

EASTERSEALS NORTH GEORGIA WINS PRESTIGIOUS SIBLEY AWARD FOR LEAP PRESCHOOL INCLUSION

A Grant to Local Nonprofit Advances Inclusion in Early Childhood Education with Evidence-Based Innovation

ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, June 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Easterseals North Georgia (ESNG), a community-based nonprofit that provides high-quality services to children with disabilities and families, is proud to

announce that its Guice Child Development Center has been awarded the 2025 Sibley Award for Early Learning Leadership & Program Excellence, receiving a \$25,000 grant to support the implementation of the LEAP (Learning Experiences and Alternative Program for Preschoolers and Parents) Preschool Model.



Funded by Early Learning Property Management (ELPM), The John H. and Wilhelmina D. Harland Charitable Foundation, and The Pittulloch Foundation, the Sibley Award honors exceptional early learning programs that advance innovation, inclusion, and outcomes for Georgia's youngest learners.

"Congratulations to the Easterseals Guice Child Development Center! The LEAP Preschool Model Implementation project embodies the innovative and inclusive spirit of the Sibley Award. We look forward to following the progress of this important project and are confident it can serve as a model for early learning programs across Georgia. We thank the Pittulloch Foundation and the John H. and Wilhelmina D. Harland Charitable Foundation for making the Sibley Award possible, and applaud Easterseals North Georgia for their commitment to children and families," said Olivia Varnson, Operations Manager of Early Learning Property Management.

The LEAP Preschool Model equips classrooms with the tools and strategies to support children with autism and developmental delays in inclusive learning environments. ESNG's implementation at the Guice Center integrates peer-mediated interventions, transdisciplinary collaboration, and structured family engagement to foster meaningful developmental progress for all children.

“With the Sibley Award, we can deepen our impact, creating classrooms where all children, regardless of ability, are supported to grow, learn, and thrive together,” said Donna Davidson, President and CEO of Easterseals North Georgia.

The funding will support professional development for instructional staff, family workshops, classroom materials, and coaching to ensure fidelity to the LEAP model. The pilot will launch in one toddler classroom and one Head Start classroom, directly serving children aged 18 months to four years, as well as their families and teachers.

With more than 200 children across ESNG programs currently diagnosed or suspected of having Autism Spectrum Disorder, the LEAP model presents a timely and scalable solution. Data from LEAP implementation sites nationally shows developmental gains of up to 1.5 months for every month in the program for children with disabilities.

“By investing in our staff and families, we’re not just changing classrooms—we’re transforming futures,” Davidson said.

The Sibley Award reinforces ESNG’s leadership in inclusive early education and affirms its strategic vision to replicate this model across additional centers in the coming years.

ABOUT EASTERSEALS NORTH GEORGIA

Easterseals North Georgia is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving children with disabilities and their families locally for over 50 years. Easterseals North Georgia, which is part of a national network of 71 community-based affiliates for Easterseals, provides high-quality services, including Early Education and Care, Early Intervention, Autism Services, Early Childhood Mental Health, and Champions for Children to ensure that all children with disabilities or other special needs and their families have equal opportunities to live, learn, work and play in their communities. Learn more at www.eastersealsnorthgeorgia.org

ABOUT EASTERSEALS

For 100 years, Easterseals has served as an indispensable resource for individuals with disabilities, veterans, seniors, and their families. Together, our 71 affiliates in communities nationwide serve 1.5 million people annually through high-quality programs, including autism services, early intervention, workforce development, adult day care, and more. In schools, workplaces, and communities, we’re fostering environments where everyone is included and valued – with a real and positive impact on us all. Join us in ensuring that everyone – regardless of age or ability – is 100% included and 100% empowered. Learn more at www.easterseals.com.

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