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**FIVE GEORGIA EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS SELECTED
FOR THE 2023 FARMER CHAMPION AWARD**

(ATLANTA) – Nov. 3, 2023 – [Georgia Organics](#) and [Quality Care for Children](#) (QCC) are excited to announce that five Georgia early care and education (ECE) programs, supporting nine childcare sites, have been selected to receive a prestigious 2023 ECE Farmer Champion Award. These ECE providers join some of Georgia’s best-known chefs and restaurants in being recognized for their commitment and support in growing Georgia’s local food movement.

The Farmer Champion program was created by Georgia Organics in 2019 to raise awareness about local sourcing and to bring Georgia farmers, institutions, and aggregators together to increase sustainable and organic purchasing. In partnership with QCC, Georgia Organics expanded the Farmer Champion program in 2022 to recognize ECE providers who purchase and serve locally-grown food in their program’s meals and snacks.

In 2023, the five champion programs were selected because they served locally purchased foods as part of their meal program four or more times per month. Together, they spent over \$4,000 on over 35 different types of local foods and supported over ten different farmers, farmers markets, produce stands, and grocery stores over a two-month time period.

Alice Rolls, Georgia Organics’ president & CEO, noted that Georgia Organics is proud to partner with QCC to create and share resources that guide ECE providers with local procurement. “We applaud the efforts of our Early Care and Education Farmer Champions to source the freshest food for Georgia’s children. They take excellent care of so many in our communities, and now they can add Georgia farmers to the list.”

The early care and education programs, chosen for their dedication to regularly purchasing and providing locally-grown foods, include:



Action Pact, serving:

- **Appling County Head Start** (Appling County)
22 Jr High Dr, Baxley, Ga., 31513
- **Clinch County Head Start** (Clinch County)
282 Carswell St, Homerville, Ga., 31634
- **Toombs County Head Start** (Toombs County)
178 Williams Ave, Lyons, Ga., 30436
- **Ware County Head Start** (Ware County)
1235 McDonald St, Waycross, Ga., 31501

Kimberly Spivey (Houston County)
PO Box 6893, Warner Robins, Ga., 31095

Lina Lane's Learning Center (Clayton County)
2329 Brookgate Way, Ellenwood, Ga., 30294

New Beginning Early Learning Academy (Dougherty)

- North location at 210 N. Monroe Street, Albany, GA 31701
- West location at 1819 West Gordon Ave, Albany, GA 31707

Polka-Dots Early Childhood Developmental Center (Muscookee County)
1719 Fountain Ct., Columbus, Ga., 31904

“Early care and education programs have a critical role to play in ensuring young children have access to foods that fuel their rapidly developing bodies and brains,” said Elyn Cochran, president and chief executive officer at Quality Care for Children. “In addition to serving fresh, locally-grown foods, ECE Farmer Champion sites engage children in experiential learning activities, including gardening, cooking, and taste tests.

Georgia Organics and Quality Care for Children began working together in 2017 to promote child health through Farm to ECE, which includes three core elements- gardening, food and agriculture education, and local food purchasing. To learn more about QCC's Farm to ECE efforts, please visit QCCga.org/farm-to-ece.

ECE Farmer Champion sites will receive a cash award, marketing resources for their program, and recognition at the Georgia Organics Farm to School and ECE Summit in Savannah, Ga., in November 2023.

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About Georgia Organics

Georgia Organics (georgiaorganics.org) is an Atlanta-based, member-supported nonprofit organization with the mission of investing in organic farmers for the health of our communities and the land. Since the 1970s, we have provided direct support to small and organic Georgia farmers. Georgia Organics became a 501(c)(3) in 1997; we have been led since 2004 by President & CEO Alice Rolls. Georgia Organics champions organic agriculture, healthy families, food justice, and environmental stewardship by prioritizing farmer prosperity, fostering improved school nutrition, and collaborating with local food partners across the state for a more resilient local food movement. Visit georgiaorganics.org to learn more. Georgia Organics program teams are: Farmer Services, Farm to Restaurant/Farmer Champion, Farm to School, and Family Farm Share. Our statewide work, including our Georgia Organics Conference & Expo, is fueled by the support of our members, partners, and generous donors. Visit georgiaorganics.org and our blog, thedirt.georgiaorganics.org, to read about our purpose, people, and programs. Follow us at [Facebook.com/georgiaorganics](https://www.facebook.com/georgiaorganics), and [@georgiaorganics](https://www.instagram.com/georgiaorganics) on Instagram, as well as LinkedIn and YouTube.

About Quality Care for Children

For more than forty years, Quality Care for Children (QCC) has remained Georgia's leader in equipping parents and child care providers with the resources they need to receive and provide high quality, affordable child care. The organization provides on-site consulting, training, business resources, and nutrition programs to child care programs and supports parents with a free referral service and tuition assistance for low-income families. Please visit www.QualityCareforChildren.org or call (404) 479-4181 for more information.

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