

# Georgia's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant October 2015 Newsletter

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## October Spotlight: Georgia's Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP)

In collaboration with the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) is currently developing a Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP) as one component of Georgia's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant. In December 2014, the GaDOE awarded a contract to NCS Pearson for development of the KEP. The Georgia Center for Assessment at the University of Georgia also serves as a subcontractor for the development of the KEP.

The KEP will augment the [Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills \(GKIDS\)](#) and will be administered during the first six weeks of kindergarten. The KEP is designed to be developmentally appropriate, reflecting research-based best practices for young learners, and will provide information to allow kindergarten teachers to individualize instruction. The goal and primary purpose of the KEP is to guide instruction and to provide teachers with information about the level of instructional support needed by individual students entering kindergarten. According to the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO), [Georgia is one of 33 states in the country that has some form of a Kindergarten Entry Profile.](#)



### **KEP Design:**

Although the KEP is designed to be administered in kindergarten classrooms, it is aligned to the [Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards \(GELDS\)](#), Georgia's set of high-quality, research-based early learning standards for children from birth through age five. Mastery of essential GELDS standards provides baseline information about students' readiness for kindergarten and allows for early intervention and differentiation of instruction.

The KEP assesses the five Essential Domains of School Readiness identified by the National Education Goals Panel:

1. Communication, Language, Literacy
2. Cognitive Development
3. Approaches to Learning

4. Social and Emotional Development
5. Physical Development and Motor Skills

The KEP will consist of both direct (e.g., structured performance tasks) and indirect (e.g., observational) assessment activities. These activities reflect essential skills and concepts deemed necessary to position students for success in future learning. The KEP will be accessible to all students at kindergarten entry, including students with disabilities and dual language learners. The KEP was developed to be unobtrusive and naturalistic within the kindergarten setting. Additionally, once operationalized, the KEP will have straightforward, easy to interpret reports at the student, class, school, district, and state levels.

***Development and Timeline of the KEP:***

In January of this year, kindergarten teachers and a representative from DECAL participated in a KEP Development Committee to identify essential skills and concepts students should demonstrate upon entry to kindergarten. Skills and concepts recommended by the Development Committee were presented in an online survey to all kindergarten and Pre-K teachers statewide for agreement and comment. The Development Committee used the results from this survey to inform the basis of the KEP content.

In February and March, development committees consisting of Pre-K, kindergarten, and first grade teachers met with representatives from the GaDOE and DECAL to develop an assessment blueprint and review activities and performance level descriptors. Both groups also included teachers with certification and experience with dual language learners and students with disabilities.

During this past spring, groups of KEP activities were administered in selected public and private Georgia's Pre-K classrooms across the state to obtain initial performance data of students who were close in age and school experience to those students who will enter Georgia kindergarten classrooms this fall. The Pre-K pilot served as an item tryout and provided early information related to the usability and performance of activities in a setting that is similar to a kindergarten classroom.

In June, a committee consisting of Pre-K, kindergarten, and first grade teachers met with the GaDOE and DECAL to review data collected during the Pre-K pilot. The committee reviewed performance data on all activities and made recommendations that informed further refinement of the KEP blueprint.

This fall, a sampling of students in Georgia kindergarten classes participated in a field test of KEP activities during the first six weeks of the school year. Student performance data and teacher feedback collected during the field test will serve to inform next steps in implementation of the KEP. Kindergarten teachers selected for the field test received face-to-face training from the GaDOE and the Georgia Center for Assessment prior to KEP administration. Student performance data and teacher feedback from the field test will be presented to an educator committee for review and recommendations for further refinement.

In fall 2016, the KEP will be launched in a representative sample of kindergarten classrooms. A survey will be administered to all participating kindergarten teachers to receive feedback about the administration procedures and utility of the KEP results for their classroom instruction. The results of the survey will inform the final refinement of all elements of the KEP prior to the statewide launch of the KEP in the fall of 2017. Once launched in 2017, the KEP will assist kindergarten teachers in guiding and individualizing instruction for their students.

For more information about the KEP, contact Jan Reyes, Ed.D. at [jreyes@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:jreyes@doe.k12.ga.us).

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## **Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) Launches [Early Education Empowerment Zone \(E3Z\) Evaluation Website](#)**

One of the major initiatives that the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) outlined in its Early Learning Challenge grant application was the development of four Early Education Empowerment Zones (E3Zs)-geographic communities around the state where integrated systems of services are designed and implemented to reach young children with high needs. The purpose of the E3Zs aim to increase access to high-quality early learning programs and cultivate integrated systems of high-quality early learning programs and services. The four zones are in North Georgia (Catoosa, Whitfield, Murray, Gordon, and Gilmer counties), Clarke County, Bibb County, and South Georgia (Colquitt, Cook, Brooks, Lowndes, and Echols counties).

One of the key goals of the E3Zs, as outlined in Georgia's Early Learning Challenge grant application, is "to commission and complete an evaluation to measure overall implementation for intervention and project scale up (using an Implementation Science Framework)." The Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) was chosen as the evaluation partner. In this role, GOSA worked with DECAL administrators to design an E3Z evaluation that uses an Implementation Science Framework for evaluation and identification of targeted E3Z programs and services that are most suitable for scale-up after the end of the grant term. The E3Z evaluation design incorporates quantitative and qualitative methodologies to produce quarterly and annual evaluation reports, as well as two small research studies each designed to focus on one of the targeted E3Z programs. GOSA will post these reports and studies on its [website](#) as they are completed. Towards the end of the grant term in 2017, GOSA will publish a final E3Z report on its [website](#).

Click [here](#) to view GOSA's first quarterly report of E3Z activities through July 31, 2015.

For more information about this project, contact Nnenna Ogbu at [nogbu@georgia.gov](mailto:nogbu@georgia.gov).

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## **The Economic Impact of the Early Care & Education Industry in Georgia**



*Register for*  
**The Economic Impact of the Early Care  
 and Education Industry in Georgia**  
*A Briefing and Public Policy Forum*

Learn the results of the 2015 *Early Care and Education Economic Impact Study* and discuss public policy implications in a town hall meeting format.

**Dates:**

- September 29: Valdosta - Valdosta State University
- October 14: Macon - Middle Georgia State University
- October 21: Atlanta - Georgia Railroad Freight Depot
- October 23: Athens - The University of Georgia

**Preliminary Agenda:**

- 7:45-8:15am: Registration
- 8:15-10:00am: Study Briefing
- 10:15-11:30am: Public Policy Forum

Visit [www.decal.ga.gov/EconomicImpactRegistration.html](http://www.decal.ga.gov/EconomicImpactRegistration.html) to register and for detailed location information.

For more information email [bftsresearch@decal.ga.gov](mailto:bftsresearch@decal.ga.gov).

*Presented by:*



The results of a recent economic impact study commissioned by DECAL will be discussed at four public policy forums across the state beginning next month.

DECAL commissioned the University of Georgia and Georgia State University to study the impact of the child care industry on the economy of Georgia. The most recent study in 2007 showed that child care programs in Georgia created over \$4.1 billion in revenues annually, while creating over 61,000 jobs.

The Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPPE) will join UGA, GSU, and DECAL in presenting the results from the study this Wednesday, October 21 in Atlanta and this Friday, October 23 in Athens. At each location registration will be held from 7:45 to 8:15 AM followed by a Study Briefing from 8:15 to 10:00 AM and a Public Policy Impact Forum from 10:15 to 11:30 AM.

Please click [here](#) to register. We hope to see you there!



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