



**Georgia Dept  
of Early Care  
and Learning**  
BRIGHT FROM THE START



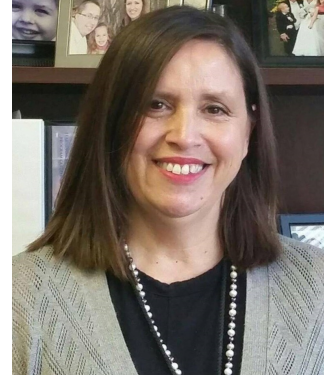
# Child Care Services Summer 2023 Newsletter

Dear Child Care Providers,

Happy Summer!

I hope you and the children you serve are enjoying these nice, long summer days. No more drop-offs or pick-ups in the dark!

We want to remind you this time of year about our Look Again campaign to build awareness of the danger of leaving children in hot cars. We hope you're doing everything you can to help your staff and families understand how important it is to look again, especially when you're not following your normal routine.



If you serve school age children, I hope you used the School Age Grant funds awarded to you through ClassWallet to help support the “big kids” this summer (information listed below). If you have photos of the supplies and materials you purchased, we would love to see them! Please send them to [schoolagegrants@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:schoolagegrants@dec.al.ga.gov).

Have a fun, memory rich summer!

Take care,

*Pam Stevens*

Pam Stevens  
Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services



**Child Care  
SERVICES**

[Contact Us](#)

LOOK AGAIN  
GA • USA



NEVER LEAVE A CHILD  
ALONE IN A VEHICLE

WWW.DECAL.GA.GOV

## Child Care Services Grant Opportunities

### HEALTH & SAFETY GRANTS

All open, operating, and licensed Child Care Learning Centers (CCLCs) and Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLHs) who are currently serving children are eligible to receive these grants. Grant awards are being issued based on the program's licensed capacity, ranging from \$5,000 - \$40,000.

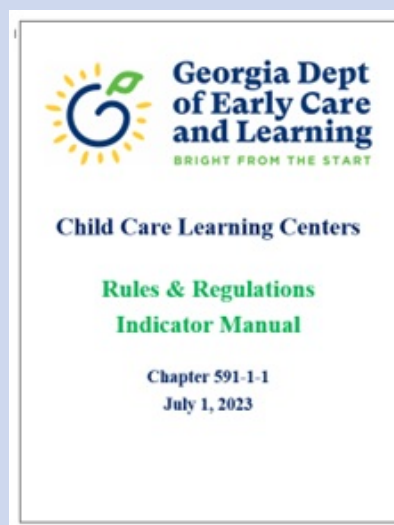
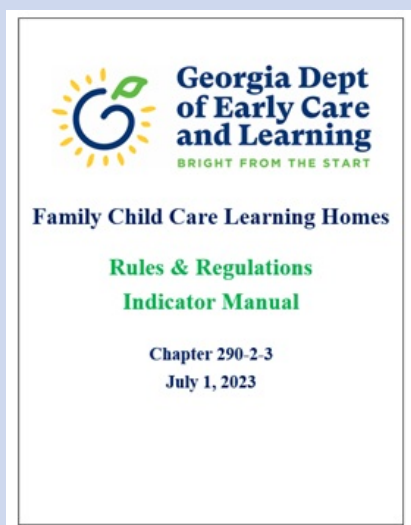
### SCHOOL AGE GRANTS

Open, operating, and licensed child care programs that are serving or have served school age children over the past year, per DECAL KOALA.

Click to Learn  
More!

# Recent Changes to Rules & Regulations Indicator Manuals

The Family Child Care Learning Home (FCCLH) and Child Care Learning Center (CCLC) Rules & Regulations Indicator Manuals continue to be updated every quarter to stay current with ever changing clarification and best practice. To ensure that you have the most up-to-date version(s), please click on the appropriate manual below.



## Outdoor Activities

All child care programs shall provide daily outdoor activities, weather permitting. Children need the opportunity to benefit from fresh air, sunshine, and the release of pent-up energy. They also need the sensory stimulation provided by a change from the indoor environment to an outdoor

environment. Many of the developmental tasks that children must achieve (i.e., exploring, risk taking, developing fine and gross motor skills, and absorbing vast amounts of basic knowledge) can be most effectively learned through outdoor play. Children should play outdoors daily when the conditions do not pose a safety risk, a health risk specific to an individual child, or a significant health risk of frostbite or of heat-related illness. Child care program staff should monitor weather conditions daily. Unless the program has documentation from a child's medical professional or from a child's parent, outdoor activities should be restricted only when there are weather-related alerts or conditions.



Below are tips for outdoor play:

- Modify scheduled times for outdoor activities during the summer and winter months. For example, during the hot summer months, allow children to go outside earlier in the day when temperatures are cooler. Reminder: Check local media outlets for weather advisories, and adjust outdoor play times accordingly.
- Keep additional clothing on site to ensure that children are not restricted from outdoor activities due to a lack of adequate clothing (e.g., coats and long-sleeved shirts for cooler months and shorts and short-sleeved shirts for warmer months, etc.).
- The Air Quality Index (AQI) provides daily information on how clean or polluted the outdoor air is, along with associated health effects that may be of concern. Find information about local air quality conditions and the AQI at: <http://www.airnow.gov/>
- Provide a variety of outdoor experiences during outdoor play (not limited to gross motor activities) to include child-directed activities such as art, science, books, dramatic play, etc.
- Listen to local media sources or a weather radio for weather alerts/weather watches. DECAL's weather watch chart is available by clicking the button below. For instructions on how to use the chart, see page 2 of the document.

[Click to View Weather Watch Chart](#)

## Are You Looking for FREE Virtual Trainings?

The Technical Assistance Unit within Child Care Services offers FREE trainings via [ZOOM](#) meetings. All participants must register for the trainings through the [Georgia Professional Development System \(GaPDS\)](#). Once registered, a link will be sent to your email to join the training via webinar.

**ALL trainings will be held from 12:30 - 1:30 PM.**

TRAINING NAME	DATE
2023-2024 CCLC Core Rules Virtual Refresher	Thursday July 27, 2023
2023-2024 Transportation & Field Trip Safety	Tuesday August 15, 2023
2023-2024 Lesson Planning 101 for Beginners	Tuesday September 5, 2023

Questions? Please email [ccs.ta@decals.ga.gov](mailto:ccs.ta@decals.ga.gov) or call (770)344-5891.

[Register Now!](#)



## We Care, Child Care Sweepstakes!

The sweepstakes winner will receive **\$1,529**, and their child care program will also win **\$1,529!**

Enter by July 31, 2023

[Path2college529.com/wecare](http://Path2college529.com/wecare)

[Learn More Here](#)



Please refer to the Plan Description at [path2college529.com](http://path2college529.com) prior to investing for details on risk, tax benefits, charges and expenses and whether your home state offers tax or other benefits such as financial aid, scholarship funds, or protection from creditors for investing in its own 529 plan. Investments in the Plan are neither insured nor guaranteed and there is the risk of investment loss. Consult your legal or tax professional for tax advice. If the funds aren't used for qualified higher education expenses, a 10% penalty tax on earnings (as well as federal and state income taxes) may apply. TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. (TFI), Plan Manager. TIAA-CREF Individual & Institutional Services, LLC, Member FINRA, distributor and underwriter for Georgia's Path2College 529 Plan.

## Protecting Children from Damaging Sun Rays

Just a few serious sunburns can increase a child's risk of skin cancer later in life. Kids don't have to

be at the pool, beach, or on vacation to get too much sun. Their skin needs protection from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays whenever they're outdoors.

- Seek shade. UV rays are strongest and most harmful during midday, so it's best to plan indoor activities then. If this is not possible, seek shade under a tree, an umbrella, or a pop-up tent. Use these options to prevent sunburn, not to seek relief after it's happened.
- Schedules can be rearranged so that outside playtime takes place in the early morning or late afternoon when it is not so hot. Outside playtime can also be broken up into smaller timeframes, such as going outside for 15 – 20 minutes several times throughout the day.
- Wear a hat. Hats that shade the face, scalp, ears, and neck are easy to use and give great protection. Baseball caps are popular among kids, but they don't protect their ears and neck. If children choose a cap, be sure that exposed areas are protected with sunscreen. Hats also help to shield and protect children's eyes from UV rays, which can lead to cataracts later in life. Encourage parents to bring hats for their children to wear outside.
- Apply sunscreen. Use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 and UVA and UVB protection every time children go outside. Do not use sunscreen with an SPF higher than 50, as these contain more chemicals. For the best protection, apply sunscreen generously 30 minutes before going outdoors. Don't forget to protect ears, noses, lips, and the tops of feet. Directions on the package should be followed for using a sunscreen product on babies less than six months of age. All products do not have the same ingredients. If a child's skin reacts badly to one product, try another one or call a doctor. A baby's best defense against sunburn is avoiding the sun or staying in the shade. Keep in mind, sunscreen is not meant to allow kids to spend more time in the sun than they would otherwise. Try combining sunscreen with other options to prevent UV damage. Please remember that Child Care Learning Centers must obtain written parental permission prior to using sunscreen on children. To satisfy this requirement, parents can complete the External Preparations form (which includes the use of sunscreen). This form can be found on the DECAL website by clicking the button below.



Authorization to Dispense External Preparations

## Serve and Return Interaction Shapes Brain Circuitry

By Center of the Developing Child: Harvard University

One of the most essential experiences in shaping the architecture of the developing brain is “serve and return” interaction between children and significant adults in their lives. Young children naturally reach out for interaction through babbling, facial expressions, and gestures, and

adults respond with the same kind of vocalizing and gesturing back at them. This back-and-forth process is fundamental to the wiring of the brain, especially in the earliest years.



## Accessibility of Pools



**Child Care Learning Centers:** 591-1-1-.35(2)  
All swimming and wading pools shall be inaccessible to children except during supervised activities.

**Family Child Care Learning Homes:** 290-2-3-.13(2)(d) Such outside play areas shall be protected from traffic or other hazards by fencing or other barriers at least four feet in height and approved by the Department. Fencing material

shall not present a hazard to children. A fence shall be provided around swimming pools to make them inaccessible when not in use.

These rules apply to any pool on the child care program's premises. A swimming pool should be made inaccessible by a fence with a locked gate. The fence must be at least four feet high and secured at the top and the bottom, with no entrapment hazards. Fencing material must be secured to all poles, and the bottom of the fence must be flush with the ground to prevent a child from trying to crawl underneath the fence and enter the pool area. All gates must be equipped with locks to prevent access, and the locks must prevent the gate from being pushed open when pressure is applied. An





effective fence is one that prevents a child from getting over, under, or through it and keeps the child from gaining access to the pool or body of water except when supervising adults are present. Fences are not childproof, but they provide a layer of protection for a child who strays from supervision. The fence should be constructed to discourage climbing and kept in good repair. For a chain link fence, the mesh size should not exceed one and one-quarter square inches.

All wading pools should be emptied and stored in an area inaccessible to children immediately after use.

 **Clean Water for Georgia Kids™**

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The Department of Early Care and Learning strongly encourages all licensed child care programs test drinking water for lead.  
Here are a few myths and facts about lead in water.

<b>MYTHS</b>	<b>VS</b>	<b>FACTS</b>
 We don't need to test because our public water utility tests it.		 Water systems do not test at every drinking and cooking tap. Levels of lead vary from tap to tap within a building, and sometimes the source of lead is the faucet fixture.
 Our newer buildings don't need to be tested for lead in water.		 Recent regulations on "lead-free" fixtures are still allowed to contain 0.25% lead.

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If your child care program has not already tested every drinking and cooking tap for lead, the Clean Water for Georgia Kids Program is ready to help you identify and eliminate exposure to lead in tap water. This unique program is free with federal grant funds and led through the Georgia Department of Education, Department of Early Care and Learning, and RTI International.

**Next Steps:**

1. Register and attend a brief training webinar at <https://bit.ly/3jSMxg6>.
2. Enroll at [www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/Georgia/enroll](http://www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/Georgia/enroll).
3. Receive your sample kit.
4. Collect and ship your water samples per instructions.
5. Review results and, if needed, steps on how to get the lead out!

For more information visit our program website: [www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/Georgia](http://www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/Georgia), or scan or click the QR code on the right.



**Moving from “Alexa, play, If you are happy and**

# ***you know it---*” toward music that supports all children’s thriving**

**By Dr. Doug Bell, Kennesaw State University and Dr. Teresa Fisher-Ari, Rollins Center for Language & Literacy, A Program of the Atlanta Speech School**

Music is a critical way to support and foster a joy-filled classroom family, foster rituals and routines, connect to family language, culture, and identity, and to build a safe and responsive classroom together. Experiences with music benefit children most when children and adults are actively engaged together. To be sure, Alexa is handy- but- the significant increase in the use of video and audio recordings for passive viewing and listening has created fewer opportunities for children to be actively engaged in singing together and with their caregivers and teachers. Active engagement experiences such as music and movement with participatory opportunities to play with language, sound, beat, body, pitch, and rhyme wire the brain differently than passively experiencing something such as listening to music on Alexa.

We can think about musical engagement on a continuum from passive to active. Where a musical experience falls on the engagement continuum depends on what the children and adults do with the music. Engagement of both children and adults alters the impact of the experience on the child’s development. An example of a passive musical experience might be children listening to music or watching a music video while an adult supervises or does something else. The engagement increases if the children sing or dance with the song or video. The engagement reaches its full potential when the adult engages in singing or dancing with the children during the song or video. The most impactful experience of all is the adult leading the musical experience without a video. Adults and children can even use props, movement, and instruments, creating something new together and making music even more engaging! It is important to note that sometimes we need to engage in digitally driven musical experiences. When we do, we make it more beneficial when we engage with the children. Our active engagement helps to highlight the purpose of the music, embed learning concepts, and present vocabulary in a more meaningful way. Our engagement bridges learning because it then becomes an authentic social emotional opportunity which tags the concept to a positive emotional experience. It embeds learning more strongly in the brain and builds a stronger relationship with the adult, which paves the way for more learning in the future.

Participatory music and movement opportunities build language, cognitive, and multiple social emotional skills. They tune us in not only to words and language, building our brain, but also connect us to ourselves and each other joyfully. These deeply engaged and joyful experiences create connections in the brain between hemispheres, create social emotional connections and pathways in the brain, and help wire the brain for problem solving and logical thinking. The more actively engaged teachers and children are in the music experience, the more developmental benefits and the more it creates a classroom community where all children can joyfully develop, learn, and thrive.

The Literacy and Justice For All Curriculum resources, co-constructed by

children, teachers, families, and university faculty/teacher educators focuses a month of inquiry across age groups on the questions *How can I use my ideas and creativity, my heart, my voice, and all of me to make the world kinder, more connected, more beautiful, more joyful, and more just? Why do we make music? How can music help us to feel joy, be connected, encourage and inspire ourselves and others?* It includes book recommendations, ideas for planning and teaching around the books, and so many opportunities for music-making, joy, connection, and learning! You can access these resources on Cox Campus (coxcampus.org) for infants and young toddlers [here](#), for Older Toddlers [here](#), and for Preschool/PreK [here](#). One particularly meaningful resource for family engagement and to partner with caregivers in support of children, centered around music and joy is our [Centering Families, their language, culture, and stories resource](#).

## 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](#)

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