



## BRIGHT FROM THE START

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning  
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**Nathan Deal**  
GOVERNOR

**Bobby D. Cagle, MSW**  
COMMISSIONER

Dear Child Care Provider,

Yesterday, April 15, 2014, a **child was left in a vehicle** by a child care provider for an extended length of time. The provider completed the transportation paperwork indicating that adults had checked the vehicle twice. I submit to you that **IF** that vehicle had been carefully checked by two adults, that child would **NOT** have been left in the vehicle.

A similar incident resulted in the **death of a child** in 2011.

As a result of yesterday's incident, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is re-issuing the directive originally issued last summer: **Comply FULLY with all rules involving transportation or be subject to enforcement actions.**

- In FY12, **21** children were left in vehicles by child care providers.
- In FY13, **17** children were left in vehicles by child care providers.
- In FY14, **18** children (including the child yesterday) have been left in vehicles by child care providers.

I assure you that DECAL will take **swift and decisive action** when providers fail to comply with rules governing transportation, and we will use our **enforcement authority** to ensure that the trend indicated by the statistics above **does not continue**. Enforcement actions include public reprimand, emergency closure, restriction of services, revocation of license, emergency monitors, and enforcement fines. *I also intend to encourage **criminal prosecution** of those responsible for transporting children **who fail to ensure** that no children are left on the vehicle upon reaching their destination.*

In addition to this letter to providers, DECAL is sending a **letter to over 30,000 parents** in Georgia reminding them about the critical dangers...and heart wrenching consequences...of leaving children in vehicles. We are also asking parents to be our "eyes" in their communities and to contact local law enforcement if they ever see a child left unattended in a vehicle.

By carefully **following the state's transportation rules** and by **remaining vigilant** when transporting children, we can help prevent senseless tragedies and keep Georgia's children safe and healthy and their families intact.

Sincerely,

Bobby D. Cagle  
Commissioner