



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

\$1,200 **FIRST** Program

(First-time Incentive to Raise Standards for Teachers)

Pre-Application Form

“Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is proud to support Georgia’s early care and education professionals through the FIRST program. This limited-time program is intended to help boost standards in our state while at the same time providing individuals an incentive to achieve a first-time credential in the field of early care and education. We also encourage FIRST recipients to enhance and continue their journey in professional development with the Department’s SCHOLARSHIPS & INCENTIVES programs.”

--Holly A. Robinson, Commissioner

The **FIRST** program is Georgia’s First-time Incentive to Raise Standards for Teachers. The **FIRST** incentive is for an individual who attains his or her first valid early care and education or school-age care credential from an eligible institution. Eligible credentials are the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, the Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC), the Technical College Diploma (TCD), and the Associate Degree if earned between September 1, 2009 and February 28, 2011.

Deadline extended to 7/1/2011

To Pre-Qualify for **FIRST**

- ✓ You must be pursuing an early childhood education program of study leading to your **first** early childhood education (ECE) credential or degree. Those qualifying are:
 - *Child Development Associate (CDA)* issued by the Council for Professional Recognition, or
 - *Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC)*, or
 - *Technical College Diploma (TCD)* or
 - *Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education* (containing a minimum of 39 quarter hours or 30 semester hours in ECE courses)
- ✓ You must attend one of Georgia’s technical colleges or a Georgia HOPE-eligible, SACS-accredited institution with an early childhood education department.
- ✓ In the case of the CDA, the 120 clock-hours of your CDA training must be approved through the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development System (see www.training.decal.ga.gov and search for “CDA” under the “Find Training” tab).
- ✓ You must attain your credential/degree between September 1, 2009 and February 28, 2011.
- ✓ You must have been working in the early childhood education field at least three months and work:
 - As a teacher or assistant teacher at least 25 hours per week, or
 - As a teacher or assistant teacher in a school-age care program at least 20 hours per week, or
 - As a director or assistant director in an early care and education program, school-age care program, or be a registered family day care home provider at least 40 hours per week.
- ✓ You must be:
 - Working for a child care facility licensed by Bright from the Start or the Department of Defense, or
 - A registered family day care home provider, or
 - Working in a private or public Georgia Pre-K Program.

Visit www.caresolutions.com to see responses to frequently asked questions.

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