



# QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION SYSTEM

## Year 4 Evaluation Report

October 2022

Prepared for Hillsborough Community College  
for submission to

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



Editorial support from

**Kimilee Norman-Goins**  
**RMC Research Corporation**  
3550 Buschwood Park Drive  
Tampa, FL 33618



**QEES – Shifting the Lens of  
Quality Care**



# Quality Early Education System

## Year 4 Evaluation Report

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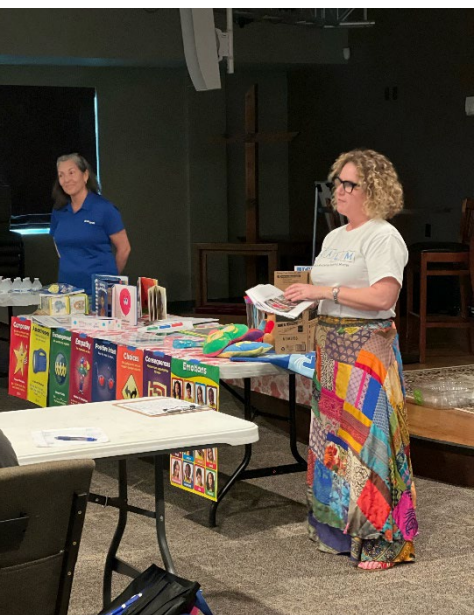
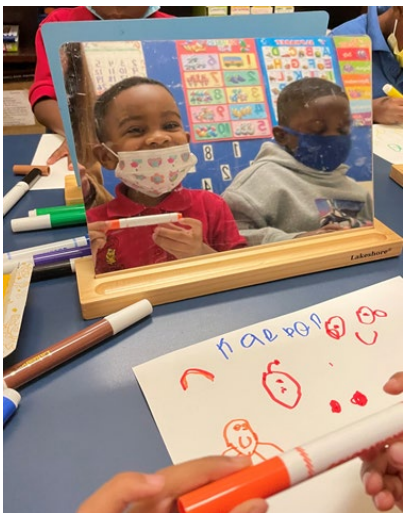


**HCC**



Collage photos (l-r; t-b): QEES at The Children's Board Family Bike Parade; ELM indoor coaching session; QEES Business Operations Support System cohort graduation; ELM outdoor coaching session; CALM indoor coaching session; ELM indoor coaching session; ELM outdoor coaching session; one-on-one ELM intervention; ELM self-portraits activity; CALM coaches presenting to HCC Early Childhood students; ELM indoor coaching session







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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 the areas that play critical roles in school success.

## As the world transitioned out of a global pandemic, the Quality Early Education System (QEES) continued to push for innovative programming and strengthen the collaboration between community partners.

QEES in Hillsborough County has a front-row seat to the challenges presented to the early childhood community, ranging from staffing shortages, fiscal burdens, and varying child learning needs that resulted from the instability presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. QEES built on its comprehensive, multiagency foundation to support all those involved in caring for young children aged birth to 5 by continuing services, staying connected, forging new partnerships, and continually adjusting its lens to meet the ever-changing needs based on feedback received from those it serves.

QEES never lost sight of the critical importance of serving the early childhood community, teachers, children, and their families. They serve as a hub of support providing academic, social-emotional, and operational supports to the early childhood community.

The world is adjusting to life after experiencing a global pandemic with uncertainty as to the lasting effects of COVID-19. Young children across the globe had a complete disruption to their daily lives, and the adults around them faced an unpredictable landscape that will be remembered for years to come.

The flexibility and resilience of young children were highlighted in last year's evaluation. This past school year, the field of early childhood saw determination, compassion, and community in the classrooms. The children remind everyone of the fundamentals needed for society to thrive. A silver lining of the pandemic is that it has provided a common denominator; everyone experienced

it. How the world transitions from it should be done from the lens of the children. Children serve as an anchor, grounded in the foundation of what is needed to thrive: **Safety, Nourishment, Compassion, and Care.**

Sometimes the importance of early childhood education and its role is forgotten. Without strong classrooms and programs to support early learners, their families, and the educators working with them, the community cannot operate with consistency and security. Early childhood providers, families, and children from around the world felt this over the last few years. However, they all (the early childhood community) continued to persevere, knowing the children must be the focus as they are the future. Adults must build resilience as they maintain their own and come together as one to create an “it takes a village” approach for sustainability that will affect generations to come.

This report will illustrate QEES' innovation and determination in 2022, growing stronger and more connected to the world of early childhood.

## 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.

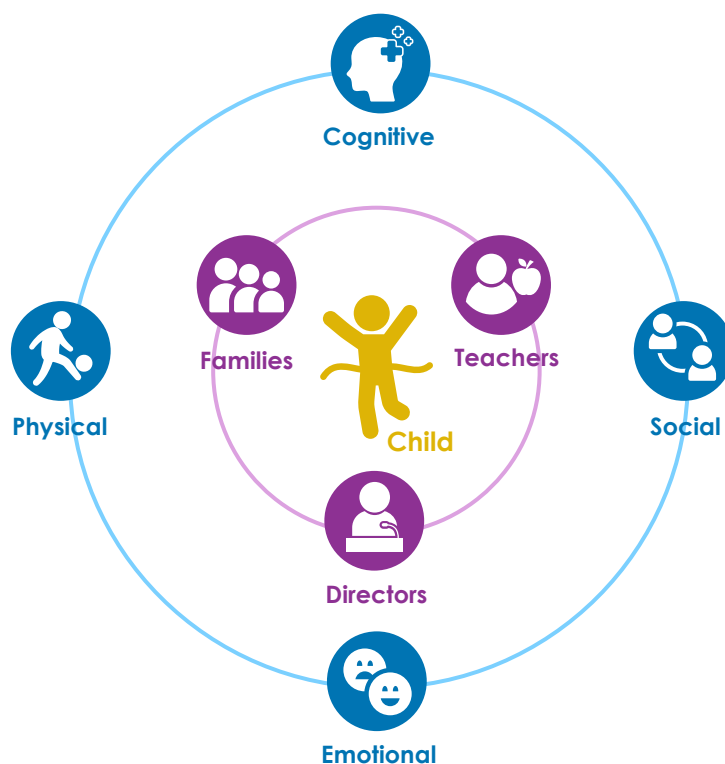
#### QEEs Business Operations and Management

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.

## QEEs Background

Since 2018, QEEs (funded by the Children's Board of Hillsborough County) has integrated supports in partnership with Hillsborough Community College (HCC) to create and expand the comprehensive QEEs program for supporting child care providers (owners and operators) and children's **cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth**. QEEs strives to enhance quality by providing a holistic, comprehensive approach to early learning and further support **professional advancement** of early childhood teachers and center directors by aligning all training to certificates or stackable credentials toward a degree at HCC. The model is thoughtful and rooted in solutions based on the current landscape of early childhood education.




In Year 4, QEEs continued to persevere while illustrating grit, compassion, and innovation, expanding multi-layered programming and partnerships to elevate the field of early childhood education.

QEEs took a strategic approach to address the many needs facing the early childhood workforce and young children and their families as the world continued to adjust from the trauma of the pandemic. QEEs has consistently proven that no challenge is too great, and all those **(staff, providers, teachers, parents, and children)** participating banded together to learn, find solutions, and shift the lens to see post-traumatic growth.



## 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)

## QEEs Transitional COVID-19 Supports

QEEs staff continued to pivot as COVID-19 continued to present many challenges to meeting the needs of young children and the early learning community. Supports were modified as the pandemic protocols changed, and the world started adjusting out of the unprecedented time. This evaluation will illustrate the magnitude of QEEs and the program components (detailed in Appendix A) that provide critical services to meet the needs of young children and the early learning community. In 2021–2022, QEEs served 245 child care programs and over 1,200 early childhood education (ECE) providers in Hillsborough County, the third-largest school district in Florida and the eighth-largest in the United States (illustrated in Appendix D).

**Hybrid training and coaching.** The monthly Saturday morning Conscious Awareness Learning Model (CALM) training sessions for teachers and center directors continued in live video format, drawing well over 100 participants each session. QEEs staff also held in-person monthly CALM Special Session trainings to address the increased self-care and social emotional needs of providers caused by post-pandemic related stress and the changing landscape. These special sessions focused on the mindfulness, brain development, and compassionate care aspects of the CALM program. The HCC Pathways, Early Literacy Matters (ELM), and Business Operations and Management team of the QEEs program also continued offering a hybrid of in-person and virtual training, yielding participants from across the county each session.

**Tracking center closures and COVID-19 cases.** The tracking of closures on Mapline continued to identify trends. QEEs tracked and mapped all of the COVID 19 cases specific to child care in Hillsborough County, documenting the location, number, and age of COVID-19 cases each day.

**QEEs Learning Line.** 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 applicable news and resources for child care providers and families.

**Video and digital coaching content (literacy, math, science, social-emotional) available 24/7.** The **QEEs YouTube channel** (starting with 13 videos on March 30, 2020) has evolved, and content creation continues to advance. These resources proved to be helpful when the program had to shift from in-person to remote and hybrid training and coaching. However, the utilization was maintained and even increased in some areas as the community transitioned out of remote learning and COVID-19 restrictions. The content was continuously updated, providing



read alouds and other activities to keep children learning whether centers were open, operating remotely, or closed. The **channel now has 852 uploaded videos in English and Spanish.** To help teachers and parents select and use the videos, staff created digital resource guides organized by theme, topic, and age (infant/toddler, 3–4, 4–5). The resource guides also include printables for related learning activities.

## Objective 1

Provide access to countywide training and technical assistance to at least 80% of 1,030 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 covered by other objectives.

### Year 4 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**121%** of target

**1,249** teachers provided with training and technical assistance

Year 4 target = 1,030 teachers



Effectiveness

**116%** of target

**93%** 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 4 target = 80% of the teachers trained



EXCEEDED TARGET

## ON-SITE SUPPORT

### PAS/BAS

Program Administration  
Scale/Business  
Administration Scale for  
Family Child Care

### EOS Organizational Checkup

Entrepreneurial Operating  
System

### CIRCLE CEC

Circle Classroom  
Environment Checklist



EXCEEDED TARGET

## Objective 2

Provide at least 70% of 267 non-system early childhood education (ECE) centers and family child care homes (FCCH) with 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 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 4 Findings



Breadth

**83% of target**

222 centers and homes supported onsite

Year 4 target = 267 centers and homes



Effectiveness

**141% of target**

99% of the 213 centers and homes that submitted data completed the pre/post assessments, involved observations and interviews, and showed improvement over time

Year 4 target = 70% of at least 267 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



EXCEEDED TARGET

## Objective 3

Provide 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 4 Findings



Breadth

**104%** of target

**172** teachers and directors coached

Year 4 target = 165 teachers and directors



Effectiveness

**120%** of target

**90%** of the teachers and directors coached demonstrated developmentally appropriate practices on the Conscious Discipline® Progress Assessment

Year 4 target = 75% of at least 165 teachers and directors



## Objective 4

Provide 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 4 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**282%** of target

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

Year 4 target = 135 children



Effectiveness

**124%** of target

**93%** of the 372 children for whom data were submitted demonstrated increased social-emotional competence from pre- to posttest

Year 4 target = 75% of at least 135 children



EXCEEDED TARGET

## Objective 5

Provide at least 75% of 375 countywide parents/caregivers engaged in early childhood education sites with CALM strategies.



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 4 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**139%** of target

**520** families provided with CALM strategies

Year 4 target = 375 families



Effectiveness

**131%** of target

**98%** of the 436 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 4 target = 75% of at least 375 families



EXCEEDED TARGET

## Objective 6

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



Teachers



Directors



Social



Emotional



Cognitive



Physical

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 or center materials needed to implement BOSS strategies for the business as a whole. Providers who are eligible are in compliance with Child Care Licensing and have attended at least 8 CALM trainings or a full BOSS cycle in the past 12 months. QEES staff review and fulfill requests from the CALM and BOSS Educational Support Catalogs and follow up to confirm the receipt and utilization of materials. QEES uses an internal system to track this program component.

### Year 4 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**194%** of target

**97** programs requested and implemented site supports for CALM and/or BOSS strategies

Year 4 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 650 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.



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 (minimum of 12 sessions; 20–30 minute lessons) in classrooms.

### Year 4 Findings



Breadth

**159%** of target

**1,036** children supported in emergent literacy skills

Year 4 target = 650 children



Effectiveness

**108%** of target

**92%** of the 748 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 4 target = 85% of at least 500 children



## Objective 8

Provide year-round support to at least 85% of 475 countywide parents/caregivers (of ELM children) engaged in early childhood education sites 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 4 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**186%** of target

884 parents/caregivers provided with support developing literacy and engagement strategies

Year 4 target = 475 parents/caregivers



Effectiveness

**115%** of target

98% of the eligible 652 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 4 target = 85% of at least 475 parents/caregivers



EXCEEDED TARGET

## Objective 9

Provide ELM activities to 240 children (ages 3–5) and their families to carry over 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 4 Findings



EXCEEDED TARGET



Breadth

**160%** of target

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

Year 4 target = 240 children



Effectiveness

**89%** of target

**71%** of the 380 children for whom data were submitted had documentation of being read to at home at least 4 times per week

Year 4 target = 80% of at least 240 children

**Note:** 8% of children submitted reading logs with less reading time, and 21% 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 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 4 Findings



Breadth

**142% of target**

**85** staff served at 35 sites

Year 4 target = 60 staff across 25 sites



Effectiveness

**113% of target**

**96%** of the 79 staff for whom data were submitted demonstrated increased literacy skills on the ELLCO from pre- to posttest

Year 4 target = 85% of at least 60 staff

CHANGE FROM YEAR 3  
TO YEAR 4



INCREASED



SLIGHT INCREASE



INCREASED



SLIGHT DECREASE  
BUT STILL ABOVE  
TARGET

## Comparison of Outcomes

Year 3 to Year 4 | October–September

**Objective 1**— Provide access to countywide training and technical assistance to at least 80% of 1,030 early childhood education staff in college, community-based locations, or via live virtual platforms.



Breadth

**More** teachers were provided with training and technical assistance in Year 4.

**Year 3 = 1,044    Year 4 = 1,249 teachers**



Effectiveness

A **higher percentage** of teachers met the target in Year 4.

**Year 3 = 94%    Year 4 = 98% of teachers**

**Objective 2**— Provide at least 70% of 267 non-system early childhood education centers and family child care homes with coaching, mentoring, and professional development.



Breadth

**More** centers and homes were supported on-site in Year 4.

**Year 3 = 221    Year 4 = 222 centers and homes**



Effectiveness

A **lower percentage** of centers and homes met the target in Year 4, but the number still exceeded the target.

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

**Year 4 = 99% of 213 centers completed posttests by September and demonstrated improvement**



## CHANGE FROM YEAR 3 TO YEAR 4



INCREASED



SLIGHT DECREASE  
BUT STILL ABOVE  
TARGET



INCREASED



SLIGHT DECREASE  
BUT STILL ABOVE  
TARGET

**Objective 3**— Provide 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 4.

**Year 3 = 147**

**Year 4 = 172 teachers and directors**



Effectiveness

A **lower percentage** of teachers and directors met the target in Year 4, but the number still exceeded the target.

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

**Year 4 = 90% of teachers and directors**

**Objective 4**— Provide 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.



Breadth

**More** children were provided with social-emotional support services in Year 4.

**Year 3 = 368**

**Year 4 = 381 children**



Effectiveness

A **lower percentage** of children met the target in Year 4, but the number still exceeded the target.

**Year 3 = 94%**

**Year 4 = 93% of children**

## CHANGE FROM YEAR 2 TO YEAR 3



INCREASED



SLIGHT DECREASE  
BUT STILL ABOVE  
TARGET



INCREASED



INCREASED



INCREASED

**Objective 5**— Provide at least 75% of 375 countywide parents/caregivers engaged in early childhood education sites with CALM strategies.



Breadth

**More** families were provided with CALM strategies in Year 4.

Year 3 = 430

Year 4 = 520 families



Effectiveness

A **lower percentage** of families who completed posttests met the target in Year 4, but the number still exceeded the target.

Year 3 = 99%

Year 4 = 98% of 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 or BOSS.



Breadth

**More** educational site support requests were processed in Year 4.

Year 3 = 36

Year 4 = 97 requests



Effectiveness

N/A

**Objective 7**— Provide at least 85% of 650 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.



Breadth

**More** children were supported in emergent literacy skills in Year 4.

Year 3 = 918

Year 4 = 1,036 children



Effectiveness

A **higher percentage** of children met the target in Year 4.

Year 3 = 87%

Year 4 = 92% of families

## CHANGE FROM YEAR 3 TO YEAR 4



INCREASED



SLIGHT DECREASE  
BUT STILL ABOVE  
TARGET



INCREASED



INCREASED



INCREASED



SLIGHT DECREASE  
BUT STILL ABOVE  
TARGET

**Objective 8**— Provide year-round support to at least 85% of 475 countywide parents/caregivers (of ELM children) engaged in early childhood education sites 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 4.

Year 3 = 702

Year 4 = 884 parents



Effectiveness

A **lower percentage** of families who completed posttests met the target in Year 4, but the number still exceeded the target.

Year 3 = 99%

Year 4 = 98% of parents

**Objective 9**— Provide ELM activities to 240 children (ages 3–5) and their families to carry over classroom literacy strategies into home environments.



Breadth

**More** children were provided literacy strategies for home in Year 4.

Year 3 = 283

Year 4 = 385 children



Effectiveness

A **higher percentage** of children met the target in Year 4.

Year 3 = 81% of children

Year 4 = 89% of children

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



Breadth

**More** staff were served in Year 4.

Year 3 = 77

Year 4 = 85 staff



Effectiveness

A **lower percentage** of staff met the target in Year 4, but the number still exceeded the target.

Year 3 = 99% of staff

Year 4 = 96% of staff

# Discussion

## Program Objectives

QEEs continued to meet and exceed program objectives as in past years. All decreases in the objectives measured were less than five percent and still above target. Given the fluidity of the last year, the service levels are remarkable. The QEEs staff took on challenges as opportunities to grow, finding solutions to reduce barriers and expand support to providers, families, and the children of Hillsborough County.

Of the 10 objectives, **9 exceeded their breadth goals** (Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). The greatest success was for Objective 4 (Provide 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. The breadth goal was exceeded by 282% reaching 381 children, an increase from last year. This objective was also the greatest success in Years 1, 2 and 3.

The two other objectives with the highest success in breadth were Objective 6 (Provide educational site supports to at least 50 eligible early childhood education programs serving children birth to age 5 participating in CALM or BOSS) and Objective 8 (Provide year-round support to at least 85% of 475 countywide parents/caregivers (of ELM children) engaged in early childhood education sites to develop strategies for emergent literacy and home-school engagement). Objective 6 had a target of 50 programs. The breadth goal was exceeded by 194% reaching 97 programs, an increase from Years 2 and 3. Objective 8 had a target of 475 parents/caregivers. The breadth goal was exceeded by 186% reaching 884 parents/caregivers.

For the program's effectiveness goals, **9 of the 10 objectives exceed their effectiveness targets**.<sup>1</sup> Objective 2 (Provide at least 70% of 267 non-system early childhood education centers and family child care homes with coaching, mentoring, and professional development) exceeded its effectiveness goal by

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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 or center materials needed to implement BOSS strategies for the business as a whole; 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.

9 objectives exceeded their breadth goals

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



141% reaching 99% of the 213 participating early childhood education centers and family child care homes.

In Year 3 due to pandemic restrictions, QEES pivoted to a hybrid approach of distribution and communication methods. This work continued in Year 4 to provide parents/caregivers and educators with flexibility when participating in QEES programming. Therefore, the increasing participation levels from parents/caregivers could be due in part to continuing the use of various communication methods. Participation throughout all program services was significant and should be highlighted noting that QEES is a completely voluntary program.

## Comparing Year 3 and Year 4

The success in breadth and effectiveness of QEES is evident. In comparison to Year 3, **QEES increased its success on breadth measures for all 10 of the objectives in Year 4.** The partnership between the local funder (Children's Board of Hillsborough County) and a higher education institute (Hillsborough Community College) remains strong forging ahead with visionary ideas to address the complex issues of early education. Both agencies are fully vested in the fabric of the community in finding solutions to the issues surrounding early and adult learning while supporting the family around them. A cradle to career mindset for sustainable change.

**QEES continued to learn and evolve, seeking collaboration with providers, families and other agencies that strengthened the system of support.** Additionally, Year 4 required ongoing adjustments to address needs of the community. QEES' ability to stay focused on participant and data driven feedback undoubtedly contributed to the growth and success of the program.

## Innovation and Expansion of Goals

QEES continued to provide services to meet outcomes while finding meaningful ways to creatively broaden their reach and support the community.

### Town Halls

In November 2021, QEES began coordinating Town Hall meetings for the child care community to build momentum for engagement and fellowship in the local industry. The topics varied based on the changing landscape, provider feedback from surveys, and current issues. QEES stayed committed to

Additional data and feedback on these activities were collected, but not calculated in the unduplicated service delivery.

finding ways to engage the community in the conversation of early childhood to find solutions and promote quality. The Town Hall meetings were held throughout the year to bring providers, agencies, community members, and other interested parties together.



**November 15, 2021.** This meeting was geared toward providers and local child care agency staff to discuss the challenges of child care persistent in the wake of the pandemic as well as funding opportunities. QEES hosted 42 child care providers and agency staff in person and between 35 and 40 additional providers who attended online via Zoom.

The panelists for the discussion were:

- Program Director, Quality Early Education System, Hillsborough Community College
- CEO, Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County
- Director of Head Start, Hillsborough County
- Director of Early Childhood Services, School District of Hillsborough County
- Executive Director, The Children's Board of Hillsborough County
- Executive Director, Florida Association for Child Care Management (FACCM)

**February 15, 2022.** With the goal of continuing discussions and child care community involvement, QEES hosted a second Town Hall collaborative on the topic of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Attendees included 25 child care providers and community agency staff (in person) and 52 participants online via Zoom.

The panelists for the discussion were:

- Manager, Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing
- BCDI Vice President, Greater Tampa Bay
- Legislative Aide, Tampa City Council

- Director of Administration, King's Kids Christian Academy (Tampa, FL)
- Program Manager for Inclusion Support Services, Early Childhood Council (Tampa, FL)
- Supervisor of VPK, School District of Hillsborough County
- Director of Strategic Initiatives, The Children's Board of Hillsborough County

**May 10, 2022.** The conversation on DEI continued.

The panelists for the discussion were:

- Manager, Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing
- Director, Provider Relations, Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County
- Director, Program Initiatives and Analysis, Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County
- BCDI Vice President, Greater Tampa Bay
- Supervisor of VPK, School District of Hillsborough County
- Director of Strategic Initiatives, The Children's Board of Hillsborough County

The Town Halls have been very productive, and QEES has received positive feedback from the providers and the community. In Year 5 (FY23), QEES will continue these activities starting October 18, 2022.

### **Department of Children and Families Statewide Project**

The Department of Children and Families contracted with QEES to provide child care licensing counselors quality training and professional development.

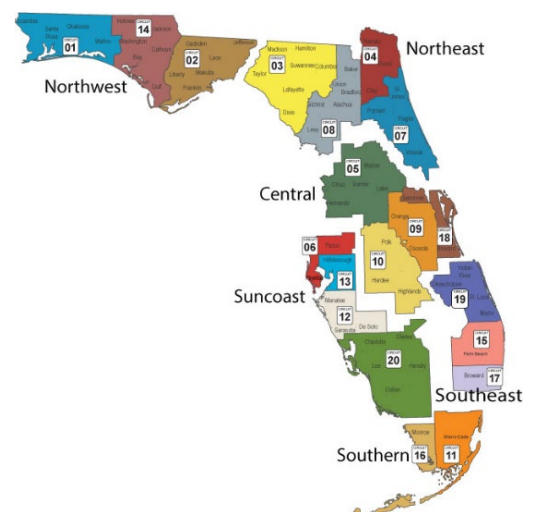
#### **The Cultivating Quality Care Collaborative – Major Program Goals:**

- 1) Provide comprehensive quality training and professional development to enhance the Office of Child Care Regulation's approach from a licensing and regulation purview to one that incorporates enhanced technical assistance, relationship building, and community integration appropriate for the early childhood education field.
- 2) Assess child care licensing and regulation on a regional basis to gain an understanding of the current landscape of the child care/early education community, what resources exist in the community, what individual licensing counselors need, and what child care providers need.

- 3) Provide a “train the trainer” type training to a cohort of Department of Children and Families Child Care Licensing Counselors that focuses on improving existing abilities, developing new skills with a focus on technical assistance, partner engagement, and building relationships with providers.
- 4) Integrate community partners and early childhood education stakeholders in training as necessary.
- 5) Identify efficiencies in the child care licensing workload, allowing time to provide technical assistance to programs that need additional help in providing a safe and healthy environment for children in out-of-home care.

The goal of this training program, The Cultivating Quality Care Collaborative, is to deliver a comprehensive approach to guide the perspective of the participants from one that focuses solely on regulatory emphasis to more of a preventative model that includes a balance of regulation, assistance, and community involvement. QEES staff attempt this potential change in perspective by incorporating CALM concepts of mindfulness and empathy throughout the training series, as well as introducing the participants to business operations concepts to use internally within their office environments and throughout the child care community. The Cultivating Quality Care Collaborative builds upon the foundation of current partnerships and programs in place. QEES partners with regional licensing agencies, managers, and staff to ensure the delivery of a proficient, well-integrated program.

The five partner regional licensing agencies are **Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southern, and Suncoast**. This partnership allows licensing counselors in these regions to refer their providers to QEES and access training. The director and/or manager of each agency sits on a QEES-Early Childhood Leadership team and is an interagency liaison to support communication, training, and outreach. This collaboration ensures the success of meeting statewide early childhood needs, program goals, objectives, and outcomes.



Prior to beginning the training component of the partnership, QEES created and delivered a needs assessment to gauge the

landscape of each participating regional agency. The needs assessment consisted of 73 questions on topics including regional office operations, office policies, regional provider demographics and data, communication, and supporting compliance and quality improvement. Questions 1–21 were identifiers for the participants to answer, such as their name, how many counties they serve, average caseloads, and the employee structure of the office. These questions required written responses from the team member and provided QEES staff insight into the operational employee hierarchy of the regional offices. Questions 22–26 gauged what policies are being implemented in the regions surrounding ethical behavior expectations from licensing staff, other licensee/licensor interactions, and the knowledge of these policies by the licensing counselor. Questions 27–31 ascertained the participants' knowledge of interoffice operational policies. Questions 34–39 assessed the types of programs that the counselors monitor. Questions 42–49 ascertained whether the region in which the licensing counselor works collects data on child care programs and if so, does any strategic planning occur based on what is learned from it? Questions 52–60 asked the counselors about regional communication, their knowledge of resources available, and what is shared with stakeholders. Questions 61–73 asked the participants about their skill set and what their region shares in the early childhood community. The results were used to identify trends within the agencies regionally and statewide and to create targeted training and coaching topics.

QEES prepared and delivered training, employing research-based teaching and training methods to a cohort of 50 participants. Delivery Year 1 took place from March 2022 to June 30, 2022, and Year 2 services began on July 1, 2022, and will run until June 30, 2023. The QEES program prepared and delivered training and coaching/mentorship with the regional licensing management supervisor and staff to improve their existing abilities, help them develop new skills, and encourage them to build providers' management and operational skills through evidence-based practices outlined in the QEES Model.

**March 2022.** Orientation to the training program and training on Promoting Community: Building Relationships.

**April and May 2022.** Conducted needs assessments of the licensing programs and the child care communities they serve.

**June 2022: Using Data for Strategic Planning.** This session presented the group with strategies for how to gather data from their providers and ways to use it to guide programming. An additional coaching session was held to allow participants to review the data gathered and establish goals.

**July 2022: Child Development.** This session presented the group with an overview of basic child development tenets to include information on developmental milestones for children's age groups.

**August 2022: Child Development – The Indoor Classroom.** This session began with a recap of the legislative intent behind child care licensing, which outlined the responsibility of the licensing regulations to protect the whole child to include their intellectual and social growth—not just their physical safety. The specific regulations regarding equipping the indoor classrooms with sufficient and suitable equipment, as well as the requirements for developmentally appropriate room arrangement, were discussed.

**September 2022.** The child development series was due to continue with Child Development: The Outdoor Area. Due to Hurricane Ian, it was postponed until October 2022.

### **Board of County Commissioners Head Start**

A collaboration was formed between QEES and the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) Head Start of Hillsborough County to build upon the foundation of partnerships and quality programming. QEES is working with a cohort of BOCC Head Start site-based management teams, case managers, teachers, and families to increase the quality of early learning. With a holistic approach, the QEES-CALM program develops and delivers training and provides coaching/mentorship on-site to improve their existing abilities, and to build developmentally appropriate instructional and operational skills through evidence-based practices outlined in the CALM approach.

### **CALM Parent Connections**

CALM Connections were offered to centers participating in CALM trainings to increase the awareness of efforts to implement social-emotional learning into the school day and build the home-school connection. These meet and greet events were held at individual schools during morning drop-off and pick-up, with resources provided to families. These short, 30-minute sessions aimed to engage families in the discussion of CALM programming and the efforts teachers are making in being trained to implement the skills and strategies in the classroom. Families were given tips and strategies to use at home to build their child's social-emotional skills.



## The Children's Board Family Resource Centers Events

Monthly events were held at The Children's Board Family Resource Centers located throughout Hillsborough County. They function as a strong, collaborative partnership with agencies committed to families throughout Hillsborough County and are managed by Lutheran Services Florida. The QEES-ELM program holds literacy-focused family events at various center locations for families with children not currently enrolled in preschool or those wanting to engage in hands-on emergent literacy activities, learn at-home strategies to help develop these skills, and/or learn more about the program.



## Business Management Supports

QEES understands that child care owners and directors must be supported in order to help them grow as professionals so they may stabilize and improve their programs. These individuals are responsible for all aspects of their center's programming. For additional support, the QEES Business Operations and Management team offered the concentrated training program—**Business Operations Support System (BOSS)**. This program provided support and services focused on organizational and operational management to all licensed child care facilities and family child care homes. BOSS is an eight-week intensive business course introducing participants to the Entrepreneurial Operating System based on the book *Traction: Getting a Grip on Your Business* by Gino Wickman. Participants learn how to strengthen the six key components of their business for success. The BOSS

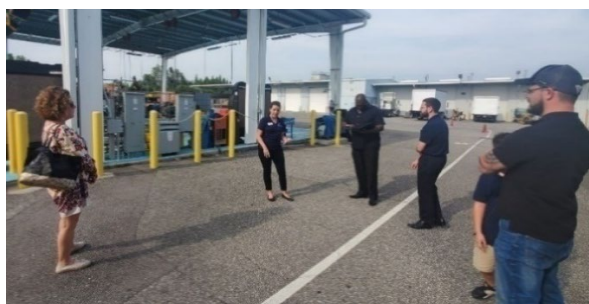
cohort cycles were offered five times this year, and alumni were invited back to share lessons and serve as mentors to the new classes. This was incredibly successful in creating a community of learners with the common goal of increasing quality in early education. In Year 4, to enhance the program, at completion, participants were eligible to apply for resources that help them implement the strategies learned.

### Scholarship Support

QEEs helped coordinate efforts to get early childhood teachers participating in the Incentive\$ program enrolled in HCC Associate of Science Early Childhood courses. The collaboration connects students directly to HCC Early Childhood Academic Advisors to determine the best course track based on past transcripts. Tuition and textbook supports are provided by the HCC Foundation in partnership with the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County.

### HCC Workforce

QEEs connected families with adult learners seeking professional development opportunities for career training with HCC's workforce programs. The families are provided information on certification and training services in the areas of Allied Health, Information Technology, Personal Interest, Professional Development, and Trades. HCC workforce advisors work directly with individuals to guide them to programs that best fit their needs. The collaboration supports the mission of stabilizing and supporting all those that surround children.



### Conferences

#### National – National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA)

In October 2021, QEEs leadership recorded a presentation on the program's components for **NARA's Licensing Seminar with the theme of Leading through a Lens of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.** This session highlighted QEEs as a program designed to streamline

early learning professional development, promote high quality early learning, support early care educators and caregivers, and increase kindergarten readiness. The goal was to show that one division of the system originated in the child care licensing office in Tampa, FL. Participants learned about the different approach that was taken with child care providers when offering technical assistance and obtaining compliance as well as other programs offered through this system all in a spirit of unity, compassion, and authentic support. Participants were also shown how QEES empowered child care providers to lead efforts that organically developed as a result of their participation in the program.



In September 2022, QEES presented in person at the **NARA's Looking Ahead – The Future of Regulation Seminar**. The seminar provided the opportunity to learn from others, share experiences, both successes and failures, and collaborate in setting the path forward for our work. This session yielded the most participants of this national seminar, titled CALMing our Brains: A Mindful Approach to Regulation. It was an opportunity to highlight the good work of QEES, network, learn, and share ideas and successes with agencies/colleagues across the nation.



**1:20 – 2:35 pm**      **Concurrent Session E**

**E1**

**CALMing our Brains:  
A Mindful Approach to Regulation**  
**Location: Salon DE**

This session will give participants a glimpse into the operational landscape that child care providers are experiencing nearing post pandemic times. Equipped with that knowledge, but knowing that the regulations must be enforced, the question is "Can we regulate differently?" Using the Conscious Awareness Learning Model concepts, participants will learn ways to help themselves first so they can implement compassion and empathy; not only into the inspection process, but through communication policies, data collection, and strategic planning. In addition, the presenters will be highlighting the metamorphosis that has occurred in Hillsborough County by the child care providers when the assistance given to them has been through a lens of support and true guidance. This forward-thinking approach is having a positive ripple effect far beyond regulation and reports.

Presented by: **Angela Chowning**, Quality Early Education System/Hillsborough Community College  
**Marni Fuente**, Quality Early Education System

## Statewide – One Goal Summer Conference

In July 2022, QEES presented two different sessions at the **One Goal Summer Conference**. This conference brings together early education and care providers and leaders from around the state. It is designed to share information on best practices in the field and build common frameworks of knowledge and understanding to assist in unified planning for young children and their families.



### Session 1: Analyzing Staff for Optimal Performance.

In the child care industry, hiring and retaining staff is always a big challenge. Using the concepts from the book *Traction: Getting a Grip on Your Business* by Gino Wickman, participants were introduced to an innovative method of analyzing their current and future staff to determine if they are the “right people” and if they are being placed in the



“right seat.” The child care business is a very human and forward-facing industry. If child care owners are not selective and strategic in hiring practices, their business could be in jeopardy. In this highly innovative workshop, participants took a deep dive into exactly what it means to hire and retain the right people. If they are the right people, are they being utilized in a position that allows them to be their best? Using a template called “The People Analyzer,” participants first identified their core values and then used those core values to analyze each of their current employees. Armed with that information, the audience was then given the tools to determine if those employees are in the “right seat.” In addition, the participants gained a new lens for evaluating staff and guiding staff now and in the future.

### Sessions 2: Parents as Partners.

This session focused on establishing, maintaining, and sustaining parent relationships by applying practical techniques of engagement. It is vital to build effective relationships with parents by valuing all families, welcoming communication, and reflecting on our own



perspectives. This session explored the essential components of building effective partnerships with parents and extended family members. QEES provided participants with practical strategies to enable early educators to create a welcoming environment for families, ensure two-way communication, provide families a variety of ways to engage in their children’s learning, build on learning opportunities for families, support diverse home languages and cultures, and encourage parent collaboration with the community. Key elements of communication were

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Unity in our field can move mountains! The ability for the providers to get together in the spirit of fellowship has re-energized the field's passion for the business of caring.

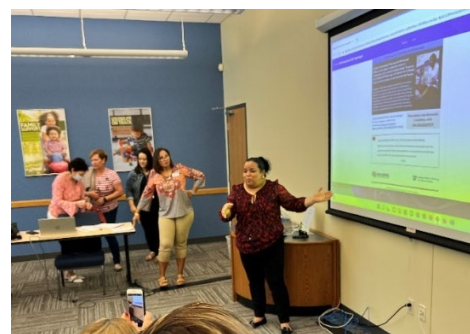
Angela Chowning,  
QEES Grants Officer



examined, as well as the importance of self-reflection and intentionality, as trust is built through respectful relationships with families. Participants were encouraged to be actively engaged in the presentation by leaning into poll questions, group learning experiences, and open dialogue after videos were presented. The session ended with additional resources offered by QEES focusing on parent engagement, partnerships, mentoring, and parent involvement.

## Local Provider Associations

QEES firmly believes that unity in the early childhood field can move mountains. It is in that spirit that QEES assists the local child care associations (Tampa Bay Chapter of FLAEYC and Hispanic Home Child Care Association) by coordinating provider meetings, sharing social media posts, and volunteering manpower for events. QEES has found that the ability for the providers to get together in a spirit of fellowship has really put a spark back into their hearts and, hopefully, will reenergize their passion for the business of caring.



## Media Outreach

The efforts of QEES to support young children and promote quality were noticed by local news outlets. Residents throughout the Tampa Bay area had access to the publications and news clips.



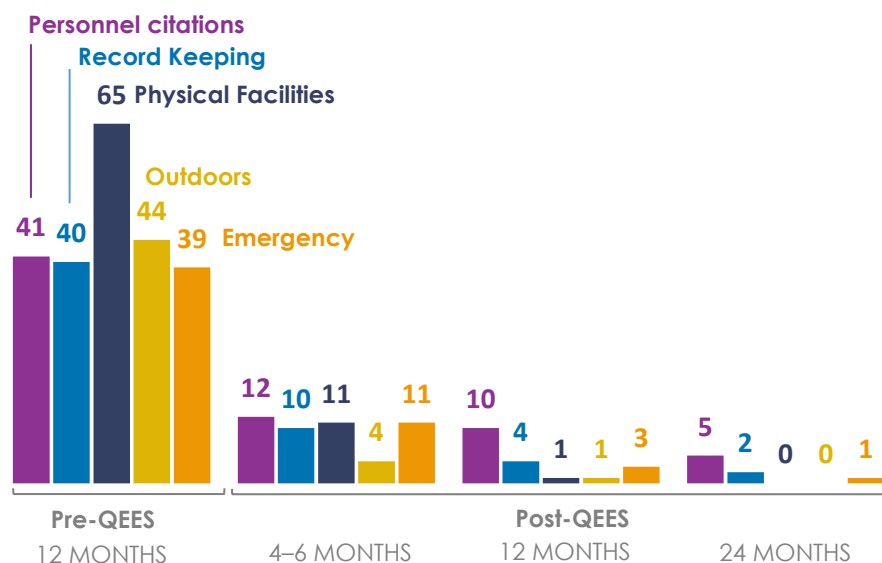
**December 4, 2021:** Tampa Bay Parenting, "Find a sense of CALM: How to teach social-emotional intelligence in the home"

**April 26, 2022:** 10 Tampa Bay, "Forever Family: A Quality Early Education System"



## Reducing Citations

In a continued effort to understand the program's impact on the early learning community during Year 4, QEES Business Operations and Management team continued to gather data on citations through Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing. Citations for standard violations are broken down into 5 areas of focus (personnel, record keeping, physical facilities, outdoors and emergency). The results illustrate a significant decrease in citations among those participating in QEES. This trend is consistent with the data reflected in the two previous years of evaluation.



In Year 4, QEES was able to add an additional component in the analysis of the citation data. To further assess the sustainability of compliance, a look at the previously participating programs' compliance history was analyzed 24 months post QEES support. Based on the data gathered, programs were able to sustain a reduction in the numbers of citations in the inspection areas noted.

## Social Outreach

Virtual and social outreach efforts remain a vital part in engaging the entire community. QEES staff kept social platforms current to maximize awareness on the importance of early education and critical community resources.

The CALM, ELM, and QEES Twitter accounts all demonstrated significant growth in Year 4. From October 2021 to September 2022, the CALM account grew from 290 to 402 followers, the ELM



account grew from 450 to 567 followers, and the QEES account grew from 304 to 347 followers. In Year 5, the three Twitter accounts will be streamlined into one account (under the QEES handle) to optimize outreach.

The QEES Instagram account served as another social outlet to reach QEES existing participants and potential new ones. The same engagement strategies used to increase Twitter traffic were applied to the QEES Instagram page. From October 2021 to September 2022, the Instagram account grew from 221 to 262 followers.

The QEES YouTube channel was created on March 30, 2020, starting with 13 videos. As in Year 3, new videos were added every quarter, with a total of 852 videos as of October 2022. The channel received 22,815 views, with a watch time of 769 hours and 74 new subscribers in Year 4 (October 2021-September 2022).

## Links to Research

The Early Learning Study at Harvard, launched in 2017, has utilized a series of surveys to gather data related to early childhood education experiences among providers, children, and families. Since 2020, the study team has added additional measures to study the impact of COVID-19 on early learning. And while increased stress related to financial and mental health impacts were common themes among providers and parents, **the resilience that QEES reported in its program outcomes last year echoed across the study data.** Results from the provider survey found that “approximately 85% of educators reported engaging in some form of online instruction. Many educators also reported communicating with parents through phone, text messaging, emails, mail, and social media, and about half of educators reported providing physical materials to children and families” (Saul Zaentz Early Education Initiative, 2020, para 7). Parent survey data serve as additional evidence of this perseverance, with results indicating that “lower-income families reported the highest levels of school and teacher outreach (87% reported being in touch with the teacher to discuss their child’s progress), including the provision of learning technology equipment (61%)” (para. 10). The shared experience of a global pandemic among all members of the early childhood education community, including families and the children themselves, has highlighted the collective effort required to support early cognitive development. This knowledge will inform the active roles that each member plays in that collective effort for years to come.

The potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child growth and development research study determined that positive child development should include a “family life rich in positive stimuli and a high-quality educational system” (Araújo et al., 2021, p. 373). These fundamentals are significant in a child’s growth and development to create crucial neural connections that will last a lifetime. Research continues to support the significance of rich, quality early learning experiences in relation to brain development. The brain is not fully developed at birth. In fact, “the most rapid brain development happens in the first five years of life, and evidence suggests back-and-forth interactions between children and their caregivers play a pivotal role” (Emanuel, 2022, para. 5). Therefore, every experience matters; sound, touch, sight, taste... everything in the surrounding environment. **QEES educates all the adult learners on the significance of these experiences and provides them weekly to the children that they serve.**

Research presented in the study, *Critical period regulation across multiple timescales*, reinforced the importance of brain plasticity peaking during the early childhood years and laying the

foundation for a child's future success in school and life (Reh, R.K. et al., 2020). Reh et al. (2020) state, "Neural circuits are shaped by experience during critical periods of development, allowing individuals to uniquely adapt their behaviors to the surrounding environment. The common occurrence of these plastic windows across species and systems speaks to their fundamental importance in ensuring future fitness" (para. 2). Early educational experiences can positively impact physical and mental well-being during child development (Tooley et al., 2021). Brain maturation and plasticity ensue for children exposed to a stimulus-rich environment, including a variety of sensory experiences. When these stimuli are not in place for children in the early years, the brain does not develop the neuro-connections required to create complex cognitive development. Research shows that low exposure to stress and high exposure to positive learning experiences promote basic brain development. **Understanding this research, QEES has integrated the physical and mental wellbeing of caregivers and children throughout all trainings.** Cultivating a compassionate, collaborative care environment has been central to the work in Year 4.

Further, Harvard's Center on the Developing Child's ongoing scientific findings, *In Brief: The Science of Early Childhood Development*, found that one of the most influential impacts on a child's developmental process is the relationship formed with their parents and caregivers (Center on the Developing Child, 2007). QEES fully embraces the research shaping its programming to address all components of an early childhood setting while supporting children and the adults engaging with them. To meaningfully improve all areas of brain development, we must support the key individuals such as **children's families, teachers, and child care and preschool directors** who mold those experiences with children beginning at birth and throughout their most formative years.

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Each year, my passion for early learning grows, and the importance of the work drives me each day. Life continuously presents us with challenges, but how we respond to each other and to our children will last a lifetime. The providers' determination and openness to shift the lens to best serve children is inspirational. **Together we have formed a connected community of compassion and care—a family.** I see so much potential for continued growth in all of us in early childhood with, children as our muse. QEES is proud of the work we have done, and we look forward to another year of serving the community and children we cherish.

Marni Fuente,  
QEES Program Director



## Key Year 4 Evaluation Takeaways

**The QEES Year 4 Evaluation highlights the determination, innovation, and collaborative efforts of the QEES staff that were awe inspiring and crucial in creating sustainable change to the field of early childhood education.** The multifaceted program reaches everyone involved in early childhood education: facilities, owners, operators, regulators, teachers, families, and, of course, children. The program's success and forward-thinking have drawn state and national attention. But what is most important is that QEES is building our children a better path toward a lifetime of opportunity.

- **The focus continues to be on the mission of providing early education programming that connects, protects, nurtures, and stimulates all those involved, especially the children.** As evidenced throughout this evaluation, QEES' work is essential in moving the needle toward quality early education.
- **The global pandemic strained an already strained early childhood community.** Providers were united in their purpose but were still in desperate need of support. QEES was able to bridge gaps when providers felt fragile, giving them much needed strength to continue to serve children and families.
- **Empathic connections are critical both to the development of the child and the adult learners.** The vulnerability we all felt from the pandemic could not be ignored. QEES addressed the issues and the emotions, though at times difficult, bringing providers, families, and children together. Having the conversations and holistically identifying the struggles allowed for environments that promoted learning and compassionate care.
- **We are stronger together.** The QEES staff built trusting relationships and empowered providers, creating a collaborative culture. This ultimately, improved learning gains for adults and children while promoting quality.
- **The multipronged approach allows for creative solutions for programs, providers, children, and families.** QEES' ability to reflect on participant feedback and the data gives them valuable insight to grow and change programming based on participant needs.
- **The workforce is still struggling.** The push for innovative ways to recruit new teachers into the workforce and re-inspire others

remains a priority. QEES is diligently working to identify barriers, work with community agencies and find solutions.

## Goals for Year 5

Caring, enthusiastic, and well-educated teachers are essential for providing children with early experiences that truly support their development and love of learning. It is essential that the system of quality care invest in the early childhood workforce by requiring and providing high-quality early childhood teacher education. Our current system offers few incentives for workers to remain in the education field or invest in their own education and professional development. The investment in early childhood is sound. Research states, "Investing in the nation's children is one of the safest bets policymakers can make. Research on early care and education programs finds that \$1 in spending generates \$8.60 in economic activity... Supporting child care workers is crucial for promoting quality care and human capital development" (Abbott, 2021, para. 5).

Per the National Academics Report, turnover among child care workers is four times higher than for elementary education teachers (Bassok, et al., 2021, p. 32). Furthermore, even when early childhood education teachers do invest in their professional development, the coursework and training they receive from a fragmented system do not often focus on the skills and competencies most needed to help young children succeed. Many early care workers lack the basic knowledge, systematic approach, and early childhood methods training needed to effectively support the growth and development of young children.

The current system of early childhood care and education is a jumble of programs with vastly different goals regarding educational best practices, quality, regulation and oversight, and funding. The global pandemic has created additional fractures, causing unsustainable struggles for teachers, children, and families alike. As QEES maintains its firmly established relationships with providers, community agencies, and organizations, it has the ability to streamline early education for children, their families, and teachers while providing access to concrete supports. Therefore, everybody wins, and children thrive.

As QEES continues its journey, the lens should continue to focus on elevating the field with its multifaceted holistic approach, maintaining strong partnerships, and forging new ones. Additionally, the comprehensive data gathered each year is valuable in making forward-thinking, sustainable solutions. It would be beneficial for QEES to be part of the conversation

around policies that directly impact the early learning community. The intensive fieldwork and connection with the providers, children, and families give an informed, authentic voice for advocacy to all in early childhood. Continuation of the efforts to expand awareness of the QEES programming beyond Hillsborough County is strongly encouraged.



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# Appendix A

## Program Description

The QEES initiative, through a comprehensive system of supports, addresses the complex needs of early childhood education. This system thoughtfully provides education and support for child care owners, directors, teachers, families, and children. The programming increases awareness of “why” early learning is so important while providing a holistic approach to teaching young children. The system is delivered through the following 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 amount to a college course credit after successful completion of the series. Other delivery formats 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, 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 a report of 25 leading social-emotional learning and character education programs (Jones et al., 2017). The researchers noted that multiple program studies have been conducted, and reported outcomes included reductions in aggression, hyperactivity, and conduct problems.

### **Modification Since Pandemic**

- Coaching and on-site training transitioned back to fully in-person.

- Monthly Saturday morning trainings continued in live video webinar format to accommodate the providers and maximize access. These trainings consistently drew between 150–200 attendees.
- CALM Special Sessions transitioned to fully in-person to address the social and emotional toll of COVID-19 and create a comprehensive support network for the early childhood community.
- CALM Connections for parents offered on-site support on following CALM procedures at home.
- 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 knowledge, 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 (HCC). Delivery formats are available that offer in-service hours and CEUs.

#### **Modification Since Pandemic**

- Coaching and training transitioned back to fully in-person.
- The QEES YouTube channel continued to provide video content that could be viewed anytime on demand.

**HCC-Pathways.** This program component is for teachers and directors of child care 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 from the CALM and ELM components of QEES. HCC-Pathways staff work with teachers and directors of child care 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.

### **Modification Since Pandemic**

- Coaching and training transitioned back to fully in-person.
- 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 quality classroom management and developmentally appropriate practice in English and Spanish.
- QEES Quick Connects continued and moved from monthly to quarterly live videoconferencing sessions at the request of the providers (in English and Spanish). The sessions primarily consisted of discussion and information sharing, focusing on the current state of pandemic, licensing regulations and guidelines, and provider needs.

**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 child care owners additional, more specific, and advanced training on organizational and operational topics that include: staff management, communication skills, record keeping, and indoor/outdoor health and safety. CEUs are issued and tracked through HCC, as are CEUs from the other QEES program components (HCC-Pathways, CALM, and ELM).

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 health and safety. Support includes training (over 30 hours) and coaching (provided in 20- to 30-minute sessions) for all child care 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 child care 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, HCC (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.

### ***Modification Since Pandemic***

- Coaching and training transitioned back to fully in-person (sessions were offered virtually for those more comfortable in that format).
- During the first two quarters, virtual calls with providers continued to provide updates on COVID-19-related guidelines, 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.
- 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 in English and Spanish.

# 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 of 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 1,030 early childhood education staff in college, community-based locations or via live virtual platforms.	Knowledge Assessments (HCC-created)	Teachers, Directors
2	Provide 267 Non-System early childhood education (ECE) centers and family child care homes (FCCH) with <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> CIRCLE Classroom Environment Checklist (Preschool CEC) Infant-Toddler CIRCLE Classroom Environment Checklist	Directors, Teachers
3	Provide <u>coaching</u> to 165 countywide early childhood education practitioners (ages 1-5 classrooms) participating in CALM.	Conscious Discipline® Progress Assessment	Teachers
4	Provide <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 375 countywide parents/caregivers of engaged early childhood education sites with <u>CALM strategies</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 or BOSS.	Site support tracking system and Utilization report	Directors, Teachers
7	Provide 650 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.	Early Literacy Skills Assessment (ELSA) Get Ready to Read Screening Tool (GRTR)	Children
8	Provide year-round support to 475 countywide parents/caregivers (of ELM children) in engaged early childhood education sites to develop <u>strategies for emergent literacy and home-school engagement</u> .	Get Ready to Read (GRTR) Home Literacy Checklist	Families
9	Provide <u>ELM activities</u> to 240 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 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 child care settings. The tool is comprised of 10 areas assessed on a 7-point scale by a trained early childhood coach. The ECE/FCCH score is the average across the 10 areas, with 7 being the highest possible score. The 10 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

**Circle Classroom Environment Checklist (CEC) Infant-Toddler and Preschool.** This tool assesses the presence and quality of important aspects of the infant-toddler (22 items) or preschool (21 items) classroom environment. This tool is designed to focus on the learning environment, not on the teacher's interactions with children. An observation can take place with or without children in the room and typically takes 15 to 30 minutes to complete. In addition, this checklist focuses on aspects of the environment that relate directly to children's opportunities for play and learning rather than basic health, safety, and sanitation (which are addressed in each state's minimum standards for child care centers). The observer needs to be able to view all parts of the classroom, as well as the environment that children use for outdoor playtime. The CEC uses a 3-point rating scale for each item: 1 - low, 2 - moderate, and 3 - high. Each item rating has a description, and most items include specific materials and examples. When toys and materials are mentioned, it is assumed that they are developmentally appropriate for the ages of children in the classroom. If materials are present that are not developmentally appropriate, they are not included when scoring the relevant checklist item.

**Conscious Discipline® Progress Assessment.** This tool assesses the implementation of Conscious Discipline® skills and structures through a self-assessment rubric created on a 4-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 Classroom Observation (ELLCO).** The ELLCO Pre-K assessment toolkit covers five areas: classroom structure (scores range from 4 at lowest to 20); curriculum (score ranges from 3 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

knowledge (1, 21). Designed as an authentic assessment for children ages 3 to 6, 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 3- to 5-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 Literacy 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 10 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.

**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 7-point scale (from 1 to 7), using 25 items clustered into 10 areas. The QEES 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 monthly reading log allows families to track books read over the course of each week in that month and provide feedback. The reading logs are used to track progress toward 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 and/or BOSS 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 to measure individual skills development. 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

Throughout the year, evaluations are collected to gain insight into a program's effectiveness in meeting the needs of teachers, center directors/owners, and parents/caregivers. The testimonials are remarkable, illustrating the impact of QEES and the considerate approach to program delivery. The following is a small sampling of participant feedback. These statements were provided voluntarily through letters, emails to staff, or as an optional part of online survey forms.



### Child Care Director/Owner

*Up until this session, I never realized the differences between a leader and a manager. This presentation was very easy to understand and extremely informative. The videos really added to the concepts.*

*I learned a lot and felt like every part of this class spoke to me about the changes I need to make in my business! Thanks!!!*

*The BOSS workshop allowed me to see the importance of planning and have improved the manner in which we do business. Cannot wait to see where it takes us.*

*Eye opening in helpful hints in classroom management - passionate and knowledgeable :)*

*Thank you for this class! Managers really need more training. It has really made me sit back and look at things I can do to improve the business! Thanks again!*

### Child Care Professionals/Teachers

*These topics are of great interest for families as well as the education community. They allow us to positively interact as well as relearn and sort different situations that we face daily with the children in our care. We are now able to better intervene with solutions to these different problems. These are very important topics especially with the pandemic which continues to change us all especially in the area of human interaction.*



Thank you so much for the valuable information and intervention that benefits all of us.

I love the proven system and I will process in my head. It will work for me. I needed this training to get motivated. Thank you ladies, have a blessed day.

Such valuable information shared and discussed. ECEs matter and all young children deserve a healthy start their first 5 years of life.

I have been attending CALM sessions from nearly the beginning and they get better each time. I am excited about the new SWIFF program that was mentioned at the beginning of this session. It would have been great if this program would have been available when my children were little. A great session!

Taking the CALM training is a way to stay connected with the resources and positive reminders on how to keep a positive perspective while educating children who can be difficult to teach. I love the beautiful reminders.

CALM has helped me to grow as an individual and teacher. At every training I am encouraged, and I learn a new strategy that supports the children I teach. Thank you so much for caring and wanting to make the school and home environment a better place for our children.

The trainer gave an extraordinary workshop, she was descriptive and gave us many examples and options and, in my case, I appreciate your patience since my English is not very good and at all times, she encourages me to participate.

I appreciate how much of the information embraces the community of participants, recognizing us as individuals navigating our own lives as we teach children to do the same. Not just a "list of do's and don'ts" but rather an encompassing philosophy of how we can improve ourselves to help children.

As always, a very informative session with a multitude of creative ideas. I really like the monthly activity calendars. Even though I have been attending these sessions from nearly the beginning, there are always new "take-aways" each and every time. I also liked the information that was

*provided by the guest speaker at the beginning of the session because I would not be aware of the organization otherwise.*

*CALM is my family and gives me meaning. Save my life as a teacher and person. Please keep up the good work. I love the in-person. Missed my family.*

*I have learned a lot, being that I am new to the field. I felt that I was equipped with the information needed to be successful and helpful to children and parents within the session.*

*Educators make conscious efforts to engage families in meaningful ways but often times it can be challenging. This webinar training provided suggestions for best practices and strategies for developing positive partnerships with families.*

### **Parents/Caregivers**

*It was very informative and very good to have this knowledge as a new father.*

*We enjoy everything about the program, the activities, diversity and the quality of the projects and time spent. Thank you!!*

*I love the accountability! Anything that encourages my child to learn while also engaging me as a parent is the best kind of lesson plan in my book!*

*Loved these techniques and we use them at home :)*

*Exceeded our expectations at school and at home. We love that each of our children got books of their very own to read and keep at home! The program is well thought out! Bravo!*

*Thank you for your efforts in helping future generations.*

*This project is marvelous initiative; the children learn to value things more when they can make it with their own hands. It teaches to give meaning to life, to be creative.*

*As a parent I feel very happy with this project. My child had a great time and learned a lot.*

*The program has a strong start! Not really anything to improve, just growing more.*

*We had a great year and I feel she is well-prepared for kindergarten. Thank you!*

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

*I feel that these training are helpful each time. Different topics are discussed that are applicable to our providers, with this information we are able to share and discuss with them any concerns or questions they may have.*

*Innovative ideas, interested to in the project.*

*I am thoroughly enjoying these trainings.*

*I really wish that the Department could contract with QEES to provide this information to providers for a Childcare Orientation.*

## Appendix D

### Mapline – Sites Served by QEES in Year 4

Map illustrates 245 QEES centers (both ECE Centers & FCCH) receiving services from October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022.

