

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning A Report to Our Citizens, State Fiscal Year 2013



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MISSION

We are committed to nurturing Georgia's youngest children, keeping them safe and healthy, and to enriching their lives.



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

A MESSAGE FROM COMMISSIONER BOBBY CAGLE



As Commissioner for Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), it is my honor to share with you this *Annual Report to Our Citizens* for State Fiscal Year 2013. DECAL is one of only three state agencies in the nation dedicated exclusively to the health, safety, and quality education of our youngest learners, birth to 5 years old.

FY2013 was a very productive year for our agency. This Annual Report is designed to highlight our programs and services, accomplishments, and financial performance. But I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight a few of these accomplishments as they relate to our Strategic Themes of Health and Safety, Quality, and Organizational Excellence:

Health and Safety

The headline here is our successful efforts in working with Governor Nathan Deal and the State Legislature to create a new law requiring all employees of Georgia’s child care programs to undergo a National Fingerprint-based Background Check. This law also applies to DECAL’s more than 250 employees and all temporary employees and contractors working on behalf of our agency in child care facilities. I personally see this as the most significant legislation protecting the safety of Georgia’s children in more than 20 years. My heartfelt appreciation to Governor Deal, the Legislature, and our providers, parents, and child care advocates.

Quality

Some 84,000 four year olds began their educational journeys through Georgia’s Pre-K Program, returning to a full 180-day instructional calendar. In this same year, we issued the first phase of a Pre-K Longitudinal Study, requested by the State Legislature, supporting the benefits of Georgia’s Pre-K Program in language, math, and behavioral skills. The second year of

the study utilized a unique sampling technique to measure the impact for a group of children who attended the program against a similar group of children who did not attend. The third year will sample a group of children who will be followed to third grade.

In FY2013, we formally launched a parent awareness campaign for Quality Rated, Georgia’s voluntary system to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. We also launched www.gelds.decal.gov supporting Georgia’s Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), standards developed by Georgians for Georgians.

Organizational Excellence

In FY2013, DECAL created an unprecedented 45-member Task Force, facilitate by a national expert, to review operations, policies, and procedures of Georgia’s Child and Parent Services (CAPS) Program. We also created a new Office of Audits and Compliance to ensure strong stewardship and accountability not only with CAPS, but all agency funds.

As you review the information contained in this report, I hope you will join me in thanking our DECAL Board and the more than 250 DECAL employees who make this work possible. If you should have any questions, please contact me at bobby.cagle@decal.ga.gov.

Thank you for your interest in DECAL and Georgia’s youngest learners.



Bobby D. Cagle, MSW
Commissioner



OUR FOCUS: EARLY CARE & LEARNING

In 2004, Georgia’s leaders made a significant investment in the state’s most valuable commodity; its’ children. That year, the Georgia General Assembly created Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) by merging several state entities that served young children and their families, including the Office of School Readiness, units from the Department of Education, the Department of Human Resources, and the Georgia Child Care Council. This new department was one of the first in the nation that was solely dedicated to meeting both the early childhood education and the child care needs of the state’s youngest citizens.

Early education is valuable and important because a child’s most significant brain development occurs in the first five years, forming the basis for future learning. DECAL’s goal is to lay a solid foundation on which the academic success of Georgia’s future leaders and workforce can be built. Investing in Georgia’s children and families will pay in dividends for decades to come; through the state’s long-term economic growth, and by producing citizens equipped to deal with the challenges of the 21st century.



Georgia’s Pre-K Program increases school success in later years.

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

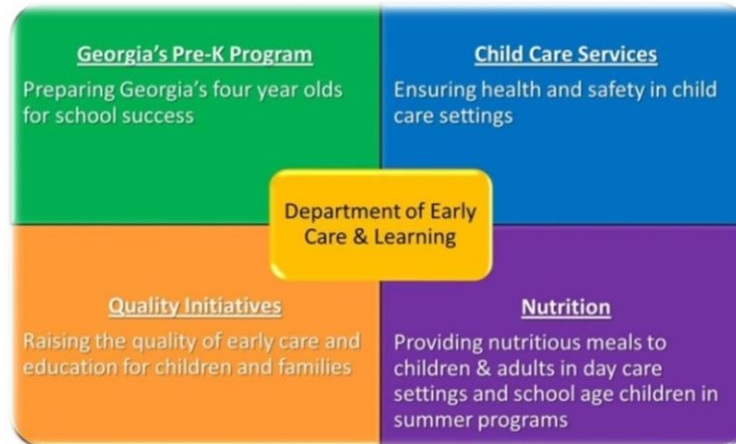
“We believe investing in our youngest learners is critical to the long-term economic growth and potential of Georgia.”

OUR PROGRAMS & SERVICES

DECAL leads the state's efforts to serve children and families by administering services in the following four main areas:



Our nationally recognized [Georgia's Pre-K Program](#) is a lottery-funded educational program that helps prepare four-year-olds for success in school. [Child Care Services](#) licenses and monitors child care programs to ensure that they provide safe, healthy, and nurturing environments. The [Quality Initiatives Division](#) partners with internal and external resources to improve the quality of early care and education for children birth to school-age, and [Nutrition Services](#) provides nutritious meals for children and adults.



DECAL oversees a wide range of responsibilities focused primarily on children ages birth to school age and their families. DECAL's responsibilities include the following:

- Administering the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program
- Licensing and monitoring center-based and home-based child care facilities
- Overseeing the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program and the Summer Food Service Program to provide nutritious meals to Georgians
- Housing the Head Start State Collaboration Office
- Administering the federal Child Care and Development Fund and state matching funds to increase the affordability and quality of early care and education by providing subsidized child care and other quality initiatives
- Administering Quality Rated: A systemic approach to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early education and school-age care programs
- Funding All Georgia Kids to provide free information and referrals for families seeking quality early care and education
- Providing technical assistance and professional development to early childhood educators and programs through the child care resource and referral agencies
- Offering support to families and early care and education programs who care for children with special needs
- Collaborating with Head Start, Family Connection Partnership, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Public Health, and Smart Start Georgia to blend federal, state and private dollars to enhance early care and education

PERFORMANCE MEASURES



DECAL Performance Measures	FY2010 Actual	FY2011 Actual	FY2012 Actual	FY2013 Actual
Child Care Services (Increase Compliance)				
Percentage of child care learning centers, group day care homes, and family day care homes that are compliant with licensing rules	81%	88%	92%	88%*
Number of licensing, monitoring, technical assistance, and complaint investigation visits to child care learning centers, group day care homes, and family day care homes each fiscal year to increase compliance and raise quality	14,667	19,019	13,045	11,800**
Pre-K (Increase Access and Quality Learning)				
Number of four year olds enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program	81,068	82,608	82,868	81,863
Percentage of classrooms implementing the Work Sampling System online to monitor and report student progress	9.6%	27%	53.3%	82.8%
Quality Initiatives (Improve Program Quality & Professional Development)				
Number and percentage of licensed, compliant early care and education programs participating in the quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) to improve quality	n/a	n/a	12%	17%
Percentage of INCENTIVES Program participants who increased their education level from the initial credential/degree earned for which an INCENTIVES payment was awarded	10%	9.26%	10.2%	10.7%
Nutrition (Increase Access and Meals)				
Number of meals served per year by providers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)	86,001,243	85,200,000	80,667,591	82,819,267
Number of feeding sites per fiscal year for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), which increased as a result of focused outreach and training efforts	5,956	6,310	6,280	6,036

*Data reflects changes in compliance measurements.

**Data reflects fewer child care programs now operating in Georgia.

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

"We are a transparent, timely and reliable resource to those connected to the care, safety and education of our youngest children."

OUR FINANCES

Services to citizens are provided through four major programs that form the structure of our financial accounting. Programs operate within their appropriated budgets and identified funding sources. Budgeted amounts must be adequate to provide legal authorization to spend funds and revenues must be sufficiently available to cover allowable expenses charged to each funding source. Excess state funds are returned to the state treasury at year end and excess federal funds are carried forward according to the requirements of each unique federal grant.

Two significant financial changes occurred in state fiscal year 2013 increasing the overall agency budget by 48%.

First was the transfer of the Child and Parent Services (CAPS) program to Bright from the Start from the Department of Human Services (DHS). This program provides funding to subsidize the cost for child care allowing qualified parents to maintain employment. The CAPS program is the major component of the federal multiyear Child Care Development Funds (CCDF) grant.

Second, state lottery funds were increased for the Georgia Pre-K program. Ten days were restored to the Pre-K schedule bringing the total to 170 days of instruction. Class sizes remain at 22 students per class.

Additionally 2013 marked the end of two federal grants: (1) the federal Title 1, Part B, Subpart 3 Even Start Family Literacy program of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) ended with final expenses recorded as of the end of the Federal fiscal year, September 30, 2012; (2) the federal State Advisory Council three year grant ended effective March 31, 2013 with some financial activity to carry forward into the 2014 state fiscal year.

Programs & Funding Sources	2013			2012		
	Final Budget	Revenues	Expenses	Final Budget	Revenues	Expenses
Child Care Services						
Federal	149,042,221	149,042,220	149,042,210	6,904,782	6,904,782	6,904,782
State	53,795,820	53,795,820	53,795,820	1,203,033	1,203,033	1,203,033
Other	13,759	14,910	13,758	16,526	19,211	16,525
Nutrition						
Federal	122,123,781	122,123,779	122,123,779	117,884,856	117,988,046	117,884,856
Pre-Kindergarten Program						
Federal	194,327	194,588	194,325	269,771	269,770	269,770
State-Lottery	299,232,510	295,129,915	293,939,678	300,691,000	293,691,000	289,222,657
Other	-	-	-	4,791	6,398	4,790
Quality Initiatives						
Federal	25,013,341	25,020,345	25,013,338	20,349,304	20,349,302	20,349,302
Other	196,440	198,513	196,438	32,608	32,608	32,608
Grand Total	\$ 649,612,199	\$ 645,520,089	\$ 644,319,347	\$ 447,356,671	\$ 440,464,150	\$ 435,888,323

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

*"We support our teachers and providers.
The quality work they do make them vital members of our team."*



Additional Collections on Behalf of the State Treasury

Collected license fees are designated to be submitted to the State Treasury along with penalty amounts collected from Child Care Providers violating core safety rules.

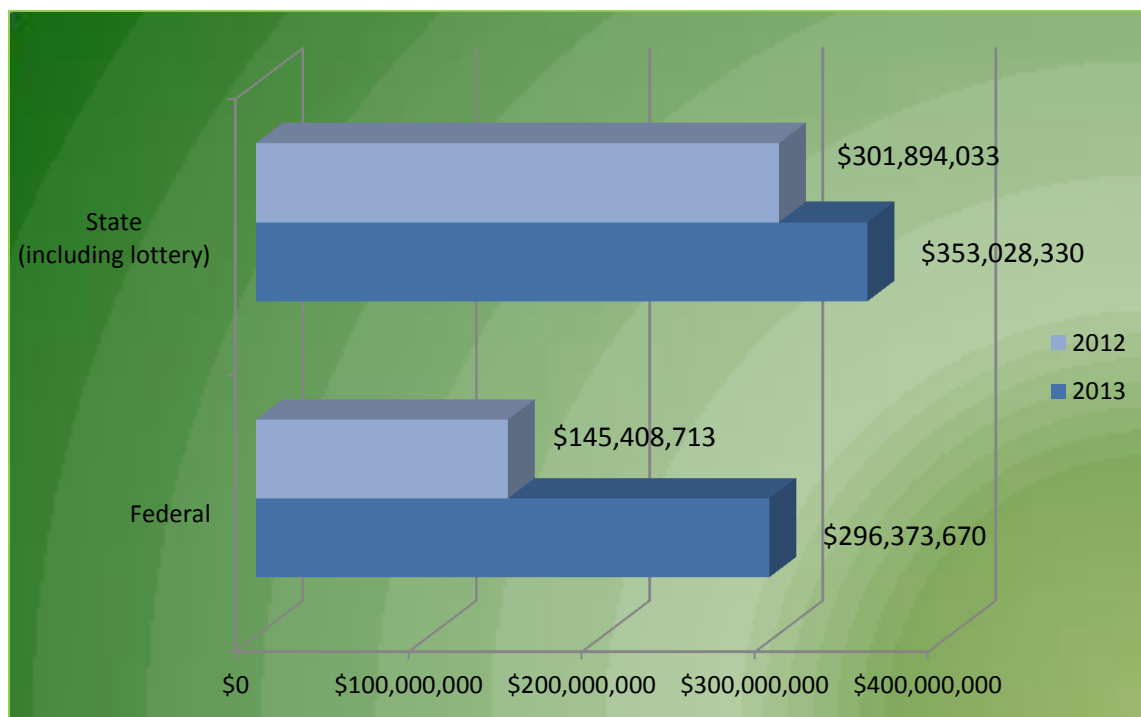
The following amounts were collected and submitted to the Office of the Treasury:

	2013	2012
License Fees	\$713,634	\$730,733
Penalties	\$108,173	\$55,590

Results of Financial Audit

The state Department of Audits and Accounts (DOAA) conducts an annual audit of the financial records of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. State fiscal year 2013 marked eleven straight years that our agency has received a clean audit opinion from DOAA.

2013 Budget Comparison



Agency Totals

Funding Source		2013	2012
Federal	(46%)	296,373,670	145,408,713
State (including lottery)	(54%)	353,028,330	301,894,033
Other		210,199	53,925



FISCAL YEAR 2013 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Worked with Governor Deal and the State Legislature to create new law requiring all employees of Georgia's 6,000 child care programs to undergo National Fingerprint Background Check. Law applies to DECAL employees and all temporary employees and contractors working on behalf of DECAL in child care facilities.
- Issued first phase of Pre-K Longitudinal Study supporting the benefits of Georgia's Pre-K Program in language, math, and behavioral skills.
- Created unprecedented 45-member Task Force, facilitated by a national expert, to review operations, policies, and procedures of Georgia's Child and Parent Services (CAPS) Program.
- Created Office of Audits and Compliance to ensure stewardship and accountability with agency funds.
- Moved CAPS investigative unit to DECAL.
- Formally launched parent awareness campaign of Quality Rated, Georgia's voluntary system to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs.
- Initiated media campaign with five other state agencies and three partner organizations calling for parents and caregivers of children to have greater awareness of dangers leaving children unattended in vehicles.
- Launched www.gelds.decal.ga.gov supporting Georgia's Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS).
- Launched Online Library Learning Initiative (OLLI), a virtual warehouse of online learning modules and video podcasts for early childhood education.
- Achieved 11th consecutive year of clean financial audits.
- Accepted into BUILD, a national initiative building a coordinated system of programs, policies, and services for early learning.
- Hosted Summer Transition Program for rising kindergartners who either did not attend Georgia's Pre-K Program or Head Start, or attended and needed additional support.
- Celebrated 20th anniversary of Georgia Lottery, benefiting more than 1.2 million Georgia Pre-K students.
- Completed second year of Race to the Top early learning initiative.

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

"We work to empower parents with relevant and accurate information so they can make the very best child care and early education decisions for their family."

STRATEGIC THEMES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014



Health & Safety

Promote safe and healthy early care and learning programs

Quality & Access

Improve quality of and access to early care and learning programs

Organizational Excellence

Foster organizational excellence through stakeholder engagement, enterprise solutions, and workforce development



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

"Our agency is dedicated to remaining flexible and nimble in order to keep us on the cutting edge of early education and improve upon our existing services."