



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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DECAL To Celebrate “A Decade of Stars” During Quality Rated’s 10th Anniversary

Rating System Has Recognized Georgia’s Child Care Stars Since 2012

ATLANTA, Ga., (August 25, 2022) –The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) will host a series of statewide celebrations beginning in September to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the state’s highly regarded Quality Rated child care system.

Under the theme, “A Decade of Stars,” the Anniversary events will celebrate Quality Rated’s achievements, spotlight some of the providers that have attained star-rated status over the years, and engage with the program’s longstanding stakeholders and partners.

“We are extremely proud to reach this important milestone in the development of Quality Rated,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “The 10th Anniversary gives us a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the great progress we have made in improving access to and elevating the quality of child care across the state with our star-rated providers and families, as well as with our stakeholders and staff.”

Over the past 10 years, the Quality Rated star rating has become a symbol of excellence that providers across the state covet and that gives parents confidence that their children are receiving high-quality care and education.

Since 2012 when the first star rating was awarded, the program has grown steadily. As of August 15, 2022, more than 2,850 child care providers are Quality Rated. Additionally, 93% of children with Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) scholarships are enrolled at a Quality Rated provider, putting DECAL ever closer to realizing its vision that every child in Georgia regardless of their family income or geographic region has equal access to high-quality early child care and education.

To earn a Quality Rated 1-, 2-, or 3-star rating, a provider must meet a list of rigorous requirements. They demonstrate their commitment to structural quality by submitting a portfolio with evidence of qualified administrators and staff; high standards for child physical, emotional, and developmental well-being; robust family engagement activities, and intentional teaching practices. Applicants must also show that they adhere to process quality standards during on-site classroom observations that are conducted by credentialed Quality Rated assessors. During the visits, the assessors evaluate the quality of teacher-child interactions; the accessibility of materials and equipment; and the room's physical layout.

“We’re very proud that so many providers over the past 10 years have accepted the challenge to enhance the quality of child care they deliver to Georgia’s youngest learners and have met the high bar Quality Rated sets for receiving a 1-, 2-, or 3-star rating,” said DECAL Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships Bentley Ponder. “These star-rated providers are DECAL’s partners in our mission to ensure that every child in Georgia has access to high-quality early care and education regardless of family income or location.”

The Quality Rated Anniversary festivities kick off at Truist Park on Sunday afternoon, September 4, 2022, when the Atlanta Braves host Quality Rated Day. Commissioner Jacobs will throw out the first pitch before the Braves take on the Miami Marlins. She will be joined on the field for pregame ceremonies by a group that will include members of the Quality Rated Team and their children.

In addition to the Braves game next month, during the fourth quarter of 2022, DECAL will host several Anniversary events that will recognize providers that were among the first to become Quality Rated and hold discussions on the future of child care quality assessment and improvement in Georgia with stakeholders and community partners. DECAL will announce details of those events in the coming months.

About Quality Rated

Quality Rated is Georgia's systemic approach to assessing, improving, and communicating the level of quality in early care and education providers. Similar to rating systems for other service-related industries, Quality Rated assigns a star rating to child care providers that meet a set of defined program standards. By participating in Quality Rated, providers embark on a path of continuous quality improvement, with the goal of instilling lasting, positive effects on Georgia's children, families, and economy.

About DECAL

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning 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.dec.al.ga.gov.