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Task Force Releases Report on Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System

Report Calls for Stronger Family-School Partnerships around Assessment

ATLANTA, Ga., (March 8, 2017) – A 40-member task force has issued an important report on ways to identify children who may need help addressing developmental challenges or health needs early in their academic careers. The task force was convened by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and the Georgia Department of Public Health. The group focused on developmental screenings used to identify children who may need support to resolve developmental issues or health needs and on formative assessments used by teachers to gauge children’s progress and plan classroom instruction. The report recommends a Comprehensive Assessment System that will help early childhood educators make better informed decisions about instruction and programs for the children they serve.

“The task force looked at other states and engaged early education professionals and stakeholders to strengthen Georgia’s system of comprehensive assessment and screening to reduce duplication of services and to encourage collaboration among programs serving young children,” said Kristin Bernhard, DECAL’s Deputy Commissioner for System Reform. “Georgia’s goal is to ensure a more unified statewide system of assessment for to the birth to eight population.”

The Georgia Comprehensive Assessment System Task Force, formed in May 2014, was composed of representatives from colleges and universities, school systems, early childhood programs, the medical community, and other state agencies.

Released this week, the report recommends supporting the use of research-based assessment tools and practices; facilitating inclusion and engagement of families in assessment activities; streamlining information sharing; and supporting the availability of high quality professional development for early childhood professionals. The work of the task force was informed by a web-based survey of early childhood educators.

The full report can be downloaded from DECAL's website at www.decal.ga.gov.

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.