



Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby Cagle, MSW
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Reg Griffin
404-656-0239
reg.griffin@dec.al.ga.gov



Children across Georgia Have Access to Free Meals This Summer

The Summer Food Service Program is available to children throughout the state

Atlanta, Ga., (May 19, 2014) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) announces that free meals are available throughout the state for eligible children age 18 and under (and some eligible adults) as a part of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

The SFSP provides free meals in low-income areas during the summer months when students are out of school. Over 60% of Georgia’s school-aged children are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Through the SFSP, these children can receive free meals during the summer when they may not have daily access to well-balanced meals. The Summer Food Service Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Agricultural and administered in Georgia by DECAL.

Parents and children can find sites in their area where meals will be served by visiting DECAL’s website at <http://dec.al.ga.gov/Nutrition/Search.aspx>. Additionally, sites can be located by calling 1-855-550-SFSP (7377) or by texting “FOODGA” to 877-877 (standard messaging and data rates apply).

According to Falita Flowers, DECAL’s Nutrition Services Director, “When school is out, too many families across the state worry about how their children will receive nutritious meals on a daily basis. The SFSP helps fill that gap and contributes to the overall health and well-being of children.”

For more information about the SFSP and to locate an area site, visit the Bright from the Start website at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/Nutrition/Search.aspx>. Use the search function (zip code or county) to find a list of all local facilities open to the public and sponsors, addresses, maps, contact names, and phone numbers.

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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 the voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start 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.