

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning BRIGHT FROM THE START











DECAL By the Numbers 4,407 - Licensed child care

programs in Georgia 3,782 - Licensed child care programs applying for STABLE Round 3 2,477 - Quality Rated child care programs in Georgia 66,537 - Children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program 29,067 - Social media followers \$165 million - Distributed by DECAL to licensed child care programs in Georgia impacted by COVID-19

awarded a SOLVE scholarship to assist with the cost of completing virtual learning from a childcare program

Follow DECAL on

Social Media

5,437 - School-age children









DECAL Download Mentioned in AJC

Our weekly podcast, DECAL Download, got a nice mention in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution's political blog, The

Jolt, recently. Here's what they

had to say: "The state Department of Early Care and Learning reached a milestone this week when the agency's weekly DECAL Download podcast entered its

The program, hosted by

communications guru Reg

third season.

about the agency's work and interviews with guests like Gov. Brian Kemp." Children's Mental **Health Week Is**

Commissioner Amy Jacobs and

Griffin, features conversations

Commissioner's Corner by Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs

Dear DECALers,



LOOK AGAIN.

and thrive in all areas of their lives.

Since becoming commissioner of DECAL, many states and national organizations have contacted me about how the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning came to be. In these conversations I've always used the word evolved, because DECAL today doesn't look anything like it did when it began. And the reason DECAL today looks different is because we've added or adapted programs and services to meet the changing

needs of Georgia's children and families as one millennium ended and a new one began. The Office of School Readiness (OSR), the forerunner of DECAL, was created in 1996 primarily to administer the popular, lottery

funded Georgia's Pre-K Program, to license child care centers that

offered Pre-K, and to administer the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for child care programs. By 2004 the agency had grown in personnel, programs, and responsibility to the extent that the Georgia General Assembly created a new department of state government, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. And today, we're providing services and administering programs that weren't even on our radar in those initial years: CAPS, Quality Rated, Inclusion and Behavior Supports, Infant Toddler

This brings me to one of our newest areas of emphasis: children's mental health. The week of May 3-7, DECAL will encourage providers and families to celebrate Children's Mental Health. For decades we've worked to enhance children's physical, academic, nutritional development by supporting high quality early care and education environments. But we know that children's mental health also matters. So, we look forward to promoting children's ability to express a range of emotions and form strong attachments with trusted adults, so they can learn

I hope you find it exciting to be part of an organization that is

and changing ... even through difficult economic times and

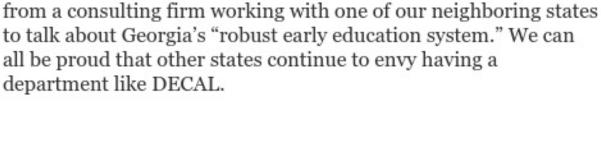
willing to grow and evolve the way OSR/DECAL has. By adapting

Supports, training and technical assistance, scholarships,

incentives, massive federal grants, public service campaigns like

pandemics...we've remained relevant, useful, and beneficial to children, families, and the early care and education industry in our state. And if we remain open and willing to change, I predict the DECAL of 2050 will look much different than our department today. Thank you for your forward thinking and flexibility,

P.S. Since writing this letter, I've received yet another request



designating May 3 - 7 as Children's Mental Health Week. The early years in a child's life provide a key opportunity to

Mental Health this year by

DECAL is celebrating Children's

May 3-7, 2021

establish safe and secure relationships and support healthy social and emotional development. DECAL is excited to provide a week full of

activities for all ages including a

list of age-appropriate books promoting mental health, products to create a Calm Corner or Zen Den, and fun giveaways for child care providers from Children's Health Care of Atlanta, Scholastic, and Lakeshore Learning. DECAL will also offer seven opportunities for Pre-K and 3's classes to sign up for the Feelings Puppet Show presented by Mental Health America of Georgia. Stay tuned to the DECAL website

and social media outlets to learn

promote healthy social and emotional development! Supporting and guiding the mission and vision

of Bright from the Start:

Board of Early

Care and Learning

VACANT First Congressional District

Susan Harper, Albany

Second Congressional District

(Chair)

Kathy Howell, Carrollton Third Congressional District (Secretary)

Seventh Congressional District

Luann Purcell, Ed.D.,

Warner Robins **Eighth Congressional District**

Cristina Washell, Ed.D., Cleveland

Ninth Congressional District Theresa Magpuri-Lavell, Ed.D.,

Twelfth Congressional District Melissa Boekhaus, M.D.,

VACANT

District

474747 **Employee** Suggestion Program

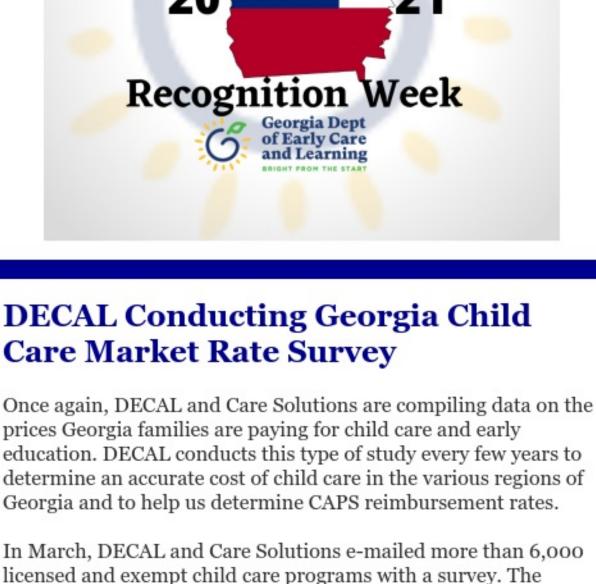


Last year was like no other. You demonstrated extraordinary leadership and customer service during the pandemic, and this

celebration provides an excellent opportunity to highlight the achievements and contributions you've made on a daily basis. Several fun activities have been planned by the Employee Advisory Committee to thank you for your dedication, hard work

DECAL Bingo Pet/Owner Match Game Flat CALi Employee Kudos And MORE!

and commitment to excellence. These virtual events include:



more about this event and participate in Children's Mental Health Week! Remember, everyone who touches the life of a child can

Phil Davis, Stone Mountain Fourth Congressional District

(Vice Chair)

Kristy Beam, Ed.D, Atlanta

Fifth Congressional District

VACANT Sixth Congressional District Kristin Morrissey, Cumming

Milledgeville Tenth Congressional District

Jen Bennecke, Atlanta Eleventh Congressional District

Smyrna Thirteenth Congressional District Debra Brock, Calhoun

Fourteenth Congressional

texting DECAL to

banner of this issue are (L-R) Aleisha Golden, Ebony Ford,

Marcie Singletary, Catherine Broussard, and Shannon Curtis.

Sign up for DECAL text messages by 57486 A draft of the proposed CCDF State Plan is available for your

State Employee Recognition Week (SERW) is May 2-8, 2021 DECAL is celebrating State Employees Recognition Week- May 2-8, 2021. The purpose of this week is to recognize and celebrate you--our employees and the work you do for the citizens of the State of Georgia.

DECAL Conducting Georgia Child Care Market Rate Survey prices Georgia families are paying for child care and early licensed and exempt child care programs with a survey. The findings from the survey will help DECAL prepare Georgia's Child

Care and Development Fund State Plan as well as a new

"It is critically important to share with the public and with

Georgia's policymakers what quality child care actually costs and

what a major component the work of the early care and education

Child care providers can complete the survey online or on paper...

in English or in Spanish. If a provider has not received the e-

industry is to our state's economy," said Commissioner Amy M.

Economic Impact Study.

COVID-19 pandemic.

Jacobs.

mails, they can contact Care Solutions toll-free at 1-800-227-3410 or e-mail GAMRsurvey@caresolutions.com. DECAL hopes to complete the survey this month. As an incentive, Care Solutions will enter everyone who completes the survey into a drawing for one of five \$100 gift cards. The last Georgia Child Care Market Rate Survey was conducted in

2016-2017. The federal Administration for Children and Families

CCDF State Plan Public Hearings Go

Virtual This Month

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)

Office of Child Care granted an extension in 2020 due to the

will hold two virtual public hearings this month on the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan. The purpose of the CCDF is to increase the availability, affordability, and quality of child care services. The CCDF State Plan describes how Georgia will administer CCDF services from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2024, specifically explaining how funds will be used to 1. help low

income, working families find and pay for child care; and 2. enhance the quality and availability of child care in Georgia.

Two virtual public hearings will be held during which time the

by DECAL, the lead agency for the CCDF in Georgia.

public can comment on the proposed State Plan that was written

Below are the dates, times, and links to access the public hearings. Tue, May 4, 2021 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM EDT- https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/regi.../46001228050082 94286 Thu, May 6, 2021 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM EDT- https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/regi.../17890454698636

If they public cannot participate in either of the virtual hearings,

All comments will be reviewed and considered; however, because

of the number of comments, DECAL will not respond to

they can still comment on the State Plan by submitting comments to CCDFstateplan@decal.ga.gov.

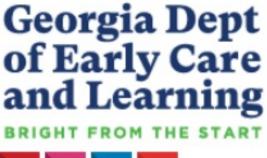
review at:

comments made at the public hearings or online.

http://www.decal.ga.gov/BftS/CCDFPlan.aspx



404-656-5957









CHILDREN'S

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

May 3rd - 7th, 2021

2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE, 754 East Tower, Atlanta, GA 30334

Contact Us

Georgia Department of Early Care and

Learning