



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Valuable Resource Will Soon be Available to Georgia Families
Seeking Child Care**

ATLANTA, Ga., (October 27, 2011) – Georgia families looking for child care will have a new resource to help them find a child care center or family child care provider that offers quality care. Starting January 2012 Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, the state agency responsible for overseeing and supporting early care and education, will launch a voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. Child care centers and family child care providers will have an opportunity to volunteer to participate in a system that will rate the quality of care they provide.

Similar to rating systems for other service related industries like restaurants and hotels, Georgia's QRIS will award ratings of **good, very good, and excellent** to early care and education programs that meet defined program standards beyond Georgia's minimum licensing requirements.

According to Bobby Cagle, Commissioner of Bright from the Start, implementing a QRIS in Georgia has been a priority for Governor Nathan Deal since the day he took office. "The first time I met with Governor Deal, he clearly communicated that he wanted a quality rating and improvement system for Georgia's child care industry that would help families and child care professionals. I am pleased that this easily accessible system will serve thousands of families and providers statewide."

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In addition, the voluntary Quality Rated Program will help improve the *quality* of early care and education services offered to children. It will assist families in understanding what higher quality child care looks like; and will identify child care programs that provide higher quality.

Child Care programs that choose to participate in the state's Quality Rated and Improvement System will be eligible for free professional development, technical assistance, and financial incentive packages to support quality improvements. Starting in 2013, families will be able to verify if a child care provider is participating in the QRIS and to see the quality rating they have achieved by visiting the Bright from the Start website at www.dec.state.ga.us.

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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 federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

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.state.ga.us.