What Every Family Should Know About Quality Rated

What is Quality Rated?
Quality Rated is Georgia's system to determine, improve, and communicate the level of quality in programs that care for children during school hours and after school. Similar to rating systems for other industries like restaurants and hotels, Quality Rated assigns a rating (one star, two star, or three star) to early education and school-age care programs that meet certain standards over and above the minimum state requirements. By participating in Georgia's voluntary Quality Rated, early education and school-age care programs make a commitment to work continuously to improve the quality of care they provide to children and families.

Why is Quality Rated important?
Research has found a connection between the quality of early care and education programs and how well children who attend those programs are prepared for school. Because of that important connection between quality and child outcomes, the goal of Quality Rated is to ensure that Georgia's families can easily identify and find high quality early education and school-age care programs in which to enroll their children...

How long has Quality Rated been in Georgia?
Georgia Governor Nathan Deal introduced Quality Rated in October 2011, and the program began accepting applications in January 2012.

Who is responsible for operating Georgia's Quality Rated program?
Quality Rated is operated by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), the department of state government responsible for meeting the early education and child care needs of Georgia's children and families. Among other things, DECAL also administers the lottery funded Georgia's Pre-K Program and licenses/oversees the state's child care programs.

How is a program rated?
To determine a program's level of quality, Quality Rated staff carefully look at the following items:a program's teaching practices; how the teachers interact with the children; the qualifications and credentials of the program's staff; how the program interacts with and involves families; how equipped the program is with appropriate materials to enhance children's learning; and the physical environment that houses the program. All programs that volunteer to participate in Quality Rated are demonstrating a commitment to improve quality early care and education by going above and beyond Georgia's licensing standards.

What does Quality Rated mean for families?
Choosing an early care and education provider is an important decision. Quality Rated helps families find high quality early care and education programs by clearly identifying the level of quality the program provides using a one star, two star, or three star rating.

What does a Quality Rated program look like?
Quality Rated programs provide the following: an atmosphere in which children feel nurtured and supported; opportunities for families to be involved with their child's early education and care; intentionally planned activities and instruction that support child development and help prepare the child for a lifetime of learning; and efforts to ensure that ALL of Georgia's children receive meaningful early learning experiences.