



**Sonny Perdue**  
Governor

10 Park Place, Suite 200, Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
(404) 656-5957

**Holly A. Robinson, Ed.D.**  
Commissioner

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Contact: Stacey Moore

404-656-0239

[Stacey.Moore@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:Stacey.Moore@dec.al.ga.gov)

**Georgia's Pre-K Program serves one million children**

**ATLANTA, Ga., (February 3, 2010)** – The location of the *Millionth Child* currently being served by Georgia's Pre-K Program has been revealed. The millionth child walked through the doors of **Sumter County Primary School** in Americus, Georgia! Governor Sonny and Mrs. Mary Perdue will kick off a special celebration at the school on Thursday, February 18. Georgia is the first state in the nation to serve more than one million Pre-K children in a voluntary, universal, lottery-funded program.

"We are thrilled with the outpouring of support that the Millionth Child Celebration has received," said Bright from the Start Commissioner Holly A. Robinson. "This exciting campaign could not have been successful without our generous partners, outstanding providers and teachers, and most importantly, the one million children who have benefitted from Georgia's Pre-K Program."

Commemorative Millionth Child Celebration activities began last year and will continue through 2010. The celebration was launched in April 2009 by Georgia First Lady Mary Perdue who read *How Much is a Million?* to a group of Georgia's Pre-K children. She and Governor Perdue chose the book in honor of this milestone. Other activities include the Million Book Campaign challenging everyone in Georgia to read to children. So far, more than 622,000 books have been logged in!

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“The millionth child campaign emphasizes the importance of a quality learning experience that includes a strong early literacy program for all of Georgia’s children,” said Mary Mazarky, Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K.

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program. High quality learning experiences are emphasized for every child participating in the program which has been in existence 16 years. During the 2009-2010 school year, 82,000 children in approximately 4,100 classrooms in every county in the state are being served.

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Bright from the Start: 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 federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

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](http://www.dec.al.ga.gov).