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**Celebrating 30 years of Georgia's Pre-K!**

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### **Champions for Early Education Celebrate Georgia Pre-K Week 2022**

**ATLANTA** – Voices for Georgia's Children and the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) are hosting the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Georgia Pre-K Week with state and local leaders and celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> year of Pre-K education by reading to the state's youngest learners October 3<sup>rd</sup> -7<sup>th</sup>.

For the past 30 years, the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program has provided quality early education to the state's youngest learners. The lottery-funded Georgia Pre-K program was launched in 1992 by Governor Zell Miller as a pilot program serving 750 four-year-olds at 20 sites. Since then, the program has laid a solid foundation for academic excellence and future success in the lives of nearly 2 million children.

Voices for Georgia's Children, the state's only comprehensive child policy and advocacy organization, coordinates Georgia Pre-K Week to emphasize the importance of quality early childhood education, and by providing opportunities for state and local leaders to engage directly with Pre-K classrooms in local communities.

"The only thing more gratifying than seeing such appreciation and commitment to Georgia's Pre-K students and teachers by community leaders, branches of government and private businesses is the fantastic return-on-investment evidenced by the millions of happy, healthy, and thriving four-year-olds Georgia's Pre-K continues to serve," said Polly McKinney, Advocacy Director of Voices for Georgia's Children. "A considerable amount of research over the years has proven that children from quality early learning settings consistently arrive at kindergarten prepared and ready to learn. We are excited to show our Georgia Pre-K Week visitors a little bit of how that happens."

Countless state, business, and community leaders will visit Pre-K centers around the state to witness early learning in action. Pre-K visitors will have the opportunity to read to the children this year's selected book, "Hey Georgia" by former UGA football player, Super Bowl Champion, and literacy advocate, Malcolm Mitchell.

"Since its inception, Georgia's Pre-K Program has enjoyed the bipartisan support and advocacy of Georgia's governors and other state and local leaders," said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. "Georgia Pre-K Week provides a perfect opportunity for these important advocates to see that their support of the Pre-K program is not in vain."

She continued, “DECAL appreciates the unwavering partnership of Voices for Georgia’s Children and the other sponsors of Georgia Pre-K Week. By working together on this annual event, we are highlighting the importance of quality early childhood education and its impact on the future of children, families, communities, and our state.”

Georgia Power return as a sponsor of Georgia Pre-K Week for the ninth year. Georgia Pre-K Week 2022 is supported by Governor Brian Kemp, state commissioners, state and local elected officials, and other longstanding community partners.

#### **About Voices for Georgia’s Children**

Voices for Georgia’s Children is a nonprofit child policy and advocacy organization that envisions a Georgia where all children thrive because they are safe, healthy, connected to family and community, and prepared to be productive and responsible citizens. Our mission is to promote equity, quality, and accessibility in systems created to serve children’s needs. We are dedicated to advancing policies and implementation actions that ensure the best possible outcomes for children. For more information, visit [www.georgiavoices.org](http://www.georgiavoices.org).

#### **About Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning**

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 Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia’s Child and Parent Services (CAPS) program, 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 resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to [www.dec.state.ga.us](http://www.dec.state.ga.us).