



**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 introduces POWER-ED**

***Wage Supplements of \$1,000 will support Early Care and Education Workforce as they Attain Higher Educational Credentials***

**ATLANTA, Ga., (April 25, 2023)** – The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is offering wage supplements of \$1,000 to members of the early care and education workforce who are attaining higher education credentials. Known as POWER-ED for Providing Our Workforce Essential Recognition for Educational Development, the supplements are designed to assist Georgia’s child care industry in attracting and retaining new employees at a time when they are needed most. The funding comes from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The POWER-ED wage supplements are available to all employees approved through the DECAL Scholars SCHOLARSHIPS Program, Georgia's statewide educational assistance program for early care and education professionals pursuing credentials or degrees in early childhood education or child development. DECAL Scholars already offers financial assistance for anyone attaining a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential through a master’s degree.

“Since 2021, DECAL has paid out three installments of POWER payments (Providing Our Workforce Essential Recognition) totaling close to \$115 million from ARPA,” said Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs.

“That’s 115,000 individual payments of \$1,000 to early learning professionals here in Georgia. Now we are repurposing POWER payments and making some changes to DECAL Scholars to increase access to degrees and credentials for those working in child care at a time when they need it most,” she explained.

DECAL Scholars also offers INCENTIVES, an annual salary bonus program that rewards tenure (the length of time an early care and education professional stays at one job) and earning an ECE credential within the last 5 years. Professionals who have earned an ECE credential in the last five years and have maintained employment with the same employer may be eligible to receive an annual INCENTIVES payment.

“We are very proud of our longstanding DECAL Scholars Program, which has served early care and education professionals for 27 years,” said Deputy Commissioner for Georgia’s Pre-K Program and Instructional Supports Susan Adams. “We are hopeful the recent updates to DECAL Scholars, along with the addition of POWER-ED, will allow us to continue to provide needed financial supports to professionals as they continue along their career pathways in early childhood education.”

For more information on DECAL Scholars and the new POWER-ED supplements, please call 770-642-6722, e-mail [support@decalscholars.com](mailto:support@decalscholars.com), or visit our website at [www.decalscholars.com](http://www.decalscholars.com).

### **About DECAL**

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) 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](http://www.dec.al.ga.gov).