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**Georgia Pre-K Program Celebrates 31 Years of Providing Early Education to Georgia Students**

**ATLANTA** – For 13 years, Voices for Georgia’s Children and the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning have celebrated quality early learning by hosting Georgia Pre-K Week. Once again, we’re inviting state and local leaders to read to Georgia Pre-K classrooms, October 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>.

Launched in 1992 as a pilot program with just 750 students, the nationally recognized Georgia Pre-K Program has laid a solid foundation for academic excellence and future success for more than two million children statewide.

“A considerable amount of research has proven that children who have access to quality early learning settings arrive at kindergarten more prepared than their peers,” said Dr. Caitlin McMunn Dooley, Executive Director of Voices for Georgia’s Children. “Not only do these students sustain gains made in pre-k through kindergarten, but the research also shows that quality pre-k education is still making a positive impact in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.”

Voices for Georgia’s Children, the state’s only comprehensive child policy and advocacy organization, coordinates Georgia Pre-K Week and provides opportunities for state and local leaders to engage directly with Pre-K classrooms in local communities. 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, “Cheer: A Book to Celebrate Community” by Uncle Ian Aurora.

“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 returns as a sponsor of Georgia Pre-K Week for the tenth year. Georgia Pre-K Week 2023 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.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov).