



May 15, 2023

## COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ended May 11

Pursuant to a February 9, 2023 declaration by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the COVID-19 public health emergency came to an end on May 11, 2023. The Administration planned for the COVID-19 public health emergency to expire on that date.

Please note that the following two CACFP waivers have either expired or will soon expire:

Waivers	Expires
Onsite Monitoring Requirements	June 10, 2023 (30 days after the end of the public health emergency)
Reimbursement for Meals & Snacks Served to Young Adults in the CACFP	May 11, 2023

In addition, the *Keep Kids Fed Act* authorities are also ending. This impacts the following:

- Temporary **10 cent** higher per-meal reimbursement rates will come to an end, effective **July 1, 2023** and
- Temporary higher **Tier I reimbursement** rates for Tier II family day care homes will also come to an end, effective **July 1, 2023**.

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## CACFP Policy Update on Monitoring

With the announcement of the start of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) on March 13, 2020, on-site monitoring of the Child Nutrition Programs became challenging and difficult to conduct as the number of COVID-19 cases increased and social distancing measures were enacted.

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) issued nationwide waivers for on-site monitoring requirements, allowing state agencies and sponsors to monitor program operations off-site. Off-site monitoring helped ensure program integrity while protecting the health and safety of staff and participants.

The Department of Health and Human Services announced that May 11, 2023, was the planned end date for the COVID-19 PHE. Given this expiration date, the FNS-issued nationwide on-site monitoring waivers are set to expire on June 10, 2023, 30 days after the end of the PHE.

As a result, USDA, on April 6, 2023, issued the guidance *Oversight and Monitoring of the Child and Adult Care Food Program – Guidance on On-site and Off-site Strategies and Options*. This memorandum can be found [here](#) and outlines monitoring procedures that may be conducted off-site for both State agencies and sponsors and those aspects of monitoring that must be performed on-site as per regulations.

For specific questions pertaining to the memorandum, please contact [Robyn.Parham@dec.al.gov](mailto:Robyn.Parham@dec.al.gov).

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## Operating as a Food Service Management Company

Organizations that operate as a Food Service Management Company (FSMC) are required to carefully complete and upload the [Sponsor Serving as a FSMC form](#) found in the attachment list on GA ATLAS.

Upon completion, please notify Sonja Adams via email at [Sonja.Adams@dec.al.gov](mailto:Sonja.Adams@dec.al.gov).

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## Feedback on Menus and Meal Counts Forms

*Respond by May 31*

Nutrition Services requests CACFP providers answer a brief survey, so we can better understand your experience with our current program forms.

Your responses will be anonymous and will be used to improve future recordkeeping and documenting procedures.

Your opinion is truly valued. Thank you for your assistance in making DECAL's Nutrition Services successful.

Please take five minutes to complete the survey [here](#) or scan the QR code.

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## Happy Helpings and Farmers Markets work together

Farmers markets are places where farmers can sell homegrown produce directly to consumers. These marketplaces differ from grocery stores or supermarkets because the farmer sells fresh produce in season. You will not find packaged or frozen goods typically found in grocery chains. However, you can find plenty of farmers' markets across many states, like supermarket chains! Search Farmers Markets [here](#) and make sure to share this resource with families.

This summer, micro-purchase (less than \$10,000) informal procurement method is the most compatible purchasing method to use at the farmers market. A vital part for Organizations to remember when purchasing from the Farmer's Market is maintaining accurate program expense records. Below is a list of best practices for managing Happy Helpings receipts to support the purchase(s). Make sure farmer's receipts have all the following elements:

- Date
- Farm Name (Vendor)
- Contact information of the farm

- An itemized list of goods and quantities
- Description with the price of items
- The total amount and tax
- The payment method
- The receipt text should be clear and legible

Shopping at the farmers market is a great way to equally distribute purchasing, provide a healthy variety of food options, support your area's economy, reduce waste, and lower your carbon footprint. Check out your local Farmer's Market (Georgia Department of Agriculture) today!

For questions regarding procurement, please contact Procurement Compliance Specialist, [Tempest Harris](#).

## Available CACFP Statewide Waivers

The emergency authority that allowed USDA to offer nationwide waivers in response to COVID-19 expired on June 30, 2022. Congress did not extend USDA's nationwide waiver authority. This means USDA can no longer offer the full range of nationwide waivers that have been available. However, USDA can provide limited operational and administrative flexibility through statewide waivers.

DECAL applied and was approved to use certain waiver flexibilities. Below you will find information regarding available CACFP waivers authorized by USDA. A copy of the waiver approval can be found [here](#):

A presentation summarizing the waivers and requirements update was created by the Nutrition team. If you would like to review the slides, you can access the deck [here](#). The recorded version of the presentation can be found on DECAL's website under Training and Technical Assistance - Recorded Training Webinars/Videos located [here](#).

### CACFP Statewide Waivers Available for Request effective July 1, 2022

Waiver	Effective Dates	Request Usage via
Non-Congregate Meal Services	July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023	USDA Waiver Module
Parent/Guardian Meal Pickup	July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023	USDA Waiver Module
Meal Service Times	July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023	USDA Waiver Module

### Non-Congregate Meal Service, Parent/Guardian Meal Pickup, and Meal Service Times Waiver Requirements

**The Non-Congregate Meal Service, Parent/Guardian Meal Pickup, and Meal Service Times waivers may only be implemented when CACFP meal services are limited by the COVID-19 pandemic.** Therefore, the following criteria is required for these three waivers to be approved and used by CACFP institutions and sponsors. Waiver requests must be based on at least 1 of the following criteria:

#### Criteria 1:

The center/facility must be located in a county that is designated as High, Substantial, or Moderate regarding COVID-19 community transmissions as determined by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website:

- CDC, [here](#) - Under the "Data Type" pull down menu (located mid-page), the user would select "Community Transmission" to access a county's designation.

#### Criteria 2:

Institutions and sponsors can provide official documentation affirming a meal service has

been impacted as a result of COVID-19 transmission. The documentation must be issued by (1) a public state, local, or county official; (2) a school superintendent or principal; or (3) a Center Director reporting a documented case of COVID-19 within the child and/or adult care facility. Documentation to support the documented case of COVID-19 could be a letter or email that was sent to parents or staff advising of the documented case.

The Non-Congregate Meal Service, Parent/Guardian Meal Pickup, and Meal Service Times waivers will be effective for **30 days** upon approval, with the option to re-apply for an additional 30 days, if the criteria are met using the most current data from the CDC, GA DPH, or with new documentation affirming that meal services have been impacted.

\*Documentation to support the criteria chosen must be uploaded with the waiver request in GA Atlas. Additionally, waiver requests will be reviewed/approved only once a center/facility has been approved to operate the CACFP.

## Requesting a Waiver via the USDA Waiver Module

The **Non-Congregate Meal Service, Parent/Guardian Meal Pickup, and Meal Service Times waivers must be requested through the USDA Waiver Module**. For information on requesting a waiver, please access the following resources:

- **USDA Waiver User Guide** – Provides step by step instructions on how to submit a waiver request in GA Atlas (applies to both CACFP and SFSP).
- **Important Reminders when using USDA Approved Waivers** - Discusses key recordkeeping requirements.
- **USDA Waiver Addendum** – Required when using the Parent Pick-up waiver or when home delivery under the Non-Congregate waiver.

## Area Eligibility – Update

On May 13, 2022, USDA issued the memorandum **Area Eligibility for Summer 2022 and School Year 2022-2023**. This memorandum provided guidance on the transition from COVID-19 Nationwide waivers related to the establishment of area eligibility in Child Nutrition Programs for summer 2022 and SY 2022-2023.

In SY 2021-2022 many schools participated in the Nationwide waiver to operate the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) during SY 2021-2022 and did not have to complete free and reduced eligibility information. This has resulted in an absence of complete SY 2021-2022 free and reduced-price school data. As school data and census data are the primary sources used to determine area eligibility in both CACFP and Happy Helpings, the USDA has advised that Program operators (CACFP institutions and Happy Helpings sponsors operating during unanticipated school closures only) may use one of the following two options with regards to school data:

- Use school data from SY 2019-2020 to determine area eligibility. SY 2019-2020 school data is now available on Nutrition Services' website (**Happy Helpings, CACFP**).
- SFAs may use Community Eligibility Provision Data (CEP). Once area eligibility data is established, all NSLP afterschool snack programs, SSO, CACFP at-risk afterschool and family day care homes, and SFSP operators may establish sites based on the determination.

**Note:** These options are not available for sites located in the attendance area of schools that operated NSLP in SY 2021-2022.

For general questions on requesting a USDA approved waiver, please contact **Tammie.Baldwin@decal.ga.gov**.

For specific policy questions pertaining to waivers, please contact **Robyn.Parham@decal.ga.gov**.

# Get Informed: Upcoming Training Dates

**May 23, 2023**

## **Let's Move! Encouraging Physical Activity throughout the Lifespan**

Do you need innovative ideas to incorporate more physical activity?

Join this webinar to learn ideas to increase physical activity throughout the day in small spaces, outdoor areas, and while using minimal equipment.

- ***Participants can earn two [2] state-approved hours for attending this training in its entirety.***

**June 6, 2023**

## **Tuesday Tip! Identifying Whole Grain-Rich Foods for CACFP Using the Ingredient List Part 2**

Does your monthly menu include whole grains?

Join this webinar to learn how to identify whole grain-rich foods.

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

**June 12, 2023**

## **Memo Monday!**

Want to avoid the most common program findings and implement best practices to maintain a compliant child nutrition program?

Join our June Memo Monday webinar to learn the following:

- ***Ensuring Institutions Implement Adequate Oversight and Internal Controls of CACFP Operations***, dated October 1, 2020
- CACFP Most Common Findings at the Sponsor and Site Level CACFP Best Practices

## 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 **Tuesday Tip! Adding Whole Grains to Your Menu**.

### **Child Nutrition (CN) Labels**

The **Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN)** has provided a great guide on the basis of CN Labels in their **February Mealtime Memo**.

- **[[Checkout the CN Labels](#)]**

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

The **National CACFP Sponsor Association** has shared snack options for program operators that are #CACFPcreditable.

- Tortilla wraps with turkey
- Whole wheat muffin and peaches
- Cottage cheese and cucumbers
- Hummus and carrot sticks
- WGR roll and mandarin oranges

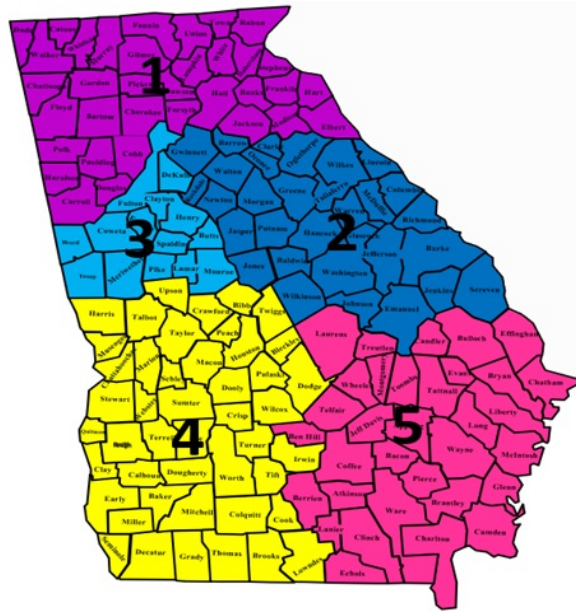
### **Is My Recipe Whole Grain-Rich in the Child and Adult Care Food Program? Worksheet**

USDA Food Nutrition Services (FNS) has developed steps to help program operators determine if a recipe is whole grain-rich, available in English and Spanish.

- **[[See the Steps](#)]**

# Training and Technical Assistance

The goal of the Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Unit is to improve performance and better equip new and participating institutions and sponsors by providing practical, user-friendly resources and guidance materials that strengthen internal controls and result in successful, sustainable program administration and operation. We want to ensure we continue to meet this goal during any transitions and/or position changes.



Therefore, institutions that reside in **region 2** listed above, please contact our Nutrition TA mailbox at [NutritionTA@dec.al.gov](mailto:NutritionTA@dec.al.gov) with any needed technical assistance.

You may also visit our [Training and Technical Assistance](#) webpage for program resources and recorded webinars.



## Nutrition Ed Nook

### *Berry Delicious: Blueberries*

Blueberries are May's Harvest of the Month (**English** and **Spanish**) spotlight. They are simple, healthy, and delicious. Blueberries are an excellent source of vitamin C, which promotes a healthy immune system. They are also a good source of fiber and copper, and high in vitamin K and manganese. Enjoy fresh blueberries as a snack or add them to cereal, oatmeal,

salads, smoothies, or yogurt.

Blueberry season in Georgia is April through July, when they are of highest quality and most cost effective. The two main varieties of blueberries grown in Georgia are Southern Highbush and Rabbiteye. Georgia's blueberry capital is Alma, located in Bacon County.

Fun Fact: Each blossom on a blueberry bush becomes one blueberry - first hard and green, then reddish-purple, and finally blue, sweet, and ready to eat!

### Integration:

- **Frozen Yogurt Covered Blueberries**
- **Blueberry Breakfast Bites**
- **Red, White & Blue Parfaits**
- **Blueberry Cheesecake Smoothie**

### 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.
- **Grow** blueberries. Rabbiteye types are the best choice for home gardens. This species

is actually native to Georgia, and there are varieties than can be produced across the state from the coastal flatwoods to the mountain regions.

- **Read** [Mr. Astley's Blueberries by Kelly Jenkins Lin](#) with you program participants. Follow Mr. Astley as he works in his blueberry patch all year long and see why his blueberries really are the best blueberries yet!
- **Talk** with families about how participants can help with meal preparation such as rinsing blueberries under cool running water. **Bonus:** Send recipes home with families for them to incorporate blueberries into their meals!

### Conversation:

- Have the children in your care eaten blueberries before?
- What is their favorite way to eat blueberries?
- What other types of berries do they like to eat?

Share your Harvest of the Month stories and menu integration of blueberries with Nutrition Education Specialist, Morgan Chapman, MPH, MCHc at

[morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov](mailto:morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov).

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## May's Harvest of the Month Bonus Item: *Vidalia Onions*

The May Harvest of the Month Bonus spotlight is the Vidalia Onion. They can boost flavor and add antioxidants for cell and tissue health. When shopping, choose whole

onions that are firm and heavy for their size and have no scent. Avoid cut, bruised, or sprouting onions.

Types of onions include green, red, white, yellow, sweet, chives, and leeks. When cooked, Vidalia onions become sweeter. Caramelize, dice, grill, roast, sauté, or steam them up and add them raw on top of tacos or a salad to boost the flavor!

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

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## Physical Activity Corner: *National Physical Fitness and Sports Month*

May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month – a campaign that provides an opportunity to celebrate and promote physical activity, sports, and all of its many health benefits to all ages, communities, schools, and workplaces.

**Move in May** is about enjoying physical activity, exercise, and sports. There are lots of ways to be more physically active, and to find a form of physical activity that each person can enjoy.

Physical activity is key to maintaining health and well-being. Being active can improve fitness, reduce stress and risk for many chronic diseases, and support good mental health. Youth sports can help kids and teens get active and develop leadership, time management, and relationship-building skills.

According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (ODPHP), here are the recommendation on all ages:

- Children ages 3 through 5 years need to be active throughout the day.
- Children and adolescents ages 6 through 17 need to be active for 60 minutes every day.
- Adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination each week.
- Adults aged 65 and older need:
  - At least 150 minutes a week (for example, 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week) of **moderate-intensity activity** such as brisk walking. Or they need 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity such as hiking, jogging, or running.
- Adults with chronic health conditions or disabilities who are able should:
  - Get at least 150 minutes (for example, 30 minutes 5 days a week) of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity a week.

### How To Observe Physical Activity:

- At home: Break away from sitting less and *MOVE* more. Take a 15-minute walk early in the morning or during a lunch break. End a long day of work with a few stretches or a yoga session for quietness, tranquility, and peace of mind.
- To school (children/parents): As a family, go together with your children early in the morning to walk to and from school or after school in the afternoon.
- With the family: Walk in with your neighborhood or community – to the park, local mall, local farmer’s market, or a grocery store in the day or on a weekend. Be safe!
- At work (colleagues): Invite a colleague to take a 10-minute walk (break) from the computer/office. Take the stairs, instead of the elevators.

Enjoy the outdoors this summer season and **Let’s Move It!**

### Integration:

- [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition
- [National Sports Youth Strategy](#)
- [Move Your Way® Community Resources](#)

### Education:

- Read out loud, **“Sports” by Alyssa Liang.**
- **Watch** the video on [Move Your Way: Tips for Getting Active as a Family.](#)
- **Talk** with families about ways to move more at home, in their community, at childcare and at adult care centers. **Bonus:** Share #MayFitness, #MoveInMay, #NationalPhysicalActivity&Sports, #MoveYourWay pictures and events that are happening in your communities.

### Conversation:

- What is your favorite physical fitness activity daily?
- What sports do most children play?
- Why is physical fitness important in sports?
- What are the benefits of staying physically active?
- How do you stay motivated to exercise daily?

Share your #DECALPhysicalActivity, #NationalPhysicalActivity, #Fitness&Sports, #MayFitness, #MoveInMay, #BeActive, #MoveYourWay stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren at [tina.mclaren@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:tina.mclaren@dec.al.ga.gov).

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## DECAL's Nutrition Spotlight:

*Meet Lavesia Ervin, Business Operations Representative*

Lavesia (Vee) Ervin recently joined the Nutrition Services Division





as a Business Operations Representative.

In this position, Lavesia is responsible for all sponsor and institution assignments that fall under Zero (o)-C and H-P. She is responsible for assisting sponsors and institutions who want to add additional sites and to make site level updates to their application that require approval. She also distributes Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) reports to the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Most recently, Lavesia was a temporary employee serving in the role as Administrative Assistant for the Nutrition Services Division, where she gained extensive knowledge of both the Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). She also assisted the marketing and outreach team recruiting potential partners to participate in the Happy Helpings program.

Lavesia is looking forward to learning new things about the application process and providing everyone she meets with top-notch customer service. "It is my pleasure to be here, and I look forward to working with everyone," said Lavesia.

Lavesia has 20 years of experience as an executive assistant. She previously worked for One & All Atlanta Marketing Agency, where she was the Sr. Executive Assistant supporting the C-suite level leadership. Lavesia also worked as a logistic assistant in the oil and gas industry where she managed a quarterly 1.5 million dollar build plan.

Originally from Texas, Lavesia has lived in Georgia since 2016 and currently resides in Atlanta with her husband. She loves anything outdoors, including riding horses. She is a jubilant grandmother, as her grandchildren "make her heart sing." Lavesia loves assisting people and is deeply spiritual. Her favorite quote is from Gandhi who once said, "In a gentle way, you can shake the world."

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## **Eat Healthy and Live Active**

### *Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 22-23 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.

DECAL's Harvest of the Month calendar aligns with the Georgia Department of Education's Harvest of the Month initiative and was created in partnership with Quality Care for Children, Georgia Organics, and the Farm to Early Care & Education Coalition for Early Care & Education settings.

Visit the Georgia Department of Education's HOTM Webpage [here](#) and the Quality Care for Children [website](#). 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:*

- Updated Business Operations Representative Assignments
- How to File a CACFP Claim for Reimbursement
- SNAP, Inc. receives scholarship from National CACFP Association
- Check your Email Messages & Update Your Email Address in ATLAS
- Updated Application Specialists
- New Interactive Map shows CACFP Participation in Georgia
- Interactive State Policy Map
- Guidance on Collecting Race and Ethnicity Data
- Be a Health Hero - Health Empowers You
- Procurement Helpful Hints
- Forecasting Purchases for CACFP
- Update Your Banking Information
- New and Revised CACFP Policies and Memoranda
- Non-profit Food Service & Procurement Procedures Monitoring
- FY2023 Annual CACFP Budget Submission
- Newly Revised CACFP Memorandum-Civil Rights Complaint Procedures
- Reminder - PolicyStat available on Nutrition Services' Webpage
- Procurement Documents Now Include Updated Non-discrimination Statement
- Unique Entity Identifier Field Added to ATLAS

## Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENTS
May	<b>Harvest of the Month: Blueberries</b> <b>Bonus Harvest of the Month: Vidalia Onions</b>
May 22	<b>Memo Monday!</b>
May 23	<b>Let's Move! Encouraging Physical Activity throughout the Lifespan Webinar</b>
June 6	<b>Tuesday Tip! Identifying Whole Grain-Rich Foods for CACFP Using the Ingredient List Part 2</b>
June 12	<b>Memo Monday!</b>
June 30	<b>All COVID Flexibilities have expired.</b>

## How was my Customer Service?

*Provide feedback on your experience with the Nutrition Team*



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

## Join Us for a NEW DECAL Download!

*Board of Early Care and Learning*

A promotional banner for a DECAL Download episode. The banner has a blue and white background with a bar chart graphic. On the left, it says "On the next ... DECAL Download" and "New Episodes Every Wednesday!". In the center, it says "This Week's Topic: Board of Early Care and Learning". On the right, there is a QR code. Below the QR code is the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning logo with the tagline "BRIGHT FROM THE START". At the bottom left, there are three portraits of board members: Phil Davis (Current Board Chair), Susan Harper (Joined the board in 2009), and Luann Purcell (Charter member since 2006). Below the portraits are social media icons for Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

This year we have celebrated several milestones, 30 years of Georgia's Pre-K Program and year number 10 of Quality Rated. Next year marks 20 years for the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. When the agency was created in 2004, the same legislation mandated that the new department have an advisory board to support our work. The board meets quarterly and is composed of 14

members appointed by the Governor, with one member from each of Georgia's 14 congressional districts.

In this week's episode of DECAL Download, we are joined by some of our longtime members who have dedicated many years to the agency. Joining us to talk about the Board of Early Care and Learning are board members Luann Purcell, a charter member since 2006, Susan Harper, who joined the board in 2009 and current board chair Phil Davis who also joined the board in 2009.

Listen to the episode [here](#).



**Cindy Kicklighter  
Carl Glover**

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

**Nondiscrimination Statement: English**

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