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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bright from the Start offering Pre-K Summer Transition Program

*Program targets rising kindergarten students who did not attend
Pre-K or need additional support*

ATLANTA, Ga., (March 7, 2016) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) will offer a six-week Summer Transition Program (STP) for rising kindergartners who did not attend Georgia’s Pre-K or Head Start, or attended but need additional support before entering kindergarten next fall. The program, targeting children whose families are eligible for subsidized child care through Georgia’s Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS), will be offered in approximately 120 classrooms across the state.

“The goal of Georgia’s Pre-K Program is to prepare four year olds to successfully enter kindergarten, but some students either miss that opportunity or need additional help. The Summer Transition Program was created to support those students,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “Dedicated Pre-K teachers and providers make this program successful, and we appreciate their willingness to participate again this summer.”

“The Summer Transition Program is a great opportunity for these young students to build their skills and confidence before moving into kindergarten,” added Susan Adams, Assistant Commissioner for Georgia’s Pre-K Program and Instructional Supports. Adams said the intensive, high quality instructional program will begin in early June.

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To be eligible to provide summer transition services, a program must be a current Georgia's Pre-K provider in good standing with Pre-K and in compliance with Child and Parent Services (CAPS), Child Care Licensing, and Nutrition Services, as applicable.

Applications will be made available statewide, however, priority will be given in the following targeted counties: Baker, Ben Hill, Bibb, Brooks, Burke, Catoosa, Chatham, Clarke, Clay, Clayton, Colquitt, Cook, DeKalb, Dooly, Dougherty, Echols, Emanuel, Fannin, Franklin, Fulton, Gilmer, Gordon, Hancock, Hart, Jefferson, Jenkins, Lamar, Lowndes, Macon, Marion, McDuffie, Montgomery, Murray, Muscogee, Peach, Quitman, Randolph, Richmond, Screven, Seminole, Spalding, Sumter, Talbot, Taliaferro, Taylor, Telfair, Terrell, Turner, Twiggs, Upson, Warren and Whitfield.

Applications will be available to providers beginning today with the deadline to submit completed applications on **March 24, 2016**. Programs are chosen to participate through a competitive application process. Locations chosen to provide the STP will be announced in late April. After classes are awarded, a list of programs will be posted to www.decal.ga.gov and parents can register their children directly with the programs.

Summer 2016 will be the seventh year DECAL has offered the STP. The program has been evaluated by independent researchers with results indicating strong impacts for the children served— especially in crucial language and literacy skills.

For more information about the Summer Transition Program, visit the DECAL website at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/Prek/SummerTransitionProgram.aspx>. You can also email questions about the program to summerschool@decal.ga.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.

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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.