



# CAPS/Quality Rated Guidelines and Requirements



**Georgia Dept  
of Early Care  
and Learning**  
BRIGHT FROM THE START

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Definitions of words or phrases in **bold** in this document are located in [CAPS Definitions and Acronyms \(CAPS/00-2\)](#).

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The CAPS Quality Rated Guidelines and Requirements is an addendum of [CAPS Child Care Participating Providers Policy \(CAPS/00-11\)](#) and [CAPS Provider Rights and Responsibilities Policy \(CAPS/00-11\)](#). The document is designed to provide families and child care providers information about the CAPS Quality Rated goal, milestones, and guidance on how child care programs can become **Quality Rated**.

## 2 What is Quality Rated?

- 2.1 Parents and families need an independent, trustworthy resource to help them find high-quality child care, preschool, before and after-school, and pre-K programs. Georgia's Quality Rated tool helps families find child care programs in their area that have been evaluated by credentialed early childhood experts and identified as high-quality. Families can have peace of mind knowing that any participating child care program is committed to providing children an environment and experience that is best for their development.

## 3 Eligible Providers

- 3.1 There are two categories of licensed providers who are eligible to participate in CAPS Quality Rated **1.) Child Care Learning Centers (CCLC)** and **2.) Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLH)**.
  - 3.1.1 **Child Care Learning Centers (CCLC)** – A provider licensed or otherwise authorized to provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a non-residential setting for seven or more children under 13 years of age (or up to age 18 years for children with qualifying disabilities or a case plan requiring child care as part of court-ordered supervision), unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' state-approved activity.
  - 3.1.2 **Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLH)** – One or more individual(s) who provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a private residence other than the child's residence for no more than six children under 13 years of age (or up to age 18 years for children with qualifying disabilities or a case plan requiring child care as part of court-ordered supervision) at a given time, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' state-approved activity For the purpose of the CAPS program, the parent cannot reside at, or work for, the family child care learning home that receives subsidies for the parent's children.

## 4 CAPS/Quality Rated Goal

- 4.1 In 2015, based on recommendations from the Early Childhood Education Subcommittee (part of the Governors Education Reform Commission) now known as the DECAL Advisory Committee, DECAL identified the CAPS/Quality Rated goal that all providers who participate in the CAPS program be quality rated by December 31, 2020. The Advisory Committee is a stakeholder group of child care providers, advocates, and family representatives convened by DECAL to study ongoing policy issues. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this goal was extended to **December 31, 2021**.
- 4.2 To ensure the CAPS/Quality Rated goal is achieved and maintained, two (2) new statuses were created: **CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status** and **CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status**. The creation of these statuses will help minimize disruptions to children and families with a CAPS scholarship. For the purpose of CAPS, a Quality Rated Provider is one that is Star Rated, in **CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status**, or in **CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status**.

## 5 CAPS Quality Rated Milestones

- 5.1 To minimize disruptions to children and families with a CAPS scholarship and to allow unrated licensed providers the opportunity to become rated, the following milestones were implemented:
  - 5.1.1 **Effective August 1, 2021**, licensed providers currently participating in the CAPS program who are not **Quality Rated** must be registered for a **Quality Rated Cohort Group** in the current calendar year to be assigned any new CAPS scholarships. Non-Quality Rated licensed providers not yet enrolled in CAPS must be registered for a **Quality Rated Cohort Group** in the current year to be eligible to enroll in the CAPS program.
  - 5.1.2 **Effective January 1, 2022**, licensed providers currently participating in the CAPS program who are not **Quality Rated** cannot be issued any new scholarships, except for type of care changes during the eligibility period through the end of calendar year 2022. Families with existing scholarships at these providers may continue services with the provider until their redetermination in calendar year 2022.

## 6 CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status

- 6.1 A **CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status** is granted to licensed providers who upon completion of the rating process were not able to achieve a star rating or are unable to maintain their star rating by **December 31, 2021**. Providers placed in **CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status** agree to complete the rating process at the earliest opportunity available and must show willingness to work with **Quality Rated** and other applicable staff to achieve their rating. Providers placed in the **CAPS/Quality Rated**

**Probationary Status** will be enrolled in a **Quality Rated Cohort Group** as directed by Quality Rated staff.

- 6.2 Providers in **CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status** may be eligible to participate in CAPS for up to twelve (12) consecutive months if they maintain adequate progress as reported to CAPS by **Quality Rated**. Providers who do not achieve at least a one-star rating during the initial twelve (12) months may, at DECAL's sole discretion and not subject to appeal, be granted an additional six (6) months in **CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status**. Providers with a probationary status can accept new CAPS scholarships and retain any existing CAPS scholarships if they maintain adequate progress to obtain a star rating as reported to CAPS by **Quality Rated**.

## 7 How to be placed in CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status

- 7.1 Providers who upon completion of the rating process were not able to achieve a star rating or maintain their star rating can be placed in **CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status** by adhering to the following:
- a. Complete and submit the CAPS/QR Probationary Status Memorandum of Understanding to Quality Rated.
  - b. Make adequate progress to complete the rating process at the earliest opportunity available or as directed by Quality Rated.
  - c. Comply with all requirements from Quality Rated and other applicable staff.

## 8 CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status

- 8.1 A **CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status** is granted to programs who are new to the CAPS program and need time to become **Quality Rated**. These programs are in good standing with the **Quality Rated** process. Providers placed in the **CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status** will be enrolled in a **Quality Rated Cohort Group** to achieve their initial rating as directed by Quality Rated staff as they progress through the steps in the Provisional Status. Providers with a provisional status can accept new CAPS scholarships and retain any existing CAPS scholarships if they maintain adequate progress to obtain a star rating as reported to CAPS by **Quality Rated**.
- 8.2 Currently, Star-Rated providers undergoing a change of ownership will not typically need to be placed in **CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status** to participate in the CAPS program. **Quality Rated** has a process whereby rated providers can request their **Quality Rated** data be transferred to the new owner and license number. If a provider did not request their data be transferred or it was not able to be transferred, then the new owner is eligible to be placed in **CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status**.

## 9 How to be placed in CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status

9.1 Newly licensed providers are eligible to enroll in the CAPS programs when they are granted permission to operate or a license from Child Care Services (CCS). Both, newly licensed providers and currently licensed providers who are new to the CAPS program can start their Quality Rated journey by completing the following steps:

- a. Contact the State Provider Management Agent (SPMA) at 1-877-755-6522 or via email at [MAXIMUSContactCenter@maximus.com](mailto:MAXIMUSContactCenter@maximus.com) to enroll as a CAPS Provider.
- b. Complete and return all required documents to the SPMA. Once all required documents have been returned to the SPMA, the provider will be assigned a Provider Identification Number (PID).
- c. Complete and submit a Quality Rated application at [Georgia's Quality Rated System \(ga.gov\)](http://Georgia's Quality Rated System (ga.gov))
- d. Contact Quality Rated at 1-855-800-7747 or via email at [CAPSQRGoal@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:CAPSQRGoal@dec.al.ga.gov) and ask to be enrolled as a CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Provider. The provider will need their licensing number (number assigned by CCS), PID, and legal name to be placed in the provisional status. Provider will be sent the CAPS/QR Provisional Status Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to acknowledge their understanding and agreement of the process to be followed, allowing them to receive CAPS Scholarships prior to achieving their Star Rating.
- e. Complete and submit CAPS/QR Provisional Status Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to Quality Rated.

## 10 Non-participating providers

10.1 Providers who choose not to become Quality Rated will not be eligible to receive child care subsidy payments. **Effective January 1, 2022**, providers currently participating in the CAPS program will be dismissed as prescribed in [CAPS Child Care Provider Rights and Responsibilities Policy \(CAPS/00-12\)](#).

## 11 Family Waiver

11.1 At DECAL's sole discretion and not subject to appeal, CAPS may grant a family a time-limited waiver allowing the issuance of scholarships to a provider who is not a **Quality Rated Provider**.