

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning Supports 33 Child Care Programs in Hurricane Helene Recovery**

ATLANTA, GA — In response to the devastating impact of Hurricane Helene, the Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning (GFEC+L) has provided relief funding to 33 child care programs across the state. These grants helped restore safe, nurturing environments for 2,200 children and their families.

In partnership with The Aspire Difference Foundation and Save the Children US, GFEC+L distributed \$49,500 in recovery grants. Each program received \$1,500 to address urgent needs such as:

- Repairing structural damage to roofs, ceilings, fences, and playgrounds
- Restoring HVAC and air conditioning systems
- Replacing classroom materials and addressing water damage
- Covering food loss and staff wages during closures
- Removing fallen trees and debris from outdoor areas

“These funds were a lifeline for programs working to reopen quickly and safely, as well as for programs that needed some financial relief for substantial costs incurred from hurricane-related damages” said Laura Wagner, Executive Director of GFEC+L.

The Foundation received 68 applications and selected 33 programs based on documented need and readiness to comply with funding requirements.

The following programs received funds:

- Jesus Loves Me Daycare LLC – Ray City, Berrien County
- Sproutland Learning Center – Cochran, Beckley County
- Sweet & Tenderhearted Childcare – Portal, Bulloch County
- Love’s Childcare Services Inc – Statesboro, Bulloch County
- Rashida's Day Care – Metter, Candler County
- Little Blessyn’s Childcare Learning Center – Savannah, Chatham County
- Ready Set Grow Early Learning Academy – Savannah, Chatham County
- Tiny Hands Big Hearts In-Home Childcare – Port Wentworth, Chatham County
- Teachers Too Early Childcare & Learning Center, Inc. – Douglas, Coffee County
- Small Wonders Playcare Center – Evans, Columbia County
- R&L Mini Miracles Daycare – Martinez, Columbia County
- The Bradley School of Martinez – Martinez, Columbia County
- Learning Junction Preschool – Evans, Columbia County
- Bartley's Family Learning Center LLC – Springfield, Effingham County
- Sonja Glaze FCCLH – Elberton, Elbert County
- Boss Babies Childcare Center, LLC – Twin City, Emanuel County
- Marie Herndon FCCLH – Brunswick, Glynn County

- Love In Action Daycare – Hazlehurst, Jeff Davis County
- Joyful All Starz LLLP – Louisville, Jefferson County
- Carol's Kidz Early Care and Learning – Lakeland, Lanier County
- Connie Pruitt FCCLH – Naylor, Lanier County
- Child Resource Center, Inc. – Lakeland, Lanier County
- Micah's Playhouse, Inc. – Dublin, Laurens County
- Little Feet Learning Academy – Dublin, Laurens County
- Marsha Octave FCCLH – Hinesville, Liberty County
- Bemiss Academy Preschool – Valdosta, Lowndes County
- Bright Start Preschool – Valdosta, Lowndes County
- Stephanie Turman FCCLH – Thomson, McDuffie County
- Lollipop Learning Center – Tifton, Tift County
- Washington County NB & PW Club Inc. – Sandersville, Washington County
- MyNana's Clubhouse – Jesup, Wayne County
- Little Wonders Learning Center – Savannah, Chatham County
- Eula Howell FCCLH – Valdosta, Lowndes County

“The impact of this funding has been transformative,” said Tracey Broxton from Little Feet Learning Academy. “The new fencing provides a much safer and more secure environment for the children, allowing them to enjoy outdoor play with peace of mind. This improvement in safety has also boosted the morale of the staff and parents.”

“With these funds, we repaired damaged but usable windows and restored compromised paneling, as well as replaced worn block walls on our playground, all essential steps in ensuring a safer, more secure learning environment for our youngest learners,” said Shelbra McKnight, from Bright Start Preschool. Most importantly, it gave our team peace of mind and allowed our children to return to a space that is safe, comfortable, and conducive to early learning and development.”

The Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning is exploring additional disaster preparedness strategies, including an ongoing commitment to using unrestricted Foundation resources to help in future disasters. To support future disaster relief and recovery efforts, visit our website:

<https://www.gaearlyed.org/Give.aspx>

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

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) oversees early education programs for children from birth to age five. DECAL administers Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based providers, and manages nutrition and inclusion services. DECAL is committed to ensuring that all children in Georgia have access to high-quality early learning experiences that prepare them for success in school and life.

#### About the Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning

The Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning (GFEC+L) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and strengthening Georgia's early childhood education system. Through strategic investments, partnerships, and advocacy, the Foundation works to expand access to high-quality care and learning environments for all children, especially those in underserved communities.