

# Nutrition News



Happy Helpings

Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

October 3, 2022

## Thank you Sponsors for another great Summer Meals Season

As we wrap up the summer meals season, DECAL's Nutrition Services Division would like to acknowledge all that you did to ensure Georgia's children had access to more than 2.8 million meals and snacks this summer.

Please take a moment to watch this brief video from Tamika Boone, Director of Nutrition Services.



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## We'd Love Your Feedback

*End-of-the-Season Survey: Respond by October 17*

DECAL's Nutrition Services Division appreciates your participation in Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program.

To better understand your experience as a Happy Helpings Sponsor, we have created an end-of-the-season survey. You may choose to respond anonymously or add your name. We will use the information to ensure we are providing the resources you need to have a successful summer meals program.

Please [click here](#) to participate in the survey. Please respond by **October 17, 2022**.

Again, thank you for your commitment to serving children free and healthy meals during the summer months!

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## Farm to School and Farm to Early Care and Education receives proclamation from Governor

# Kemp

We are extremely appreciative to see Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) supported from the highest Georgia leadership office of Governor Brian Kemp to our active and engaged Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program operators. You can view the proclamation [here](#).

Farm to ECE is an innovative way to build children's relationship with food and the local food system through hands-on food education and gardening experiences, interactive and adventurous taste testing, and inclusion of local food items into CACFP meals and snacks.

Farm to ECE is an opportunity to engage families in a more meaningful way, increase access to healthy foods, boost physical activity and mental wellbeing, and support local farmers and communities. DECAL's Nutrition Services Division has supported Farm to ECE for many years and will continue to grow our support through our work with the Farm to ECE Coalition and the USDA Farm to School Grant, and our two Child Nutrition Programs: CACFP and Happy Helpings.

One way to celebrate Farm to School and Farm to Early Care and Education Month is through Georgia Organics' "[Spinach To Win It](#)" October Farm to School Month Campaign. Sign-up for free activities, curriculum, recipes, and more to celebrate all season long!

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## Are you "Spinach to Win It" with us?

*Win prizes when you share pictures on social media using #spinachtowinit*



Registration for this year's October Farm to School Month campaign remains open! You can sign up [here](#) to get access to all of the resources including spinach-themed activities, standards-based lessons, recipes and more through the month of October.

Share your *Spinach to Win it* pictures and activities on social media using the hashtag, **#spinachtowinit** and be eligible to win a prize!

Georgia Organics will select winners weekly throughout October, and at the end of the month, there will be a grand prize winner! Prizes include T-shirts and supplies to support your farm to school efforts. In order to be eligible for a social media prize, one **MUST** be signed up. Anyone can register for free [here](#).  
**#spinachtowinit #farmtoschool @GeorgiaOrganics**

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## Annual Year-End Reconciliation

*Due October 31*

Institutions operating FY22 Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Program, (May 2022-Aug 2022) must complete an Annual Reconciliation Form. The form should include all FY22 Happy Helpings operating months. Per SFSP Policy 5, sponsors are required to submit year-end reconciliation documentation as well as the bank statement and/or system-generated general ledger supporting the ending balance on the reconciliation form.

The SFSP reconciliation form **and** final bank statement or system-generated general ledger must be submitted to DECAL no later than October 31, 2022. Click [here](#) for the reconciliation form and [here](#) for instructions.

### Submit the following:

- Annual Year End Reconciliation Form

- Supporting financial documentation
- Bank statement and/or system-generated general ledger supporting the ending balance on the reconciliation form
- Include the name of the institution and agreement number in the subject line
- Email to [nutritionbudget@decals.ga.gov](mailto:nutritionbudget@decals.ga.gov), as well as any questions about the budget process.

To review the Happy Helpings Budget Annual Year-End Reconciliation Training, click [here](#).

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## Happy Helpings Year-End Reconciliation Memorandum Revised

The policy memorandum, *Simplified SFSP and Bright from the Start's Annual Year-End Reconciliation Process*, was revised to provide further guidance on the required submittal of the Annual Year-End Reconciliation Form and supporting Happy Helpings financial records. The memorandum now also includes additional information pertaining to the use of excess Happy Helpings funds towards the Happy Helpings program, the CACFP, and other child nutrition programs (CNP's).

In addition, guidance is provided on the Excess Funds Request form which is required to be completed and submitted by Happy Helpings sponsors who desire to use excess Happy Helpings funds towards the operations of other CNPs (e.g., CACFP, NSLP, SBP).

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## Happy Helping Waivers available during Unanticipated School Closures

On May 18, 2022, DECAL received approval from the USDA for the following statewide waivers which are available during unanticipated school closures. These waivers are in effect October 1, 2022 through April 30, 2023. The waiver approval letter can be found [here](#).

*Please note: For the purposes of these waivers, unanticipated school closures only occur when instruction is not provided to children. If a school plans to offer virtual learning or a mix of in-person classes and virtual learning, then the school would be considered open and not in an "unanticipated school closure" status.*

- **Waiver 16: Non-Congregate Meal Service during Unanticipated School Closures** waives the requirements that meals must be served in a congregate setting and be consumed by participants on site.
- **Waiver 17: Parent and Guardian Meal Pick-Up during Unanticipated School Closures** waives the requirement that meals be served directly to eligible participants.
- **Waiver 18: Meal Service Times for Unanticipated School Closures** waives meal service time requirements.
- **Waiver 19: Service of Meals at School Sites during Unanticipated School Closures** waives the requirement that State agencies are to only approve meal service operations at non-school sites.

***These waivers are only applicable when the congregate meal service is limited by the COVID-19 pandemic.*** Therefore, the following criteria is required for these waivers to be approved and used by Happy Helpings sponsors during unanticipated school closures. 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](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 the following:

- A public state, local, or county official
- A school superintendent or principal
- 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.

These 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.

**Happy Helpings sponsors interested in applying for these waivers during unanticipated school closures must submit waiver requests via the Waiver Module within GA ATLAS.**

\*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.

**More 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@dec.al.gov](mailto:Tammie.Baldwin@dec.al.gov).

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

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## **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 [Happy Helpings Reconciliation Training](#) webinar. It discussed detailed information on the Annual Year-End Reconciliation process including how to complete the [Reconciliation Form](#) and types of documents required for submission.

### **Annual Year-End Reconciliation Form Instructions**

These instructions are designed to help HH sponsors complete the [Annual Year-End Reconciliation Form](#) that is due by October 31. The form and instructions are located on the DECAL website under HH SFSP Forms.

[\[Download Instructions\]](#)

[SFSP Transition to CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Webinar Recording](#) **Now Available!**



Are you interested in serving meals year-round when school is in-session? Register below to learn:

- the overview of the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program, and
- eligibility, application, licensing, and exemption requirements to participate.
- [[Register Now](#)]

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## 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, sponsors that reside in **region 2** listed in the map above, please contact our Nutrition TA mailbox at [NutritionTA@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:NutritionTA@dec.al.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

### *Spinach To Win It!*

The October Harvest of the Month spotlight & this year's theme for October Farm to School Month is spinach ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)).

Great for use in a variety of dishes, spinach is a nutrient packed vegetable that can be incorporated into almost any meal. Packed with vitamins that promote health, it is a major source

of vitamins A and C, iron, and folate; an excellent source of fiber; and a good source of calcium.

In Georgia, spinach is in season January through May, and November and December. It may cost less when it is in season. Frozen spinach can be found year-round and may be a cost-effective alternative to fresh spinach. Enjoy the leafy vegetable in a tasty salad, smoothie, on a sandwich, in lasagna, in casseroles, soups, or sautéed in eggs.

### Integration:

- [Spinach Stuffed Potatoes](#)
- [Delicious Dunking Dip](#)
- [Easy Meatballs and Sauce](#)
- [Popeye Power Smoothie](#)
- [Skillet Lasagna](#)

### Education:

- [Read Sylvia's Spinach by Katherine Pryor](#) with your program participants.
- [Compare & Contrast](#) spinach and another dark green leafy vegetable.

- **Talk** with families about how participants can help with meal preparation by rinsing spinach in lukewarm water to be included in a meal. **Bonus:** Send recipes that incorporate spinach home for families to try together!

## Conversation:

- Have your program participants eaten spinach before?
- What is their favorite way to eat spinach?
- What other green vegetables do they like to eat?



## October's Harvest of the Month BONUS Item: *Squash - summer, winter, and pumpkin*

**Summer squash** are high in vitamin C, vitamin A and fiber. Although, summer squash is usually available year-round in Georgia they are in season April through November, which is when they are freshest and more cost-effective. They come in many shapes and sizes, but smaller squash

typically has a better texture and more concentrated flavor. Larger squash have bigger seeds and less flavor, but are better suited for baking and stuffing. Examples of summer squash include zucchini, round ball, yellow crookneck, and straightneck.

**Winter squash** is an excellent source of vitamin A and minerals. It is often available year-round. In Georgia, winter squash season is August through December, which is when they taste better and are more cost-effective. It is harvested in autumn before a hard frost and stored for later. Like its summer counterpart, winter squash comes in many sizes and colors and may even have decorative warts. Examples of winter squash include acorn, butternut, pumpkin, and spaghetti.

**Pumpkin** is a type of winter squash available September through November in Georgia. Pumpkin is a very good source of vitamins A and C, potassium, and fiber. While they come in a variety of types, sizes, and colors, it is recommended that you always choose a pumpkin that feels heavy for its size. Types of pumpkin includes Baby Boo, Baby Pam, Fairytale, Jack Be Little, New England Pie, and Winter Luxury.

**Fun Fact:** Seeds from inside the pumpkin can be dried and saved for growing pumpkins for the next year.

- [Roasted Zucchini](#)
- [Rice Bowl Southwestern Style](#)
- [Spaghetti Squash](#)
- [Butternut Apple Crisp](#)
- [Turkey Pumpkin Chili](#)
- [Whole Grain Pumpkin Muffins](#)

Share your Harvest of the Month stories and menu integration of spinach and squash with Nutrition & Physical Activity Supervisor, Diana Myers, MS, RD, LD at [diana.myers@decal.ga.gov](mailto:diana.myers@decal.ga.gov).

## 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 (ECE) Coalition for ECE settings.

Visit the [Georgia Department of Education's HOTM webpage](#) and [Quality Care for Children's HOTM webpage](#). Upon viewing, you can find tips and tricks for preparing produce items, curriculum connections, activity lists and book alignment for your early care classrooms.



## Physical Activity Corner: "Walk"tober Month: Let's Get Walking!

Walktober - A New Month, A New You! It's a start of the beautiful fall season. As some of you may know, October is National Walk to School Month. Walking is one of the many physical activities people enjoy adding into their daily routine. Start a day by moving - go for a short walk by yourself or a power walk with your family for at least 30-minutes a day to keep your heart rate up. The important benefit of walking is to raise awareness and to support good health for our families, schools, and neighboring





communities.

As per the "*Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*," (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) via the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the benefits of physical activity such as walking include improved sleep, reduced anxiety and depression, lower risk of hypertension and type 2 diabetes, and many more.

#### **How To Observe #OctoberWalks:**

- 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 a 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 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 co-worker to take a 10-minute walk to break away from the computer/office. Take the stairs instead of the elevator.

The “Power of Walking” is an International Walk to School Month celebrated in the month of October. Organize, plan, or coordinate a small walk community event or an activity with your family, school, work, or local communities. To find out more, please, visit:

[www.walkbiketoschool.org](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org) or <https://www.livesmartoni.com/walktober>.

#### **Integration:**

- **Benefits of Walking**
- **Walk to School**
- **State Parks and Trails in Georgia**
- **2022 Georgia 2-Day Walk for Breast Cancer**
- **Walks in Georgia**

#### **Education:**

- **Read** aloud the book “**I Went Out Walking**” by Sue Williams .
- **Watch** the video on the **Benefits of Walking**.
- **Talk** with families about ways to incorporate walking into their daily lives. **Bonus:** Send #WALKTOBER pictures and events that are happening in your communities.

#### **Conversation:**

- What is the best day and time to walk?
- Who do you enjoy walking with?
- What is your favorite leisure place to walk (i.e., parks, trails, neighborhoods, schools)?

Share your #Walktober, #WalkDay, #Walkathon, #Walkclub, #WalkToSchool, #WalkToWork stories and photos with Nutrition & Physical Activity Supervisor, Diana Myers, MS, RD, LD at [diana.myers@dec.al.gov](mailto:diana.myers@dec.al.gov).

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## **DECAL's Nutrition Spotlight:**

*Meet Emilia Emmanuel, Technical Assistance Coordinator and Trainer for the Metro West region*

Emilia Emmanuel recently joined the Nutrition Services Division as the Technical Assistance Coordinator and Trainer for the Metro West region. She serves the counties of Butts, Clayton, Coweta, DeKalb, Fayette, Fulton, Heard, Henry, Lamar, Meriwether, Monroe, Pike, Spaulding, and Troup. She is extremely passionate about the work here at DECAL and is



excited to meet everyone.

In this role, Emilia will coordinate and perform duties which include planning & evaluation and technical assistance and training to assist sponsors and institutions participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program.

Emilia says, "One aspect of the job I am most excited about is getting to meet new people and to help them learn about the Child and Adult Care Food program and the Happy Helpings program. I want to assure that no child or adult in the state of Georgia will ever go hungry!"

Previously, Emilia worked for several Early Head Start/Head Start Programs. She served the children in Georgia as a health, nutrition, mental health, and pregnancy manager. Emilia has also been an agency nurse administrator.

Emilia joins the DECAL family with an impressive educational background in medicine. She has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing and her Doctorate in Medicine. She is also bilingual in English and Spanish. During her professional tenure, she has used her medical and nutrition knowledge to educate children, adults, organizational personnel, program staff, and parents to live a healthy lifestyle. One of her main goals is to help prevent long-term health problems or a crisis in the communities she has served.

Emilia loves spending time with her family, cooking, reading, traveling, and exploring nature. "My professional life and personal life are very connected. I enjoy combining the knowledge and skills that I acquired in my years of medical education and work experiences to assist Georgia's children and their families," added Emilia.

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## Dates To Know

DATE:	2022 October Events
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farm to School and Farm to Early Care and Education Month</li><li>• National Walk to School Month</li><li>• Harvest of the Month: Spinach &amp; Squash</li></ul>
October 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sponsor Survey Deadline</li></ul>
October 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Annual Year-End Reconciliation for Happy Helpings FY22 Due</li></ul>

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## Happy Helpings Resources:

*The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:*

- [Statewide Happy Helpings Waivers Available](#)
- [After School Programs Required to Apply for License or Exemption to Participate in At-Risk](#)
- [Transitioning from Happy Helpings to CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals](#)
- [HH Sponsors: Pictures of high quality meals](#)
- [Check your Email Messages in GA ATLAS](#)
- [Reimbursement Rates for Summer 2022](#)

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## 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

### Georgia Pre-K Week 2022

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

*This Week's Topic:*  
**Georgia Pre-K Week 2022**

**Polly McKinney**  
Advocacy Director,  
Voices for Georgia's Children

**Susan Adams**  
Deputy Commissioner of  
Georgia's Pre-K Program  
and Instructional Supports

**Sharon Cooper**  
State Representative

This year, DECAL and Voices for Georgia's Children are celebrating the 12th Annual Georgia's Pre-K Week, October 3-7. This is our thirtieth year offering Pre-K to students and families here in Georgia.

In 1992, Governor Zell Miller launched a pilot program serving 750 four-year-old children in the state. Now, 30 years later, the lottery-funded

Georgia's Pre-K Program has laid a solid foundation for academic excellence and future success in the lives of nearly 2-million children. Pre-K Week is an opportunity for us to tell this great success story of Georgia's Pre-K.

Joining us on this week's episode to talk about Georgia Pre-K Week is State Representative Sharon Cooper, representing District 43 and the East Cobb County area. She is also a frequent guest reader in Georgia's Pre-K Program classrooms through the years. We are also joined by Polly McKinney, from Voices for Georgia's Children and Susan Adams, the Deputy Commissioner for Georgia's Pre-K Program and Instructional Supports.

Listen to the episode [here](#).



### Nutrition Division

### Marketing & Outreach Team

Cindy Kicklighter  
Carl Glover

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**Nondiscrimination Statement: Spanish**

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