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**DECAL and Quality Rated Launch Applications for
Inaugural Quality Rated Advisory Committee**

*Committee Will Guide and Foster Growth for
Georgia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)*

ATLANTA, Ga., (July 29, 2015) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) released applications today for its Quality Rated Advisory Committee to guide and foster growth for Georgia's Quality Rated program.

Quality Rated is Georgia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for eligible child care programs in the state. Similar to rating systems for other industries like restaurants and hotels, Quality Rated assigns a rating (one star, two star, or three star) to child care programs that meet certain quality standards over and above the state licensing requirements for health and safety. Currently, 670 child care programs in Georgia (12.8% of eligible child care programs) are Quality Rated.

"We are excited to open applications for the inaugural Quality Rated Advisory Committee," said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. "We are looking for a cross-section of early care and education professionals whose support will be critical in helping Georgia achieve its goal of 100% of eligible child care providers participating in Quality Rated by the end of 2017."

Quality Rated child care providers who have received their quality rating within the past year; child care providers that are participating (in the process of becoming Quality Rated); and early childhood education stakeholders are eligible and encouraged to apply to serve on the Quality Rated Advisory Committee. Applications for the one-year term on the committee are due on August 18, 2015. Applicants selected to serve will be notified by August 26, 2015.

For more information about the Quality Rated Advisory Committee and to access the application, visit www.bit.ly/QualityRatedAC.

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.