



2024-25 POLICY POSITION STATEMENT: ADDRESSING KEY CHALLENGES IN GEORGIA'S EARLY LEARNING CHILDCARE SECTOR

WHO WE ARE

The Georgia Child Care Association (GCCA), representing over 700 childcare providers and early education stakeholders, is committed to advocating for accessible, high-quality childcare across Georgia. Our members are child care business owners and leaders with deep understanding of the industry, its opportunities, and challenges. We stand poised to support the State of Georgia in transformative work to address the crisis in child care access and affordability.

OUR VOICE

We bring forward this policy statement to inform and engage legislators, our members, prospective members, and the public on the urgent challenges facing licensed childcare providers in Georgia. Through targeted solutions, we seek collaborative action to secure a thriving early learning environment for all Georgia families.

OUR VISION

A strong child care system is imperative to the economic growth of our State. We envision a robust, mixed delivery system of licensed child care in Georgia that meets the needs of every community. This vision requires expanded access to high-quality care for every child and family while also addressing the challenges that child care providers face in sustaining their businesses. We support efforts to ensure child care providers can thrive through targeted support for rising business costs, workforce shortages, and improved access to essential resources, including insurance. Only by supporting both the demand for and supply of child care can we build a system that serves all Georgians effectively.





.....➤ **WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

Labor Challenges in Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Rising wages, inflation, and the challenge of recruiting and retaining skilled early childhood educators strain the budgets of childcare centers across the state, making it difficult to balance costs without impacting tuition rates. With labor costs comprising 50%-60% of a childcare center's budget, the need for a stable, qualified workforce is paramount.

Our Position:

GCCA supports prioritizing ECE teachers within the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, proposing an income eligibility benchmark at 85% of the State Median Income (SMI) and at least 150% of the Federal Poverty Limit (FPL). This action would not only attract skilled professionals but also empower centers to meet Quality Rated status requirements, ensuring high standards in early learning.

.....➤ **EQUITABLE FUNDING FOR GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS**

Addressing Childcare Access and Affordability Across Georgia

While Georgia's lottery-funded Pre-K program is a national model, it is essential to address regional funding disparities that contribute to "childcare deserts" in rural areas where costs rival those in urban settings. Additionally, funding shortfalls for substitute teachers force childcare centers to increase tuition, burdening families. Restoring support for the 75,000 children previously enrolled in the Very Low Income (VLI) category will strengthen program accessibility.

Our Position:

GCCA advocates for equitable funding between metro and non-metro areas to ensure all families can access affordable, quality childcare. We urge policymakers to address gaps in Pre-K and CAPS program funding to promote long-term sustainability in early education statewide.

.....➤ **ACCESS TO LIABILITY INSURANCE**

Mitigating Rising Insurance Costs for Childcare Centers

Childcare centers across Georgia are experiencing average annual insurance premium increases of over 20%, disproportionately affecting independent and small operators. These rising costs are often transferred to parents, further driving up the cost of childcare for families.

Our Position:

GCCA calls for legislative efforts to address insurance challenges facing childcare providers. We propose forming an insurance pool, limiting the public availability of older licensing reports, and pursuing civil justice reforms to reduce financial burdens on centers. As a collective, GCCA is ready to collaborate with legislators and industry representatives to explore sustainable solutions.

CONCLUSION

The GCCA is dedicated to strengthening Georgia's early learning childcare infrastructure and believes that targeted action on these three key areas will support accessibility, affordability, and quality in childcare services statewide. We welcome the opportunity to work closely with policymakers and stakeholders to ensure Georgia families have access to essential early learning resources.

Together, we can build a resilient, accessible, and high-quality early childhood education system for all Georgia families.