



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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Georgia's Innovative Summer Transition Program Receives Positive Reviews from Parents and Teachers

Programs target Rising Kindergarten and Rising Pre-K students needing additional support

ATLANTA, Ga., (March 24, 2015) – According to a recent evaluation, Georgia's Summer Transition Programs for rising Pre-K and rising Kindergarten students are providing positive experiences for children and their families. The report by national experts showed high scores for both programs in emotional support and classroom organization using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

Both of the six-week programs target children in low-income families eligible for subsidized child care. In addition, the rising Pre-K program focuses on children from families where Spanish is the home language. The evaluation, conducted during the summer of 2014, was commissioned by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL).

Conducted by scientists at the FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (FPG), the study observed teacher-child interactions in 62 rising kindergarten classrooms and 20 rising Pre-K classrooms. In both transition programs, teachers, transition coaches, and parents completed questionnaires.

Georgia's Summer Transition Program Receives Positive Reviews from Parents and Teachers – Page 2

Key findings and implications of the study included:

- In both programs, scores measuring key teacher-child interaction concepts were high.
- Both Spanish and English were used regularly in the rising Pre-K classrooms.
- Parents were generally pleased with both programs and their child's experiences.

“We have consistently seen gains in children's skills over the past five years of the Rising Kindergarten Program,” said Susan Adams, Assistant Commissioner for Georgia's Pre-K Program and Instructional Supports. “For a six-week program to demonstrate even moderate gains is somewhat unexpected and implies a successful implementation.”

Adams said past research shows that learning opportunities for dual-language learners are maximized when both languages are used in the classroom. In this study, English and Spanish were used for explicit instruction and behavior management in the Rising Pre-K Program. The majority of classrooms had books in English and Spanish.

“Georgia's Summer Transition Programs provide important opportunities for young learners to build their skills and confidence before moving into Pre-K and Kindergarten,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “We appreciate the partnerships with our early care and education providers and teachers who make these valuable classes available over the summer months.”

To view highlights from the 2014 study and/or the full report, visit the DECAL website at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/SummerTransitionProgram.aspx>.

This summer, DECAL will offer 80 Summer Transition Classes for rising Kindergarten students and 30 classes for rising Pre-K students. Specific locations will be announced in late April.

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.