



Nathan Deal
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United Way of Greater Atlanta grants \$650,000 to Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning

*Grant supported by the Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation
will fund efforts of Quality Rated System*

ATLANTA, Ga., (May 21, 2018) - Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) announced today that the United Way of Greater Atlanta (UWGA) and the Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation granted \$650,000 to the new Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning. The grant will support Quality Rated, Georgia's rating system that helps parents and families find high-quality child care, preschool, and Georgia's Pre-K Program classes in their area.

“This is the first major donation received by our new foundation and we are so grateful for the help of public-private partnerships like United Way and the Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation who have supported Georgia's quality rating and improvement system from the very beginning,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “We believe investing in our youngest learners is critical to the long-term economic growth and potential of our state. That is one reason we have looked for ways to provide support to our child care programs all across the state.”

Quality Rated assesses whether child care programs apply research-based best practices, and are then awarded a one, two or three star rating. Whether they have one, two, or three stars, all programs that participate in Quality Rated are demonstrating a commitment to improve early care and education by going above and beyond Georgia's licensing standards. Through this program, parents and caregivers have access to an independent, trustworthy resource to help them find quality care, preschool, and Pre-K programs.

“The United Way of Greater Atlanta and Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation are tremendous partners of DECAL and the young learners and their families of whom we serve,” said Georgia Foundation of Early Care and Learning Executive Director Carrie Ashbee. “This generous grant will provide greater access to high quality care for their children using the Quality Rated system.” Ashbee said the grant will provide \$450,000 in mini-grants for child care programs just beginning the Quality Rated process. In addition, \$200,000 will purchase signage for the centers indicating Quality Rated programs, similar to signage for Georgia's Pre-K Program.

The grant was awarded to the Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning and will be administered by DECAL for a one-year period beginning July 1, 2018.

Commissioner Jacobs said the foundation allows DECAL to expand its support of and recognition of child care programs and early childhood educators. The funding will also allow the department to help child care programs and/or early learning communities during times of natural disaster when other funding streams may not be available.

About Georgia Foundation of Early Care and Learning

Formed in 2017 by Governor Nathan Deal and the Georgia General Assembly, the Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that aims to strategically enhance children's early education experience to promote their academic, social-emotional and physical development in partnership with families, communities, the early care and education industry and stakeholders.

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.state.ga.us.