

Decidedly DECAL

Highlighting the Events That Shape Who We Are



May 2017 - In This Issue

- [By the Numbers](#)
- [Follow DECAL on Social Media](#)
- [Decidedly DECAL CALi Quiz Winner](#)
- [DECAL TV Quiz Winner](#)
- [New Faces and Places](#)
- [DECAL Activity Challenge 2017 Gets Underway](#)
- [Ashbee to Lead Early Care and Learning Foundation](#)
- [Pre-K TOTY Meet with Governor](#)
- [Privacy Matters](#)
- [May Birthdays](#)
- [A Day in the Life of...](#)
- [Virtual Suggestion Box](#)
- [Board of Early Care and Learning](#)
- [Commissioner's Corner](#)
- [Employees Share Appreciation for Their Colleagues](#)
- [System Reform Launches New Organizational Structure](#)
- [Quality Rated Team Participates in National Conference](#)
- [Update from DECAL CAPS Team](#)
- [New Quality Rated Programs](#)

DECAL By the Numbers

4,827 - Licensed child care programs in Georgia
1,279 - Quality Rated child care programs in Georgia
80,830 - Student enrollment in Georgia's Pre-K Program

Commissioner's Corner

by Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs



Dear DECAL Co-workers,

In this issue I want to talk about DECAL's second value: *Exhibiting organizational excellence*...words that can mean as many things as the people who read them. What exactly does *organizational excellence* mean and how does an organization like DECAL achieve it?



To help myself answer those questions, I "googled" organizational excellence and found a huge body of work. But one article immediately grabbed my attention; its title: *Organizational Excellence Is About Being Perfect Together*.

This article gave me new insight into organizational excellence. In several ways it liberated me as a leader and as a person. I'm not a perfect individual. I'm not a perfect leader. And this article explained how trying to be a perfect individual...or expecting our staff or co-workers to be perfect individually...can actually hinder organizational excellence. It's smarter...and easier...to strive for perfection together.

I don't want to say too much. Instead, I ask you to go to the link below and read the short article for yourself:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/great-work-cultures/organizational-excellence_b_5673755.html

After you read it, I'd love to hear what you think of this article, so please e-mail me your thoughts. As

52,013- Georgia children in care receiving Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) scholarships
78,553,644 - Meals served in Georgia through federal nutrition programs in FY2016

Follow DECAL on Social Media

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



Decidedly DECAL CALi Quiz Winner



Amy Page

DECAL's Policy and Process Improvement Manager Amy Page is the winner of this month's Decidedly DECAL CALi Quiz. She won two tickets to Zoo Atlanta. Amy's name was drawn from all employees who took the quiz and scored 100. To win, read this issue of Decidedly DECAL and complete the next quiz for your chance to score some fun prizes donated by local businesses!

DECAL TV Quiz Winner



Carrie Spangler

DECAL's CCS Coordinator Carrie Spangler is the winner of this month's DECAL TV Quiz. She won two tickets to The College Football Hall of Fame. Carrie's name was drawn from all employees who took the quiz and scored 100. To win, watch next month's DECAL TV episode and look out for the next quiz for your chance to score some fun prizes donated by local businesses!

New Faces and Places

Congratulations to the following employees who joined the DECAL team in April:

your commissioner, I want to create a climate where we employ our collective strengths, more than focus on individual weaknesses, to create corporate excellence that's recognized around the state.

Thank you for your commitment to excellence as we serve children, families, the public, and each other.

DECAL Employees Share Appreciation for Their Colleagues

State Employee Recognition Week will be held May 7-13, 2017. In observance of this week, DECAL employees were asked to offer kudos to their co-workers.

To: Arielle Deadwyler, CAPS Customer Service Specialist

From: Rita B. Lang, CAPS

Scholarship Administration Director *Thank you for always being a person I can count on in a pinch.*



To: John Gardner, Criminal Records Administrative Assistant

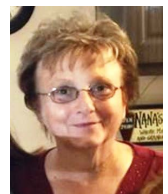
From: Julie Harnage, Training and Organizational Development Specialist

Thanks, John, for always checking on me. Since my first week here at DECAL, you have always made me feel welcome and a part of the team here! I appreciate your great attitude, candor and great ideas. DECAL is a better place because of you.

To: Sherrie Mullis, Nutrition Compliance Examiner SW

From: Aleisha B. Golden, Nutrition Compliance Examiner SW

I would like to acknowledge Sherrie Mullis for her heart, kindness, openness and desire to do a great job. Since the first day of meeting, she has always been helpful, open minded and most of all caring. She puts others needs before her own. I am thankful to have her as a co-worker and on my team. I want everyone to know that her love and compassion is contagious! Thank you.



Sherrie Mullis

To: Elisabetta Kasfir, Assistant Commissioner for Federal Programs

From: Rita B. Lang, CAPS Scholarship Administration Director

Thank you for everything...for your vast knowledge, endless patience and your tenacity. I learn something daily from you.



To: Dorothy "DOT" Mitchell, CCS Administrative Assistant

From: Barbara D. Sanders, Business Analyst - IT

Thank you for your support! Every time I call for help, you always step up and lend a helping hand! Thanks for backing me up with the Wellness activities and special events at DECAL. Thank you for all you do!

- Audits & Compliance welcomes Audit Manager Gail McNeely
- ELC System Reform welcomes EHS Partnership Specialist Nilia Lalin
- Legal welcomes Legal Administrative Assistant Kanisha Copenny
- Legal welcomes Criminal History Supervisor Sherry Grant
- Legal welcomes Legal Administrative Assistant Ouicia Jolly
- Legal welcomes CRC Operations Supervisor Kimberly Howard
- Instructional Support welcomes Workforce Development Specialist Pamela Hall
- CCS welcomes Comp Consultant CCS NE Stacy Whitten
- CCS welcomes CCS Administrative Assistant Shaketia Robinson

DECAL Activity Challenge Gets Underway



The DECAL Activity Challenge 2017 has officially kicked off, and the DECAL Wellness Committee is encouraging you to get moving.

Formerly the Walking Challenge, the Activity Challenge is a friendly fitness competition between DECAL departments to promote increased physical activity and optimal health. For those of you who enjoy a variety of activities, we have posted an "Activity Conversion" chart on POLAR. Refer to this chart to convert other physical activity, such as swimming, gardening, or yoga, into steps

In addition to enjoying the many health benefits of regularly exercise, the winning team will maintain "bragging" rights for one year, and the top three individual walkers will win gift cards of \$50, \$30, or \$20.

Get moving, DECALers!

Ashbee to Lead Early Care and Learning Foundation

Gov. Nathan Deal has tapped Deputy Chief of Staff of Executive Office Operations Carrie Ashbee to head the newly created Department of Early Care and Learning Foundation, which launches on July 1. The nonprofit organization, called the Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning, will

Dorothy Mitchell

To: Elizabeth Holland, CCS Enforcement Unit Manager
From: Rita B. Lang, CAPS Scholarship Administration Director

Thank you for all your help recently with interviews. I needed and really appreciate it.

To: Mark Dock, Senior Recruiting Specialist
From: Julie Harnage, Training and Organizational Development Specialist

Thanks, Mark, for always having a great smile and fabulous "can do" attitude! It's so great to have such a wonderful teammate who is always willing to pitch in whatever the task and a great resource with whom I can brainstorm. I'm SO grateful that you joined our team!

To: LaVerne Seales, LaQuillia Tatum and Renee' Lind, CAPS Scholarship Administration Region Managers

From: Rita B. Lang, CAPS Scholarship Administration Director
Thanks for joining our team.

To: Rachel Fowler & Lacey Lewis, Quality Improvement and Training Consultants
From: Shawnell M. Johnson, MAT, Quality Improvement and Training Unit Manager

I appreciate Lacey and Rachel taking on leadership roles as consultants in the Quality Improvement and Training Unit. They are accountable and helpful by supporting team members in the division with a variety of tasks and projects. They both take the initiative by creating resources and communicating important information to other consultants. They are always willing to volunteer for special committees and get the work done with quality and a smile. Thank you Lacey and Rachel for your hard work and dedication to CCS!



*Rachel Fowler
and Lacey
Lewis*

To: Arlene Green, CAPS Administrative Assistant
From: Rita B. Lang, CAPS Scholarship Administration Director

Thank you for keeping me straight and for your patience.

To: Robin Stevens, HR Director
From: Julie Harnage, Training and Organizational Development Specialist

Thanks, Robin, for taking the time to expose me to the different areas of HR. I have appreciated how you have taken the time to involve me in these various areas which have helped to stretch and grow my knowledge and talents. I can't thank you enough for the extremely insightful feedback and knowledge which you have shared!

To: Keia Cole, CAPS Business Operations Specialist
From: Rita B. Lang, CAPS Scholarship Administration Director

Thank you for always being willing to do the other stuff.

To: Donna Johnson and Laura Wagner, CAPS Family Support Directors
From: Rita B. Lang, CAPS Scholarship Administration Director

Thank you for all your help recently with interviews. I needed and really appreciate it.

To: Keturah Washington, Pre-K Quality Support Administrative Assistant
From: Isha Barrie, Professional Learning Intern

I appreciate Keturah for her wonderful, cheery, and warm outlook on life. She always has a smile and words of encouragement to brighten up my day. Keturah is sweet, funny, helpful, and most importantly a professional. She is an amazing person to work with, and it has been an absolute pleasure to know

promote partnerships between businesses, charities, institutions of higher education, local and public school systems and early care and education programs. Its purpose is to support educational excellence for children and families.



Carrie Ashbee

"I am thrilled to have Carrie join our outstanding team and look forward to the success of the Foundation in supporting the important work we do every day for children, families, teachers and providers," said Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs.

Ashbee has worked for Gov. Deal for nearly a decade. She began her career in Washington, D.C., serving with then-Congressman Deal in various positions, including executive assistant and scheduler. In 2011, Ashbee returned to Georgia to join Gov. Deal as his executive assistant and later as deputy chief of staff. She currently serves as chair of the Capitol Arts Standards Committee overseeing the implementation of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. statue on Capitol grounds.

Ashbee graduated from the University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in Advertising and Public Relations. She and her husband, Blake, have one daughter and are members of Northside United Methodist Church in Atlanta.

Pre-K Program Teachers of the Year Meet with Governor Deal



Keturah Washington

her. Keturah's personality shines the most when she is doing what she loves, and when she is giving out the BEST hugs!!

To: April Rogers, CCS Program Operations Director

From: Rita B. Lang, CAPS Scholarship Administration Director

Thank you for all your help recently with interviews. I needed and really appreciate it.

To: Mary Stoklas, Quality Rated Operations Coordinator

From: Rita B. Lang, CAPS Scholarship Administration Director

Thanks for being an ear and my personal seamstress.

To: Rhonda Gunn, Employment and Benefits Manager

From: Julie Harnage, Training and Organizational Development Specialist

Thanks, Rhonda, for always having a minute to explain something, review a concern I might have or just be there to lend a listening ear. It's nice to sit beside someone who is such a wealth of knowledge who is always open to help in any way possible!

To: Sabrina Henry, HR Generalist

From: Julie Harnage, Training and Organizational Development Specialist

Thanks, Sabrina, for always pitching in no matter what the situation or issue. You are the epitome of a team player and I really appreciate you! Thanks for always taking the time to say hello and make me smile!



Kristie Lewis (front row, far right) with CCS Management Team

To: Kristie Lewis, Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Services

From: Shawnell M. Johnson, MAT, Quality Improvement and Training Unit Manager

The whole team would like to express our gratitude to you for being an inspiration to us. Working under your leadership we have grown professionally and personally. Thank you for your compassion, support, and willingness to help each of us sharpen our skills to be good leaders. The CCS Management Team loves you!

To: Sandra McNeal, Front Desk Receptionist

From: Julie Harnage, Training and Organizational Development

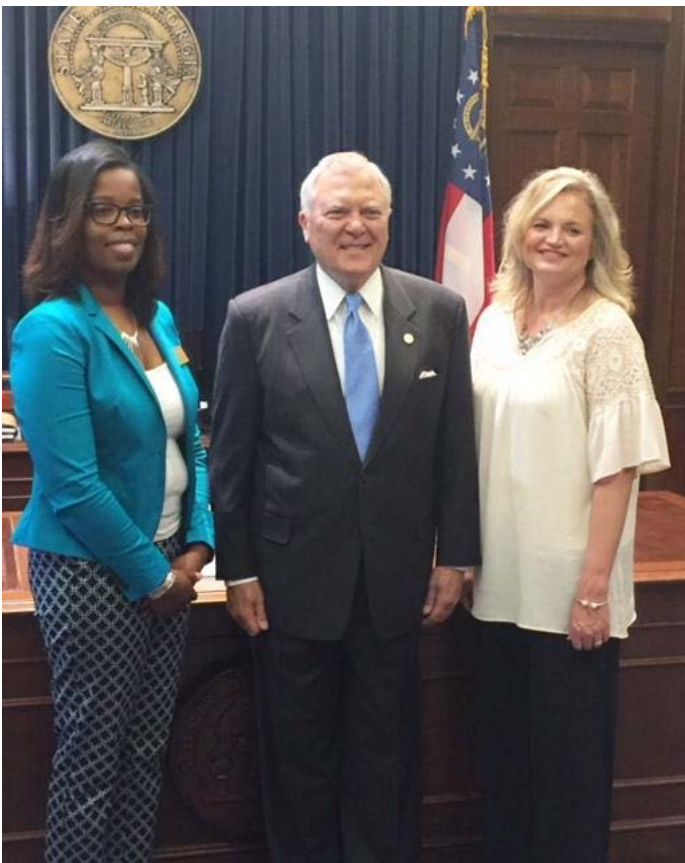
Specialist

Thanks, Sandra, for being you! You are such a special person here at DECAL. Your calming presence and beautiful smile brightens the day of so many every day!

To: Reisha Merriman, CAPS Customer Service Specialist

From: Rita B. Lang, CAPS Scholarship Administration Director

Thank you for always being a person I can count on in a pinch.



Our Georgia's Pre-K Program Teachers of the Year Channie Frazier and Connie Ellington met Governor Nathan Deal recently in his office at the State Capitol. Channie and Connie are the first Pre-K Teachers of the Year in the program's almost 25 year history.

Privacy Matters

by *Brian McKeen, Privacy Attorney*



Brian McKeen

How secure are you?

No, I'm not talking about your physical safety or your financial stability. I'm talking about how you handle confidential information at work. Take a quick look around your desk. Are there any files sitting around? Is your computer locked when you walk away? Do you use thumb drives? Do you access your personal email from your work

computer? Do you access your work email from your personal phone? Do you use your speaker phone?

To: Marcy Maioli, Project Manager, IT

From: Rita B. Lang, CAPS Scholarship Administration Director

Thank you for the "headaches." You are great at what you do!

System Reform Launches New Organizational Structure

DECAL's System Reform Division has launched a new organizational structure to better support DECAL's strategic goals.

The division has created the Quality Rated Policy and Partnerships Unit and the Quality Rated Operations Unit. Kristin Bernhard, Deputy Commissioner for System Reform, said the new organizational structure better supports all the parts of Quality Rated for both families looking for child care and for providers seeking to improve.



Kristin Bernhard

"The new organizational structure allows our division to focus on operational improvements such as decreasing processing time and maintaining accuracy and reliability, while also deepening the support we offer to child care providers to increase and maintain quality," Bernhard said. "I'm excited that we had great internal leaders ready to take System Reform -- and Quality Rated -- to the next level."

System Reform's Quality Rated Policy and Partnerships Unit is responsible for the support providers need to increase their quality as well as marketing and outreach for the rating system. Pam Stevens has taken on the role of the Quality Rated Policy and Partnerships Director. In this new role, Stevens will provide leadership for the Quality Rated Technical Assistance, Early Education Empowerment Zones (E3Z), Quality Rated Subsidy, the Quality Rated Help Desk and Support, and the Communication and Outreach units.

The new Quality Rated Operations Unit is responsible for the processes and observations that lead to a child care provider being issued a star rating. Denise Jenson will serve as the new Quality Rated Operations Director. In this role, she will lead the operations functions, which include Quality Rated Assessors, the Standardization & Evaluation Unit, and the Portfolio Unit.

The new organizational structure went into effect on April 1.

The answers to each of these questions can help answer the question of "How secure is your work environment?" from a privacy perspective. Here are some quick tips on how to properly answer the questions above:

- Always place any files with confidential information (SSN, school records, salary, etc.) in a locked location when away from your desk;
- Always lock your computer when stepping away from your desk. It only takes a few seconds to lock it and then unlock it when you return.
- Never download unencrypted confidential information to a thumb drive or any other type of portable storage device. If the device is portable and easy to transport, it is also easy to lose.
- Do not use your work computer to access your personal email accounts (Gmail, Hotmail, AOL, etc.). You may be downloading malicious software or bypassing DECAL privacy and security policies, potentially placing you, DECAL and all of our clients at risk.
- Do not use your personal phone or other portable device to access your work email. Your personal devices probably are not encrypted and likely contain security issues of which you are unaware.
- Do not use your speaker phone for work related calls unless you are behind closed doors. Not only is this practice distracting to your co-workers, it also allows others to hear what may be confidential information.

These are just a few steps that we can each take to help ensure the information we are entrusted with is properly used and protected. Remember to treat each file, each SSN, each application, and each record with the same level of care and discretion you would want used for your own confidential information.

May Birthdays



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

- 1 - Karen Mobley
- 1 - Jennifer Salies
- 1 - Margaret Tarrant
- 2 - Sharon Aston
- 2 - Margie Cook
- 4 - Taurus Jackson
- 4 - Jill O'Meara
- 6 - Cresia Jackson
- 7 - Michelle Hughes

Quality Rated Team Participates in National Conference

Members of our Quality Rated team recently participated in an Environment Rating Scale National Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Quality Rated Operations Director Denise Jenson said, "The focus of this conference was Continuous Quality Improvement and the Role of the Environment Rating Scales. We got to interact with and share in the wisdom of authors and collaborate with our colleagues and peers from around the country."



CAPS Team Embracing Opportunities to Enhance Support for Families

by Laura Wagner, CAPS Family Support Director

As you may have previously read in the March issue of Decidedly DECAL, our agency is making strides towards the transfer of the eligibility function of the CAPS program from the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) to DECAL. We wanted to take this opportunity to share an update with you about where we are in this process.

Our team is growing quickly! We have hired staff for each of our units over the last couple of months and have grown from a team of ten to a team of more than forty. Our new positions are spread throughout each of our three CAPS functional areas: Program Administration, Scholarship Administration, and Family Support.

We have also been working diligently to outline our processes and explore just how each program area will function, and how these functional areas will interact with one another. For example, when a new family applies for the CAPS program, they will work with a Scholarship

- 7 - Twylah Tippet
- 8 - Thea Stevens
- 11 - Reg Griffin
- 13 - Vanessa Brown
- 13 - Melissa Davis
- 13 - Melissa Donovan
- 14 - Lindsay Miller
- 15 - Crystal Hoffman
- 15 - Maria Reznik
- 16 - Jennifer Bridgeman
- 17 - Dianne Clarke
- 17 - Kori Woodward-Dickens
- 18 - Sandra McNeal
- 19 - Robyn Parham
- 20 - Mary Stoklas
- 22 - Angelette Anderson
- 24 - Iko Ezell-Blackmon
- 24 - Lakeyshia Tucker
- 25 - Jennifer Delorme
- 26 - Shericka Blount
- 26 - Margarita Scott
- 29 - Amy Browder
- 29 - April Brown
- 30 - Sonya James
- 31 - Grushan Robinson

Day in the Life of Barbara Sanders

Barbara Sanders is a Georgia native who has worked for DECAL since 2007. Here, she is a Business Analyst, and she also leads the Wellness Committee. Something she looks forward to in her job is "providing support to institutions/sponsors." She also loves "being able to be creative with planning special events at DECAL, IT monthly meetings, and wellness activities events." If Barbara were Commissioner for a day, she would take time to celebrate and host a DECAL family event, like a summer picnic at a park or a holiday dinner.



Barbara Sanders

Barbara married her high school sweetheart and has two children and two grandchildren. She loves to travel with her family, and she also loves serving the

Administration Specialist in order for their eligibility to be determined. After new families are enrolled in the program, Family Support Consultants will conduct welcome calls in order to talk through child care selections, licensing histories of child care providers, and more. Our Scholarship unit will be centrally located in Atlanta, and our Family Support staff will be regionally based throughout the state.

In addition to working on our internal program procedures with our new CAPS division, we are continuing to collaborate with our counterparts at DFCS in order to align plans for: communicating with families, providers and others about the eligibility transfer; workload distribution during the transfer; and for new procedures for the program. These three working groups are proving to be especially helpful as we intentionally plan for the future of the program.

Lastly, we are preparing our teams to be equipped to support our CAPS families by implementing technology and data solutions that streamline the processes that we develop. Much of this work centers around developing a phone system for families, as well as training our teams on the various data systems that they will use to work with families (including Compass, UCM, MaxStar, Georgia Gateway, and more).

We have a busy year ahead, but we are embracing each challenge as an opportunity to enhance our support for families who participate in the CAPS program.



community. In fact, she is an Administrator of Activities for the ladies and children's ministries at her church.

Something Barbara keeps in mind is to celebrate life all day, every day. Her favorite quote is Zig Ziegler's, "It is your attitude, more than your aptitude that will determine your altitude." She notes, "Attitude is the EYE of your soul! If your attitude is negative, you will see life negatively. If your attitude is positive, you will see life positively."

"I may not be able to change the world I see around me but I can change the way I see the world within me!" - Zig Ziegler

**Let Us Hear
From You!**

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

- ★★★ H.E.R.O. 's Instillment Academy, Albany
- ★Rivers Day Care, Savannah
- ★Safe Haven Learning Academy, College Park
- ★★★★ Rambam Day School, Savannah
- ★Islands YMCA Fun Club, Savannah
- ★★★ Rainbow Learning Center, Valdosta
- ★ Jacob's Ladder Educational Childcare Center, Centerville
- ★Graceland Institute of Early Learning, Albany
- ★★★ Small World Child Care Center, Thomaston
- ★★★ Fun Learning Academy, Albany
- ★★★★★ Treutlen Head Start, Soperton
- ★Teach Love & Care Learning Center, Rincon
- ★Kathy R. Brown, Atlanta
- ★★★ Kidz R Kidz Childcare and Learning Center, Statesboro
- ★★★ Rainbow Child Care Center (Sugar Hill), Sugar Hill
- ★★★★★ To The Top Youth Center, Wrens
- ★★★★★ Liberty Early Head Start, Hinesville
- ★★★ Dabel School LLC, Acworth
- ★★★ Wheeler Head Start, Alamo
- ★★★ Thelma L. DeVerger, Townsend

Got a great new idea for the Agency?
Share it through DECAL's

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, Midway
First Congressional District
(Secretary)

Susan Harper, Albany
Second Congressional District
(Vice Chair)

Kathy Howell, Carrollton
Third Congressional District

Phil Davis, Stone Mountain
Fourth Congressional District



*Congratulations to all of our
QUALITY RATED™ child care programs
who've increased their star rating
in April!*

- ★★ Intelli-Kids, Dublin (1 to 2 star)
- ★★ C-Three Childcare & Learning Center LLC, Macon (1 to 2 star)
- ★★★ Sheltering Arms - Norcross Center, Norcross (2 to 3 star)
- ★★ Arrow Christian Academy at College Park, College Park (1 to 2 star)
- ★★ KinderCare Learning Center, Smyrna (1 to 2 star)
- ★★★ Shawn Brown, Lithonia (2 to 3 star)
- ★★ Discovery Point #43, Marietta (1 to 2 star)
- ★★★ Discovery Point #3, Duluth (1 to 3 star)
- ★★ Childtime Childcare #1102, Lilburn (1 to 2 star)
- ★★ Tutor Time Child Care Learning Center, Smyrna (1 to 2 star)
- ★★ South Dekalb YMCA Lithonia Academy, Lithonia (1 to 2 star)
- ★★★ KinderCare Learning Center #1313, Lawrenceville (1 to 3 star)
- ★★★ Kiddy Land Early Learning Center, Madison (2 to 3 star)

*Visit qualityrated.org to find
Quality Rated child care programs in your area!*

Carlene Talton, Decatur
Fifth Congressional District

Dawnn Henderson, Marietta
Sixth Congressional District

Vacant
Seventh Congressional District

Luann Purcell, Ed.D., Warner Robins
Eighth Congressional District

Sheri Hooper, Gainesville
Ninth Congressional District

Janice Gallimore, Greensboro
Tenth Congressional District

Victor Morgan, Cartersville
Eleventh Congressional District
(Chair)

Jerri Kropp, Statesboro
Twelfth Congressional District

Melissa Boekhaus, MD., Mableton
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) Gail McNeely, Mary Houtz, Doris McQuiller, Sherry Grant, Suze Neal, Ray Higgins, and Stacy Whitten.
