Promote maximum use of the Variance option as a practical and cost-effective way for applicants to obtain a credential-degree and to open their homes.*

**Comment.** Applicants with a credential degree in early childhood have a head start in offering the high-quality experience all children need and deserve. They will be welcomed into the project. But the opportunity to help an applicant obtain the credential-degree through the Variance option is an underutilized option showing great promise. Work will be conducted to publicize this option when applicants are first exploring FCC as a career and scholarship opportunities identified and presented. The coordination work can take place using existing platforms, including the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS), the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, DECAL Scholars, and the DECAL FOM course.

*2.5 Coordinate with training and credential/degree granting institutions to ensure family child care is validated as a career option and course content adapted, when appropriate, to specific characteristics of this option.*

**Comment.** This ambitious objective is an outgrowth of informal conversations with training and credential/degree granting partners wondering whether and how the family child care career option is presented to students, and whether student placements in family child care homes are allowed. At the macro level, these issues are addressed by organizations such as GaPDS, but at the micro-level, **Explore-FCC** will work with

partners in metropolitan Atlanta to promote the family child care option to students, ensure in-service training offerings include family child care content, arrange student placements in family child care homes, and assure scholarship opportunities are open to providers. The pioneering effort of an Enhanced CDA for limited English speakers and CDA courses in Spanish described in Chapter 3 will be promoted to, and hopefully expanded by technical schools. In addition, UWGA Joseph B Whitehead Foundation supports quality and professional development through grants to three non-profit organizations (Our House, Sheltering Arms, YMCA of Metro Atlanta) aimed at helping child care workers obtain a CDA credential. FCC applicants are eligible to participate but outreach is needed to make that connection,

*2.6 Ensure racial, culture and language diversity through community outreach and language support activities.*

**Comment.** The **Explore-FCC** project addressed racial and cultural diversity initially through the inclusion of diverse organizations on the Friends of Family Child Care Advisory Group\* through use of volunteer Spanish interpreters, and through the translation of practical help bulletins into Spanish. As the project expands and has full-time staff, the project will seek to hire bilingual staff, when possible, as well as budget for paid translators. The partnership with CDF-Action, which serves Clarkston GA (Very Low CWB score area), will increase.

*\*Members include CDF-Action, Coalition of Refugee Service Agencies (CRSA) of Georgia, 9to5 National Association for Working Women-GA (9to5-GA) and the Black Child Development Institute-Atlanta (BCDI-ATL).*

*2.7 Support applicant business and technology skills in coordination with our key partner, QCC Works, and other small business resource organizations.*

**Comment.** **Explore-FCC's** collaboration with *QCC Works* will expand to ensure iron triangle metric concepts are introduced to all 130 applicants and newly opened homes in this project. In a similar manner, **Explore-FCC** will help all 130 applicants and newly opened homes enroll in the KidKare software platform. **Explore-FCC** will also expand connections to small business support organizations so providers can take maximum benefit of resources available through those organizations. Partnerships with UGA-SBDC and Small Business Majority will be maximized.

*2.8 Develop and implement a "post-opening" technical assistance plan.*

**Comment.** The first year to a year and a half after opening constitutes a consolidation period. During this time aspirations become realities, children's activities and program schedule are revamped, hours of operation and ages served refined, room arrangements finetuned, parent policies tested, income and expenses are monitored carefully, taxes are filed, and the bottom line examined. Even though at one level, the FCCLH home is a work in progress, the provider is expected to assume the mantle of full responsibility for meeting all licensing and food program requirements, and the journey toward Quality Rated has begun.

This is when the **Explore-FCC** project turns attention to the concept of “supporting them to become sustainable businesses, operating at a high level of quality, and part of an ongoing community support process.” From a provider’s perspective, they begin an ongoing relationship with DECAL for licensing, Quality Rated, CAPS and other purposes while also drawing on the QCC Works menu of business supports and entering a relationship with professional organizations. **Explore-FCC** will remain available as needed and continue to share ideas and resources about common post-opening challenges and opportunities.

### *2.9 Continue research on innovative start-up strategies and support options.*

**Comment.** This Blueprint for Action is inspired by the concepts, methods, and budget information of the start-up grant examples in Chapter 3 and benchmark start-up projects identified in Chapter 4. There are likely other start-up projects with best practices and innovative ideas to be discovered, but time and resources prevented this wider search. And there are likely to be more communities developing family child care start-up initiatives in the future who are interested in sharing ideas. For both reasons, staff will continue seeking successful models in other parts of the country and adapting the **Explore-FCC** approach.

**Goal Three:** *Strengthen PFCCAG’s capacity to administer and evaluate the **Explore-FCC** Project.*

### **Objectives**

*3.1 Maintain and expand the successful planning and coordination model involving FCCLH advisors, DECAL Liaison, Friends of Family Child Care Advisory Group, the FCC Marathon Project, and UWGA Professional Development Grantees.*

**Comment.** The combined expertise and wisdom of the advisory groups and partner organizations has been invaluable in implementing the **Explore-FCC** project so far, and especially so in formulating this Blueprint for Action. The dialogue builds momentum for tackling barriers, streamlining process steps, and innovating a more effective support process. The many organizations involved in advice-giving and coordination roles will be invited to continue supporting the expanded project. At the same time, the expertise, good will, and momentum of these groups is informally strengthening PFCCAG’s overall mission. The opportunity to connect these groups to the PFCCAG Board of Directors and other PFCCAG activities will be pursued.

*3.2 Develop staffing, financial, technical infrastructure, and operation procedures to manage the project and strengthen PFCCAG organizational capacity.*

**Comment.** Concurrent with, and partly because of the funding and responsibility of the **Explore-FCC** UWGA grant, PFCCAG is strengthening both board and administrative functions. The PFCCAG board of directors is moving from being a governance/operational board to becoming a governance-only board and is doing so

through completion of a Strategic Plan and board development process. In January 2021, the board created the role of Executive Director, its first paid staff position. The position is currently staffed part-time, on contract, by Bill Hudson of Family Child Care Associates. Hudson will be supporting the board's efforts to hire a permanent, full-time Georgia-based, Executive Director.

In March 2021, PFCCAG was accepted as a client by the Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta. The organization provides free legal advice to non-profit organizations. An audit of the PFCCAG board and operational issues was recently completed by a team of four pro bono lawyers, and additional legal support is available to implement their recommendations.

When funding is available for the **Explore-FCC** project to address Goal One and Two, there will be full-time staff positions, additional financial management duties, and the need to expand communication, training, and accountability functions. These are eagerly awaited growing pains. PFCCAG's technical infrastructure (management software, website, use of new media for communication and networking) also needs to grow, and plans are on tap to do so.

*3.3 Establish an evaluation plan, including process and outcome measures, and conduct the evaluation plan.*

**Comment.** **Explore-FCC** evaluation plan during the initial year of operation consists of progress reports to the PFCCAG board and UWGA, plus a survey for coaching recipients on satisfaction and outcome measures. As the project grows, an evaluation plan will be initiated using an outside evaluator. The PFCCAG team gained valuable experience when it helped *QCC Works* develop its evaluation plan for the SFCCN project. That project now has a pre and post-evaluation tool with the potential to be adapted for **Explore-FCC** use. The survey instrument used by AOK (see Chapter 4) emphasizes the impact on household income resulting from starting a family child care home. This key indicator will be measured.

**Cost.** PFCCAG developed a working budget for the three year Explore-FCC project of from \$1.1 to \$1.2 M. This includes \$436K in direct financial assistance to the 130 providers receiving a license. The assistance consists of Health and Safety Start-Up Kits, partial reimbursement of supply and equipment costs, assistance with minor repair and renovation costs, and other direct support.

Staffing for the project includes 3 full time positions, Project Director, FCC Coach, Administrative Assistant, and significant part time support from the PFCCAG Executive Director, Senior Coach, and Accountant. Consultant help is included for interpreter/translation and evaluation. The budget is available upon request. Address inquiries to [info@pfccag.org](mailto:info@pfccag.org).

**Conclusion.** The purpose of this *Blueprint for Action* is to document the important role Family Child Care (FCC) plays meeting child care needs, explain why the number of homes is declining, describe barriers and challenges to reversing this decline, and propose a bold plan

to increase the number of FCC homes in metropolitan Atlanta by 2024. In effect, this Blueprint for Action affirms the need for a start-up program parallel and complementary to other licensing efforts. We believe that several key actions outlined here can effectively reverse the current decline.

## Appendix A

### PFCCAG Explore-FCC Advisory Groups

#### Greater Atlanta Provider Steering Committee

Antoinette Elliott  
 Leysi Guarnizo  
 Edelina (Lina) Lane  
 Claudia Ortega  
 Myra Saboor

#### DECAL Liaison Team

Laura Wagner  
 Brittany Sams  
 Lisa Chandler

#### Friends of Family Child Care Advisory Group

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
9to5 National Association for Working Women-GA (9to5-GA)	Mica Whitfield
Black Child Development Institute-Atlanta (BCDI-ATL)	Daphne Babrow
Care Solutions-DECAL Scholars	Brandi Swain
CCR&R of Central GA at Augusta University	Pam Fields
CCR&R of Southwest GA-Albany State University	Soraya Miller
CDF-Action & Coalition of Refugee Service Agencies (CRSA) of Georgia	Roberta Malavenda
Leading to Movement Early Learning Career Pathway Project	Nancy Hartman
Gee Whiz Education	Beth Smith
GA Association on the Education of Young Children (GAEYC)	Jamie Dice Moore
GA Budget and Policy Institute (GPBI)	Amanda Hollowell
GA Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS)	Jessica Woltjen
GA Piedmont Technical College	Jean Jones
Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce	Tim Cairl
Quality Care for Children (QCC)	Pam Tatum
University of GA Cooperative Extension	Diane W. Bales
Small Business Majority	Rachel Shanklin

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> DECAL Open Records Requests 5-28-19 & 3-11-21
- <sup>2</sup> DECAL *Rules and Regulations Family Child Care Learning Homes Chapter 290-2-3* October 1, 2019290-2-3-.03 Definitions (k)).
- <sup>3</sup> Adapted from: Donna Fowler, *Family Child Care Involvement In Prekindergarten Expansion: Legislative Report*, The Family Child Care Alliance of Maryland, September 2020
- <sup>4</sup> Atlanta Regional Commission website, *Atlanta Region Population Estimates*, accessed 5-20-21.
- <sup>5</sup> United Way of Greater Atlanta website, *Child Well Being Map*, accessed 3-4-21.
- <sup>6</sup> DECAL *Rules and Regulations Family Child Care Learning Homes Chapter 290-2-3* October 1, 2019290-2-3-.03 Definitions (k)).
- <sup>7</sup> DECAL Open Records Requests 5-28-19 & 3-11-21
- <sup>8</sup> Adapted from: Donna Fowler, *Family Child Care Involvement In Prekindergarten Expansion: Legislative Report*, The Family Child Care Alliance of Maryland, September 2020
- <sup>9</sup> Georgia State University Andrew Young School of Policy Studies and University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government *Economic Impact of the Early Care and Education Industry in Georgia, 2016*
- <sup>10</sup> Kathy Modigliani, Marianne Reiff, Sylvia Jones, *Opening Your Door to Children: How to Start a Family Day Care Program*, NAEYC, 1987
- <sup>11</sup> DECAL *Rules and Regulations Family Child Care Learning Homes Chapter 290-2-3* October 1, 2019290-2-3-.03 Definitions (k)).
- <sup>12</sup> Private correspondence with Sandy Byrd, PFCCAG Administrative Advisor
- <sup>13</sup> DECAL Open Records Request
- <sup>14</sup> Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS), *2021 Policy Priorities for Child Care Affordability Committee*, December 2020.
- <sup>15</sup> DECAL Open Records Request 3-10-21.
- <sup>16</sup> Atlanta Regional Commission website, *Atlanta Region Population Estimates*, accessed 5-20-21.
- <sup>17</sup> United Way of Greater Atlanta website, *Child Well Being Map*, accessed 3-4-21.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> 290-2-3-.07 Staffing and Supervision (2).
- <sup>20</sup> *Rules and Regulations for Child Care Learning Centers 591-1-1* October 1, 2020

- <sup>21</sup> DECAL, *A Course Guide for: Family Child Care Learning Home Licensing Orientation (FOM) Module 4 Training and Credentialing*
- <sup>22</sup> INDICATOR MANUAL *Family Child Care Learning Homes Chapter 290-2-3 January 7, 2021*, page 19.
- <sup>23</sup> DECAL Website, <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/>.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Family Child Care Marathon Project, *Possible Change in Gwinnett Zoning Law to Bring into Compliance with Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) Six Child Maximum*, October 2020.
- <sup>26</sup> Open records Request to DECAL, 1-6-2020.
- <sup>27</sup> Joe Perreault, Logan Creel, *An Advocates Guide to Helping Family Child Care Applicant's Meet Zoning Requirements for A Georgia City or County*, Family Child Care Marathon Project, March 2021
- <sup>28</sup> Family Child Care Marathon Project, *Family Child Care Learning Home (FCCLH) Zoning-Business-Permit-Fire Inspection Cobb County Example, March 2021*
- <sup>29</sup> Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office for Refugee Resettlement, *Refugee Family Child Care Microenterprise Development Program, HHS-2021-ACF-ORR-RG-1919*, Application Date 6-1-21
- <sup>30</sup> Olivia Barrow, Lanette Dumas, Danielle Ewen, Angie Garling, Lauren Hogan, Christine Johnson-Staub, Cindy Larson, Mary Beth Salomone Testa, *How States Can Improve Child Care Facilities & Physical Spaces Using Federal Relief Dollars*, National Children's Facilities Network, May 2021
- <sup>31</sup> E-mail Laura Jackman, Deputy Director, Early Care and Education, Low Income Investment Institute, 9-2-21
- <sup>32</sup> Georgia State University Andrew Young School of Policy Studies and University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government *Economic Impact of the Early Care and Education Industry in Georgia, 2016*
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup> Atlanta Regional Commission Website Population Forecasts and Estimates
- <sup>35</sup> <http://languagecenter.emory.edu/home/languages/atlantallmap.html>
- <sup>36</sup> Wikipedia, *Demographics of Georgia*, July 2021
- <sup>37</sup> Children's Equity Project, December 2020.
- <sup>38</sup> CCIP Fact Sheet 1-13-21.
- <sup>39</sup> CCIP Infographic 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Community Resource for Children, Napa County CA <http://www.crcnapa.org/child-care-initiative-project/>]

<sup>41</sup> Derry G. Koralek, Laura J. Colker, *Army Family Child Care Director's Handbook*, 1996 US Army Child, Youth, and School Services

<sup>42</sup> [allourkin.org](http://allourkin.org).

<sup>43</sup> *The Economic Impact of All Our Kin Family Child Care Tool Kit Licensing Program*, Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis, University of Connecticut, 2011

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> [allourkin.org](http://allourkin.org).

<sup>46</sup> Early Childhood Services, *Growing Family Child Care Opportunities: A Recruitment and Retention Effort for Family Child Care*, Montgomery County DHHS-ECS, 2021

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid