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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DECAL Training Child Care Staff on
Handling Challenging Behaviors**

***Research Based Model Designed to Improve Classroom Climate by Promoting Social
Competence and Addressing Challenging Behavior in Young Children***

ATLANTA, Ga., (July 21, 2015) – Early childhood educators report that handling challenging behavior in their classrooms is a major concern. To address that concern, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is spearheading an initiative to provide training in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to early childhood educators, families, and others.

Georgia is working with the national Pyramid Model Consortium on the implementation of a research-based model to improve classroom climate in Georgia’s early childhood settings by promoting social competence and addressing challenging behavior in young children. The model is called the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children.

“The Pyramid Model is a tiered framework of evidence-based practices that promotes the social emotional development of all young children with additional supports for children and families with more complex needs,” said Susan Adams, Assistant Commissioner for Georgia’s Pre-K Program and Instructional Supports. “Based on evaluation data over the last eight years, the Pyramid Model is a sound and effective framework for early care and education systems.”

A state leadership team composed of representatives from early childhood programs, the Metro Regional Education Service Agency (RESA), Georgia's Pre-K Program, Georgia Department of Education, Babies Can't Wait, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, and other partners has been formed to develop a multi-year plan to guide the work. In the first year this team will support implementation of the Pyramid Model in early childhood programs in Cordele, Brunswick, Lawrenceville, Marietta, and Richmond Hill. The leadership team will identify additional implementation sites and develop a plan for sustainability and scale-up.

“We are excited to provide Georgia's early childhood professionals with research-based practices they can use to promote strong social emotional skills and decrease challenging behavior in their classrooms,” said Jennie Couture, DECAL's Director of Practice and Support Services.

“Our teachers have been asking for a stronger foundation in understanding social, emotional, and behavior needs of the children who enter our program,” said Monica Warren, Director of Early Learning for Crisp County Pre-K. “The Pyramid Model will lay a foundation for all of our staff and ensure we are better able to meet the needs of every child who enrolls in our program.”

Julie Barnett, Pre-K Project Director for the Knowledge Learning Corporation, added, “The Pyramid Model training has increased our teacher's confidence in dealing with challenging behaviors and given them a fresh perspective on communicating challenges with families. The framework is a great resource to increase team work and school spirit as well. With the pyramid model, the teacher is no longer alone in the journey.”

DECAL staff is managing the project and serving as external coaches to the demonstration sites. All staff in each site will receive high quality professional development, training, and individualized technical assistance. Additionally, the participating programs have identified site leadership teams that will meet monthly to review data and guide implementation.

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.

PBIS Implementation Sites:

Crisp County Pre-K
802 East 24th Avenue
Cordele, Georgia 31010

Glynn County Head Start
1 Community Action Drive
Brunswick, Georgia 31520

KinderCare Learning Center #1544
1720 Marathon Boulevard
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30043

KinderCare Learning Center #1690
2615 Bells Ferry Road
Marietta, Georgia 30066

Richmond Hill Montessori Preschool
2933 Highway 17
Richmond Hill, Georgia 31324