



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

Date: 9/5/2025 **VisitType:** Monitoring Visit

Arrival: 11:25 AM **Departure:** 1:40 PM

CCLC-39274

First Steps Childcare of Braselton

9234 Hwy 124 W Braselton, GA 30517 Jackson County
(706) 658-4075 cathyamartinez@gmail.com

Regional Consultant

Lynn Schnitzer

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lynn.schnitzer@decal.ga.gov

Mailing Address

Same

Quality Rated: ★

<u>Compliance Zone Designation</u>			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.
09/05/2025	Monitoring Visit	Good Standing	
07/25/2024	Licensing Study	Good Standing	
08/31/2023	Licensing Study	Good Standing	

Ratios/License Capacity

Building	Room	Age Group	Staff	Children	NC/C	Max 35 SF.	35 SF. Comp.	Max 25 SF.	25 SF. Comp.	Notes
Main	A Right		0	0	C	10	C	NA	NA	
Main	B Left	Infants and One Year Olds	1	6	C	8	C	NA	NA	Transitioning, Lunch
Main	C- Middle	Two Year Olds and Three Year Olds	2	7	C	14	C	NA	NA	Transitioning, Lunch
			Total Capacity @35 sq. ft.: 32			Total Capacity @25 sq. ft.: 0				
Total # Children this Date: 13			Total Capacity @35 sq. ft.: 32			Total Capacity @25 sq. ft.: 0				

Building	Playground	Playground Occupancy	Playground Compliance
Main	Playground	53	C

Enrolled Children						
Under 1 years	1 years	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years (Prekonly)	5 years and older
1	5	3	5	0	0	0

Comments

Consultant discussed the report with director, Cathy Martinez, on September 5, 2025.

Consultant discussed with the director that DECAL SCHOLARS may have funding available.

Plan of Improvement: Developed This Date

Any rule violation which subjects a child to injury or life-threatening situation or any rule violations previously cited but not corrected, may result in the imposition of an adverse enforcement action. Serious or continued noncompliance may also jeopardize participation in one or more DECAL program(s).

Please refer to the website, <http://www.decgal.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)

Important Quality Rated/CAPS Update:

As January 1, 2022, child care providers must be Quality Rated to receive Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS). Newly licensed, or new to CAPS providers may be eligible for the new CAPS/QR Provisional Status, allowing for scholarships while working toward a star rating.

Contact the Quality Rated help desk at 855-800-7747 or qualityrated@decgal.ga.gov for more information. Free technical assistance is available!



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(Findings Report)

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The following information is associated with a MV:

Activities and Equipment

Records Reviewed: 3

Records with Missing/Incomplete Components: 1

Staff # 1

Not Met

Date of Hire: 09/03/2024

"Missing/Incomplete Components"

.31(2)(b)2.-Staff Qualifications-Education Missing

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

Met

Comment

Equipment and furniture observed to be properly secured, as applicable.

591-1-1-.35 Swimming Pools & Water-related Activities(CR)

N/A

Comment

Center does not provide swimming activities.

Children's Records

Records Reviewed: 3

Records with Missing/Incomplete Components: 1

Staff # 1

Not Met

Date of Hire: 09/03/2024

"Missing/Incomplete Components"

.31(2)(b)2.-Staff Qualifications-Education Missing

591-1-1-.08 Children's Records

Met

Correction Deadline: 7/25/2024

Prior Visits: 07/25/2024

Corrected on 9/5/2025

.08(1) - The previous citation was observed corrected on this date. The Consultant observed five of five children's files to be complete and well-organized. Consultant discussed with the director to ensure that families completely fill out children's enrollment forms.

Records Reviewed: 3

Records with Missing/Incomplete Components: 1

Staff # 1

Not Met

Date of Hire: 09/03/2024

"Missing/Incomplete Components"

.31(2)(b)2.-Staff Qualifications-Education Missing

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

Met

Comment

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

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

Met

Comment

No hazards observed accessible to children on this date.

Comment

The Center appeared clean and well maintained on this date.

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

Met

Comment

Playground observed to be clean and in good repair on this date.

Health and Hygiene

Records Reviewed: 3

Records with Missing/Incomplete Components: 1

Staff # 1

Not Met

Date of Hire: 09/03/2024

"Missing/Incomplete Components"

.31(2)(b)2.-Staff Qualifications-Education Missing

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

Met

Correction Deadline: 7/25/2024

Prior Visits: 07/25/2024

Corrected on 9/5/2025

.07(5) - The previous citation was observed corrected on this date. The Consultant observed that children present did not have anything around their necks or attached to their clothing.

591-1-1-.10 Diapering Areas & Practices(CR)

Met

Comment

Staff stated proper knowledge of diapering procedures.

591-1-1-.17 Hygiene(CR)

Met

Comment

Proper hand washing observed throughout the center on this date.

591-1-1-.20 Medications(CR)

N/A

Comment

The Provider currently does not dispense/administer medication.

Policies and Procedures

Staff # 1

Not Met

Date of Hire: 09/03/2024

"Missing/Incomplete Components"

.31(2)(b)2.-Staff Qualifications-Education Missing

591-1-1-.21 Operational Policies & Procedures**Not Met****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.al.gov/CCS/RulesAndRegulations.aspx> or through the Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome found at: <https://dontshake.org/>.

Correction Deadline: 9/10/2025**Finding**

591-1-1-.21(1)(p) requires the Center to have a written plan for handling emergencies, including but not limited to severe weather, loss of electrical power or water and death, serious injury or loss of a child, a threatening event, or natural disaster which may occur at the Center; to have in place procedures for evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, lock-down, communication and reunification with families, and continuity of operations. The plan must apply to all children in care and include specific accommodations for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions and shall include assurance that no Center Personnel will impede in any way the delivery of emergency care or services to a child by licensed or certified emergency health care professionals. It was determined based on review of records that the center did not have a written plan for handling emergencies. The consultant will provide a template for the emergency plan.

POI (Plan of Improvement)

The Center will write or revise an emergency plan that includes all of the required items.

Correction Deadline: 9/12/2025**Prior Visits: 08/31/2023****Recited on 9/5/2025****Correction Deadline: 7/30/2024****Prior Visits: 12/22/2021****Corrected on 9/5/2025**

.21(3) - The previous citation was observed corrected on this date. The Consultant observed documentation of emergency drills being conducted since the previous visit July 25, 2024.

Safety

Staff # 1

Not Met

Date of Hire: 09/03/2024

"Missing/Incomplete Components"

.31(2)(b)2.-Staff Qualifications-Education Missing

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

Age-appropriate discussion and/or redirection observed.

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

Center does not provide routine transportation.

Sleeping & Resting Equipment**Records Reviewed: 3****Records with Missing/Incomplete Components: 1**

Staff # 1

Not Met

Date of Hire: 09/03/2024

"Missing/Incomplete Components"

.31(2)(b)2.-Staff Qualifications-Education Missing

591-1-1-.30 Safe Sleeping and Resting Requirements(CR)**Met****Comment**

Staff stated knowledge of infant safe sleep practices.

Staff Records**Records Reviewed: 3****Records with Missing/Incomplete Components: 1**

Staff # 1

Not Met

Date of Hire: 09/03/2024

"Missing/Incomplete Components"

.31(2)(b)2.-Staff Qualifications-Education Missing

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

Criminal record checks were observed to be complete.

Comment

Director provided one file for employees hired since last visit July 25, 2024.

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: 10/5/2025**591-1-1-.33 Staff Training****Technical Assistance****Correction Deadline: 12/31/2024****Corrected on 9/5/2025**

.33(5) - The previous citation was observed corrected on this date. The Consultant observed that the required staff had completed ten hours of annual training in 2024.

Technical Assistance

591-1-1-.33(5)(b)1. - New - Discussed that effective July 1, 2025, all staff are required to obtain at least two hours in evidence based, developmentally appropriate language and literacy practices and at least two hours in on-going child development and health and safety related topics as part of their 10 hours of annual training.

Correction Deadline: 10/5/2025

Comment

Staff observed to be compliant with applicable laws and regulations.

Finding

591-1-1-.31(2)(b)3.(i) requires that newly hired teachers who do not possess the educational and qualifying child care experience requirements must enroll in a program of study to obtain one of the educational credentials and qualifying experience requirements as required by these rules within six months after employment at the Center and complete the credential or degree within 18 months after enrollment. It was determined based on a review of records that staff #1, date of hire September 3, 2024, did not meet the educational requirements for a lead teacher and did not enroll in a program of study to obtain an educational credential.

POI (Plan of Improvement)

The Center will ensure that Staff #1 enrolls in a program of study by October 6, 2025, and completes the program by April 5, 2027.

Correction Deadline: 10/6/2025

Staffing and Supervision

Records Reviewed: 3

Records with Missing/Incomplete Components: 1

Staff # 1

Not Met

Date of Hire: 09/03/2024

"Missing/Incomplete Components"

.31(2)(b)2.-Staff Qualifications-Education Missing

591-1-1-.32 Staff:Child Ratios and Group Size(CR)

Met

Correction Deadline: 7/25/2024

Prior Visits: 12/22/2021

Corrected on 9/5/2025

.32(2) - The previous citation was observed corrected on this date. The Consultant observed that the center was within the required ration in each classroom.

591-1-1-.32 Supervision(CR)

Not Met

Finding

591-1-1-.32(7) requires that children be supervised at all times appropriate to the individual age, needs and capabilities of each child. Such supervision must include, but not be limited to, indoor and outdoor activities, mealtimes, naptime, transportation, field trips, and transitions between activities. "Supervision" means that the appropriate number of Staff members are physically present in the area where children are being cared for and are providing watchful oversight to the children, volunteers and Students-in-Training. The persons supervising in the child care area must be alert, positioned to maximize their ability to hear and see the children at all times, and able to respond promptly to the needs and actions of the children being supervised, as well as the actions of the volunteers and Students-in-Training, and provide timely attention to the children's actions and needs. Staff shall be attentive and participating with all children during mealtimes and shall be seated within an arm's length away from children thirty-six (36) months of age and younger. It was determined based on observation that the staff in classroom B Left was standing by the door with an infant in a highchair while the four one-year-old children were seated at the table and one one-year-old child was in a highchair eating lunch. The staff member sat within an arms length away when the consultant explained the rule requirement.

POI (Plan of Improvement)

The Center will train Staff and monitor to ensure they are providing supervision and watchful oversight to the children at all times.

Correction Deadline: 9/5/2025

Prior Visits: 01/10/2023, 06/09/2022