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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Children across Georgia Have Access to Free Meals This Summer**

*The Summer Food Service Program is available to children throughout the state*

**Atlanta, Ga., (June 1, 2016)** - Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) announces that free meals are available for children 18 and under (and some eligible adults) throughout the state through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The SFSP, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is administered in Georgia by DECAL.

Over one million of Georgia's school-aged children are eligible for free or reduced lunch when school is in session. The SFSP provides free meals in low-income areas during the summer months when students are out of school and may not have access to well-balanced meals.

Nutrition Services Director, Falita Flowers, explained the importance of the Summer Food Service Program. "Maintaining a healthy, well-balanced diet is critical to children's health, their success in the coming school year, and their overall well-being. The SFSP provides families a resource to fill the gap during the summer when children are out of school and do not have access to nutritious meals."

For more information about the SFSP and to locate a site where children can access nutritious, free meals, visit the DECAL website at <http://www.decalf.ga.gov/Nutrition/Search.aspx>. Use the search function (zip code or county) to find a list of local facilities open to the public and sponsors, addresses, maps, contact names, and phone numbers. Additionally, sites can be located by calling 1-855-550-SFSP (7377) or by texting "FOODGA" to 877-877 (standard messaging and data rates apply).

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- (1) mail:  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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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 federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

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).