

Decidedly DECAL

Highlighting the Events That Shape Who We Are



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DECAL By the Numbers

80 - Summer Transition Program classes this year

71 - Summer Transition Program sites this year

5,259 - Licensed child care programs in Georgia

2,235 - Child care programs participating in Quality Rated

602 - Quality Rated programs

9 - Emergency closures in 2015

12 - Emergency closures in 2014

Commissioner's Corner

by Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs

Dear DECALers:

Last month it was "lights, camera, action" at my house. My husband John, son Charlie, and daughter Laine joined me in making a video for "Look Again," our annual campaign raising awareness of vehicular heatstroke among children and the warning to never leave a child alone in a vehicle...even for a minute.

On Wednesday, June 3, 2015, Governor Nathan Deal, First Lady Sandra Deal, and a number of other state agencies will join me for a media event starting at 1:30 PM in Liberty Plaza. We believe the key to our success in recent years has been collaboration with other state agencies and child advocates in pushing this message to the forefront, especially here at the start of the summer with consistently hotter temperatures.

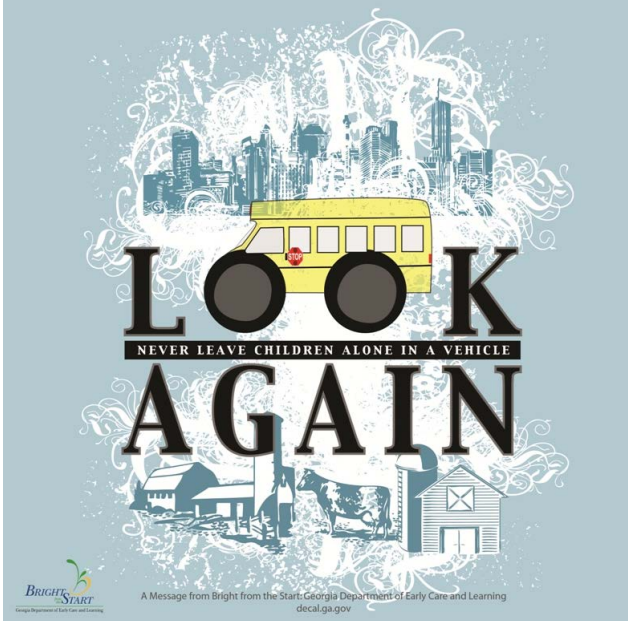
DECAL receives calls about incidents where children are left in vehicles from a few minutes to several hours, and we investigate each incident. Last month alone we investigated three such cases where children were left in vehicles from three minutes to six hours. According to our records, in FY2012, 21 children were left in vehicles by child care providers; 17 in FY2013; and 18 in FY2014.

DECAL is uniquely positioned to deliver the Look Again message to parents of young children and providers of child care all across the state. But this issue goes beyond the walls of child care centers



18 - Substantiated cases of children left in vehicles by child care in 2014

2 - Georgia child deaths in 2014 due to vehicular heatstroke



Quick Links

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



June Birthdays



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

- 4 - Princess Walton
- 6 - Jennifer McCreary
- 7 - Rukiya Thomas
- 10 - Deborah Toney
- 12 - Annie Blair

and schools. It affects every person who transports a child. In 2014, two Georgia children died of heatstroke in cars while in the care of their parents.

The Look Again message is for anyone caring for a child -- child care programs, teachers, parents, and grandparents, anyone -- to always account for the children in your care as you drive them from place to place. When you arrive at your destination, check the front and back of your car, and after you've looked, just to be sure, LOOK AGAIN. There is absolutely no reason for a child to suffer or die in these conditions.

As I see it, we really have two key messages here: Never leave a child alone in a vehicle...not even for a minute...and if you see a child left alone in a vehicle, don't be afraid to call 911. It could be the difference between life and death.

With your supervisor's approval, please join us for the Look Again event on Wednesday, June 3. Then visit our Bright from the Start YouTube channel and share our new video with your family and friends using the hashtag #LookAgain.

As Governor Deal says in the video, "You can be a hero. You can prevent a tragedy."

Get a preview of our new Look Again 2015 video here: <https://youtu.be/d2rkuG-uImE>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy M. Jones'.

- 14 - Ashley Cunningham
- 14 - Dorothy Mitchell
- 15 - Janice Haker
- 17 - Karyn Presley
- 20 - Ashia Jackson
- 23 - Janice Dye
- 24 - Edward Rowell
- 25 - Ettoniet Anderson
- 26 - Charles Cobb Jr.
- 26 - Miranda Murphy
- 27 - Amanda Reynolds
- 28 - Lisa Henderson
- 28 - Bridgette Washington
- 30 - Coty Johnson
- 30 - Marybeth McGee

Summer Food Service Program

DECAL has announced that free meals are available for children 18 and under (and some eligible adults) throughout the state through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The SFSP, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is administered in Georgia by DECAL. Over 900,000 of Georgia's school-aged children are eligible for free or reduced lunch when school is in session. The SFSP provides access to free meals in low-income areas during the summer months when students are out of school and may not have



Pictured (L-R) are Laine, John, Amy, and Charlie Jacobs as they make a video to raise awareness of the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles, particularly during the hot summer months.

DECAL Priority:

Ensure Health & Safety

DECAL Warns Child Care Providers of the Dangers of Leaving Children Unattended in Vehicles

DECAL is urging Georgia's more than 5,200 licensed child care programs to always check their vehicles to help prevent injury or death due to a child being left alone in a vehicle. The warning comes as the agency is investigating three reports in May of children being left inside vehicles at the end of routine transportation.

"These incidents are entirely preventable and therefore unacceptable," said Kristie Lewis, Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Services. "Complying with the transportation rules prevents these incidents. As the agency responsible for the health and safety of children in child care, DECAL will

access to well-balanced meals throughout the day.

Parents and children can find area sites where meals will be served by visiting DECAL's website at <http://dec.al.ga.gov/Nutrition/Search.aspx>. Additionally, sites can be located by calling 1-855-550-SFSP (7377) or by texting "FOODGA" to 877-877 (standard messaging and data rates apply).

Early Learning Climate Prototype

Motivated by evidence of the strong relationship between school climate and reading proficiency, an innovative public-private partnership is creating a model for the promotion of positive learning climates in Atlanta's early learning centers and elementary schools.

The Early Learning Climate Prototype is funded by the David, Helen, and Marian Woodward Fund - Atlanta and implemented by the Metropolitan Regional Educational Service Agency (MRESA), in partnership with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and DECAL. It is a research-informed approach to teach teachers and staff how to use Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) to improve the learning climate - an indicator significantly correlated with third-grade reading outcomes.

Early Education Success through Positive Learning Climates is the prototype for what is possible through a safe, supportive, and positive learning climate -- one of the four strategic pillars of the Get Georgia Reading Campaign's common agenda.

Working with the University of South Florida and renowned national leaders in both school-wide PBIS (implemented in K-12 schools) and program-wide PBIS, the pyramid model (implemented in early learning centers), the partners are creating a blended PBIS model tailored to the developmental stages that children move through during their first eight years. The prototype is focusing on two elementary schools and one "feeder" early learning center within Atlanta Public Schools, DeKalb County Schools, and Fulton County Schools.

Over the last two weeks, the child care centers and schools participated in a three-day leadership team

take immediate action when these incidents occur."

Lewis said on May 5, a two-year-old girl was left in a day care van for six hours in Cobb County (Austell). On May 13, a seven-year-old girl was left on a day care van for 2-3 minutes in Fulton County (College Park) when a second check of the vehicle discovered she had been left unattended. The most recent incident was May 20, when a four-year-old girl was reportedly left on a daycare van for three hours in Fulton County (Atlanta).

In an e-mail sent May 21, Lewis asked each child care provider to review the transportation processes with their staff and stress the importance of never leaving children unattended in vehicles. "We are entering the summer months when temperatures are rising, and we all know that it takes only a few minutes for children to be seriously harmed or die when they are left in vehicles," she wrote.

On Wednesday, June 3, at 1:30 p.m., Governor Nathan Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal will join DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs and other state agencies at a media event in Liberty Plaza calling for parents and caregivers of children to have a heightened awareness of dangers of heatstroke this summer. Since 2010, seven children in Georgia have died due to vehicular heat stroke.

Please join the Governor and First Lady, the Department of Early Care and Learning, other state agencies, and child advocates to launch

LOOK AGAIN 2015

Georgia's campaign to prevent child injury and death caused by leaving children unattended in vehicles leading to vehicular heatstroke.

PRESS EVENT FEATURING:

- Governor Nathan Deal
- First Lady Sandra Deal
- Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

EVENT DETAILS:

- Wednesday, June 3, 2015
- 1:30 p.m.
- Liberty Plaza (In case of inclement weather, the event will move to the North Wing of the Capitol.)

DECAL Priority:

Increase Quality & Access

Task Force Issues Report on Family Engagement

training led by GaDOE, DECAL and University of South Florida staff. Leadership teams learned how to create and set universal expectations and rules across environments, as well as the importance of teaching children appropriate behavior through modeling and reinforcement.

Particular emphasis was placed on recognizing early learning as birth - 3rd grade and the additional supports all children need throughout those crucial years.

Throughout next school year, teachers in these grades will also be supported with additional social/emotional, developmentally appropriate classroom strategies to help them keep their students calm, engaged, and safe while learning in the classroom. At early ages, when students don't have language or a fully developed vocabulary, their behavior becomes their language.

Throughout the year, child care center and school teams will utilize data to track behavior incidents and adjust strategies as needed to help children with self-regulation skills and promote self-awareness.

Georgia is one of only a few states pioneering the blended PBIS approach birth - third grade and beyond.

**Let Us Hear
From You!**

A DECAL task force recently issued its report on family engagement in early childhood education settings. The task force was composed of 55 members representing a range of stakeholders who serve children and families. Their report, titled *Roadmap for Engaging Families with Young Children*, included a definition of family engagement and outlined strategies to support child care providers in engaging families. Research shows that family engagement is a critical component of a young child's success.

"A child's early educational journey requires more than just great teachers and schools," said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. "An effective partnership between families - parents, grandparents, foster parents, aunts, uncles, siblings, the community - and teachers helps lay a solid foundation for children's success in school. The work of this task force will equip early education programs across Georgia to partner with families to create a better future for our youngest learners."

The task force defined family engagement as "the shared responsibility of families, schools, and communities to actively promote, support, and sustain family wellbeing, healthy child development, strong family child relationships, and lifelong learning for all children and families." The group concluded that effective family engagement is intentional, universal, respectful, collaborative, and equitable.

In response to the task force's work, DECAL will invite families to participate on state advisory committees and will develop training and resources to provide early education programs with evidence-based strategies that will encourage families to be actively involved with their children's early education.

To review the full report, visit: <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/EarlyChildhoodGa-web.pdf>.

May Quality Rated Programs

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

We cannot read your

MIND.

That is why DECAL has



Bill Folsom
Training & Org Development Specialist

**EMPLOYEE
SUGGESTION
PROGRAM**

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

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, Savannah
First Congressional District

Susan Harper, Albany
Second Congressional District
(Secretary)

Kathy Howell, Carrollton
Third Congressional District

Phil Davis, Stone Mountain

Congratulations to the newest **QUALITY RATED** child care programs!

- | | |
|---|---|
| Myra F. Abdus-Saboor, East Point ★ ★ | ★ ★ Nashville/ Berrien County Head Start, Nashville |
| Childcare Network #21, Savannah ★ ★ | ★ ★ Delores A. Newborn, Brunswick |
| Childcare Network #222, Warner Robins ★ ★ ★ | ★ ★ Peachtree Academy, Avondale Estates |
| Childcare Network #233, Macon ★ ★ | ★ ★ Precious Possessions, Douglas |
| Creekstone Academy, Lithonia ★ | ★ Precious Possessions Preschool & Daycare, Dalton |
| Deans Bridge Head Start, Augusta ★ | ★ Melody L. Robinson, Decatur |
| Discovery Point #28, Newnan ★ ★ | ★ ★ ★ Jori Rose, Kingsland |
| Discovery Point #42, Covington ★ | ★ Seven Oaks Academy, Lilburn |
| Effingham Head Start Center, Guyton ★ ★ | ★ Sharon's Tiny Tots, Sylvania |
| Georgia Kids Academy, Hoschton ★ ★ ★ | ★ ★ Tara Academy, Atlanta |
| Globe's Learning Center, Atlanta ★ | ★ ★ Antoinette H. Taylor, Snellville |
| Growing Room Too, Columbus ★ ★ ★ | ★ ★ The Goddard School of
Flowery Branch, Flowery Branch |
| Kid's Advocacy Coalition At Len Lastinger, Tifton ★ | ★ Towne Lake Academy - North Campus, Woodstock |
| Lanier County Head Start, Lakeland ★ ★ | ★ ★ YMCA Prime Time, Valdosta |
| Lil' Blessings Inc., Ashburn ★ | ★ ★ YMCA PrimeTime @ Clyattville Elementary, Valdosta |
| Meadowdale Learning Center - ★ | ★ YMCA PrimeTime @ Dewar Elementary, Valdosta |
| Houston Lake Road, Perry | ★ ★ YMCA PrimeTime @
Moulton-Branch Elementary, Valdosta |
| Meadowdale Learning Center - ★ ★ | ★ YMCA PrimeTime @ Westside Elementary, Valdosta |
| Moody Road, Warner Robins | ★ ★ YMCA PrimeTime at Pine Grove Elementary, Valdosta |
| Carolyn R. Miller, Attapulgus ★ ★ | |
| Kimberly M. Mills, Lithonia ★ | |



DECAL Priority:

Foster Organizational Excellence

DOAS Recognizes DECAL HR Efforts

On May 19, DECAL was recognized by the Georgia Department of Administrative Services for Best Practices in Human Resources Classification and Performance Management. Shown below (L-R) are Bart Gobeil, Governor's Chief Operating Officer, DECAL Deputy Commissioner Ray Higgins, DECAL Human Resources Director Robin Stevens, DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs, and Department of Administrative Services Commissioner Sid Johnson.

Fourth Congressional District

Carlene Talton, Decatur
Fifth Congressional District

Dawnn Henderson, Marietta
Sixth Congressional District

Sherron Murphy, Lawrenceville
Seventh Congressional District

Luann Purcell, Ed.D., Warner Robins
Eighth Congressional District
(Vice Chair)

Tammy Lenkeit, Hoschton
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)
Michelle Radford, Linda Loff, Karyn Presley, Stephen
Knighton, Scott Hall, Jennie Couture, and Rochelle Lindsey.*

