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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Georgia Awarded \$2.9M Grant for Preschool Development for  
Children from Birth to Age Five**

**ATLANTA, GA (January 7, 2019)** – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) announced today that Georgia has been awarded a \$2.9 million Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education. The funds will be used to help ensure that Georgia’s children from birth to age five have access to high quality early childhood care and education (ECCE).

DECAL will serve as the lead state agency in executing the activities funded by the grant. While ultimately benefiting all children and families in the state, these activities will focus on the needs of children and families from vulnerable and underserved populations, such as those living in poverty, experiencing homelessness, living in foster care, living in rural areas, and living with disabilities.

Using grant funds, DECAL will conduct a statewide ECCE needs assessment; develop a statewide strategic plan to strengthen the state’s ECCE system; create resources to inform families about available programs and services; develop groups and opportunities for early childhood educators to share best practices; and create supports for the state’s dual language learners and their families.

“We are honored and excited to receive this grant because of the opportunity it provides to coordinate funding streams, streamline service delivery, and strengthen partnerships throughout Georgia’s birth-to-five system,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “Additionally, the comprehensive plan that results from this work will strengthen alignment, integration, and coordination throughout the system to improve experiences for all of Georgia’s youngest learners and their families.”

The initial grant award covers one year. Later this year, the states that received initial grants will be eligible to compete for additional funding of up to \$45 million over three years.

### **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](http://www.decal.ga.gov).