



BRIGHT FROM THE START

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SE, Suite 754, East Tower, Atlanta, Georgia 30334
(404) 656-5957

Brian P. Kemp
GOVERNOR

Amy M. Jacobs
COMMISSIONER

March 23, 2020

Dear Early Education Providers:

At 5:58 P.M. on Monday, March 23, 2020, Governor Brian Kemp issued an Executive Order in response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. The Executive Order, effective at noon on March 24, 2020, through April 6, 2020, banned gatherings of more than 10 people unless they can always maintain spacing of at least six feet between people. Note that the Executive Order does not distinguish between staff, children, and volunteers; any individual present is counted as part of the 10. The Executive Order can be found here: <https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders>.

DECAL strives to provide as much guidance as possible to Georgia's early education community. DECAL recognizes that the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency constitutes many challenges to all Georgia's early education programs. DECAL recognizes that much of Georgia's Early Education system is made up of private businesses and non-profit entities who must make decisions based on the Governor's Executive Order as well as local ordinances, local health department guidance, and the Georgia Department of Public Health. DECAL recognizes that these are not easy decisions and is committed to do everything possible to support the vital service that the state's early education community provides.

In light of the Governor's Executive Order, DECAL is providing the following guidance:

Child Care Learning Centers: Georgia's licensed Child Care Learning Centers (CCLC) may remain open if classrooms are limited to 10 or less individuals (including staff), and classrooms are self-contained. Current ratios for infants (1:6) and toddlers (1:8) must be maintained. DECAL is asking child care providers to update their open/close status on KOALA.

Family Child Care Learning Homes: Georgia's licensed Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLH) may also continue to operate. FCCLHs are permitted to serve up to 6 children for pay. To comply with the Governor's Executive Order, FCCLHs must ensure that their program does not have, at any time, groups of more than 10. This includes staff, family members, and children enrolled in the program.

Georgia's Pre-K Programs: Many of Georgia's Pre-K programs have already elected to close. However, due to the decreased class size and the need to support social distancing, all Georgia's Pre-K programs are effectively closed until April 6, 2020. DECAL will continue to make Georgia's Pre-K

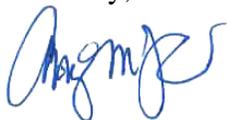
payments as scheduled. If a child care program has enrolled Georgia's Pre-K children who need care, then Pre-K funds could be utilized to pay for their care during the 6 ½ hour instructional day. Georgia's Pre-K lead and assistant teachers should continue to receive salary and should not be required to report to work. (However, programs are not required to pay salary for Spring Break if this is conflicting with their salary policy.)

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Institutions and Sites Operating During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency: DECAL is pleased that so many organizations have received permission to serve families impacted by COVID-19 closures through the SFSP and that so many institutions and facilities continue to serve families through the CACFP. These feeding programs can continue to operate if they follow the guidelines noted in the Governor's Executive Order.

DECAL is providing this guidance as soon as possible to help providers make decisions in a timely manner. As DECAL receives more information, additional guidance will be provided. Providers should also reference DECAL's COVID-19 F.A.Q.s found at: <http://www.dec.state.ga.us/BFTS/Covid19.aspx>. These are updated daily.

Thank you for your continued support of Georgia's youngest learners and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Amy M. Jacobs', written in a cursive style.

Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner