

August 25, 2017

Dear Child Care Provider,

I am writing to make you aware of some critical concerns regarding records checks and determination letters that could seriously impact your program or personnel.

Alert: Determination Letter Fraud

Recently we have identified fraudulent determination letters in the files of several child care programs. Fraudulent activity includes, but is not limited to:

- Creating a false document;
- Possessing a false document;
- Presenting a false document to the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL); and
- Forging a document.

DECAL is aggressively investigating the incidents of these recently discovered fraudulent determination letters.

Fraudulent activity is punishable by law, and DECAL will take swift and decisive action when such activity occurs. Substantiated fraudulent activity may result in adverse action, such as but not limited to, revocation, emergency closure, and/or enforcement fines. If fraudulent activity is substantiated, DECAL will hold accountable the people responsible for operating and managing the program.

Due to the seriousness of these incidents, DECAL wants to help ensure that your program's staff records are authentic, valid, and up-to-date. You can use DECAL KOALA to track and manage your program's staff records, including specific information on an individual's records check.

We strongly encourage you to use DECAL KOALA to audit all your staff records. **You should submit a portability request through DECAL KOALA for any staff member not currently listed in your account.**

If you cannot access a staff member's determination letter through DECAL KOALA or if you cannot access a new staff member's previous determination letter when adding her/him to your account, the determination letter MAY be fraudulent.

Alert: Board of Education Determination Letters No Longer Accepted

Federal law requires determination letters for all individuals working in Georgia child care programs to be issued by DECAL. Therefore, we can no longer accept determination letters issued by individual boards of education. Individuals working in child care programs with a determination letter from a board of education must:

1. Complete the LiveScan fingerprinting process, AND
2. Submit a complete Records Check Application form to DECAL (recommend submitting via DECAL KOALA).

Required forms and specific instructions on this process can be accessed at

<http://www.decals.ga.gov/CCS/CriminalRecordsCheck.aspx>.

If you suspect that a determination letter is fraudulent or if you have specific questions about the records check process, contact the DECAL Records Unit Help Desk at CRCHelpDesk@dec.al.ga.gov or 1-855-884-7444.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristie Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristie Lewis, Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Services