



July 5, 2022

Georgia Nutritional Services hosts Happy Helpings Kick-off Event in Dekalb County



On June 10, Georgia Nutritional Services, Inc. (GNSI) helped bring awareness to the importance of summer meals during a Happy Helpings Kick-off event in Dekalb County.

Approximately 70 kids enjoyed free nutritious meals & learned about the importance of staying hydrated during the summer.

The children also enjoyed combining good nutrition with physical activities by playing with hula hoops, jump ropes, and volleyball.



Happy Helpings Branded Items Available to Sponsors

North Georgia Community YMCA staff and volunteers posed for a group photo wearing their Happy Helpings t-shirts. They also handed out water bottles and frisbees to the kids that came out for free meals.

Happy Helpings branded items are



available free to all sponsors. We have banners, directional signs, bar towels, t-shirts, water bottles, back packs, and frisbees available. To help us determine the quantity of items needed, we ask that you take a moment to participate in this brief [survey](#).



Rabun County Public Library promotes Summer Meals

Special thanks to Laura Lane with Rabun County Family Connection for promoting the availability of summer meals in her local community.

Laura worked with the Rabun County Public Library to display information about Happy Helpings and how to locate meals.

Happy Helpings Sponsors: *Submit pictures of your high-quality meals*



We want to hear from you!

The Nutrition Services Division wants to spotlight the high-quality meals that you are serving in your Happy Helpings program this year. We are seeking pictures of your *appetizing*, *appealing*, and *nourishing* meals being served this summer!

You fill the gap for children during the summer months by providing access to necessary and nutritious meals to support children's healthy growth and development. Let's share and celebrate your efforts across Georgia!

Submit your high-quality meal photos, organization's name, and any local items being served to Nutrition & Physical Activity Supervisor, Diana Myers at diana.myers@dec.al.gov.

Guidance for Accommodating Meal Service during Excessive Heat

With the rise in temperatures, Nutrition services would like HH Sponsors to be aware of options available to accommodate their meal service during this period of high temperatures. As you are aware, in 2019, USDA allowed the continuation of the demonstration project for non-congregate feeding for outdoors summer meal sites.

Specifically, sponsors operating approved outdoor meal sites without temperature-controlled

alternative sites were able to operate as non-congregate sites on days when the area experienced excessive heat. Non-congregate meal services were only permitted on days when the National Weather Service (NWS) issued a heat advisory. GA DECAL participated in the project with instructions on how HH Sponsors could participate. Due to the pandemic and the change in USDA's waiver request guidance and protocol, per Section 12(l) of the NSLA, 42 U.S.C. 1760(l), the demonstration project was temporarily dormant.

On May 26, 2022, Nutrition Services requested a waiver to allow HH Sponsors to serve non-congregate meals during excessive heat to be effective upon approval and are awaiting a response. You may find a copy of the waiver request [here](#). As we await a response, HH Sponsors can refer to the following guidance to help ensure children stay safe during these extreme temperatures.

HH Sponsors must make appropriate arrangements for food service during periods of inclement weather. Although all outdoor HH sites are not required to have an alternate temperature-controlled site, sponsors should have a contingency plan for dealing with extreme weather conditions, such as thunderstorms and excessive heat.

Options include:

- Discontinuing the meal service, if safety is a concern;
- Using a tent to provide extra shade on extremely hot days; and/or
- Partnering with a housing community to use an air-conditioned lobby or community room on an extremely hot day.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Robyn Parham at Robyn.Parham@dec.al.ga.gov.

Racial and Ethnic Data Collection

Additional Nutrition Services' Guidance Forthcoming

On May 17, 2021, USDA issued guidance advising that visual observation and identification in the CACFP and HH was no longer an allowable practice for program operators to use during the collection of race or ethnicity data. On June 13, 2022, USDA issued policy memorandum [Questions and Answers Related to Collection of Race and Ethnicity Data by Visual Observation and Identification in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program – Policy Recission](#).

This memorandum provides clarification on questions related to the collection of race or ethnicity data now that visual identification of race and ethnicity is no longer an allowable practice in the CACFP and HH.

FNS provided a grace period for CACFP and HH program operators and State agencies to develop other data collection methods. The grace period which applies to both HH and CACFP is May 17, 2021 through December 31, 2022. During the grace period, program operators will not receive a finding of non-compliance during reviews; however, it will be noted as an observation and may become a finding if alternative means are not implemented before the end of the established grace period.

Nutrition Services is currently developing additional guidance for the collection of racial and ethnic data for both the CACFP and HH. This guidance will be forthcoming.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Robyn Parham at Robyn.Parham@dec.al.ga.gov.

Updates on USDA Waivers

Nutrition Services would like to offer the most up-to-date information on available waivers, soon-to-be expired waivers, and waivers requested by Nutrition Services that recently received USDA approval.

A webinar summarizing the updates on waivers and requirements was recently hosted by the Nutrition team. To watch the webinar, click [here](#). You can also access the slides from the webinar [here](#).

Happy Helpings (SFSP) USDA Waivers Available for Sponsor Request

Waiver	Expires	Request Usage via
Closed Enrolled Sites (non-COVID)	April 30, 2023	ATLAS Site Application Section: <i>Site Type</i>
First Week Site Visits (non-COVID)	April 30, 2023	ATLAS Site Application Section: <i>General Site Information</i>
Meal Service Time Restrictions (non-COVID)	April 30, 2023	USDA Waiver Module
Non-Congregate Meal Service	September 30, 2022	USDA Waiver Module
Parent/Guardian Meal Pickup	September 30, 2022	USDA Waiver Module

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

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

Criteria 1:

The site 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) and/or Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) websites:

- CDC, https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view?list_select_state=Georgia&data-type=CommunityLevels&null=Risk - Under the "Data Type" pull down menu (located mid-page), the user would select "Community Transmission" to access a county's designation; and/or
- DPH, <https://dph.georgia.gov/county-indicator-reports> - The user would select the most recent County Indicator Report and click "Community Transmission" in the top right corner of the page to access a county's designation.

Criteria 2:

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
3. An SFSP Sponsor reporting a documented case of COVID-19 at an SFSP Site. Documentation to support the documented case of COVID-19 could be a letter or email that was sent to parents, staff, or site location such as an apartment complex advising of the documented case.

The Non-Congregate Meal Service and Parent/Guardian Meal Pickup 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 for sponsored sites will be reviewed and approved upon the site's approval to operate the Program.

Meal Service Time Restrictions

This waiver is applicable to 7 CFR § 225.16(c)(1) which places Federal limits on the amount of time that must elapse between the end of one meal and the beginning of the next, as well as 7

CFR § 225.16(c)(2) which places Federal limits on the duration of a meal service. Happy Helping sponsors interested in participating in the Meal Service Time Restrictions Waiver should apply for DECAL approval through the GA ATLAS Waiver Module. For instructions on how to submit a waiver request in GA ATLAS please see the [USDA Waiver User Guide](#).

Closed Enrolled Sites

This waiver is applicable to 7 CFR § 225.15(f) and allows sponsors to operate closed enrolled sites in areas where at least 50 percent of children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Happy Helping Sponsors interested in participating in the Closed Enrolled Sites waiver should apply for DECAL approval within Happy Helpings' site applications.

First Week Site Visits

This waiver is applicable to 7 CFR 225.15(d)(2) which requires Sponsors to visit each of their sites at least once during the first week of operation. This waiver would be applicable only to SFSP sites that have successfully operated the previous year and for sponsors that operate the CACFP or the National School Lunch Program (NLSP). Happy Helping sponsors interested in participating in the First Week Site Visits Waiver should apply for DECAL approval within Happy Helpings' site applications.

FSMC Contract Duration Waiver Request receives USDA Approval

Nutrition Services also received USDA approval for the Food Service Management Company (FSMC) Contract Duration Waiver. This waiver permits School Food Authorities and Program Operators to extend existing FSMC contracts expiring in the month of July. This flexibility means operators do not need to re-compete their existing Food Service Management Company contracts.

Operators may instead submit to DECAL a notification of renewal letter that is signed and dated by both parties. The renewal will be good for one (1) year and no further criteria is required. This waiver expires June 30, 2023 and sponsors should request use of this waiver via the USDA Waiver Module.

Information on Requesting a Waiver

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 conducting home delivery under the Non-Congregate waiver.

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.

Area Eligibility Guidance from the USDA

Transitioning from COVID-19 Nationwide Waivers and School Data

On May 13, 2022, the USDA issued the memorandum [Area Eligibility for Summer 2022 and School Year 2022-2023](#). This memorandum provides 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 Happy Helpings and CACFP, the USDA has advised that

Program operators may use one of the following two options with regards to school data for sites located in the attendance area of schools that operated SSO in SY 2021-2022 (*these options are not available for sites located in the attendance area of schools that operated NSLP in SY 2021-2022*) :

- 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.

Procurement Updates

Monitoring Executed Contracts, Agreements and Services

Organizations are encouraged to frequently monitor and evaluate contractual agreements and invoices, as well as assess current and potential meal sites. Doing so may help determine if:

- There are unexpected changes by the vendor on price or supply
- A new vendor should be used
- The contract period is ending, and/or
- If proper procurement using alternative procurement methods different from previous years should be executed (i.e., new bid process, new agreements, amendments, change in procurement method overall, etc.).



Now Available! Revised Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs Guide

On June 21, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) Farm to School Program released the revised Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs Guide, which provides an overview of federal procurement principles and covers topics related to sourcing and purchasing local foods, for State agencies and child nutrition program operators.

This guide highlights a variety of mechanisms schools can use to purchase local products while staying in accordance with federal procurement regulations. Featured are examples of how to target local foods when conducting both formal and informal procurements, use the Geographic Preference option, and use the USDA Foods and DoD Fresh Programs to enhance local purchasing. Please feel free to share the guide across your networks.

To access the revised Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs Guide along with other local procurement resources for child nutrition program operators, visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/procuring-local-foods>.

Summer Meals Season Ends When School Starts

Sponsors can only operate the HH during the summer months when school is not in session. Once school reopens in the district where a site is located, HH operations must end.

Reminder to Review Online HH Application

Sponsors are required to review and ensure that all sections of their online HH application in

GA ATLAS are accurate at all times. Failure to maintain an accurate application could result in a finding(s) and/or an adverse action. [Click here](#) to access HH application update procedures. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your assigned Business Operations Representative.

For HH applications, contact:

Application Specialists	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
Paula Lawrence	o (zero)-G	Paula.Lawrence@decals.ga.gov	(404) 463-2111
Shericka Blount	H-P	Shericka.Blount@decals.ga.gov	(404)656-6411
Kenya Taylor	Q-Z	Kenya.Taylor@decals.ga.gov	(404) 463-4040

Please send site updates and add-a-sites to your reassigned Business Operations Representative:

Application Specialists	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
Jerald Savage	o (zero)-C, H-P	Jerald.Savage@decals.ga.gov	(770) 405-7916
Edith Pierre	D-G, Q-Z	Edith.Pierre@decals.ga.gov	(404) 463-8314

Get Informed: 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 [Approved USDA Waivers](#) webinar. It discussed available waivers and the requirements for usage in the Child Nutrition Programs.

MyPlate

June 2nd marked the 11th birthday for MyPlate and in celebration, please feel free to share Team Nutrition's free [MyPlate materials](#) developed specifically for kids and their parents/caregivers. Child care and summer meal sites that participate in the Federal Child Nutrition Programs can request free Team Nutrition MyPlate materials using the following link.

- [\[MyPlate Order\]](#)

Crediting Tip Sheets in Child Nutrition Programs (CNP)

[Team Nutrition](#) has developed a fruit and vegetable tip sheet for program operators. These two [2] tip sheets are a part of a series of tips sheets that include milk, meats/meat alternates and whole grains that provide references for program operators across all Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs). They will address requirements common to all CNPs, as well as requirements that are specific to each program. These simple easy-to-use references highlight the basics of crediting for these two [2] meal components. The tip sheets will allow program operators to test their knowledge of the meal component requirement with a question-and-answer section.

- [\[Download Fruit Tip Sheet\]](#)
- [\[Download Vegetable Tip Sheet\]](#)

Serving Seafood Tip Sheet

[Seafood Nutrition Partnership](#) has developed a resource tip sheet to share the benefits of

seafood and how to serve seafood to children of all ages.

- [[Serve Seafood](#)]

Healthy Hydration Infographic

The [National Drinking Water Alliance](#) has developed this infographic with strategies and resources for promoting water consumption in ECE setting.

- [[Download in English](#)]
- [[Download in Spanish](#)]

Best Fruit Forward

The [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) has developed a colorful quiz, budget-friendly buyer's guide, and easy-to-use resources to help you and your family discover and enjoy fruit all year round.

- [[Download Quiz](#)]

The Food Buying Guide (FBG) *Have You Heard?*

Team Nutrition is excited to announce that training videos on navigating the Food Buying Guide (FBG) Mobile App are now available. These short videos are broken into four [4] chapters to provide users with step-by-step instructions on using the Mobile App and its different components. These training videos, along with existing FBG Web Tool training videos, are accessible within the FBG Web Tool under the 'Help' tab from the top navigation menu.

- [[View Videos](#)]

Training & 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 that we continue to meet this goal during any transitions and/or position changes.

Therefore, institutions that reside in **theregion 2** and **region 3** areas listed, please contact our Nutrition TA mailbox at NutritionTA@decals.ga.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

Sweet, Georgia Peaches!

The July Harvest of the Month ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)) item is peaches! Georgia is known as the Peach State, however, we are number four in peach production in the U.S.

Peaches are available fresh, frozen, and canned for good nutrition and convenience. Fresh peaches may be at peak quality and lowest cost from June through September, depending on the variety and growing area. There are three types of peaches: Clingstone, Freestone, and Semi-

freestone.

Peaches provide important nutrients like vitamins C and A, and fiber. Vitamin C helps your body heal cuts and wounds. Vitamin A helps keep good vision, fight infection, and keep your skin healthy. Fiber helps you feel full, keep normal blood sugar levels, and avoid constipation. Peaches also provides vitamins E and K, potassium, and water. Enjoy peaches as a snack or with your favorite yogurt or cereal.

Fun Fact: *Peaches are part of the rose family and August is National Peach Month!*

Integration:

- **Peachy Pops**
- **Peach Cooler**
- **Fruit Crunch Cobbler**
- **Munchy Peach Parfait**
- **Frozen Fruit Yogurt**

Education:

- **Compare & Contrast** Make a list of similarities and a list of differences between peaches and another fruit. Are there more similarities or differences?
- **Watch a Video** Find and watch a video online that shows how peaches are grown, harvested, and distributed in the United States.
- **Talk** with families about how participants can help with meal preparation including washing and drying peaches to be served with a meal. **Bonus:** Send recipes that incorporate peaches home for families to try together!

Conversation:

- Have your program participants eaten peaches before?
- What is their favorite way to eat peaches?
- Describe how peaches feel and taste.

Share your Harvest of the Month stories and menu integration of peaches with Nutrition & Physical Activity Supervisor, Diana Myers, MS, RD, LD at diana.myers@dec.al.gov!



DECAL's Nutrition Spotlight: *Deidrea Thompson, Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator*

After a 10-year career with DECAL, Deidrea Thompson, Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator, has announced her retirement effective June 30, 2022.

Deidrea began her career with DECAL as an auditor with the Audits and Compliance Division. After a brief hiatus, she returned to DECAL and began working for the Nutrition Division as a Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator covering the East region. Deidrea has held this position for the last six years.

“Deidrea has a genuine personality and a heart of gold,” said Grushan Blake, Nutrition Training Manager. “She was always willing to provide assistance to her team and the customers that we serve. She has a special way of connecting with our program operators using her longstanding experience and training humor.”

There were many things Deidrea enjoyed about her job. She loved helping children and being empathetic towards others. Seeing the kids’ faces when she would go out to monitor a site and hearing them say they enjoyed the food was important to her.

She also enjoyed working with the institutions to promote best practices. She loved “seeing the program contacts understand their duties and “watch as the light bulb turned-on.” “Program operators often get overwhelmed because there is a lot to digest, at first. I have been in their shoes as a program contact, so I understand their situation and all the things they are responsible for,” said Deidrea.

The other aspect she enjoyed was hearing the relief of the institution program contact when she said, “I’m here for you and to help you be successful in the program.”

Deidrea stated that the decision to retire wasn’t difficult. “It was time.” She is looking forward to traveling and spending time with her family.

“Deidrea could always be counted on for genuine smiles and conversation. And moreover, you could always count on her to give 100 percent in everything she did, whether she was providing training to institutions or even working to get institutions the answers they needed. Deidrea will be greatly missed, and we truly appreciate her many years of service,” said Tamika Boone, Director of Nutrition Services.

Join us in thanking Deidrea for her commitment and dedication to DECAL Nutrition.

Happy Helpings Resources:

The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:

- [Revised Happy Helpings Policies & Memoranda](#)
- [PolicyStat is available on the Nutrition Services' Webpage](#)
- [Requirements for Obtaining a Food Service Permit](#)
- [Infant Formula Recall](#)
- [Does your organization operate as a Food Service Management Company \(FSMC\)?](#)
- [Check your Email Messages in GA ATLAS](#)
- [Reimbursement Rates for Summer 2022](#)
- [COVID Resources for Sponsors](#)
- [Updated CDC Guidance for Operating Early Care & Education/Child Care Programs](#)
- [After School Programs Required to Apply for License or Exemption to Participate in At-Risk](#)
- [Annual Year End Reconciliation Notice](#)
- [Nutrition Services announces New Brand Identity for the Summer Food Service Program: Happy Helpings](#)
- [Claim Deadlines announced for FY2022](#)
- [How to Submit a Waiver Request](#)

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.

NEW DECAL Download

Preparing for Georgia's Pre-K Program

Summer is in full swing, but before you know it, the 2022-2023 school year will be here

On the next ...
DECAL
Download 
New Episodes Every Wednesday!



Faith Duncan
Director of Georgia's
Pre-K Program

Laurianne McDonald
Georgia Pre-K Program
Specialist

LaNita Carey
Jackson Creek Academy in
Lilburn, GA & 2021-2022 GA
Pre-K Teacher of the Year

This Week's Topic:
**Preparing for
Georgia's Pre-K
Program**



Georgia's Pre-K Program, Laurianne McDonald, who is a Pre-K Specialist working with programs in Southeast Georgia, and LaNita Carey from Jackson Creek Academy in Lilburn. Lanita is also one of our Georgia's Pre-K Program Teachers of the Year for the 2021-2022 school year.

Listen to the episode [here](#).



Nutrition Division

Marketing & Outreach Team

Cindy Kicklighter
Carl Glover

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
Nondiscrimination Statement: English
Nondiscrimination Statement: Spanish

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