



Nathan Deal
Governor

Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Reg Griffin

404-656-0239

reg.griffin@decals.ga.gov



**State Agencies Award Grants to
Fifty Infant and Toddler Classrooms across the State**

***Grants Support Language and Literacy Instruction for
Children in the Most Critical Years of Life***

ATLANTA, GA (August 2, 2017) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) are awarding approximately \$2 million in Early Language and Literacy Classroom Grants to 50 infant and toddler classrooms across the state. “These state-funded grants will help implement strong language and literacy instruction for children in the earliest, and most critical, years of life,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs.

“Thanks to Governor Deal and the Georgia General Assembly, for the first time the state has committed significant funds targeting infants and toddlers,” Jacobs explained. “This effort advances the Governor’s goal that every child in Georgia reads on grade level by the end of third grade. Grant funding will provide infant and toddler teachers with coaching and professional development on building early literacy skills.”

“GOSA is very excited to fund this grant opportunity because we know rapid brain development, that specifically impacts language and higher cognitive functioning, takes place during the first few years of a child’s life,” said GOSA Executive Director Martha Ann Todd. “Supporting infant and toddler teachers as they work to provide language-rich interactions, beginning at birth, will have tremendous positive impact on a child’s ability to read well by the end of third grade.”

The grants will foster positive and responsive relationships between teachers and children and will help develop critical early language and literacy skills. Teachers and directors will increase knowledge and skills in developing and maintaining a social, emotional, and intellectual climate that supports child-initiated and child-pursued learning and in building and sustaining positive relationships among adults and children.

“We are excited about this opportunity to support infant and toddler teachers and administrators in implementing strong language and literacy practices in their classrooms,” said Jennie Couture, DECAL’s Director of Practice and Support Services.

Early Language and Literacy Classroom Grants totaling \$2 Million were awarded to the following programs through a competitive proposal process: The Family Tree Child Development Center in Dougherty County; Especially for Kids Christian Academy in Clayton County; The Phoenix School in DeKalb County; Arrow Christian Academy at College Park in Clayton County; Friendship Learning Center in Hall County; Mother's Love Child Care Center in Tift County; Druid Hills Child Development Center in Fulton County; Oglethorpe Children's Academy in Oglethorpe County; Stepping Stones Educational Therapy Center in Spalding County; Child's World Comprehensive Learning Center Inc. #1 in Warren County; Kids R Kids #28 in Fulton County; Kidzz First Child Development Center in DeKalb County; Discovery Point 61 in Rockdale County; All About Kid's in Rockdale County; Jeff Davis Learning Center in Jeff Davis County.

About the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA)

As the state's P-20 education agency, the Governor's Office of Student Achievement strives to increase student achievement, school completion, and life opportunities for all Georgia students. The agency provides meaningful education information to stakeholders across Georgia. It focuses on all levels of education, from prekindergarten centers to higher education institutions. Parents, educators, business leaders, and community activists alike are able to use this information to help support and improve education statewide to build a more educated Georgia. While GOSA's direct affiliation remains with the Governor's Office, it also works closely with all of Georgia's education agencies, including the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), the University System of Georgia (USG), the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC), and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC). For more information about the agency and its major areas of work, go to gosa.georgia.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.