

# Decidedly DECAL

*Highlighting the Events That Shape Who We Are*



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## DECAL By the Numbers

**260** - Full-time DECAL employees

**5,538** - Licensed child care programs in Georgia

**3,845** - Classes in Georgia's Pre-K Program

**1,240** - Students in Georgia's Pre-K Summer Transition Program this summer

**1,285** - Programs participating in Quality Rated

**319** - Rated programs in Quality Rated

**55,000** - Children served monthly by Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)



## Quick Links

## Commissioner's Corner

*by Commissioner Bobby Cagle*



On May 27, DECAL was joined by Governor Nathan Deal, First Lady Sandra Deal, and leaders of several state agencies to launch a campaign to remind parents and caregivers of children about the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles. We're calling this campaign "Look Again," and it includes, among other things, a YouTube video featuring Georgia parents who have tragically lost children to vehicular heatstroke.

We're hoping this campaign will help raise awareness and prevent similar incidents in the future.

Governor Deal put it this way: "During Georgia'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. Since 2010, seven 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 taking the chance of leaving a child in a car, even for just a minute. Lives can be saved if we take the time to Look Again."

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

Over 370,000 children across the state depend on approximately 6,000 child care providers daily, most of whom transport children on a regular basis 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. According to our records, in FY2012, 21 children were left in vehicles by child care providers; 17 in FY2013; and already 18 in FY2014. While thankfully we have not seen any child deaths in child care centers since 2011, we want these dangerous close calls to decrease. Consequently, safely transporting children will remain a focus for our agency.

"Look Again" is a message to anyone caring for a child - child care programs, teachers, parents, and grandparents - to always account for the children in their care as they 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 DECAL employees, I am hoping each of you will join me in sharing the "Look

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



## Weather Channel Features "Look Again" Campaign



Commissioner Bobby Cagle was interviewed by Meteorologist Keith Carson about the "Look Again" campaign Saturday morning on The Weather Channel.

## "Look Again" Campaign YouTube Video

"Look Again" is DECAL's campaign calling for parents and caregivers of children to have heightened awareness this summer of the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles. The public awareness campaign includes a YouTube video featuring Georgia parents who have lost children to vehicular heatstroke.



[Watch the video.](#)

## Summer Transition Program

Again" video with family and friends using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. Featured in the video are interviews with Jenny Stanley, mother of six-year-old Sydney Marie Stanley of Evans, Georgia, who died in August 2010 when she became trapped in the family car while it was parked in the garage, and Charles Green, father of two-year-old Jazmin A'mya Green, a toddler who died in June 2011 after being left for two hours on a day care van in Jonesboro, Georgia.

Just last month, a two-year-old girl in Clarkston, Georgia died of heatstroke when she became trapped in the family car for over an hour, and our agency revoked the license of a child care center in Macon that left a five-year-old boy on a van for more than four hours last April. The problem continues, and we must take action. We're asking the public to be our 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.

Agencies participating in the news conference with us included the Georgia Department of Public Health; Georgia Department of Human Services; Georgia Department of Public Safety; Georgia State Patrol; Governor's Office of Highway Safety; Georgia Department of Transportation; and the Governor's Office for Children and Families. Supporting partners included Safe Kids Georgia, Emory Center for Injury Control, Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Georgia Child Care Association (GCCA), Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS), Prosecuting Attorneys Council of Georgia, and Voices for Georgia's Children.

Thanks in advance for the role you will play in the "Look Again" campaign. The lives of our children are far too precious to ignore or be complacent regarding this critically important issue.

## Georgia Child Vehicular Heatstroke Deaths

YEAR	NUMBER	LOCATIONS
2014	1	Clarkston - 2-year-old girl dies after apparently getting trapped inside her mother's car for over an hour.
2013	0	
2012	0	
2011	3	Jonesboro - 2-year-old girl left in daycare van for two hours Kennesaw - 5-month-old girl left in family car outside Ivy Hall day school for five hours Warner Robins - 3-year-old boy left in car outside family daycare for one hour
2010	3	Canton - 3-year-old girl left in family mini-van outside a church for undetermined amount of time Evans - 6-year-old girl left in family car in her driveway for undetermined amount of time Monroe County - 18-month-old boy left in family van at Hubbard Elementary School for 7-8 hours
2009	0	
2008	2	Jackson County - 2-month-old boy left in minivan at home for two hours Hephzibah - 6-week-old boy left in mom's car at home for over an hour
2007	2	Stone Mountain - 7-month-old boy left in car outside a relative's home for "several hours" Macon - 5 ½-month-old girl left in mother's car at The Coliseum Medical Center for entire day

*Source: Department of Earth & Climate Sciences, San Francisco State University,  
Update March 14, 2014*





Georgia's Pre-K students at The Sunshine House in Loganville did an Alphabet Countdown to their Pre-K last day recently. For the fifth year in a row, Georgia's Pre-K Program will offer a six-week Summer Transition Program (STP) for rising kindergartners who either did not attend Pre-K or Head Start, or attended but need additional support to be ready for Kindergarten in the fall. The program is targeted for children whose families are eligible for Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS). This year, 960 five-year-old students will fill 60 classrooms preparing for Kindergarten, while for the second year another 280 four-year-old students will participate in 20 classrooms offering summer transition for rising Pre-K students.

## June Birthdays



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

- 2 - Jimea Evans
- 4 - Nikki Beavers
- 4 - Aleisha Golden
- 6 - Jennifer McCreary
- 7 - Rukiya Thomas
- 10 - Deborah Toney
- 12 - Annie Blair
- 14 - Ashley Cunningham
- 14 - Dorothy Mitchell
- 15 - Janice Haker
- 20 - Ashia Jackson
- 21 - Margie Landers
- 23 - Diane Dye
- 24 - Edward Rowell
- 25 - Toni Anderson
- 26 - Charles Cobb Jr.
- 26 - Miranda Murphy
- 28 - Lisa Henderson
- 28 - Bridgette Washington
- 30 - Coty Johnson
- 30 - Marybeth McGee



At left, DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle, Georgia's First Lady Sandra Deal and Georgia Governor Nathan Deal are pictured at the launch of the "Look Again" campaign. Above, Gov. Deal speaks of the dangers of leaving children in vehicles, particularly in hot weather. Below, various agencies show their support for this public awareness effort.



## DECAL Priority:

## Health & Safety

### Children Across Georgia Have Access to Free Meals this Summer

DECAL has announced that free meals are available throughout the state for eligible children age 18 and under (and some eligible adults) as a part of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The SFSP provides free meals in low-income areas during the summer months when students are out of school. Over 60% of Georgia's school-aged children are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Through the SFSP, these children can receive free meals during the summer when they may not have daily access to well-balanced meals. The SFSP is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and administered in Georgia by DECAL.

Parents and children can find sites in their area where meals will be served by visiting DECAL's website at <http://decals.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).

## 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

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Twelfth Congressional District

Judy Neal, Stockbridge  
Thirteenth Congressional District

Tangela Johnson, Cohutta  
Fourteenth Congressional District

According to Falita Flowers, DECAL's Nutrition Services Director, "When school is out, too many families across the state worry about how their children will receive nutritious meals on a daily basis. The SFSP helps fill that gap and contributes to the overall health and well-being of children."

For more information about the SFSP and to locate an area site, [visit DECAL's website](#). Use the search function (zip code or county) to find a list of all local facilities open to the public and sponsors, addresses, maps, contact names, and phone numbers.

## DECAL Priority:

## Quality

### Selection Process Begins for Early Education Empowerment Zones

Site visits and interviews will take place over the summer to help determine the location of the four Early Education Empowerment Zones, or E<sup>3</sup>Zs, across Georgia, part of the \$51.7 million Early Learning Challenge Grant received last year from the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Kristin Bernhard, Deputy Commissioner for System Reform, said DECAL first used quantitative data from the Department of Economic Development, the Department of Community Affairs, and the Department of Education to identify eleven geographic regions of the state.

"We will ultimately decide the final locations considering both quantitative data and qualitative data," Bernhard told the Board of Early Care and Learning last month. "First, we looked at poverty rates, unemployment, and per capita income, as well as students not meeting the standard for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading on the CRCT, the percentage of licensed capacity filled by CAPS, and other factors."



*Kristin Bernhard*

Bernhard said now DECAL will examine qualitative data to narrow down the list of eleven potential zones to the final four. Communities could improve their chances of becoming E<sup>3</sup>Zs by having strong Quality Rated child care programs in or nearby, universities or technical colleges with strong programs in early childhood education, and support from public school superintendents. She hopes to have the four zones selected sometime this fall.


Bernhard said each zone will target around 10,000 children and receive over \$2 million in resources with which to serve them.

Governor Nathan Deal designated DECAL as the lead agency for the Early Learning Challenge Grant on behalf of the state. "Increasing the percentage of Georgia students reading on grade level by the completion of third grade has been a top priority of my administration," said Deal. "With this strategic investment in our state's work, we will be able to ensure that more of our youngest students are positioned to meet this critical benchmark and thus improve our long-term economic competitiveness."

Georgia was awarded \$51.7 million to be used over a four-year period, the highest amount awarded among the six winners in round three of the grant competition. Georgia's grant includes a variety of projects, all of which focus on improving services to Georgia's children from birth to age eight and their families. While DECAL is the lead agency for the grant, the work will be accomplished through partnerships with other state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations.

## GAPITC and GA AAP Partner to Support Professional

You know that **great idea** you have for our department?  
 We cannot read your **MIND**.  
 That is why DECAL has



Randy Hudgins  
 Research Specialist

**EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM**

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

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

## Development

The Georgia chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (GA AAP) and the Georgia Program for Infant and Toddler Care (GAPITC) developed a partnership in 2012 to support the professional development of infant and toddler early care and education professionals. Through this partnership we have developed and continue to develop free professional development seminars available across the state to families, teachers, administrators, other state agencies, and state approved trainers. In addition, a pediatrician from the GA AAP supports our Ask the Expert column on the GAPITC website offering advice and answering questions for families and early educators.

Two of our recent professional development seminars were offered in English and Spanish and focused on Medicine Administration in Early Education Settings and Developmental Milestones for Infants and Toddlers. The Developmental Milestones seminar focused on the pediatricians' perspective of brain development, toxic stress, preventive health, and injury prevention.

## DECAL Priority: Organizational Excellence

### The Faces of DECAL

DECAL faces featured in the banner of this issue are (L-R) Liz Young, Sylvia Boykin, Rebecca McDonald, Roslyn Coleman, Lauris Cooper, Richard Bartlett, and Kenyatta Wade.

### Flowers Named Director of Nutrition Services



Falita Flowers

Falita Flowers has been named Director of Nutrition Services after serving as interim director since September 2013. Flowers joined DECAL in February 2002 as a Nutrition Program Coordinator. In 2005 she was promoted to Compliance Review Manager and in 2008 was promoted to Program Manager.

"I've enjoyed working with Falita since joining DECAL, and we appreciate her many years of service to the agency," said Ray Higgins, Deputy Commissioner of Finance and Administration.

"During this time she has demonstrated valuable and extensive knowledge of the various nutrition programs helping make her an ideal selection for this role."