



**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**

BRIGHT FROM THE START

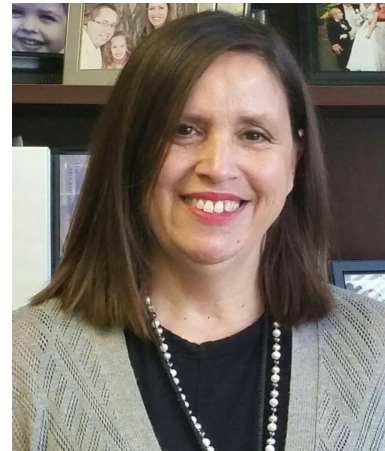


Child Care Services Winter 2024 Newsletter

Dear Child Care Providers,

Happy New Year! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and 2024 is off to a great start. As we kick off the new year, here is a list of resolutions that all child care staff should strive for:

- Greet every child and parent with a smile each day.
- Say something positive to every child each day.
- Get on the floor with children during play.
- Listen to parents' concerns and offer appropriate solutions.
- Get children up and moving several times a day for physical activity.
- Be prepared for all activities by planning ahead and gathering all materials.
- Get a good night's sleep to make sure you can give each day your best effort.



Let's continue to work together with passion and dedication for Georgia's

youngest learners. Wishing you good health, love, and prosperity in 2024!

Take care,

Pam Stevens

Pam Stevens

Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services



**Child Care
SERVICES**

[Contact Us](#)

Child Care Services Grant Opportunities

HEALTH & SAFETY GRANTS

All open, operating, and licensed Child Care Learning Centers (CCLCs) with a capacity of 101+ and all school age programs operating in public school buildings who are currently serving children are eligible to receive these grants until March 31, 2024. Grant awards are being issued based on the program's licensed capacity, ranging from \$5,000 - \$40,000.

[Click to Learn
More!](#)

CCS Offers Exciting New Training Opportunities!

Child Care Services (CCS) is proud to offer several free, online training opportunities for child care program staff. The free trainings may only be accessed through the Georgia Professional Development System for Early Childhood Educators ([GaPDS](#)).

It is important to remember that all virtual trainings must **never** be taken while supervising children. Proper supervision of children requires a staff members' full attention to ensure the health and safety of children in their care.

The trainings are:

[Transportation Safety](#)

[CCS Food Allergies](#)

[CCS Risk Assessment](#)

[Health and Safety: Child Development](#)*

[Health and Safety: Health and Nutrition](#)*

[Health and Safety: Safety and Emergency Preparedness](#)*

*Program staff will receive 15 hours of training credit for taking all three Health & Safety training courses, which will exceed the 10-hour Health and Safety Requirement for licensing. All three trainings must be taken to meet the Health and Safety Orientation requirement.

Program staff are encouraged to choose state-approved training courses that work best for them; whether it be free, has an enrollment fee, is face-to-face, virtual, etc. Please note that the Health & Safety Orientation training offered by Penn State and the Transportation training offered by ProSolutions are no longer available. All free trainings may be accessed only through GaPDS.

Click on the button below to find a Required Training Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) explaining all training requirements.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Why Outdoor Winter Play is Important

by Montessori Academy

The physical health benefits of outdoor play

Playing outdoors in winter promotes physical development and well-being. This is because outdoor play encourages the use of the whole body by offering a safe space to run,



jump, and exercise key muscle groups.

Through activities such as riding tricycles, swinging, and running, children increase their large muscle use. This increase in physical activity supports children's gross motor development and overall health. It is important that children remain active in the cooler months so that they continue to build emerging skills that are crucial to their physical development.

The emotional benefits of outdoor play

Outdoor activities also promote emotional health benefits, such as self-confidence, and the ability to assess risks. By encouraging outdoor play in the winter, children learn to identify hazards, such as slippery surfaces, and moderate their behavior to ensure their safety.

Further, challenges associated with winter environments, such as icy leaves, and games played in fog, also provides children with new ways to develop their emotional skills. Through wintry games, children learn to explore, work together, and find harmony in endless problem-solving opportunities.

The social benefits of outdoor play

Finally, playing outdoors with others encourages social development and collaboration. This is because play teaches children how to work together in groups, which includes learning to share, negotiate, and solve conflict. Social outdoor play also provides children the opportunity to exercise and stretch their imaginations. In winter, the physical changes to the outdoor environment provide children with new opportunities for socio-dramatic play, and winter-themed games. Children who are encouraged to explore through play are also more likely to learn new skills and overcome challenges, which promotes self-confidence, resilience, and self-advocacy. The development of these social skills are highly important to the development of healthy social relationships, communication skills, and a strong sense of self.

Free Training Available from DECAL's Thriving Child Care Business Academy



**DECAL
Thriving Child Care
Business Academy**

DECAL launched the Thriving Child Care Business Academy last October and in the three months since then, many, many business owners and administrators have taken advantage of its free virtual

trainings and online resources. If you're one of those providers, we hope you've enjoyed and benefited from your experience and will continue to consume the content in 2024.

If you haven't yet explored what the Academy has to offer, we'd like to encourage you to do so as the new year gets underway. DECAL understands that federal COVID-19 relief funding has been crucial to the survival of child care businesses in Georgia. The Academy was created to help you strengthen and sustain your program as the federal funding winds down. Use this [link to the Academy's website](#) to see everything it has to offer. You'll find [FAQs here](#).

All of the Academy's courses and resources are offered free of charge to all licensed Georgia child care business owners and administrators, with content tailored for the child care industry. Topics include:

- Planning and Budgeting
- Staff Recruitment and Retention
- Financial Accounting and Tax Preparation
- Enrollment Management
- Organizational Leadership
- Marketing

To develop the content and deliver the trainings, DECAL chose partners with deep expertise in business subjects, small business operations, and child care. You may want to start with the large group one- and two-hour basic trainings offered by Civitas Strategies, a national management consultancy, and the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center at Valdosta State University (UGA SBDC). You can also enroll in training modules on strengthening child care business practices developed by the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (NCECQA). These are four, three-hour modules delivered by DECAL-approved trainers and the CCR&Rs. Trainings are conducted live and recorded for online viewing afterwards. Participants can receive state-approved training hours for completing the live trainings; credits are not awarded for viewing [recorded trainings](#).

If you want a deeper understanding of a particular business topic, you can join other providers in a small study group led by Civitas trainers. Study groups will meet online for a series of four, one-hour sessions over eight weeks. Participants who complete a study group series will receive state-approved training hours and be eligible for a \$300 stipend. Civitas coaches are also available to provide one-on-one technical assistance. Additionally, the Academy includes a [large resource library of print and video self-study guides](#) on more than 50 business topics in English and Spanish. Here's a link to the [Academy Handbook](#) with detailed descriptions of the Academy trainings and resources. Knowing how busy you are, we've also created a [quick guide to the Academy](#) to help you figure out where to start.

When you're ready to choose a specific training session and register, follow these [instructions](#). Please email gapds@dec.al.ga.gov if you have trouble searching or registering for the Academy trainings. To sign up for a small study group or individual coaching, contact GAcoaching@civstrat.com and complete the [Intake Assessment](#).

We hope that the knowledge you gain from the Academy will allow you to

build your business skills and keep your program thriving, so that you can continue to help Georgia's youngest learners prepare to succeed in school and in life. Email thriving@decal.ga.gov if you have questions about the Academy.

Free Child Development Training and Materials on GaPDS

The “CDC Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns” is a free training in GaPDS that provides tools and best practices for monitoring the development of children and discussing development and developmental monitoring with families. This training can be easily accessed on GaPDS and providers who complete it get 1 hour of free training credit.

“CDC Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns” is available in Both English & Spanish and covers the following topics:

- Your important role in monitoring children's development
- Understanding children's developmental milestones
- Objective and engaged developmental monitoring
- How to talk with parents about their child's development
- Acting early in Georgia

At the end of the online course, providers who work in licensed and exempt child care programs can order a **FREE** Developmental Monitoring starter kit to use in their classroom. Each kit includes a classroom set of the materials discussed in the training.

To find this training, log into gapds.decal.ga.gov and select “Find OLLI Trainings” under the Trainings tab. Then search for “Watch Me”. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact us at childdevelopment@decal.ga.gov.

Safe Sleep for Babies Act of 2021 (H.R. 3182)

This bill makes it unlawful to manufacture, sell, or distribute crib bumpers or inclined sleepers for infants. Inclined sleepers for infants are those designed for an infant up to one year old and have an inclined sleep surface of greater than 10 degrees.



Dozens of children have died in incidents involving padded crib bumper pads. Crib bumper pads increase the likelihood of suffocation or entrapment. The U.S. Consumer Product

Safety Commission (CPSC) has received 113 reported deaths involving crib bumpers from January 1, 1990, through March 31, 2019. Over 100 babies have died in infant inclined sleep products. Babies sleep safest flat on their backs in a crib, bassinet, or play yard with nothing in the sleep space.

Talking to Kids About the News and Current Events

By Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Strong4Life

STRONG4LIFE™



Children's™
Healthcare of Atlanta

When newsworthy events happen in the world, kids need help making sense of it all. While you may not have all the answers to their questions (and that's OK!), there are guiding principles you can follow that help with any type of difficult conversation.

[Click to Read Entire Article](#)

Consumer Product Safety Commission Children's Products Recalls



Sign up today to receive up-to-date email notifications whenever children's products are recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

[**Click Here to Enroll**](#)

Interested?

Interested in reading past issues of the CCS Newsletter? Click [here!](#)



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning | 2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE, East Tower
Suite 670, Atlanta, GA 30334

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