



Bright from the Start Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE, 670 East Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334

Phone: (404) 657-5562 WWW.DECAL.GA.GOV

Investigation Report

Date: 11/6/2025 **VisitType:** Complaint Investigation Closure from CI FollowUp on 11/06/2025

CCLC-39560

Stepping Stones Early Development Center

125 Galan Drive Byron, GA 31008 Peach County
(478) 956-1438 Director@steppingstonesga.com

Regional Consultant

Brandi Mangino

Phone: (478) 314-9726

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brandi.mangino@dec.al.ga.gov

Mailing Address

Same

Quality Rated: ★ ★

Compliance Zone Designation			Compliance Zone Designation - A summary measure of a program's 12 month monitoring history, as it pertains to child care health and safety rules. The three compliance zones are good standing, support, and deficient. Good Standing - Program is demonstrating an acceptable level of performance in meeting the rules. Support - Program performance is demonstrating a need for improvement in meeting rules. Deficient - Program is not demonstrating an acceptable level of performance in meeting the rules.
11/06/2025	Complaint Investigation Follow Up	Deficient	
11/06/2025	Complaint Closure	Good Standing	
10/21/2025	Complaint Closure	Good Standing	

Comments

The purpose of the visit was to conduct a Complaint Investigation.

Advisement of Potential for Repeated Rule Violations during Pending Investigations

This report shall serve as official notice of potential rule violations. These potential rule violations have been detailed in this report and discussed with you by the consultant. The department shall conduct a thorough investigation to determine if in fact the alleged rule violation(s) should or should not be substantiated. Please be aware that the investigation may take some time to be finalized to ensure fairness and accuracy. During this investigation period, any violations of an identical rule or rules will require the department to treat any and all substantiated rule violations identified in the investigation as repeated rule violation(s).

Further, from time to time the department discovers additional rule violations during the course of an investigation. If there are new rule violation(s), your consultant shall inform you of the violation(s) as soon as possible. However, as stated above, any violations of identical rule(s) will require the department to treat any and all additional rule violations identified in the investigation as repeated rule violations.

All rule violations found in relation to a complaint or incident investigation will be associated with the date the investigation was closed.



Please refer to the website, <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/CCS/RulesAndRegulations.aspx>, for information regarding October 1, 2018 rule changes about Criminal Records Checks that may affect your facility. In summary,

- New records checks will be required to be completed if a staff member experiences a six month break in service from the child care industry
- New clearance is required at least once every five years
- Any staff member solely responsible for supervising children will be required to have completed a comprehensive background clearance
- All staff members are required to have completed at least a national fingerprint based clearance check
- Any staff member with only the national fingerprint based clearance, must be under constant and direct supervision of a staff member with a satisfactory comprehensive records check clearance
- Facilities are required to use DECAL KOALA for Criminal Records Checks, including to verify portability of an employee

O.C.G.A. Section 42.1.12(i)(2) requires Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning to notify licensed child care programs on accessing and retrieving from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation's (GBI) website a list of the names and addresses of all registered sexual offenders. Please see GBI's website located at <http://gbi.georgia.gov> to access the Georgia Sex Offender Registry.

Refutation Process:

You have the right to refute any of the citations noted in this report with which you disagree. To refute a citation(s), do the following:

- 1) Log into DECAL KOALA www.decalkoala.com with the userid for your program
- 2) On the home page scroll down to the Inspection Reports and select 'Refute Citation' for the visit report in dispute
- 3) Select the specific rule number(s) that you are refuting, add the reason for disagreement regarding the rule citation, and upload supporting documentation
- 4) Submit the refutation in DECAL KOALA to Child Care Services (CCS) within 10 business days of the completion date.

Your refutation will be forwarded to the appropriate CCS manager, who will follow up with you about your concerns. If you have any questions about this process, contact our office at 404-657-5562.

Bright from the Start recommends that all licensed child care providers carry liability insurance coverage sufficient to protect its clients. If you do not have this liability insurance, you are required to post a notice with ½ inch letters in a conspicuous location in the program, notify the parent or guardian of each child in care in writing, obtain their signature to acknowledge receipt and maintain this written acknowledgment on file at the program at all times while the child attends the program and for 12 months after the child's last date of attendance. (O.C.G.A. Section 20-1A-4)

I have read and understand the Rules and Regulations for Child Care Learning Centers, 591-1-1. I acknowledge that the items noted in this report have been discussed with me and I have agreed to a Plan of Improvement (POI) as indicated in this report. I understand that correction of these deficiencies, while required, will not necessarily prevent DECAL from taking adverse action against this facility. I understand that if I disagree with any of the deficiencies cited, I have the right to refute them on this report or any other form that I choose to send to Child Care Services.



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Summary Report

Date: 11/6/2025 **VisitType:** Complaint Investigation Closure
from CI FollowUp on 11/06/2025

Arrival: 7:40 AM **Departure:** 11:30 AM

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The following information is associated with a Complaint Closure:

Activities and Equipment

591-1-1-.12 Equipment & Toys(CR)

Not Met

Finding Associated with Complaint

591-1-1-.12(1) requires each Employee and child in attendance to use all indoor and outdoor furniture, activity materials, and equipment in a safe and appropriate manner and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, recommendations, and intended use. All equipment and furniture shall be used only by the age-appropriate group of children. It was determined based on investigative findings that toys were removed after September 17, 2025 due to them being a choking hazard to children in care.

POI (Plan of Improvement)

The Center will ensure Staff are trained in and children are taught the proper use of all furniture, materials and equipment; will implement a plan for this information to be reviewed with both groups on an ongoing basis; and for monitoring proper and age-appropriate usage.

Correction Deadline: 11/6/2025

Finding Associated with Complaint

591-1-1-.12(2) requires that all equipment and furniture be free from hazardous conditions such as, but not limited to, sharp rough edges or toxic paint; and be kept clean. It was determined based on investigative finding that outside toys were removed from the center playground after September 17, 2025 due to them being crack and having wear from the sun.

POI (Plan of Improvement)

The Center will ensure that equipment and furniture are used by the age-appropriate group of children.

Correction Deadline: 11/6/2025

Facility

591-1-1-.25 Physical Plant - Safe Environment(CR)

Not Met

Finding Associated with Complaint

591-1-1-.25(3) requires the Center and surrounding premises to be kept clean, free of debris and in good repair. Hygienic measures such as, but not limited to, screened windows and proper waste disposal procedures shall be utilized to minimize the presence of rodents, flies, roaches and other vermin at the Center. It was determined based on investigative findings that rugs in the infant and toddler room had to be removed due to stains.

POI (Plan of Improvement)

The Center will have the Center and surrounding areas cleaned, make repairs where needed, and remove all debris is removed. The Center will implement a plan to keep areas clean and in good repair that includes regular monitoring.

Correction Deadline: 11/6/2025

Finding Associated with Complaint

591-1-1-.25(8) requires protective caps on all unused electrical outlets within children's reach and requires that electrical outlets in use be made inaccessible to children. It was determined based on investigative findings that in the Pre-K room the cart with the laptop and projector had exposed cords.

POI (Plan of Improvement)

The Center will train Staff to check outlets and replace protective caps when needed and identify and monitor how outlets in use are inaccessible to children.

Correction Deadline: 11/6/2025

Food Service

591-1-1-.15 Food Service & Nutrition

Not Met

Finding Associated with Complaint

591-1-1-.15(2)(f) requires that food for infants or children less than one (1) year of age be cut into pieces one-quarter inch or smaller and food for toddlers shall be cut into pieces one-half inch or smaller to prevent choking. It was determined based on investigative finding that food served to infant and toddler children were not cut in 1/4 inch sizes and were 1/2 inch or more on the date of the visit. Staff statements indicated the food would be cut and classroom staff could make the sizes smaller.

POI (Plan of Improvement)

The Center will ensure that food for infants and children less than one (1) year of age is cut into pieces one-quarter inch or smaller and food for toddlers is cut into pieces one-half inch or smaller to prevent choking.

Correction Deadline: 11/6/2025

Health and Hygiene

591-1-1-.07 Children's Health

Not Met

Finding Associated with Complaint

591-1-1-.07(2) requires that Parents be immediately notified and specific instructions obtained until the child can be picked up or returned to the group, immediately when professional medical attention is required, or when the child experiences symptoms of moderate discomfort, or when the child is involved in an incident that puts their health and/or safety at risk and to notify Parents by the end of the day when professional medical attention is not required, when the child experiences symptoms of less than moderate discomfort or when the child experiences an adverse reaction to prescribed medication which does not constitute moderate discomfort. It was determined based on investigative finding that on September 17, 2025, a 3-year-old child fell on the center slide and bust a lip. The center did not have documentation of an incident report for parental notification.

POI (Plan of Improvement)

The Center will provide notification and obtain instructions as required and will train Staff to familiarize them with the notification requirements and the Center's procedures for following them.

Correction Deadline: 11/6/2025