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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Georgia Celebrates Inclusive Early Learning Week

Child Care Providers Encouraged to Help Celebrate February 11-15, 2019

ATLANTA, Ga., (January 15, 2019) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) has designated February 11-15, 2019, as Inclusive Early Learning Week in Georgia. The purpose of this special week is to increase the public’s awareness of and advocacy for inclusion, to celebrate child care programs’ successes in creating inclusive classrooms, and to promote inclusive practices in all early learning environments in Georgia.

Early childhood inclusion means that every infant and young child and his or her family has the right...regardless of ability...to participate in activities as full members of families, classrooms, communities, and society (NAEYC/DEC, 2009). Inclusive classrooms help ensure that children with disabilities and without disabilities develop a sense of belonging and membership, form positive social relationships and friendships, and experience learning to reach their full potential.

“During this exciting week we will partner with child care providers to celebrate, inform, and reflect on serving children with and without disabilities as we work to ensure that all of Georgia’s children benefit from high quality learning experiences.” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs.

As part of the celebration, Commissioner Jacobs, DECAL's official mascot, CALi, and many special guests will visit child care programs across the state to read books to children that celebrate diversity and promote friendship.

During Inclusive Early Learning Week, Georgia child care programs will receive an electronic Provider Celebration Kit to help providers engage all children, staff, and families in ways that are inclusive and diverse. The kit will be e-mailed to child care providers and will be posted at www.decals.ga.gov.

During the week providers will be encouraged to interact with DECAL through social media and participate in contests to win prizes. Providers can post pictures of their program celebrating Inclusive Early Learning Week on DECAL's social media pages (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) using the hashtag #LoveInclusion2019 to show others how they are celebrating. DECAL will soon announce details about the week's Friendship Art and Reading contests.

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.decals.ga.gov.