



# QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION SYSTEM

## Year 2 Evaluation Report

October 2020

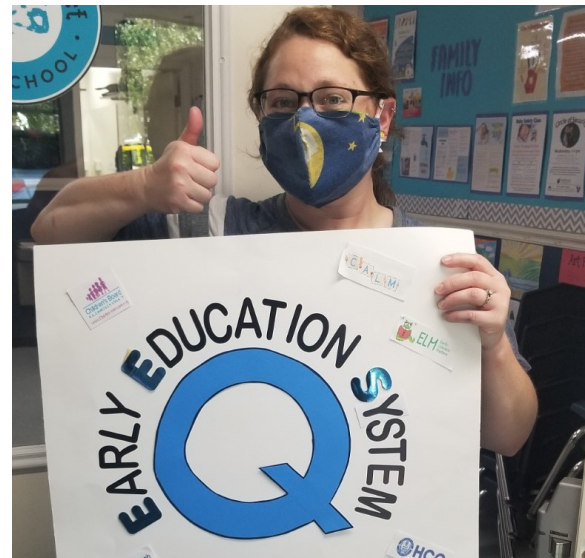
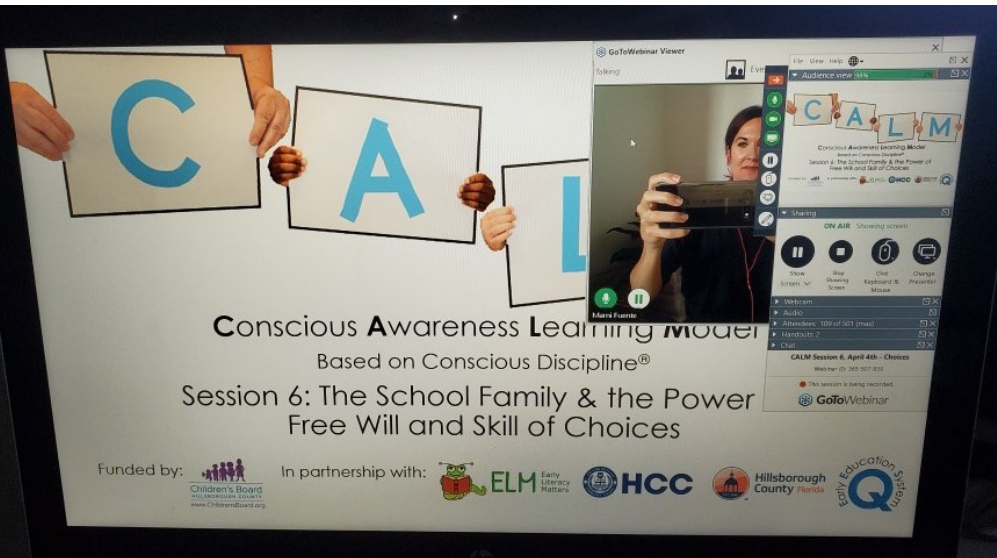
Prepared for Hillsborough Community College  
for submission to

**Children's Board Hillsborough County**  
1002 East Palm Avenue  
Tampa, FL 33605



Prepared by

**Diana Sharp**  
**RMC Research Corporation**  
3550 Buschwood Park Drive  
Tampa, FL 33618





# Quality Early Education System

## Year 2 Evaluation Report

Funded by



In partnership with



# CONTENTS

- Objective 1 ..... 6
- Objective 2..... 7
- Objective 3..... 8
- Objective 4..... 9
- Objective 5..... 10
- Objective 6..... 11
- Objective 7..... 12
- Objective 8..... 13
- Objective 9..... 14
- Objective 10..... 15
- Comparison of Outcomes Year 1 to Year 2 | October–March ..... 16
- Discussion ..... 19
- Key Year 2 Evaluation Takeaways..... 25
- References ..... 28
  
- Appendix A Program Description..... 30
- Appendix B Objective Symbols and Assessment Instruments..... 34
- Appendix C Qualitative, Formative Survey Responses ..... 39



## The story of the 2020 pandemic is still unfolding.

For thousands of young children in Hillsborough County, Florida, this story includes unprecedented changes in the care and teaching they receive from adults, all of whom are impacted by the societal upheaval caused by the pandemic. We know from decades of research on brain development that **experience shapes the brain.**

Accordingly, the changes in young children's experiences that began on March 13—the day the U.S. government declared the COVID-19 outbreak a national emergency—have the potential to impair their social, emotional, and cognitive growth. For this reason the **Quality Early Education System (QEES)** program—a comprehensive, multiagency effort to support the adults involved in caring for young children aged birth to 5 years and their families—pivoted on the first day of lockdown to developing new approaches to delivering this support to mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic on the program's long-term vision:

All children arrive at school with the benefit of high-quality positive life experiences that matter for brain development in all of the areas that play critical roles in school success.

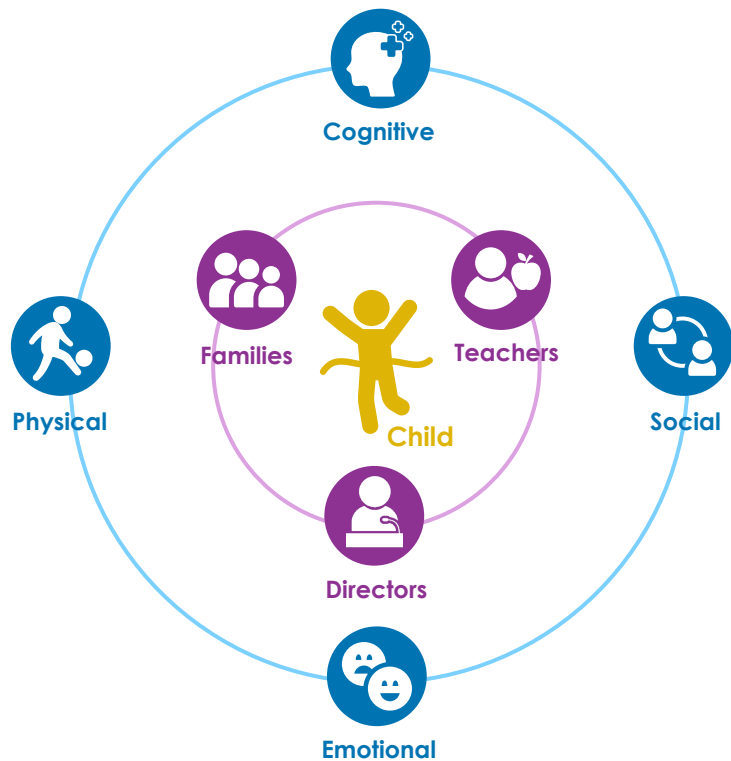
---

QEES Vision Statement

## QEES Background

QEES is built on the recognition that if experience shapes the brain, then the only way to significantly improve all areas of brain development is to create a solution that comprehensively supports the people who shape children's experiences prior to school. **These key people are the children's families, teachers, and childcare and preschool directors.**

During 2018–2019, the QEES program completed its first year of integrating supports from Hillsborough Community College and Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing to create the comprehensive QEES system for supporting children's **cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth.**



The QEES system was designed to further support the **professional advancement** of early childhood teachers and center directors by aligning all training to either certificates or stackable credentials toward a degree at Hillsborough Community College.

## QEEs TRAINING AND COACHING

### HCC-Pathways

Biweekly, one-on-one coaching and monthly training on foundational elements for successful programs.

### Conscious Awareness Learning Model (CALM)

Monthly training plus on-site coaching and parent training in social-emotional skill development.

### Early Literacy Matters (ELM)

Coaching and workshops for strengthening early literacy and cognitive growth.

### Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing (HCCCL)

QEEs management and operational support. Coaching and training sessions on organizational and operational topics, including staff management, communication skills, record keeping, and indoor/outdoor health and safety.

For a complete description of these program components see Appendix A.

The evaluation of the first year of QEEs implementation revealed impressive success meeting targets related to the breadth and effectiveness of services. For 6 of the program's original 9 objectives, the breadth and effectiveness targets were exceeded—in many cases by a wide margin. The plan for the second year of QEEs implementation aimed to sustain and build on the program's achievements aligned to its objectives by strengthening program components. With the onset of the pandemic, however, **the QEEs story shifted.**

## Key Elements of the QEEs COVID-19 Response

This Year 2 evaluation report is not the envisioned story of how QEEs staff strengthened the established program components described in Appendix A. Instead, it is an account of how of a program that provides multiple types of training and coaching rose to the challenge after schools and child care centers closed in mid-March, pivoting quickly to reinvent these services and develop additional supports to meet the avalanche of new and evolving needs of young children. **This story is one of innovation, compassion, and community on the part of QEEs leaders driven by a whatever-it-takes commitment to help families, teachers, and center directors respond to the pandemic. It is the story of how QEEs leaders designed new strategies for supporting the comprehensive needs of children's development necessary for school success.**

**Remote operations.** With the closure of Hillsborough Community College, where QEEs is headquartered, staff began operating out of their homes and garages, and this transition was fully accomplished within 2 weeks.


**Learning Line.** Launched on March 23, the phone-based Learning Line was the first new point of contact established for early education providers, caregivers, and families in need of one-on-one guidance and age-appropriate resources for meaningful learning experiences to keep children connected and engaged. For support beyond that QEEs could provide, staff direct callers to the appropriate community resources. Information about the Learning Line was posted on the QEEs website and emailed to all providers, caregivers, and families. In addition, the QEEs website began publishing links to COVID-19 news and resources for childcare providers and families.

## Resource Guides With Activities and Links



### LITERACY•MATH•SCIENCE

Related to Early Literacy Matters coaching and training

 [earlyliteracymatters.com/learning-line-resources](https://earlyliteracymatters.com/learning-line-resources)



### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

Related to CALM coaching

 [calmhcc.org/learning-line-resources](https://calmhcc.org/learning-line-resources)

**Emergency Supports.** Using emergency funds and additional funds provided by the Children's Board, QEES staff immediately began offering supplies to meet the needs of providers and their families caused by the pandemic and retail shortages. For example, QEES used emergency funds to purchase items such as sanitizers, outdoor sinks, and hoses required to adhere to safety protocols. Families (and some providers) also urgently needed supplies such as diapers and food. Staff used Amazon or socially distanced drop-offs to deliver supplies to providers and, in some cases, families served by centers that were closed.

**Tracking center closures and COVID-19 cases.** Immediately after the national shutdown, Child Care Licensing staff began verifying whether centers were open or closed and identifying unmet needs. Child Care Licensing provided QEES staff with daily updates on center closures. QEES also began tracking and mapping all of the COVID-19 cases specific to child care in Hillsborough County.

**Delivery of learning materials.** In addition to emergency supplies, staff began delivering learning materials and activities to centers, which in turn passed them on to families for use at home. QEES staff met families served by centers that had closed in community locations. On several occasions, staff also delivered food donated by area restaurants to providers and families severely economically impacted by the shutdown.

**New video and digital coaching content (literacy, math, science, social-emotional) available 24/7.** QEES staff quickly ramped up an entirely new content creation stream to help with the change from in-person to remote training and coaching, launching a YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJRIHnWOW78wMDhufUp0mTg>) with 13 videos on March 30. The videos provided read-alouds and other suggested activities to keep children learning whether centers were open, operating remotely, or closed. New videos were added every week, and by June 11 the channel had 50 videos; **the video total as of October 1 was 550.** To help teachers and parents select and use the videos, staff created digital resource guides organized by theme or topic and age (infant/toddler, 3–4, 4–5). The resource guides also included printables for related learning activities.

**Virtual training and coaching.** The monthly Saturday morning CALM trainings for more than 100 teachers and center directors switched to a live video format on April 4. QEES staff also initiated supplemental monthly CALM trainings to address the increased self-care and social-emotional needs of providers caused by pandemic-related stress. These supplemental trainings focused on the mindfulness and compassionate care

aspects of the CALM program. In addition, a special crisis management session held on Saturday, April 18, attempted to answer providers' questions about new guidelines for centers and mitigate the problem of fragmented messaging that resulted from government agencies' rushed efforts to enact COVID-19 plans and regulations.

The HCC-Pathways, ELM, and Child Care Licensing components of the QEES program also began offering virtual training. Eight new training topics were added, including crisis management and ways to support pre-K children during virtual learning. The QEES team continued their field work and coaching in person whenever possible, while also providing virtual coaching for providers more comfortable with that format.

**New virtual resources for providers and families.** The HCC-Pathways and Child Care Licensing teams quickly began conducting weekly QEES Quick Connect virtual calls over Zoom. During these calls, Child Care Licensing staff updated providers on COVID-19-related regulations and responded to requests for tips on best practices. The goal of these calls was to increase the confidence of providers who suddenly had to make unprecedented decisions for their programs and needed the best and latest information available. Two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, were instituted to fit the varied schedules of the providers.

For QEES families whose children were no longer in child care—either to avoid exposure to COVID-19, because they could no longer afford care, or because their center had closed—QEES began offering one-on-one Zoom conferences to impart strategies for home learning and connect children to academic and social-emotional experiences led by QEES staff. After a local news story about QEES on August 5, families whose children had never been in care at a QEES provider began reaching out to ask for support. QEES accepted these families into the program also.

Additionally, QEES staff initiated Parent Connects, regular Zoom calls that give parents a chance to get together, support each other, share struggles, and discuss with QEES staff new strategies for supporting their children's growth in academic and social-emotional skills.



# Objective 1

Provide access to training and technical assistance to 850 early childhood education staff in community-based locations countywide.



Teachers



Directors



Cognitive



Social



Emotional



Physical



Advancement

This objective refers to training and follow-up training and technical assistance across CALM, ELM, HCC-Pathways, and Childcare Licensing. This objective does not include more intensive coaching, which is conducted with a subset of participants and is covered by other objectives.

## Year 2 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**155%** of target

**1,315** teachers provided with training and technical assistance

Year 2 target = 850 teachers



Effectiveness

**118%** of target

**94%** of the teachers trained for whom data were submitted demonstrated increased knowledge from pretest to posttest by achieving at least 70% correct on the posttest

Year 2 target = 80% of the teachers trained



EXCEEDED TARGET

## Objective 2

Provide coaching to 165 countywide early childhood education practitioners participating in CALM.



Teachers



Directors



Social



Emotional

CALM creates an environment for positive learning, constructive problem-solving, and self-regulation, allowing children to be successful in their early years and ready for kindergarten.

CALM provides universal training to early education providers and families in social-emotional learning, using Conscious Discipline® as a framework while integrating positive psychology, mindfulness, emotional-intelligence theory, and self-care strategies. Coaching is more intensive and extensive than training and occurs weekly, biweekly, or monthly for a subset of people who attend the trainings. The program builds a connected early-childhood community of caring and compassionate educators who support each other and the children and families they serve.

### Year 2 Findings



Breadth

**85%** of target

**141** teachers and directors coached

Year 2 target = 165 teachers and directors



Effectiveness

**N/A**

Only 6 teachers were assessed due to COVID-19. Assessing the remainder was not possible due to related obstacles.

Year 2 target = 75% of the teachers and directors coached demonstrated developmentally appropriate practices on the Conscious Discipline® Progress Assessment.



EXCEEDED TARGET

## ONSITE SUPPORT

Assessing each classroom allows for individualized supports and a more complete view of center and teacher practices.



EXCEEDED TARGET

### PAS/BAS

Program Administration Scale/Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care

### PQA

Program Quality Assessment

## Objective 3

Provide onsite support to 250 nonsystem early childhood education centers and family child care homes.



Teachers



Directors



Cognitive



Physical

This objective refers to support provided by Child Care Licensing and includes support on topics such as budget, finance, record keeping, management, communication, and indoor/outdoor safety. Support includes training (over 30 hours) and coaching (provided in 20- to 30-minute sessions) for the highest need centers. Also included is support provided by the Hillsborough Community College Pathways team whose staff visit centers and homes to provide coaching on setting up basic structures for learning related to the environment, daily routines, curriculum planning, approaches to learning, and assessment. This support helps centers and homes achieve a baseline of quality instruction by assessing each individual classroom. This evaluation is necessary before a center can successfully implement additional, more specialized support elements provided by CALM and ELM.

### Year 2 Findings



Breadth

**108%** of target

**270** centers and homes supported onsite

Year 2 target = 250 centers and homes



Effectiveness

**143%** of target (*partial*)<sup>†</sup>

**100%** of the 188 centers and homes that submitted data completed the pre-post PAS/BAS and PQA assessments, involved observations and interviews, and showed improvement over time

Year 2 target = 70% of at least 200 centers and homes<sup>†</sup>

## Objective 4

Provide supported services for the social-emotional development of 135 children aged 3–5 countywide in classrooms where early childhood education staff receive coaching and resources.



Families



Teachers



Social



Emotional

This objective refers to on-site supports and intervention activities for children in identified classes. Coaches model and implement lessons and strategies on self-regulation and prosocial behavior. The classroom strategies are shared with families to encourage the implementation of practices at home. Parent and family engagement are promoted by providing information, materials, and take-home activities.

### Year 2 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**258%** of target

**348** children provided with social-emotional support services

Year 2 target = 135 children



Effectiveness

**120%** of target

**90%** of the 246 children for whom data were submitted demonstrated increased social-emotional competence from pre- to posttest

Year 2 target = 75% of at least 135 children

## Objective 5

Provide CALM strategies to 200 parents/caregivers in engaged early childhood education sites countywide.



Families



Social



Emotional

This objective refers to providing families with information from the CALM program on self-regulation and social-emotional development. Parent resource centers are established at the preschools of participating children. Additional resources and materials are offered through outreach, forums, and website links to support services.

### Year 2 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**219%** of target

**438** families provided with CALM strategies

Year 2 target = 200 families



Effectiveness

**125%** of target (partial)<sup>†</sup>

**94%** of the 135 families for whom data were submitted attended events and demonstrated increased knowledge on surveys administered at the beginning and end of events by achieving at least 70% correct on the postsurvey

Year 2 target = 75% of at least 200 families<sup>†</sup>

ELM encourages the home-school connection by providing families with books, literacy activities, and materials.



EXCEEDED TARGET

## Objective 6

Provide emergent literacy skills support to 615 children aged birth to 5 in early childhood education centers countywide.



Families



Teachers



Cognitive

This objective refers to on-site, small-group literacy intervention provided by ELM. The Early Literacy Skills Assessment or the Get Ready to Read! Assessment tool is used to guide individual, targeted literacy intervention. Coaches work with children to strengthen early literacy skills through various modalities and multisensory instruction.

### Year 2 Findings



Breadth

**152%** of target

**932** children supported in emergent literacy skills

Year 2 target = 615 children



Effectiveness

**N/A**

Prior to the pandemic, pretest assessment data were collected for 734 children that were of eligible age. Posttest data were collected for only 6 children due to pandemic-related obstacles.

Year 2 target = 85% of at least 495 children demonstrate increased literacy skills on the Early Literacy Skills Assessment or Get Ready to Read (as appropriate for age) from pretest to posttest.

## Objective 7

Provide strategies for emergent literacy and home-school engagement to 445 parents/caregivers at engaged early childhood education sites countywide.



Families



Cognitive

This objective refers to parent support and information provided through the ELM program. Literacy activities include family trainings, lending libraries, events, distribution of family tips and calendars of readiness activities, access to myON digital library, and forums.

### Year 2 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**156%** of target

**695** parents/caregivers provided with support developing literacy and engagement strategies

Year 2 target = 445 parents/caregivers



Effectiveness

**116%** of target (*partial*)<sup>†</sup>

**99%** of the eligible 158 parents/caregivers for whom data were submitted earned a score of at least 20 on a home literacy checklist administered at the end of the year

Year 2 target = 85% of 445 parents/caregivers<sup>†</sup>

## Objective 8

Provide ELM activities to 225 children aged 3–5 to carry over classroom literacy strategies into the home environment.



Families



Cognitive

This objective refers to an enhanced home reading program supported by ELM. Books, reading tips, and supplemental activities are sent home monthly with each participating child to encourage at-home reading.

### Year 2 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**125%** of target

**282** children provided with literacy strategies for home

Year 2 target = 225 children



Effectiveness

**20%** of target

**16%** of the 273 children still in the program by March 2020 submitted reading logs showing they were read to at home at least 4 times per week.

Year 2 target = 80% of 225 children

Note. 12% of children submitted reading logs with less reading time, and 72% did not submit a log.



## Objective 9

Provide technical assistance to 60 early childhood education staff in 25 sites countywide.



Teachers



Cognitive

This objective refers to coaching on literacy in classrooms, using the Nemours BrightStart! Literacy Curriculum as a framework. The Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation is conducted to determine the quality of instructional strategies and the literacy environment. Results are used to tailor coaching to meet the specific needs of teachers in their classrooms.

### Year 2 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



EXCEEDED TARGET

#### ELLCO

Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation



Breadth

**127%** of target

76 staff served at 28 sites

Year 2 target = 60 staff across 25 sites



Effectiveness

**118%** of target (*partial*)<sup>†</sup>

100% of the 9 staff for whom data were submitted demonstrated increased literacy skills on the ELLCO from pre- to posttest

Year 2 target = 85% of at least 60 staff<sup>†</sup>

## Objective 10

Provide educational site supports to 50 eligible early childhood education programs serving children birth to age 5 and participating in CALM.



Teachers



Directors



Social



Emotional

This new objective in Year 2, initiated in 2018 and added as a deliverable in 2019, refers to a system for managing funding requests from early education providers for classroom materials needed to implement CALM techniques and Conscious Discipline® strategies. Providers who are eligible are in compliance with Child Care Licensing and have attended at least 5 CALM trainings in the past 12 months. QEES staff review and fulfill requests from the CALM Educational Support catalog and follow up to confirm the receipt and utilization of materials. QEES uses an internal system to track this program component.

### Year 2 Findings



Breadth

**54%** of target

**27** programs requested and implemented site supports for CALM strategies to increase children's social-emotional development

Year 1 target = 50 programs



Effectiveness

N/A

# Comparison of Outcomes

Year 1 to Year 2 | October–March

**Objective 1**—Access to countywide training and technical assistance to 850 early childhood education staff in community-based locations.

  
INCREASED

  
Breadth

**More** teachers were provided with training and technical assistance in Year 2.

Year 1 = 691      Year 2 = 901 teachers

  
MAINTAINED

  
Effectiveness

About the **same percentage** of teachers exceeded the target both years.

Year 1 = 98%      Year 2 = 95% of teachers

**Objective 2**—Provide coaching to 165 countywide early childhood education practitioners participating in CALM.

  
MAINTAINED

  
Breadth

About the **same number** of teachers and directors were coached both years.

Year 1 = 138      Year 2 = 139 teachers and directors

  
Effectiveness

N/A— only 6 teachers were assessed due to COVID-19.

**Objective 3**—Provide 250 nonsystem early childhood education centers and family child care homes onsite support.

  
INCREASED

  
Breadth

**More** centers and homes were supported onsite in Year 2.

Year 1 = 90      Year 2 = 167 centers and homes

  
INCREASED

  
Effectiveness

**More** centers and homes met the targets in Year 2.

Year 1 = N/A      Year 2 = 100% of 58 centers completed posttests by March and demonstrated improvement

↓  
DECREASED  
BUT STILL MORE THAN  
250% ABOVE TARGET

**Objective 4**—Provide supported services for social-emotional development of 135 countywide children aged 3–5 in classrooms where early childhood education staff receive coaching and resources.



**Breadth**

**Fewer** children were provided with social-emotional support services in Year 2, but the number of children served greatly exceeded the target both years.

**Year 1 = 402**

**Year 2 = 347 children**



**Effectiveness**

N/A—posttests administered after March.

**Objective 5**—Provide 200 countywide parents/caregivers of engaged early childhood education sites with CALM strategies.

↑  
INCREASED



**Breadth**

**More** families were provided with CALM strategies in Year 2.

**Year 1 = 359**

**Year 2 = 434 families**



**Effectiveness**

About the **same percentage** of families who completed posttests exceeded the targets both years.

**Year 1 = 96% of 49**

**Year 2 = 99% of 67 families**

≈  
MAINTAINED

**Objective 6**—Provide 615 children aged birth to 5 in early childhood education centers countywide with emergent literacy skills support.

↑  
INCREASED



**Breadth**

**More** children were supported in emergent literacy skills in Year 2.

**Year 1 = 679**

**Year 2 = 930 children**



**Effectiveness**

N/A—posttests administered after March.

↑  
INCREASED

**Objective 7**—Provide 445 parents/caregivers, at engaged early childhood education sites, support developing strategies for emergent literacy and home-school engagement.



**Breadth**

**More** parents were provided with support for developing literacy and engagement strategies in Year 2.

**Year 1 = 227**

**Year 2 = 690 parents**



**Effectiveness**

N/A—posttests administered after March.

**Objective 8**—Provide ELM activities to 225 children aged 3–5 to carryover classroom literacy strategies into the home environment.



**Breadth**

**More** children were provided literacy strategies for home in Year 2.

**Year 1 = 245**

**Year 2 = 282 children**



**Effectiveness**

N/A—reading logs were collected in March 2020, as requested by the Children's Board, but data were difficult to interpret (see Discussion section).

**Objective 9**—Provide technical assistance to 60 early childhood education staff in 25 sites countywide.



**Breadth**

**More** staff were served in Year 2.

**Year 1 = 67**

**Year 2 = 76 staff**



**Effectiveness**

N/A—postassessments administered after March.

**Objective 10**—New; no comparison to Year 1 possible.

↑  
INCREASED

# Discussion

## Program Objectives

Many of the QEES program objectives, designed pre-COVID-19, were still met or exceeded—sometimes greatly. This success is a significant accomplishment considering the dramatic impact of the pandemic on the program's original activity structure and the early learning community as a whole.

Of the 10 objectives, **8 exceeded their breadth goals** (Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9). The greatest success was for Objective 4 (provide supported services for the social development of children), which had a target of 135 children. QEES exceeded this breadth goal by 258%, reaching 348 children.

The pandemic's greatest effect on the evaluation involved measuring the program's **effectiveness goals**. The closure of schools and child care centers made it difficult or impossible to collect the spring and summer data necessary to gauge effectiveness. Only Objectives 1 and 4 had sufficient data collected for interpretation, and both objectives exceeded their effectiveness targets. The data collected for 4 objectives (Objectives 3, 5, 7, and 9) did show effectiveness above the targets, but the datasets were incomplete. Objectives 2, 6, and 8 were impacted the greatest: either insufficient meaningful effectiveness data could be calculated to measure effectiveness, or the data collected were challenging to interpret due to COVID-19-related circumstances.

For example, Objective 8, reported as meeting only 20% of its effectiveness target, was designed to be measured by collecting reading logs used to determine how many children whose families had received supports were read to at least 4 times per week. Of the 273 families of children receiving these supports who were still in the program in March, 196 families did not return the March reading log (as a result of preschool closure or lack of access to classroom due to COVID-19). Among the 77 families who returned the logs, only 12 reported reading fewer than 3 times a week, whereas 65 families reported reading 3 or 4 times a week. However, the missing logs of the remaining 196 families limit the evaluation's ability to draw conclusions.

8 objectives exceeded their breadth goals

The pandemic impacted the evaluation of the effectiveness goals

## Comparing Year 1 and Year 2

Given the overall success in the breadth and effectiveness goals reported by the QEES program in 2019 (Sharp & Melton, 2019), a comparison across Years 1 and 2 before the pandemic can provide insight into the program's growth and improvement with respect to its goals. The comparison of data collected from October to March in both years (see pages 16–18) shows that overall in Year 2 the QEES program **increased its success on breadth measures** for all objectives except Objective 4, which was already more than 250% of the target. The 3 objectives for which effectiveness data were collected before March (Objectives 1, 3, and 5) either increased or maintained their effectiveness levels.

In short, the available evidence suggests that in Year 2 QEES was on track to maintain or exceed its success in breadth and effectiveness achieved in Year 1. Although only speculations about effectiveness can be made, there is no evidence to suggest that QEES program components were less effective in Year 2 than in Year 1. In Year 1, only one objective fell short of the effectiveness target and only by a slight margin (9%).

## COVID-19 Response and Attainment of Additional Goals

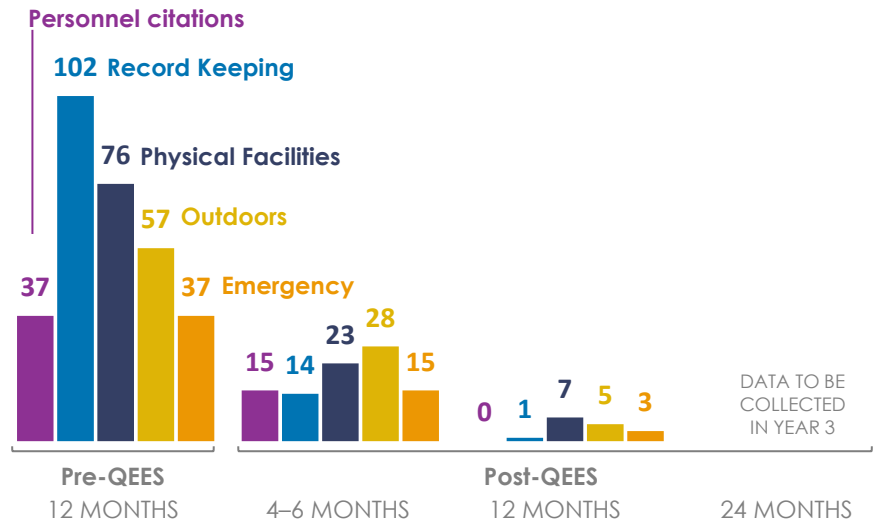
As soon as the pandemic emergency was declared, QEES shifted goals to prioritize supporting teachers, directors, parents, and children to overcome the ensuing challenges. The success of this feat is best illustrated by the powerful testimonials provided in **Appendix C**, which validate that QEES provided what stakeholders needed most—from support with new health protocols to business coaching, to support for managing stress, to new supports for learning in remote contexts.

Like a lifeline, supports such as the weekly QEES Quick Connect calls linked providers with both QEES staff and each other. In fact, the Quick Connect calls inspired providers belonging to the QEES Association Facebook group to form their own COVID support group. Evidence gathered by QEES staff at Child Care Licensing adds even more detail to our understanding of the program's impact on the early learning community during Year 2 of the evaluation. Records show that citations for standards violations across all areas (personnel, record keeping, physical facilities, outdoors, emergency) decreased among QEES participants over time despite the challenges presented by the pandemic.

Prior to the pandemic QEES was on track to maintain or exceed its success in breadth and effectiveness

QEES pandemic supports were a lifeline to early education and childcare providers

**Longer participation in QEES corresponds with fewer standards violation citations.**



QEES increased its social media presence

The growth of QEES' social media efforts is another way that the program made progress in Year 2 of the evaluation beyond its original objectives. QEES implemented Twitter accounts for the CALM and ELM components and the QEES program as a whole, and the latest analytics show a combined 210 followers. The QEES Association for Early Learning Leaders' private Facebook group has 310 members (as of October 1, 2020), and in recent weeks QEES began an Instagram account that had 37 followers by October 1, 2020. Most impressively, the website analytics for the QEES websites (QEES.org, calmhcc.org, earlyliteracymatters.com) indicate 42,549 page views from October 1, 2019, to October 1, 2020. The numbers of unique visitors to the sites was also high: 5,036 for the QEES site; 6,714 for the CALM site; and 2,527 for the ELM site.

QEES enriched its connections to the community

QEES also enriched its connections to the community in several other ways. For example, QEES leaders Marni Fuente and Angela Chowning participated in a communitywide event led by Safe and Sound Hillsborough and the Children's Board of Hillsborough County that made the documentary film *No Small Matter* available for viewing online prior to a group panel discussion on Facebook LIVE on August 11. The film presents overwhelming evidence of the importance of a child's first 5 years and existing barriers to providing quality care and education for all children during these formative years. The event launched a community conversation on how Hillsborough County can overcome these barriers, and the video of the panel discussion has been viewed more than 1,600 times.





## Safe & Sound Hillsborough Community Violence Prevention Collaborative

...

August 5 at 10:31 AM · 🌐

#NoSmallMatter | Starting this Thursday, August 6 you can view the documentary No Small Matter that explores the importance and impacts of early childhood education for ALL Americans. Register to watch the film... [More](#)

### VIRTUAL FILM SCREENING & PANEL DISCUSSION

Presented by Safe & Sound Hillsborough in partnership with the Children's Board of Hillsborough County

High quality early education isn't just powerful - it's possible.



**SCREENING**  
AUGUST 6-10, 2020

**PANEL DISCUSSION**  
AUGUST 11, 2020  
6:00 PM

MODERATOR

**Freddy Barton**

Executive Director  
Safe & Sound Hillsborough



**No Small Matter** is the first documentary to explore the most overlooked, underestimated, and powerful force for good in America today, **early childhood education**. Through poignant stories and surprising humor, the film lays out the overwhelming evidence for the importance of the first five years, and reveals how our failure to act on that evidence has resulted in an everyday crisis for American families, and a slow motion catastrophe for the country.

Watch the film for FREE from the comfort of your home and then engage in a post-screening online discussion.

For more info contact  
[info@safesoundsoundhillsborough.org](mailto:info@safesoundsoundhillsborough.org).

**Chief Kenneth Albano**  
City of Temple Terrace  
Temple Terrace Police  
Department



**Angela Chowning**  
Program Manager  
Hillsborough County Child  
Care Licensing

**Major Anthony Collins**  
Hillsborough County  
Sheriff's Office



**Stevonix Dixon**  
School Improvement Specialist  
Southwest Region  
Florida Department of  
Education

**Marni Fuente, M.S., Ed.S**  
Program Director  
Hillsborough Community  
College - Quality Early  
Education System (QEES)



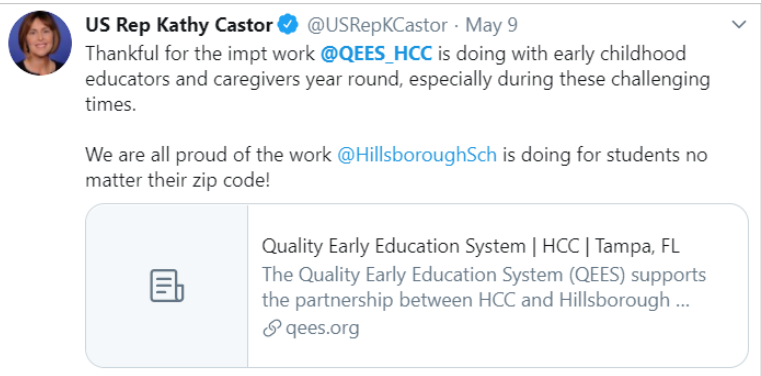
**Attorney Edwin Narain**  
Board Chair  
Children's Board of  
Hillsborough County

**REGISTER** <https://screeningnosmallmatter.eventbrite.com>



Safe & Sound Hillsborough Tweet August 2020

In addition, on August 5 the area Bay News 9 channel aired a feature report about the QEES program, prompting additional families to contact the QEES program to request support. Finally, the Tampa Museum of Art formed a partnership with QEES over the summer, enabling QEES families to participate in remote events hosted by the museum. A total of 75 families participated in the virtual events, which included book readings and 7 tours created especially for young children. The museum also generously provided participants with a museum pass for visiting the museum at a later date. These connections are evidence of the QEES program's commitment to and impact on the Hillsborough County community beyond its formal objectives.



US Representative Kathy Castor Tweet May 2020

Our nation's early learning community is in crisis and QEES supports are more important than ever before

### Links to Research

Research conducted since the pandemic began confirms that our nation's early learning community is in crisis. **These data also indicate that the QEES supports are more important than ever before.** The closure of early learning centers, along with indications of additional closures to come, represent a threat to economic recovery and the health and development of our nation's youngest and most vulnerable learners and their families. Prior to the pandemic nearly two thirds (59%) of prekindergarten children aged 5 and younger were cared for weekly by someone other than their parents. Of these children, 62% were in a daycare center, preschool, or prekindergarten, and 18% were in the care of a family childcare home provider (Cui & Natzke, 2020). Between February and July 2020 the National Women's Law Center found that the pandemic was responsible for the loss of 370,600 jobs among the early learning community (Ewing-Nelson, 2020). In July 2020 the National Association for the Education of Young Children conducted a survey and found that 40% of the childcare providers still operating reported they would close without additional public assistance (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2020).



QEES Association teacher appreciation car parade May 2020

Closures disproportionately impact low- and middle-income families

Research emphasizes the need for support to reduce racial disparities in early childhood education

Many parents need supports delivered directly

Nationally, in May and June only 10% of children whose classrooms were closed reportedly engaged in a reading, math, or science activity daily

Such closures are likely to affect low- and middle-income community providers the most, highlighting the critical need to support these providers as QEES has done. Prepandemic data confirm that high-income areas have a greater supply of childcare and early learning centers than middle and low-income communities (Malik, Hamm, Lee, Davis, & Sojourner, 2020). As COVID-19 forces the closure of unsupported providers, the "childcare deserts" described by the Center of American Progress will likely expand for middle- and low-income families (Malik et al., 2020).

Beyond reducing inequities associated with income level, recent studies emphasize the need for QEES supports to **reduce racial disparities**. Prepandemic data reveal that compared to their White non-Hispanic peers, Black children enter kindergarten the equivalent of nearly 9 months of learning behind in math and 7 months behind in reading (Friedman-Krauss & Barnett, 2020). Prompted by recent, highly publicized incidents of racial injustice, the National Institute for Early Education Research analyzed data from existing programs and estimated that one year of universal, high-quality prekindergarten could "practically eliminate the Black-White reading skills gap at kindergarten entry—from nearly 7 months to almost 0—and cut the math skills gap almost in half—from about 9 months to 5 months" (Friedman-Krauss & Barnett, 2020).

Data gathered in 2020 show an acute need for supports delivered directly to parents, as QEES has done during the pandemic. A survey conducted in Georgia found that 83% of parents reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had "disrupted my home and family life" (Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students, 2020). A national survey conducted in June revealed that only 47% of families were receiving supports for their young children's learning while their classrooms were closed. Furthermore, parents with the least



Community collaboration tweet April 2020

Researchers are developing supports for online instruction

Teachers are sharing their pandemic successes and lessons learned with others

education reported receiving the least support (Barnett & Jung, 2020). Even more troubling are national data showing that in late May and early June only 10% of young children whose classrooms were closed "listened to a story or engaged in a math or science activity daily" (Barnett & Jung, 2020). These data demonstrate that the QEES program has provided participating families with more support than many families in need have received.

In the coming year QEES leaders might benefit by deepening connections with other early learning research and community efforts to share their successes and challenges as they learn to navigate the pandemic and its effects on children. In Atlanta, for example, the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS, n.d.) has been pursuing the following vision since 2018: "Families in the City of Atlanta have what they need to ensure that all children starting at birth are healthy, learning, and developing so that they enter school ready for success, thrive once in school, and are prepared to reach their full potential as citizens of our city." At the University of Central Florida researchers are exploring ways to provide early childhood teachers with more opportunities to prepare to teach and support young children online (Szente, 2020).

Finally, the national publication EdSurge recently announced a plan to "launch a special series to document the emerging impact of COVID-19 on the early childhood education workforce, examining how educators, childcare programs, organizations, businesses, policymakers, and others are responding. In doing so, we hope to highlight the critical role that early childhood educators play in society, a role that is in starker relief now than ever" (Wan, 2020). EdSurge also invited early childhood teachers and leaders to share what they are doing during the pandemic, and this may be one way for QEES leaders to share their story with a broader audience.



QEES Association teacher appreciation car parade May 2020

## Key Year 2 Evaluation Takeaways

**The success of the Year 2 evaluation of the QEES program is much more than the story told through its pre-COVID objectives.**

The comprehensive areas of support that are intrinsic to the program's design provided a map and a means for pivoting the program to meet new pandemic needs:

- **New supports were developed and delivered to ensure that young children remained surrounded by loving, caring adults whose own needs were met.** Just as airlines instruct passengers to "secure your own oxygen mask before assisting others," QEES staff understood that they had to meet the critical needs of the adults in children's lives. Support for teachers, center directors, and parents was based on a fundamental understanding of how their needs were linked to children's needs. These adults' social–emotional, cognitive, and even physical needs were addressed through existing and new QEES supports.
- **QEES adopted a solution-based approach to the pandemic, always attentive to potential detriments to a quality environment for children.** The program immediately pivoted from its original structure to new activities and formats, requiring the rapid development of vast amounts of new materials for training, coaching, and instruction. All new development focused on helping adults stabilize and support children's growth in all domains—cognitive, social, emotional, and physical—despite the new and daunting challenges.
- **Mitigating stress became an even larger component** of CALM, which already had developed a foundation for mindfulness. This foundation meant that QEES staff could "hit the ground running" to address the stress caused by the pandemic and focus on limiting the potential for devastating consequences to the support structures that are critical to children's development.
- One possible silver lining of the pandemic might be that the **QEES program has discovered new ways to engage directly with families.** Program leaders believe that the connection QEES has with the parents it serves is stronger than ever before. Additionally, the exceptional threat to the survival of family child care homes paved the way for developing even stronger connections between QEES staff and those caring for children aged birth to 3.

“ ”

Leading the QEES team through this year has been a true privilege. Early education is the most important component of a child's educational life cycle. The process takes a collaborative approach to building a child's brain while opening the minds of those surrounding the child. I am tremendously proud of my team and all of the providers in Hillsborough County. The pandemic challenged the QEES team and early learning community beyond measure. But in working together, we became stronger. We are a family of early educators who are determined to stay forward-thinking in our approach to early learning—**no matter what life throws our way.**

*Marni Fuente,  
QEES Program Director*

- Overall, the data QEES collected toward the original program objectives; the comparison of outcome data from October to March of Year 1 and 2; and the testimonials from parents, teachers, and center directors support the conclusion that **prior to the pandemic QEES was on track to meet its Year 2 objectives.** Moreover, a comprehensive look at the Year 2 QEES program and the sheer amount of new development that happened as a result of the grit and determination of QEES leaders and staff merits the following conclusion:

**QEES leaders and staff creatively pivoted the program to meet pandemic needs and successfully provided strong, high-quality, and comprehensive benefits to those in their circle of care.**



QEES Tweet

## References

- Barnett, W. S., & Jung, K. (2020, July). *Understanding and responding to the pandemic's impacts on preschool education: What can we learn from last spring?* National Institute for Early Education Research. <http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/NIEER-Special-Report-July-2020-What-Can-We-Learn-From-Last-Spring.pdf>
- Cui, J., & Natzke, L. (2020). *Early childhood program participation: 2019* (NCES 2020-075). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2020075>.
- Ewing-Nelson, C. (2020, August). *One in five child care jobs have been lost since February, and women are paying the price.* National Women's Law Center. <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ChildCareWorkersFS.pdf>
- Friedman-Krauss, A., & Barnett, S. (2020, June 18). Special report: Access to high-quality early education and racial equity. National Institute for Early Education Research. <http://nieer.org/policy-issue/special-report-access-to-high-quality-early-education-and-racial-equity>
- Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS). (n.d.). *Making the PAACT (Promise All Atlanta Children Thrive)*. <https://gears.org/initiatives/paact/>
- Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS). (2020, August 27). "Simply not sustainable:" Georgia parents' experiences during the COVID-19 crisis. Atlanta, GA: Author. <https://gears.org/publications/simply-not-sustainable-georgia-parents-experiences-during-the-covid-19-crisis/>
- Jones, S. M., Brush, K., Bailey, R., Brion-Meisels, G., McIntyre, J., Kahn, J., . . . & Stickle, L. (2017). *Navigating social and emotional learning from the inside out. Looking inside and across 25 leading SEL programs: A practical resource for schools and OST providers (elementary school focus)*. Harvard Graduate School of Education. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/navigating-social-and-emotional-learning-from-the-inside-out.aspx>

- Malik, R., Hamm, K., Lee, W., Davis, E. E., & Sojourner, A. (2020, June 22). The coronavirus will make child care deserts worse and exacerbate inequality. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2020/06/22/486433/coronavirus-will-make-child-care-deserts-worse-exacerbate-inequality/>
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (2020, July 13). Holding on until help comes: A survey reveals child care's fight to survive. [https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/holding\\_on\\_until\\_help\\_comes\\_survey\\_analysis\\_july\\_2020.pdf](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/holding_on_until_help_comes_survey_analysis_july_2020.pdf)
- Sharp, D. & Melton, . A. (2019). *Quality Early Education System: Year 1 evaluation report*. Tampa, FL: RMC Research Corporation.
- Szente, J. (2020). Live virtual sessions with toddlers and preschoolers amid COVID-19: Implications for early childhood teacher education. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 28(2), 373–380.
- Wan, T. (2020, October 15). Child care is in crisis. We'll be here to cover it during the turbulent year ahead. EdSurge. <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2020-10-15-child-care-is-in-crisis-we-ll-be-here-to-cover-it-during-the-turbulent-year-ahead>



# Appendix A

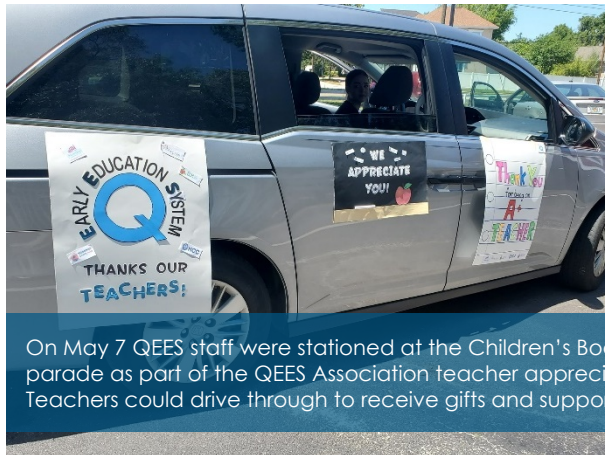
## Program Description

The QEES initiative achieves its vision through a comprehensive system of supports. This system promotes increased awareness of the importance of early learning while providing a holistic approach to teaching young children. The system is delivered through four primary program components.

**HCC-Pathways.** This program component is for teachers and directors of childcare homes and centers who need support in establishing strong foundational elements for a successful early learning environment. The program uses HCC-trained coaches who provide bi-weekly, one-to-one coaching and monthly training on topics such as Learning Environment, Daily Routines, Curriculum Planning, Approaches to Learning, and Assessment. HCC-Pathways ensures that teachers and directors can more easily and successfully implement what they learn about from the Early Literacy Matters (ELM) and Conscious Awareness Learning Model (CALM) components of QEES. After completing HCC-Pathways, teachers' classrooms have threshold levels of quality that can support the introduction of new classroom strategies and structures from ELM and CALM around cognitive and social-emotional development. The basic classroom quality features that HCC-Pathways supports are essential for giving teachers and directors the confidence and foundation for greater and earlier success as they participate in other QEES programs. All HCC Pathways support for teachers and directors is provided on-site at their learning centers.

### ***Pandemic Adaptations (March–September)***

- In-person training and coaching switched to virtual coaching via Zoom and GoToWebinar.
- New YouTube channel provided additional video content that could be viewed 24/7.
- QEES Quick Connects live videoconferencing sessions were held on Wednesday mornings and Thursday evenings with usually no more than 35 providers to provide an informal space for discussions about following the pandemic regulations. The sessions primarily consisted of discussion and information sharing, focusing on the current state of the pandemic regulation, guidelines, and provider needs.
- Providers that did not have a state contract were supported with materials for following guidelines: portable sinks, walls, hoses, buckets for water stations, and multiple tables for stations so parents did not have to stand in line.
- New training topics were added, including how to support children with virtual learning.



On May 7 QEEs staff were stationed at the Children's Board for a car parade as part of the QEEs Association teacher appreciation celebration. Teachers could drive through to receive gifts and support materials.

**Conscious Awareness Learning Model (CALM).** CALM is based on the framework of Conscious Discipline® as outlined by Dr. Becky Bailey. The program integrates positive psychology, mindfulness, emotional intelligence, social-emotional skills, and child development into every training. Trainings are offered in a series of 10 or more sessions that articulate into a college course credit after successful completion of the series. Other delivery formats are available that offer in-service hours and continuing education units (CEUs). Additional CALM support is provided to teachers and directors through on-site coaching throughout the year. Parents also receive training in Conscious Discipline® approaches on-site at participating preschools. CALM provides materials and activities to families throughout the year.

Conscious Discipline® teaches adults to adopt new mindsets about children's behavior, encouraging early learning practitioners and family members to develop greater empathy toward children as they encourage children's strong connections to their peers and the adults in their lives. Drawn from well-established scientific findings from brain and psychological research, Conscious Discipline® empowers teachers and other adults with the Seven Powers and Skills for self-control. These powers and skills change adults' perceptions and relationships with conflict, empowering them to be proactive instead of reactive, and to build relationships with children that support greater cooperation from children and more positive, loving experiences throughout the child's day. The program stresses increased self-regulation, along with strategies and classroom structures for resolving conflict through a greater understanding of children's fears, emotional needs, and explicit language and modeling of helpful, cooperative interactions. CALM is critical for addressing the complexity of early education and the skills needed for quality instruction, and its integrated approach aims to change the culture, perception, and mindset of early learning in Hillsborough County.

In 2017, a team of researchers from the Harvard Graduate School of Education included Conscious Discipline® in its report of 25 leading social-emotional learning and character education programs (Jones et al., 2017). The researchers noted that multiple studies of the program have been conducted, and reported outcomes have included reductions in aggression, hyperactivity, and conduct problems.

### ***Pandemic Adaptations (March–September)***

- Monthly Saturday morning trainings switched to a live video webinar format on April 4. Special sessions were added between monthly trainings to address COVID-19 issues.
- Monthly self-care and compassionate care CALM trainings via live webinars were added, conducted on Thursday evenings to address the social-emotional needs of teachers and center directors.
- Parent Connects sessions via Zoom and FaceTime offered parents support on following CALM procedures at home. One-on-one Zoom and FaceTime conferences were also offered to families to provide additional support.
- Staff provided drop-and-go activities and materials to providers and families.
- New YouTube channel provided additional video content that could be viewed anytime on demand. Resource guides were developed to organize the content into themes and add printable materials.

**Early Literacy Matters (ELM).** ELM is an early literacy intervention program that focuses on building emergent literacy skills: concepts of print, phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, and comprehension. ELM coaches work with preschool teachers and families to strengthen their knowledge and use of effective, developmentally-appropriate practices for strengthening early literacy. At intake, coaches conduct an Early Learning Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO). Coaching is guided by the results of the observations to best meet the individual needs of the teacher and classroom environment. While working in partnership with the teachers, ELM coaches provide targeted small group literacy intervention to the children. Each child is assessed using the Early Literacy Skills Assessment (ELSA) or Get Ready to Read! (GRTR) to establish their individual skills level. Small group literacy intervention is guided by these results. Families of these children receive books, information, materials, and take-home activities for supporting literacy development. ELM specialists working in classrooms also use the myON digital literacy library in their work. The ELM program has designed and offers over 20 workshops on diverse topics related to supporting literacy in children from infancy to the start of kindergarten. Trainings take place in the community, on-site and in the evenings at Hillsborough Community College.

### ***Pandemic Adaptations (March–September)***

- In-person coaching and training switched to virtual coaching via Zoom.
- New YouTube channel provided additional video content that could be viewed anytime on demand. Resource guides were developed to organize the content into themes and add printable materials.
- Parent Connects sessions via Zoom offered parents support on following ELM procedures at home.
- One-on-one Zoom and FaceTime conferences with families were offered to connect them to literacy experiences at home.
- Staff provided drop-and-go activities and materials to providers and families.

## **Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing: QEES Management and Operational Support.**

As a subcontracted partner, Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing standards require initial consultation prior to licensure and ongoing inspections and training thereafter. However, the need for additional operational support has been recognized. Through QEES, Hillsborough Child Care Licensing offers center directors additional, more specific and advanced training on organizational and operational topics that include: staff management, communication skills, record keeping, indoor/outdoor health and safety. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are issued and tracked through HCC, as are CEUs from the other QEES program components (HCC-Pathways, CALM, and ELM).

These Operational Support services are provided through coaching and training sessions built on evidence-based practices and tailored to site needs. Using information from an initial assessment, HCCCL works with home or center directors to create Action Plans for raising low scores and maintaining a safe and professional environment. For nonestablished or inexperienced early childcare homes and centers, HCCCL provides coaching and training sessions that establish a strong foundation for quality early care and education from the point of inception. For established homes and centers, coaching addresses imminent needs with mentoring support and coaching. Individual sessions occur on-site, and group sessions take place at off-site locations such as The Children's Board and public libraries. Once the providers have completed 30 hours of training, with CEUs attached to each section, they receive a certificate of completion and Specialized Certification.

HCCCL further supports the creation of collaborative partnerships among early childhood professionals through the QEES Association for Early Learning Leaders. This group of home and center administrators from across the county meets regularly, operates a Facebook page, and may provide peer mentoring opportunities in the future.

### ***Pandemic Adaptations (March–September)***

- Coaching and training continued in person when possible and was also offered virtually for those more comfortable in that format. New training topics were added to meet providers' needs.
- A crisis-management session conducted on April 18 addressed providers' questions about new COVID-related guidelines.
- Weekly QEES Quick Connect virtual calls with providers were added to update them on COVID-related guidelines, provide opportunities for questions, and give providers additional information and confidence for making their new program decisions. Calls were scheduled in the morning and afternoon to accommodate different provider schedules.
- Providers who did not have a state contract were supported with materials for following guidelines: portable sinks, walls, hoses, buckets for water stations, and multiple tables for stations so parents did not have to stand in line.
- New YouTube channel provided additional video content that could be viewed anytime on demand.

# Appendix B

## Objective Symbols and Assessment Instruments

### Key to Objective Symbols

This report uses symbols to denote how each objective relates to the child's development and surrounding support system, strengthened by the QEES program.

The **purple** symbols reference **key people** who build skill for supporting the child.



Families



Teachers



Directors

The **blue** symbols reference **areas of the child's development** supported through targeted QEES program components.



Cognitive



Social



Emotional



Physical

The **green** symbol references **career advancement supports** for teachers and directors to promote retention and stability in the child's circle of care.



Advancement

## Assessment Instruments

This section summarizes the assessment instruments used to gather data about the effectiveness of QEES activities and the overall impact from achieving the 10 QEES objectives listed in the following table. The assessment instruments used to measure the impact of the activities embedded in the 10 objectives are indicated along with the constituents impacted by the objectives. Descriptions of each assessment, organized alphabetically, follow the table.

### QEES Objectives

Objective	Objective text	Assessment(s)	Constituent(s) Impacted
1	Provide access to <u>training and technical assistance</u> to 850 early childhood education staff in community-based locations countywide.	Knowledge Assessments (HCC-created)	Teachers, Directors
2	Provide <u>coaching</u> to 165 countywide early childhood education practitioners participating in CALM.	Conscious Discipline® Progress Assessment	Teachers
3	Provide <u>onsite support</u> to 250 nonsystem early childhood education centers and family child care homes.	Business Administration Scale (BAS) for Family Child Care Program Administration Scale (PAS) for Early Childhood Programs Preschool Program Quality Assessment (Preschool PQA) Infant-Toddler Program Quality Assessment (Infant-Toddler PQA) Family Child Care Home Program Quality Assessment (FCCH PQA)	Directors, Teachers
4	Provide <u>supported services for the social-emotional development</u> of 135 children aged 3–5 countywide in classrooms where early childhood education staff receive coaching and resources.	Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) Rating Scales: Prosocial Behavior Skills Scale	Children
5	Provide <u>CALM strategies</u> to 200 parents/caregivers in engaged early childhood education sites countywide.	Knowledge Assessments (HCC-created)	Families

6	Provide <u>emergent literacy skills support</u> to 615 children aged birth to 5 in early childhood education sites countywide.	Early Literacy Skills Assessment (ELSA) Get Ready to Read Screening Tool (GRTR)	Children
7	Provide <u>strategies for emergent literacy and home-school engagement</u> to 445 parents/caregivers at engaged early childhood education sites countywide.	Get Ready to Read (GRTR) Home Checklist	Families
8	Provide <u>ELM activities</u> to 225 children aged 3–5 <u>to carry over classroom literacy strategies into the home environment.</u>	Reading log	Families
9	Provide <u>technical assistance</u> to 60 early childhood education staff in 25 sites countywide.	Early Language and Literacy Observation (ELLCO)	Teachers
10	Provide <u>educational site supports</u> to 50 eligible early childhood education programs serving children birth to age 5 and participating in CALM.	Site support tracking system and Utilization report	Directors, Teachers

**Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care (BAS).** The BAS is a valid, reliable tool for assessing the quality of business and professional practices in family child care settings. The tool is comprised of ten areas assessed on a seven-point scale by a trained early childhood coach. The ECE/FCCH score is the average across the ten areas with a seven being the highest possible score. The ten areas covered by the tool include:

- Qualifications and Professional Development
- Income and Benefits
- Work Environment
- Fiscal Management
- Recordkeeping
- Risk Management
- Provider-Family Communication
- Family Support and Engagement
- Marketing and Community Relations
- Provider as Employer

**Conscious Discipline® Progress Assessment.** This tool assesses the implementation of Conscious Discipline® skills and structure through a self-assessment rubric created on a four-point scale (1, lowest;4, highest). Tool materials assist in determining each level of proficiency and include specific verbiage and perceptual shifts related to the Seven Skills of Conscious Discipline®, which include: composure, encouragement,

assertiveness, choices, positive intent, empathy, and consequences. A composite score is not used with this assessment rather this evaluation looks at scores in each of the mentioned subdomains.

**Early Language and Literacy Observation (ELLCO).** The ELLCO Pre-K assessment toolkit covers five areas: Classroom structure (scores range from four at lowest to 20); Curriculum (score ranges from three at lowest to 15); Language environment (scores range from 4 at lowest to 20); Books and book reading (scores range from 4 at lowest to 25); and print and early writing (score ranges from 3 at lowest to 15). The ELLCO requires approximately 3 hours and 30 minutes for early literacy coaches to complete. Components of the toolkit include a literacy environment checklist for use in observing the classroom layout and content; a classroom observation tool and teacher interview that target language, literacy, and curriculum; and a literacy-activities rating scale geared toward book reading and writing behaviors. Scores from each of the five areas of the ELLCO are analyzed separately.

**Early Literacy Skills Assessment (ELSA).** The ELSA measures children's skill levels across four areas of early literacy (score range from low to high): alphabetic principle (0, 60), phonological awareness (1, 18), reading comprehension (integer), and concepts of print (1, 21). Designed as an authentic assessment for children ages three to six, the ELSA is conducted with a children's storybook (e.g., Violet's Adventure). A teacher reads the story to the child and stops periodically to ask questions. Each of the four scores in the literacy areas is used to analyze a child's performance.

**Get Ready to Read Screening Tool (GRTR).** The GRTR consists of 25 questions for three- to five-year-old children who have not yet entered kindergarten, to assess their skills and understanding related to print knowledge, book knowledge, phonological awareness, and phonics. The assessment is graded by hand and children receive scores on a continuous scale from 0 (low) to 25 (high). Scores correlate to steps, which describe the child's relative ability in each reading concept.

**Get Ready to Read Home Literacy Environment Checklist (GRTR Home Checklist).** This checklist consists of 37 items that the child's parent rates as true or false. A score of at least 20 indicates that the home environment has many supportive elements for early readers.

**HCC-Created Knowledge Assessments.** These assessments created by the QEES program staff are designed to validate that teachers, directors, or families who attend a QEES training gain new knowledge. Typical assessments consist of ten multiple-choice assessment items covering key concepts linked to the goals of each training session. These are "dipstick" measurements that enable a quick, broad check of training effectiveness and are not intended to assess the full depth of learning by program participants.

**Preschool (Preschool PQA), Infant-Toddler (Infant-Toddler PQA), and Family Child Care Home (FCCH PQA) Program Quality Assessments.** The Preschool, Infant-Toddler and FCCH PQAs are used to evaluate quality and identify needs in center-based preschool programs. Developed by the HighScope Educational Research Foundation, a HCC-Pathways coach rates the program on a scale of one (lowest) to five (highest). Each classroom receives an average score from each graded domain. An ECE/FCCH earns



the grand mean average rating of the scores across all classrooms. The Preschool, Infant-Toddler and FCCH PQA reflect research-based and field-tested best practices for early childhood programs in the following domains:

- Learning environment
- Daily routine
- Adult-child interaction
- Curriculum planning and assessment
- Parent involvement and family services
- Staff qualifications and development
- Program management

**Program Administration Scale (PAS).** The PAS measures leadership and management practices of early childhood programs not considered to be family child care settings. Program quality is assessed on a seven-point scale (from one to seven), using 25 items clustered into ten areas. The early literacy coach scores the 10 domains and averages the score across the 10 domains. A score of seven is the highest possible. The 10 domains are as follows:

- Human Resources Development
- Personnel Cost and Allocation
- Center Operations
- Child Assessment
- Fiscal Management
- Program Planning and Evaluation
- Family Partnerships
- Marketing and Public Relations
- Technology
- Staff Qualifications

**Reading Log.** The weekly reading log allows families to track books read over the course of a week and provide feedback. Children select a happy face for positive feedback, a neutral face for neutral feedback, and a sad face for negative feedback. The weekly reading logs are used to track progress towards the overall quarterly reading targets.

**Site Support Tracking System and Utilization Report.** This internal QEES reporting system includes product details and expenditures by site for materials purchased to help programs implement CALM strategies. The system tracks requests; fulfillment; confirmation of materials received; and follow-up by phone, email, or in-person visit to confirm that the materials were utilized.

**Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) Rating Scales: Prosocial Behavior Skills Scale.** This tool measures social skills including communication, cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, engagement, and self-control. It includes a classwide screening guide that can be used for ages 3 to 18. The early childhood coaches assess the students on the scale. Students can receive a high score of 4 and a low score of 1.

## Appendix C

# Qualitative, Formative Survey Responses

The value of any professional support initiative is often best expressed by those who participate in its activities. During this year of the pandemic, these testimonials illustrate the impact of the QEES program and contribute to the available evidence of the program's effectiveness in meeting the needs of teachers, center directors, and parents. This appendix provides a small selection of participant's statements. These statements were provided voluntarily through letters or emails to HCCL staff, or as an optional part of online survey forms.



*I learned self-regulation and practicing on a DAILY basis.*

*I love coming. I always learn something new to incorporate into my class and my life.*

*Love every time that I came in. I learn more and more every time.*

*This year we started something new, called QEES quick connect. This has been valuable to providers as it provides them a way to stay connected. As I thought about it more the name QEES connects really summarize the entire QEES program . QEES allows opportunities to make connections. QEES is valuable to the early childhood community in Hillsborough County.*

*This session helps me not only for my job as a teacher, but more for myself. How to help myself to relax. Really helpful!*

*I love all of your workshops. They are helpful to me and the children in my care. God bless.*

*Love the new adaptations to the presentation that give real solutions to our social distancing reality. Great work, guys!*

*As a Director, things can become very overwhelming along with demanding at times. The desire and need to improve, always being needed, something need fixing, something is missing, days of never-ending needs. Often it leaves me feeling that no one could ever understand or even imagine the demand. There have been times that I felt like giving up and just walking away. The program has been a blessing to me since I started, along with allowing me the opportunity to be involved and have a voice. QEES has provided*

*support and feedback in areas that will help improve and make things easier for me as a Director. So, at this time I would like to say Thank You for your support and all that you do.*

*These workshops are very helpful to me inside and outside the classroom. I love attending them.*

*This workshop was really good for me, because I understood different things that I was already doing, and now I learned why to do them and how, in a better way.*

*Ms. [Coach] did an excellent job continuing the literacy program virtually with [my child]. There are so many elements that I truly valued about the virtual literacy lessons:*

- 1. Lessons were focused on reading strategies that touched on many of the Florida Standards.*
- 2. [Coach] kept [child] engaged during the virtual lessons. She was quick to redirect her if she got off task.*
- 3. Stories and activities were age appropriate.*
- 4. She was always available if we had any questions or concerns and quick to respond back.*
- 5. During the COVID quarantine, [child] struggled with anxiety from being isolated from her friends. [Coach] was good about reviewing breathing techniques and even gave her the pillows to remind [child] how to calm herself. The breathing techniques have been so helpful in getting [child] to sleep and helping her transition into Kindergarten.*
- 6. [Coach] was wonderful at following up with me to review what they discussed during their virtual lesson and how I could continue to support [child] at home.*

*Overall, [Coach] has been a wonderful teacher to [my child] and exceeded our expectations. I am so thankful that there are programs like ELM and CALM that are around to work with centers like [the early learning center my child attends] to help children with these skills. We look forward to continuing to touch base with Ms. [Coach] because of the bond that [child] has formed with her.*

*[This workshop] provided information that was extremely helpful, especially during this time of pandemic and social unrest.*

*It is my third year attending, and every time I attend a session, I learn something new or a more effective way of supporting our kiddos. The presentation is always on point and helpful.*

*Thanks so much for taking the time to actually make a class that would benefit us teachers. I feel it was a recharge and refocus session. I truly appreciate it!*

*When I first started QEES I was not all that interested in joining, I thought—another program with their set of policies and procedures. That meant more work for me and the staff. I was in for a surprise. This program has been the most valuable in Early Childhood. Being able call if I have a question or problem receiving a quick solution, receiving weekly update on everything in Early Childhood not just licensing, making sure you talk to the right people, giving your program items to increase the quality and being able to be honest with you when you are wrong. Amy McLane is all that and more. This is a great program and I'm privileged to be a part of it.*

*The CALM team is a part of our family that we can't do without. They help us and empower us as caregivers and teach us to help others who are in most need of our understanding and guidance, our children and future leaders. Thank you from here to the moon and back.*

*I felt like I wasn't alone. Great encouragement.*

*The coaches bring me peace in the middle of the torment.*

*This is what I needed today. With being out of touch of our school, this is awesome.*

*This program has proven to be one of the best that has happened for the providers this year (or ever). I actually felt a connection to the other Directors that I have not had in the past. Great topics, awesome speakers and so much feedback from other professionals in our field. Proved to me that Hillsborough is a wonderful place for children and families.*

*Even virtually, I am still able to understand what we need to be doing in our classrooms. Thank you.*

*You are a wonderful support especially at this time of uncertainty.*

*Your support during these difficult times is so essential and I hope you will be able to continue providing this program in the uncertain future that we face.*

*Often, our team felt overwhelmed and intimidated by the thought of an inspection or a visit from licensing. Although this may not be a reflection of the job or individuals who work at HCCCL it was the perception of child care providers and their employees. The QEES association has changed that perception. Now a visit from a QEES member means we are getting support and training. My staff looks forward to a representative visiting and mentoring our team. Furthermore, QEES has opened communication among providers by hosting weekly Zoom meetings, a Facebook group and individual contacts. The QEES team has facilitated a grass roots, countywide quality improvement initiative that is growing exponentially and we are grateful.*

*Such a powerful and much-needed webinar, especially during these stress-filled times. Marni, Denise, and Laura were able to project their great calmness, positivity, and knowledge through an engaging webinar.*

*I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the QEES Program on an exceptional year. Even though there have been many trials and obstacles since March, the program has stayed up to date and very informative. Participating in the QEES Program has been one of the best decisions that our center has made.*

*I sincerely appreciate being able to participate in this program. Hillsborough County providers need this kind of inspiration.*

*Once again you knocked it out of the water (it was great!!!) I am just so thrilled that you guys are available to help us. The insight can be so life-changing when applied. The useful way parents can be helped in situations when they are not used to having the children at home with such emotions flaring at stressful times—this is so wonderful because it can also bring peace that our children can be safe because we can help. Thanks for all your help. Priceless! Thank you for helping me with the struggling.*

*[My child] was instructed by you virtually during the summer. The lessons were incredibly helpful to continue the learning from pre-k, that were cut short due to Covid-19. Going over letter recognition and sounds proved exceedingly helpful because his recent assessment with his kindergarten teacher, showed he was able to recognize 23/26 letters and knew all sounds. [Child's] favorite part of his 45 min a week lesson was the books you would read. It was a great way to engage his attention before delving right to the learning. Thank you so much for all of your attention and kindness during the stressful time and the unconventional way of learning that had been brought upon us.*

*The QEES program is an asset not only to our center and its families but to the community at large.*

*What can I say about the QEES program? I wish that this program was available when we opened our child care center 2½ years ago. Many of the things that we went through was trial and error, more error than anything. Since the QEES program has been working with us, I've seen a tremendous difference in the day to day function of the center. Tina is a jewel and having her as a coach has been amazing.*

*To know that we are all in this together means a lot to all of us.*

*When I have questions or where I need some guidance, I know exactly who to turn to. As a director, I feel grateful to have a program that helps me be a better leader and that helps my school become better as well.*