



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: 8/4/2025 **VisitType:** Complaint Investigation & Monitoring Visit

CCLC-56596

A Step Above Preparatory South

4195 Welcome All Rd SW Atlanta, GA 30349 Fulton County
(260) 760-4679 astepaboveprepsouth@gmail.com

Regional Consultant

Shameka Dozier

Phone: (770) 857-7010

Fax: (770) 357-7009

shameka.dozier@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.
08/04/2025	Complaint Investigation & Monitoring Visit	Support	
04/03/2025	Complaint Closure	Good Standing	
04/01/2025	POI Follow Up	Good Standing	

Comments

Staff files, literacy training, CPR/ pediatric CPR, policy and procedures, and Initial Program Orientation was discussed with the provider on this date.

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: 8/4/2025 **VisitType:** Complaint Investigation & Monitoring Visit **Arrival:** 7:40 AM **Departure:** 4:25 PM

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The following information is associated with a Monitoring Visit:

Activities and Equipment

591-1-1-.03 Activities

Not Met

Finding

591-1-1-.03(1) requires the Center to provide a daily planned program of varied and developmentally appropriate activities to promote social, emotional, physical, cognitive, language and literacy growth. Center Staff shall use a variety of teaching methods to accommodate the needs of the children's different learning styles. It was determined based on observation that a daily planned program of varied and developmentally appropriate activities was not provided as the children were observed climbing on furniture and playing with the same toys in classrooms CL and AL.

Correction Deadline: 8/4/2025

Recited on 8/4/2025

Finding

591-1-1-.03(13) requires Center Staff to develop a daily schedule for each group to reflect routines and activities that is flexible but routinely followed to provide structure. The schedule must be posted in each group's room or area and made available to Parent(s) upon request. It was determined based on observation that the daily schedule and routine for each group in classrooms AL- infant, HR, and CL were not followed. Consultant observed children not following the posted schedule as they only had limited toys to play with such as dolls and blocks. There were no other activities being provided by staff.

Correction Deadline: 8/4/2025

Finding

591-1-1-.03(2) requires the Center to keep current lesson plans on site that reflect appropriate instruction practices and activities to support children's development. The Center shall have sufficient and varied play and learning equipment and materials to support the above program of activities in all developmental areas. It was determined based on observation that classrooms AL- infant, CL, and HR-One Year Old did not have an updated lesson plan posted. Director and staff were not able to provide consultant a copy of the lesson plans upon request and there were no lesson plans posted for the current week.

Correction Deadline: 8/4/2025

Recited on 8/4/2025

Finding

591-1-1-.03(5)(a-k) requires the Center to provide a variety of activities that allow for: indoor and outdoor play; quiet and active periods; free choice and directed activities; individual and group activities; large and small muscle activities; language experiences; arts and crafts; dramatic play; music and movement; and nature and science. It was determined based on observation that a variety of activities such as arts and crafts; dramatic play materials; music and movement; nature/ science, and manipulates in classrooms CL, BL, HR, and AL- infant were not present as the shelves were nearly empty with only a limited variety of activities for children.

Correction Deadline: 8/8/2025

Recited on 8/4/2025

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

Discussed adding equipment and toys to enhance variety.

591-1-1-.35 Swimming Pools & Water-related Activities(CR)	N/A
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Comment

Per the provider, the center does not provide swimming activities.

	Facility
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591-1-1-.06 Bathrooms	Technical Assistance
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Technical Assistance

591-1-1-.06(7) - Consultant discussed with the provider to ensure that bathrooms are cleaned daily with a disinfectant.

Correction Deadline: 8/4/2025

591-1-1-.19 License Capacity(CR)	Met
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Comment

Licensed capacity observed to be routinely met by center on this date.

Finding

591-1-1-.25(13) requires that potentially hazardous equipment, materials and supplies be stored in a locked area inaccessible to children. It was determined based on observation that a broom and dust pan were behind the classroom door of classroom AL-infant and was accessible to children. It was also observed that a vacuum cleaner, mop, and a mop bucket with water were on the wall in the hallway near classroom BL-One and Two and was accessible to children.

Correction Deadline: 8/4/2025

Finding

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 observation that three of five windows in classroom HR-One year Old had torn blinds.

Correction Deadline: 8/4/2025

Finding

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 observation that a charger cord was hanging from the electrical outlet that was accessible and within children's reach in classroom CL-Three year old.

Correction Deadline: 8/4/2025

591-1-1-.26 Playgrounds(CR)

N/A

Comment

Playground not observed on this date due to inclement weather.

Food Service

Finding

591-1-1-.15(10) requires that portions of food or drink which are served to children or placed on the table for service and are not consumed at that meal or snack by the children to whom the portions are served shall be thrown away. Any formula or breast milk remaining one hour from the beginning of the feeding shall be discarded or returned to Parent(s). It was determined based on observation that the refrigerator contained foods such as lima beans in a plastic container covered in aluminum foil and a sweet potato casserole that was in a cooking pan that had been served to children on Friday August 1, 2025 was not thrown away and stored in the refrigerator.

Correction Deadline: 8/4/2025

Correction Deadline: 4/1/2025

Corrected on 8/4/2025

.15(5) - Previous citation of no current menu posted for the month of February and no current food menu posted for the current week was observed to be corrected on this date.

Finding

591-1-1-.15(6)(a) requires the Center to serve all scheduled meals and snacks to children when they are present. In those Centers where the Parent(s) of children enrolled provide the meals and snacks, the Center shall ensure that no child remains at the Center without receiving the scheduled nutritious meals and snacks. There shall be a period of at least two (2) hours between each required meal or snack. The following meals and snacks shall be scheduled and served by the Center when appropriate: breakfast or morning snack, lunch, an afternoon snack, supper during evening care, and evening snack prior to bedtime, if the Center provides night-time care. It was determined based on observation that children under the age of six were not provided breakfast at their listed daily scheduled time based on the center's hours of operation as consultant observed breakfast was served to children at 9:45 a.m.

Correction Deadline: 8/4/2025

591-1-1-.18 Kitchen Operations**Technical Assistance****Technical Assistance**

591-1-1-.18(12) - Children being excluded in the kitchen except as part of a planned, supervised learning experience was discussed with the provider on this date.

Correction Deadline: 8/4/2025

Technical Assistance

591-1-1-.18(7) - Kitchen cleanliness was discussed with the provider on this date.

Correction Deadline: 8/4/2025

Health and Hygiene**591-1-1-.10 Diapering Areas & Practices(CR)****Met****Comment**

Diapering requirements were discussed with the director on this date.

591-1-1-.17 Hygiene(CR)**Met****Comment**

Please ensure lids remain on trash containing organic waste.

591-1-1-.20 Medications(CR)**Met****Comment**

The Provider currently does not dispense/administer medication.

Policies and Procedures**591-1-1-.21 Operational Policies & Procedures****Technical Assistance****Technical Assistance**

591-1-1-.21(1)(a-o) - Discussed updating the Center's policies and procedures to include the program's practices regarding the expulsion and suspension of children enrolled for care within the description of behavior management and discipline actions used by the Center. Also discussed to ensure a description of the practices followed by the Center to prevent shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma in children up to five years of age that includes the following information: how to recognize, respond to, and report the signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma; strategies to assist staff members in understanding how to care for infants and how to cope with a crying, fussing, or distraught child; strategies to ensure staff members understand the brain development of children up to five years of age; and a list of prohibited behaviors when dealing with children. Additional information can be found in the CCLC Indicator Manual found on DECAL's website at: <https://www.dec.state.ga.us/CCS/Regulations.aspx> or through the Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome found at: <https://dontshake.org/>.

Correction Deadline: 8/9/2025

Safety**591-1-1-.05 Animals****N/A****Comment**

Center does not keep animals on premises.

591-1-1-.11 Discipline(CR)**Met****Comment**

Age-appropriate discussion and/or redirection observed.

591-1-1-.13 Field Trips(CR)**N/A****Comment**

Center does not participate in field trips at this time.

591-1-1-.36 Transportation(CR)**N/A****Comment**

Per the provider, the center does not provide routine transportation as the vehicles are not currently working. Transportation was discussed with provider on this date.

Sleeping & Resting Equipment**591-1-1-.30 Safe Sleeping and Resting Requirements(CR)****Technical Assistance****Comment**

Cleaning and disinfecting of mats was discussed with the director on this date.

Technical Assistance

591-1-1-.30(1)(b)1 - Construction of cots and mats were discussed with the provider on this date.

Staff Records

Records Reviewed: 7**Records with Missing/Incomplete Components: 4**

Staff # 1

Not Met

Date of Hire: 08/01/2025

"Missing/Incomplete Components"

.24(1)-Evidence of Orientation Missing

Staff # 2

Not Met

Date of Hire: 08/19/2024

"Missing/Incomplete Components"

.33(3)-Health & Safety Certificate,.24(1)-Evidence of Orientation Missing

Staff # 3

Not Met

Date of Hire: 07/28/2025

"Missing/Incomplete Components"

.24(1)-Evidence of Orientation Missing

Staff # 5

Not Met

Date of Hire: 07/30/2025

"Missing/Incomplete Components"

.24(1)-No Record

591-1-1-.09 Criminal Records and Comprehensive Background Checks(CR)**Met****Comment**

Criminal record checks were observed to be complete.

591-1-1-.14 First Aid & CPR(CR)**Technical Assistance****Technical Assistance**

591-1-1-.14(1)(a) - Discussed that effective July 1, 2025, new staff are required to obtain pediatric First Aid and pediatric CPR training within 45 days of employment. It was further discussed that programs must have at least one person with current pediatric First Aid and pediatric CPR training in each classroom at all times.

Correction Deadline: 9/3/2025**591-1-1-.24 Personnel Records****Not Met****Finding**

591-1-1-.24(1) requires the center to maintain a personnel file on the Director, all Employees, Provisional Employees, Personnel, Staff, Students-in-Training, Volunteers, Clerical, Housekeeping, Maintenance, and other Support Staff for the duration of the term of employment plus one calendar year, and it shall contain the following: identifying information to include: name, date of birth, social security number, current address and current telephone number; employment history; as applicable to the position held: evidence of education and qualifying work experience; evidence of all training required by these rules which shall include: title of training, date of training, trainer's signature, location of training and number of clock hours obtained; a statement completed by the staff member that the information provided is true and accurate; any other records required by these rules; and as applicable to the position held, evidence of required orientation including date and signature of person providing the orientation; It was determined based on review of records that there was no personnel file for staff #5. The director was not able to produce the file when asked by consultant and stated that there was no file for staff #5.

Correction Deadline: 8/9/2025

591-1-1-.33 Staff Training

Not Met

Finding

591-1-1-.33(1) requires all Employees and Provisional Employees to receive Initial Center orientation prior to assignment to children or task. It was determined based on review of records that there was no Initial Center orientation on file for staff #1, #2, and #3.

Correction Deadline: 8/4/2025

Defer

591-1-1-.33(5)- Previous citation of staff #7 having zero of ten annual hours for the year 2024 will be deferred until next visit date.

Correction Deadline: 2/5/2025

591-1-1-.31 Staff(CR)

Not Met

Finding

591-1-1-.31(11) requires the Center to have qualified and sufficient direct-care, clerical, housekeeping, maintenance and other employees to ensure full compliance with these rules without neglecting the supervision of children. It was determined based on observation that there was no sufficient direct-care to ensure full compliance as only two teachers were observed at the facility for over an hour upon consultants arrival.

Correction Deadline: 8/4/2025

Recited on 8/4/2025

Staffing and Supervision

Met

Center observed to maintain appropriate staff:child ratios.

Met

Adequate supervision observed on this date.

The following information is associated with a Complaint Investigation Visit:

Food Service

Not Met

Correction Deadline: 4/1/2025

Corrected on 8/4/2025

15(1) - Previous citation of children not being provided a fruit component as there was no fruit served for breakfast.was associated with a complaint and observed to be corrected on this date.

Policies and Procedures

Met

Correction Deadline: 3/4/2025

Corrected on 8/4/2025

.29(1) - Previous citation of the facility being closed on February 17, 2025 in observance of President's Day, and did not report the closing within twenty-four (24) hours or the next work day was associated with a complaint and observed to be corrected on this date. Required reporting was discussed with the provider.