

Decidedly DECAL

Highlighting the Events That Shape Who We Are



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DECAL By the Numbers

11,859 - Visits by Child Care Services FY 2012-2013

1,801 - Investigations by Child Care Services FY 2012-2013

84,000 - Students anticipated in Georgia's Pre-K Program this school year

20 - Hyperthermia deaths of children left in vehicles in Georgia 1998-2012

1,300 - Child care programs participating in Quality Rated

1.5 million - Meals served in the first six weeks of 2013 Summer Food Service Program

1,017 - DECAL Facebook Friends

506 - DECAL Twitter Followers

3,800 - Georgia's Pre-K classrooms for 2013-2014

4,500 - Children enrolled in blended Head Start/Pre-K Program in Georgia



During the Pre-K School year, Commissioner Cagle visits many schools to read to students.

Quick Links

[DECAL on Facebook](#)



Commissioner's Corner

by Commissioner Bobby Cagle



Recently, I had the honor of participating in a national webinar on Pre-K and early childhood education hosted by the Education Writers Association (EWA). Reporters from across the country had questions about Georgia's universal, lottery-funded Pre-K program.

As DECAL Commissioner, it is always a pleasure to talk about Georgia's Pre-K Program, recognized as one of the top state programs in the nation based on quality standards, teacher qualifications and enrollment. As we begin our 21st year serving approximately 84,000 four year olds in 3,800 classrooms across the state, I could not be more proud of our accomplishments through this unique public-private partnership. About half of our classes this year will be housed in public schools, the other half in private settings including child care learning centers, Head Start programs, charter schools, military bases, universities and technical colleges.

Since 1995, Georgia's Pre-K Program has been accessible to any four-year-old resident of Georgia regardless of family income. However, almost 60% of our students receive other social services.

Georgia's Pre-K classes in the 2013-2014 school year start between late July and the week following Labor Day. Last year, 66% of all four year olds in Georgia were served by state Pre-K and Head Start, with a statewide Pre-K enrollment of nearly 83,000.

Please join me in thanking Governor Deal and state legislators who have restored the Pre-K school year to 180 days in the 2013-2014 school year. As the availability of lottery revenues becomes clearer, additional strategic decisions will be made concerning future investments in Georgia's Pre-K Program.

I recognize that the Pre-K program has room for improvement, especially in the areas of teacher salaries, class size (now with teacher-student ratios of 1:11), and family engagement and support. I assure you that these concerns will be priorities as we work this year with legislators, providers, parents and child care advocates.

This is an exciting time for our Pre-K students, as they begin their formal educational journeys on the strong foundation of Georgia's Pre-K Program - a journey that will hopefully stay on course through high school and on to college or careers. To our providers, teachers, parents, DECAL staff and especially those four year olds, I offer my best wishes for a very successful year.

If I can ever be of service to you, contact me at 404-651-7432 or bobby.cagle@decal.ga.gov.

Adams Offers tips for "Pre-K First Day"

"Starting school is an exciting time for children and families," says Susan Adams, assistant commissioner

[DECAL on Twitter](#)



[DECAL Website](#)

Braves Tickets Going to Path2College 529 Plan Contest Winner

Our friends at the Path2College 529 Plan want to send a Georgia child care program to an Atlanta Braves game in September! Formerly known as the Georgia Higher Education Savings Plan (GHESP), the Path2College helps families prepare for the future costs of college tuition and other qualified expenses, such as fees, books, and certain room and board costs for colleges in Georgia and nationwide.

To be included in the drawing for the Braves tickets, child care programs can simply request brochures for their facilities or host a presentation at their centers. The drawing will be held the first week in September. The winner will receive four free tickets to the Saturday, September 14, 2013, game between the Atlanta Braves and the San Diego Padres.

For more information and to enter the contest, email Path2College@gfsc.org with subject line Atlanta Braves. Good luck and GO BRAVES!



Pictured (L-R) are Path2College 529 Plan employees Deborah Smith, Administrative Assistant; Cassandra Sherrill, Marketing Specialist; Mitch Seabaugh, Executive Director; and Renee Hicks, Marketing Specialist.

DECAL Participates in "Speak Your Mind Monday"



DECAL was proud to participate in a "Speak Your Mind Monday" event with State Representative Valenica Stovall (D-74) held July 22, 2013, at Clayton State University. Rep. Stovall's district includes the cities of Morrow, Lake City, Forest Park, Riverdale, and College Park, all located in Clayton County.

DECAL presented its departmental priorities along with updates from Child Care Services, Quality Initiatives, Georgia's Pre-K Program

for Georgia's Pre-K Program. "This is a big step, and we are excited to provide so many children with their first school experience."

Adams offers families the following tips to help their child's first day in Pre-K go smoother and be less stressful:



Susan Adams

- Send your child to school in clothes she or he can manage independently in the bathroom: No overalls.
- Make sure your child's shoes are comfortable for playtime. Slip-on shoes or shoes with Velcro fasteners are easiest for children to manage.
- Visit the classroom before school starts so your child is familiar with the new surroundings.
- Tell your child's teacher about any fears he or she may have.
- Discuss any special dietary needs or allergies your child may have with the teacher and ask the teacher to explain their program's policies around meals.
- Complete any necessary forms or releases your Pre-K provider may require for dispensing medication during the school day.
- Locate the bathroom with your child, and determine any special bathroom routines the school observes.
- Build in extra time for the first day: Make sure you have time to say good-bye.
- Determine if your child needs a blanket for rest time: Can he or she bring a favorite stuffed animal?
- Send along a family photo in your child's backpack in case she or he gets lonely.

DECAL Priority:

Health & Safety

Heatstroke Prevention Day Media Event Reminds

Caregivers Not to Leave Children Unattended in Cars

Wednesday, July 31, 2013, was National Heatstroke Prevention Day. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) spearheaded a social media awareness day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. using the hash tag #heatstroke on both Facebook and Twitter.

More than half of all vehicle-related heatstroke deaths in children are caused by a child accidentally being left in a car, and more than 30% are from a child getting into a hot car on their own. One way to remember the warnings is with the word ACT: Avoid heatstroke; Create reminders; Take action.

In May, DECAL participated with other state agencies and partner organizations in a news conference at the State Capitol reminding families and caregivers of the dangers associated with leaving children unattended in vehicles. DECAL joined these agencies to express our concerns and demonstrate how fast temperatures rise inside a closed vehicle, especially here in Georgia.

Two recent news conferences on the importance of transportation and not leaving children unattended in vehicles are posted on our [DECAL website](#).

and Nutrition Services.

Show in the photo above are (L-R) State Rep. Stovall, Deputy Commissioner for Programs Keith Bostick, Assistant Commissioner of Child Care Services Kristie Lewis, Director of External Affairs Dee Bolden, Program Manager for Nutrition Services Falita Flowers, Director of Quality Initiatives Dr. Laura Johns and Assistant Commissioner for Georgia's Pre-K Program Susan Adams.

August Birthdays



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

- 1 - Gwen L. Kahn
- 5 - Paula Lawrence
- 6 - Valerie H. Coulton
- 6 - Ira M. Sudman
- 7 - Kay W. Pollard
- 11 - Vicki J. Watts
- 12 - Kristie D. Lewis
- 14 - Denise A. Jenson
- 16 - Karen S. McGill
- 19 - Monique R. Johnson
- 23 - Susan A. Simpson
- 25 - D. Bart Ellington
- 26 - S. Kay McCorkle
- 31 - Cynthia M. Caver

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
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, Flowery Branch
Ninth Congressional District

Janice Gallimore, Greensboro
Tenth Congressional District

Victor Morgan, Cartersville
Eleventh Congressional District
(Chair)

Jeri Kropp, Statesboro
Twelfth Congressional District



Commissioner Bobby Cagle with Jennifer Stanley, a local parent who in August 2010 lost her six-year-old daughter Sydney when the child became trapped inside the family's car while parked in their garage. Today Ms. Stanley speaks on a regular basis warning audiences about the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles.

DECAL Priority:

Quality

Governor Deal Recognizes Georgia's first Quality Rated Child Care Programs

On Tuesday, July 16, Governor Nathan Deal held a news conference at the state Capitol recognizing Georgia's first Quality Rated child care programs. Similar to other service industries like restaurants and hotels, Quality Rated uses one, two and three stars to indicate programs that meet a set of standards exceeding the state's minimum licensing requirements. First Lady Sandra Deal and DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle also spoke at the event highlighting Deal's vision for improving early education.

"I believe education offers one of the premier ways of attracting businesses, retaining businesses and watching them and the Georgia economy thrive," said Governor Deal. "As much as Quality Rated will benefit Georgia and our economy, it also sets our state's children up for success - and that is equally as important. By giving parents a way to distinguish between low-quality child care and great child care, we can ensure our youngest learners receive a jump start on life."

Ratings are posted for public inspection at www.qualityrated.org and the DECAL web site www.decal.ga.gov. Nearly 1,300 child care programs are participating in Quality Rated, with approximately 230 programs now rated.

Judy Neal, Stockbridge
Thirteenth Congressional District

Vacant
Fourteenth Congressional District

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

your brain is only young once

If your child is 5 or under, now is the time to help them live a happier, healthier life.

Introducing Georgia's community-powered early education rating system.

Make the right choice for your child.
Choose Quality Rated.



qualityrated.org
877-ALL-GAKIDS



Shown at top are Governor Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal. At bottom the Deals are pictured with DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle and representatives from Georgia's first Quality Rated programs.

DECAL Priority: Organizational Excellence

DECAL Welcomes New Board Member

Ms. Tammy Lenkeit was recently named to the Board of Early Care and Learning. Governor Nathan Deal appointed Ms. Lenkeit to represent the 9th Congressional District.



Ms. Tammy Lenkeit

Ms. Lenkeit works as a senior finance operations manager for Cisco Systems, Inc. She has been with Cisco for seven years and has spent the majority of her professional career in various finance and consulting roles with companies including MCI Telecommunications and Arthur Andersen.

Ms. Lenkeit earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Florida State University and a master's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. She has two children who attend the World Language Academy, a Hall County charter school. They reside in Flowery Branch.

A product of the public education system herself and with two children in Georgia public schools, Ms. Lenkeit believes strongly in equal access to quality public education and funded community programs for families and children. She is excited about this opportunity to be involved in the Board and contributing to improving the futures of Georgia's children.

Spotlight on...

Donna Pettigrew-Jackson

Donna Pettigrew-Jackson recently joined DECAL as Special Assistant to Commissioner Bobby Cagle. In her position, Pettigrew-Jackson assists Cagle in providing for the early care and education of hundreds of thousands of Georgia's children, including programs focused on licensing, nutrition, child care subsidy, quality

improvement, and Georgia's Pre-K Program.

Pettigrew-Jackson has worked in social services for more than 13 years with the Children's Family and Community Partnerships in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the Georgia Department of Human Services. Most recently she served as Program Operations Manager at DHS where she handled special projects and community relations, managed the child welfare budget and supervised the administrative staff. Pettigrew-Jackson has also worked as executive assistant and marketing director for a Milwaukee shopping center and as a program assistant at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Pettigrew-Jackson earned a bachelor of arts degree from Grace Christian College in Loris, South Carolina, and an associate's degree in Theology from Grace Theological Seminary.

She is pictured below with Commissioner Cagle.



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