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## Georgia Pre-K Week 2017: State Celebrates Pre-K Program's 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday

**ATLANTA, (September 26, 2017)** – Starting Monday, hundreds of state and local leaders will celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> birthday of Georgia's Pre-K Program by reading to Georgia's youngest learners from October 2-6 as part of Georgia Pre-K Week 2017.

Governor Zell Miller launched Georgia's lottery-funded Pre-K program in 1992 as a pilot program serving 750 four-year-old children. Since then, Georgia's Pre-K Program has laid a solid foundation for academic excellence and future success in the lives of approximately 1.6 million children.

Now in its seventh year, Georgia Pre-K Week is coordinated by Voices for Georgia's Children, a policy and advocacy non-profit organization. The goal of Pre-K week is to emphasize the importance of quality early childhood education by providing opportunities for leaders to engage with Pre-K classrooms in local communities.

Georgia Power and Synovus return as presenting sponsors of Georgia Pre-K Week for the fourth consecutive year. Additional key supporters include Governor Nathan Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal, state commissioners, state and local elected officials and other dignitaries.

"The broad and diverse base of support from around our state is evidence that Georgia's leaders care about and understand the long-term impact of quality early learning on each child," said Dr. Erica Fener Sitkoff, Executive Director of

Voices for Georgia's Children. "Research consistently shows that children entering kindergarten from quality early learning settings are more prepared and ready to learn, which our leaders see first-hand during Pre-K Week."

During the week, countless state, business and community leaders will visit Pre-K centers to witness early learning in action. While there, each will read a favorite children's book to the classes. Since Pre-K Week began, nearly three out of every four state legislators and nearly half of Georgia's congressional delegation have participated in the event.

"We are grateful to see Georgia's state and local leaders celebrate this landmark year for Georgia's Pre-K Program," said Amy M. Jacobs, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), which administers Georgia's Pre-K Program and licenses and monitors the state's child care learning centers. "By participating in Pre-K Week activities, our leaders show parents and the public that they value quality early education and its impact on students, families and our state."

Joining Voices for Georgia's Children as gold level sponsors for Georgia Pre-K Week are Junior League of Atlanta and Reach Out and Read Georgia. Additional partners include Black Child Development Institute-Atlanta, Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy, Georgia Association for the Education of Young Children, GEEARS: Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students, Georgia Family Connection Partnership, Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, Georgia Public Library Service, Georgia Vision Project, Jumpstart for Young Children, multiple Junior Leagues throughout Georgia, Literacy for All, Metro Atlanta YMCA, Quality Care for Children and United Way of Greater Atlanta.

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#### About Voices for Georgia's Children

Established in 2003, Voices for Georgia's Children is a nonprofit child policy and advocacy organization that envisions a Georgia where all children will thrive because they are safe, healthy, educated, connected to family and community, and prepared to be productive and responsible citizens. Our mission is to promote equity, quality, and accessibility in systems created to serve children's needs. We are dedicated to advancing policies and implementation actions that ensure the best possible outcomes for children. For more information, visit [www.georgiavoices.org](http://www.georgiavoices.org).

#### 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.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov).

#### About Georgia Power

Georgia Power is the largest electric subsidiary of Southern Company (NYSE: SO), America's premier energy company. Value, Reliability, Customer Service and Stewardship are the cornerstones of the company's promise to 2.5 million customers in all but four of Georgia's 159 counties. Committed to delivering clean, safe, reliable and affordable energy at rates below the national average, Georgia Power maintains a diverse, innovative generation mix that includes nuclear, coal and natural gas, as well as renewables such as solar, hydroelectric and wind. Georgia Power focuses on delivering world-class service to its customers every day and the company is consistently recognized by J.D. Power and Associates as an industry leader in customer satisfaction. For more information, visit [www.GeorgiaPower.com](http://www.GeorgiaPower.com) and connect with the company on Facebook ([Facebook.com/GeorgiaPower](https://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaPower)), Twitter ([Twitter.com/GeorgiaPower](https://twitter.com/GeorgiaPower)) and Instagram ([Instagram.com/ga\\_power](https://www.instagram.com/ga_power)).

#### About Synovus Bank

Synovus Bank, a Georgia-chartered, FDIC-insured bank, provides commercial and retail banking, investment, and mortgage services together with its affiliates through 248 branches in Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Florida, and Tennessee. Synovus Bank was recognized as the "Most Reputable Bank" by *American Banker* and the Reputation Institute in 2017, and was named "[Best Regional Bank, Southeast](#)" by *MONEY Magazine* for 2016-17. Synovus Bank is on the web at [synovus.com](http://synovus.com), on Twitter [@synovus](https://twitter.com/synovus), and on LinkedIn at <http://linkedin.com/company/synovus>. Equal Housing Lender.