



March 15, 2024

## Celebrating National CACFP Week

March 10-16, 2024



This week we celebrated National CACFP Week – a national education and information campaign designed to raise awareness of how the USDA’s Child and Adult Care Food Program works to combat hunger.

During this special week, we especially want to **Thank You** --the CACFP providers-- for all the work you do every day to ensure Georgia’s children and adults have access to healthy meals and snacks!

The Nutrition Services Division promoted a different theme each day to raise awareness of how the CACFP works to combat hunger throughout Georgia.

- **Monday: C is for Community & Food Access**
- **Tuesday: A is for Adults**
- **Wednesday: C is for Children**
- **Thursday: F is for Farm to Early Care & Education**
- **Friday: P is for Physical Activity**

*A few of the week’s highlights included:*

- Governor Brian Kemp recognized CACFP Week in Georgia with a **proclamation**.
- Representatives from DECAL and the USDA visited the children at White Oak Learning Academy.
- A raffle was held among providers who shared their CACFP Week celebrations on social media using **#CACFPWeekGA**
- Providers were encouraged to follow us on **Facebook** and **Instagram** for daily

- resource shout outs, recognition, and activities.
  - DECAL teamed up with Small Bites Adventure Club to provide CACFP operators with a free digital resource kit that included making a Very Berry Smoothie. *This initiative is funded through the USDA Farm to School FY23 Grant.*
  - DECAL encouraged recognizing CACFP Superheroes with a [Certificate of Awesomeness \(English and Spanish\)](#).
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## DECAL, USDA tour White Oak Learning Academy during National CACFP Week



*Representatives from DECAL and USDA toured White Oak Learning Academy in Cumming during National CACFP Week. Pictured above (not in order) Representing DECAL: Rian Ringsrud, Deputy Commissioner for Finance & Administration; Kristin Morrissey, DECAL Board Member; Tamika Boone, Director of Nutrition Services; Diana Myers, Nutrition Education and Physical Activity Supervisor and Cindy Kicklighter, Marketing & Outreach Manager. USDA representatives included Rosie Daugherty, Branch Chief for Community Nutrition Programs; Willie Taylor, Regional Administrator for SERO and Eugene Malveaux, Regional Director for SNAP. The White Oak Learning Academy team includes Jennifer Kudlas, Executive Director; Angie Carlisle, Director; Donna Corley, Assistant Director; Jessica Reid Holgate, Assistant Director; Jessica Gaines, Executive Assistant and Devin Wright, Owner.*

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The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) brings healthy foods to approximately 230 children enrolled at White Oak Learning Academy in Cumming. From infants to afterschool care, the children enjoy daily nutritious meals and snacks at the center that provides a safe place to learn, grow and thrive.

During National CACFP Week, representatives from DECAL and the USDA had the opportunity to tour the Three Star Quality Rated facility and to learn how the staff implements CACFP. Participants also observed the kids in the early care classes as they took part in a Small Bites Adventure Club Very Berry Smoothie taste test activity and book reading.

"A big part of White Oak Learning Academy is family," said Donna Corley, Assistant Director. "One reason we participate in CACFP is because we are able to provide our kids with healthier meals. Every child deserves access to healthy foods, and the meals we serve may be the only time that healthier foods are available for our children. The program also helps build good eating habits that last a lifetime."

The White Oak Team also mentioned the benefit of CACFP when feeding infants. "Our parents absolutely love that we can provide basic cereal, formula and baby food through CACFP," said Jennifer Kudlas, Executive Director. "It helps to offset the price of childcare, which is a substantial benefit."

Jennifer recognizes improved behavior when serving the CACFP supper meal to children

attending the afterschool program. "They come in hungry, and they go home happier with full tummies."

Another benefit of CACFP is that it allows the center to expose children to new and different types of food choices. "We recently added fresh mango to the supper menu, and I was surprised how many kids enjoyed it," said Jennifer. "Now the kids are asking if we they can have it more often. They are also talking about their new food choices with their parents and asking them to serve it at home."

Executive Assistant Jessica Gaines says that offering fresh fruits and vegetables through CACFP encourages the kids to make healthier choices. "I feel like when they see their friends eating something they normally would not eat at home, they are more willing to try that item too."

White Oak Learning Academy has been a CACFP Center Sponsor for more than 10 years under North Georgia Kids Academy. They have four locations and all are Quality Rated. The center was also awarded the Health and Safety Grant through DECAL. They used the funds to provide turf, mulch and to create a bike path for their play ground.



*A toddler at White Oak Learning Academy enjoys a nutritious lunch that meets USDA meal pattern requirements.*



*DECAL Board Member Kristin Morrissey watches for the reaction as the kids in the early care program taste test a very berry smoothie.*

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## **USDA Requests Input on Proposed Serious Deficiency Process**

*Deadline to respond: May 21, 2024*

On February 21, 2024, USDA published the Proposed Rule entitled "Serious Deficiency Process in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The proposed rule can be viewed [here](#).

This rulemaking proposes important modifications to make the application of serious deficiency procedures in the CACFP and SFSP consistent, effective, and in line with current requirements under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act.

USDA proposes to add clarity to the serious deficiency process by defining key terms, establishing a timeline for full correction, and establishing criteria for determining when the serious deficiency process must be implemented. This rulemaking will also address termination for cause and disqualification, implementation of legal requirements for records maintained on individuals on the National Disqualified List, and participation of multi-state sponsoring organizations.

CACFP institutions may offer written comments on the proposed rulemaking on or before May 21, 2024. For further information on submitting written comments please click [here](#).

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## Is it Time to Submit a Budget Revision?

We are halfway through the CACFP program year. This is an ideal time to review your budget and to determine if it is necessary to submit a budget revision.

You should submit a budget revision if:

- A new cost is incurred
- A line item increases or decreases by 20% or more
- When allocation methodologies change due to changes within the organization resulting in an increase or decrease of 20% or more
- A new cost item will be incurred that requires prior or specific prior approval or special consideration (i.e. formal procurement)
- When an approved specific prior written approval item's actual cost is found to be more than the actual approved amount
- If there is a 10% or more increase or decrease in the number of homes sponsored in any one trimester for Day Care Home Sponsors, and/or
- When there is a 25% increase or decrease in the number of sites sponsors by the organization.

For questions regarding your CACFP budget, please email [nutritionbudget@decals.ga.gov](mailto:nutritionbudget@decals.ga.gov).

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## Reminder to Review Online CACFP Applications

CACFP Institutions/Sponsors are required to review their online application monthly in GA ATLAS and to ensure that any updates are made within 30 days. [Click here](#) to access CACFP application update procedures.

Independent Centers who have questions or concerns regarding updates, please contact your assigned Application Specialist:

Application Specialists	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
Jerald Savage	o (zero)-G	<a href="mailto:Jerald.Savage@decals.ga.gov">Jerald.Savage@decals.ga.gov</a>	(770) 405-7916
Shericka Blount	H-P	<a href="mailto:Shericka.Blount@decals.ga.gov">Shericka.Blount@decals.ga.gov</a>	(404) 656-6411
Cassandra Washington	Q-Z	<a href="mailto:Cassandra.Washington@decals.ga.gov">Cassandra.Washington@decals.ga.gov</a>	(404) 591-5616

Sponsors who have questions or concerns regarding updates, please contact your assigned Business Operations Representative:

Business Operations Representatives	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
Lavesia Ervin	o (zero)-C, H-P	<a href="mailto:Lavesia.Ervin@decals.ga.gov">Lavesia.Ervin@decals.ga.gov</a>	(404) 293-5258
Vanessa Goodman	D-G, Q-Z	<a href="mailto:Vanessa.Goodman@decals.ga.gov">Vanessa.Goodman@decals.ga.gov</a>	(404) 591-6027

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# At-Risk Afterschool Waivers Available during Unanticipated School Closures

On August 30, 2023, DECAL was approved by USDA to grant CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meal Component facilities waivers for the following:

- Non-Congregate Meal Service
- Parent and Guardian Meal Pick-up
- Meal Service Times
- At-Risk Enrichment Activities

These waivers can only be utilized during unanticipated school closures resulting from natural disasters, unscheduled major building repairs, court orders relating to school safety or other issues, labor-management disputes or when approved by DECAL for similar unanticipated causes.

You may access the waiver request approval [here](#). To read more about At-Risk Afterschool Waivers Available during Unanticipated School Closures, click [here](#).

For questions, please contact [Robyn Parham](#) or [Tammie Baldwin](#).

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## Get Informed: Upcoming Training Dates

**March 26, 2024**

**Adult Meal Count Form Training**

**10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Do you need a refresher on how to complete the Adult Weekly Menu & Food Service Record form? Join this webinar to learn the tips for a perfect meal count form.

**April 2, 2024**

**Milk Calculation Worksheet Training**

**10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Do you need a refresher on how to determine if you are purchasing and serving enough milk for all age groups? Join this webinar to learn tips for calculating milk purchases.

**April 9, 2024**

**Tuesday Tip! Vegetarian Meals in CACFP**

**1:30 - 2:00 p.m.**

Do you serve children with any dietary restrictions? If so, join this webinar to learn how to incorporate vegetarian meals in your monthly menus.

***Participants can earn one half [0.5] state-approved hours for attending this training in its entirety.***

**April 18, 2024**

**Procurement Documents & Resources**

**1:00 - 3:00 p.m.**

Each year, CACFP operators are tasked with calculating the food cost for the fiscal year and selecting the appropriate procurement method(s) to support the food cost. Join this webinar to learn ways to:

- distinguish the standard procurement methods with each procurement threshold,
- know how to complete or create a Procurement Policy, and
- understand the required procurement documents to complete and submit to support the food cost.

Please click [here](#) to register for all DECAL webinars listed above.

**Registration:** This is a **two-step** process:

- **Step 1:**
  - After registering in GA ATLAS, you will receive a Training Confirmation email *immediately* from Georgia DECAL Help Desk - [helpdesk@cnpus.com](mailto:helpdesk@cnpus.com) with a registration link to attend the webinar (**check your spam/junk folder**).
- **Step 2:**
  - You must then register for the training using the link provided on the Training confirmation email.
  - If you should have an issue with registering, please contact Leslie Truman **prior** to the day of training.
  - [Click here](#) if you need a refresher on how to register for training in GA ATLAS.

**Please note:** Only the Program Contact (PC) can self-register within GA ATLAS. If an additional person will be attending, please contact Leslie Truman, Administrative Assistant, at (404) 657-1779 for assistance.

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## Training Resources

### In Case You Missed It: Webinar Recordings Now Available!

If you missed a webinar, please visit the [Training and Technical Assistance](#) webpage for previously recorded webinars. This month's training highlight is the [Child Meal Count Form Training](#) webinar. It discussed tips on how to complete a perfect meal count form.

### Healthy Eating for Preschoolers

USDA FNS has developed this resource to help you and the families you serve encourage healthy eating at home.

- [[Share the Source](#)]

### Food Buying Guide (FBG) for Child Nutrition Programs *New Foods & Features!*

Team Nutrition released new foods that consist of USDA frozen mixed vegetables and a variety of meat items including 11, 43, and 48-ounce pouched tuna; boneless, skinless chicken thighs; ground mutton, mutton shoulder chops and stew meat; catfish fillets; and USDA Foods canned pork. Stay tuned for additional yield data releases. There are also two [2] new features of the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG) Interactive Web-based Tool. Both features below are available under the Tools menu on the toolbar.

1. **Interactive flow chart on using the preparation yield** walks users through when to use the Preparation Yield factor in the Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW).
2. **An Ounces to Pounds Calculator** allows users to easily convert ounces to pounds and pounds to ounces to make converting units a breeze!

### The Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Manual

The CN Labeling Manual provides food manufacturers with instructions on how to apply for and obtain approval for a Child Nutrition (CN) label. It also contains instructions for calculating the contribution that meats, meat alternates, poultry, and seafood products make toward the meal pattern requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP).

CN labels are approved by USDA and provide a way for a manufacturer to demonstrate how a processed food product contributes to the meal pattern requirements in CNP. In addition, food manufacturers and CNP operators can find other CN label-related resources at the [CN Labeling Program website](#), which includes policy guidance and technical assistance.

Please feel free to share with your communities.

- [[View Manual](#)]

The [National CACFP Sponsor Association](#) has developed quick CACFP meal pattern tips, recipes, resources, and videos. View the videos of the following meal pattern minute tips below.

- Meal Pattern Minute: Serving Nuts & Seeds
- Meal Pattern Minute: Crediting Popcorn
- Meal Pattern Minute: WIC Cereals
- Meal Pattern Minute: Crediting Beans
- Meal Pattern Minute: Vegan Cheese
- Meal Pattern Minute: Home-Frozen Fruits
- Meal Pattern Minute: Serving Pancakes to Infants
- Serving Meats and Meat Alternates at Breakfast
- Potato Chips
- Minimum Serving of Dried Fruits
- Sugar Limits in Yogurt
- Crediting Beans
- Meat Alternates
- Grain-Based Desserts
- Ounce Equivalency of Meat
- Breakfast Components *New!*
- Plant-Based Meat Alternatives *New!*
- Is Store-Bought Tomato Soup Creditable? *New!*
- Beef Jerky Sticks *New!*

### **Snack Attack *New Recipes!***

The [National CACFP Sponsor Association](#) has shared snack options for program operators that are **#CACFPCreditable**.

- Sugar snap peas and cheese cubes
- Avocado and tomato slices on toast
- Cucumber and cantaloupe salad
- Roasted chickpeas and mango chunks
- Corn salsa and tortilla chips



## **Nutrition Ed Nook**

### *Root Vegetables*

Root vegetables are the March Harvest of the Month spotlight. The calendar is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

These vegetables, which grow underground at the base of a plant, bring vitamins, minerals, starches, and sugars to help supply the body's needs. Root vegetables include beets, carrots, and radishes.

**Beets** are packed with nutrients like fiber, iron, folate, potassium, and antioxidants. Beets come in a variety of colors, including white, red, Chioggia, and golden. Smaller to medium size beets tend to have better flavor. In Georgia, beets are in season April through June. Sauté them with chopped onion and garlic for a healthy side dish.

**Carrots** are high in vitamin A, which supports good eyesight. Carrots also provide vitamin K and biotin. Orange carrots are the most recognized, however, carrots can also be red, purple, white, or yellow in color. In Georgia, carrots are in season January through June and October through December. Add carrots to salads and soups for a crunchy, sweet flavor.

**Radishes** are a good source of vitamin C, which is good for a healthy immune system and skin. They are also a good source of fiber and potassium. Radishes are crisp, crunchy, and come in different colors such as red, pink, white, and purple, shapes, and sizes. In Georgia, radishes are in season March through June. Enjoy radishes raw or added to main dishes such as salads, stews, soups, pastas, or sandwiches.

### **Integration:**

- [Peach and Carrot Smoothie](#)
- [Carrot Pancakes](#)

- **Beet Dip**
- **Un-beet-able Berry Smoothie**
- **Crunchy Vegetable Wraps**
- **Delicious Dunking Dip**

## Education:

**Watch** the *Harvest with Holly* video that explores the Harvest of the Month spotlight, how these items grow, where they grow in Georgia, and how they get from the farms to school meals all across the state of Georgia.

**Taste Test** with carrots, beets, radishes, or another root vegetable to see how children enjoy them and add it as a side item in your menu.

**Read *Rah, Rah, Radishes!*** by April Pulley Sayre. Know anyone who doesn't like veggies? Here is a book that's sure to change their hungry minds! With raucous, rhyming text, *Rah, Rah, Radishes!* celebrates fresh vegetables, nature's bright colors, and the joy of healthy eating. The book's interactive spirit encourages kids to join in on the read-aloud fun, and little ones won't be able to resist the book's vibrant photographs—they're a feast for the eyes!

**Talk** with families about how children can help with meal preparation such as rinsing and drying root vegetables to be cooked in a dish. **Bonus:** Send recipes home with families for them to incorporate root vegetables into their meals!

## Conversation:

- Have the children you serve tried carrots, beets, and/or radishes before?
- Of the three root vegetables, is their favorite carrots, beets or radishes?
- What other root vegetables do they like to eat?

Share your Harvest of the Month stories and menu integration of root vegetables with Nutrition Education Specialist, Morgan Chapman, MPH, MCHc at [morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov](mailto:morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov).

## Nibbles for Health Newsletter

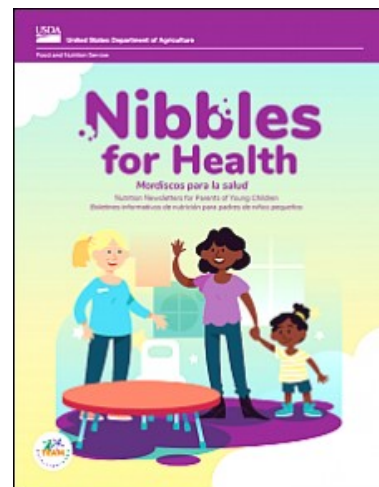
### *Family Engagement Resource for Healthy Eating Habits*

USDA's Team Nutrition has released three new Nibbles for Health: Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children. Available in English & Spanish

- Developing Healthy Habits With Less Sugar
- Developing a Taste for Less Sodium
- Serving Meals "Family Style"

These colorful and engaging newsletters for parents of young children (3 to 5-year-olds) can be shared by Child and Adult Care Food Program providers to communicate information about popular nutrition topics.

Click [here](#) to check out these newsletters and more.



## Physical Activity Corner

### *Spring into health with Gardening*

As spring approaches, now is the perfect time to venture outdoors and get in some physical activity while smelling





the fragrance of bright, beautiful flowers blossoming in the morning.

“Spring Into Health” with gardening this season, a great form of physical activity! Gardening improves fitness and overall health and mental wellbeing. In addition, gardening is a way to integrate family engagement through Farm to Early Care & Education (ECE) in your program.

Farm to ECE has become increasingly popular in our communities in Georgia for many good reasons! When children are gardening with the assistance of parents or providers, they tend to eat more fruits and vegetables, have a better understanding of nutrition, improve their physical and mental development, increase social & emotional skills, and connect with nature.

Gardening can provide farmers, providers, parents, and children with a sense of purpose in life and nature; this may include the feeling of the soil slipping through their fingers for strength and the awe in harvesting fruits and vegetables after planting, caring, and harvesting them. Gardening helps to enhance body movement, coordination, and fine & gross motor skills.

Gardening is a great way to bring the family together while planting, caring, and harvesting fresh fruits and vegetables, preparing and cooking meals with the produce from your garden, and engaging in the outdoors in a meaningful way. Time to get outdoors, experiment, and explore!

### **Integration:**

- [Getting Started: Georgia Farm to ECE Guide](#)
- [Georgia Master Gardeners: Gardens of Georgia](#)
- [Quality Care for Children’s Farm to ECE Webpage](#)
- [UGA Extension's Community and School Gardens](#)
- [Join a Community Garden – Food Well Alliance](#)

### **Education:**

**Read** out loud, "[The Garden Project](#)," by Margaret McManamara.

**Watch** the video on "[Introduction to Gardening with Children](#)" by Georgia Organics in Georgia.

**Talk** with families about ways to start a small garden, whether at home, in their local community, at your childcare site, or at their local school. **Bonus:** Share [#LoveGardening](#), [#SpringIntoHealth](#), [#GardenLife](#), [#Instagarden](#), [#CommunityGarden](#) pictures and events that are happening in your communities.

### **Conversation:**

- How do you feel after gardening?
- What would you like to plant in your garden?
- How does gardening help you with physical activity?
- Why is it important to build and to grow gardens in your communities?

Share your [#LoveGardening](#), [#SpringIntoHealth](#), [#MyGarden](#), [#GardenLife](#) and [#Instagarden](#) stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren at [tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov](mailto:tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov).

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## **Help Families with Medicaid Redetermination**

Help Georgia's Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids® members and communities prepare for eligibility checks beginning in April 2023 through May 2024.

Encourage the families of kids in your care to take charge of their Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids® coverage by visiting [Gateway](#) to view their redetermination date and to update their contact information.



## Eat Healthy and Live Active *Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 23-24 Calendar*

Harvest of the Month (HOTM) is the Georgia Department of Education School Nutrition Program's farm to school initiative that highlights an item each month that can be sourced locally and served in Georgia's school meals.

The Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month is a collaborative campaign to promote a different local, seasonal fruit or vegetable in child care settings each month.

Visit the Georgia Department of Education's [HOTM webpage](#) and Quality Care for Children [webpage](#). Upon viewing, you can find tips and tricks for preparing produce items, curriculum connections, activity lists and book alignment for your early care classrooms.

## CACFP Resources:

*The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:*

- [Thriving Child Care Business Academy](#)
- [Claim Deadlines Updated](#)
- [The Institute of Child Nutrition Wants to Hear From You](#)
- [Get the Lead Out of Water Where Children Learn and Play](#)
- [Updated Agreements for DCH and Administrative Sponsors](#)
- [Updated Suspension & Disbarment Certification Information](#)
- [How to File a CACFP Claim for Reimbursement](#)

You can find archived CACFP Newsletters [here](#).

## Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENTS
March	Harvest of the Month: Root Vegetables
March 26	Adult Meal Count Form Training Webinar
March 31	Easter
April	Harvest of the Month: Legumes
April 2	Milk Calculation Worksheet Training Webinar
April 9	Tuesday Tip! Vegetarian Meals in CACFP Webinar
April 18	Procurement Supporting Documents & Resources Webinar

## How was my Customer Service?

*Provide feedback on your experience with the Nutrition Team*



Click on the icon on the right to participate in the customer service survey. Responses are anonymous.

## Join Us for a NEW DECAL Download!

*POWER-ED & DECAL Scholars*



During the COVID pandemic, DECAL offered POWER payments to all eligible early learning professionals and staff here in Georgia.

POWER stood for providing our workforce essential recognition. The payments were \$1,000 per person in three rounds, that totaled over \$118 million in supplemental payments from the American Rescue Plan.

Today POWER has become POWER-ED, a wage supplement paid through DECAL Scholars to support early child care workers as they begin or further their educations. Joining us on our latest episode of DECAL Download to tell us about the changes to the program is Abby Mozo, the Professional Learning Operations Analyst here at DECAL. We are also joined by Lindsey Peterson and Charlotte Pelz, both with Care Solutions, who help us administer the program.

Listen to the episode [here](#).



### Nutrition Division

### Marketing & Outreach Team

Cindy Kicklighter  
Carl Glover

FOLLOW US



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