

# MILESTONE MOMENTS

*For The Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning*



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Dear Friends of the Foundation,

As spring ends and summer begins, I am excited to share some of what the Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning has accomplished since my last letter AND some of our plans for the upcoming months.

I have recently drafted a plan to establish an individual giving campaign to ramp up fundraising and to do more to communicate why individuals, other foundations, and corporate sponsors should give to our mission. Many people may think that since the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is a government agency, government funding (state or federal) should be used to support children, families, and the early care and education industry. That's a rational point.

However, state and federal monies are usually allocated (sometimes in statute) for specific programs and services. So, what happens when needs clearly arise outside those programs and services...needs like recognizing and honoring exemplary work by early care and education professionals; or helping child care programs that have been damaged by natural disasters or that experience trauma of some kind?

That's why our Foundation was created and why people should contribute to our work. The Foundation, supported by the generosity of individuals, businesses, stakeholders, and other philanthropies, can step in to fill the gap not filled by state or federal funds.

I look forward to sharing more about my plan to generate more support for our work. In the meantime, however, I continue to appreciate your interest in and support for the Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning.

Together, we are making a difference.

Gratefully,  
*Laura*



## Celebrating our 2023 Early Childhood Educators and Georgia Pre-K Teachers of the Year



Since 2016, the Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning has recognized two Georgia Pre-K Teachers of the Year every year – one from a public school setting, and another from a private school setting. This is no popularity contest: our winners are selected through a rigorous process that includes interviews and classroom observations conducted by a trained team of evaluators. These teachers have shared expertise and best practices with us, as a result, through a variety of platforms. In 2021, the Foundation expanded this program to also recognize and celebrate Early Childhood Educators of the Year, across three different categories (Infant, Toddler, and Preschool). For the first time, on April 18, 2023, we brought together all five awardees to celebrate collectively with them in person.

The 2023 group of winners (L to R: Mary Williams, Shannon Gibson, Elianne Aguilera, Alanna Jones, and Tierra Faulcon) toured the Governor's Mansion, and were hosted at a very special luncheon including DECAL staff, Foundation Board Members, and other special guests.

The Foundation awards each teacher a check for their personal use and each school a check for a classroom makeover and travel stipends. The Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning is grateful to the Naserian Foundation for making these awards possible.

We look forward to continuing to lift up the voices of these talented professionals – and we look forward to honoring six new Georgia Pre-K Teacher of the Year Finalists in the weeks ahead!





## Quality Rated 10th Anniversary: Signage Gift to Providers

We've written to you recently about all the happenings surrounding Quality Rated's important milestone anniversary - a "Decade of Stars," no less. From our own Commissioner throwing out the first pitch at an Atlanta Braves game, to recognizing incredible community leaders and ECE advocates such as former Governor Nathan Deal, to giving each of our 127 initial adopters of Quality Rated a very special award... and more... it has been a special time for the agency and for the providers and families we serve.

Between November 2022 and February 2023, the Foundation has distributed nearly 3,000 signs to child care learning centers (CCLC) and family child care learning homes (FCCLH) across Georgia. These signs have been provided at no cost to our rated CCLC and FCCLH providers through a generous grant from the United Way of Greater Atlanta (UWGA) via the Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation.

The Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning first distributed wind-resistant signs to a select group of approximately 1,100 CCLCs in 2017, and we have been told repeatedly that these signs have provided the child care programs an effective marketing tool. Over time, the number of rated programs has grown significantly; the sign inserts from those old 2017 signs have faded; and our FCCLH partners have expressed interest in advertising their QR status. Because of these factors, we thank UWGA and the Whitehead Foundation for the funds to replace old, and in some cases provide new, Quality Rated signs to child care programs.

As we've traveled the state celebrating QR's anniversary, it has been gratifying and exciting to see these signs first-hand in many Georgia counties!





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