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Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Announces First County in Georgia with All Child Care Programs Participating in Quality Rated

Fannin County is Only County in Georgia with 100% Quality Rated Participation

ATLANTA, Ga., (April 4, 2016) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) announced today that Fannin County is the first and only county in Georgia where all eligible child care programs are Quality Rated or are working toward earning a Quality Rated star rating. Those Fannin County child care providers are Mountain Area Christian Academy, MileStones Learning Center & Childcare, The Learning Depot, and Fannin County Head Start/Pre-K.

Similar to rating systems for other industries like restaurants and hotels, Quality Rated assigns a rating (one star, two star, or three star) to child care programs that meet certain quality standards in early childhood education over and above the state licensing requirements for health and safety. Quality Rated has an online database where Georgia parents and families can find information on quality early care programs in their area—regardless of what type of provider they prefer, whether at a home, a preschool at a center, or a program at a school.

“This outstanding level of participation shows that child care providers in Fannin County are serious about providing high quality care and education to children and families in their communities,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy. M. Jacobs. “Fannin County’s child care providers can be proud of this accomplishment that ultimately benefits Georgia’s youngest citizens.”

DECAL Announces First County in Georgia with All Child Care Programs Participating in Quality Rated – Page 2

“I appreciate the hard work and dedication of these child care providers to strive for the highest standards of care for the children of our area,” said Speaker David Ralston (R-Blue Ridge), who represents Fannin County in the Georgia House of Representatives. “We know that early childhood care and education have a profound impact on the lives of children and having access to these providers will make a significant, positive difference in their futures.”

Families looking for child care can learn more the importance of selecting a Quality Rated child care program at www.qualityrated.org and can search for Quality Rated child care programs on the DECAL website at www.decals.ga.gov.

Governor Nathan Deal and DECAL launched Quality Rated July 2013. Currently, 954 child care programs in Georgia (19% of eligible child care programs) are Quality Rated, with an additional 1,631 child care programs in the process of becoming Quality Rated.

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 *Quality Rated*, Georgia’s community powered child care rating system.

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.decals.ga.gov.