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**Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning and
City of Atlanta's Department of Recreation Celebrate National CACFP Week**

DECAL and City of Atlanta stress importance of nutritious food served during Afterschool Programs

ATLANTA, GA. (March 17, 2016) – Yesterday, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) joined the City of Atlanta's Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to celebrate National Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Week at the *Center of Hope* at Adamsville Recreation Center. National CACFP Week is a national campaign to raise awareness of the CACFP's work to combat hunger. The City of Atlanta's DPR partners with the DECAL to provide snacks and dinner to students participating in its afterschool programs in the *Center of Hope*.

DECAL and DPR are partnering to raise awareness about the At-Risk Afterschool program, an important component of the CACFP. "Over sixty percent of children in Georgia qualify for free or reduced-price meals at school," said DECAL Nutrition Services Director, Falita Flowers. "The At-Risk Afterschool Program provides children in afterschool programs with enrichment activities and nutritious snacks and supper meals that meet federal requirements for balanced and healthy meals."

According to DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs, "Our goal is to increase the number of meals and snacks served this year, enabling more children across the state to benefit from this special program. To accomplish that goal, we need organizations in communities throughout Georgia to partner with us as sponsors and as workers 'in the trenches.' Together, we can help ensure that more children receive the nutrition they need to be successful in school...and ultimately, in life."

The CACFP is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and administered in Georgia by DECAL. Children up to age 12 and adults ages 60 or older and adults who are functionally impaired, can receive nutritious meals while enrolled in qualified, non-residential child care or adult day care settings. The At-Risk Afterschool component of the CACFP provides free meals and snacks to children 18 and under enrolled in afterschool programs located in low-income areas that offer approved enrichment activities. Facilities approved by DECAL to provide meals that meet USDA meal pattern requirements can be reimbursed for those meals.

“The hot meals program is critical to the services we provide to our youth participating in afterschool programs in our centers,” said Atlanta’s Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner, Amy Phuong. “For many of the families we serve, the hot meals program is the difference between a child going to bed with a full stomach or a child going to bed hungry.”

The National CACFP Week event at the Adamsville Recreation Center included a press conference with DECAL’s Commissioner Jacobs, City of Atlanta’s Commissioner Phuong, Robin Bailey, Regional Administrator for the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, and a physical education activity presented by GA SHAPE.

To learn how to get involved in the CACFP, visit <http://dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/CACFPBecomingASponsor.aspx>.

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About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages the voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.decal.ga.gov.