



**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**
BRIGHT FROM THE START

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Governor

Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DECAL Awards 13 EXPAND Grants to Child Care Providers and Organizations
Agency's new grant program facilitates greater access to child care during non-traditional hours

ATLANTA, Ga., (September 29, 2023) – The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) has awarded new Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery (EXPAND) Grants to seven child care providers and six nonprofit and government organizations.

Supported by research and analysis showing that the availability of high-quality child care and early education plays a key role in Georgia's workforce development and economic growth, DECAL created the EXPAND Grants. The awards serve an identified need shared by many families, employers, and communities for child care services outside of the traditional hours of Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

"The EXPAND Grants reflect DECAL's targeted focus on creating supports for families with young children, the child care industry, and other businesses that contribute to well-being and overall growth," said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. "In order for Georgia to have a strong workforce and economy, working families must have access to quality child care during both traditional and nontraditional hours and these grant awards will support that goal."

There are two types of EXPAND Grants: one for licensed child care providers to expand their operating hours and a second for government entities and nonprofit organizations to form collaboratives to address the child care access challenges in their communities.

The seven providers receiving EXPAND Grants, ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000 each, are family home providers Danielle E. Albanese and Edalina Lane and child care learning center programs Bright Horizons Preschool, Creative Labs Learning Center, Start Bright Academy Hiram, Bright Ones Learning Center, Inc., and The Learning Voyage Student Success Center.

The six EXPAND grantees from the non-profit and government sectors are Navicent Health, Inc., Columbus Technical College, The Manufacturers Education Foundation, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and

Developmental Disabilities, City of Thomasville Payroll Development Authority, and Alliance Theatre, a division of the Robert W. Woodruff Arts Center, Inc. These grants range from \$100,000 to \$750,000.

“Congratulations to the 13 recipients of the new EXPAND grants,” said DECAL Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships Bentley Ponder. “We look forward to assisting the grantees in administering the funds to develop impactful programs and supports to serve the pressing needs we learned about through extensive engagement with families, providers, and other stakeholders.”

The EXPAND Grants, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), can be used for a variety of initiatives. The grants for child care providers could cover staff pay and benefits, child transportation costs, or necessary health and safety improvements to support extended hours of operation. Grants to nonprofits and government agencies could help underwrite partnerships between local businesses and child care providers to serve parents working nontraditional hours.

The EXPAND Grants are just one component of more than the \$2 billion in supports DECAL has developed using federal financial relief funds to help the child care industry, families with young children, and communities surmount the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency has allocated more than \$100 million in one-time bonuses for early care and education teachers. It has distributed over \$1 billion in STABLE 4wards to support child care providers and Awarding Child Care Education Scholarship Supplements (ACCESS) payments to support families with CAPS scholarships in paying for child care. DECAL has also made available tens of millions in Quality Rated Restoration Grants to help stabilize providers delivering high-quality care. Additionally, the agency has distributed hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants for projects to transform and increase access to early education services in local communities. DECAL also recently launched the [Thriving Child Care Business Academy](#) of free training and resources for child care owners to help them strengthen their businesses.

About DECAL

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia’s Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program and federal nutrition programs, and manages Quality Rated, Georgia’s community-powered child care rating system. The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.decal.ga.gov.