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**Quality Progress Report (QPR)**  
**For**  
**South Carolina**  
**FFY 2023**

***QPR Status: Accepted as of 2024-03-07 15:35:36 GMT***

The Quality Progress Report (QPR) collects information from states and territories (hereafter referred to as lead agencies) to describe investments to improve the quality of care available for children from birth to age 13. This report meets the requirements in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 for lead agencies to submit an annual report that describes how quality funds were expended, including the activities funded and the measures used to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services.

For purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions of applicable laws printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text. The lead agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to the applicable laws regardless of these modifications.

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

## QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

The Quality Progress Report (QPR) collects information from lead agencies to describe investments to improve the quality of care available for children from birth to age 13. This report meets the requirements in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 for lead agencies to submit an annual report that describes how quality funds were expended, including the activities funded and the measures used to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services. Lead agencies are also required to report on their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) quality improvement investments through the CCDF Plan, which collects information on the proposed quality activities for a three-year period; and through the ACF-696, which collects quarterly expenditure data on quality activities.

The annual data provided by the QPR will be used to describe how lead agencies are spending a significant investment per year to key stakeholders, including Congress, federal, state and territory administrators, providers, parents, and the public.

### **Specifically, this report will be used to:**

- Ensure accountability and transparency for the use of CCDF quality funds, including a set-aside for quality infant and toddler care and activities funded by American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act
- Track progress toward meeting state- and territory-set indicators and benchmarks for improvement of child care quality based on goals and activities described in CCDF Plans; and
- Understand efforts in progress towards all child care settings meeting the developmental needs of children
- Inform federal technical assistance efforts and decisions regarding strategic use of quality funds.

**What Period Must Be Included:** All sections of this report cover the federal fiscal year activities (October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023), unless otherwise stated. Data should reflect the cumulative totals for the fiscal year being reported, unless otherwise stated.

**What Data Should Lead Agencies Use:** Lead agencies may use data collected by other government and nongovernment agencies (e.g., CCR&R agencies or other TA providers) in addition to their own data as appropriate. We recognize that lead agencies may not have all of the data requested initially but expect progress towards increased data capacity. The scope of this report covers quality improvement activities funded at least in part by CCDF in support of CCDF activities. Lead agencies must describe their progress in meeting their stated goals for improving the quality of child care as reported in their FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

### **How is the QPR Organized?**

The first section of the QPR gathers basic data on the population of providers in the state or territory and goals for quality improvement and glossary of relevant terms. The rest of the report is organized according to the ten authorized uses of quality funds specified in the CCDBG Act of 2014:

- 1) Support the training and professional development of the child care workforce
- 2) Improve the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines
- 3) Develop, implement, or enhance a quality rating improvement system for child care providers
- 4) Improve the supply and quality of child care for infants and toddlers
- 5) Establish or expand a lead agency wide system of child care resource and referral services
- 6) Support compliance with lead agency requirements for licensing, inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety
- 7) Evaluate the quality of child care programs in the state or territory, including how programs positively impact children
- 8) Support providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation
- 9) Support the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development
- 10) Other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry.

The Office of Child Care (OCC) recognizes that quality funds may have been used to address the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. These activities should be reflected in the relevant sections of the QPR.

### **Reporting Activities Related to ARP Act Child Care Stabilization Grants**

The ARP Act included approximately \$24 billion for child care stabilization grants, representing an important opportunity to stabilize the child care sector and do so in a way that builds back a stronger child care system that supports the developmental and learning needs of children, meets parents' needs and preferences with equal access to high-quality child care, and supports a professionalized workforce that is fairly and appropriately compensated for the essential skilled work that they do. Lead agencies must spend stabilization funds as subgrants to qualified child care providers to support the stability of the child care sector during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency. Please refer to the information memorandum [ARP Act Child Care Stabilization Grants](#) (CCDF-ACF-IM-2021-02) for further guidance on the child care stabilization grants made available through the ARP Act.

While the OCC has established a new data collection form, the ACF-901 – American Rescue Plan (ARP) Stabilization Grants Provider-Level Data, as the primary data collection mechanism for reporting related to ARP stabilization grants, Section 13 of the QPR asks about activities related to stabilization grants made possible through ARP funding. The OCC will inform lead agencies if the data reported through the ACF-901 is complete enough to warrant skipping Section 13 of the QPR. The following information is requested in Section 13:

- If the lead agency ran more than one grant program;
- How stabilization grants were used to support workforce compensation; and
- Methods to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse when providing stabilization grants

Section 13 should be used to report on ARP Stabilization Grants ONLY. Other child care sustainability or stabilization grant programs established or ongoing using other funding mechanisms (i.e., CCDF or other supplemental funding e.g., CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary Funds) should be reported in Section 11.

### **When is the QPR Due to ACF?**

The QPR will be due to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) by the designated lead agency no later than December 31, 2023.

### **Glossary of Terms**

The following terms are used throughout the QPR. These definitions can also be found in section 98.2 in the CCDBG Act of 2014. For any term not defined, please use the lead agency definition of terms to complete the QPR.

***Center-based child care provider*** means 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, unless in care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work. Associated terms include "child care centers" and "center-based programs."

***Director*** means a person who has primary responsibility for the daily operations and management for a child care provider, which may include a family child care provider, and which may serve children from birth to kindergarten entry and children in school-age child care.

***Family child care provider*** means one or more individuals who provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a private residence other than the child's residence, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work. Associated terms include "family child care homes."

***In-home child care provider*** means an individual who provides child care services in the child's own home.

***License-exempt*** means facilities that are not required to meet the definition of a facility required to meet the CCDF section 98.2 definition of “licensing or regulatory requirements.” Associated terms include “legally exempt” and “legally operating without regulation.”

***Licensed*** means a facility required by the state to meet the CCDF section 98.2 definition of “licensing or regulatory requirements,” which explains that the facility meets “requirements necessary for a provider to legally provide child care services in a state of locality, including registration requirements established under state, local or tribal law.”

***Programs*** refer generically to all activities under the CCDF, including child care services and other activities pursuant to §98.50 as well as quality activities pursuant to §98.43.

***Provider*** means the entity providing child care services.

***Staffed family child care (FCC) networks*** are programs with paid staff that offer a menu of ongoing services and resources to affiliated FCC educators. Network services may include individual supports (for example, visits to child care homes, coaching, consultation, warmlines, substitute pools, shared services, licensing TA, mental health services) and group supports (for example, training workshops, facilitated peer support groups).

***Teacher*** means a lead teacher, teacher, teacher assistant or teacher aide who is employed by a child care provider for compensation on a regular basis, or a family child care provider, and whose responsibilities and activities are to organize, guide and implement activities in a group or individual basis, or to assist a teacher or lead teacher in such activities, to further the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children from birth to kindergarten entry and children in school-age child care.

## 1) Overview

*To gain an understanding of the availability of child care in the state or territory, please provide the following information on the total number of child care providers.*

### 1.1 State or Territory Child Care Provider Population

#### 1.1.1 Total Number of Licensed Providers:

Enter the total number of licensed child care providers that operated in the state or territory as of September 30, 2023. These counts should include all licensed child care providers, not just those serving children receiving CCDF subsidies.

Licensed center-based programs **1516**

Unable to provide number. Indicate reason:

**Additional clarification: Based on most recent submission of the FY 2023 ACF-800 data there were 748 licensed center-based programs receiving CCDF funding. Please report the number of ALL licensed center-based programs operating in the state here, regardless of receipt of CCDF funding.**

Licensed family child care homes **812**

Unable to provide number. Indicate reason:

**Additional clarification: Based on most recent submission of the FY 2023 ACF-800 data there were 241 licensed family child care homes receiving CCDF funding. Please report the number of ALL licensed family child care homes operating in the state here, regardless of receipt of CCDF funding.**

## 2) Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce

Goal: *Ensure the lead agency's professional development systems or framework provides initial and ongoing professional development and education that result in a diverse and stable child care workforce with the competencies and skills to support all domains of child development.*

### 2.1 Lead Agency Progression of Professional Development

#### 2.1.1 Professional Development Registry:

Did the lead agency use a workforce registry or professional development registry to track progression of professional development during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023?

Yes. If yes, describe: **SC Endeavors houses the workforce registry system for the early childhood workforce in SC. All professional development activities are tracked within the system including training and technical assistance.**

No. If no, what alternative does the lead agency use to track the progression of professional development for teachers/providers serving children who receive CCDF subsidy? Describe:

#### 2.1.2 Participation in Professional Development Registry:

Are any teachers/providers required to participate?

Yes. If yes, describe: **Teachers and programs are required to document training hours within the system to ensure compliance with child care licensing requirements. In addition, ABC Quality requires participation for verifying education documentation and career ladder placement.**

No. If no, describe:

#### 2.1.3 Number of Participants in Professional Development Registry:

Total number of participants in the registry as of September 30, 2023 **41,117**

#### 2.1.4 Spending - Professional Development Registry:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

## 2.2 Workforce Development

### 2.2.1 Professional Development and Career Pathways Support:

How did the lead agency help teachers/providers progress in their education, professional development, and/or career pathway between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023 (check all that apply)? If selected, how many staff received each type of support?

- Scholarships (for formal education institutions) **266**
- Financial bonus/wage supplements tied to education levels **356**
- Career advisors, mentors, coaches, or consultants **27**
- Reimbursement for training **1,450**
- Loans
- Substitutes, leave (paid or unpaid) for professional development **50**
- Other. Describe: **SC Endeavors incentivized career ladder placement within the registry system. Individuals who work in a regulated program with verified employment, completed the career ladder application, and applied for the bonus, received \$150. There was a total of 829 individuals who completed this process and received the bonus award.**

N/A. Describe:

### 2.2.2 Spending - Professional Development and Career Pathways Support:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds



- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

## 2.3 Child Care Provider Qualifications

### 2.3.1 Number of Licensed Child Care Programs Qualifications:

Total number of staff in licensed child care programs with the following qualification levels as of September 30, 2023:

- Child Development Associate (CDA) **355**
- Associate's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **566**
- Bachelor's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **746**
- State child care credential **4199**
- State infant/toddler credential **146**
- Unable to report this data. Indicate reason:

### 2.3.2 Number of Licensed CCDF Child Care Programs Qualifications:

Total number of staff in licensed CCDF child care programs with the following qualification levels as of September 30, 2023:

- Child Development Associate (CDA) **243**
- Associate's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **434**
- Bachelor's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **438**
- State child care credential **280**
- State infant/toddler credential **22**
- Unable to report this data. Indicate reason:

## 2.4 Technical Assistance for Professional Development

#### 2.4.1 Technical Assistance Topics:

Technical assistance on the following topics is available to providers as part of the lead agency's professional development system (can be part of QRIS or other system that provides professional development to child care providers):

- Business Practices
- Mental health for children
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Emergency Preparedness Planning
- Other. Describe other technical assistance available to providers as part of the professional development system: **Nutrition, physical activity**

#### 2.4.2 Spending - Technical Assistance for Professional Development:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

### 2.5 Spending – Training and Professional Development

#### 2.5.1 Spending – Training and Professional Development:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to support the training and professional development of the child care workforce during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$4189907**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

## 2.6 Progress Update

### 2.6.1 Progress Update – Training and Professional Development:

Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 6.3.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

The ABC Quality Program Standards provide measurable indicators of progress relevant to training and technical assistance in a variety of ways. Program eligibility requirements require all staff engaging with children to complete the 15-Hour Health and Safety Pre-Service Certificate within 90 days of hiring or the program must have all staff complete prior to ABC Quality enrollment. There are five quality levels in ABC Quality: A+, A, B+, B, and C. From a program standpoint, the assignment of the quality level indicates the degree to which a program has demonstrated their adherence to the indicators of quality measured by the review tool. Within each of the quality levels, the program can identify their strengths and weaknesses and choose which indicators they want to target for improvement. Attainment of their continuous quality improvement goals can increase their performance score within a level or by moving to a higher level. Within the tool, individual staff included in the observation can be reviewed by the director to identify staff training needs on an individual basis. The structure of the annual 15 hours of training must include topics from at least three areas but individual staff can choose training in areas in which they seek to improve. The LA provides a variety of educational/training/technical assistance options targeted to individuals or program-wide. Annual training hours are noted on the SC Endeavors website, T.E.A.C.H scholarships are available for a variety of educational options with attainment of degrees tracked. T.E.A.C.H monitors program participation by the three scholarship models: Credentials, Associates, and Bachelors by College/University. T.E.A.C.H data also captures geographic areas served, scholarship duration, number of child care centers supporting teacher participation and the role of the T.E.A.C.H participants as well as other demographic information. The LA funds three major entities to provide training and technical assistance to both ABC Quality providers and regulated providers. SC Endeavors (formerly the Center for Child Care Career Development or CCCCD), the professional development system for South Carolina's early childhood workforce, continues to enhance professional development opportunities, resources, and tools for early education professionals. In 2019, SC Endeavors established the state's first ECE

workforce registry that keeps track of important information about all child care professional endeavors - including training, academic coursework, work experience, and certifications. This information allows for an analysis of participation in all types of professional development including online training, on-site training, and community-based training. This system also serves as a central and comprehensive list of training classes offered to ECE professionals allowing policymakers to use the data to expand the reach of PD opportunities to underserved areas and populations. SC Endeavors will explore the dashboard and reporting features in the new system to make aggregate data available to DECE for planning purposes. Voluntary data is collected from ECE professionals on their employment allowing the analysis of training and PD of the child care workforce by child care facility type and quality level. SC Endeavors will establish clear criteria for incorporating technical assistance provided by CCDF-funded technical assistance agencies such as SC CCR&R, SC PITC, and SCIC into the professional development system to account for the mandated training hours required by child care licensing. SC Endeavors will also report training participation and opportunities by topic areas Curriculum Activities, Child Growth & Development, Child Guidance, Health & Safety, Professional Development, Program Administration, Nutrition and Special Needs. SC Endeavors will explore the dashboard and reporting features in the new system to make aggregate data available to stakeholders for planning purposes. The UofSC CDRC Data Team will assist the DECE in determining further measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 6.3.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 6.3.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **The ECE workforce registry consists of all ECE workers, including trainers, ECE administrative staff, ECE leaders, policy advocates, etc. Of the 41,117 unique active registry participants, 34,950 indicated that they provide direct care to children. The majority (n=33,302, 95.29%) of the direct care workforce works in a child care center that includes Child Care Center, Exempt Child Care Center, Head Start/Early Head Start (Site, not Grantee), Military Child Care, Private School Pre-K, Public School Pre-K (Individual Site), Registered Faith-Based Child Care Center, School Age Program Only, Tribal Child Care Center. A total of 1,056 registry members indicate that they work in family or group child care home. The providers are removed from our reports if they remain dormant for 2 years.**

There are a combined total of 6,012 participants whose self-reported education aligns with QPR categories. Close to 9,000 (n=8,945) workforce registry participants did not report their education level or the education level does not correspond to the QPR

category. For example, there are an additional 2,182 workforce participants who have a Bachelor's degree but it is not in a related field. Approximately 67% of the workforce has an education category aligned with the QPR categories.

SC Endeavors registry continues to grow and add necessary data regarding the workforce, as well as training and technical assistance for individuals and programs. CCDF-funded partners providing technical assistance have made significant efforts to increase organizational profile completion and employees' connection to those profiles. A total of 3,601 direct care organizations have set up an organizational profile in the registry system. In addition, a new feature launched within this reporting period prompts organization profile owners to update and review the organization profile to report on any necessary changes such as staffing changes. A total of 849 programs have updated the program profile. The organization profile increase also positively impacts the SC CCR&R system which helps parents to locate child care and helps TA partners to access the ABC Quality system and the CQI module for technical assistance tracking.

The Pathways to Quality CQI module within the registry system tracks TA events within the system for each child care program. This module has allowed TA agencies to create TA events and track them within a specific case with the goal of capturing more information related to this type of professional development and associated outcome. In addition, programs are able to apply for TA services within the registry on their organization profile.

The T.E.A.C.H. program has also continued efforts to increase awareness and participation in the program. Within this reporting period, SC Endeavors received ARPA funds to provide an additional incentive award to each of the 16 Technical Colleges in the state. The colleges were presented with an additional \$10,000 to continue their efforts of providing high quality academic education to early childhood students. SC Endeavors coordinated a check presentation for each college on their campuses with early childhood department leadership and college leadership attending and recognizing the efforts of the department.

SC Endeavors has continued to process career ladder applications which documents the education of the ECE workforce. As an incentive, a bonus of \$150 is utilized by individuals who complete the career ladder process and apply for the bonus award. A total of 829 child care staff received bonus awards for completion of their career ladder. We have continued to promote the career ladder to all individuals working in direct care

which will help increase the education records reported within the registry.

In June 2023, ABC Quality launched a series of free courses in the online training system, ProSolutions. Each of the 1-hour courses are designed to support ABC Quality Programs through the quality framework.

**\* Overview of ABC Quality**

Since the launch through September 30, 2023, 927 users have completed this course.

**\* An Introduction to the Structural Elements of ABC Quality and Portfolio Submission**

Since the launch through September 30, 2023- 736 users have completed this course. \*

**An Introduction of ABC Quality's Process Quality Elements V and VI Including the Intentional Teaching Tool (ITT)** Since the launch through September 30, 2023- 1073 users have completed this course.

**\* An Introduction of ABC Quality's Process Quality Elements V and VI Including the Intentional Teaching Tool (ITT)**

Since launch through September 30, 2023- 1073 users have completed this course.

ABC Quality conducted a 3 Part Webinar Series running from July 6, 2023, to August 26, 2023, with the goals of providing more information about the new assessment framework and helping programs have success navigating their quality journey.

Each of the webinars was 2 hours in length and provided training credit in the area of Program Administration for those who that met the attendance guidelines. Each webinar was conducted on three various dates and times to include a weekday from 12-2pm, a weekday from 6-8pm and a Saturday from 9-11am.

The three webinars in the series were:

**\* Highlight Your Program's Strengths Through ABC Quality: broad overview of the ABC Quality Program**

**\* Navigating Your Journey Towards Structural Quality: explores Structural Quality within the ABC Quality framework**

**\* Navigating Your Journey Towards Process Quality: focuses on the importance of Process Quality within the ABC Quality framework, which are the observable experiences children have in child care**

There were more attendees for each session than those who received credit, due to partial attendance, which indicated meant there was a higher exposure to content. The

**totals for training credit for the series is as follows:**

- \* Highlight Your Program's Strengths Through ABC Quality: 229**
- \* Navigating Your Journey Towards Structural Quality: 219**
- \* Navigating Your Journey Towards Process Quality: 202**

**Following the webinar series ABC Quality hosted three Town Hall sessions running from September 12, 2023-September 23, 2023, with the goals of clarifying information and answering questions from child care programs.**

**Session 1: Using the SC Endeavors Registry to Support Your ABC Quality Review Process- 180 participants**

**Session 2: Eligibility and Ratio and Group Size- 107 participants**

**Session 3: Open Session- 67 participants**

**In partnership with four statewide early childhood professional organizations with national affiliation, the LA supported the opportunity for early childhood educators to attend professional development conferences to meet yearly training requirements and network with other early childhood professionals with the strategy to professionalize the field of early care and education in South Carolina. ABC Quality staff members conducted a total of 32 conference sessions that focused on early childhood quality improvements such as program structure, outdoor learning environment, nutrition, physical activity, supporting children's home culture, and other topic areas that increase overall program quality. There were 1,600 early childhood educators who received conference scholarships to attend early childhood conferences during October 1, 2022-September 30, 2023. \$248,000.00 funding was allocated to support early childhood educators' conference registration fees. The following is a summary of the conferences including sponsoring organization, conference date(s), number of early childhood educators' who received a conference scholarship and funding designated for each conference based on the number of scholarship recipients and registration fees:**

**South Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children (SCAEYC)**

**October 14, 2022-October 15, 2022**

**235 Scholarship Recipients, \$43,895.00**

**South Carolina Early Childhood Association (SCECA)**

**February 2, 2023-February 4, 2023**

**761 Scholarship Recipients, \$129,370.00**

**South Carolina Association of Early Care and Education (SCAECE)**  
**February 25, 2023**  
**374 Scholarship Recipients, \$28,050.00**

**South Carolina Montessori Alliance (SCMA)**  
**September 22, 2023-September 23, 2023**  
**53 Early Childhood Educators, \$5,975.00**

**South Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children (SCAEYC)**  
**September 29, 2023-September 30, 2023**  
**177 Early Childhood Educators, \$40,710.00**

**There may be an increase of statewide conference support due to statewide efforts to professionalize the field of early care and education and the development of new partnerships with early childhood organizations with expertise in early childhood curriculum and theory. The South Carolina Montessori Alliance was a new conference organizer partnership during this reporting period.**



### 3) Improving early learning and development guidelines

*Goal: To ensure the lead agency has research-based early learning and development guidelines appropriate for children birth to age 12, including children with special needs and dual language learners that are used to inform practice and professional development.*

#### 3.1 Early Learning and Development Guidelines

##### 3.1.1 Spending - Early Learning and Development Guidelines:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to improve early learning and development guidelines during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on improving upon the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines? **\$45316**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not capture in the item already reported:

No

#### 3.2 Progress Update

##### 3.2.1 Progress Update - Early Learning and Development Guidelines:

Improving upon the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 6.4.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. The LA and the South Carolina Department of Education convened representatives of the early childhood community to develop the SC-ELS to describe what children should know and be able to do. The essential domains of early childhood development were determined to be: Approaches to Play and Learning; Emotional and Social Development; Health and Physical Development; Language Development and Communication; Mathematical Thinking and Expression; and Cognitive Development. A section titled "How to Use the South Carolina Early Learning Standards" is included which outlines 10 Guiding Principles for teachers/caregivers to provide positive learning experiences for young children of all ages, starting at birth and continuing through the preschool years. The ABC Quality process quality standards (Intentional Teaching Tool (ITT)) are aligned directly to the SC-ELS. Examples of how to meet the indicator are provided within the ITT Clarification Guide that are taken from the SC-ELS from strategies found for ages addressed after each domain; infant/toddlers and preschool children. The SC-ELS are used statewide by child care providers, ABC Quality providers, public kindergarten, Head Start, and First Steps 4k. Over 11,250 copies have been distributed to date. The SC-ELS is required as a reference in all training and professional development to be approved by SC Endeavors, the state's workforce registry. Measurable indicators include the number and reach of the SC-ELS distribution, the records from SC Endeavors as to numbers of training approvals granted with reference to SC-ELS; the number of people taking the online training on the SC-ELS. The LA is requesting technical assistance to determine measurable indicators for the early learning standards.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 6.4.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: The South Carolina Early Learning Standards (SC ELS) continue to serve as a guide for teachers to address developmentally appropriate child development expectations in preparation for seamless transition to kindergarten. The SC ELS are available to be downloaded at [SC\\_ELS-second-edit.pdf \(scchildcare.org\)](https://scchildcare.org),

The last round of SC ELS printing was just prior to the COVID pandemic, and a recent review of the inventory indicate that there are approximately 5,800 remaining copies. During October 1, 2022-September 30, 2023, SC ELS were distributed to ABC Quality programs serving children birth-5 years old at the time of their ABC Quality assessment visit, if needed due to staff turnover. In addition, SC ELS were distributed at statewide conferences during ABC Quality training sessions and conference booth to newly hired early childhood educators. Due to South Carolina experiencing a high teacher turnover rate, the development of a new plan for

distribution will be implemented in 2024 with the goal of distributing a large portion of the remaining available copies to Head Start programs, 4K classrooms served by South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness, the Department of Education classrooms, and a focus area on infant and toddler classrooms. The plan also includes a distribution of the SC ELS printed copies to early childhood professors who teach ECD 101 for the 2024 Spring and 2024 Fall semesters with our partnership with South Carolina Endeavors' TEACH program. Even though the online version of the SC ELS is available, the printed version has been popular with classroom teachers in a variety of early childhood settings (e.g., center-based, family-based, faith-based, and school-based.).

Other measurable indicators include the records from SC Endeavors on the number of people taking the online training on the SC ELS. During the reporting period, a total of 3,648 unique participants with an average passing course test score of 94.1% completed the online, An Introduction to the South Carolina Early Learning Standards training free of cost through the ProSolution online training platform, SC - Home - ProSolutions Training. These trainings are documented within the SC Endeavors registry system. All certified early childhood training is required to reference the SC ELS except for program administration and professional development topic areas.

Continuing plans for further review of the current standards are in place for 2024. This will include the convening of an updated interagency leadership and stakeholder group to review the current standards for updates and changes, if appropriate. Many of the original stakeholder members are no longer representing their respective agencies and/or organizations. However, the leadership group has been identified and co-chairs from the LA and the SC Department of Education have been named. Based on feedback from the SC Department of Education leadership which has made a significant investment in implementing the SC ELS throughout their 4K teacher training plan and classrooms statewide Early Learning - South Carolina Department of Education - 12/01/2023 11:23 AM (sc.gov), the SC ELS are meeting the department's outcome goals for children and families. Other community stakeholders have implemented the SC ELS in their program's scope of work and curriculum. The South Carolina Forestry Commission's Project Learning Tree curriculum materials have been correlated to the SC ELS Project Learning Tree - South Carolina Forestry Commission (scfc.gov). Project Learning Tree is an award-winning international environmental education program of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. The LA continues to expand the public awareness of the SC ELS and the development of community engagement and partnerships. Other family-oriented public entities such as Riverbanks Zoo in Columbia and the Edventure Museum in Columbia have aligned with the SC ELS for families.

To expand the awareness of the SC ELS to families, the LA partnered with the Carolina Family Engagement Center to develop family friendly resources of the SC ELS that includes handouts, videos and materials in English and Spanish to support children’s school readiness using the SC ELS domains of development. Ready, Set - Kindergarten! | Carolina Family Engagement Center (sc.gov)

In addition, tentative plans have been made to reconnect with Dr. Catherine Scott-Little, who was the technical consultant for the current standards development and adoption. Going forward, the schedule for formal review and revision will be conducted every 5 years.

The development of the Spanish version of the SC ELS has met a number of challenges primarily with difficulty finding translators. The Spanish version has been translated and is undergoing final review by independent readers. In 2024, the version will be available primarily online.

A total of 951 SC ELS were distributed to early childhood educators during October 1, 2022-September 30, 2023.

#### 4) Developing, implementing, or enhancing a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) and other transparent system of quality indicator

*Goal: To ensure the lead agency implements a quality rating and improvement system, or other quality rating system, to promote high-quality early care and education programs.*

##### 4.1 Quality rating and improvement system status

###### 4.1.1 QRIS or other system of quality improvement status:

Indicate the status and include a description of the lead agency's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

The lead agency QRIS is operating state- or territory-wide.

- General description of QRIS: **The ABC Quality Child Care Rating and Improvement System is a five-tiered voluntary quality system ranging from A+ through C. Level A+ scores range from 96-100. Level A scores range from 86-95. These programs consistently excel and effectively promote quality practices. Level B+ scores range from 81-85 and Level B scores range from 71-80. These programs are progressing and developing strategies to increase their program quality. Level C scores range from 50-70. These programs are emerging; they understand the importance of quality and meet health and safety requirements. A pending (P) rating allows programs to accept Child Care Scholarships without a rating. All quality ratings are posted on the website and accessed through a child care search with rated programs listed first and then by highest to lowest quality rating.**

**Tiered reimbursement is used to determine payment rates based on a market rate survey conducted periodically. Programs earn points based on their strengths in areas of responsive and sensitive care, language and communication, guidance, program structure, early learning, and environment. The full review is based on meeting all eligibility requirements, classroom observations, review of business practices, and ratio and group size. The reviews are conducted by trained, reliable assessors.**

- How many tiers/levels? **5** [insert number of tiers below as required and describe each tier and check off which are high quality]

- Tier/Level 1: **C**  
**Entry level to quality. Emerging to meeting health and safety standards and understanding the importance of quality. May be focusing on improvement in areas of strength. Level C scores range from 50-70.**  
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 2: **B**  
**Meets high quality in some areas but still progressing and developing strategies to increase their program quality. Level B scores range from 71-80.**  
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 3: **B+**  
**Meets high quality standards in many areas but still progressing and developing strategies to increase their program quality. Level B+ scores range from 81-85**  
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 4: **A**  
**Meets high quality standards in system with room to grow still. Excels and promotes highest quality standards in most areas. Level A scores range from 86-95.**  
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 5: **A+**  
**Meets highest quality level in system. Consistently excels and promotes highest quality practices in all areas. Level A+ scores range from 96-100.**  
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 6:  
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 7:  
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 8:  
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 9:  
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 10:

High Quality

- Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition: **421**
- Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition: **100**
- Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition: **579**
- Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition: **22,075**

The lead agency QRIS is operating a pilot (e.g., in a few localities, or only a few levels) but not fully operating state- or territory-wide.

- General description of pilot QRIS (e.g., in a few localities, or only a few levels):
- Which localities if not state/territory-wide?
- How many tiers/levels? [insert number of tiers below as required and describe each tier and check off which are high quality
  - Tier/Level 1:  
 High Quality
  - Tier/Level 2:  
 High Quality
  - Tier/Level 3:  
 High Quality
  - Tier/Level 4:  
 High Quality
  - Tier/Level 5:  
 High Quality
  - Tier/Level 6:  
 High Quality
  - Tier/Level 7:  
 High Quality
  - Tier/Level 8:  
 High Quality
  - Tier/Level 9:  
 High Quality
  - Tier/Level 10:  
 High Quality

- Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:

- Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
  - Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:
- The lead agency is operating another system of quality improvement.
- General description of other system:
  - Describe assessment scores, accreditation, or other metrics associated with this system:
  - Describe how “high quality” is defined in this system?
  - Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:
  - Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
  - Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:
- The lead agency does not have a QRIS or other system of quality improvement.
- Do you have a definition of high quality care?
    - Yes, define:
      - Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:
      - Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:
      - Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
      - Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:
    - No

#### 4.1.2 Spending - Quality rating and improvement system status:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:



No

## 4.2 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems participation

### 4.2.1 QRIS or other system of quality improvement participation:

What types of providers participated in the QRIS or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023 (check all that apply)?

- Licensed child care centers
- Licensed family child care homes
- License-exempt providers
- Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy
- Early Head Start programs
- Head Start programs
- State Prekindergarten or preschool programs
- Local district-supported Prekindergarten programs
- Programs serving infants and toddlers
- Programs serving school-age children
- Faith-based settings
- Tribally operated programs
- Other. Describe: **Licensed faith-based settings**

## 4.3 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits

### 4.3.1 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits:

What types of financial incentives or technical assistance are available for providers related to QRIS or other system of quality improvement? Check as many as apply.

- One-time grants, awards or bonuses
  - Licensed child care centers **2179**
  - Licensed family child care homes **881**
- On-going or periodic quality stipends
  - Licensed child care centers
  - Licensed family child care homes
- Higher CCDF subsidy rates (including tiered rating)
  - Licensed child care centers **421**
  - Licensed family child care homes **100**

- Ongoing technical assistance to facilitate participation in QRIS or improve quality of programs already participating in QRIS (or some other technical assistance tied to QRIS)
- Other. Describe

#### 4.3.2 Spending - Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

#### 4.4 Spending – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

##### 4.4.1 Spending – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) related to QRIS or other quality rating systems during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$17042204**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

#### 4.5 Progress Update

##### 4.5.1 Progress Update – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems:

Developing, implementing, or enhancing a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) or other transparent system of quality indicators.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.3.6 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **ABC Quality has elected to provide reciprocity for programs that meet federal Head Start Program Performance Standards and programs that meet national accreditation standards (specifically National Association for the Education of Young Children or NAEYC) by awarding them total credit for the Structural Quality portfolio which has been judged to be comparable to Head Start Standards and NAEYC Standards. The weighted value of the Structural Quality component is 20 points. These programs must meet the mandatory Eligibility Requirements and receive a Process Quality assessment. The current rubric rates the Process Quality score at 80% of total points earned for Process Quality, the Structural Quality score at 20% of total points earned for Structural Quality and an added 3 points. Providers earn a final score which determines the quality level of the program (A+, A, B+, B, or C) .**

During the transition period for the new standards, providers have been “held harmless” if their quality level decreased. Increases in scores resulting in attainment of a higher level were processed. During 2021-2022, review scores will count and will become measurable indicators of progress. The new integrated data system is expected to provide data on indicators across providers and across levels. The Workforce Registry will be populated with individuals assigned career levels and will attach individual caregivers to the program where they work to yield data on the education and experience of the workforce and to measure the educational progress that is made. A new incentive structure known as “Building for Our Future” has been piloted as a strategy for Continuous Quality Improvement or CQI which is expected to track progress by programs working to improve their quality in measurable ways. This strategy is being tested through use of the PDG B-5 funds.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.3.6 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **ABC Quality did a gradual phase-in of implementation of center-based new standards. Programs were recovering from the impacts of COVID to their businesses to include lack of qualified staff which provided the biggest detriment to programs. During the pandemic ABC Quality implemented a modified enrollment process with programs meeting all health and safety requirements and receiving a Pending Quality Level. This quality level allowed programs to receive Child Care Scholarships prior to receiving a rating. During this period ABC Quality restructured and implemented their organizational structure to include regional Quality**

**Anchors. Quality Anchors no longer have an assigned caseload of programs to review but instead serve as the expert of the assessment tools providing mentoring, coaching, and training to Quality Assessors and technical assistance professionals. Quality Anchors ensure Quality Assessors are reliable to the assessment tools (Intentional Teaching Tools: Infant/Toddler, Preschool and School-Age and Structural Portfolio) to ensure accuracy and consistency statewide. In addition, the Quality Anchor approves the assessment reports (process and structural quality) prior to finalization. This new framework increased the ABC Quality workforce of Quality Assessors by 1 and Quality Anchors by 4 for a total of 18 Quality Assessors statewide. During the reporting period ABC Quality had 5 new Quality Assessor positions to fill, train, and promote to reliability.**

**During the reporting period ABC Quality focused on ensuring all Quality Assessors had met reliability 85% or higher for each of the Intentional Teaching Tools, before they were able to conduct assessments for rating. ABC Quality's priority for reviews during the reporting period was to issue quality levels for all new enrollments, pending programs and conduct health and safety inspections on all license-exempt centers participating in ABC Quality.**

**Quality Assessors enrolled 58 programs (20 licensed-centers, 1 license-exempt center, 27 family child care homes, 10 Pending) during the reporting period.**

**Quality Assessors had 94 License-exempt programs needing Health and Safety Inspections during this timeframe. Of those programs Quality Assessors were able to complete 89%. Many license-exempt programs continued to be impacted by COVID and/or reported a lack of qualified staff that caused unanticipated closures making it difficult for Quality Assessors to complete all the inspections. The Health and Safety Inspection is a detailed process that has numerous points of compliance. This additional inspection along with the assessment review can cause the license-exempt review to be elongated in comparison to other program type reviews. In addition, making determinations can be challenging for Quality Assessors without expertise in Health and Safety. Therefore, in an effort to shorten the length of time needed to conduct the review and to ensure accuracy of determinations, ABC Quality plans to solicit the ABC Quality Health Educators to conduct the Health and Safety Inspection of license-exempt programs. Currently, the Health Educators are working on development of the Codepal (automated inspection and database) system.**

**ABC Quality had 182 programs with a Pending status, Quality Assessors initiated 89% of these visits during this time frame for quality rating.**

During this reporting period ABC Quality implemented an accelerated pathway that exempted Head Start and NAEYC Accredited programs from submitting their structural quality portfolio and were awarded full credit for that portion of the review. Adaptations were also made to the scoring structure to accommodate for individually weighting of ratio/group size score at 5%, Process Quality score at 80% and Structural Quality score at 15% and an added 3 pts to earn a final score which determines the quality level of the program (A+, A, B+, B and C).

To support programs transition to the new standards ABC Quality developed a series of trainings for quality assessors, quality coaches (SC-CCR&R), and child care center directors and teachers. These trainings focused on the Overview of ABC Quality Framework, Structural Quality and Process Quality. Trainings offered to ABC Quality Assessors and Quality Coaches were held together and in-person, provided through the lens of content and reliability. Trainings offered to programs were presented in-person (conferences), webinars and online courses. A total of 648 participants received professional development credit for attending the webinars related to the new standards. As a follow-up to these trainings to child care centers ABC Quality held a series of Town Halls that focused on programs questions and provided further clarification. 354 participants attended the Town Hall sessions.

ABC Quality began development of a procedural protocol for programs that score below 50 on their overall quality level score (Structural Quality + Process Quality + Ratio/Group Size = Quality Level). This protocol consists of identifying programs that meet the criteria, developing a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), making the appropriate referral and program support. The Quality Assessor makes recommendations of areas of improvement in the plan. A quality improvement team consisting of the appropriate technical assistance support, quality assessor, compliance coordinator, and program determine areas of improvement, goals, and timeframes. The team works with the program to meet goals and timeframes with checkpoints during the QIP process. The goal is to provide the program the support needed to improve their overall quality and increase their quality level score to meet a score of 50 or higher. Implementation of this protocol will begin in the upcoming federal reporting year and will be made retroactive to programs that recently received a review (Pending Level to new Quality Level). A total score below 50 for two consecutive reviews will be staffed for termination or non-renewal of the Provider Agreement.

Longevity grants were funded during the report period by the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) which the South Carolina Department of Social Services received in 2021 to establish a system of care and education to support each and every child in meeting their potential. To qualify for the grant a center-based program must have participated with ABC Quality since

June 30, 2021, or earlier. The program must have a current quality level (A+, A, B+, B, or C) and may not have any negative action outstanding. License-exempt programs were not eligible due to the funding source.

611 programs qualified for the grant based on these parameters. This number established the grant amount of \$4,431, based on a budget of \$2,707,341. On April 27, 2023, all the qualifying programs were emailed an award letter and a grant agreement that needed to be signed and returned to process the grant. 607 programs were paid the longevity grant award of \$4,431 for a total of \$2,689,617. The final grants were submitted to finance for payment on June 19, 2023.

Due to having a upsent balance in the budget and some additional PDG funds that were not spent, a supplemental award was provided to a subset of the original group who were enrolled with ABC since 1993 or earlier. The 54 programs who qualified for this award received an additional \$520 for a total of \$28,080. All of these awards were submitted to finance for payment on June 23, 2023.

The total amount spent for the longevity awards was \$2,717,697.

## 5) Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers

*Goal: Ensure adequate and stable supply of high quality child care with a qualified, skilled workforce to promote the healthy development of infants and toddlers. Please report on all activities funded by quality dollars and infant toddler set-aside.*

### 5.1 Infant/Toddler Specialists

#### 5.1.1 Infant/Toddler Specialists:

Did providers have access to infant/toddler specialists during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

Yes

- Number of specialists available to all providers **16**
- Number of specialists available to providers serving children who receive CCDF **16**
- Number of specialists available specifically trained to support family child care providers **16**
- Number of providers served **196**
- Total number of children reached **7,264**

No, there are no infant/toddler specialists in the state/territory.

N/A. Describe:

#### 5.1.2 Infant/Toddler Specialists Supports Provided:

If yes, what supports do the infant/toddler specialists provide?

Relationship-caregiving practices (or quality caregiving/developmentally appropriate practices)

On-site and virtual coaching

Health and safety practices

Individualized professional development consultation (e.g., opportunities for or awareness on career growth opportunities, degreed/credential programs)

Group professional development

Family engagement and partnerships

Part C early intervention services

Mental health of babies, toddlers, and families

Mental health of providers

Behavioral Health

Other. Describe

### 5.1.3 Spending – Infant/Toddler Specialists:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

## 5.2 Staffed Family Child Care Networks

### 5.2.1 Number and Description of Staffed Family Child Care Networks:

How many staffed family child care networks operated during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

Number of staffed family child care networks: **1**

- o Describe what the network/hub provides to participating family child care providers: **The SC Family Child Care (FCC) Early Learning Network managed through the SC Child Care Resource & Referral (SC CCR&R) is a statewide resource for licensed and registered family child care providers. Through the coordination of four SC CCR&R dedicated Quality Coaches, family child care providers have access to quarterly regional network meetings that provide a program for collaboration, learning and leadership opportunities for participants. SC FCC Early Learning Network providers receive customized technical assistance opportunities, certified training on family child care specific content, access to the statewide family child care conference, a membership to Palmetto Shared Services Alliance, and resources including curriculum and business management materials.**

No staffed family child care networks operate in state/territory



## 5.2.2 Spending - Staffed Family Child Care Networks:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

## 5.3 Spending - Programs and services for infants and toddlers

### 5.3.1 Spending - Programs and services for infants and toddlers:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside), above and beyond to the 3% infant and toddler set-aside, to improve the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$806918**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

## 5.4 Progress Update

### 5.4.1 Progress Update - Programs and services for infants and toddlers:

Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.4.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

The primary source of technical assistance for infants and toddlers is the SC Program for Infant Toddler Care. This initiative leverages initial investments made in offering the PITC Train the Trainer Certification course at USC by providing a structured framework for certified PITC ITS to deliver their specialized knowledge to infant/toddler programs statewide. SCPITC employs a team of full-time ITS to provide intensive training, mentoring and TA to caregivers and child care program administrators. Using a cohort model, providers join together for monthly trainings for one year. Between those monthly trainings, providers are supported to use the information from the trainings and implement relationship-based care practices through on-site, individualized, strength-based coaching occurring biweekly, weekly, or monthly depending to the needs of each program. Each cohort has an ITS who provides consistency in all training and coaching activities for the service plan. To measure the overall success of the project, each SCPITC service plan is reviewed and approved by the ITSN Manager and tracked by the SCPITC Program Coordinator to ensure that Infant/Toddler Specialists are delivering services consistently and with fidelity to the SCPITC service delivery model. The following information is tracked to document ITSN activities and progress: 1. Information about programs receiving training to include program name, contact person's name, contact information, number of infants and toddlers served, ABC level, number of SC vouchers, list of caregivers who will attend trainings. 2. Training schedules developed collaboratively between each Infant/Toddler Specialist and the program receiving training. Schedules are recorded electronically and approved by the SCPITC Field Manager. ITS submit weekly progress reports using the database to document each training and technical assistance visit they hold. The progress reports will show service type (plan development, pre-observation, training, technical assistance or post-assessment) dates, times, topics, and the total number of hours spent on each topic. ITS will also report to SC Endeavors so that the SC PITC program assistant can track participant attendance and determine eligibility for incentive awards. 3. At the close of the service plan, SCPITC will audit participation records and verify participants' eligibility for award of certificates and training incentives as evidenced by tracking records in the SCPITC database. 4. Program outcomes data will be collected and analyzed to determine the extent to which program quality might change as a result of services. Data collected through the ABC Quality program, on-site observations and stakeholder completed surveys will be included in the analysis. 5. Caregivers participating in the SCPITC service plans complete a pre- and post-training survey. Evaluations are kept on file and available for review by the LA. The Child Care Data Team (CCDT) at USC's Child Development Research Center (CDRC) can identify areas that are underserved in the state with methodologies developed with funding from the Office of Program, Research and Evaluation (OPRE). This allows the CCDT to inform the supply and demand for child care in the state as well as equity in voucher utilization to target strategies and resources to priority areas and populations in SC. SC Voucher, the state's subsidy program, provides differential rates of

payments for urban and rural counties based on the results of periodic Market Rate Survey (MRS). The most recent MRS is under analysis for possible higher payment rates to be made. The LA will analyze child care accessibility in the state and explore options to offer alternative payment rates in areas of low access to high quality child care, especially for infants and toddlers, to improve supply and quality of child care in those areas. SC requires child care providers to participate in the state's QRIS program to receive subsidy. The implementation of COVID-300 vouchers (eligibility raised to 300% of poverty), provision of enrollment award of \$2,000, and the streamlining of the quality rating process is showing an impact in increased participation in QRIS which, in turn should increase access to high quality child care for all children, including low-income families utilizing child care subsidies. As Head Start programs complete the eligibility process to participate in the QRIS (anticipated by September 30, 2021), this should substantially increase statewide participation in the QRIS especially in the more rural areas of the state. Initiatives in the PDG grant support cross-agency partnerships with multiple state and non-profit organizations designed to facilitate coordination among agencies to identify gaps in supply of child care. ABC Quality will explore the enhancement of the enrollment award to include higher awards for programs which enter ABC Quality with higher levels than Level C (i.e. increasingly higher awards for Level B, B+, A, and A+). Other strategies under consideration will be regular stipends based on quality levels at designated intervals.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.4.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: The South Carolina Program for Infant/Toddler Care (SCPITC) has grown in size and expanded its work since 2020. SCPITC began a program evaluation in February 2020 led by researchers at the Institute for Families in Society housed at the Arnold School of Social Work at the University of South Carolina. Due to significant disruptions to the early care and education system caused by the global pandemic beginning in March 2020, in-person services were put on hold and the Infant/Toddler Specialists (ITS) shifted their focus to supporting providers' physical and mental health by providing resources like KN95 masks and gloves, as well as providing a listening ear and emotional support to providers during this time of extreme stress. There were numerous challenges when attempting to measure pre-, mid-, and post-service plan changes because of the ongoing pandemic's effect on the child care workforce and SCPITC's service delivery. Another major disruption occurred with the primary researcher, Carl Sorensen, died unexpectedly in July 2022. A new primary researcher, Tristan Collier, MA was hired in September 2022, after which the program evaluation survey process was moved to a new survey system.

The high rate of staff turnover in child care settings created great difficulty in receiving completed pre-, mid-, and post-service plan measures. SCPITC's relationship-based model

spans 13-15 months on average, and includes monthly manualized trainings followed by bi-weekly onsite observation and strengths-based coaching, as well as parallel director support and coaching. The goal of SCPITC's services is to implement relationship-based caregiving by using SCPITC's Six Essential Policies, based on WestEd's PITC. Program participants (infant/toddler teachers and directors) are asked to complete several online evaluation surveys: Pre-service plan (Prior to the first training), mid-point of the service plan (after the 6th training), post-service plan (at the end of the 12th and final training), and satisfaction surveys after each of the 12 monthly training sessions.

The evaluation was funded through September 2023, so the research team analyzed the data available through August 2023. After cleaning up the dataset to remove incomplete and duplicate surveys, the sample size (n=28) is far too small to draw conclusions from the data. Data collection is ongoing, and if funding is approved for FY 2024-2025, the researchers will analyze the additional data collected so that more accurate conclusions can be drawn.

A representative sample of participants from 2021-2023 was reviewed (n=166), and of the participants who worked at programs where a service plan was completed between January 2021-October 2023, only 59 of the sample's participants were present throughout the entire service plan, indicating that potentially only 36% of the programs' staff remained at the participating child care programs. The state does not currently have a universal mechanism to track turnover rates. The SC Endeavors data system relies on child care program administrators to add and remove employees within the data system, but with numerous competing priorities and ongoing staffing crises, updating the data system is challenging for child care directors.

SCPITC has expanded its reach and capacity in addition to strengthening cross-agency partnerships. Four ITS specialize in providing relationship-based coaching and training to staff at programs with child care licensing (CCL) violations in their infant/toddler classrooms to bring the programs back into compliance and equipping them with knowledge and tools to provide child care that protects the health and safety of infants and toddlers.

One of the most frequent referrals from CCL is safe sleep. During the reporting period, 229 individuals received training on safe sleep practices from SCPITC as a result of referrals from CCL. SCPITC developed and is piloting a statewide child care safe sleep designation, called Sleep Safe SC. SC's current child care laws and regulations do not require infant caregivers outside of ABC Quality to complete training on using safe sleep practices. SCPITC is working to increase the number of caregivers at all regulated facilities to complete safe sleep training through the designation to protect infants and reduce the use of unsafe sleep practices, therefore also

reducing the number of licensing violations for unsafe sleep.

The Sleep Safe SC designation has been developed in collaboration with the SC Birth Outcomes Initiative Safe Sleep Workgroup, a statewide interdisciplinary workgroup including medical providers, social workers, and law enforcement. SCPITC staff consulted with the Chair of the SC chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and other medical providers on the Sleep Safe SC Designation training to align with the most updated recommendations from the AAP as well as SCDSS CCL to ensure that messaging is consistent with SCDSS CCL licensing policies and procedures. The designation will fully roll out in January 2024.

SCPITC has partnered with ABC Quality on the initiative Quality Care by Design (QCBD) funded by the Preschool Development Grant B-5 to increase the quality of the classroom environment through the combined efforts of redesigning the classroom and providing coaching and training on relationship-based infant/toddler care. In this reporting period 18 programs and 77 classrooms participated in QCBD. Program staff received training from PITC Faculty and national consultant Louis Torelli, as well as individualized onsite coaching and training from the ITS. To build on the state's capacity to sustain this initiative, SCPITC hired a Senior Designer who is a certified Infant/Toddler specialist with a bachelor's degree in Interior Design and a master's degree in Early Childhood Education. This program will be sustained with CCDF funds through the continued partnership with ABC Quality and SCPITC.

Further supports to the early care and education workforce include two signature training events: Baby Jam and Advanced Training. The 2023 Baby Jam consisted of two sessions: Trauma-Responsive Care led by Dr. Holly Higgins-Wilcher from the State Capacity Building Center and Reframing Challenging Behavior, led by Dr. Mackenzie Soniak and Amaris Gibson from the SC Infant Mental Health Association. 336 caregivers received DSS-approved credit for the virtual Baby Jam. Of the attendees who completed the voluntary post-event satisfaction survey (n=69), 94.2% indicated they were highly satisfied with the event and the remaining 5.8% indicating they were somewhat satisfied. Through a partnership with the SC School for the Deaf and the Blind, SCPITC provided two ASL interpreters for the event and will continue that service in future sessions.

Advanced Training is SCPITC's special training event for individuals in the state who have previously completed training in the PITC approach, either through the WestEd PITC Global Trainer Institute or through the graduate course Principles of Infant/Toddler Caregiving: The Program for Infant/Toddler Care offered through the University of South Carolina. Featured speaker for this year was Louis Torelli who shared his approach to designing early childhood environments that promote safety, supervision, exploration, play and learning.

The SCPITC Director is an appointee to the Governor's Advisory Committee on the Regulation of Child Care Facilities as a parent representative. She recommended adding 8 specific regulations regarding the use of safe sleep practices, which the committee approved. The following regulations have been added to the draft documents for Family Child Care Homes for the proposal being submitted to the General Assembly in January 2024. Note: Regulations for Group Child Care Homes, Faith-Based Centers, and Licensed Centers are still under review by the Advisory Committee.

Proposed regulations include:

- a) Infants shall be placed on their backs to sleep in a crib, on a flat, non-inclined, CPSC-certified crib mattress.
- b) Cribs shall be approved and meet compliance. The crib mattress shall be firm and covered with a tight fitted sheet.
- c) No monitoring or positioning devices shall be placed in the crib.
- d) No other items, bedding, or soft toys shall be in the crib except a pacifier that is not attached in any way to the infant.
- e) An appropriate, non-restrictive sleep sack shall be permitted.
- f) Infants shall not sleep anywhere other than a crib and this includes, but is not limited to, bouncy seats, swings, high chairs, sofas, or car seats.
- g) If an infant arrives asleep in a car seat, the parent/guardian or staff member shall immediately remove the infant and place them on their back in that infant's assigned crib. When an infant falls asleep on a surface other than a CPSC-certified crib, the infant shall be moved immediately to their crib.
- h) Infants shall not be swaddled.

The infrastructure for improving the quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers is well-established in providing a structured framework for certified PITC Specialists to deliver their specialized knowledge to infant/toddler programs statewide as described in 7.4.2 of the 2022-2024 CCDF State Plan. Surveys are conducted at pre-, mid- and post service to participating caregivers. Information about programs receiving the services is maintained and tracked. SCPITC tracks each participant's attendance and eligibility for training stipends by name and contact information, number of infants and toddlers served, ABC level, number of scholarships. As noted, this has been a difficult year for reporting with extensive staff turnover.

**6) Establishing, expanding, modifying, or maintaining a statewide system of child care resource and referral services**

*Goal: Lead agency provides: services to involve families in the development of their children, information on a full range of child care options, and assistance to families in selecting child care that is appropriate for the family's needs and is high quality as determined by the lead agency.*

**6.1 Spending – Child Care Resource and Referral Services**

**6.1.1 Spending – Child Care Resource and Referral Services:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to establish, expand, modify, or maintain a statewide CCR&R during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to **establish, expand, modify, or maintain a statewide CCR&R** during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$2468893**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent

No

**6.2 Progress Update**

**6.2.1 Progress Update – Child Care Resource and Referral Services:**

Establishing, expanding, modifying or maintaining a statewide system of child care resource and referral services.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.5.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **The SC CCR&R is working with the LA to develop and implement a comprehensive data system in coordination with LA DECE divisions ABC Quality and SC Endeavors and other partner agencies including SC SCIC and SC PITC. This data system will capture the operations, professional development, and progress of technical assistance provided to child care programs motivated to improve their overall quality, participating in ABC Quality, starting a child care program, or engaged in improving health and safety compliance of child care licensing regulations. The system collects data on specific target areas that are aligned with child care licensing and ABC Quality Standards. Analysis of the data will be explored to fully understand the impact of technical assistance, consultation and professional development on the quality of child care programs. Another function of this new system is a SC CCR&R specific child care database that is connected and based on individual child care program’s organization profiles listed in SC Endeavors Statewide workforce registry. This information contains licensing information, ABC Quality participation and general program details. A newly developed SC CCR&R profile will be available for programs to complete that provide more detailed information that the programs will supply including enrollment, vacancies, rates, meals, and additional services. These profiles will be accessed by parents searching a web search on the SC CCR&R website and by SC CCR&R staff to provide up-to-date, real time information to parents to assist in their child care search and promote parental choice. This data source will be able to provide an overview of the supply and demand of child care throughout the state and will help to develop initiatives and services to meet better meet the needs of child care programs, families and communities.**

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.5.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **CCDF quality funds have been used by the Lead Agency to establish, sustain, and enhance the statewide SC CCR&R program. The SC CCR&R operates under a CCDF-funded contract between the Lead Agency and the USC-College of Education. The office is in the Yvonne & Schuyler Moore Child Development Center on the campus of University of South Carolina. SC CCR&R provides services to statewide to families, child care programs and the community.**

**SC CCR&R’s Family Services promotes high-quality, affordable child care options for families through customized referrals to child care programs including centers, family child care, Pre-kindergarten, faith-based, Head Start, and after school programs. Each family receives information regarding licensing standards, types and hours of care, ABC Quality level if enrolled,**



and other quality indicators to assist families in their search for programs. Families are provided information on free or subsidized child care programs including the SC Child Care Scholarships, First Steps 4K, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, and customized support to families applying for the Dual Language scholarships and Homeless Initiative scholarships. Families can work directly with the team of trained Family Referral Specialists via phone, email, text, or chat through the customized referral system. During the reporting period, 1,138 child care referrals were provided to families, of those, 906 families requested referrals to SC Scholarship programs or other free/low-cost child care options including Head Start, First Steps 4K, or State-Funded Pre-K programs. Enhanced referral support was provided to 361 families experiencing homelessness and 219 families that have dual language learners. The SC CCR&R Family Referral team provided general assistance to 384 families navigating the SC Scholarship process and referrals to resources and/or other support organizations to 504 families. In addition, families can search for child care through the SC CCR&R website [www.sc-ccrr.org](http://www.sc-ccrr.org) utilizing the enhanced referral search that allows users to search for programs based on their needs. Families can search by location, type of care, schedule, quality level, vacancies, cost, etc. and can compare three programs side by side. This platform is mobile friendly and available in English and Spanish. During the reporting period, there were 12,324 visits to the child care search portion of the SC CCR&R website with 4,471 actual child care searches conducted. The Family Services Team has worked through the reporting period to further develop more in-depth intake information from families seeking child care to build more demographic data on where families are looking, what type of care, additional services needed, types/size of family, issues in finding care, etc.

SC CCR&R's Program Services provides professional development through targeted technical assistance and research-based training to family child care providers, child care centers, directors, and staff. Through three teams of Quality Coaches (Compliance Team, Quality Team, and Family Child Care Team) programs statewide receive customized, relationship based technical assistance and certified training to address specific goals and areas of improvement based on an agreed upon action plan with the program. . The following information provides an overview of the SC CCR&R training in the past year:

Total number of trainings: 136

53 ☒ in-person sessions

41 -Conference sessions

42 -Virtual Trainings

Total number of training hours offered: 4,681

Total Number of participants -breakdown:

SC CCR&R # of Training Participants	Total Count	Classroom	Conference	Web Based
	2748	687	622	1,439
Child Growth & Development	206	103	45	58
Child Guidance	173	73	21	79
Curriculum Activities	334	77	97	160
Health /Safety	840	288	110	442
Nutrition	23			23
Professional Development	574	143	175	256
Program Administration	598	3	174	421

During the reporting period the SC CCR&R Quality Coaches provided 2,719 customized technical assistance sessions with child care centers, family child care programs, group child care programs, and license-exempt programs in the following areas: business start-up support, grant opportunities, health & safety, compliance issues, quality improvement, supporting dual language learners, incorporating cultural competencies and general assistance.

The Family Child Care Team has in the past year continued to provide the previous year's PDG work with FCC Community of Practices and moved into planning and implementation of the SC Family Child Care (FCC) Early Learning Network. The SC CCR&R provided a free 2-day statewide conference for Family Child Care Providers. The SC CCR&R "Strengthening Systems" conference was attended by 142 family child care providers and the 38 participants of the FCC Community of Practices were recognized for their work.

The Program Services Team collaboratively worked with the Lead Agency's Child Care Licensing Department to implement a child care business start-up funding opportunity for eligible individuals called the SC SUCCEss Grant. During the reporting period, the teams developed a new on-line grant module through the SC Endeavors registry system that allows for all grant activities and transactions to be tracked in one system that is utilized by SC CCR&R staff, Child Care Licensing staff and participants. In May 2023, The SUCCEss Grant was opened to eligible providers with SC CCR&R providing training and technical assistance to programs with a focus on business practices, providing high quality child care and state regulations while Child Care Licensing provides oversight of licensing process and approvals of payments. During the reporting period, 62 individuals attended the SC SUCCEss Grant Introductory meeting and were in the process of applying, and 21 programs were accepted into the grant project.

The SC CCR&R Community Outreach Services works at a local, regional, and state level to involve the early care and education community and the public in understanding the importance of high-quality child care. The SC CCR&R offered five free child care conferences for early care and education providers and staff. These events were available both in-person and virtual. Through these conferences, 816 child care providers attended to participate in networking and professional development opportunities. The SC CCR&R offered five free child care conferences for early care and education providers and staff. These events were available both in-person and virtual. Community outreach events, and networking meetings provide an opportunity for SC CCR&R to establish and strengthen relationships with organizations, school districts, employers, and communities to promote early care and education initiatives and programs. During the reporting period, SC CCR&R attended 92 outreach events including conference booths, seminars, and presentations. SC CCR&R staff provide input and guidance on 20 various advisory boards and committees dedicated to improving early care and education systems. The SC CCR&R continues to build working relationships with SC business community and workforce organizations. To increase awareness of child care needs and help the business community identify options for their workforce, the SC CCR&R developed an on-line Employer Supported Child Care Guide, an Employee Needs Survey, and in coordination with the Child Care Research Team at the University of South Carolina developed an on-line, interactive map with county level child care demographics to help demonstrate needs statewide.

Through the documentation of required training hours, 100% of the early childhood workforce utilizes the SC Endeavors registry system. In addition, 95% of the workforce provided information on employment within the system. To ensure the most accurate employment information is captured within the system, SC Endeavors receives weekly imports from the Child Care Licensing system regarding regulated programs. Programs can also connect through a toggle to the SC CCR&R system to further update their program profile, providing even more detailed information such as enrollment, vacancies, rates, meals and additional services. These profiles are accessible by parents searching for child care. To date, 94 programs have updated their program profile reporting vacancies and information for parents.

ABC Quality levels are also updated within the system through data imports. The majority of individuals working in ABC Quality programs provided education data by participating in the career ladder initiative.

The SC Endeavors registry captures all technical assistance activities for all funded partner organizations including SC Inclusion Collaborative, SC Program for Infant/Toddler Care, SC Child Care Resource & Referral, Florence-Darlington First Steps. Each funded partner has an

endorsement within the system that relates to each program. Child Care programs are able to apply for TA initiatives within the system under the quality tab of their organization profile. The following options are provided within a menu including ABC Quality, SC CCR&R Business Start-up, SC CCR&R Health & Safety Practices, SC PITC CQI, SCIC General Inclusion Support, SCIC Cara's Kit, Pyramid Pieces Program Wide Implementation, and Florence-Darlington Family Child Care support. Certified Technical Assistance providers enter events that relate to these cases or as individual TA events. The data collected is related to specific target areas that are aligned with child care licensing and ABC Quality Standards. Not only does the system provide a streamlined way for TA providers to enter events; but also allows the activities to be visible to programs as well. The programs and TA partners are able to view the activities of other partners working within the system and allow a director to review events and track the professional development and progress within their program.

**7) Facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspection, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards**

*Goal: To ensure child care providers maintain compliance with lead agency licensing, inspection, monitoring, and health and safety standards and training.*

**7.1 Complaints about providers**

**7.1.1 Number of Complaints about providers:**

How many complaints were received regarding providers during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **1140**

**7.1.2 Spending - Complaints about providers:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity (including maintaining a hotline)?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

**7.2 Licensing Staff**

**7.2.1 Number of Licensing Staff:**

How many licensing staff positions were there in the state or territory during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023? Number of staff **56 Licensing Specialists, 4 Regional Program Managers, and 4 Regional Supervisors**

**7.2.2 Spending – Licensing Staff:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

### **7.3 Health and Safety Standards Coaching and Technical Assistance**

#### **7.3.1 Coaching or technical assistance on health and safety standards as a result of inspection:**

How many child care programs received coaching or technical assistance to improve their understanding and adherence to CCDF health and safety standards as a result of an inspection or violation during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023? **90**

#### **7.3.2 Spending - Coaching or technical assistance on health and safety standards as a result of inspection:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

## 7.4 Spending - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards

### 7.4.1 Spending - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspections, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$68897152**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

## 7.5 Progress Update

### 7.5.1 Progress Update - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards:

Facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspection, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.6.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **ABC Quality captures compliance with the SC 15-Hour Health and Safety Pre-Service Certificate or completion of ECD 101, both of which satisfy the health and safety requirement. Measurable indicators include the compliance rate for employees in ABC Quality programs. The Health and Safety Pre-Service Certificate is a part of the ABC Eligibility Requirements which must be met in order to enroll in ABC Quality. The new management system from NWN now has the capability to connect individuals in the registry to employers. A goal for ABC Quality in 2022 is to assure that all ABC participants are fully enrolled in the Endeavors system with an assigned career level and connected to their employer. Non-ABC Quality programs can be measured as well. SC Licensing Regulations stipulate one annual unannounced review visit per child care program to ensure compliance with state standards. Compliance with state health and safety requirements, mandatory training requirements, teacher-child ratios, etc. are basic indicators of quality. Similar announced visits are conducted at child care facilities during the application and renewal processes. Additionally, the state can make a visit to a child care program when the LA has received a complaint. These review/complaint visits are the primary source of data on compliance to state standards. The CCL specialists inspect all elements related to licensing compliance, including but not limited to necessary documentation,**

teacher/child ratios, and health and safety standards. CCL specialists also document the visit and issue citations of non-compliance when deficiencies are found. Deficiencies and review visits are measurable indicators of compliance to state standards. ABC Quality assessors are assigned responsibility for assuring that license-exempt providers enrolled in ABC Quality are compliant to minimum health and safety requirements. Results of the health and safety checklist are posted on the (<http://www.scchildcare.org>) [www.scchildcare.org](http://www.scchildcare.org) website.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.6.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **Child Care Licensing facilitated compliance during inspections, monitoring against the regulations for Licensed Centers, Licensed Group Child Care Providers, Licensed and Registered Family Child Care Homes and FFN Providers through annual visits, renewal visits, new application visits and complaint visits.** There were 2,223 annual visits completed in FFY October 1, 2022-September 30, 2023. Licensing Specialist conducted 1,414 renewal visits in FFY October 1, 2022-September 30, 2023. Additionally, there were 232 new application visits conducted in FFY October 1, 2022-September 30, 2023.

ABC Quality updated their program manuals to ensure that programs were meeting all 11 Health and Safety requirements during the eligibility portion of the review. Health and Safety policies were added that show program and staff compliance that include Health and Safety Pre-service certification as part of eligibility requirements. To support programs writing policies for the 11 Health and Safety topics that meet all the criteria ABC Quality created templates that programs can utilize. These templates are accessible on the website and are fillable for the user. In addition, group size requirements were added to program types to include licensed centers and ABC Quality license-exempt programs. Programs were notified and advised of these new requirements through emails, manual updates, webinars, town hall meetings and onsite advisement by the Quality Assessor. Seventy (70) ABC Quality License-exempt centers received a health and safety inspection during the reporting period. All programs participating in ABC Quality must meet program and staff eligibility.



**8) Evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs and services, including evaluating how programs positively impact children**

*Goal: Lead agency investment in effective quality improvement strategies using reliable data from evaluation and assessment*

**8.1 Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs**

**8.1.1 Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs:**

What measure(s) or tool(s) were used to evaluate and assess the quality of and effective practice in center-based programs during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

QRIS

CLASS

ERS

FCCERS

ITERS

State evaluation tool. Describe In October of 2022, ABC Quality launched the redesigned the assessment process for programs to ensure all programs receive the same assessment which assigns a quality level. This was a change from a block system to a hybrid rating system. To implement this process, ABC Quality redesigned all the assessment tools being used in programs.

The comprehensive process now includes 3 major components: Eligibility, Structural Quality, and Process Quality. Each of these components include an assessment process, which is detailed and specific to content. Eligibility includes all of the Federal Mandates to operate with CCDF funding. Structural Quality is assessing program level policies, procedures, staff education and professional development, and practices that support children and families through a submission of a portfolio.

Process Quality examines the teaching practices occurring day to day in child care programs, using a state developed assessment known as the Intentional Teaching Tool (ITT). The ITT is a classroom assessment designated by age group (Infant Toddler, Preschool, and School Age) and designed for child care programs. These process quality assessments, while snapshots, are expected to reflect the overall experiences of children. Once scored, the assessment showcases a program's strengths in the element of Intentional Teaching Practices, to include the following six standards of: Responsive and Sensitive Care, Language

**and Communication, Guidance, Program Structure, Early Learning, and Environment.**

- Core Knowledge and Competency Framework
- Other. Describe
- Do not evaluate and assess quality and effective practice

**8.1.2 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

- Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

- No

**8.2 Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs**

**8.2.1 Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs:**

What measure(s) or tool(s) were used to evaluate and assess the quality of and effective practice in family child care programs during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

- QRIS
- CLASS
- ERS
- FCCERS
- ITERS
- State evaluation tool. Describe **ABC Quality uses an instate developed assessment tool to evaluate the quality of family-based program. Licensed/registered family child care homes and licensed family child care group homes are eligible to participate in the QRIS. All family child care program types are assessed using assessment tools for quality levels of B+/B and C. Family child care programs choose the quality level they would like to participate in ABC**

**Quality.** Programs meet all the mandatory requirements for the chosen quality level and are assessed according to the standards outlined in the applicable assessment tool. The Level B+/B assessment tool includes the following standards: regulatory requirements, administration, staff qualifications and professional development, health, safety and well-being, and family and community partnerships. Family child care programs must meet all mandatory requirements and score 80% on the onsite assessment to receive a quality level of B. Family child care programs that meet all mandatory requirements and score 100% on the onsite assessment receive a quality level of B+. The Level C assessment tool includes the following standards: regulatory requirements, administration, staff qualification and development, health safety and well-being and family communication. Programs must meet all the mandatory requirements to receive a quality level of C. In addition to these mandatory standards, a program receives an onsite assessment which includes observing caregiver and child interactions, activities and the environment for levels B+/B. Level C programs receive an onsite observation to review the environment.

Age-appropriate child development is measured at Level B+/B during the assessment of caregiver and child interactions and activities. However, revisions of the family child care standards are currently underway. These standards will measure teaching strategies that support age-appropriate child development. These revisions will include measurement of teaching strategies that support age-appropriate child development with the development of one family child care assessment for all quality levels.

- Core Knowledge and Competency Framework
- Other. Describe
- Do not evaluate and assess quality and effective practice

#### **8.2.2 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

### 8.3 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs

#### 8.3.1 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs, practice, or child development during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?  
**\$17042204**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

### 8.4 Progress Update

#### 8.4.1 Progress Update - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs:

Evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs and services, including evaluating how programs positively impact children.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.7.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **South Carolina measures the quality and effectiveness of child care programs and services being offered with the ABC Quality tools. ABC Quality is a broad five-tier-quality structure. It includes standards based on research and practice focused on health and safety, staff education and qualifications, supportive staff-child interactions, meaningful learning activities and child centered environment. The five quality levels are A+, A, B+, B, and C. The structure and content of the assessment system are in the final stage of revisions to update the content to current best practices, to provide a continuum of quality using one assessment tool for all levels, and to redesign the tool to encourage continuous quality improvement through the use of a points-based system. The revision will be implemented in phases beginning with center-based programs in the fall of 2021. The new standards have been built from the existing Level B standards platform with major upgrades and expansion to include Level C as well as Levels A and A+. The Structural Quality Elements 1 through 4 are scored based on a portfolio review and are weighted 20% of the total score. The Process Quality Element is scored through an on-site**

unannounced visit and is weighted 80% of the total score. The LA has been working with the Research, Evaluation, and Measurement (REM) Center (formerly the Office of Program Evaluation at UofSC since 2012 to provide ongoing evaluation and improvement to ABC Quality. This process has included data collection and analysis to inform revisions of and provide validity evidence for four state-based tools: Infant Toddler Intentional Teaching Tool, Preschool Intentional Teaching Tool, School Age Intentional Teaching Tool, and Family Child Care Intentional Teaching Tool. The goals are to have state-developed tools that 1) are aligned, 2) incorporate awareness and a strengths-based perspective related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, 3) focus on continuous quality improvement to include validity and reliability studies and continued field-based and organizational feedback loops to make rapid revisions, and 4) lead to higher quality early care and education for all South Carolina children. When the Infant and Toddler teaching tool revisions were complete, the REM Center evaluators conducted a concurrent validity study comparing the Infant Toddler Teaching Tool with the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale, a nationally recognized QRIS tool that affirmed the quality of the state-developed tool for this age group. The Preschool Intentional Teaching Tool was initially developed and revised in 2019 based on data and feedback from field-based use of the revised Infant Toddler Intentional Teaching Tool. To gain additional feedback to inform content validity, the collaborative sought expert review in three areas: content, diversity/equity, and inclusion. This expert review process was also extended to the Infant Toddler Teaching Tool to continue to explore alignment and best practices across the tools. Ten reviews were completed in 2020 – 2021 representing the Preschool Intentional Teaching Tool and/or the Infant Toddler Intentional Tool. REM Center evaluators coded the expert review comments, and DSS compiled a demographically and geographically diverse internal team to review and discuss the comments. The Preschool Intentional Teaching Tool was updated based on the expert review and prepared for a field-based feedback process to occur from June-August 2021. The field-based feedback process involves data collection from child care center directors and preschool teachers from representative programs across South Carolina. REM Center evaluators will analyze the feedback gained through surveys and focus groups and provide quantitative and qualitative data to inform revisions to the Preschool Intentional Teaching Tool. In addition to collecting stakeholder feedback, the REM Center is conducting a literature review of outcomes-based research to situate the standards within the literature and is also aligning the Preschool Intentional Teaching Tool with other national and state standards to identify similarities and differences across standards/assessment tools. These include: 1) the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Early Learning Program Accreditation Standards, 2) Head Start Program Performance Standards, 3) South Carolina’s Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers/Caregivers and Program Administrators, and 4) South Carolina’s Early Learning Standards. The School Age Intentional Teaching Tool is embarking on a similar process

that included feedback from eight expert reviewers in April 2021, which was coded by REM Center evaluators. A DSS team that is demographically and geographically diverse is incorporating revisions to the tool based on this feedback. A field-based feedback process including a representative sample of centers using multiple data collection methods will occur in August-October 2021. The field-based feedback will be analyzed by REM Center evaluators to inform revisions to the School Age Intentional Teaching Tool. Finally, the Family Child Care Intentional Teaching Tool will use a similar process in 2022. These plans will continue through 2022 with follow-up planned for 2023 and 2024. A new initiative (Building for Our Future) to create a companion CQI infrastructure to incentivize improvement is being implemented through the PDG -Birth-5 grant awarded to the LA. This new CQI process is anticipated to continue with CCDF funds once the infrastructure is created and the PDG Birth-5 grant is completed. All of the assessment indicators are measurable and can be tracked both individually and aggregated.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.7.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: In October of 2022, ABC Quality launched the redesigned the assessment process for programs to ensure all programs receive the same assessment which assigns a quality level. This was a change from a block system to a hybrid rating system. At this time, this revision of the process is only impacting child care centers. ABC Quality plans to expand this hybrid approach to Family/Group child care in the coming years.

To implement this process, ABC Quality redesigned all the assessment tools being used in programs. The comprehensive process now includes 3 major components: Eligibility, Structural Quality, and Process Quality. Each of these components include an assessment process, which is detailed and specific to content. Eligibility includes all of the Federal Mandates to operate with CCDF funding. Structural Quality is assessing program level policies, procedures, staff education and professional development, and practices that support children and families through a submission of a portfolio.

Process Quality examines the teaching practices occurring day to day in child care programs, using a state developed assessment known as the Intentional Teaching Tool (ITT). The ITT is a classroom assessment designated by age group (Infant Toddler, Preschool, and School Age) and designed for child care programs. These process quality assessments, while snapshots, are expected to reflect the overall experiences of children. Once scored, the assessment showcases a program's strengths in the element of Intentional Teaching Practices, to include the following six standards of: Responsive and Sensitive Care, Language and Communication, Guidance, Program Structure, Early Learning, and Environment.

To ensure consistency in the assessment of each of these components, assessors undergo a process of quality assurance called reliability. This is conducted by highly trained and experienced Anchors, who provide overall guidance and mentorship to Quality Assessors. This process includes completion a series of 2 days trainings on each of three Intentional Teaching Tool age groups: Infant Toddler, Preschool, and School Age. After training, a quality assessor is paired with a veteran assessor to complete at least 3 practice reviews per age group. Additionally, at least 1 practice reliability visit is conducted between an anchor and quality assessor. Following the practice visits, Quality Assessors must reach 85% consensus over three consecutive classroom assessments, when paired with an Anchor for each age group of the Intentional Teaching Tools. All Quality Assessors repeat a reliability assessment twice annually for each Intentional Teaching Tool to ensure a score of 85%.

Initial assessor training on the Intentional Teaching Tools (ITT) occurred over the summer of 2022. Following these trainings, the reliability process began with the quality assessor team in September of 2022. All the quality assessors who were trained completed the reliability of all Intentional Teaching Tools by the beginning of June 2023. 6 additional Quality Assessors were hired, completed training and began reliability on the Intentional Teaching Tools after October 1, 2022.

The following are the average reliability scores for Anchors and Assessors on the Intentional teaching Tools:

Infant Toddler: Quality Anchor = 95.75%; Quality Assessor= 92.56%

Preschool: Quality Anchor= 95.92%; Quality Assessor= 90.58%

School Age: Quality Anchor= 95.75%; Quality Assessor= 92.11%

Ensuring consistency and accuracy, continues through the final rating a program receives, as it is verified by 3 people. The Quality Assessor completes the initial assessments and reports for structural quality and process quality. The reports are read by Anchors, who verify the accuracy and completeness of the information. Once approved by an Anchor, a Quality Administrator reviews and finalizes the score and the quality rating within the system.

In December of 2022, ABC Quality implemented a restructuring plan for its organizational structure due to a complete revision of the ABC Quality Program Standards, launch of a new integrated data system, commitment to inter-rater reliability and significant increases in provider enrollments due to additional grant opportunities through CARES, ARP, and PDG

funding. In May of 2021, 1,146 programs were enrolled in ABC Quality, with an anticipated increase of 100 Head Start Programs. By October of 2022, there were 17 Quality Assessors and 1,351 programs currently enrolled in ABC Quality, which was an increase of 205 programs. This placed the average caseload at 79 programs. By the end of September 2023, there were 16 Quality Assessors, 2 Quality Assessor vacancies and 1262 programs currently enrolled in ABC Quality. This reduced the average caseload to 70 programs. Child Care Licensing establishes caseload sizes by best practices recommended by the National Association of Regulatory Agencies (NARA). In the 2022-2024 CCDF State Plan, ABC Quality made recommendations to the LA to include a caseload of no more than 50 programs, similar to Child Care Licensing to adequately. To adequately ensure timely and quality visits. With the updated caseload numbers, it is estimated that a minimum of 25 Quality Assessors are needed. Continued growth will require recalculations.

Each program that is assessed by ABC Quality receives a detailed report on the program as a whole (Structural Quality) as well as each classroom observation (Process Quality). Part of the restructuring included adding 4 anchors to assure reliability and provide ongoing support for the team of quality assessors. These 4 positions were in place by December 2022 as well as an additional Project Manager. This role serves to design, manage, and implement quality initiatives as well as support ongoing data system development.

ABC Quality implemented the use of the completed revised center-based standards (revised in January of 2023) during the reporting period for all licensed and license-exempt centers. This delay was due to COVID recovery efforts, system redesigns, reliability for all Quality Assessors and training of center-based child care programs. With staffing shortages, ABC Quality prioritized reviews to include new enrollments and rating with Pending levels.

ABC Quality continued work on revisions of the family/group child care standards during the reporting period. The revision team was in development of one tool for all quality levels (A+, A, B+, B and C) representing a mixed-age group. The framework for the family/group child care assessment tool will include eligibility requirements, structural standards, and process quality standards. Programs will be assessed on program administration, staff education and professional development, child well-being, family communication, engagement, and cultural competence, and intentional teaching practices. Programs will meet eligibility criteria and be awarded points based on strengths as part of the structural and process quality reviews. By the end of the reporting period the review had completed the revisions of the process quality standards. These standards went out for review and edit to our Quality Anchor and Assessor team. Recommendations were adopted for edit. The Research, Evaluation and Measurement



(REM) team of the College of Education at the University of South Carolina provided technical expertise on the investigation of ABC Quality standards. In October of 2023, REM will begin the validity process of the family child care standard revisions. The revised standards will be reviewed by expert reviewers in-state and at the national in areas of content, equity and inclusion, as well as conducting surveys and focus groups for the revised family child care standards. The Building for Our Future initiative, creating a companion CQI infrastructure to incentivize program quality improvement has been postponed, with the re-prioritization of reviews because it was not the appropriate time to begin this initiative. Child care centers needed to have time and ability to focus on the revised standards before beginning another initiative. Plans are to delay after all programs have had an initial review using the new standards. Continued partnership with REM's evaluation data summary to evaluate QCBD scope of work and the development of a sustainability plan to create future opportunities for early childhood programs participating in ABC Quality. It is anticipated that this initiative will be continued with CCDG funds with the end of the PDG funding. The REM and ABC Quality leadership team submitted a transcript based on the proposal presented at the 2022 AERA Conference in San Diego. The name of the manuscript is Validity Evidence for a State-Developed Process Quality Assessment in a Quality Rating and Improvement System. The name of the manuscript is Validity Evidence for a State-Developed Process Quality Assessment in a Quality Rating and Improvement System. The manuscript was submitted to the Journal of Early Childhood Research Quarterly. Even though the manuscript was not accepted the team plans to take into consideration feedback from the response and redevelop it for submittal to other publications.

Quality Care by Design (QCBD) is a funded project by the Birth-5 Preschool Development Grant (PDG) to improve the seamless transition to kindergarten through a mixed delivery system between child care programs and South Carolina First Steps 4K classrooms participating in ABC Quality program. The presence of 4K classrooms in early childhood programs highlighted equity differences between the infant, toddler and 3-year-old classroom environments compared to the 4K classroom environment in the area of teacher and classroom resources.

The QCBD goal is to increase the quality of infant, toddler and 3-year-old learning environments and increase the number of participating ABC Quality programs who meet the Environments indicators of the ABC Quality standards. As participating QCBD early childhood programs receive their on-site ABC Quality assessment, there is an expectation that the programs' environment quality level would increase in the infant, toddler and 3-year-old classrooms. Tracking this information will provide research data to determine the level of assistance early childhood programs need to increase the quality of the learning environment that directly impacts children's health, safety, learning experiences and well-being. In addition, the redesign

of the classroom environment has an impact on the teacher's well-being and job satisfaction. In 2024, QCBD will contact families with child(ren) in QCBD designed classrooms to complete an evaluation to obtain their feedback on their child's behavior and learning outcomes. The LA has the assistance of the University of South Carolina's Research, Evaluation and Measurement Center (REM) to conduct research on QCBD impact on children, teachers, and families.

Each QCBD participating program received a classroom design plan from Allison Becker, SC PITC Senior Designer with guidance from Louis Torelli, Design Consultant, biweekly on-site technical assistance from an assigned SC PITC Specialist, and materials to implement the design plan.

During October 1, 2022-September 20, 2023, 77 classrooms received a design plan, early learning materials and age-appropriate furniture to increase the quality of the learning environment for infants, toddlers and 3-year-olds. To ensure demographic equity, 18 early childhood programs throughout the 4 regions of South Carolina, the Pee Dee, Lowcountry, Midlands and Upstate participated in QCBD. A total of 1,390.5 hours of technical assistance was provided to implement QCBD project at the program from the SC PITC Specialist.

**\*Total QCBD PDG Funding: \$2,310,000**

In addition, Louis Torelli conducted monthly technical assistance and reviewed design case studies focused on the key elements of classroom design (e.g., neutral-colored walls, edited walls, natural hardwood furniture, play spaces, protected nap areas, etc.) with the SCPITC specialists to prepare for the implementation design plans.

COVID-19, general illnesses, staff turnover, supply chain delays, delivery of materials, and shortage of staff with early childhood education experience and/or education provides challenges to QCBD. In 2024, QCBD is developing innovative ways to ensure all children have access to high quality learning experiences in the learning environment.

## 9) Supporting child care providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation

*Goal: Support child care programs and FCCs in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation by a national accrediting body with demonstrated, valid, and reliable program standards of quality*

### 9.1 Accreditation Support

#### 9.1.1 Accreditation Support:

How many providers did the lead agency support in their pursuit of accreditation (e.g., financial incentives, technical assistance with the accreditation process, coaching/mentoring by accredited programs) during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

- Yes, providers were supported in their pursuit of accreditation
- a. Licensed center-based programs
  - b. License-exempt center-based programs
  - c. Licensed family child care homes
  - d. License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home)
  - e. Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy
- No lead agency support given to providers in their pursuit of accreditation.
- N/A. Describe:

#### 9.1.2 Spending – Accreditation Support:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

- Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on accreditation during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? \$

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent  
 No

## 9.2 Progress Update

### 9.2.1 Progress Update – Accreditation Support:

Supporting providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.8.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.  
**N/A  no use of CCDF funds for this. SC does not have plans for supporting accreditation.**

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.8.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **Even though the LA does not support a program's pursuit of accreditation, ABC Quality has created an accelerated pathway to rating within the development of the structural quality review as a recognition of the accomplishment. Child care centers who have obtained current documentation of NAEYC Accreditation are eligible for the accelerated pathway. The accelerated pathway means that the program bypasses the structural quality review. Programs who are eligible for accelerated pathway still must meet all eligibility criteria to participate in ABC Quality and receive an annual onsite observation for the process quality review (Intentional Teaching Tool). The program's quality score is based on 100 points received for structural quality review and actual points earned for the process quality review. The structural quality review is currently worth 15%, process quality is currently worth 80%, and ratio/group size is worth 5% of the total review.**

## 10) Supporting providers in the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development

*Goal: Assist programs to meet high-quality comprehensive program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development*

### 10.1 High-Quality Program Standards

#### 10.1.1 High-Quality Program Standards:

How did the state or territory help providers develop or adopt high quality program standards during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023?

QRIS, check which indicators the lead agency has established:

Health, nutrition, and safety of child care settings

Physical activity and physical development in child care settings

Mental health of children

Learning environment and curriculum

Ratios and group size

Staff/provider qualifications and professional development

Teacher/provider-child relationships

Teacher/provider instructional practices

Family partnerships and family strengthening

Other. Describe:

Early Learning Guidelines

State Framework. Describe

Core Knowledge and Competencies

Other. Describe

N/A – did not help provider develop or adopt high quality program standards

#### 10.1.2 Spending - High-Quality Program Standards:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to **support providers in the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development** during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$2896621**

- Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

- No

## 10.2 Progress Update

### 10.2.1 Progress Update - High-Quality Program Standards:

Supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.9.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

**Measurable indicators of progress that capture the quality initiatives in 7.2.1 include:**

**Section 7.2.1a:** Once the workforce registry is populated and a baseline is created, reports from the workforce registry can show individual caregiver and director progress toward higher educational achievements which can be aggregated to show statewide progress of the workforce. The T.E.A.C.H. scholarship initiative can show data on those attaining credentials and degrees in early childhood through the state’s technical college system and at 4 year colleges and universities.

**Section 7.2.1b:** Measurable indicators of progress include: number of ELS copies distributed: number of staff who have attended training related to use of ELS: number of training approvals that have linked the training to ELS domains; number of downloads of ADA compliant version

from the LA website; when completed, information on use of Spanish version of the ELS.

**Section 7.2.1c:** During the first year of full implementation, establishing a baseline for scores. Separate measures of progress meeting Structural Quality indicators, Process Quality indicators, compliance to Eligibility Requirements including item analysis and overall changes in quality levels. Measures related to impact of technical assistance provided for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). Progress on inter-rater reliability for assessors. Measures of caseload levels and status with measures related to organizational changes.

**Section 7.2.1d:** Number of programs and staff served through intense year-long training and technical assistance including staff turnover and dropouts. Impact of services on ABC Quality assessment scores and quality levels.

**Section 7.2.1e:** Measures of impact of CCR&R training and technical assistance services on ABC Quality assessment scores and quality levels.

**Section 7.2.1f:** Measures of impact of CCR&R training and technical assistance services on child care licensing deficiencies and corrective action plans. Measures of progress on inter-rater reliability for child care specialists.

**Section 7.2.1g:** Measures recommended by REM at UofSC to measure the effectiveness of the ABC Quality program assessment tool. Full use of the New World Now system which is designed to be an integrated data system that pulls from a variety of sources to link data needed for ABC Quality assessment tool and to track all technical assistance reported through the system.

**Section 7.2.1i:** High-quality program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development in many cases are developed in collaboration with state partners and include the use of contracted services in development. These contracts have specific requirements in the scope of work which are reviewed by the LA.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.9.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **The ABC Quality Assessment Tool addresses all quality indicators listed in 10.1.1 except Other. The quality indicators in the ABC Quality Assessment Tool are found in the three components of the Tool: Eligibility Requirements, Process Quality and Structural Quality. A new group size requirement was added to the eligibility requirements portion of the review. All new enrollments met this requirement to participate. A gradual phase of the requirement were**

implemented for currently participating ABC Quality programs as of October 1, 2023. Eligibility requirements are mandatory for enrollment. Process Quality is the observation tool used on-site in program classrooms. Ratio and group size indicators, which represent best practice were pulled out of the Intentional Teaching Tool and are now a standalone element of quality. Structural Quality is demonstrated by the creation of a portfolio describing how the program meets the indicators. The review system underwent major modifications and was expected to launch in early 2023.

We utilize technical assistance partners to help providers enhance, reinforce, and develop their program standards.

### **Inclusion Support**

The South Carolina Child Care Inclusion Collaborative (SCIC) is contracted by the Lead Agency to provide specialized training and technical assistance to child care programs to support children with disabilities enrolled in their programs.

Overview of professional development provided by SCIC between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023:

### **Training**

Training is one professional development strategy used by SCIC to introduce teachers and directors to specific strategies and practices with the goal of providing follow-up coaching or consultation to increase the fidelity of implementation. In-person or synchronous virtual training was delivered to 397 participants in 20 unique child care programs throughout the state. Collectively, 889 training hours were awarded to meet licensing and ABC Quality training requirements. SCIC offers asynchronous online modules to support the implementation of the ASQ in child care programs, to communicate the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) related to child care, and to promote strategies to enhance communication with families about development. There were 6,427 course completions across all six online courses offered.

### **Technical Assistance**

SCIC provided technical assistance (practice-based coaching or consultation) to 154 unique child care programs across 31 counties this year. Sixty-four percent of the programs were participating in the ABC Quality system. The average duration of the SCIC TA is 2.68 months. SCIC provides TA to programs to increase their use of SCIC Inclusive Teaching Practices.



## **Pyramid Model**

The LA supported the development of Program-Wide Pyramid Model implementation and a Behavior Support Network in child care through the PDG 0-5 renewal grant. These supports were not available in South Carolina prior to 2021. On April 30, 2023, the LA sustained funding for these initiatives with CCDF funds.

### **Program-wide Pyramid Model Implementation:**

Program-wide Pyramid Model implementation requires a 2-3 year commitment from the child care program to work with a Pyramid Model Program Coach. The Pyramid Model Program coach facilitates the program leadership team and provides practitioner coaching to support teacher use of Pyramid Model practices in their classroom. There were three child care programs in various stages of implementation between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023.

### **Behavior Support Network (BSN)**

The BSN was designed and implemented to support tier-3 interventions and prevent suspension and expulsion from child care settings because of the presence of persistent challenging behavior. Currently, there is one Behavior Specialist providing support for child care programs across the state. Between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023, the Behavior Specialist provided consultation to 13 unique child care programs Six of those programs were participating in ABC Quality. There were 136 onsite technical assistance visits resulting in 227.75 hours of support to assist providers. Since March 2022, the BSN received 13 referrals for children and their teacher for tier-3 individualized intervention and consultation supports. The average duration days from referral to closed is 130 days (range=6 days to 314 days). For the case that lasted 6 days, the program had already decided to disenroll the child before supports could get started.

### **Disposition of Cases as of September 30, 2023**

Goal met 6

Referral to other supports 3

Goal not met 2

Currently active 2

### **Participant feedback**

Feedback from directors, teachers, and families who received support from the BSN has been positive. The testimonial video highlights the benefits programs are receiving from BSN.

### **Help Me Grow SC as Centralized Access Point for Preschool Expulsion Support**

1. Establishment of Centralized Access Point for Preschool Expulsion Support: Completion Date:

**June 2023**

**\* Through partnership with DSS DECE and under current contract deliverables, successfully established Help Me Grow SC as the primary access point for preschool expulsion support.**

**2. Designation of HMG SC Care Coordinator as Point Person: Completion Date: June 2023**

**\* Appointed a dedicated Care Coordinator as point person for preschool expulsion support referrals.**

**3. Learning Sessions Conducted with Early Care and Education Support Programs: Started: June 2023- Completed: November 2023**

**\* Conducted 7 learning sessions with early care and education support programs to train HMG SC program staff in understanding and implementing referral protocols.**

**Participating Partners:**

**\* SCPITC**

**\* SCIC (Pyramid Pieces, Crawl, Behavior Support Specialist)**

**\* PEAR**

**\* SC Department of Education**

**\* SCCR&R**

**\* SC First Steps T/TA Program**

**\* SC First Steps 4K Program**

**4. Technological Updates for ECE Center-Based Referrals: Completion Date: October 2023**

**\* Completed extensive updates to the HMG SC STAR database and online referral form, enabling acceptance of ECE center-based referrals without child-specific information.**

**5. Establishment of Internal Triage Process for Referrals: Completion Date: November 2023**

**\* Created an internal triage process for ECE program support referrals.**

**\* Established quarterly meeting schedule with ECE Support Program small group to receive feedback from partners.**

**6. Collaboration with DSS DECE for Marketing Campaign and Material Development: In Progress:**

**\* Ongoing collaboration with DSS DECE to create a marketing campaign and develop materials for programs to disseminate to inform about the centralized access point.**

**\*This project is currently progressing steadily toward the campaign's launch and full implementation.**

**Summary: This progress report showcases the milestones achieved within the grant period, emphasizing the successful establishment of Help Me Grow SC as a centralized support system for preschool expulsion and the ongoing efforts to improve accessibility and support mechanisms for early care and education programs.**

**Due to high staff turnover for SC PITC providers and problems with implementation of New**

World Insight System with ABC Quality, problems continue to impact evaluation.

Supporting high quality program standards related to health, nutrition and physical activity.

In-house with ABC Quality are 3 health educators who provide technical assistance and training on ABC Quality high quality program standards relating to nutrition and physical activity.

During the reporting period the following activities were provided:

Nutrition Sessions in SC Endeavors system: 754 providers reached through 37 sessions. Topics included: nutrition and healthy eating, choosy eating and novel foods, plant-based nutrition, consuming more fruits and vegetables, and gardening.

Physical Activity Sessions in SC Endeavors system: 547 providers reached through 26 sessions. Topics included: being physically active indoors and out, outdoor play in every season, gross motor skill development, and more active classrooms.

Conference Events included 16 sessions for 758 providers (2022 SCAEYC-2 sessions; 2023 SCAEYC-3 sessions; 2023 SCECA 4 sessions; 2023 SC CCR&R Regional Conferences (x4)-5 sessions; PreK Jamboree-2 sessions).

13 programs were referred to Health Educators by ABC Quality assessors. TA topics included: menu compliance (x8); nutrition educator for parents (x1); choking prevention (x1); CACFP enrollment assistance (x1); and OPLE design plan (x1).

For the Health and Safety Materials Grant: 3 TA webinars were provided for 105 providers in September 2023. Approximately 950 programs applied through the portal designating OPLE as a desired funding category by the end of September 2023 (with the portal continuing to be open through Nov 2023). Health educators reached out via email or telephone to approximately 75-100 programs during September 2023 to gauge the level of assistance required for this grant. An estimated approximately 20-25 programs per region would need ongoing TA.

Measurable indicators of progress that capture the quality initiatives in 7.2.1 also include the grant with South Carolina Infant Mental Health Association (SCIMHA). SCIMHA is a collaborative multidisciplinary membership association for the infant, early childhood and family-serving workforce in South Carolina. With a professional staff of 36, SCIMHA serves as a hub for healthy social and emotional development resources including: IECMH Endorsement, certifications and training across all infant and young child serving disciplines and systems;

access to highly trained IECMH specialists who mentor early childhood professionals; connect caregivers to the resources and professional services critical to babies' well-being; and advocate for a connected system of care across the state to improve quality of life outcomes for infants. Signature programs and services include the PEAR (Partners for Early Attuned Relationships) Network which is a prevention-based program pairing a highly specialized infant mental health consultant with the adults who work with children ages 0-5 to support them as they learn to form secure relationships, manage emotions, and explore their environment. Other signature programs include Safe Babies Courts and Help Me Grow.

During this reporting period SCIMHA/Help Me Grow statistics include:

1,669 children served (699 female, 968 male; 445 African American, 823 White, 145 Hispanic/Latino, 126 more than one race

Number of children screened through HMG portal: 1,483

Total screenings: 2,186

Number of screening partners: 29

Planning continued to expand the initiative Grow Outdoors South Carolina, designed to naturalize the outdoor play and learning environments to support children's physical activity and well-being in child care programs. The LA agency had funded several small initiatives related to this concept by providing grants to demonstration sites and pilot sites and established an advisory committee but had difficulties with having adequate resources available to take it to scale. During this reporting period, the LA contracted with the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) to provide oversight and to work with the NC State University Natural Learning Initiative (NLI) to build infrastructure to include website development, professional development, and consultation. Contractors for evaluation of the project were identified. The LA provided a grant to the National Wildlife Federation's (NWF) Early Childhood Health Outdoors (ECHO), a division of NWF, to provide a team of landscape designers and educational specialist to work in each of the 4 regions of SC used by Child Care Licensing. By the end of the reporting period, key contracts/grants were in place for implementation of the initiative in the next reporting period.

## 11) Other activities to improve the quality of child care services

*Goal: To improve the quality of child care programs and services related to outcomes measuring improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry*

### 11.1 Sustainability funding to child care providers

#### 11.1.1 Sustainability funding to child care providers:

Did the state or territory continue to provide stabilization grants to child care providers using funds other than the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Stabilization funds during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

Yes. If yes, describe and check which types of providers were eligible and number served.

**SC Building Blocks Stabilization Grant Round 2 was launched to help support child care programs operating costs so that they can remain open during the pandemic.**

Licensed center-based programs **338**

License-exempt center-based programs **31**

Licensed family child care homes **260**

License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home)

In-home (care in the child's own home)

Other (explain)

No.

N/A. Describe:

#### 11.1.2 Spending – Sustainability funding to child care providers:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

## 11.2 Data Systems Investment

### 11.2.1 Data Systems Investment:

Did the state/territory invest in data systems to support equitable access to child care (e.g., modernizing and maintaining systems; technology upgrades and data governance improvements to provide more transparent and updated information to parents; a workforce registry; updated QRIS systems; CCR&R updates; monitoring systems) from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

**[x] Yes. Describe: Historically the DECE has made investments in electronic data collection and management systems that facilitate staff's ability to document program and regulatory compliance and enhance data collection efforts. Ongoing funding has been provided to support the Codepal system, developed by Sybatech Incorporated, to be loaded onto a tablet/personal computer currently used by the fire marshals to conduct fire, health, and safety inspections of state regulated child care facilities. The system is also used to review plans for new child care facilities to ensure they are constructed in accordance with the International Fire Codes.**

**In 2021, the scope of services provided by Sybatech increased and support for upgrading and expanding the Codepal software system that was being used by fire marshals. The enhancements included the following functions:**

- 1. Automation of paper checklists being used by child care licensing (CCL) specialists.**
- 2. Facilitating the capability to readily review and link child care licensing and health/safety inspection findings/results with regulations and standards without having to manually lookup child care licensing laws and regulations.**
- 3. Ability to print reports onsite which enhanced the ability to offer timely feedback regarding citations.**
- 4. Ability to work in offline and online modes which is critically valuable as there are areas in the state with limited or not internet connectivity.**
- 5. Ability to maintain and track any previous inspections for past violations.**

**In 2023, the scope of services under contract with Sybatech was again expanded to include ABC Quality's documentation of health and safety inspections of license-exempt child care providers in the Codepal system. These inspections are similar in nature to visits conducted by CCL specialists to child care centers. Previously the license-exempt health and safety inspections were manually conducted which limited the ability to collect, report, and maintain data efficiently. The reports are synced with information in the Child Care Services System to verify compliance with comprehensive background checks and eligibility requirements on the automated assessment tool.**

Overall, the Codepal system has greatly enhanced and strengthen the efficiency of onsite data collection and maintenance, and the capability to report findings/results.

In October 2022, the SC Child Care Scholarship Program launched an online benefits portal. This portal will allow parents to apply for child care assistance on-line.

The portal will allow parents to:

- \* Apply for child care on-line
- \* Upload all supporting work, school, training, or disability documents
- \* Track the status of their child care scholarship application
- \* Receive notifications via email

No

#### 11.2.2 Spending - Data Systems Investment:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

### 11.3 Supply and Demand Analysis

#### 11.3.1 Supply and Demand Analysis:

Did the state/territory conduct an analysis of supply and demand or other needs assessment to identify areas of focus to build supply or target funding from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

[x] Yes. Describe findings: The Child Care Research Team (CCRT), based at the Yvonne & Schuyler Moore Child Development Research Center at the University of South Carolina and funded by the LA, conducted secondary data analysis to monitor child care supply and demand in the state. The LA provided data on child care supply and demand to the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) for the state ECE Birth Through Five plan in the previous year to set a baseline to measure child care access in the states to be monitored every two years.

Due to the wide range and variability in the size of census tracts, LA chose county-level as the geographical area for analyzing child care access. Child care demand is over-estimated at 64% of children based on census estimates of the percentage of children under five living with all biological parents in the labor force. This estimate was obtained from the American Community Survey Table B23008 - Age of own children under 18 years in families and subfamilies by living arrangements by employment status of parents (1). After accounting for child care demand met by relative care, which is estimated at 22% (2), the child care demand for formal care in child care centers or family homes is estimated at 44- 45%. This estimate is similar to the child care demand percentage of 46% estimated using nationally representative data from the National Survey of Early Care and Education (2012). The estimated demand percentage was computed. These decisions and estimates of child care demand were presented at the Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC) in June 2023, representing a shift in usual practice.

Child care supply is measured using child care licensing data on child care capacity. The SC Child Care Resource & Referral (SC CCR&R) has started collecting child care enrollment in facilities for a better estimate of child care slots and vacancies.

The Child Care Research Team (CCRT) has been conducting geospatial analysis since 2015 after receiving a grant award from the Office of Program, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in 2015. In 2018, the team developed a Child Care Accessibility Index (CCAI) that measured child care supply, demand, and voucher utilization. This index was one of the three indicators used to create an Equity Index for Child Care, which is an enhanced Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) for Child Care. The Equity Index is designed to identify communities in need and use the grants as a policy measure to address the geographical inequities in some communities.

A similar equity bonus focusing on high poverty density among young children is being awarded to child care providers participating in the Startup grants initiative implemented



collaboratively by licensing and SC CCR&R. The equity bonus incentivizes providers to open child care facilities in areas of greater child care shortage, thereby increasing the supply of child care in these areas.

The research team compared child care access and availability in urban and rural counties. In South Carolina, 39% (18 counties) are urban, and 61% (28 counties) are rural. The average number of child care facilities in urban counties is 136 facilities (centers and home-based), and the average number in rural counties is 26 facilities. The average number of children per child care slot in urban counties is 1.41 (1.41 children per every child care slot) and 1.83 in rural counties. The LA provides differential payments to providers in urban and rural counties based on the market rate survey results indicating lower operating costs in rural counties. The LA state administrator and the director of SC CCR&R were invited to participate in a Rural Round Table hosted by the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC). In 2019, BPC performed a child care gap analysis in 25 states and concluded that South Carolina's statewide gap of 16.1% is lower than the 25-state average. Rural communities in South Carolina are less underserved than urban communities inconsistent with trends across the 25 states.

The research team will continue to examine child care availability in the context of child care demand, addressing the complexity of child care choices and family needs.

No

### 11.3.2 Spending - Supply and Demand Analysis:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

## 11.4 Supply and Demand Initiatives

### 11.4.1 Supply and Demand Initiatives:

Did the state/territory implement initiatives designed to address supply and demand issues related to child care deserts and/or vulnerable populations (such as infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, English language learners, and children who need child care during non-traditional hours) during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? Check all that apply.

- Child care deserts
- Infants/toddlers
- Children with disabilities
- English language learners
- Children who need child care during non-traditional hours
- Other. Describe:

### 11.4.2 Spending - Supply and Demand Initiatives:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

- Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

- No

## 11.5 Provider Compensation and Benefits

### 11.5.1 Spending - Provider Compensation and Benefits:

What compensation and benefits improvements did teachers/providers receive between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023 (check all that apply)? If indicated, how many providers received each type of support?

- Financial bonuses (not tied to education levels)
- Salary enhancements/wage supplements
- Health insurance coverage
- Dental insurance coverage
- Retirement benefits
- Loan Forgiveness programs
- Mental Health/Wellness programs **225**
- Start up funds **13**
- Other. Describe:
- N/A. Describe:

**11.5.2 Spending - Provider Compensation and Benefits:**

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

**11.6 Spending – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services**

**11.6.1 Spending – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services:**

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on other activities to improve the quality of child care services during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$6957216**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

*Optional:* Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

## 11.7 Progress Update

### 11.7.1 Progress Update – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services:

Other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.10.1 of the 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

**Section 7.2.1a: Data reports from New World Now system on individual caregiver and director progress toward higher educational achievements. Use of T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program .**

**Number of individuals in Workforce Registry and movement upward through Career Levels.**

**UofSC Leadership Cohort: The LA has funded cohorts of early childhood leaders (both established and emerging) to enroll in the program of study leading to a M.Ed in early childhood education. This program is designed to provide a strong infrastructure of knowledge and practice within the early childhood field in SC with the purpose of strengthening each person’s core early childhood knowledge and skills. Four cohorts have completed the degree and a fifth cohort began fall of 2021. Measurable indicators of progress include: class lists, numbers graduating, career advancement and recognitions.**

**Third Sector New England (TSNE): The LA has a continuing grant to provide BUILD membership and technical assistance to the LA and a SC inter-agency team to explore new ways of partnering and collaborating to increase services to children and to explore critical issues including equity and inclusion. Regular opportunities are presented to engage with other states experiencing similar issues and challenges in small gatherings with opportunities for discussion and interaction. Other services include specialized consultants and services through other entities through sub-contracts to assist the LA. Measurable indicators of progress are work projects completed and satisfaction surveys to participants.**

**United Way of South Carolina: The LA has a grant to United Way of South Carolina to increase investment for children and families in local communities to support child care and after-school activities. Measurable indicators of progress are numbers of communities impacted, numbers of children and families served.**

**AIM:** The LA has a grant with Anderson Inter-faith Ministries to provide support for women to complete their education and become gainfully employed through a faith-based ministry in a local community providing child care scholarships. Measurable indicators of progress are numbers of women served and other outreach provided by AIM.

**New World Now:** The LA has a sole-source contract with New World Now to develop an integrated data system that will allow more efficient data management, tracking and reporting for SC Endeavors and ABC Quality and reduce duplicate processes for child care providers. Measurable progress indicators will be better and more accurate data available for decision-making by the LA.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.10.2 of the 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **United Way Association of South Carolina (UWASC):** The Lead Agency continues to provide support for UWASC's Community Partner agencies to sustain the availability of child care services and programs at the local level. During this reporting period fourteen Community Partner agencies representing geographic areas across the state received CCDF to support community-based programs for the provision of afterschool/summer programs, enhancements in child care classroom environments to include inclusive practice supports, materials/supplies, and health/safety supplies. An estimated total of 13,163 children and their families were impacted and benefited from this continuing partnership with the UWASC.

**Anderson Interfaith Ministries (AIM), Women And Children Succeeding Program (WACS):** Support for this program continues to be provided under a grant agreement to offer child care scholarships for WACS participants. A range of supportive services are offered to women with low-incomes and their children to transition to self-sufficiency. WACS participants must be enrolled in a local college and employed. Child care for the participants is an essential component to assure successful completion of the program. During this reporting period, AIM worked with 15 child care providers to provide care for 140 children (58 two years old and below).

**Southeastern Chapter National Safety Council (SCNSC):** Subsequent to revisions in the health and safety requirements included in the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014, the Lead Agency began contracting with the SCNSC for statewide provision of Pediatric First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (PFACPR) training. The training includes three types of training (full certification, re-certification, and train-the-trainer) classes. The training is provided to caregivers employed in ABC Quality (SC's QRIS) enrolled child care programs. Training sites are readily available across the state and many child care facilities serve as host

locations for the trainings. During this reporting period 4,604 individuals participated in the various classes.

In January of 2023, ABC Quality launched the use of the New World Now/Insight data system for licensed centers/license exempt centers to apply for enrollment and continue to participate in the QRIS, including the submission of their Structural Quality Portfolio (SQP). The goal of the new system was to simplify the review process for programs by integrating data from their organization profile in SC Endeavors to reduce duplicate entry, both in the application and submission of their SQP. The system accesses all professional development and education information from the SC Endeavors Registry, and then influences the outcome of indicators in the structural quality review. Programs provide answers and upload of evidence within the system at required indicators.

Another goal of the system was to streamline the validation and scoring of Quality Reviews. The system provides a dashboard for both quality staff and child care program staff to monitor the progress of the review, along with a history of cases and partners who support the program. Quality Assessors verify evidence and score portfolios within the system.

In conjunction with this launch, ABC Quality also launched an automated assessment tool that quality assessors will use to collect eligibility criteria and assess process quality of licensed child care centers and license-exempt centers, as designed by the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs (RFA) Office. The RFA automated assessment tool receives information from the SC Endeavors Registry to populate pertinent information within the assessment, along with the providing the flexibility to make necessary adjustments to ensure the accuracy of the tool. This system is integrated with the SC Endeavors Registry in terms of staff information, classroom information, enrollment, scoring, verification of eligibility and review reports. Quality Assessors use a tablet to document and score their observations in the automated assessment tool. Reports are generated electronically in automated assessment tool and sent back to New World Now/Insight upon completion.

New World Now/Insight uses appropriate weighting to combine the process quality and structural quality scores, which generates a program's final score and Quality Level. Programs are able to view the status of their review within the assessment process and are able to access the reports after their quality review has been completed. Both systems have included multiple checkpoints within the assessments to ensure accuracy, along with reliability checks to ensure consistency of assessments statewide.

ABC Quality is having regular meetings with New World Now and DSS IT to develop

requirements to ensure the most efficient application and rating process for providers. The rating process will be transferred to SCDSS to integrate into the DECE internal system. The goal is for the New World system to reflect all information about child care programs for appropriate use by providers, technical assistance staff, and DECE program staff.

ABC Quality began planning and development of the Codepal system to improve the efficiency of the health/safety inspection conducted of participating license-exempt centers. This enhancement will bring about automation of paper checklist used by Quality Assessors and/or Health Educators conducting the inspection. This system will facilitate to readily review and inspection findings to ABC Quality eligibility requirements.

DHEC Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention contracts with the LA for the purpose of creating sustainable healthier environments that support children's well-being, particularly related to health eating, physical activity, and naturalized outdoor play and learning environments, in early care and education programs/facilities. The 2 agencies agree to make use of their resources to achieve the goal of creating sustainable healthier learning environments by integrating child well-being supports in SC's early care and education system. DHEC maintains an Early Care and Education Consultant position within DHEC to include:

- \* Lead statewide launch of Grow Outdoors SC.
- \* Sub-contract with NC State University's Natural Learning Initiative (NLI) to provide key support and resource development for GO SC.
- \* Work collaboratively and communicate regularly with DECE health education staff and program areas to provide leadership, best practice recommendations into statewide plans, policies, standards, and or measures in SC's early care and education system.
- \* Support child care providers in the ABC Quality rating system to implement nutrition, physical activity and outdoor play and learning standards through training and technical assistance.

#### LA grant to National Wildlife Federation

This grant agreement is to provide technical support for Grow Outdoors SC activities outlined in the DHEC contract in a variety of activities to include but not limited to:

- \* Develop Early Childhood Health Outdoors (ECHO) design team.
- \* Manage planning and systems development.
- \* Offer professional development and trainings delivered as stand-alone offerings as series using ECHOL's existing menu of training opportunities.
- \* Support existing GO SC demonstration sites to continue implementation.

#### LA contract with USC Preschool Development Grant (PDG-B5)

This contract provided oversight of and conducting of activities that included:  
Be Well Care Well expansion addressed in PDG Activity 4  
Baby Jam addressed in PDG Activity 4  
PDG project coordination  
PDG performance evaluation addressed in PDG Activity 6  
PDG Strategic Plan Implementation and Revisions addressed in PDG Activity 2  
Contract of 3 years ended April 29, 2023

LA contract with USC REM Center PDG Grant

This contract provided for an update of a statewide needs assessment and compilation of findings for the PDG Birth-5 grant and consultation on the state plan.

LA contract with USC Impact Project for Early Childhood Workforce Development

This contract aka Be Well Care Well was developed as a strategy to address infant and early childhood mental health. Be Well Care Well promotes and supports the well-being of child care providers so they are better equipped for the challenges of their daily work. The interventions focus on building social-supports, improving physical health and facilitating financial supports in order to build teacher resiliency and buffer effects of difficult life experiences. Be Well Care Well coaches carry a caseload of 12-15 child care programs in their region for a 12 month period. They recruit programs through peer referrals and targeted community outreach. The coaches help build social connections and peer support among child care providers and provide incentive packages. Currently there are 5 coaches available to provide services.

LA Contract with Revenue and Fiscal Affairs (RFA) Office

This purpose of this contract is to build, maintain and update secure web-based customized application for ABC Quality assessment tools with online/office capabilities. The contract application allows for synchronization of data collected offline. The contract provided for services specified for the Preschool Development Grant.

Other contracts/grants include: SCIMHA and SCPITC, both of which are discussed in previous sections of the QPR.



## 12) Annual Report

Lead agencies must submit an annual report, as required at 45 CFR § 98.53(f) (4), describing any changes to lead agency regulations, enforcement mechanisms, or other lead agency policies addressing health and safety based on an annual review and assessment of serious child injuries and any deaths occurring in child care programs receiving CCDF, and in other regulated and unregulated child care centers and family child care homes, to the extent possible.

### 12.1 Annual Report and Changes

#### 12.1.1 Annual Report:

Describe the annual review and assessment of serious injuries and any deaths occurring in child care programs receiving CCDF, and in other regulated and unregulated child care centers and family child care homes, to the extent possible. **The LA reviews all deaths and serious injuries that come from Child Care Licensing and the ABC Quality Program and are sent to the Agency Deputy via a Critical Incidence notification. This is reviewed by the State's Child Fatality Review Team of which the LA is a member, to rapidly and expeditiously review all child deaths that occur in the county in which each coroner serves. Aggregate data regarding fatalities and accident/injuries are collected and added to the DECE's website at [schildcare.org](http://schildcare.org) for consumer's information. This information is compiled into a yearly report. This information is maintained on a spreadsheet and compiled into a yearly report. Upon request, it is provided to the LA's executive staff. Aggregate data is collected and added to the DECE's website at [schildcare.org](http://schildcare.org) for consumer's information.**

#### 12.1.2 Annual Report Changes:

Describe any changes to lead agency regulations, enforcement mechanisms, or other lead agency policies addressing health and safety based on the annual review and assessment. **During FFY October 1, 2022-September 30, 2023, proposed Family Child Care Homes regulations were developed by the SC State Advisory Committee on the Regulation of Childcare Facilities as indicated in the Child Care Licensing Law Section 63-13-1220. These proposed regulations will be submitted to the SC General Assembly Legislative Session in January of 2024 for approval. The SC State Advisory Committee on the Regulation of Childcare Facilities is also reviewing to update the regulations for Licensed Child Care Centers, Faith-based Child Care and Group Child Care Homes. Two Town Hall meetings were conducted to review the proposed regulations with the Family Child Care Home providers.**

The Family Child Care Home policy manual was also updated and provided to the Family Child Care Home providers twice in 2023. There were two Town Hall meetings for Family Child Care Provider to review the Family Child Care Home Policy Manual. The Family, Friend and Neighbor Policy Manual (FFN) for FFN providers was updated and is provided to the FFN Provider when they are approved to care for children.

Lastly, a new DSS Form was developed to add to the Consumer Education website in March 2023 along with the Inspection Form to capture the dates and details of correction of citations from child care providers regarding any deficiencies cited against the provider.

### 13) American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Child Care Stabilization Grants

*Goal: To ensure the lead agency implements an equitable stabilization grant program. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act included approximately \$24 billion for child care stabilization grants, representing an important opportunity to stabilize the child care sector and do so in a way that builds back a stronger child care system that supports the developmental and learning needs of children, meets parents' needs and preferences with equal access to high-quality child care, and supports a professionalized workforce that is fairly and appropriately compensated for the essential skilled work that they do. Lead agencies must spend most stabilization funds as subgrants to qualified child care providers to support the stability of the child care sector during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency. Section 13 should be used to report on ARP Stabilization Grants ONLY.*

#### 13.1 Multiple Grant Programs

##### 13.1.1 ARP Act Stabilization multiple grant programs:

Did you run more than one grant program? If so, list the number of separate grant programs and describe their uses.

Yes. Describe: **The SC Building Blocks Stabilization grants were appropriated to help stabilize the child care sector. Grants were paid for using all of the American Rescue Plan Stabilization funding and some of the ARPA Supplemental funding. DECE awarded child care providers with two rounds of the stabilization grant. Child care providers could apply these funds to the following areas:**

- \* Personnel Cost
- \* Rent, utilities, facility maintenance, and insurance
- \* Personal Protective Equipment, Cleaning, and other health and safety practices
- \* Equipment and Supplies
- \* Goods and Services
- \* Mental Health Services
- \* Past Expenses

No

#### 13.2 ARP Act Stabilization Grants workforce compensation

##### 13.2.1 ARP Act Stabilization Grant strategies for workforce compensation:

Which of the following methods were used to support workforce compensation (e.g., bonuses, stipends, increased base wages, or employee benefits) with stabilization grants?  
(check all that apply)

- Targeted grants to support workforce compensation (no other allowable uses)
- Providing bonus funds to providers that increased child care staff compensation through stabilization grants
- Requiring a specific percentage or amount of stabilization grant funding go toward child care staff compensation increases. Percent or amount for staff compensation: **25 percent**
- Other (Describe):