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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DECAL Announces Members of
Inaugural Quality Rated Advisory Committee**

Committee Will Guide Georgia's Quality Rating and Improvement System

ATLANTA, Ga., (September 8, 2015) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) announced today the members of its inaugural Quality Rated Advisory Committee that will guide and foster growth for Georgia's Quality Rated program.

Quality Rated is Georgia's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for eligible child care programs in the state. 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 quality standards over and above the state licensing requirements for health and safety. Currently, 729 child care programs in Georgia (14% of eligible child care programs) are Quality Rated.

"I look forward to working with the first Quality Rated Advisory Committee," said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. "This important committee is composed of representatives from the Georgia General Assembly, large child care chains, individually owned child care businesses, family day care homes, for profit and non-profit child care, and child care professional organizations. Their diverse experiences and perspectives will help Georgia achieve its goal of 100% of eligible child care providers participating in Quality Rated by the end of 2017."

Quality Rated Advisory Committee members will provide direct feedback to DECAL about the Quality Rated process and will be charged to think innovatively about increasing Quality Rated awareness and participation. Members of the Quality Rated Advisory Committee serve for a one-year term.

Members of the 2015-2016 Quality Rated Advisory Committee:

1. Michelle Smith Lank, Director at A Kid’s World Learning Center in Statesboro
2. Thonja Smith-Lee, Executive Director at the Goddard School in Atlanta
3. Rhonda Canerday, Manager of Quality Assurance at Discovery Point Franchising Inc.
4. Lisa Morris, Child Care Provider at Just For Kids Family Child Care in McDonough
5. Marla Reisman, Center Director at North Fulton Child Development Association in Roswell
6. Michelle Culter-Ervin, Director at Central Georgia Technical College Child Development Center in Macon
7. Jed Tuiolosega, Child Care Director of YMCA of Metropolitan Columbus in Columbus
8. Sherrie Johnson, Owner at Discovery Point #42 in Covington
9. Dianne Coggins, Family Child Care Provider in College Park
10. Carolyn Salvador, Executive Director of the Georgia Child Care Association
11. Barbara Miller, Manager of Government Relations at Kids R Kids Corporate
12. Jori Rose, Family Child Care Provider in Kingsland
13. Linda Owens, Director of the Rollins Child Development Center in Cartersville
14. Jaime Rechkemmer, Director of Education at Childcare Network
15. Trina Pattullo, Director at Josiah Christian School in Valdosta
16. Michelle Carter, Director of Druid Hills Child Development Center in Atlanta
17. Heather Bardi, Program Specialist at Ninth District Opportunity, Inc.
18. Lisa Downs Henry, Project Director at Downs Preschool in Watkinsville
19. Valencia Stovall, State Representative for House District 74
20. Yvette Drake, Owner at Creekstone Academy in Lithonia

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.dec.al.ga.gov.