



September 1, 2023

## We'd Love Your Feedback

### *End-of-the-Season Survey: Respond by September 11*

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 to the survey. 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 **September 11, 2023**.

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

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## Happy Helpings Year-End Reconciliation Memorandum

The policy memorandum, *Simplified SFSP and Bright from the Start's Annual Year-End Reconciliation Process*, provides guidance on the required submittal of the Annual Year-End Reconciliation Form and supporting Happy Helpings financial records. The memorandum also includes additional information pertaining to the use of excess Happy Helpings funds towards the Happy Helpings program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and other child nutrition programs (CNPs).

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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## Annual Year-End Reconciliation Requirement for FY2023 Happy Helpings

It's that time of year again. Institutions operating FY2023 Happy Helpings Summer Food Program (May 2023- Aug 2023) must complete an Annual Reconciliation Form by **October 31, 2023**. Click [here](#) for the reconciliation form and [here](#) for instructions.

The form should include all FY2023 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 general ledger **supporting the ending balance on the reconciliation form**.

The Year End Reconciliation is completed after:

- The final claim is submitted to DECAL.
- All invoices are paid.
- Final reimbursement is received.
- Happy Helpings functional activity is closed.
- All Happy Helpings activity is accounted for on the last operating bank statement or general ledger.

**The SFSP reconciliation form and final bank statement or general ledger must be submitted to DECAL no later than October 31, 2023.**

Submit the form and supporting financial documentation together, to [nutritionbudget@decals.ga.gov](mailto:nutritionbudget@decals.ga.gov). Include the name of the institution and agreement number in the subject of the email.

Contact the budget team at [nutritionbudget@decals.ga.gov](mailto:nutritionbudget@decals.ga.gov) with any questions.

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## Understanding Food Yield to Prevent Food Waste

Now is the time to answer the following questions about the Happy Helpings program for next year.

- What quantity of raw products is needed to provide the amount of ready-to-cook food called for in a recipe?
- How much food will need to be purchased?
- Will the meal or snack being served meet the appropriate requirements for the Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program? How many servings can be distributed from a specific quantity of food?

An organization should start by understanding food yield for the overall food cost. The food yield can also predict and reduce food waste as they understand the expected and acceptable amount of waste from each ingredient and can calculate the inventory needs and par levels accordingly.

The Food Buying Guide (FBG) for Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs) is designed to assist organizations in estimating the food yield, as well as procuring the right amount of food while purchasing it in the most cost-effective manner. The food yield information is an essential planning and production tool used to do the following:

- Estimate the amount of food to purchase
- Control food costs and determine the procurement method(s)
- Prevent food waste
- Ensure an adequate quantity of food is produced each meal

The following examples illustrate what is meant by food yield:

- If the organization plans to include fresh, chopped tomatoes in a green salad, they need to determine how many pounds of whole tomatoes you must purchase to have the amount needed for the recipe.
- If an organization plans to serve a marinated black bean salad and the recipe calls for 5 pounds of drained, canned, black beans, they need to determine how many cans to start with – in other words, how many cans of undrained beans will yield 5 pounds of drained beans?

Visit the [The Food Buying Guide Interactive Web-based Tool](#) to begin the planning process for Happy Helping 2024.

For questions regarding procurement, please contact Tempest Harris, Procurement Compliance Specialist at [tempest.harris@decals.ga.gov](mailto:tempest.harris@decals.ga.gov).

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## Transitioning from Happy Helpings to CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals

Many existing Happy Helpings sites are well-positioned to offer afterschool meals during the school year through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Both organizations and communities benefit when meals are offered to children in low-income communities year-round.

Now that we are at the end of the summer season, the opportunity for sponsors to transition to At-Risk Afterschool Meals, a component of CACFP, is upon us. Here are a few things to consider:

- An application for Happy Helpings sponsors transitioning to CACFP is required upon initial entry to the CACFP. General updates and annual renewal will be required thereafter.
- As part of the current ATLAS CACFP application process, Happy Helpings sponsors are required to sign a multi-program agreement.
- Sponsors are required to adhere to all monitoring requirements.
- Sponsors are required to attend training.
- If you have questions or are interested in registering for training, please contact [Leslie Truman](#) at 404.657.1779.

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## After School Programs Required to Apply for License or Exemption to Participate in At-Risk

Afterschool programs MUST apply for license or exemption in order to participate in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program by submitting a complete license or exemption application to DECAL's [Child Care Services \(CCS\)](#).

### Available Resources:

- [Applicant's Guide to Licensing](#)
- [Child Care Learning Center Information](#)
- [Exemption Overview Presentation](#)

For more information, requirements, License Orientation meeting, and state laws, contact CCS at 404.657.5562.

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## Statewide Unanticipated School Closure Waivers Requested for Happy Helpings

On August 30, 2023, Nutrition Services received USDA approval for statewide waivers for Happy Helpings sponsors to utilize during unanticipated school closures. The following waivers are available during unanticipated school closures when meal service operations are limited due to natural disasters, unscheduled major building repairs, court orders relating to school safety or other issues, labor-management disputes, or when approved by the State agency for similar unanticipated causes. The approved waivers are as follows:

- **Non-Congregate Meal Service**
- **Parent and Guardian Meal Pick-up**
- **Meal Service Times**
- **Service of Meals at School Sites**

The waivers listed above are available October 1, 2023, and are effective through April 30, 2024.

When approved, Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors may only serve meals in a non-congregate setting, adjust the time of meal service, allow parent pick up, and allow service of meals at non-school sites. Waivers cannot be approved for more than 10 consecutive operating days without approval from Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

In situations that may warrant longer approval periods, the FNS Southeast Regional Office

(SERO) will work closely with Nutrition Services to determine if an extension is needed.

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

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## 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 Budget Reconciliation Training](#).

It discussed detailed information on the annual Year-End Reconciliation process, how to complete the Reconciliation Form, types of documents required for submission and potential next steps.

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## Nutrition Ed Nook

### *Crisp and Delicious*

Crisp and Delicious Apples are September's Harvest of the Month spotlight. Apples are a good source of **vitamin C**, which supports healthy gums, skin, and blood; **potassium**, which helps lower blood pressure; and **fiber**, which helps keep you regular, controls blood sugar and lowers cholesterol. Eat the peel to get the most from this nutritional powerhouse. Apples are a great low-calorie snack that are naturally fat and sodium-free.



Apple season in Georgia is July to December. North Georgia is the center of the state's apple industry with more than 85% grown in Gilmer and Fannin counties. The state's apple varieties include Fuji, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Red Delicious, and more.

**Fun Fact:** Did you know (#DYK) apples, apricots, blackberries, cherries, peaches, pears, plums, raspberries, and strawberries are all members of the rose family?

### **Integration:**

- [Apple Sandwiches](#)
- [Cranberry Applesauce](#)
- [Chicken Apple Salad Wrap](#)
- [Fall Apple Pumpkin Oatmeal](#)
- [Apples with Raspberry Fruit Dip](#)

### **Education:**

- **Watch** the [Harvest with Holly](#) video that explores the Harvest of the Month spotlight, how these items grow, where they grow in Georgia, and how they get from the farms to school meals all across the state of Georgia.
- **Compare & Contrast** different apple varieties, such as Granny Smith, Gala, Fuji, using the five senses, look, feel, taste, sound, and smell.
- **Read aloud** [Bring Me Some Apples and I'll Make You a Pie: A Story About Edna Lewis by Robbin Gourley](#). Long before the natural-food movement gained popularity, before greenmarkets sprouted across the United States, Edna Lewis championed purity of ingredients, regional cuisine, and the importance of bringing food directly from the farm to the table. The story follows Edna from early spring through the growing season to a family dinner celebrating a successful harvest.
- **Talk** with families about how participants can help with meal preparation such as choosing which apples to buy at the store or rinsing apples under cool running water.



**Bonus:** Send home with families for them to incorporate apples into their meals!

## Conversation:

- Have your program participants eaten apples before?
- What is their favorite way to eat apples?
- What is their favorite color apple to eat?

Share your Harvest of the Month stories and menu integration of apples with Nutrition Education Specialist, Morgan Chapman, MPH, MCHc at [morgan.chapman@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:morgan.chapman@dec.al.ga.gov).



## Make Time for Activities, Games and Movement

Physical activity, exploration, and play are critical for all ages, especially our youngest learners. Through this, children develop coordination and strong, healthy bodies and exercise their minds through sensory play including touching, reaching, grasping, and exploring.

Movement is one of the main ways that children learn, develop, and grow. Each new phase of physical activity development brings new opportunities for learning and development. An infant might explore by tummy time, touching

books, grasping blankets, banging toys, or crawling. A toddler might explore by walking or climbing. Young children are naturally curious and excited to learn about their surrounding environment.

According to the CDC, physical fun such as free unstructured games during playtime helps children develop motor and coordination skills, prevent childhood obesity, and build social and emotional intelligence. A child builds their confidence in a safe enjoyable environment.

Enjoy these fun ideas to get our younger children moving:

- Provide child-friendly sports equipment, like balls, poms or throwable beanbags.
- Make time for outdoor play at a park or playground, in the backyard, on a beach or at a football field. Moving around on various surfaces develops strength, balance, and coordination.
- Make an obstacle course or treasure hunt.
- Provide chalk to draw outside with a child.
- Go for a nature walk. This gets a child moving, and they can also collect leaves, sticks, or pebbles for crafts or pretend play when you get home.
- Younger children can practice coordinating the small movements of their fingers through playdough, blocks, and drawing activities.

Providing children plenty of opportunities to play is one of the best ways to help them grow into curious, creative, healthy, and happy adults equipped with the skills they need today.

## Integration:

- [Georgia's Early Care and Learning Standards \(GELDS\) - Songs, movement, and play](#)
- [Playgrounds in Georgia](#)
- [Active Play: Healthy Habits Start Early](#)
- [CDC – Making Physical Activity a Part of a Child's Life](#)

## Education:

- **Read** out loud, [“Are You Ready to Play Outside?” by Mo Willems](#).

- **Watch the video on Movement and Play:** [Play-based Learning with Dr. Peter Gray.](#)
- **Talk** with families about ways parents, educators, and communities can promote physical activity, movement and play all year round, whether at home, outside, in their local community, at your childcare site, or at their local community recreational areas. **Bonus:** Share #ActivePlay, #OutdoorGames, #MovementandPlay, #MoveYourWay, and #LovePlay pictures and events that are happening in your communities.

### Conversation:

- How do you encourage parents, educators, and staff to engage in physical activity?
- What are fun physical activities for family?
- How do you play with children of different ages?
- Why is family engagement, movement, and play important in physical activity?

Share your #ActivePlay, #OutdoorGames, #MovementandPlay, #MoveYourWay and #LovePlay stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren at [tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov](mailto:tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov).

## Eat Healthy and Live Active

### Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 23-24 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 [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.



## Dates to Remember

| DATE         | EVENTS                             |
|--------------|------------------------------------|
| September    | Harvest of the Month: Apples       |
| September 4  | Labor Day                          |
| September 11 | Deadline for Happy Helpings Survey |
| October 31   | Year-End Reconciliation Deadline   |

## Happy Helpings Resources:

*The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:*

- **Stay Informed on Monitoring**
- **Determining Duty Allocation in the Management Plan**
- **Pre-Award Cost Request vs. Excess Funds Use Request**
- **Apply for a No Kid Hungry Grant Today**
- **Be a Health Hero - Health Empowers You**
- **Guidance on Collecting Race and Ethnicity Data**
- **Updated HH Forms and Policies**
- **Reminder: PolicyStat is available on the Nutrition Services' Webpage**
- **Check your Email Messages in GA ATLAS**

## 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

*Thriving Child Care Business Academy*

A stable early care and education industry consisting of thriving child care businesses is important to families, other businesses and the state's economic growth. This industry continually prepares our young learners for academic and future success.

A new program called the Thriving Child Care Business Academy is designed to help owners and

administrators of early learning programs learn best business management practices, much like the training they receive in best early childhood education practices on other platforms. This is another way that we hope to help the child care industry in Georgia navigate through some difficult times.

Joining us to talk about the Thriving Child Care Business Academy is Quality Innovations and Partnerships Communications and Outreach Manager, Sonja Steptoe and Relationship-Based Professional Learning manager, Laura Reid.

Listen to the episode [here](#).



### Nutrition Division Marketing & Outreach Team

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