The Quality Matters Fund (QMF) was developed on January 21, 2020 to provide capital support for early learning programs to expand their capacity or increase quality to serve vulnerable families. Eligible programs seeking grant funding could seek awards ranging from $20,000–$75,000. A cross-sector committee was developed with members of the community to determine recipients.

This grant was a public-private partnership funded by the city of Chattanooga and the Smart City Venture Fund, with United Way of Greater Chattanooga’s fiscal management and the oversight of Early Matters Chattanooga. As a result of COVID-19, in early April 2020 QMF was repurposed as the Emergency Child Care Provider Bridge Fund in order to offer support to child care providers as they sought state and federal relief in response to the pandemic.

**Criteria:**
- Must be a 3-star operator*
- Currently serving low-income populations**
- All needed project funding beyond this application has been secured
- Proposed project to be located in Hamilton County
- Demonstration of ownership or long-term lease

**Priority Preference**
- Strong track-record for serving vulnerable populations
- Demonstration of need in the proposed location
- Increasing infant or toddler seats

**QMF Committee**
- David Ferrier, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
- Angela Hayes, City of Chattanooga, Office of Early Learning
- Lee Hope, Chattanooga Public Library
- Miles Huff, Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce
- Dwayne Marshall, Community Foundation
- Silvia Ramos, United Way of Greater Chattanooga
- Monica Stone, CCR&R

**Poverty and Insurance Rates in Centers’ Census Tracts**
- Data from Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Census, and TN Dept. of Health
- *Pop < 5, Poverty Rate < 5, Total Poverty Rate, Lack of Health Insurance (18-64)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Tract 29</th>
<th>City of Chattanooga</th>
<th>Hamilton County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pop &lt; 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Poverty Rate &lt; 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total Poverty Rate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 providers awarded $96,826 Both providers located in Census Tract 29

56% of children served by providers are below 250% FPL

102 current seats 93 additional proposed quality seats

*or plan submitted for increasing quality
**defined as client population of at least 50% low income children, as defined by 250% Federal Poverty Level
Recipients were located in 37411.


Recipients represented Chattanooga city council districts 5.

To access the Quality Matters Fund and the Emergency Child Care Provider Bridge Fund reports please visit earlymatterschatt.org.