

Decidedly DECAL

Highlighting the Events That Shape Who We Are



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DECAL By the Numbers

- 3,855** - Georgia's Pre-K Program funded classes for 2018-2019
- 4,692** - Licensed child care programs in Georgia
- 1,609** - Quality Rated programs in Georgia
- 1,593** - Summer Food Service Program sites in Georgia
- 73,372** - Active registrants in Georgia Professional Development System
- 15** - New Pre-K Classes added this year

Commissioner's Corner

by Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs



Dear Fellow DECAL Team Members,

Eleven months ago, I wrote to you in the September 2017 issue of *Decidedly DECAL* about CHANGE...and the requisite FLEXIBILITY needed to effectively navigate what sometimes felt overwhelming.

At that time DECAL was immersed in transition as we continued to assume responsibility for the CAPS program: CAPS hadn't completely moved into the Ag building; hundreds of new CAPS employees were still being trained; and we were working hard to catch up on the backlog of CAPS applications and renewals.

Well, here we are almost a year later, and I am compelled to repeat much of what I wrote then. Remember what ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus said: *There is nothing permanent except change.*

In the past months, several senior DECAL leaders have left the department. Cumulatively, these men and women provided decades of solid, consistent leadership to our work and supported me as the Commissioner and each of you as members of your respective DECAL units serving children, families, and early care and education providers in our state.

I consider their leaving bittersweet: *bitter* because we're going to miss their wisdom, experience, and friendship; *sweet* because each of them left for opportunities where they can grow professionally while continuing to serve the citizens of Georgia or other states.

Each of our departing leaders has been or will be replaced by competent, committed professionals

24 - Expansion Pre-K Classes at existing programs

3,818 - Continuation Pre-K Classes

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State Charitable Contributions Program Starts October 1

The Campaign is back! Beginning October 1, the infamous penny wars, donut dollar drives, division prizes, and much more will be coming your way!

The Campaign is an opportunity for you to support the nonprofit organization of your choice through monthly payroll deductions or a one-time gift. This year, the Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning is among the many impactful organizations you can give to! Over the last 20 years, State of Georgia and University System employees have generously contributed over \$36 million to support a wide variety of causes. Last year, DECAL employees contributed \$14,000 with around 40 percent employee participation.

We hope you will help us exceed last year's giving! Every dollar makes a difference.

Kristie Lewis Leaving DECAL



Kristie Lewis

Kristie Lewis, Assistant Commissioner of Child Care Services, is leaving DECAL on August 10 to embark on a new journey working with different state leadership teams on issues related to child care and child care and Development Funds.

"I will miss all the truly wonderful people at DECAL who have touched my life here over the past 17 years," said Lewis. "I have been truly blessed in this regard. I will also miss seeing CCS continue to expand and grow and the many wonderful consultants and managers who make CCS what it is."

Lewis is looking forward to moving back home, where she will be

who possess the skills, knowledge, and experience to assume the responsibilities of leadership. *Will it take time for them to settle into their new jobs? Absolutely. Will they need to learn new skills? Without question. Will they lead their respective divisions/units differently than their predecessors? No doubt.*

BUT, the mission and vision of DECAL haven't changed...and even with new leaders, the goals and objectives of our work remain the same. As we become accustomed to new leaders and as these new leaders grow in their confidence and experience, it's our shared focus on and commitment to the well-being of children, families, early care and education providers, and our various partners that will keep our work moving forward.

Please join me in wishing the leaders who have recently left DECAL...and the men and women who have been chosen to replace them...much success and satisfaction in their new roles. Their success is our success.

Grateful for your partnership,

CCS Expansion Leads to Improved Services for Providers

At the beginning of the new fiscal year on July 1, Child Care Services (CCS) implemented several exciting changes. To better serve the entire provider population, CCS expanded from five regions into six. Due to the expansion, consultants will have smaller caseloads; therefore, they will have more time to provide quality-based technical assistance during licensing visits. In addition to the regional expansion, several of the CCS specialty units expanded and a new unit was created.

The newly-created Intake Unit consists of a manager, a coordinator, and three intake consultants. Consultants are assigned full time to answer questions from the public, to receive and enter complaints, and to create a "seek and search" task force to search out unlicensed programs operating throughout the state and assist these programs through the appropriate processes.

The Exemption Unit expanded due to changes in work load responsibilities, including routinely monitoring exempt programs receiving Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) subsidies, conducting pre-approval site visits when new exempt applications are received, and routinely visiting select exempt programs not receiving a CAPS subsidy to conduct health and safety evaluations and to ensure compliance with the program's operating guidelines.

The Enforcement Unit added two enforcement review consultants. The additional positions were needed due to a 112 percent increase in enforcement fines and a 38 percent increase in the number of adverse actions. The expanded staff will also help shorten time required to process adverse actions and issue them to providers.

The Quality Improvement & Training Unit added a coordinator and an additional training consultant. The additional positions were needed to streamline and consolidate on-boarding for new hires, to support the creation of professional development training modules for CCS staff, and to assist in the oversight of the Critical Response Unit (CRU).

closer to family and working from a home office, meaning "less commuting, and that dry cleaning bill will be cut drastically."

She said she is excited to travel to other states to share her knowledge and expertise, and to learn from them too.

She adds, "I wish everyone here at DECAL well."

Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning Plans First Fundraiser

Mark your calendars for the Foundation's inaugural fundraiser, Moonlight Through the Pines: A Singer Songwriter Event, on Saturday, October 20, 2018.

Lightfoot Plantation will host this unforgettable evening filled with music and storytelling from nationally renowned songwriters, southern dishes served by Georgia chefs, and a lively auction all in celebration of literacy, conservation, and the arts.

Because the Foundation focuses on partnerships, we are excited to collaborate with the Georgia Forestry Foundation for this event. The goal of this event is to garner recognition and financial contributions to support the work you do every day to provide resources to the children, families, and providers of Georgia. More information and volunteer opportunities will be announced soon!

The Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning is a separate non-profit 501 (c) (3) foundation.

Governor Announces 2019 State Holidays

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 1-4-1, the following is the list of state holidays when the Capitol and state agencies will be closed in 2019:

New Year's Day: Tuesday, January 1

State Holiday: January 19 - will be observed on Friday, November 29

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday: Monday, January 21

Washington's Birthday: February 18 - will be observed on Tuesday, December 24

State Holiday: April 26 - will be observed on Monday, April 22

Memorial Day: Monday, May 27

The expansion of the department brings with it an exciting opportunity to better serve our providers through higher quality-based interactions with CCS consultants, therefore increasing the quality of child care for Georgia's children.

Georgia's Pre-K Program Welcomes Over 80,000 Four Year Olds

All over Georgia school is beginning for over 80,000 four year olds attending Georgia's Pre-K Program. The voluntary, lottery-funded Pre-K program has been recognized as one of the top programs in the nation based on quality standards, teacher qualifications, and enrollment. In the 2017-2018 school year, approximately 60 percent of all four year olds in Georgia were served by state funded Pre-K. For this upcoming school year, DECAL awarded 15 new Pre-K classes, 24 expansion classes at existing programs, and 3,818 continuation classes for a total of 3,857 classes serving over 80,000 children.

Usually the first day of Georgia's Pre-K Program aligns with the local school system calendar regardless of the Pre-K setting, i.e., for profit and nonprofit child care centers, military bases, colleges and universities, and other facilities.

"Georgia's Pre-K Program is a nationally-recognized program of excellence now entering its 26th year," said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. "The program encompasses all aspects of the highest quality early learning experiences that ensure school readiness for children and impact educational outcomes well into Kindergarten and early elementary years."

"Research shows that a quality early learning experience through Georgia's Pre-K Program significantly impacts school readiness skills for our students in language, literacy, and math," added Susan Adams, Deputy Commissioner for Georgia's Pre-K Program and Instructional Supports. "The program's success can be attributed directly to the outstanding Pre-K teachers and assistants who implement this program daily, and the strong family support we see in communities across the state."

CCS Offering New Way for Providers to Give Feedback About Regulatory Visits

In an effort to ensure exceptional customer service and improve our practices, Child Care Services will soon provide a survey to child care providers for direct feedback on their regulatory visits. Upon the completion of the visit report, the provider will receive an email with the visit report attached. The email will contain information that the visit report is ready and available in the provider's KOALA account and encourage the provider to complete the survey. The survey will be accessible in the providers KOALA account, identified next to the visit report. Access to the survey will expire 30 days after receipt of the email message.

The email message may arrive in the provider's email account several days after the visit took place due to the completion process of visit reports. The survey will ask just a few quick questions so that the survey may take minimal time for the provider to complete.

Questions ask whether the consultant:

- Was polite, courteous, and respectful
- Was helpful and provided useful information

Independence Day: Thursday, July 4

Labor Day: Monday, September 2

Columbus Day: Monday, October 14

Veterans Day: Monday, November 11

Thanksgiving Day: Thursday, November 28

Christmas Day: Wednesday, December 25



My 23-year-old daughter majoring in Biology Education was invited to teach Biology to Tibetan Monks with post doctorates from Emory University this summer in India.

*Rebecca McDonald, M.S.
Georgia's Pre-K Program*

I got engaged on the 4th of July! Thanks for celebrating with me!

*Sarah Tinsley
Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning*

Board of Early Care and Learning

Supporting and guiding the mission and vision of Bright from the Start:

Board of Early Care and Learning

Vacant
First Congressional District

Susan Harper, Albany
Second Congressional District
(Chair)

Kathy Howell, Carrollton
Third Congressional District
(Secretary)

Phil Davis, Stone Mountain
Fourth Congressional District

Carlene Talton, Decatur
Fifth Congressional District

- Answered questions in an easy to understand way
- Clearly understood the rules and regulations
- Was fair in his or her review
 - Documented the provider's input and ideas in the plan for correcting citations or in developing an action plan
 - Reviewed the visit report with a facility representative

And if the provider:

- Is able to reach someone in CCS at times they have a question
- Would like to speak with management regarding their experience.

The survey results will be used to refine our internal professional development opportunities and to recognize our staff for providing exemplary customer service.

Division Updates

Pre-K:

The Summer Transition Program is designed to provide a six-week intensive academic program to support children entering Pre-K and Kindergarten the following fall. This summer marks the ninth year that DECAL has been providing this opportunity to children and their families.

During the 2018 summer, 868 children were enrolled in the Rising Pre-K program (RPK). There were 62 classrooms in 22 counties across the state. Rising Pre-K specifically targets students who are registered to attend Georgia's Pre-K Program or a Head Start Program AND whose home language is Spanish. A defining characteristic of the program is that at least one teacher must be bilingual, fluent in English and Spanish. The presence of the bilingual staff facilitates the strategic use of the home language to support young dual language learners' early language and literacy development in English.

Also this summer, 2,384 children were enrolled in the Rising Kindergarten program. There were 149 classrooms in 51 counties across Georgia. This program focuses on serving children who have not attended Georgia's Pre-K program at all or for a full school year or have attended but need additional academic support before entering Kindergarten.

Inclusion Services:

Our most recent cohort of 16 SEEDS Pyramid Model Implementation Sites have completed their initial summer trainings. This includes three Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership sites! Programs are gearing up to kick off site-level implementation this fall. For more information on Georgia's SEEDS for Success and the Pyramid Model Implementation Project visit:

<http://dec.al.ga.gov/InstructionalSupports/Seeds.aspx>

Also, six Quality Rated providers earned the Quality Rated Inclusion Endorsement this Spring:

- Discovery Point #3 in Duluth
- The Goddard School in Flowery Branch
- CRK Child Development Center in Albany
- Child Development Center in Columbus
- Wilkes County Head Start in Washington

Vacant
Sixth Congressional District

Vacant
Seventh Congressional District

Luann Purcell, Ed.D., Warner Robins
Eighth Congressional District

Sheri Hooper, Gainesville
Ninth Congressional District

Vacant
Tenth Congressional District

Victor Morgan, Cartersville
Eleventh Congressional District

Jerri Kropp, Statesboro
Twelfth Congressional District
(Vice Chair)

Melissa Boekhaus, MD., Mableton
Thirteenth Congressional District

Tangela Johnson, Cohutta
Fourteenth Congressional District

Watch on POLAR



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

**Let Us Hear
From You!**

- Smiles, Giggles, and Hugs Child Development Center in Statesboro

Quality Rated:

We're Spotighting Quality Rated Family Providers

DECAL's Quality Rated program recently partnered with The Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) and Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB) Media to film at two Quality Rated family learning homes.

Through this partnership, GPB Media and GOSA's team interviewed two family learning home providers and filmed footage at their child care programs. Each of the providers spoke about their Quality Rated experience as a family child learning home provider and discussed their passion for the child care industry.

Filming took place in Lawrenceville with Gleydis Estrada and with DiAnne Coggins in College Park. Estrada and Coggins both talked about their program's demographics, their classroom setup and the impacts of being a Quality Rated family learning home.

The footage was gathered to use with GOSA's Word2Reading campaign and to spotlight the significance of family learning homes.



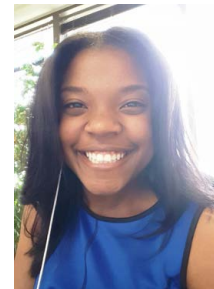
Gleydis Estrada being filmed



Dianne Coggins (right) preparing for filming

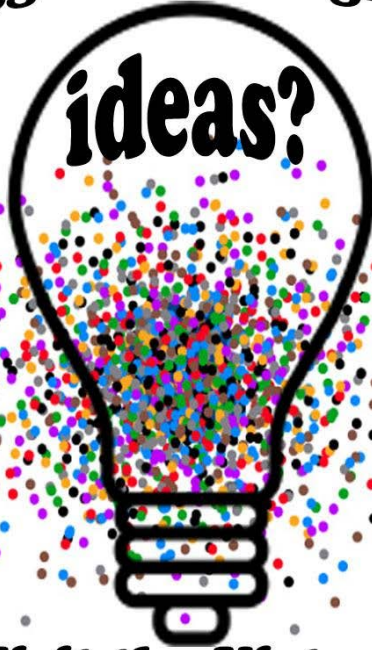
We asked staff who their celebrity look alike is...

Here are our DECAL Doppelgängers!



Alexandria Williams is Gabrielle Union

Employee Suggestion Program



**Visit the Virtual
Suggestion Box now!**

Gabrielle Union

Alexandria Williams



Drew Carey



Ira Sudman

Ira Sudman is Drew Carey



Jason Alexander



Reg Griffin

Reg Griffin is Jason Alexander

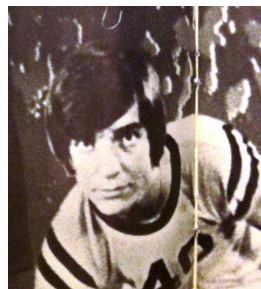


Halsey



Shannon Williams

Shannon Williams is Halsey



Pete Maravich



Steve Mayer

*Steve Mayer is "Pistol" Pete
Maravich*



CONGRATS!

DISCOVERY POINT #3, DULUTH
 THE GODDARD SCHOOL, FLOWERY BRANCH
 CRK CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER, ALBANY
 CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER, COLUMBUS
 WILKES COUNTY HEAD START, WASHINGTON
 SMILES, GIGGLES, AND HUGS CHILD
 DEVELOPMENT CENTER, STATESBORO

CONGRATS

TO THE #QUALITYRATED PROGRAMS
 WHO'VE INCREASED THEIR STAR RATING!

MAY 2018

- ★ Alpha Preparatory Academy II / Norcross 1 TO 2 STARS
- ★ Wadley Head Start / Wadley 2 TO 3 STARS
- ★ Polk Head Start/ Cedartown 1 TO 2 STARS
- ★ St. Paul's Lutheran Pre-School / Savannah 2 TO 3 STARS
- ★ B.W. Lester Head Start Center/ Valdosta 2 TO 3 STARS
- ★ Imagination Station #1/ Columbus 1 TO 2 STARS
- ★ Lanier County Head Start / Lakeland 2 TO 3 STARS
- ★ ATL Tech College Early Education Center / Atlanta 1 TO 3 STARS
- ★ Lowndes I Head Start Center / Valdosta 1 TO 2 STARS



Keisha Lance-Bottoms



Tina Brown

Tina Brown is Mayor Keisha Lance-Bottoms



Madea



Glenda Davis-Canteen

Glenda Davis-Canteen is Madea

CONGRATS

TO THE NEWEST
 #QUALITYRATED PROGRAMS

CONGRATS

TO THE #QUALITYRATED PROGRAMS
WHO'VE INCREASED THEIR STAR RATING!

★ Ben Hill County Head Start / Fitzgerald	2 TO 3 STARS
★ White Oak Learning Academy # 1 / Cumming	1 TO 3 STARS
★ Bright Beginnings Day Care & Learning Center / Bulloch	1 TO 3 STARS
★ Macon County Head Start / Marshallville	2 TO 3 STARS
★ Grayson Academy / Grayson	1 TO 3 STARS
★ The Children's House/ Savannah	2 TO 3 STARS
★ The Bradley School of Augusta / Augusta	2 TO 3 STARS
★ Eagle Springs Children's Center / Atlanta	1 TO 2 STARS
★ Bradley Dawn A / Dalton	1 TO 2 STARS

JUNE 2018 

The Faces of DECAL

DECAL faces featured in the banner of this issue are (L-R) Ben Appling, Jasmine Ford, Rosheda Doe, Michael Rodgers, Ettoniet Anderson, David Ginsburg, and Laura Wagner.

TO THE NEWEST #QUALITYRATED PROGRAMS

MAY 2018

YMCA After School @ College Park Elementary / College Park	★ ★ ★
CJ's Learning Academy II / Savannah	★ ★ ★
Quitman County Early Childhood Development & Education Center / Georgetown	★ ★ ★
The Sunshine House #51 / Woodstock	★ ★ ★
Larry Wynette P / Montezuma	★ ★ ★
Easter Seals Head Start Barrow County / Winder	★ ★ ★
Highland Kids Academy (Afterschool) / Columbus	★ ★ ★
Early Beginners Learning Center / Thomson	★ ★ ★
Sunbrook Academy at Stonebridge/ Bremen	★ ★ ★
Forsyth County Head Start / Cumming	★ ★ ★
YMCA Prime Time @ W.G Nunn Elementary / Valdosta	★ ★ ★
Kid's Academy of Baxley LLC / Baxley	★ ★ ★
Gingerbread House Child Care Center / Ringgold	★ ★ ★
Kidz Biz Child Care Center/ Augusta	★ ★ ★
Cross Roads Christian School of Paulding / Dallas	★ ★ ★
Storyland Child Care / Marietta	★ ★ ★
Monroe County / Forsyth	★ ★ ★
Y After School at West Roswell / Roswell	★ ★ ★
Winnford Academy / Flowery Branch	★ ★ ★
Pryor Ruth L / East Point	★ ★ ★
Beyond the Books Academy / Smyrna	★ ★ ★
Prime Time - Northwood / Roswell	★ ★ ★
R L Mack Head Start / Tifton	★ ★ ★



CONGRATS

TO THE NEWEST #QUALITYRATED PROGRAMS

JUNE 2018

Developing Minds Academy IV / Decatur	★ ★ ★
Candy Cane's Learning Center / Adel	★ ★ ★
Open Hearts and Minds Learning Center LLC / Albany	★ ★ ★
Turman Stephanie M / Thomson	★ ★ ★
Preparing for the Future Child Care Center / Quitman	★ ★ ★
Our House / Decatur	★ ★ ★
Davis Emma L / Albany	★ ★ ★
Yvette's Little World Day Care Center/ LaGrange	★ ★ ★
Pre-K Preparatory Learning Academy/ Gainesville	★ ★ ★
Prime Time - Shakerag / Duluth	★ ★ ★
Tender Years Learning Center #3 / Macon	★ ★ ★
Mrs. Rhonda's Stay N' Play / LaGrange	★ ★ ★
Easter Seals Child Development Center in Jackson / Jefferson	★ ★ ★
Doe Felicia R/ Valdosta	★ ★ ★
Glynn Head Start / Brunswick	★ ★ ★
Beauvil Nadia / Powder Springs	★ ★ ★
A Step of Faith Christian Academy II / Union City	★ ★ ★
Precious Moments Child Development Center / Wrightsville	★ ★ ★
Harmon Head Start at Talbot / Talbotton	★ ★ ★



