



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

**Brian P. Kemp**  
Governor

**Amy M. Jacobs**  
Commissioner

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DECAL to Recognize Georgia’s Early Childhood Educators of the Year**

### *Program Celebrates Outstanding Teachers of Children Birth to Preschool*

**ATLANTA, Ga., (September 1, 2022)** – The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and the Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning are seeking applications for the second annual 2022-2023 Georgia’s Early Childhood Educators of the Year program. This important initiative recognizes three outstanding early education teachers: Infant Teacher of the Year (for children 0-18 months), Toddler Teacher of the Year (for children 15-36 months), and Preschool Teacher of the Year (for children 36-48 months).

“Early childhood educators play a critical role in the lives of Georgia’s youngest citizens,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “Their contributions are far broader than ensuring that young children are safe and healthy while their families are working. These professionals also work tirelessly to build a foundation of basic skills, promote language and literacy, teach self-regulation, cooperation and other critical social emotional skills, and foster a love of learning in the children they teach.”

The top six finalists (two from each category) will each receive \$500 for their personal use, and the top three winners (one from each category) will receive an additional \$3,000 for their personal use, \$2,000 for a classroom makeover, and up to \$2,500 for their school to cover travel costs and stipends for substitute teachers as the teacher fulfills their duties as Georgia’s Early Childhood Educator of the Year.

Program directors working with early childhood teachers dedicated to making a difference in the lives of young children may nominate them for Georgia’s Early Childhood Educator of the Year through an online application found on the DECAL website at <https://www.decal.ga.gov/BftS/GaECEoftheYear.aspx>. Eligibility requirements are listed with the application. The deadline to submit applications is **Thursday, September 15, 2022, at 5:00 PM.**

“We are proud to highlight the important work happening in early childhood classrooms across Georgia through these well-deserved awards,” said Laura Wagner, Interim Executive Director for the Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning. “Early childhood educators help ensure that our children are prepared to succeed in Kindergarten and ready for a lifetime of success. Professionals in our field are dedicated, talented, and deserving of this kind of recognition.”

The Georgia’s Early Childhood Educator of the Year program follows in the footsteps of the highly successful Georgia’s Pre-K Program Teachers of the Year program, which began in the 2016-2017 school year.

### **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.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov).