



Nathan Deal
Governor

Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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



**State Awards Family Engagement Grants to
Five Georgia Early Care and Education Organizations**

Grants Provide Resources to Support Families of Georgia's Youngest Learners

ATLANTA, Ga., (February 15, 2016) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) announced today that it will award Family Engagement Opportunity Grants to five early childhood care and education organizations across Georgia. The purpose of the grants, which total over \$60,000 from the federally funded Early Learning Challenge, is to promote, encourage, and support community and family awareness and advocacy and to provide families access to free resources related to parent leadership and child development.

Grant recipients include Prevent Child Abuse Athens, Inc. in Clarke County; Sandy's Sandbox in Bibb County; Georgia Hope in Gilmer County; Emmaus House in Fulton County; and Moultrie YMCA in Colquitt County. To be eligible, applicants had to be located in one of Georgia's Early Education Empowerment Zones (E3Zs) or Metro Atlanta. The E3Zs are regions of the state that work with DECAL and other state agencies to pilot early education system reform initiatives and partnerships that support better outcomes for young children. Eligible applicants could apply for a maximum of \$15,000 for a one-year program or project.

“An effective partnership among families, communities, and educators helps lay a solid foundation for children’s success in school,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “We congratulate these organizations on receiving family engagement grants and wish them well as they equip their communities to partner with families and create a better future for our youngest learners.”

Prevent Child Abuse Athens will use grant funds to involve parents in healthy cooking sessions, first aid and CPR training, and a literacy/back-to-school event. Sandy’s Sandbox requested funding to inform parents and families about healthy childhood development and to teach useful skills to reinforce education at home. Georgia Hope will receive funds to offer two consecutive 14-week parent skills training series to high-risk families in Gilmer County. Emmaus House will use funding to offer spring and fall training on stress management skills for parents. The Moultrie YMCA will use this grant opportunity to offer programs on developmental milestones for preschoolers, to develop literacy in young children, and to promote overall wellness for families.

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.