

Georgia's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant December 2015 Newsletter

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December Spotlight: Funding Opportunities in Georgia's Early Education Empowerment Zones (E3Zs)

In 2014, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) established four Early Education Empowerment Zones (E3Zs) in regions of the state with large populations of under-served young children with high needs and the community capacity and willingness to deliver services to help reduce the achievement gap. Each zone also has a community coordinator to work with the community to implement E3Z projects. Additionally, some of the strategies that DECAL and its partners will employ to help achieve this goal are E3Z Child Care Expansion Grants and Family Engagement Opportunity Grants.

The four E3Zs and their community coordinators are:

- Central: Bibb
 - Valerie Blackmon, Valerie.Blackmon@dec.al.ga.gov
- East: Clarke County
 - Clayton Adams, Clayton.Adams@dec.al.ga.gov
- North: Catoosa, Gilmer, Gordon, Murray, Whitfield Counties
 - Suzanne Harbin, Suzanne.harbin@dec.al.ga.gov
- South: Brooks, Colquitt, Cook, Echols, Lowndes
 - Jill O'Meara, Jill.OMeara@dec.al.ga.gov

Family Engagement Opportunity Grants in the E3Zs and Metro Atlanta Area

DECAL's Family Engagement Opportunity Grants aim to provide educational opportunities that promote, encourage, and support community awareness and advocacy and to provide access to free, ongoing resources related to parent leadership and child development.

Legally operating early childhood care and education organizations located in one of the E3Zs or in certain metro Atlanta counties (Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Rockdale) are eligible to apply.

The purpose of the Family Engagement Opportunity Grant is to:

- Increase availability and accessibility to quality family engagement programs,

activities, and opportunities

- Provide supplemental educational outlets that promote, encourage, and support community awareness and advocacy
- Provide access to free, ongoing parent leadership and child development resources in one or more of the Early Education Empowerment Zones (E³Zs) and/or in the Metro Atlanta area as defined below.

Applicants can apply for a maximum of \$15,000 for a one-year program or project. Click [here](#) for the application, more detailed requirements, and an informational webinar about the Family Engagement Opportunity Grant. The application is due on Friday, January 22, 2016.

For more information, contact Carolyn Morkeh at Carolyn.Morkeh@decalf.ga.gov.

E3Z Child Care Expansion Grant

In partnership with DECAL, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is offering economic development incentive packages up to \$100,000 in the E3Zs for two and three star Quality Rated programs to expand their program to serve additional infants and toddlers. When selecting the E3Zs, DECAL strongly considered child care capacity, because lack of quality child care in a region can hinder a community's ability to support young children. By targeting these economic development incentive packages to the E3Zs, DECAL and DCA hope to increase the child care capacity in these regions to better serve young children. This is the second round of applications for the E3Z Child Care Expansion grant. In round one, DCA funded two applications - one applicant will expand their current child care center and the second applicant will open a new child care learning center in an E3Z.

Eligible two and three star child care learning centers can use this funding to expand (add new classrooms) to an existing child care learning center that is located in an E3Z to create a minimum of two new full time jobs that will serve infants and toddlers. High quality child care programs outside of the E3Zs can also apply for funding to open a new child care learning center in an E3Z. The funding can be used to buy equipment and materials for infant and/or toddler classrooms and salary subsidies for new infant and/or toddler classrooms.

Click [here](#) for the application, more detailed requirements, and an informational webinar about the E3Z Child Care Expansion Grant. The application is due by February 5, 2015.

For more information, contact Anna Hensley at Anna.Hensley@dca.ga.gov.

DECAL will also be hosting information sessions around the state about these funding opportunities to provide additional information and answer any questions.

E3Z Grants Information Sessions:

December 14th, 2015 - Click [HERE](#) to Register!

South Georgia Regional Library, 300 Woodrow Dr. Valdosta 31602

2:00 pm - E3Z Child Care Expansion Grant

5:00 pm - Family Engagement Opportunity Grant

December 16th, 2015 - Click [HERE](#) to Register!

Dalton/Whitfield Library, 310 Cappes St. Dalton, GA 30720

10:00 am - E3Z Child Care Expansion Grant

12:30 pm - Family Engagement Opportunity Grant

December 17th, 2015 - Click [HERE](#) to Register!

Peyton Anderson Building , 277 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Macon, GA 31210

9:30 am - E3Z Child Care Expansion Grant

December 17th, 2015 11:00 am - Family Engagement Opportunity Grant

January 6th, 2016 - Click [HERE](#) to Register!

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning 2 Martin Luther king Jr. Dr. Suite 854

10:00 am - E3Z Child Care Expansion Grant

1:00 pm - Family Engagement Opportunity Grant

January 7th, 2016 - Click [HERE](#) to Register!

Athens-Clarke County Library, 2025 Baxter St. Athens, GA 30606

10:00 am - E3Z Child Care Expansion Grant

12:00 pm - Family Engagement Opportunity Grant

For more information about these information sessions, contact Carolyn Morkeh at Carolyn.Morkeh@dec.al.ga.gov.

Quality Rated Child Care Subsidy Grants

This past fall, DECAL accepted applications from two and three star Quality Rated child care programs that were willing to provide quality early care and education services to infants and toddlers from income eligible working families. Monies awarded to these child care programs fund slots for children receiving or eligible to receive subsidized child care through the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program. With funding from the Early Learning Challenge grant, DECAL is able to reimburse child care providers that are awarded the grant at the 90th percentile of the 2013 Market Rate Survey for their area, and eligible families do not pay a family fee. Currently, 36 two and three star Quality Rated child care providers have been awarded Quality Rated Subsidy Grants, and are funded to serve 516 children across Georgia.

Little Ones Learning Center in Forest Park is a two star Quality Rated program and currently has a Quality Rated Subsidy Grant to fund 17 children. When explaining the impact of the Quality Rated Subsidy Grant on her child care program, Early Childhood Program Administrator Wande Meadows of Little Ones Learning Center explained that this grant opportunity has allowed for her program to have better ratios and group size, higher credentialed teachers, and a larger budget for teacher professional development.

When Meadows asked the parent of a child whose child care is funded through the Quality

Rated Subsidy Grant, the parent shared the following:

[My child] is 3 years old now and before I was aware of this program, she was at home with my mom everyday not learning anything. I wanted her to be in school, but I couldn't afford the payments as was asked. Now that my kid attends [Little Ones Learning Center], she knows her ABC's and numbers 1-10 (still working on her colors!). She's more open now with her speech and most of all - she enjoys it.

"Many families simply cannot afford the cost of quality child care and those who need quality the most, are often the children who do not receive it," said Meadows. "Several of our families who received a slot in our Quality Rated Subsidy Grant shared how they had to put their child in less desirable forms of care, due to not being able to afford quality care... but with the grant, we are extremely grateful for the opportunity to be able to serve our community."

For more information about the Quality Rated Subsidy Grants, contact Pam Stevens at Pam.Stevens@dec.al.ga.gov.

For more information about Little Ones Learning Center, contact Wande Meadows at littleoneslearningcenter@gmail.com.



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