

Decidedly DECAL

Highlighting the Events That Shape Who We Are



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DECAL By the Numbers

8 - Substantiated cases of children left unattended in child care vans in FY2015

18 - Substantiated cases of children left unattended in child care vans in FY2014

10 - Orders for Intended Emergency Closures in 2015

12 - Orders for Intended Emergency Closures in 2014

3,828 - Georgia's Pre-K classes funded in 2015

80 - Rising Kindergarten Summer Transition Classes

30 - Rising Pre-Kindergarten Summer Transition Classes

Commissioner's Corner

by Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs

Dear DECALers:

From Powerball and Fantasy 5 to Mega Millions and Cash 3, the Georgia Lottery has been popular since Georgia voters approved its creation in a November 1992 referendum.

Last month I had the pleasure of speaking to the 2015 Georgia Lottery Corporation Sales Conference to explain how their work contributes to the success of Georgia's Pre-K Program and thereby impacts the well-being and development of Georgia's children. Since the 1993-94 school year, the Georgia Lottery Corporation has funded Pre-K in Georgia, preparing the state's four-year-old children for Kindergarten. In 2014, the Pre-K budget was over \$312 million and in 2015 over \$314 million.

While the mission of the sales team is to recruit and support ticket retailers, Georgia Lottery Corporation President & CEO Debbie D. Alford wanted them to know the role they play in supporting Georgia's Pre-K Program and the important impact of high quality early childhood education on brain development. I talked about how Georgia was a pioneer when the state designated by law that lottery proceeds must be used for education, specifically a college scholarship program and a voluntary Pre-K program. I explained that Georgia's Pre-K Program consistently meets eight out of 10 national quality benchmarks, and we continually explore ways to meet the remaining two benchmarks (related to class size and staff-child ratios).

The response from the Georgia Lottery Corporation Sales Team was really gratifying. They



5,223 - Licensed child care programs in Georgia
637 - Quality Rated child care programs in Georgia



Quick Links

[DECAL on Facebook](#)
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[DECAL on Instagram](#)
[DECAL on Pinterest](#)
[DECAL Website](#)



July Birthdays



Best wishes go out to the following DECAL employees who celebrate birthdays this month:

- 1 - Jacqueline Frederick
- 5 - Glen Cardy
- 7 - Zara Handsford
- 8 - Allison Carwile
- 8 - Laura Wagner
- 9 - Nakilia McCray
- 9 - Darlene Sims
- 9 - Robin Stevens
- 9 - James White
- 11 - Wakisha Carswell
- 11 - Candace Gilbert
- 13 - Brandy Locchetta
- 13 - Jennifer Underwood
- 13 - Ronnae Williams
- 14 - Marsha Ruiz-Crosby
- 16 - Adrienne Hamlin

embraced being part of our mission for continuous quality improvement, strengthened alignment with Kindergarten-3rd grade, improving access, and continuing to engage stakeholders and families. I believe our discussion last month will help them relay that a lottery ticket represents more than the dream for a big payoff one day...it's also an investment in preparing our children for school...and for life.

I closed with this quotation from Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates: "The first five years have so much to do with how the next 80 turn out."

We hear you, Bill...and are thrilled to be part of a program - and a department - that are impacting future generations of Georgians.

Sincerely,



- 16 - Kimberly Pratt
- 17 - Stephine Newberry
- 19 - Jennie Couture
- 20 - Jackie Shivers
- 21 - Jacquice Jones
- 23 - Carol Hartman
- 23 - Bridgette Merrett
- 25 - Pam Stevens
- 28 - Christie Bearden
- 28 - Glenda Davis-Canteen
- 28 - Rhonda Gunn
- 30 - Dee Bolden
- 30 - Demetria Joyce
- 31 - Judy Carter
- 31 - Patty Malone
- 31 - Bentley Ponder
- 31 - Jacquelyn Sims

DIY Summer School Prevents "Brain Drain"

Grab your construction paper, masking tape, crayons, and play dough. For the second year in a row, DECAL is posting helpful tips for preventing summer "brain drain" to our social media pages, including Facebook and Twitter.

All children experience learning loss when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer. Experts believe most children lose about two months of grade level equivalency over summer break. Using the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), DECAL created "DIY Summer School" with fun activities parents and caregivers can utilize using common household items. Some examples from June included playing animal charades, creating a weather chart and discussing patterns, and writing letters of significance or drawing shapes with sidewalk chalk. Each tip is based on one of the GELDS, designed to help teachers and families better understand what children from birth to age five should know and be able to do.

For more information, watch our Facebook and Twitter pages each weekday or visit www.summerlearning.org.

Pictured (L-R) are DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs, Georgia Lottery Corporation President & CEO Debbie D. Alford, and Georgia Student Finance Commission President Tricia P. Chastain.

DECAL Priority:

Ensure Health & Safety

Governor, First Lady Urge Georgians to "Look Again"

In a news conference held June 3, Governor Nathan Deal, First Lady Sandra Deal, and DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs called for families and caregivers of children to have heightened awareness of the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles. Officials hope the news conference conducted at Liberty Plaza at the State Capitol, which included a demonstration of how quickly temperatures rise in a closed vehicle, will help prevent children's heatstroke deaths this summer.

"During our state's hot summer months, there is a higher risk of serious injury or death as a result of a child being left alone inside a vehicle," said Gov. Deal. "Since 2010, eight children in Georgia have died due to vehicular heatstroke. I ask that all Georgians join me in preventing future loss of life by being aware of your surroundings and never leaving a child in a car, even for just a minute. Lives can be saved if we take the time to Look Again."

"We, as parents and grandparents, work hard to keep our children safe and out of harm's way," said Mrs. Deal. "By increasing awareness and reminding your family and friends to Look Again, together we can prevent future tragedies here in Georgia."

Commissioner Jacobs said over 370,000 children in Georgia are cared for daily by approximately 5,300 child care providers, most of whom regularly transport children to and from home, after school to the child care center, and on field trips.

"We receive calls about incidents where children are left in vehicles from a few minutes to several hours, and we investigate each incident," Jacobs explained. "According to our records, in FY2013, 17 children were left in vehicles by child care providers; 18 in FY2014; and 4 in 2015. While, thankfully, we have not seen any heatstroke-related deaths in child care centers since 2011, these dangerous close calls are completely unacceptable. Consequently, safely transporting children will remain a focus for our agency."



DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs, Governor Nathan Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal are pictured at a "Look Again" news conference.

State officials hope the public will help distribute a new "Look Again" video to family and friends using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. The video has been posted to YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2rkuG-uImE> and to DECAL's Facebook and Twitter pages.

**Let Us Hear
From You!**

You know that **great idea** you
have for our department?

We cannot read your

MIND.

That is why DECAL has



Nadine Hollis
Program Operations Specialist

**EMPLOYEE
SUGGESTION
PROGRAM**

[Visit the Virtual Suggestion Box
Now!](#)

The 2015 SFSP is Underway

Officials also ask the public to be their eyes and ears in the community, and if they see a child left alone in a vehicle, call 911 immediately; emergency personnel are trained to respond.



DECAL Priority:

Increase Quality & Access

Celebrating 40 Years of the Summer Food Service Program

Georgia's First Lady Sandra Deal and Atlanta Falcons Punter Matt Boshier joined DECAL and the Georgia Food Bank Association on June 4 to kick off the 2015 Summer Food Service Program and celebrate the program's 40th year in Georgia. The event was held at the Athens Housing Authority.

On June 18, Former Atlanta Falcon Chuck Wiley and the Falcons Cheerleaders joined DECAL, Georgia School Superintendent Richard Woods, and the Georgia Food Bank Association in kicking off the SFSP at the Clayton County Headquarters Library in Jonesboro.



Board of Early Care and Learning

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

Board of Early Care and Learning

Kay Ford, Midway
First Congressional District
(Secretary)

Susan Harper, Albany
Second Congressional District
(Vice Chair)

Kathy Howell, Carrollton
Third Congressional District

Phil Davis, Stone Mountain



Former Atlanta Falcon Chuck Wiley attended the SFSP kick-off event in Jonesboro.

More than 915,000 children throughout Georgia qualify for free or reduced meals during the school year. However, without access to meals during the summer, some families are left wondering how they will fill the gap. The SFSP provides free meals to children 18 and under during summer months and when school is not in session.

Shown L-R in the photo at left below are Dee Bolden, DECAL Assistant Commissioner of Federal Programs; Beegee Elder, Childhood Nutrition Manager with Food Bank of North East Georgia, Inc; John Becker, President/CEO with the Food Bank of North East Georgia, Inc.; First Lady Sandra Deal; and Falita Flowers, DECAL Director of Nutrition Services. The First Lady presented DECAL with a proclamation from Governor Nathan Deal recognizing 40 years of the SFSP. At right, DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs is shown at a SFSP event in Clayton County.



DECAL Priority:

Foster Organizational Excellence

Fourth Congressional District

Carlene Talton, Decatur
Fifth Congressional District

Dawn Henderson, Marietta
Sixth Congressional District

Sherron Murphy, Lawrenceville
Seventh Congressional District

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

Vacant
Ninth Congressional District

Janice Gallimore, Greensboro
Tenth Congressional District

Victor Morgan, Cartersville
Eleventh Congressional District
(Chair)

Jerri Kropp, Statesboro
Twelfth Congressional District

Judy Neal, Stockbridge
Thirteenth Congressional District

Tangela Johnson, Cohutta
Fourteenth Congressional District

The Faces of DECAL

*DECAL faces featured in the banner of this issue are (L-R)
Falita Flowers, Jae Boyd, Zara Handsford, LaKisha Robinson,
Kimberly Smith, Titus Dyson and Patty Malone.*

Path2College Is Giving Child Care Centers a Chance to Win VISA Cards

From teaching shapes and colors to making every "boo-boo" better, child care facilities throughout Georgia play a critical and necessary role in a child's life. Within these four walls, the building blocks of education begin for a lifelong learner to blossom and grow. While we may not realize it on a day-to-day basis, child care teachers have a lasting impression on the future minds of Georgia and instill a desire for higher education that leads them down the path towards college.

This desire will be the driving force behind the all-night study sessions and final exams that will ultimately be exchanged for a college degree. However, that desire can be hindered by the cost of a college degree. The state of Georgia, with the help of child care centers, wants to help place families on the path towards college with the Path2College 529 Plan - Georgia's official college savings plan.

To encourage families to plan for college, DECAL is excited to announce a partnership with the Path2College 529 Plan - the "We Care, Child Care" Challenge. This partnership is designed to encourage Georgia families to plan for the cost of their loved ones' college education. As a part of the challenge, child care facilities throughout Georgia will have the chance to win up to a \$1,000 VISA gift card. Path2College 529 will be giving away 60 VISA gift cards ranging from \$100 to \$500, with one \$1,000 winner.

To participate, child care centers should fill out a form at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/wecare529>, where they can sign up to promote college savings with a Path2College 529 Plan informational display and/or schedule a presentation on saving for college between the dates of August 1 - October 31, 2015.

Additionally, students will have a chance to win \$1,529 towards a Path2College 529 account by visiting www.WeCare529.com starting August 1, 2015.



Congratulations to the newest QUALITY RATED[®] child care programs!

- ABC, Another Bright Creation, Douglasville ★
- An Angel's Touch Learning Center, College Park ★★
- Cynthia L. Anderson, Decatur ★★
- Bells Ferry Learning Center, Woodstock ★
- Bethel Head Start Center, Savannah ★★
- Bright Stars Primary Learning Academy, Jonesboro ★
- Brock Head Start, Savannah ★
- Mildred M. Buchanan, Snellville ★
- Laverne M. Bussey-Kemp, Augusta ★★
- Challenged Child and Friends, Inc., Gainesville ★★
- Childcare Network #24, Augusta ★★
- Childcare Network #50, Decatur ★★
- Children's Destiny Christian Academy, Valdosta ★★
- Cooper Head Start Center, Garden City ★★
- Discovery Point Child Development Center #29, Newnan ★★
- Downs Preschool, Watkinsville ★★
- Economic Opportunity for Savannah-Chatham County Area, Inc., Savannah ★
- Five Star Learning Center, Louisville ★★
- Fort Daniel Children's Academy, Dacula ★★
- Foundations Christian Preschool, Martinez ★
- Gateway Academy & Childcare Center, Austell ★
- Golden Isles YMCA, Brunswick ★★
- Hansel & Gretel Daycare & Learning Center #2, Albany ★
- Heritage Kids Christian Academy, Austell ★
- Hodge Memorial Day Care Center, Savannah ★★
- Lynita Hughes, Saint Marys ★★
- Inspired Minds S.T.E.A.M. Academy, Inc., Jonesboro ★★
- Irwin County Head Start, Ocilla ★
- Mirtha Z. Joan Bart, Jonesboro ★★
- Kid's Advocacy Coalition At Northside, Tifton ★★
- Kid's Advocacy Coalition At Omega, Omega ★★
- Liberty County Early Head Start, Hinesville ★★
- Little Treasures Learning Center, Hinesville ★★
- Lumpkin County PreK, Dahlonega ★★
- Murray Head Start/Early Head Start, Chatsworth ★★
- New Kingdom Life Head Start Center, Savannah ★
- Oak Meadow Montessori School, Lawrenceville ★★
- Old Fountain Academy, Lawrenceville ★
- Pinecrest Child Care Center, Cordele ★★
- Pride & Joy Daycare Learning Academy II, McDonough ★★
- Pride and Joy Daycare Learning Academy, Morrow ★
- Saint John Child Development Center, Atlanta ★★
- Saint Philip Child Development Center, Inc., Atlanta ★★
- Saxon Street Day Care, Dublin ★★
- Schoolzin Schoolzout Christian Learning Center, Ringgold ★★
- Sheltering Arms - Lillian Webb Center, Lawrenceville ★★
- Shining Star Learning Center, Mount Vernon ★★
- Smyrna Bilingual Academy, Smyrna ★
- The Corner Preschool, Hapeville ★★
- The Learning Station, Ellenwood ★★
- The New Covenant Preschool, Savannah ★★
- Towne Square Academy, McDonough ★★
- Towne Square Academy at Green Valley, McDonough ★★
- Erica D. Weston, Lawrenceville ★★
- Whiteford Prekindergarten Program, Atlanta ★★
- Sheila M. Williams, Folkston ★
- YMCA PrimeTime @ Hahira Elementary, Hahira ★
- YMCA PrimeTime @ Lake Park Elementary, Lake Park ★