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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DECAL to Cover Cost of Comprehensive Records Checks**

*Made Possible by Additional Federal Funding*

**ATLANTA, Ga., (October 1, 2018)** – Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) has announced that, beginning today and for the next two years, DECAL will pay the cost of the initial national fingerprint scan for eligible early care and education workers. New employees of the Georgia child care industry and employees whose current records check determination is about to expire will benefit from this initiative.

“Ensuring that all employees working in child care undergo and pass a thorough background check is critically important to providing a safe environment for Georgia’s youngest learners,” said Commissioner Jacobs. “Funding this initial national fingerprint scan will support Georgia’s child care professionals by alleviating the financial burden associated with the background checks, while also helping to maintain high safety standards throughout the child care industry.”

The initiative is made possible by an additional \$93 million in discretionary funding Georgia received this year from the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). DECAL is using the funds to: raise child care quality and increase access to high quality early childhood education, with an emphasis on infant-toddler care; expand inclusion services; increase workforce professional learning supports; and maintain high safety standards.

For more details on who qualifies for this benefit and on the procedure for registering for the benefit, visit the DECAL website at <http://dec.al.ga.gov/CCS/CriminalRecordsCheck.aspx>.

The following individuals must undergo a comprehensive background check and obtain a satisfactory determination from DECAL: employees working in licensed child care programs; employees working in programs that are exempt from licensing but that receive federal funds for subsidized child care; or individuals (age 17 or older) who reside in a family child care learning home.

### **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](http://www.dec.al.ga.gov).