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Study Confirms Georgia’s Pre-K Students Sustain Progress in First Grade

*Growth in Language, Math, and General Knowledge Skills
Maintained from Pre-K through First Grade*

ATLANTA, Ga., (August 22, 2017) – According to findings from a recent study, students in Georgia’s Pre-K Program continue to exhibit positive outcomes through the end of first grade across all domains of learning. The report is part of a multi-year evaluation of Georgia’s Pre-K Program by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

“These findings clearly indicate that Georgia’s signature early education program impacts children’s academic development years after they participate in the program,” said Amy M. Jacobs, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). “The findings validate the important work accomplished by our teachers and assistant teachers every day and confirm that Pre-K provides the strong foundation needed for future learning.”

DECAL commissioned the multi-year, comprehensive evaluation in 2011 at the request of the Georgia General Assembly. The study began with a sample of 1,169 children who participated in Georgia’s Pre-K Program during the 2013-2014 school year and will follow them through their third grade year in 2017-2018.

“This study provides an important opportunity to follow over 1,100 children who attended Georgia’s Pre-K through elementary school.” said Dr. Ellen Peisner-Feinberg, principal investigator with the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. “The results indicate that children made significant gains from Pre-K through first grade on most skills that were measured in English as well as the same skills when measured in Spanish for children who were Spanish-speaking dual language learners. However, children’s gains tended to be greater in Pre-K and kindergarten than in first grade, suggesting that this earlier exposure may be especially beneficial.”

Georgia’s Pre-K program is available in all 159 counties of the state. Approximately 60% of Georgia’s four year olds are served by the program. Approximately 50% of Georgia’s counties serve at least 70% of all eligible four year olds in their counties.

“This study provides evidence of the impact of the program,” said Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K and Instructional Supports Susan Adams. “It shows that Georgia’s Pre-K is a beneficial and strong component of the state’s educational system. The study also helps inform decisions we make about policies and strategies that best support all of Georgia’s youngest students.”

The full report and an executive summary can be found at:

<http://dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/EvaluationGAPreKProgram.aspx>.

About Bright from the Start

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 Georgia’s Childcare 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 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.