

1. Descriptive Information

<p><b>Towards a School-Age Child Care Research and Policy Agenda</b></p> <p>Over the last several years there have been substantial federal and State investments in school age child care (including before- and afterschool care and summer learning supports). Many low-income families rely on these supports and nearly half (45%) of the children served by HHS-funded child care subsidies are school-age; each month, an average of 627,000 school-age children utilize these supports. Despite the large proportion of the subsidy population that falls within this age range, research, training, and quality improvement efforts still largely focus on the birth-to-five end of the age continuum. This session will raise awareness about the unique issues faced by school-age child care providers and administrators, as well as low-income families seeking high-quality out-of-school time care. We will also engage in discussion about how school-age child care can be a crucial part of emergency planning and phased re-opening that supports economic recovery, based on lessons emerging from the COVID-19 crisis.</p> <p>This session draws on local, state and national research capturing provider and family to spark conversations about how research and policy can be moved forward. Heidi Rosenberg from the National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment (NCASE) will present findings from a descriptive analysis of CCDF school-age enrollment data and state policies that highlights trends and variations across states and territories. Mariel Sparr will discuss findings from recent case study research that delves into timely opportunities for meeting the social-emotional and behavioral health issues of children. For an in-depth look at the challenges of formulating a comprehensive system, Shayna Funke and Melissa Davis from Georgia’s Department of Early Care and Learning will provide an overview of GA’s work, and discuss the ways school age child care is involved in plans for re-opening schools and work during recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Jillian Luchner from the Afterschool Alliance will then transition us to thinking about the extent to which the needs of working families for high-quality care are being met through findings from a national survey. Juliet Taylor from the University of Washington will bring another state policy and research lens to the presentations that will set the stage for rich discussions.</p>	<p><b>Panelists</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Heidi Rosenberg</b>, Education Development Center (EDC), National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment (NCASE)   <i>School-Age Child Care Enrollment and State Policies</i></li> <li>• <b>Mariel Sparr</b>, James Bell Associates   <i>Promoting Healthy Development in Afterschool Settings</i></li> <li>• <b>Shayna Funke and Melissa Davis</b>, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)   <i>Quality of School-Age Care in Licensed Child Care Centers</i></li> <li>• <b>Jillian Luchner</b>, Afterschool Alliance   <i>Researching Family Needs for High-Quality School-Age Care</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Discussant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Juliet Taylor</b>, Cultivate Learning at the University of Washington</li> </ul> <p><b>Chair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pamala Trivedi</b>, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation</li> </ul> <p><b>Scribe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Katie Caldwell</b>, ICF</li> </ul>
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2. Documents Available on Website

- Towards a Research and Policy Agenda for School-Age Child Care Presentation

3. Brief Summary of Presentations

- Pamala Trivedi, ASPE, gave a brief introduction to the webinar.
- Why school-age child care?
  - 45% of children served by the HHS-funded Child Care & Development Block grant are school-age
  - Essential support for low income families

- Context of recovery from COVID-19:
  - New vulnerabilities and exposures to trauma layered onto existing issues for students, families & staff
  - Need for school-age child care to be included in holistic approaches serving children, families, and staff right now
- **Summary of Presentation #1: School-Age Child Care Enrollment and State Policies, Heidi Rosenberg**
  - National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment (NCASE)
    - Goal: ensure that school-age low-income families have increased access to afterschool and summer learning experiences that contribute to children’s overall development and academic achievement.
  - NCASE Key Strands of Work:
    - Research and data: tell the story of school age child care through enrollment statistics, state policies, specific focus on CCDF
    - Social Emotional Learning (SEL)/Trauma informed practice:
      - Increase awareness of SEL practices
      - Raise awareness of the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma and the need for trauma-informed care approaches
  - Characteristics of CCDF school-age population (FY 2018 data)
    - Nearly half (44%) of all children served through CCDF subsidies are school-age (ages 5 through 12)
    - Over 584,000 school-age children served through subsidies each month
    - 75% served in child care centers; 22% served in family child care homes; 3% served in their own home
    - 22 states/territories see a double-digit increase in the number of school-age children served during the summer months
  - State and Policies and Practices (data from CCDF Plans 2019-2021)
    - Nearly all State CCDF Lead Agencies require professional development around supporting the positive development of school-age children
    - 22 CCDF Lead Agencies offer grants and contracts for child care slots
    - Consumer Education Websites
      - 45 show ages served by a provider
      - 30 indicate whether a provider accepts vouchers
      - 32 websites include license-exempt provider listings
  - Directions for Future Research
    - Of the states that use grants/contracts to promote child care slots, how specifically can these be used to affect school age child care?
    - What drives the variation across states/territories in the number of school-age children served during the summer months?
    - How have the provisions of reauthorization affected the supply of license-exempt providers serving school-age children?
  - Current context
    - School closures
    - Child care/afterschool program closures
    - Lack of summer camp opportunities
    - Food insecurity
    - Lack of connections with trusted caregivers
    - Uncertainty about upcoming school year

- Strategies to promote resilience in school-age children
  - Managing Emotional Impulses
    - Active listening
    - Labeling emotions
    - Collaborative problem-solving
  - Continuity of Care
    - Consistent primary caregiving
    - Routines
    - Cohort models
- Covid-19 related research questions
  - How have states modified policies to facilitate access to full day child care during school closures and/or remote learning days?
  - Have states offered additional search features on consumer education websites in light of school closures and transportation safety protocols?
  - Does the required training/PD supporting the positive development of school-age children have a specific focus on SEL and trauma-informed practice in light of pandemic?
  - To what extent have child care agencies worked with SEAs and 21st CCLC offices to coordinate re-opening guidance?
- **Summary of Presentation #2: Provider Perspectives from National Case Studies Research, Mariel Sparr**
  - Continuum of Care from Early Childhood
    - Case for quality care beyond the early years
    - Developmental changes across domains in middle childhood (age 6-12)
      - Managing relationships with peers and adults
      - Developing sophisticated problem-solving skills
      - Building emotional regulation skills
      - Increasing cognitive capacities
  - Objectives and Project Activities
    - Examine how investments made by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services support children's social-emotional, behavioral, and physical health in middle childhood.
    - Project activities include:
      - Comprehensive literature review
      - In-depth case studies
      - Development of a survey of local sites
  - Findings on Afterschool Care
    - Providers see their services as a key support for working parents
    - Contributions to protective factors
    - Opportunities to build essential non-academic skills
    - Leveraging routines and activities
    - Scaling evidence-informed approaches
  - Deeper Implications for Supporting Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health in Afterschool
    - Building social skills and self confidence
    - Leveraging staff and peer relationships
    - Training and ongoing support for staff, including opportunities to address staff wellness
    - Funding, collaboration and partnerships to build sustainable programing
      - Providers articulated that the continual cycle of funding applications inhibits the ability to build sustainable programs as they feel they are constantly applying for funds and worrying about losing certain funding streams.

- **Summary of Presentation #3: School Age Care in Georgia: Working Towards Quality Improvement and Meeting Current Needs**
  - Georgia's QRIS is a 3 star quality rating system
    - Structural quality and process quality
    - School age is not currently embedded in the system. For example, a school age classroom in a three star center is not subject to the rating system so there is no information on the quality of the care in that classroom.
  - Georgia's CCDF subsidies are called CAPS scholarships
    - Tiered reimbursement rates
    - More CAPS scholarships go to school age children each month than any other group
  - Exploratory research on school-age quality
    - In 2019, Georgia conducted a small in-house research study to look at the quality of school-age classrooms.
      - 50 licensed multi-aged centers with summer school-age classrooms, 25 licensed multi-aged centers with fall afterschool classrooms. Mix of unrated and rated centers.
      - School Age Care Environment Rating Scale- Updated (SACERS-U) observations; director and teacher surveys; school-age Program Quality Assessment (PQA) observations; licensing study checklists.
      - Most centers scored in the 1-star range on the SACERS-U; many centers would drop down a star rating if the SACERS-U ratings were incorporated into their current QRIS rating.
    - Georgia plans to do a scaled-up study in the future that will contribute to a plan for fully embedding school-age into Georgia's QRIS.
  - School-age Currently
    - In the midst of the pandemic, the majority of Georgia's CAPS scholarships are still going to school-age children over other age groups.
    - We are focused on the current unique needs of those children, their families, and the providers who serve them.
  - Meeting Current Community Needs
    - Day camp exemption to include facilitation of distance learning (executive order issued by Governor)
      - Allows CCDF to be used for full time care during school hours
      - Allows participation of programs already in the system where children were already participating
      - Conditions:
        - Minimum staff to child ratio of 1:20
        - Criminal background checks
        - Maintain health and safety standards
      - Expedited licensing process for those needing licensure
  - Family Access to School-Age Services
    - Providers able to indicate open/closure status and ability to care for school-age children in provider portal.
    - Consumer education website set up for families to find care during this time
      - Families go to [qualityrated.org](http://qualityrated.org) and search for school-age child care
- **Summary of Presentation #4: Researching Family Needs for High-Quality School-Age Care, Jillian Luchner**
  - Afterschool Alliance's mission: to expand support for quality afterschool programs, the Afterschool Alliance works with agencies, elected officials, business, 50 state afterschool networks, community leaders, and program providers across the nation.
  - 80% of a student's waking hours over a year are spent outside of the school day

- The Opportunity Gap: Parents with higher income levels can and do pay more to place their children in enrichment activities during out of school time and this creates a gap between their lower income peers.
- 11.3 million youth are unsupervised from 3-6pm afterschool and this time is the peak time for children to commit or be victims of crime and experiment with unhealthy behaviors.
- America After 3pm (AA3)
  - On-going project that studies the access, demand, and demographics of afterschool programs
  - Survey of families across the U.S. every five years.
    - 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2020 is next.
  - AA3 defines afterschool as: “a program that a child regularly attends that provides a supervised, enriching environment in the hours after the school day ends (typically around 3 P.M.). These programs are usually offered in schools or community centers and are different from individual activities such as sports, special lessons, or hobby clubs, and different from childcare facilities that provide supervision but not enrichment”
  - Unmet demand for afterschool programs has steadily risen over the last 20 years
  - For every child in an afterschool program, there are 2 children waiting to get in
  - Benefits of Afterschool:
    - Opportunity for physical activity
    - Homework assistance
    - Social, emotional and positive youth development
    - Beverages, snacks and meals
    - Opportunities for reading and writing
    - STEM learning opportunities
- Research Questions to Consider from AA3 data:
  - Consumer Education Databases sometimes list whether school - age programs provide transportation from the school. How many programs in areas of high demand offer transportation?
  - The 50 Statewide Afterschool Networks have frequently adopted standards for quality afterschool programs. How many states are using CCDF quality set - aside dollars to invest in school - age quality work?
  - How many school-aged children are being served through CCDBG in programs that would be designated as supervision rather than enrichment?
  - How many CCDF programs are connected with ways to receive relevant professional development in school age care through their state child care system? How many states have school age professional networks? How does licensing support programs that operate in coordination with the school system?
  - How does CCDF support school age children over the summer?
- Coming soon on AA3:
  - Responses from 13,000 households
  - New questions on: summer program choices, social emotional learning, computer science and older youth activities
- COVID-19
  - Online research conducted between May 28 and June 30, 2020 with a total of 914 responses across 47 states and Washington D.C.
    - More than 8 in 10 providers said funding and better guidance and resources to protect the health and safety of staff and students is extremely or very important.
    - Research showed that the majority of programs were still serving children remotely and around half are delivering meals and other resources to families and connecting families to community resources.

- Many providers are worried about sustaining afterschool programs this fall because of COVID-19.
  - Currently doing another round of survey and another iteration will be done in the fall
- **Summary of Presentation #5: The State of School-Age Child Care, Juliet Taylor**
  - Report from Washington State's work in this area: [Washington's Expanded Learning Opportunities](#).
    - Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) refers to the child care and extracurricular sports, music, arts, and other enrichment activities for school-age children and youth that occur outside of the school day, including afterschool programs and summer learning.
    - Wanted to break down the silos between early learning and ELO.
    - Completed a two-year research project testing the efficacy of a school-age quality system that connects to the early learning QRIS. Found that the systems could be connected and still focus on unique development and that online coaching is an affordable and effective way of supporting ELO programs.
    - Access to enrichment programs is not always equitable.
    - ELO supports children's social emotional development.
    - WA now re-envisioning our QRIS to focus on birth to 12 years
    - Free resources and professional development available to ELO programs and staff at [cultivatelearning.uw.edu](http://cultivatelearning.uw.edu)

#### 4. Brief Summary of Discussion

Webinar participants were asked to respond to the following questions via the chat function on the webinar platform. Presenters shared selected responses for discussion.

- *How does school age child care related to your work?*
  - We are looking to build out our state system for school-age care.
  - We have a dearth of school-age child care options in Oklahoma.
- *How can we support the scale up of the supportive programming related to trauma-informed approaches and social-emotional and behavioral health in school-age child care?*
  - Sharing lessons learned between states is so helpful
    - AA3 has many useful resources
    - NCASE website reflects data from 2018 but is still very useful
  - Resources for programs around how to support distance learning with fewer resources and less money
  - Free professional development for school-age providers around quality, having learned from the B-5 experience of raising quality.
  - Are there scalable models for connection between public school districts and community-based school-age programs in support of children and families during the pandemic? This is something we're exploring in MA as many districts go fully remote. We know of some promising local models but I wonder if another state has a more fully developed system of public/private school age partnership?
- *How can our CCEEPRC community support progress on a school-age child care research and policy agenda?*
  - Building bridges between 0-5 and SA in terms of what are the quality indicators that can weave the foundations together.
  - Data to share with state leaders as governors are crafting executive orders and state budgets are in play, could support school-age child care.

#### 5. Question and Answer

**Q:** Did Mariel's project include home-based child care settings (sorry if I missed that)?

**A:** Pamala Trivedi - The MCASP study focused on center-based programs, but that is a great area for follow

- Q:** @Shayna in GA: if a program operates a birth to 5 program AND school-age program on the same site, are the school-age programs subject to observation by the QRIS?
- A:** Shayna Funke - For child care programs in GA serving multiple age groups (birth through 5 and school age), their school age classrooms are not observed as part of their rating process. Currently only stand-alone school age programs are observed with the SACERS-U as part of their rating process.
- Q:** What an amazing resource for families in the Georgia public education web site. As I learn about this, I'm wondering what impact this kind of system has on the home-based care providers in your state? In my interviews with licensed family child care educators in California, their distinctive strengths are not well captured in existing measures of quality (see *A Conceptual Model for Quality in Home-Based Child Care*: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/a-conceptual-model-for-quality-in-home-based-child-care>). Is Georgia looking at the impact of the parent education site on home-based care educators, including those who are highly engaged in ongoing quality improvement but whose strengths may not be well-captured with existing measures of quality?
- A:** Melissa Davis - Georgia has been very intentional in the equity of child care programs. The listing of providers on the website is to show QRIS providers first, of which our family child care providers have been receptive to and are often listed first in the lists.
- Q:** Shayna/Melissa - Did I understand that the state offered exemptions to allow for more license-exempt child care this school year? And, CCDF funds can be used for those programs? Can those license-exempt programs be in the QRIS and, therefore, get a tiered reimbursement? Or is the QRIS just for licensed programs?
- A:** Melissa Davis - Yes, Georgia already has an exemption for day camps and the definition was expanded to provide care for SA children while school systems are closed. CCDF funds may be used for these programs and they are monitored for health and safety standards. Only licensed programs are eligible for QRIS (or very small number of exempt such as at a univ lab school). A licensed program may qualify for a higher reimbursement depending on their rating, so it is an incentive for licensure.
- Q:** How is quality SA defined in WA?
- A:** Juliet Taylor - In Washington, there has been many years of work to define quality throughout the age continuum. School's Out Washington in partnership with communities and programs co-created and published a set of comprehensive quality standards for the state that can be accessed at: <https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0515/3189/files/Quality-Standards-PDF-2-14-14-Final-web.pdf?6388612972077965549>  
Additionally, over the many years of the pilot, we built a tool specific to quality in school-age and youth development called the Quality Seal. This tool emphasizes five domains of development including engagement and interaction. We use both the Quality Seal and the David P. Weikart Center tools (Youth and School Age Program Quality Assessments) to further define quality.
- Q:** As states are working to assess quality of school age care (like the example of Georgia and Washington) are they working and learning together/sharing their successes or challenges?
- A:** Juliet Taylor - We have presented the Washington state work broadly with national partners and at national conferences like Readyby21 to share learnings and findings with other state systems. Additionally, the BUILD Initiative completed an evaluative report that tells the story of Washington's work which highlights both successes and challenges.  
Shayna Funke - Georgia is still in the early stages of its school-age quality project but has shared its preliminary work along the way – here at CCEPRC and at the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA) Annual Licensing Seminar – and will continue to learn and work together with other states as the project is scaled up.

**Q:** To what extent are state agencies helping to disseminate the 2-min tips or other training tools for school age caregivers?

**A:** Jillian Luchner – In regards to collaboration, we put out a blueprint of how afterschool and school may partner which I will link to below, CA and WA also are formulating some great models.

<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Blueprint-for-How-Afterschool-Programs-Community-Partners-Can-Help.pdf>.

In regards to quality and training, many states can partner with their statewide afterschool networks. Here are some examples from the 50 Statewide Afterschool Networks, for example Utah

(<https://utahafterschool.org/what-we-do/quality-standards>), California

(<https://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/increasing-quality>); and Georgia (<https://dfcs.georgia.gov/prevention-and-community-support-section/initiatives/georgia-afterschool-youth-development-asyd>)

**Q:** Are there scalable models for connection between public school districts and community-based school-age programs in support of children and families during the pandemic? This is something we're exploring in MA as many districts go fully remote. We know of some promising local models but I wonder if another state has a more fully developed system of public/private school age partnership?

**A:** Jillian Luchner – One model to look to are the community learning hubs being used in cities like San Francisco <https://www.dcyf.org/care> ; Additionally CA released some recent FAQs on their Dept of Education's Expanded Learning Division page that talk about coordinating programs and school sites-

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ex/covid19faq2020.asp>

Pamala Trivedi - Thanks for sharing this information from MA. We are not aware of fully developed models between schools districts and school-aged child care programs, but the Afterschool Alliance has put out some resources that summarize across providers and communities who have started to develop collaborative relationships to serve particularly families and communities who have been hit hard by the pandemic. Please see:

[http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue\\_briefs/issue\\_COVID-19\\_77.pdf](http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue_briefs/issue_COVID-19_77.pdf)

## 6. Summary of Key Issues Raised

- Numerous research questions were put forth by presenters for future research related to school-age child care.
- School-age child care is an important but sometimes overlooked function of state child care systems. Ensuring the quality of school-age childcare environments is necessary as many children are served by afterschool and summer camp programs and in some states, these programs are not integrated into their QRIS.
- COVID-19 has had a strong impact on school-age child care programs and has presented issues around program sustainability, implementing distance learning for children, health and safety protocols for staff and children.
- School-age child care has the potential to greatly affect school age children's social-emotional health and program features can help create protective factors for more vulnerable and low-income children.
- In states where school-age programs are licensed exempt some programs are having trouble accessing Federal CARES dollars when the process for receiving funds flows through licensed providers only
- School-age providers may need more fast-track systems to operate as schools make decisions about how their space is used leaving providers needing safe, convenient spaces to relocate. This is also true as staff make decisions about their own involvement and require sick and family leave for safety, systems for safely on-boarding new staff and ensuring rapid processing are also essential.