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DECAL Announces Family Engagement Opportunity Grants

Grant Opportunity Provides Resources that will Equip Communities to Partner with Families to Create a Better Future for our Youngest Learners

ATLANTA, Ga., (December 2, 2015) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) announced today that the application period for the Family Engagement Opportunity Grants is now open. The purpose of these grants is to provide educational opportunities that promote, encourage, and support community awareness and advocacy and to provide access to free, ongoing resources related to parent leadership and child development. Applicants can apply for a maximum of \$15,000 for a one-year program or project.

To qualify for a grant, legally operating early childhood care and education organizations must be located in designated areas of the state and must commit to providing quality family engagement programs, activities, and services to families with children ages birth to eight years old. Funding for these grants comes from the federal Early Learning Challenge grant.

“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. “This grant opportunity provides resources that will equip communities to partner with families to create a better future for our youngest learners.”

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Successful grant applications will propose family engagement programs/projects that develop quality resources to be offered to families at least **once a month** free of charge. Programs or projects **must** fit in one or more of the following focus areas:

- **Advocacy:** Empower parents and families as child advocates and leaders
- **Community Connection:** Help families become well-connected to community resources and supports
- **Education:** Strengthen families as child’s primary educators and nurturers and increase families’ knowledge of child development
- **Health & Safety:** Support families as safe, healthy, and self-sufficient caregivers

Eligible applicants must also be located in one of the Early Education Empowerment Zones (E3Z) or in certain Metro Atlanta counties: Bibb, Brooks, Catoosa, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Colquitt, Cook, DeKalb, Douglas, Echols, Fayette, Fulton (including the City of Atlanta), Gilmer, Gordon, Gwinnett, Henry, Lowndes, Murray, Rockdale, or Whitfield.

The full requirements, application, and submission instructions for this competitive grant opportunity are posted at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/QualityInitiatives/Grants.aspx>. Applications are due January 22, 2016 by 5:00 PM. Contact Carolyn Morkeh at Carolyn.Morkeh@decal.ga.gov with questions regarding the Family Engagement Opportunity Grants.

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.