



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Sponsors needed to serve meals to children during the summer**

**ATLANTA, Ga., (February 27, 2012)** – The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is looking for eligible sponsors to serve nutritious meals to children throughout Georgia this summer. The SFSP, administered by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (Bright from the Start), is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The SFSP provides free meals to eligible children in low-income areas during the summer months when students are out of school where they would normally receive breakfast and/or lunch. Approximately 3.6 million meals were served through the SFSP during the summer of 2011, an increase of 9.3% from the previous year. Bright from the Start is looking for additional sponsors this year to serve even more meals to children who receive free and reduced price lunches during the school year.

The following entities can qualify as sponsors: public or private nonprofit schools; universities, colleges, or camps; units of local government; private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based organizations considered tax exempt by the IRS.

Sponsors can operate the program and feed children at sites such as schools, churches, recreation centers, community and migrant centers, and other local community areas where children congregate and play. Sponsors are reimbursed according to federal guidelines for the meals they serve. They can prepare and serve meals themselves, receive bulk items from a vendor or contract with a food service management company to prepare meals for the program.

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## Page 2 -- Sponsors needed to serve meals to children during the summer

Sponsors receive training regarding the application process; setting up and operating a successful SFSP; nutrition education; and they receive technical assistance during the time the program is operating.

Bright from the Start ensures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subject to discrimination in any activity of the Summer Food Service Program.

For more information on becoming an SFSP sponsor, visit Bright from the Start's website at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/BftS/SFSPBecomingASponsor.aspx>, or contact the Summer Food Service Program team at Bright from the Start toll free at 1-855-550-SFSP (7377) or via e-mail, [SFSP@decal.ga.gov](mailto:SFSP@decal.ga.gov).

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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**Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning** is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to [www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov).