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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Applications to Provide Georgia's Pre-K Program Now Available

Deadline for Submitting Applications is April 22, 2016, at 5:00 PM

ATLANTA, Ga., (March 28, 2016) –Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) has posted application packages for new and returning providers of Georgia's Pre-K Program for the 2016-2017 school year. Existing providers of currently funded classes can request expansion classes via DECAL's PANDA website while new providers can receive information about the application review, award process, and grant funding at www.dec.al.ga.gov. The deadline for all applications is **Friday, April 22, 2016**, at 5:00 PM EDT.

Georgia's Pre-K Program is a lottery-funded educational program for age-eligible children in Georgia. To attend Georgia's Pre-K in the 2016-2017 school year, a child must be four years old on or before September 1, 2016. Georgia's Pre-K Program normally operates on the regular school system calendar for the length of a typical school day. This year, approximately 81,000 four year olds are being served in over 3,800 Georgia's Pre-K classes at 1,837 locations.

The purpose of the program is to prepare children for success in Kindergarten and later school years. Programs are offered at local public schools or through private providers of preschool services.

“Georgia’s Pre-K Program significantly improves school readiness skills in language, literacy, math, and general knowledge,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “By acquiring these skills early on, our students stand a greater chance of reading on grade level by the end of the third grade, which better positions them for future academic excellence.”

For more information about becoming a provider in Georgia’s Pre-K Program, call 404-656-5957 or 1-888-4GA-PREK and ask for the Pre-K Consultant of the Day.

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.