

## FOCUS AREA: Birth to Eight Strategy

PRIORITY: Expand access to high-quality early care and learning options that leverage new state and corporate investments.

### Framework 2033 Big Bet

Investing in a statewide child development plan that addresses the conditions stifling success and well-being.

#### How the 2026 Priority Sets the Stage for a Statewide Child Development Plan

In 2023, the EdQuest Coalition called on state leaders to create a child development plan that ensures more children receive the education, health, and family supports that promote success and well-being.

To set the stage for a unified plan, the Georgia Partnership recommends that state and community leaders explore ways to increase state and corporate investment in the early care sector.

Increasing access to high-quality early childhood education is a crucial first step in closing opportunity gaps. While Georgia's leaders promote child care access, education and community health experts should collaborate and draft a child development plan that identifies strategies that support the achievement of academic and developmental milestones.

The draft plan will also spotlight local programs and strategies that inspire state policymakers to enact a statewide strategy.

#### Recommended Actions

*Create a new early care economic model focused on attracting state and corporate investment*

Center directors operate on slim margins. Dependence on parent tuition means that providers cannot raise rates to pay early childhood educators more. New state and private sector investments can grow provider networks, creating more sustainable and predictable access to child care for families.

*Provide incentives for education, civic, and corporate leaders to develop regional early care strategies*

In 2025, the Georgia General Assembly enacted [House Bill 136](#), which created a corporate income tax credit for businesses who subsidize child care costs for their employees. Building on this foundation, the state leaders should explore additional incentives that encourage public-private partnerships in communities.

#### Key Outcome

*Increase third grade reading proficiency to 50% by 2033, up from the current rate of 35%.*

Third grade reading proficiency is a key predictor of future academic achievement and quality of life. Investments in integrated education and health strategies will increase the odds that our youngest children have opportunities to succeed.

#### EdQuest Resources

[Foundations for Learning](#)

[Leading Indicators](#)

