



**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**

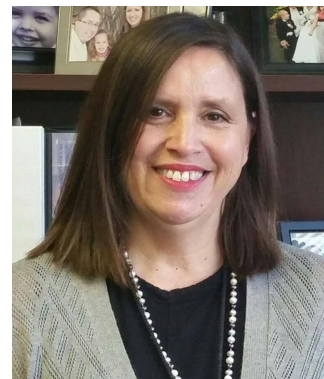
BRIGHT FROM THE START



Child Care Services Fall 2023 Newsletter

Dear Child Care Providers,

The Child Care Services (CCS) team is launching a quarterly series for providers called CCS Lunch and Learn. These half hour webinars will give us an opportunity to share information with the provider community and give you an opportunity to share feedback with us. The first one will be October 26th from 12:30 to 1:00 and will cover information from our enforcement chart. Julia Strickland and Carrie Spangler will give you a quick refresher on the chart and how it works. At that time, we'll ask you to share suggestions for future topics. I'm really excited about these sessions! It will be nice to communicate with you outside of email and to hear your ideas. Look for details and registration information soon.



I want to remind you that we are now in Phase 2 of the CCS Health and Safety Grants. These grants are provided to purchase equipment and materials that will help support compliance with health and safety rules and regulations in your program. This grant, made possible by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), is funded through the American Rescue Plan Act. Phase 1, for Family Child Care Learning Homes and Child Care Learning Centers with a capacity of less than 100, ended on September 30th. If you were a part of Phase 1, we would love to see photographs of what you purchased. If you are in Phase 2, for Child Care Learning Centers with a capacity of over 100 or school age programs operating in public school buildings, your grants opened on October 2nd. Please photograph your progress and send those pictures to us at ccshealthsafetygrants@decals.ga.gov. It assists us in making future decisions to know what is helpful and what makes the biggest difference in your work. If you have questions about the grants or how to access your funds, you can reach us through the same email address.

Have a wonderful fall and enjoy the nice, cooler weather with the children and families you serve. Thanks for all you do!

Take care,



Pam Stevens
Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services



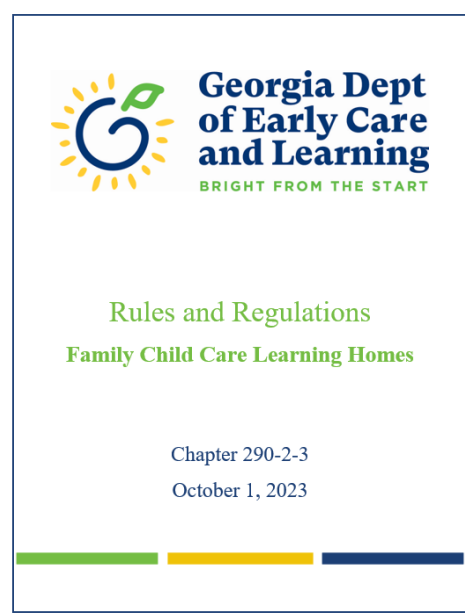
**Child Care
SERVICES**

Contact Us

**Effective October 1, 2023:
Changes to Rule Books and
Indicator Manuals**

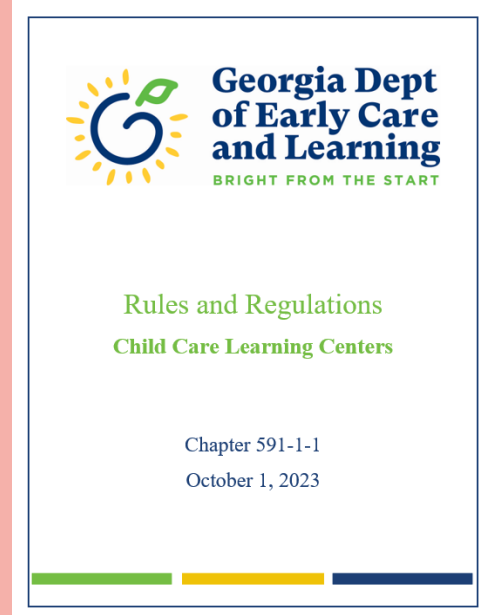
The Family Child Care Learning Home (FCCLH) and Child Care Learning Center (CCLC) Rule Books and Rules & Regulations

Indicator Manuals have been updated effective October 1, 2023.



FCCLH - The chapter effected by the recent rule changes is:

- Health, Safety, and Discipline 290-2-3-11



CCLC - The chapters effected by the recent rule changes are:

- Children's Health 591-1-1-.07
- Governing Bodies and Licenses 591-1-1.16
- Transportation 591-1-1-.36

To ensure that you have the most up-to-date version(s), please click on the appropriate button below:

[FCCLH Rule Book](#)

[CCLC Rule Book](#)

[FCCLH Indicator Manual](#)

[CCLC Indicator Manual](#)

[Update CCLC Transportation Forms](#)

Child Care Services Grant Opportunitites

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 between October 2, 2023 – 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!](#)

License Fee Information

Georgia law requires annual license fees for all licensed child care programs. The Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) will e-mail a notice to all licensed programs before the current licenses expire on December 31, 2023.

DECAL will begin collecting license fees on November 1, for the 2024 calendar year. Payment of the annual license fee is due by December 1, 2023. Paying online is quick and convenient.

[Click for More Information](#)

CCS Offers an Exciting New Training Opportunity!

Child Care Services (CCS) within the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) was tasked with the opportunity of developing free versions of the Health & Safety Orientation training as part of participating in a federal funding program known as the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF).

We are proud to announce the free CCS versions are live on the Georgia Professional Development System for Early Childhood Educators (GaPDS)! The trainings are listed as:

[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 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.

The current Health & Safety Orientation training offered free by Better Kid Care (through Penn State) will be available through December 31, 2023. Starting January 1, 2024, Better Kid Care will no longer offer their version of the training at no charge.

Program staff are encouraged to choose a state-approved Health and Safety training course that works best for them; whether it be free, has an enrollment fee, is face-to-face, virtual, etc. Click on the button below to find a Required Training Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) explaining all training requirements.

Frequently Asked Questions

Rough Play

Children should be allowed to participate in activities that are not detrimental to the child's health or well-being. Positive interactions between teachers and children are an important part of quality care. Staff should talk to children about their play, help play develop by providing the right materials and equipment and encourage children to interact well with others. Children participate in physical play for active fun and enjoyment, not to display aggression or hurt another child. Appropriate physical play should be supported and supervised to allow opportunities for many social, physical and cognitive skills. Staff should intervene immediately if play becomes too rough or if the nature of the play is not appropriate for the age of the children. Play that isn't respectful of the participants should be redirected to appropriate play and to allow plenty of active play.



Child care program staff must not allow children to engage in activities that could be detrimental to a child's health or well-being.

- Staff must intervene when children are playing inappropriately or using equipment incorrectly (e.g., play fighting, jumping on each other, standing in swings, climbing up slides backwards, etc.).
- When necessary, it is acceptable to physically remove (in a gentle, non-harmful manner) a child from a potentially harmful situation.
- Additional information regarding age-appropriate physical development activities for children birth to five years of age can be

found in the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) at: www.gelds.decal.ga.gov.

Child care program staff or other adults must not engage in activities that could be detrimental to a child's health or well-being.

- Staff must ensure that children are not handled in a way that could possibly harm them (e.g., picking a child up by the arm or wrist, pulling a child by a piece of clothing, etc.).
- Adults (staff and non-staff) must ensure that their verbal and physical interactions with children are appropriate and that staff intervene when necessary.
- Create a cohesive classroom environment (e.g., sense of belonging, nurturing and support) and cooperation (e.g., see things from another's point of view, work together, negotiate, problem solve, share, accept and help one another) during structured and unstructured times.

Screen Time Linked with Developmental Delays in Toddlerhood

Article by Kristin Rogers, CNN

Handing your baby a phone or tablet to play with may seem like a harmless solution when you're busy, but it could quickly affect their development, a new study has found.



Having anywhere from one to four hours of screen time per day at age 1 is linked with higher risks of developmental delays in communication, fine motor, problem-solving and personal and social skills by age 2, according to a study of approximately 7,000 children conducted by the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Pediatrics.

[Click to Read Entire Article](#)

Emergency Preparedness Plans and Drills

During an emergency, it is often difficult to remain calm and think clearly. A written plan provides the opportunity to prepare and to prevent poor judgments made under the stress of an emergency. When



emergency plans are written, well thought out and implemented, they provide a common understanding and clear expectations for all those involved. Written emergency plans provide clear instructions and guidelines on what should/must be done in a particular set of circumstances or with regard to a particular issue.

Emergency drills are necessary to prepare children and staff on how to respond appropriately to numerous potential emergencies. “Other emergency situations” include, but are not limited to, evacuation, shelter in place, and lockdown. Routine practice of emergency drills fosters a calm, competent response to an emergency when it occurs. A child who is coached properly ahead of time will have a better chance to be safe. Documentation ensures that all children are accounted for, that emergency plans are conducted appropriately, and drills are carried out in a timely manner.

Things for child care programs to consider:

- Review written emergency plans every six months or more often and update as needed.
- Practice drills at varying times to ensure that all children are familiar with procedures.
- Practice drills on transportation vehicles to ensure that children and staff know how to respond if an emergency occurs while they are present on the vehicle.
- Inform parents whenever emergency drills take place in the program (i.e., send notes home, etc.).
- Plan specifically for the evacuation of infants, toddlers, children with special needs and/or children with chronic medical conditions. The program should be able to evacuate all children to a safe location outside within two minutes or less of an emergency alarm.
- Prepare children for emergency drills prior to practicing the drills. Practice emergency drills using the same alarm that would be used during an actual emergency to ensure children are familiar with the sound and know how to respond. Use a different sounding alarm, such as a whistle, for a tornado drill versus a fire drill so that children and staff are not confused about which type of emergency drill is taking place.
- Post evacuation plans by each exit door.
- Position evacuation cribs close to an exit door and ensure these cribs are easily identified.
- Keep hallways and/or rooms used for sheltering-in-place free of clutter. When possible, these areas should also be free from windows.
- Maintain documentation in a central location for easy access by

staff, child care consultants, etc.

- Keep an easy-to-carry emergency preparedness kit in a central location for staff's use during emergency situations and drills. Emergency kits should contain first aid kits and children's emergency contact information. Other potential items to include in the kit are drinking water, snacks, diapering supplies, books and/or activities for children's use at an evacuation site, etc.
- It may not be feasible to conduct all types of drills on a routine basis for potential emergencies, such as relocation (off premises) and reuniting children with families. Staff should routinely review the program's emergency preparedness manual, so they are aware of the actions to take whenever such emergencies occur.

[View Emergency Drills Documentation Form](#)

[Child Care Learning Center Emergency Plans Template](#)

[Family Child Care Learning Home Emergency Plans Template](#)

Using Wordless Picture Books to Support Language and Literacy Development and to foster meaningful conversations and creativity

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

How can a book with no written words support literacy? In SO many ways!

Wordless picture books provide great opportunities for meaningful conversations and language development as children describe, wonder, and connect to the world they know. Wordless picture books can be enjoyed alone, in pairs, or with a caregiver and can even be used for progress monitoring and assessment.

Approach with Enthusiastic Joy

When sharing wordless picture books with young children, it is helpful to approach the experience with enthusiasm and joy. When you are excited, the children will be excited. When you approach with a sense of wonder, the children approach with wonder. You can do this by using excited facial expressions and tones when the children notice something in a picture. Allow your face to match the tone of the story when an emotional part is occurring. Finally, think beyond just the picture with the children. While a picture walk and finding out what the children notice is one appropriate approach to sharing wordless picture books, there are many strategies for supporting children to gain much deeper understanding of the story itself when there are no words present.

Foster Meaningful Conversations

As you talk, support social-emotional development by supporting children to take the perspective of different characters and to explore thoughts and feelings. **Ask open-ended questions and wonder along with children. Focus on *why* and *how* questions:**

- What is going on here?
- How do you know?
- Why do you think that?
- How do you know?
- What else could happen?
- What do you think the character did?
- Why do you think they made that choice? What do you think about that choice?
- How do you think the character is feeling?
- What do you think they are thinking about? Why do you think that?
- How do you feel about that? What would you do if it were you? How could you help the character?

Invite Dual Language Learners and their families to share Wordless Picture Books

Encourage families to talk about wordless picture books in their first language with their child! This is an opportunity to grow vocabulary and comprehension in the child's first language and is a great tool to foster meaningful conversations and wonder about the world together.

Focus on Target Vocabulary

While exploring the wordless picture book, consider target vocabulary that the story lends itself to fostering. This vocabulary can be included through questioning and through describing. Encourage the children to both describe what they see and ask questions themselves. Additionally, you can recap what is discovered by the children and insert target vocabulary that is made meaningful through the pictures and the story of the wordless picture book.

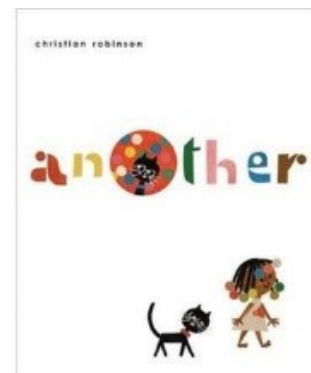
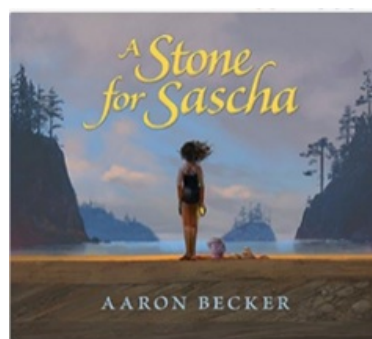
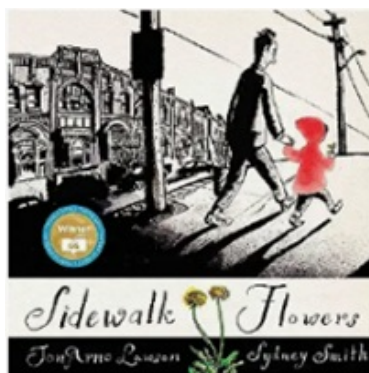
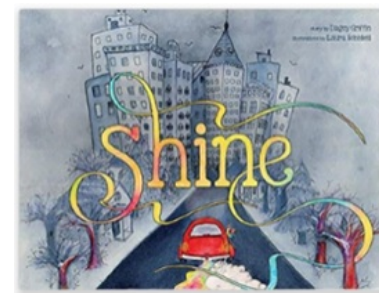
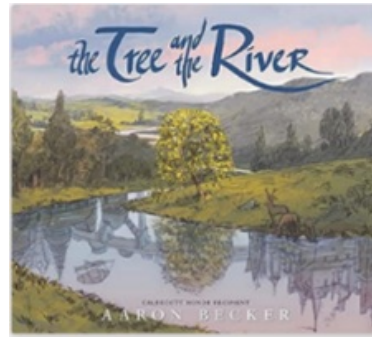
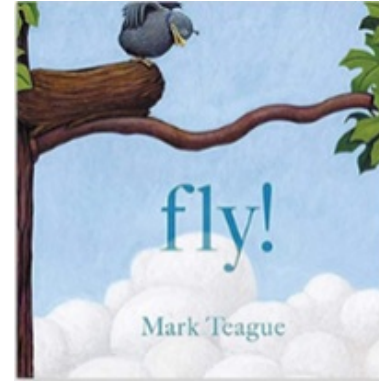
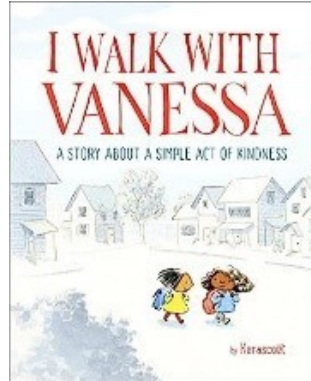
Connect to Literacy Justice for All (LJFA) Curriculum

If you are using wordless picture books as a part of the LJFA curriculum, connect back to the monthly inquiry questions and to specific vocabulary and main ideas from our anchor books to see what ideas and concepts, language and vocabulary children use. Check out the curriculum resources and materials on <https://coxcampus.org/literacy-justice-for-all-b-5-2/>

Using Wordless Picture Books for Progress Monitoring or Assessment

Wordless picture books can be used to monitor and assess children's conceptual learning or language development. Listen for vocabulary use, complex sentence structure, how they map words together in order (syntax), what they notice and point out, and what you can see and understand about their world.

There are so many inspiring Wordless Picture Books! Here are some of our favorites!





PREVENTING LEAD IN DRINKING WATER FOR GEORGIA CHILDREN



Why is preventing lead in drinking water so important?

Throughout history, lead has been known as a notoriously toxic chemical. Because of its use in water infrastructure, it is still *commonly* found where children learn and play. Children may also be exposed to lead in drinking water at home.

Because lead is toxic to the brain, infants and young children are especially sensitive, resulting in harmful, lifelong effects, like IQ loss, learning disabilities, and behavioral disorders.

It is important to ensure that children's homes, child care centers, and schools are free from sources of lead.

There is **no** safe level of lead in drinking water, but exposure is preventable! The Clean Water for Georgia Kids program is **free**, helping to identify and get the lead out of drinking and cooking water where children learn and play across Georgia. This program is a partnership between the nonprofit research institute RTI International and the Georgia Department of Education.

How can I participate?

Our approach is designed for easy online registration, enrollment, and participation.

You can register for one of the required webinars [here](#).

Together with your help, we can protect and make positive changes in the lives of young children!



For more information, visit www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/georgia
or call 1-855-997-3183

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!](#)



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