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Georgia Agencies Award over \$400k in Grants to Local Early Child Care and Education Programs

Fourth Round of Child Care Expansion Grants will serve infants and toddlers in seven Early Education Empowerment Zones

ATLANTA, GA (December 5, 2016) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), in partnership with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), has awarded Child Care Expansion Grants to seven organizations in Georgia’s Early Education Empowerment Zones (E3Zs). These federally-funded incentive packages will help expand or open child care programs designed to serve infants and toddlers in E3Z counties. Located in regions with large populations of under-served children, these counties work with DECAL, DCA and other state agencies to implement early education initiatives and develop partnerships that support better outcomes for these vulnerable children.

In this round of funding, grants totaling \$409,879 in economic development incentives were awarded to the following: Brighter Tomorrow’s Child Development Center in Gordon County; Candy Cane Learning Center in Cook County; Joshua House in Bibb County; Kiddie Carousel in Whitfield County; Kreative Kidz Academy in Lowndes County; Sandy’s Sandbox Childcare & Learning Center in Bibb County; and Tickle Me Pink Daycare & Learning Center in Brooks County.

“Working together with these highly-rated child care programs, we can expand and serve more infants and toddlers in their communities,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “These grants will encourage creative development and promote early education for children, including those with special needs, as well as create new jobs and support working families.”

Brighter Tomorrow’s Child Development Center will use its \$43,707 grant to add three staff members and serve 12 additional children. Candy Cane Learning Center will use \$78,085 for a new site that will serve 40 children and employ five additional staff members. Joshua House will receive \$55,000 in grant funding to help them relocate and serve 13 additional children. Kiddie Carousel will receive \$34,441 to expand their existing program and serve 24 new children. Kreative Kidz Academy will receive \$50,000 in grant funding for new equipment. Sandy’s Sandbox Childcare and Learning Center will receive \$51,247 to open a new location that will serve 44 children and employ 10 additional staff members. Tickle Me Pink Daycare & Learning Center will use \$97,399 to open a new site that will serve 65 new children and employ six additional staff members.

Together, DCA and DECAL have awarded four rounds of Child Care Expansion Grants, totaling more than \$1 million. Recipients of these grants must be “Quality Rated” child care providers, in one of Georgia’s E3Z counties. Quality Rated is Georgia’s system to assess, improve, and communicate the quality of care a program provides. Only child care providers who have chosen to participate in Quality Rated; who have completed the rigorous process to earn a rating; and have been awarded a one, two, or three star rating are eligible for an expansion grant. Families looking for child care can learn more about the importance of selecting a Quality Rated child care program at www.qualityrated.org and can search for Quality Rated child care programs on the DECAL website at www.decals.ga.gov.

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About the E3Z Child Care Expansion Grant

This grant program is funded by the federal Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant that Georgia was awarded in 2013. The intent of the expansion grants is to ensure that infants and toddlers in under-served areas receive care based on early learning best practices and involvement to prepare them for Pre-K and beyond. DCA’s and DECAL’s goal is to significantly expand access to high quality early learning and development programs within Georgia’s four Early Education Empowerment Zones through the distribution of these 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.

About the Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) partners with communities to create a climate of success for Georgia's families and businesses through community and economic development, local government assistance, and safe and affordable housing. Using state and federal resources, DCA helps communities spur private job creation, implement planning, develop downtowns, generate affordable housing solutions, and promote volunteerism. DCA also helps qualified low- and moderate-income Georgians buy homes, rent housing, and prevent foreclosure and homelessness. For more information, visit www.dca.ga.gov.