“Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is proud to support and encourage Georgia’s early care and education professionals through the SCHOLARSHIPS & INCENTIVES programs. These innovative programs help create a high quality, stable early care and education workforce that benefits families, contributes to the state’s economy, and helps prepare Georgia’s young children for success in school.”

**Bobby D. Cagle, MSW, Commissioner**

**INCENTIVES** is a salary bonus program that encourages early care and education professionals to increase their level of education and that rewards job stability. Research confirms that high levels of caregiver/teacher education and reduced teacher turnover positively impact the quality of care provided to children. Eligible participants receive a maximum of two payments for each higher level of education attained after payment for the initial level. The master’s degree is the highest level awarded.

### To be eligible:

- You must be able to document that you are a United States citizen, legal permanent resident, qualified alien or non-immigrant.
- You must be a teacher, assistant teacher, director or assistant director (all other positions do not qualify) employed with a child care learning center or group day care home that is licensed by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning or the Department of Defense (DOD) OR you must work in a registered family day care home.
- You must work with children, ages five or younger, at least 25 hours per week if you are a teacher or assistant teacher OR 40 hours per week if you are a director or assistant director.
- You must earn $15.00 per hour or less.
- You must have been employed with your same employer for at least 12 consecutive months in a teaching or program administration position, or be a registered family day care provider for 12 months.
- You must submit your Georgia Professional Development Registry (PDR) Profile. See instructions on page seven.
- Your work setting must be **ONE** of the following:
  - A program that has earned a Quality Rated designation.
  - Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA), the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) or other approved national accreditation. See Frequently Asked Questions on page two for a list of approved national accreditations.
  - A participant in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
  - Serving children of whom 25% or more receive Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) subsidy.
- You must have earned an early childhood education, child development or child care administration credential or degree. The Child Development Associate (CDA) credential must be valid as of April 15 for the spring payment and as of October 15 for the fall payment.

**INCENTIVES** applications must be dated and postmarked between February 15 and April 15 for the spring payment OR between August 15 and October 15 for the fall payment. For additional information, contact the **SCHOLARSHIPS & INCENTIVES** office at 800-227-3410 or 770-642-6722.

Rev. 2/2013 (Applications are updated when program revisions occur. Visit www.caresolutions.com to download the most recent application or to apply online.)
1. **What are the INCENTIVES application deadlines?** Applications must be postmarked between February 15 and April 15 for the spring payment and between August 15 and October 15 for the fall payment. INCENTIVES payments are typically mailed to approved applicants within six to eight weeks of the close of the application period.

2. **I received an INCENTIVES payment in the past. Am I eligible for future payments?** Since July 2011, qualifying applicants have received a maximum of two payments per education level. Previous recipients of an INCENTIVES award may reapply if they have earned a higher credential or degree since their last INCENTIVES payment and meet all other requirements.

3. **I am paid a salary. How is my hourly wage calculated?** Your hourly wage is calculated by dividing your annual salary by the actual number of hours you work all year to determine your hourly wage. Regardless of whether you are a 10 or 12 month employee, your actual hourly wage must be $15.00 or less to qualify for INCENTIVES.

4. **What is the Professional Development Registry?** The Professional Development Registry (PDR) is an innovative resource developed by Bright from the Start for early care and education (ECE) professionals. It allows individuals to track their career, training hours, and any credentials or degrees earned. See page seven for instructions.

5. **Where can I find a Notary Public to notarize the “Affidavit for Lawful Presence Verification?”** A Notary can often be found at your local bank, post office, public library or court house.

6. **How often do I have to submit a notarized “Affidavit for Lawful Presence Verification?”** A notarized affidavit and required documentation must be submitted for every application period.

7. **Are all ECE degrees accepted?** No. Your degree must have been earned through a college or university that is regionally accredited. See [www.chea.org/Directories/regional.asp](http://www.chea.org/Directories/regional.asp) for a list of regional accrediting agencies.

8. **How many ECE credit hours must my associate or bachelor’s degree have to qualify for INCENTIVES?** The INCENTIVES program requires your associate degree to have at least 30 semester or 39 quarter hours in ECE-specific courses. A bachelor’s degree must have at least 36 semester or 48 quarter hours in ECE-specific courses.

9. **Achieving national accreditation is one way an employer can meet the work setting requirement. What national accreditations are accepted by Bright from the Start as meeting this work setting requirement?**
   - Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment (APPLE)
   - American Montessori Society
   - Association for Early Learning Leaders
   - Association of Christian Schools International
   - Council on Accreditation
   - International Montessori Council
   - National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
   - National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
   - National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
   - National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA)
   - Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)

10. **Can I fax my application?** No, faxed applications are not accepted.

11. **Should I send a copy of my credential/degree or do I need to send an official transcript?** If you have earned a CDA Credential, Technical Certificate of Credit or Technical College Diploma, submit a copy of your credential. If you have earned an associate, bachelor’s or master’s degree, submit a copy of your official transcript from the Registrar’s Office. Unofficial transcripts are not accepted.

12. **When will I find out if I have been approved for an INCENTIVES payment?** You should receive a letter indicating the status of your application within two to three weeks. If you have not heard from the program within three weeks, call 770-642-6722 or 800-227-3410 to confirm receipt of your application.
STEP 1: Personal Information (Please print):

Name: ______________________________ County of Residence: __________________

Home Address: __________________________ Street or post office box (Enter only one) Apartment Number: __________________

City: __________________ State: __________ Zip: __________

Home Phone: ( ) ___________________ Cell Phone: ( ) ___________________ Date of Birth: __________ / __________ / __________

Social Security Number: __________ / __________ / __________ E-mail: __________________

Gender:  [ ] Female  [ ] Male

Race:  [ ] White  [ ] Black / African-American  [ ] Asian  [ ] Native American / Alaskan Native  [ ] Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander  [ ] Bi- / Multi-Racial  [ ] Other: __________________

Ethnicity: (any race)  [ ] Hispanic / Latino  [ ] Not Hispanic / Latino

Georgia Professional Development Registry Number: __________________

(Payment will not be issued without a copy of your PDR Profile reflecting your PDR number.)

Note: You will receive an IRS Form 1099 as required and must report INCENTIVES income on your tax return.

STEP 2: Employment Information (Employer must complete, sign, and date):

Name of center, group home or family day care home: __________________________ Enter name as it appears on Bright from the Start license/registration

Work Address: __________________________ Enter address as it appears on Bright from the Start license/registration County: __________

City: __________________ State: __________ Zip: __________

Phone: ( ) ___________________ Fax: ( ) ___________________

Facility type (check one):  [ ] Child Care Learning Center  [ ] Group Day Care Home  [ ] Family Day Care Home

Home or center is licensed by (check one):  [ ] Bright from the Start (BFTS)  [ ] Department of Defense (DOD)

As Owner, Director or Human Resources Manager, I verify that the above employment information for this applicant is true and accurate. I understand and agree that receipt of INCENTIVES monies by the applicant will not affect any salary adjustments the applicant may be eligible to receive through our program.

Name (print): __________________________ Title (print): __________________________

Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Family Day Care Homes Only

Date you opened your family day care home: __________ / __________ / __________

Number of hours your family day care home operates each week: __________________

Number of children currently enrolled in your family day care home: __________________

Ages of children currently enrolled (circle all that apply):

Birth – 1 1 2 3 4 5

Your Net Income from previous year’s IRS Schedule C tax form:

$ __________________

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No

Serve DFCS subsidized children?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No

Child Care Learning Centers and Group Day Care Homes Only

Applicant’s Job Title (mark all that apply):

[ ] Asst. Teacher  [ ] Asst. Director  [ ] Owner

[ ] Teacher  [ ] Director (other positions do not qualify)

Is the applicant a Georgia lottery-funded Pre-K teacher?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No

Is the applicant a Head Start or Early Head Start teacher?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No

Number of hours applicant works each week: __________________

Number of months per year applicant works (circle one):  9  10  12

Number of months per year applicant is paid (circle one):  9  10  12

Applicant’s current hourly wage: $ __________________

Applicant is paid:  [ ] Weekly  [ ] Bi-Weekly  [ ] Bi-Monthly  [ ] Monthly (circle one)

Applicant’s date of hire: __________ / __________ / __________ (use original hire date if employment has been continuous with present employer, but at different locations)

If applicant is in the classroom, # of children in applicant’s classroom: __________________

If applicant is in the classroom, ages of children in class (circle all that apply):

Birth – 1 1 2 3 4 5
APPLICANTS MUST COMPLETE THIS SECTION

To qualify for INCENTIVES, your credential or degree must be in Early Childhood Education, Child Development or Child Care Administration. INCENTIVES award levels are not related to the Professional Development Registry Career Levels.

**INCENTIVES Award Levels:** Eligible Applicants may receive a maximum of two payments per education level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1 – Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential</th>
<th>Level 2 – Technical Certificate of Credit</th>
<th>Level 3 – Technical College Diploma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Child Care Technical Certificate of Credit* = $ 250</td>
<td>= $ 375</td>
<td>= $ 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 – Associate Degree = $ 750</td>
<td>Level 5 – Bachelor’s Degree = $ 1,000</td>
<td>Level 6 – Master’s Degree = $ 1,250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The 3 courses required to complete this program do not move into higher levels of education in any ECCE program

**STEP 3:** Indicate the highest early childhood education credential or degree you have earned:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels 1, 2, and 3 Completed Education Credential(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❑ Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) issued by the Council for Professional Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Introduction to Child Care Technical Certificate of Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Technical College Diploma (TCD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels 4, 5, and 6 Completed Education Degree(s) from SACS-accredited or other regionally-accredited institution:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❑ AAS/AAT Early Childhood Ed./Child Development/Child Care Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ BA/BS Early Childhood Ed./Child Development/Child Care Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ MA/MS/M.ED Early Childhood Education/Child Development/Child Care Administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STEP 4:** List all credentials and/or degrees you have previously earned:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credential/Degree Earned:</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Program of Study</th>
<th>Year Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❑ Child Development Associate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Technical Certificate of Credit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Technical College Diploma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Associate Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Master’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bright from the Start SCHOLARSHIPS Program**

Are you currently pursuing a credential or degree in early childhood education, child development, or child care administration? You may be eligible for SCHOLARSHIPS, which offers tuition assistance and a stipend for academic programs at Georgia’s HOPE-eligible colleges, universities, and technical schools. Visit our website at www.caresolutions.com for the SCHOLARSHIPS program requirements and application as well as more information about going back to school.
STEP 5: Affidavit for Lawful Presence Verification:

Affidavit For Lawful Presence Verification
For
Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
INCENTIVES

By executing this affidavit under oath, as an applicant for an INCENTIVES payment or for other public benefit as referenced in O.C.G.A. §50-36-1(a)(3)(A), I hereby swear and affirm that the following is true and correct with respect to my application for an INCENTIVES payment from Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.

Name of Person Receiving Benefit: _______________________________________________

Check one of the following:

1) _____ I am a United States citizen 18 years of age or older.

2) _____ I am a legal permanent resident of the United States, 18 years of age or older.

3) _____ I am a qualified alien or non-immigrant under the Federal Immigration and Nationality Act, 18 years of age or older, with an alien registration number issued by the Department of Homeland Security or other federal immigration agency

My alien registration number issued by the Department of Homeland Security or other federal immigration agency is: _______________________________ (Required if #2 or #3 is checked).

I also verify I am providing A COPY OF THE FRONT AND BACK of at least one secure and verifiable document, as required by O.C.G.A. Sec. 50-36-1(e)(1), with this affidavit. A complete list of acceptable documents is on page 8 of this application.

The secure and verifiable document I am providing with this affidavit is:

_______________________________________________________________________________________
(Identify the document, such as driver's license, Temporary Resident Card, passport, etc.)

In providing the above information under oath, I understand that any person who knowingly and willfully makes a false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation in an affidavit in any matter within the jurisdiction of any department or agency of state government shall be guilty of a violation of O.C.G.A. §16-10-20 and face criminal penalties as allowed by such criminal statute.

Signature of Applicant  Date

Printed Name: ________________________________________________________________

Printed Address: ________________________________________________________________

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN
BEFORE ME ON THIS THE
______DAY OF _______________________, 20___

Notary Public
My Commission Expires: ____/____, 20___
STEP 6: Attach the following documents to your INCENTIVES application:

**Required Documentation**
- Copy of your valid (not expired) CDA credential, Technical Certificate of Credit, Technical College Diploma OR an official transcript if you hold an Associate, Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree.
- Copy of two recent pay stubs reflecting the name of your employer, your name, and your gross (before deductions) wages. Family day care providers and owners who do not pay themselves W2 wages submit a copy of last year’s Schedule C or other federal tax form documenting net business income.
- Copy of your Professional Development Registry Profile reflecting your PDR number.
- Copy of a secure and verifiable document (see page eight for information).

STEP 7: Sign and date the application:

**STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATION:** Read carefully before signing and dating. Unsigned applications will not be processed.

I ___________________________________________________________ (Applicant’s Name), attest that all of the information appearing on this application and in supporting documentation is true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any false or incomplete information knowingly provided on this application or in supporting documents may be grounds for denial of this application and denial of future participation in this or other programs. I understand that intentionally providing false information on this application or in supporting documents is a violation of state law and may result in civil or criminal proceedings. I authorize any agent or employee of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning to verify this information and release it to any necessary party to determine my eligibility.

I also understand and agree that my personal information may be shared with the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development Registry.

Applicant’s Signature ___________________________ Date ____________

STEP 8: Detach pages three through six and mail to:

**SCHOLARSHIPS & INCENTIVES** Programs

c/o Care Solutions, Inc.

1117 Perimeter Center West, Suite W-300
Atlanta, GA 30338

INCENTIVES is funded by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning through the federal Child Care and Development Fund.

If you have any questions, call toll free 800-227-3410 or 770-642-6722.

www.caresolutions.com

**SCHOLARSHIPS & INCENTIVES** are managed by Care Solutions, Inc.
All individuals applying for the INCENTIVES program must register with the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development Registry (PDR) as a part of the application process. The PDR is separate from SCHOLARSHIPS and INCENTIVES. It records and maintains your professional development information – your training and/or any credentials or degrees you earn, in one convenient location.

Registering is easy! You can sign up immediately, even if you have not earned a credential or degree by entering any recent early childhood or related training you have received up to the established time frame.

1. Gather your relevant training certificates, credentials, and/or transcript(s).
3. Follow the directions to create your confidential account. Be sure to record your username and password and secure them for future use.
4. After completing and saving the Contact, Education, and Employment and Training sections, scroll to the bottom of the page and look for the message ‘Ready for Submission? Return to My Profile to submit.’ Click there.
5. Scroll to the bottom and check the box next to ‘I have reviewed.’ Click on the Continue button, check the box next to ‘I authorize’ then click ‘Submit’ to send your profile for review. This action will change your PDR status from Incomplete to Pending and you will be assigned a PDR Number.
6. Print your PDR Profile to submit with your SCHOLARSHIPS or INCENTIVES application.
7. You will receive an email identifying what you need to submit to the PDR to verify the information you entered. The documents are not shared with the SCHOLARSHIPS and INCENTIVES programs.

Two other tabs appear when you enter the system to view your profile: Other Career Data and Demographics. Completing the information under these tabs is voluntary; this data is used by Bright from the Start to determine additional supports and services needed across the state. If you have participated in SCHOLARSHIPS, INCENTIVES, or other programs, check the appropriate box.

You can update your profile at any time by submitting documentation of state-approved trainings, credentials, degrees, conference attendance, etc. as you complete them.

The PDR is a tool that benefits the early care and education community in Georgia, and we encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity. Thank you for your continued dedication to your professional development and your commitment to improving the quality of care for young children.

If you have questions or need technical support, contact the PDR at 866-258-7737 or e-mail pdrsupport@decal.ga.gov.
Secure and Verifiable Documents Under O.C.G.A. § 50-36-2
Issued August 1, 2012 by the Office of the Attorney General, Georgia

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act of 2011 ("IIREA") provides that “[n]ot later than August 1, 2011, the Attorney General shall provide and make public on the Department of Law’s website a list of acceptable secure and verifiable documents. The list shall be reviewed and updated annually by the Attorney General.” O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(f). The Attorney General may modify this list on a more frequent basis, if necessary.

The following list of secure and verifiable documents, published under the authority of O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2, contains documents that are verifiable for identification purposes, and documents on this list may not necessarily be indicative of residency or immigration status.

- A United States passport or passport card [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2]
- A United States military identification card [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2]
- A driver’s license issued by one of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the United States Virgin Island, American Samoa, or the Swain Islands, providing that it contains a photograph of the bearer or lists sufficient identifying information regarding the bearer, such as name, date of birth, gender, height, eye color, and address to enable the identification of the bearer [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2]
- An identification card issued by one of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the United States Virgin Island, American Samoa, or the Swain Islands, providing that it contains a photograph of the bearer or lists sufficient identifying information regarding the bearer, such as name, date of birth, gender, height, eye color, and address to enable the identification of the bearer [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2]
- A tribal identification card of a federally recognized Native American tribe, provided it contains a photograph of the bearer, such as name, date of birth, gender, height, eye color, and address to enable the identification of the bearer. A listing of federally recognized Native American tribes may be found at: http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/BIA/OIS/TribalGovernmentServices/TribalDirectory/index.htm [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2]
- A United States Permanent Resident Card or Alien Registration Receipt Card [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2]
- An Employment Authorization Document that contains a photograph of the bearer [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2]
- A passport issued by a foreign government [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2]
- A Merchant Mariner Document or Merchant Mariner Credential issued by the United States Coast Guard [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2]
- A NEXUS card [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2]
- A Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI) card [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2]
- A Free and secure Trade (FAST) card [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2]
- A Consular Report of Birth Abroad issued by the United States Department of State (Form FS-240) [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2]
- An original or certified copy of a birth certificate issued by a State, county, municipal authority, or territory of the United States bearing an official seal (O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(b)(3);8 CFR § 274a.2)
- In addition to the documents listed herein, if, in administering a public benefit or program, an agency is required by federal law to accept a document or other form of identification for proof of or documentation of identity, that document or other form of identification will be deemed a secure and verifiable document solely for that particular program or administration of that particular public benefit. [O.C.G.A.§ 50-36-2(c)]

If you have any questions, call toll free 800-227-3410 or 770-642-6722.
www.caresolutions.com

SCHOLARSHIPS & INCENTIVES are managed by Care Solutions, Inc.