

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

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November Spotlight: Supporting Families through Center-Based Home Visitation

Administered by the Georgia Department of Human Services - Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), Office of Prevention and Family Support, Great Start Georgia is a framework to help local communities coordinate and deliver services to meet the needs of expectant parents and children birth to age five and their families. In partnership with the Department of Public Health, the system is designed to create a community culture of care, encouragement, and support for all families before and after the birth of a child. A major service strategy of Great Start Georgia is [evidence-based home visiting](#) for families needing support in providing safe, nurturing, and healthy environments for their children. Great Start Georgia is available in 15 counties.



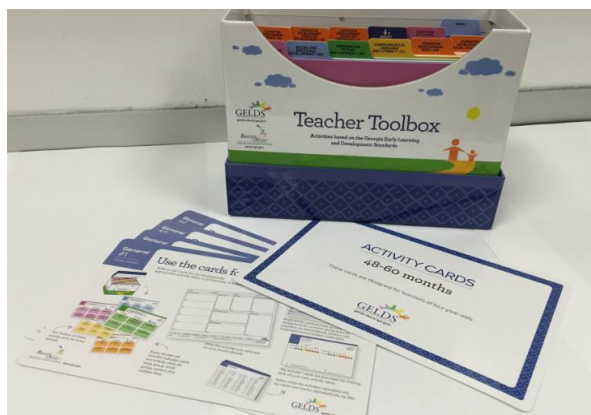
With funding from Georgia's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant, Georgia is implementing and expanding Great Start Georgia, including evidence-based home visiting, in Georgia's four Early Education Empowerment Zones (E3Z) through partnerships with a licensed child care learning center in each E3Z. The child care program serves as the "hub" for families to access Great Start Georgia services. The expansion in new counties provides access for families with children enrolled in the child care program as well as other families in the community. Child care learning centers meeting specific quality standards were recruited to participate as hubs for First Steps Georgia intake screening, parent education, child development screening, and linkage to resources and services. Child care learning centers selected as hubs participate in Quality Rated, serve a high percentage of children who receive subsidies, serve infants and toddlers, and are located in high needs area within the community).

Four counties (one from each E3Z) were chosen to implement the Great Start Georgia expansion. Within the four counties (Gordon, Clarke, Bibb, and Lowndes), Great Start Georgia staff have held stakeholder meetings, delivered technical assistance and training for E3Z expansion sites to develop community plan outlines, select the evidence-based home visiting model to use in the community, and develop and implement the screening and referral protocols. As of October 1, 2015, all sites are staffed and are implementing Great Start Georgia, including offering their selected evidence-based home visiting model to families in their communities.

Since launching in the July 2015, through September 30, 2015, 38 families are enrolled in the program and over 100 home visits have been conducted. Further, 34 mothers have been screened for domestic violence and 25 families have completed referrals (e.g., referral made to other services and families followed through to obtain services).

For more information, visit <https://www.greatstartgeorgia.org/> or call 1-855-707-8277.

Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) Toolboxes Are Now Available!



The GELDS Teacher Toolboxes are AVAILABLE on the e-store! These toolboxes provide teachers with thousands of developmentally appropriate activities linked to the GELDS for children from birth to five along with tips for transitions, embedding technology, and adapting activities for children with disabilities.

The toolboxes are available at www.custompoint.rrd.com/DECAL (**note - the e-store cannot be accessed using mobile devices**)! The e-store can also be accessed from our GELDS site (gelds.dec.al.ga.gov) under the Resources tab. The toolboxes are free, you just pay for shipping!

Celebrate Inclusive Schools Week December 7th - 11th



SHARING OUR *Lifts* in inclusive schools

INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS WEEK
DECEMBER 7-11, 2015
www.inclusiveschools.org

Inclusive Schools Week is an annual international event celebrated the first week in December. It's a time designated to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of teachers, administrators, students, and parents in making their schools more inclusive and, thereby, significantly contributing to the development of a more inclusive society. The goals of Inclusive Schools Week are:

- Celebrate the progress of schools in educating an increasingly diverse student population
- Acknowledge the hard work and commitment of schools, families and communities in creating inclusive opportunities for all children regardless of disability, gender, ethnicity, language, health status, etc.
- Encourage reflection on how culture, policies and practices in schools can promote inclusive education
- Promote action to increase the capacity of schools and communities to meet the needs of all learners.

The Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) will be hosting TED Talk screenings and panel discussions, as well as parent trainings provided by Parent to Parent of GA about inclusive environments in celebration of *Inclusive Schools Week*. These events will be held in each of the four E3Zs, Savannah, and Metro Atlanta.

For more information contact Brandy Locchetta at Brandy.Locchetta@decalf.ga.gov.

