



# QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION SYSTEM

## Year 3 Evaluation Report

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**Children's Board Hillsborough County**  
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QEES planted  
a seed and is  
watching it  
grow





# Quality Early Education System

## Year 3 Evaluation Report

Funded by



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Collage photos (l-r; t-b): ELM outdoor coaching session; QEES presenting at Florida's Department of Children and Families summit; HCC-Pathways coaches at the QEES Early Childhood Careers Expo; QEES Business Operation & Management FaceTime coaching session; CALM connection ritual; QEES Business Management & Operations and HCC-Pathways coaches at the QEES Early Childhood Careers Expo; ELM indoor coaching session; first cohort of the QEES Business Operations Support System; ELM indoor coaching session; CALM outdoor Parent Connection; ELM indoor coaching session



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## New heights of flexibility and resilience amidst COVID-19.

It is impossible to anticipate the length and impact of a global pandemic. No one could have predicted that we would still be adapting to the effects of COVID-19 over a year and a half later. Millions of young children across the globe had to quickly adjust to innovations in technology that support cognitive development. The coaches and educators at the **Quality Early Education System (QEES)** in Hillsborough County—a comprehensive, multiagency effort to support the individuals involved in caring for young children aged birth to 5—had no idea how these children would acclimate. Was it even possible to provide effective social, emotional, and cognitive support in the era of COVID-19? This was a story that had never before been written.

We are often too quick to underestimate the flexibility and resilience of young children. This past school year, we reinvented our classrooms and the programs we have built to support early learners, their families, and the educators that work with them. Additionally, we (society) undervalue the vital importance of early childhood educators. Families around the world turned their dining room tables into art studios, their backyards into exhibition sites. Preschools held drive-through graduations and pivoted protocols and instruction. **The experiences that shape the brain have looked different from ever before during this unprecedented time.** However, our children did what young children do best: they persevered... and they did it with joy.

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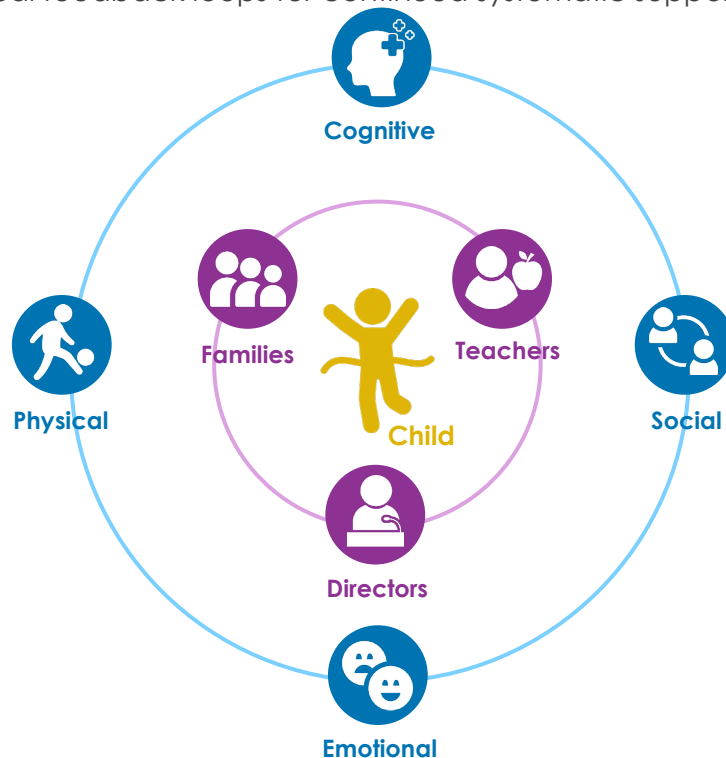
### QEES Vision Statement

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 Background

Decades of research support the idea that experiences and the quality of those experiences shape the brain. QEES understands that the only way to significantly improve all areas of brain development is to support the key individuals like **children's families, teachers, and childcare and preschool directors** who mold those experiences, beginning at birth.

From 2018-20, QEES completed its first two years of integrating supports in partnership with Hillsborough Community College and Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing to create and expand the comprehensive QEES program for supporting children's **cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth**. In 2020-21, QEES brought the operations and management staff in house but continued to collaborate with Hillsborough County Childcare Licensing as a non-subcontracted thought-partner, providing mutual feedback loops for continued systematic support.



QEES was designed to enhance quality by providing a holistic, comprehensive approach to early learning and 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.

## Quick Guide

### QEES TRAINING AND COACHING

#### 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.

#### HCC-Pathways

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

#### QEES Business Operations and Management

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.

Last year's evaluation revealed the program's ability to achieve and exceed objectives despite pandemic-related shifts. The program was on-target for all 10 objectives and increased the breadth for seven of the objectives. The plan for the third year of QEES implementation aimed to sustain and build on the program's achievements aligned to its objectives by strengthening program components and further developing the shifts necessary to reach children, families, and early childhood education (ECE) providers in virtual settings.

### Strengthening the QEES COVID-19 Response

This Year 2 evaluation report provided QEES with the vital reassurance that ECE programs can not only continue but are essential to the functioning of a community amid challenging times (COVID-19) and always. QEES had the opportunity to write a new story—one of trust, compassion, and community. However, this would not be possible if not for the undying dedication of QEES program staff and the perseverance of children and their families. The Year 3 evaluation will provide insight into how the program components (detailed in Appendix A) continue to develop to meet the needs of young children and the early learning community. In 2020-21, QEES delivered onsite support to 256 ECE providers throughout Hillsborough County, the third largest school district in the state of Florida and eighth largest in the country (illustrated in Appendix D).

**Learning Line.** Launched on March 23, 2020, the phone based Learning Line was established for ECE 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 what QEES could provide, staff directed 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 continued publishing links to COVID 19 news and resources for childcare providers and families.

**Tracking center closures and COVID-19 cases.** The tracking of closures on Mapline is ongoing. QEES also continued tracking and mapping all of the COVID-19 cases specific to childcare in Hillsborough County, documenting the location, number, and age of COVID-19 cases each day.


**Video and digital coaching content (literacy, math, science, social-emotional) available 24/7.** The content creation stream continued to evolve to help with the change from in-person to remote and hybrid training and coaching. The **QEES YouTube channel** (starting with 13 videos on March 30, 2020) continued to

## Resource Guides with Activities and Links



### LITERACY•MATH•SCIENCE

Related to ELM coaching and training

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



### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

Related to CALM coaching and training

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

provide read alouds and other suggested activities to keep children learning whether centers were open, operating remotely, or closed. New videos were added every week. **A year and a half later, the channel has uploaded 762 videos in English and Spanish.** 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 include printables for related learning activities.

**Virtual training and coaching.** The monthly Saturday morning Conscious Awareness Learning Model (CALM) trainings for teachers and center directors continued in live video format, drawing well over 100 participants each session. 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. The Business Operations and Management, Early Literacy Matters (ELM), and HCC-Pathways teams of the QEES program also continued offering virtual training, yielding more than 50 participants each session.

**Virtual resources for providers and families.** The foundation of these resources remained valuable as QEES continue to navigate supports based on the trends of the pandemic. The Business Operations and Management and HCC-Pathways teams continued conducting weekly QEES Quick Connect virtual calls over Zoom. The providers were surveyed to determine interest and frequency of the calls. During these calls, staff updated providers on COVID 19–related regulations and responded to requests for tips on best practices. Providers needed the best and latest information available. The goal of these calls was to maintain a connection to all providers while increasing their confidence when needing to suddenly make unprecedented decisions for their programs. Two sessions were held, one in English and one in Spanish, at a time that fit the varied schedules of the providers.

As supporting families and children is always at the forefront of programming, coaches continued to offer virtual support to families. QEES staff offered one on one Zoom conferences to impart strategies for home learning and connect children to academic and social emotional experiences. This option was available to families with children that were no longer in childcare—either to avoid exposure to COVID 19, because they could no longer afford care, or because their center had closed.

Additionally, QEES staff worked collaboratively with preschool directors and teachers to facilitate virtual parent events to keep parents connected and engaged. These regular Zoom calls gave 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. One of the silver linings of the pandemic was the strengthening of the relationship with families throughout the year and ability to reinforce the home-school connections with each provider.

**Parent/Family Engagement.** QEES expanded its outreach to families by holding connection events in the mornings at childcare facilities. Staff met with parents/caregivers outside of preschools to discuss the supports in place for their children and share social-emotional strategies to help children cope with changing landscapes as a result of the pandemic.

**QEES Cares.** QEES created QEES Cares bags filled with essential supplies like masks, cleaning supplies, and QEES program information. These bags were delivered to ECEs impacted by COVID-19 to provide support and lift spirits.



# Objective 1

Provide access to countywide training and technical assistance to at least 80% of 1,000 early childhood education staff in college, community-based locations, or via live virtual platforms.



Teachers



Directors



Cognitive



Social



Emotional



Physical



Advancement

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

## Year 3 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**104%** of target

**1,044** teachers provided with training and technical assistance

Year 3 target = 1,000 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 3 target = 80% of the teachers trained



EXCEEDED TARGET

## ONSITE SUPPORT

### PAS/BAS

Program Administration Scale/Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care

### EOS Organizational Checkup

Entrepreneurial Operating System

### PQA

Program Quality Assessment



EXCEEDED TARGET

## Objective 2

Provide at least 70% of 250 non-system early childhood education centers and family child care homes with in-person or live virtual coaching, mentoring, and professional development.



Teachers



Directors



Cognitive



Physical

This objective refers to support provided by Business Operations and Management as well as HCC-Pathways. The Business Operations and Management team staff visit centers and homes to provide coaching on setting up their business with specific and advanced organizational and operational supports. The new Business Operations Support System (BOSS) course takes a deeper dive into the overarching business concepts that can help businesses succeed, using the *Organizational Checkup* as an assessment tool for providers. Also included is support provided by the HCC-Pathways team, whose staff visit centers and homes to provide coaching on setting up basic structures for learning related to environments, daily routines, curriculum planning, approaches to learning, and assessments. This evaluation is necessary before a center can successfully implement additional, more specialized support elements provided by CALM and ELM.

### Year 3 Findings



Breadth

91% of target

227 centers and homes supported onsite

Year 3 target = 250 centers and homes



Effectiveness

130% of target

100% of the 227 centers and homes that submitted data completed the pre-post assessments, involved observations and interviews, and showed improvement over time

Year 3 target = 70% of at least 200 centers and homes

## COACHING

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.



EXCEEDED TARGET

## Objective 3

Provide in-person and live virtual coaching to at least 75% of 165 countywide early childhood education practitioners (ages 1-5 classrooms) participating in CALM.



Teachers



Directors



Social



Emotional

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 tailored to specific needs and occurs weekly, biweekly, or monthly. 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 3 Findings



Breadth

**89%** of target

**147** teachers and directors coached

Year 3 target = 165 teachers and directors



Effectiveness

**125%** of target

**94%** of the teachers and directors coached demonstrated developmentally appropriate practices on the Conscious Discipline® Progress Assessment

Year 3 target = 75% of at least 165 teachers and directors

## Objective 4

Provide in-person or live virtual early childhood education coaching support services for social-emotional development of at least 75% of 135 children (ages 3-5) in classrooms countywide participating in CALM.



Families



Teachers



Social



Emotional

This objective refers to 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, events, materials, and take-home activities.

### Year 3 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**273%** of target

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

Year 3 target = 135 children



Effectiveness

**125%** of target

**94%** of the 358 children for whom data were submitted demonstrated increased social-emotional competence from pre- to posttest

Year 3 target = 75% of at least 135 children



EXCEEDED TARGET

## Objective 5

Provide at least 75% of 200 countywide parents/caregivers engaged in early childhood education sites with CALM strategies in-person or via live virtual platforms.



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, parent events, forums, and website links to support services.

### Year 3 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**215%** of target

**430** families provided with CALM strategies

Year 3 target = 200 families



Effectiveness

**132%** of target

**99%** of the 313 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 3 target = 75% of at least 200 families

## Objective 6

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



Teachers



Directors



Social



Emotional

This objective 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 8 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 3 Findings



Breadth

**72%** of target

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

Year 3 target = 50 programs



Effectiveness

N/A

**EMERGENT LITERACY  
SKILLS SUPPORT**

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



**EXCEEDED TARGET**



**EXCEEDED TARGET**

## Objective 7

Provide at least 85% of 615 children (ages birth-5) in countywide early childhood education centers or family child care homes with emergent literacy skills/support year-round through the ELM model on-site or via live virtual platforms.



Families



Teachers



Cognitive

This objective refers to providing support/skills to children (ages birth-5) regarding emergent literacy. Children are assessed to identify levels of emergent literacy skills. Instruction on multisensory early literacy skills includes print awareness, oral language, letter knowledge, phonological awareness, syllable counting and segmentation, rhyming, blending, alliteration, onset-rime, and emergent writing. This support is provided through weekly targeted coaching in small groups (12 sessions; 20-30 minute lessons) in classrooms or via virtual formats.

### Year 3 Findings



Breadth

**149%** of target

**918** children supported in emergent literacy skills

Year 3 target = 615 children



Effectiveness

**102%** of target

**87%** of the 662 children for whom data were submitted demonstrated increased literacy skills on the Early Literacy Skills Assessment or Get Ready to Read! from pretest to posttest

Year 3 target = 85% of at least 495 children



## Objective 8

Provide year-round support to at least 85% of 445 countywide parents/caregivers (of ELM children) engaged in early childhood education sites or via live virtual platforms to develop strategies for emergent literacy and home-school engagement.



Families



Cognitive

This objective refers to parent/caregiver 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 3 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**158%** of target

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

Year 3 target = 445 parents/caregivers



Effectiveness

**116%** of target

**99%** of the eligible 524 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 3 target = 85% of at least 445 parents/caregivers

## Objective 9

Provide ELM activities to 225 children (ages 3-5) and their families to carryover classroom literacy strategies into home environments.



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 at least four times a week.

### Year 3 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**126%** of target

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

Year 3 target = 225 children



Effectiveness

**101%** of target

**81%** of the 264 children for whom data were submitted had documentation of being read to at home at least 4 times per week

Year 3 target = 80% of at least 225 children

*Note. 6% of children submitted reading logs with less reading time, and 13% did not submit a log.*



EXCEEDED TARGET



EXCEEDED TARGET



EXCEEDED TARGET

## Objective 10

Provide technical assistance for literacy strategies to at least 85% of 60 early childhood education staff in 25 sites countywide or via live virtual platform using Nemours BrightStart! Literacy Curriculum.



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 (ELLCO) 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 3 Findings



Breadth

**128%** of target

77 staff served at 31 sites

Year 3 target = 60 staff across 25 sites



Effectiveness

**108%** of target

92% of the 72 staff for whom data were submitted demonstrated increased literacy skills on the ELLCO from pre- to posttest

Year 3 target = 80% of at least 60 staff

CHANGE FROM YEAR 2  
TO YEAR 3



DECREASED  
BUT STILL ABOVE  
TARGET



MAINTAINED



DECREASED



MAINTAINED

## Comparison of Outcomes

Year 2 to Year 3 | October–September

**Objective 1**— Provide access to countywide training and technical assistance to at least 80% of 1,000 early childhood education staff in college, community-based locations, or via live virtual platforms.



Breadth

**Fewer** teachers were provided with training and technical assistance in Year 3.

**Year 2 = 1315    Year 3 = 1044 teachers**



Effectiveness

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

**Year 2 = 94%    Year 3 = 94% of teachers**

**Objective 2**— Provide at least 70% of 250 non-system early childhood education centers and family child care homes with in-person or live virtual coaching, mentoring, and professional development.



Breadth

**Fewer** centers and homes were supported on-site in Year 3 due to many pandemic-related closures.

**Year 2 = 270    Year 3 = 221 centers and homes**



Effectiveness

The **same percentage** of centers and homes met the targets in Year 3.

**Year 2 = 100% of 188 centers completed posttests by September and demonstrated improvement**

**Year 3 = 100% of 221 centers completed posttests by September and demonstrated improvement**

CHANGE FROM YEAR 2 TO YEAR 3



INCREASED

**Objective 3**— Provide in-person and live virtual coaching to at least 75% of 165 countywide early childhood education practitioners (ages 1-5 classrooms) participating in CALM.



Breadth

**More** teachers and directors were coached in Year 3.

**Year 2 = 141      Year 3 = 147 teachers and directors**



Effectiveness

Year 2 = N/A— only 6 teachers were assessed due to COVID-19.

**Year 3 = 94% of teachers and directors**

**Objective 4**— Provide in-person or live virtual early childhood education coaching support services for social-emotional development of at least 75% of 135 children (ages 3-5) in classrooms countywide participating in CALM.



INCREASED



Breadth

**More** children were provided with social-emotional support services in Year 3.

**Year 2 = 348      Year 3 = 368 children**



Effectiveness

**More** children exceeded the target in Year 3.

**Year 2 = 90%      Year 3 = 94% of children**



INCREASED

**Objective 5**— Provide at least 75% of 200 countywide parents/caregivers engaged in early childhood education sites with CALM strategies in-person or via live virtual platforms.



DECREASED BUT STILL ABOVE TARGET



Breadth

**Fewer** families were provided with CALM strategies in Year 3, but the number of families served greatly exceeded the target both years.

**Year 2 = 434      Year 3 = 430 families**



Effectiveness

**More** families who completed posttests exceeded the target in Year 3.

**Year 2 = 94%      Year 3 = 99% of families**



INCREASED

**CHANGE FROM YEAR 2 TO YEAR 3**



**INCREASED**



**DECREASED BUT STILL ABOVE TARGET**



**INCREASED**



**MAINTAINED**

**Objective 6**— Provide educational site supports to at least 50 eligible early childhood education programs serving children birth to age 5 participating in CALM.



**Breadth**

**More** educational site support requests were processed in Year 3.

**Year 2 = 27**

**Year 3 = 36 requests**



**Effectiveness**

N/A

**Objective 7**— Provide at least 85% of 615 children (ages birth-5) in countywide early childhood education centers or family child care homes with emergent literacy skills/support year round through the ELM model on-site or via live virtual platforms.



**Breadth**

**Fewer** children were supported in emergent literacy skills in Year 3, but the number of children served greatly exceeded the target both years.

**Year 2 = 930**

**Year 3 = 918 children**



**Effectiveness**

Year 2 = N/A— only 6 children were assessed due to COVID-19.

**Year 3 = 87% of children**

**Objective 8**— Provide year-round support to at least 85% of 445 countywide parents/caregivers (of ELM children) engaged in early childhood education sites or via live virtual platforms to develop strategies for emergent literacy and home-school engagement.



**Breadth**

**More** parents were provided with support for developing literacy and engagement strategies in Year 3.

**Year 2 = 690**

**Year 3 = 702 parents**



**Effectiveness**

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

**Year 2 = 99% of 158 Year 3 = 99% of 524 families**

**CHANGE FROM YEAR 2  
TO YEAR 3**



**INCREASED**

**Objective 9**— Provide ELM activities to 225 children (ages 3-5) and their families to carryover classroom literacy strategies into home environments.



**Breadth**

**More** children were provided literacy strategies for home in Year 3.

**Year 2 = 282**

**Year 3 = 283 children**



**Effectiveness**

Year 2 = N/A— reading logs were collected in March 2020, as requested by the Children's Board, but data were difficult to interpret.

**Year 3 = 81% of children**

**Objective 10**— Provide technical assistance for literacy strategies to at least 85% of 60 early childhood education staff in 25 sites countywide or via live virtual platforms using Nemours BrightStart! Literacy Curriculum.



**Breadth**

**More** staff were served in Year 3.

**Year 2 = 76**

**Year 3 = 77 staff**



**Effectiveness**

Year 2 = N/A— only 9 teachers were assessed due to COVID-19.

**Year 3 = 99% of staff**



**INCREASED**

# Discussion

## Program Objectives

Despite pandemic-related challenges, QEES continued to meet and exceed program objectives. Pandemic-related adaptations had the power to impact these objectives, but QEES staff saw the potential to use these adaptations as catalysts to reach more families and ECE professionals and define new modes of support.

Of the 10 objectives, **7 exceeded their breadth goals** (Objectives 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10). The greatest success was for Objective 4 (Provide in-person or live virtual early childhood education coaching support services for social-emotional development of at least 75% of 135 children [ages 3-5] in classrooms countywide participating in CALM), which had a target of 135 children. QEES exceeded this breadth goal by 275%, reaching 368 children. This objective was also the greatest success in Years 1 and 2.

For the program's effectiveness goals, **9 of the 10 objectives exceed their effectiveness targets**.<sup>1</sup> Objective 5 (Provide at least 75% of 200 countywide parents/caregivers engaged in early childhood education sites with CALM strategies in-person or via live virtual platforms) exceeded its effectiveness goal by 132%, reaching 99% of the 313 participating families.

Pandemic-related challenges required QEES staff to develop several additional means of communication and engagement (i.e., video calls, increased phone communication, virtual activities, setting up outdoor classrooms for coaching sessions). The increase in available communication methods and the flexibility of QEES staff significantly strengthened existing relationships with families. Therefore, the success in objectives that depend on family engagement could be due, in part, to virtual and hybrid service delivery methods and the ability to effectively communicate with families to receive necessary data.

## Comparing Year 2 and Year 3

As evidenced by the overall success in the breadth and effectiveness goals, QEES has evolved its program components to expand its reach and establish an effective system for collecting

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<sup>1</sup> Objective 6 refers to a system for managing funding requests from early education providers for classroom materials needed to implement CALM techniques and Conscious Discipline® strategies; however, the effectiveness of this objective is not currently measured. QEES staff conduct frequent site checks to ensure the receipt and appropriate utilization of the materials.

7 objectives exceeded their breadth goals

9 objectives exceed their effectiveness targets<sup>1</sup>



supporting data despite pandemic-related challenges. In comparison to Year 2, **QEES increased its success on breadth measures** for 6 of the 10 objectives in Year 3.

The continued success of the QEES program is driven by its strong program partnerships and the innovative combination of a local higher education institution (Hillsborough Community College) and a local funder (The Children's Board). Another factor contributing to this success is that **QEES never ceased operation**. Adjustments were made when needed to accommodate providers, children, and families, but services were not interrupted. Continuity of support is critical to early education and care. This endurance was likely a key component in the program's ability to sustain momentum.

## COVID-19 Response and Attainment of Additional Goals

No one could have predicted that when the pandemic emergency was declared in 2020, it would last another full 12 months. QEES continued to prove its strength and ability to be nimble shifting services to prioritize teachers, directors, parents, and children's daily needs 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 and intensive social-emotional supports to business coaching, to strategies for managing stress, to implementing new instructional techniques for learning in remote contexts.

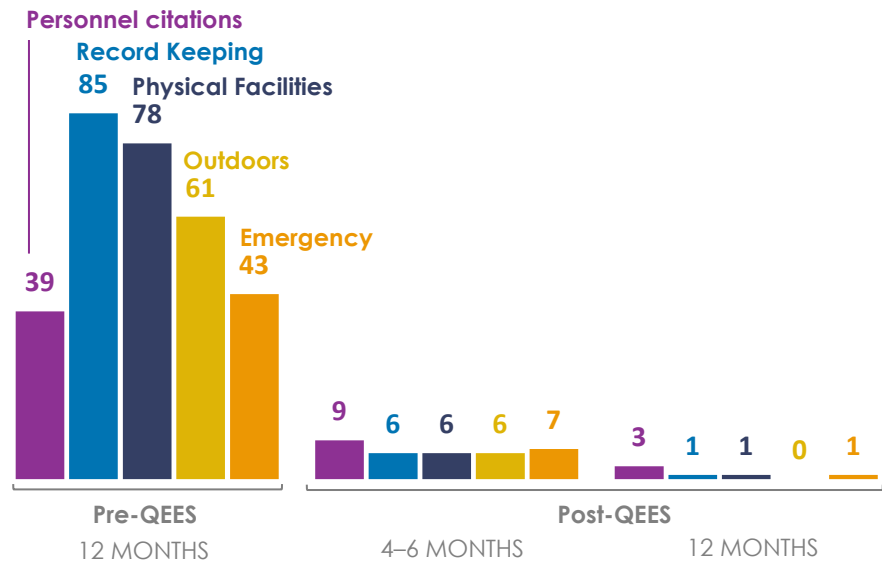
Like a lifeline, supports such as the CALM Special Sessions and QEES Quick Connect calls linked providers with QEES staff and each other. All supports that were inspired from the initial pandemic response last year continued to thrive with innovation as the system grew larger. The QEES Association Facebook group, formed last year, expanded membership and guided discussions to support each other as providers navigated through the new landscapes resulting from COVID. As the system grows is vital that all providers have access to the supports offered by QEES. This year, QEES delivered trainings and events in Spanish to best meet the needs of English learning providers.

## Reducing Citations

Evidence gathered by the QEES Business Operations and Management team adds even more detail to the understanding of the program's impact on the early learning community during Year 3 of the evaluation. Records show that citations for

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

standards violations across all areas (personnel, record keeping, physical facilities, outdoors, and emergency) significantly decreased among QEES participants over time despite ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic.



The program activities associated with Objectives 1 and 2 (Provide access to countywide training and technical assistance to at least 80% of 1,000 early childhood education staff in college, community-based locations, or via live virtual platforms; Provide at least 70% of 250 non-system early childhood education centers and family child care homes with in-person or live virtual coaching, mentoring, and professional development) likely have the most influence on the decrease in citations. The activities provide ECE staff with professional development in the areas of business operations, budget, finance, record keeping, management, communication, indoor and outdoor safety, disaster planning, closures and re-opening, and more.

QEES is unique in the fact that participation is completely voluntary. There are no monetary benefits or contracts involved for those who receive support. Therefore, providers must possess initiative and a high level of engagement in order to demonstrate success. When looking at the data for this year, it is evident that providers understand the mutually beneficial partnership available to them and derive deep and sincere relationships with the QEES staff and other QEES participants.

## Social Outreach

QEEES' virtual presence is a vital part of its community engagement strategy. QEEES staff implemented new social outreach strategies in order to increase widespread understanding of these critical early childhood programs. The CALM, ELM, and QEEES Twitter accounts all demonstrated significant growth in Year 3. From February to August 2021, the CALM account grew from 37 to 266 followers, the ELM account grew from 76 to 424 followers, and the QEEES account grew from 42 to 286 followers.

The QEEES Instagram account served as another social outlet and provided insights into viewer demographics. The same engagement strategies used to increase Twitter traffic were applied to the QEEES Instagram page. The data breakdown from June to September 2021 is as follows:

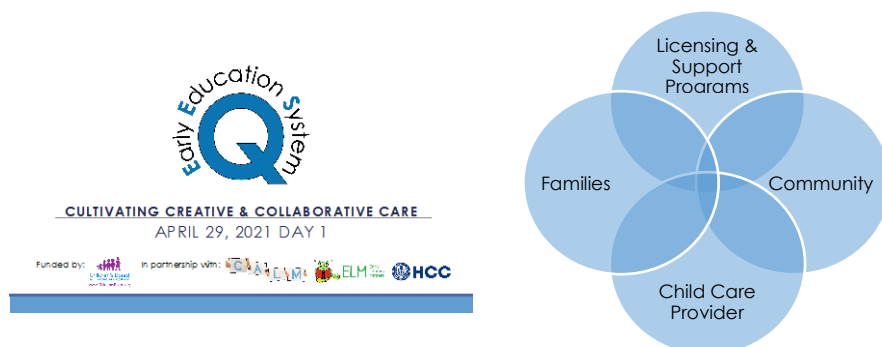
- +34.9 More accounts reached compared to March 20-June 17
- 398 accounts reached
  - +112% more accounts reached that weren't following compared to March 20-June 17
- Total followers 203
  - +9.7% vs June 17
  - Follower growth: Overall 18: 22 follows, and 4 unfollows
  - Follower Locations: Tampa, Brandon, Riverview, New York, Plant City
  - Age ranges from 18-65+
  - Audience gender attraction 88.5% of women 11.5% men

The QEEES YouTube channel was created on March 30, 2020, starting with 13 videos. The videos provided read-alouds and other suggested activities in both English and Spanish to keep children learning whether centers were open, operating remotely, or closed. As in Year 2, new videos have been added every week, with a total of 762 videos as of October 2021. The channel has received 35,371 views since March 2020.

## Additional Community Engagement Achievements

In April 2021, QEEES participated in a 3-day, state-wide presentation along with a summit presentation in partnership with the Florida Department of Children and Families to present information and training on core QEEES components to ECE providers and licensing staff throughout the state.

The goal of the summit was to reach regional leadership teams for licensing agencies across the state to increase engagement and understanding of the importance of ECE programs. The presentations highlighted the need for adjustments to procedures to foster a holistic approach when looking at ECE licensing and support.



QEES was awarded an honorable mention for its contributions to the community at the Humankind Film Festival, presented by the Humankind Partnership. The QEES video submission was highlighted at the Gasparilla International Film Festival on June 11, 2021.

QEES leadership also recorded a presentation on the program's components for the National Association of Regulatory Administration (NARA) to be presented for childcare licensing staff nationwide in the next fiscal year.

## Links to Research

Across the nation, early childhood education centers (ECEs) have been severely impacted by COVID-19. **Much of the long-term data on how pandemic-related disruptions will impact cognitive development is unknown.** Many of the social-emotional supports provided by ECEs have had to shift into virtual or hybrid forms. These virtual modalities can create a sense of isolation and stress. "Understanding these stressors and their impacts are particularly significant since many young learners have not yet internalized or experienced typical classroom routines which could be considered prerequisites to effective teaching and learning" (Barnett, Grafwallner & Weisenfeld, 2021). There is an understandable amount of anxiety surrounding how the "delay" of such social routines affect children, which further emphasizes the need for QEES program supports to serve as a bridge to guide that transition—however it may look.

QEES is also hyper-aware of the many **inequities associated with income level.** Data from the Early Education Research (NIEER) 2020 Preschool Learning Activities (PLA) parent survey showed

that, following the closure of a majority of ECE programs, home learning environments alone were unequal in levels of cognitive support, worsening educational disparities. The study revealed that Black and Hispanic children were more likely to lose preschool support services entirely, and levels of at-home engagement varied. “This suggests not only that parents could not fill the gaps created by the preschool classroom closings but that home learning activities also declined, leading to even more missed learning opportunities” (Barnett, Grafwallner & Weisenfeld, 2021). **QEES has worked to make at-home learning materials accessible to more families** by hand-delivering packets and providing access to a wide library of online materials.

However, beyond ensuring access to materials, **QEES has provided the opportunity for families to learn how to support their children—and themselves**—while gaining knowledge about brain development and social-emotional learning. Self-regulation and emotional awareness skills are vital to early development. Children’s “development is contingent on nurturing, responsive, stimulating interactions with primary caregivers, so it is imperative that families are supported to interact with their young children in these ways and this is especially important in contexts where children cannot attend early childhood provision” (Murray, 2020).

We talk a lot about resilience as a key factor in ECE success—particularly amidst a global pandemic—but it isn’t just talk. The neuroscience of resilience has been thoroughly investigated and tested. Doctor and researcher Nadine Burke Harris says that “a predisposition to resilience is partly genetic... **But childhood experience plays a key role in shaping our implicit expectations and tuning the neural circuits of the brain.** That’s where teachers and parents come in” (Piore, 2020). Burke Harris found that many of her adolescent patients seeking treatment simultaneously faced stressors at home. These additional stressors contributed to the release of the stress hormone cortisol. Her team sought to identify 10 of the most common familial stressors and create screening processes for healthcare workers to recognize these stressors and combat them with positive interactions that promote resiliency. Burke Harris says, “Resilience is not something that kids just have in themselves. It’s built from the dozens, if not hundreds of daily interactions with the world. The question is, does that world recognize and respond in a way that supports and promotes resilience” (Piore, 2020)? **QEES, in partnership with families and ECE providers, aims to act as the force to encourage that resilience through its program activities and by consistently evolving the program components to meet the needs of all children, families, and providers.**

QEES has established a root system in the field of early childhood. It formed organically—original in its design—wanting to CALM the

chaos that often surrounds early childhood to create a nourishing environment for children, families, and providers alike to grow, ultimately leading to a healthier community and influencing the generations to come.

Maintaining and evolving this root system in times of stress is critical. Literature surrounding the Trauma Integration Tree notes, "To sustain a well-developed root system, routines and rituals are used to create a predictable environment that fosters belonging. Bruce Perry [neuroscientist, psychiatrist, clinician and researcher] advises to 'provide a consistent, predictable pattern for the day' because brain imaging shows that familiar patterns are calming to a child. He also reinforces that a history of connectedness is a better predictor of health than a history of adversity" (Step, 2021).

## Goals for Year 4

In the coming year, QEES will prioritize finding new and effective ways to serve the Spanish-speaking childcare providers in the county. Data for Hillsborough County shows that, of the 540 active family child care home providers, 302 of them are Spanish-speaking only (Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing Office). QEES will also explore new connections with other early learning research centers and communities to expand and share their successes and challenges as they learn to navigate the pandemic and its effects on children. This knowledge will inform ways to continue to build connections with families and increase overall program engagement.



I love everything about early childhood education. It is an opportunity to make a lasting impact on the world and maintain focus on what is most important in life. Children allow us to look at the world with a more playful and untethered lens. **It is our responsibility with QEES to guide others in understanding we are literally shaping children's view of the world**, from the physical environment and tone to academic instruction...it all matters. Serving as Program Director of QEES, surrounded by an incredible team in a community I cherish is the gift of a lifetime.

Marni Fuente,  
QEES Program Director



## Key Year 3 Evaluation Takeaways

**The success of the Year 3 evaluation is a result of the resilience and perseverance of the QEES program staff and program participants.** 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 a new landscape of early childhood needs (resulting from the pandemic):

- **Supporting the key individuals in children's lives—parents, teachers, and program directors—will, in turn, promote a nurturing environment for the children.** QEES understands the ripple effect that a healthy home environment can have on social, emotional, and cognitive development. Supporting the environment itself will lead to greater opportunities for success. Additionally, it promotes overall mental and physical health and supports an ecosystem of connection.
- **QEES found a safe and productive way to stay true to the mission of the program.** The QEES program's goal has always been to nurture and protect children. QEES leadership and staff adopted the necessary formats and innovations to continue this service while ensuring the safety of children and program staff.
- **Mitigating stress remains a critical component of CALM and other program elements.** QEES staff continued to address the stress caused by the pandemic and focused on limiting the potential for devastating consequences to the support structures that are critical to children's development. We know from participant feedback that the CALM sessions and coaching served as a source of comfort for many participants during stressful times. The support system that has formed is determined to grow and learn together far beyond the pandemic.
- **The QEES program has discovered new ways to engage directly with families.** Based on parent feedback, program leaders believe that the connection QEES has with the parents it serves is stronger than ever before. This has led to new and innovative programming that is relevant to the unique needs of each family.
- **New ways to engage with providers.** 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. A focused effort to provide intensive training to owners and operators of family

child care homes proved a valuable resource. QEES also worked to address the need for more Spanish resources due to the volume of Spanish-speaking family child care home providers in Hillsborough County.

- **QEES leadership and staff are more prepared than ever to continue a variety of support options**, even after the pandemic subsidies. The pandemic provided an opportunity to establish a framework for emergency situations whenever remote or hybrid support is necessary.



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# 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.

**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 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**

- Monthly Saturday morning trainings switched to a live video webinar format on April 4, 2020. Special sessions were added between monthly trainings to address the social and emotional toll of COVID-19, creating a comprehensive support network for the early childhood community.

- 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.
- Virtual and outdoor Parent Connects events 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.
- The QEES YouTube channel provided ongoing video content that could be viewed anytime on demand.

**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. Delivery formats are available that offer in-service hours and CEUs.

#### **Pandemic Adaptations**

- Coaching and training took on a hybrid format of in-person and virtual coaching via Zoom.
- The QEES YouTube channel continued to provide video content that could be viewed anytime on demand.
- Zoom sessions 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.

**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. Other delivery formats are available that offer in-service hours and CEUs.

HCC-Pathways ensures that teachers and directors can more easily and successfully implement what they learn about from the CALM and ELM components of QEES. HCC-Pathways staff work with teachers and directors of childcare homes and centers to create Action Plans to maintain a quality early learning environment and ensure that the strategies provided are implemented successfully. 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**

- Hybrid of in person and virtual training and coaching.
- The QEES YouTube channel provided ongoing video content that could be viewed 24/7. New content was added specifically for ECE providers in areas of business operations and HCC-Pathways.
- 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. In 2020-21, QEES added Quick Connects in Spanish to increase accessibility.

**QEES Business Operations and Management Support.** 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, the Business Operations and Management team offers center directors and home childcare owners 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).



**The QEES staff has evolved to include experts in licensing standards. Angela Chowning, manager of QEES Business Operations and Management team, brings 27 years of experience in childcare licensing, regulation and policy.**

These Business Operations and Management services are provided through coaching and training sessions 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 all childcare programs. These sessions are built on evidence-based practices and tailored to site needs. Using information from an initial assessment, the Business Operations and Management team works with home or center directors to create Action Plans for raising low scores and maintaining a safe and professional environment. For non-established or inexperienced early childcare homes and centers, the Business Operations and Management team 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, Hillsborough Community College (Ybor Campus), 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.

The Business Operations and Management team 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**

- 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.
- Virtual calls with providers continue to provide updates 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 and were available in both English and Spanish formats.
- New YouTube videos have been added every week, with a total of 762 videos as of October 2021. The channel has received 35,371 views since March 2020.

# 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 countywide <u>training and technical assistance</u> to 1,000 early childhood education staff in college, community-based locations or via live virtual platforms.	Knowledge Assessments (HCC-created)	Teachers, Directors
2	Provide 250 Non-System early childhood education centers and Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) with in-person or live virtual <u>coaching, mentoring and professional development</u> .	Business Administration Scale (BAS) for Family Child Care Program Administration Scale (PAS) for Early Childhood Programs Business Operations Support System (BOSS) <i>Organizational Checkup</i> 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
3	Provide in-person and live virtual <u>coaching</u> to 165 countywide early childhood education practitioners (ages 1-5 classrooms) participating in CALM.	Conscious Discipline® Progress Assessment	Teachers
4	Provide in-person or live virtual <u>early childhood education coaching support services for social-emotional development</u> of 135 children (ages 3-5) in classrooms countywide participating in CALM.	Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) Rating Scales: Prosocial Behavior Skills Scale	Children

5	Provide 200 Countywide parents/caregivers of engaged early childhood education sites with <u>CALM strategies in-person or via live virtual platforms.</u>	Knowledge Assessments (HCC-created)	Families
6	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
7	Provide 615 children (ages birth-5) in countywide centers or family child care homes with <u>emergent literacy skills/support</u> year-round through the ELM model on-site or via live virtual platforms.	Early Literacy Skills Assessment (ELSA) Get Ready to Read Screening Tool (GRTR)	Children
8	Provide year-round support to 445 countywide parents/caregivers (of ELM children) in engaged early childhood education sites or via live virtual platforms to develop <u>strategies for emergent literacy and home-school engagement.</u>	Get Ready to Read (GRTR) Home Checklist	Families
9	Provide <u>ELM activities</u> to 225 children (ages 3–5) and their families <u>to carry over classroom literacy strategies into the home environment.</u>	Reading log (HCC-created)	Families
10	Provide <u>technical assistance</u> for literacy strategies to 60 early childhood education staff in 25 sites countywide or via live virtual platforms using Nemours BrightStart! Literacy Curriculum.	Early Language and Literacy Observation (ELLCO)	Teachers

**Business Operations Support System (BOSS) Organizational Checkup.** This tool, created by the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS), serves as a reliable self-assessment for businesses participating in the BOSS program. The 20-question checkup tool aims to measure the strength (on a scale of 1–5) of several operating system components, including vision, data, process, traction, issues, and people. The strength ratings for all 20 questions are averaged to determine an overall strength percentage. The checkup is administered twice throughout the 12-week BOSS training, with a pretest at the initial session and a posttest after six sessions.

**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 childcare 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 structures 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 childcare settings. Program quality is assessed on a seven-point scale (from one to seven), using 25 items clustered into 10 areas. The early literacy coach scores the 10 domains and averages the score across the 10 domains. A score of 7 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, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, engagement, and self control. It includes a class-wide 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. Throughout the pandemic, 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/owners, and parents/caregivers. This appendix provides a small selection of participant's statements. These statements were provided voluntarily through letters or emails to staff, or as an optional part of online survey forms.



### Childcare Professional/Teacher/Director/Owner

*Thank you for so many helpful reminders and refreshers about the Power of Composure! I am planning our staff professional development day and there are lots of great nuggets for us to explore together as a school family. Looking forward to the next session.*

*The only good thing that has happened as a result of COVID-19 is the opening up of participation in CALM workshops to more people, of which I am one! I love that the CALM trainings are helping me take better care of myself, give more of my best to others, and become a better childcare professional. Thank you!*

*In the few hours the material was presented, I was easily able to identify (reflect) on some of my weaknesses and how I could improve my interactions with children throughout the day. Exciting! I am anxious to see these strategies improve the overall "climate" of my program and become more positive and peaceful!*

*Even though I have several years of childcare experience, I learned quite a bit from this training. I never realized that evaluating the staff and management is just as crucial as observing and evaluating the developmental milestones of the children.*

*This challenging and arduous topic was covered in a very positive and engaging way! Expecting another training on the "tedious tasks" to include in our Risk Management Plan, I was surprised to be enlightened with*

valuable information and action-plans designed to give me strategies on how to "manage myself" before, during and after a crisis. In addition to the PPT, which I downloaded, I took several notes on points I want to take action on! A great presentation!

[This workshop] helped me realize that I was doing a couple things this week in the classroom that I need to change to make it more positive. I was a little down this week and I think that's why the environment was not as positive as it should have been. Just by having this conversation, I'm going to be changing quite a few things in the classroom. It made me feel so good inside it helped me remember to quit taking it personally because we are at trying times.

Everything was great and my comment is that I am grateful for CALM and how CALM helps me maintain my professionalism when it comes to helping children and staff deal with behavioral and emotional challenging situations.

This session was so informative! I really enjoyed the videos that showed how classrooms for children of varying ages can be neatly organized, regardless of the amount of space available.

As a Director, I want to thank you all for initiating and pushing QEES. Programs like these are vital to the continued success of our childcare centers. As always today's information was organized, inspiring and encouraging. GOOD FOOD FOR THE HEART & SOUL TO SHAPE YOUNG MINDS!!!! Thank you!

Thank you for empowering me to be the best educator for young children and a mentor to my coworkers and children's families! Without CALM, I would not be where I am today and know what are acceptable and appropriate ways to teach.

This is my third year attending CALM and in every session, I learn something new. The trainers are wonderful. They inspire us and encourage us to be better. I appreciate the information and tips presented to us today.

Everything was super. I loved the training it is very important during these difficult times with the families.

*I feel invigorated and empowered after taking the class. I needed to refresh my knowledge in reference to assessing employees and children. Thank you for offering this very valuable class.*

*In my 26 years of experience in early childcare, you can never be too prepared for a crisis, this training was great. New ideas presented, and great reminders to keep at our forefront. Thank you.*

### **Parent/Caregiver**

*This is a phenomenal program. These 2 ladies bring the C out of CALM. They are very helpful at teaching our children to stay calm. Particularly when they stick with the routine of the CALM program. Love it!*

*This session was particularly helpful and powerful for me! The session content alone added so much for me to think about and apply as an individual, parent, and professional. As an added "bonus" the presenters gave such insightful responses to some difficult questions. Thank you so much for your time today, and for doing the hard work it takes to provide such quality trainings!*

### **Feedback from Florida's Department of Children and Families Staff**

*I am an Administrative Secretary, and even though I am not out in the field, your presentation will assist me with conversations with our Providers via phone conversations or email conversations. Thank you!!!!*

*The videos were amazing! They were very engaging. The presenters showed care and focus on helping to rectify issues in childcare.*

*Both teams are excellent in their knowledge and execution of the information. They created an opportunity for great discussion and learning. I always leave these webinar sessions feeling empowered as well as knowing how important all of our roles are as it relates to Childcare Regulation.*

*I learned a lot professionally AND personally. As a regular participant in DBT therapy, I was so thrilled to see practices and skills like mindfulness and emotional regulation at the forefront of our training. What you're teaching us is REAL!*

# Appendix D

## Mapline – Sites Served by QEES in Year 3

Map illustrates 256 QEES centers (both ECE Centers & FCCH) receiving services from October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021.

