



**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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**Georgia Celebrates Inclusive Early Learning Week 2021**

*Celebration aims to Increase Public Awareness of and Advocacy for  
Inclusion in Early Learning Classrooms*

**ATLANTA, Ga., (February 1, 2021)** – Governor Brian P. Kemp has proclaimed February 7-13, 2021, as Inclusive Early Learning Week in Georgia. The purpose of this special week is to increase the public’s awareness of and advocacy for inclusion, to celebrate child care programs’ successes in creating inclusive classrooms, and to promote inclusive practices in all early learning environments in Georgia.

During Inclusive Early Learning Week, Georgia child care programs will receive an electronic Provider Celebration Kit to help providers engage all children, staff, and families in ways that are inclusive and diverse. The kit will be e-mailed to child care providers and will be posted at [www.dec.al.ga.gov](http://www.dec.al.ga.gov).

“As champions for young children, we at DECAL want children of all abilities to have equal access to quality early childhood programs that support their individualized learning and development needs and foster a sense of belonging and engagement,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Division for Early Childhood describe early childhood inclusion as embodying “the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society.”

Ensuring that children with disabilities are included in high quality early learning environments is one of main priorities of the Inclusion and Behavior Support Services unit.

“One of the ways DECAL’s Inclusion and Behavior Support Services unit supports child care providers is by providing professional development and coaching on how to modify their learning environments, daily activities, and teaching practices to ensure high quality inclusion,” said Susan Adams, Deputy Commissioner for Georgia’s Pre-K Program and Instructional Supports. “The unit also works with families to provide referrals to inclusive child care programs and to identify community resource agencies in their area. By calling the SEEDS for Success Helpline at 1.833.354.HELP, early childhood providers and families can request support or resources from the Inclusion and Behavior Support Services unit to help them better understand and address the social, emotional, and developmental needs of all children.”

We encourage providers and staff to celebrate Inclusive Early Learning Week in a number of fun ways. Commissioner Jacobs will read a social story celebrating our unique differences that was developed by the Inclusion and Behavior Support unit.

Please join us in promoting inclusive practices during Inclusive Early Learning Week and share how you celebrate inclusion by posting on social media with the hashtags #loveinclusion2021 and #GaSEEDSforSuccess. A discussion of inclusion in the early learning environment is also featured on this week’s DECAL Download podcast.

### **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).