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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DECAL joins Zoo Atlanta for Educator Appreciation Day

Educators receive FREE admission and \$2 OFF General Admission for accompanying guests

ATLANTA, Ga., (August 3, 2015) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is partnering again this year with Zoo Atlanta as they host Educator Appreciation Day on **Saturday, August 29, 2015**, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Early care and education professionals throughout the state are encouraged to bring their guests to the zoo for a day of fun-filled activities. Educator Appreciation Day is presented by PNC Bank and sponsored by Kaiser Permanente and Macy's.

Educators will receive free admission and \$2 off general admission for each of their guests. Educator identification, such as an employee photo ID; a pay stub or name badge with school name or county and a state-issued photo ID; or a homeschool declaration of intent and a state-issued photo ID, is required.

Educators are encouraged to pre-register to attend at

<http://shop.zooatlanta.org/webstore/shop/ViewItems.aspx?&CG=105&C=55>.

“Educator Appreciation Day provides a great opportunity for educators and their guests from across the state to experience Zoo Atlanta,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “In addition to enjoying one of Georgia’s most interesting and extensive nature resources, educators can access the Educator Lounge at the Ford Tent to personally encounter exotic animals and to talk with the Zoo’s education staff.”

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“Education is a central aspect of our mission at Zoo Atlanta, and we rely on our fellow Georgia educators not only to help us introduce hands-on concepts of wildlife, conservation and ecology to the children of our state but also to join us in making sure Georgia students excel in the sciences,” said Raymond B. King, President and CEO of Zoo Atlanta. “Educator Appreciation Day is just one of the ways we show educators how much they’re valued and appreciated. We’re proud to partner with DECAL on supporting excellence inside and outside the classroom.”

In addition, guests will receive a coupon for 10 percent off purchases in the gift shop and food outlets (coupon valid on August 29 only). For more information on Zoo Atlanta’s Educator Appreciation Day, call 404.624.WILD or e-mail education@zooatlanta.org.

About Zoo Atlanta

Viewed as one of the finest zoological institutions in the U.S. and a proud accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Zoo Atlanta has a mission to inspire value and preservation of wildlife through a unique mix of education and outdoor family experiences. From well-known wildlife to critically endangered species on the brink of extinction, the Zoo offers memorable close encounters with nearly 1,400 animals from around the world. The Zoo’s newest destination, Scaly Slimy Spectacular: The Amphibian and Reptile Experience, opened in April 2015.

Zoo collection highlights include Mei Lun and Mei Huan, the only giant panda twins in the U.S.; North America’s largest zoological collections of gorillas and orangutans; and a global center of excellence for the care and study of reptiles and amphibians. Up-close-and-personal animal experiences include behind-the-scenes Wild Encounters with African elephants, giant pandas, lemurs and Aldabra giant tortoises. Zoo Atlanta is open daily with the exceptions of Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Keeper talks, interactive wildlife shows, education programs and special events run year-round. For more information, visit zooatlanta.org or call 404.624.WILD.

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.

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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.