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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Georgia's Quality Rated Meets Year-End Goal

Kids World Academy in Mableton and Easter Seals Child Development Center in Roswell are the latest to join Statewide Initiative for Quality Early Education Programs

ATLANTA, Ga., (December 18, 2014) – With help from all across Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and external supporters, Georgia's Quality Rated Program has met its 2014 year-end goal to reach 1,755 Georgia child care programs participating in the statewide initiative that helps parents in selecting quality early education programs in their communities. That record only stood for a short time before the 1,756th program joined in about a half hour later.

Earlier today, Kids World Academy in Mableton became the 1,755th provider participating in Quality Rated. Fast on its heels was the Easter Seals Child Development Center in Roswell. Over 400 programs have been rated with one, two or three stars.

“This was the first key performance measure of Georgia's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, and a critical milestone towards achieving our state's ultimate goal of 100% participation by all child care providers,” said Kristin Bernhard, Deputy Commissioner for System Reform. “We wouldn't have hit this milestone without the hard work of DECAL employees across all divisions of the agency, particularly our child care licensing consultants. While this is a big achievement for Quality Rated, it's a reflection on the dedication of our entire agency.”

Georgia's Quality Rated Meets Year-End Goal – Page 2

Simply by participating in Quality Rated, programs receive free approved training, free technical assistance, and are eligible for a \$1,000 Materials Mini Grant. Star-rated programs receive generous bonus packages of classroom materials contributed by private philanthropic partners and are eligible to collect tiered bonuses in the state/federal reimbursements they receive from Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) Program, which provides subsidized child care for low income families.

“Members of the philanthropic community continue to demonstrate their support for quality early care and education; just recently the Goizueta Foundation and the Zeist Foundation have contributed an additional \$2 million to help us provide incentives to programs participating in Quality Rated,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy Jacobs.

Ratings are posted for public inspection at www.qualityrated.org and the DECAL web site www.decals.ga.gov.

Quality Rated was formally launched by Governor Nathan Deal and DECAL in July, 2013.

About Bright from the Start

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 Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, 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.decals.ga.gov.