Frequently Asked Questions
Related to Covid-19/Coronavirus
*(Revised **4-3-20**; most recent Q&A's or updated answers in **red**)*

This document is a compilation of questions that DECAL has received from child care providers, families, policy makers, and the public relating to the impact of COVID-19.

*The **most recent questions** and answers are in red font at the beginning of this document. For additional information, **scroll through** the questions and answers on **the following pages** organized by DECAL programs.*

We recommend that you visit this webpage often because this document will be updated regularly as additional questions are submitted.

New Questions regarding CAPS:

I'm having issues billing. Who can I contact to get help on this issue?

Report your billing issue–related to COVID-19 or otherwise–to the Maximus support desk at 1-877-755-6522. If Maximus cannot resolve your billing issue, submit the billing issue to us on our website at https://caps.decal.ga.gov/en/ContactSupport/.

If a family's scholarship is currently up for renewal, how might this affect my ability to bill on that family?

Renewals will not be impacted at this time because CAPS staff members are working remotely to process renewals.

Changes/Clarifications to CAPS Questions:

What does it mean when CAPS states that it will pay providers the maximum rate for each child? Does this mean that CAPS will pay providers' listed tuition?

This change means that CAPS will pay providers the CAPS program's published maximum reimbursement rates while emergency CAPS policies are in effect, which may be less than your listed tuition. However, we will continue to pay the provider's published tuition for children with disabilities and children in DFCS custody. Information on CAPS reimbursement rates is available in the appendices of the CAPS policy manual.

I am concerned COVID-19 will continue to affect my center even after April 10, 2020. What will happen then?

We recognize that COVID-19 may impact our families and communities beyond the April 10, 2020 expiration of these temporary policies. We will continue to send updates and additional information if we choose to extend these policies or if we add other emergency measures. If a provider chooses to remain closed due to COVID-19 related circumstances after these emergency policies formally expire, those providers will not continue to receive CAPS payments.

Governor Brian Kemp's Executive Orders Related to COVID-19

On March 26, 2020, Governor Brian Kemp issued an Executive Order closing public elementary and secondary schools for in-person instruction through April 24, 2020. The Executive Order can be found at: https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders.

At noon on March 24, 2020, an Executive Order issued by Governor Brian Kemp went into effect. The order, in effect through April 6, 2020, bans gatherings of more than 10 people unless they can always

maintain spacing of at least six feet between people. The 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 at: https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders.

Some answers to these Frequently Asked Questions have been revised in light of the Governor's Executive Orders.

FOR PROVIDERS: Regarding Georgia's Pre-K Program

How does the Governor's Executive Order impact Georgia's Pre-K Programs?
In keeping with Governor Kemp's recent order to close Georgia's public elementary and secondary schools for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year**,** DECAL is **closing all Georgia's Pre-K classrooms** for the remainder of the school year.

DECAL will continue to make Georgia's Pre-K payments as scheduled. If a program is currently serving Georgia's Pre-K children and a parent requires continued child care, Pre-K funds can be used to pay for their care during the 6 ½ hour instructional day. Tuition for the 6 ½ hour instructional day may not be charged for a Pre-K child who is currently on your Pre-K roster during COVID closures.

Georgia's Pre-K lead and assistant teachers must continue to receive salary and may not be required to report to work. (However, programs are not required to pay salary for Spring Break if this conflicts with their established salary policy.)

How long is the Pre-K closure in effect?
Georgia's Pre-K programs are closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

Will programs with a scheduled Spring Break be required to pay the lead and assistant teacher for the week of Spring Break?
Programs that have a scheduled Spring Break should follow their own salary policy regarding whether teachers are paid for Spring Break.

Will Pre-K payments be paid on schedule?
Yes, DECAL will execute payments on schedule even if the state office staff are teleworking or if the state office is closed. The April payment is scheduled on or before April 13, 2020. Payments will be based on the April roster count.

Will make-up days be required due to COVID-19 closures?
At this time, teachers and students will not be required to make up days missed due to the COVID-19 closures.

Should Pre-K lead and assistant teachers be paid while Pre-K classes are closed?
Yes. Pre-K lead and assistant teachers must be paid while Pre-K classes are closed. Pre-K payments will not be adjusted for closure days due to COVID-19. Therefore, lead and assistant teachers must be paid according to the established salary agreements between the employer and employee. Changes may not be made in the salary agreement due to closures associated with COVID-19. For example, if your agreement with a lead teacher is that you will pay your lead teacher 100% of the posted salary, you may

not reduce the amount the teacher now receives to 90%. Programs must arrange to process and distribute pay to Pre-K teachers.

Do I need to submit my roster even though all Pre-K classes are closed?
Yes, your roster should be submitted even though Pre-K classes are closed. Roster 4 is due by 5 p.m. on April 3. Providers are encouraged to submit their roster as soon as possible and not wait until the due date. If your roster is ready for submission, you should go ahead and submit it now.

Will my Pre-K payment be prorated if my program closes due to COVID-19?
Pre-K payments will not be prorated due to COVID-19 classroom closures. Payments will be based on roster 4 which is due by April 3rd.

Should lunch fees be charged if a Pre-K program is closed? What if a child is absent?
Meal fees for children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K should not be charged when the Pre-K program is closed. If an individual child is absent, existing meal fee policies should be followed.

Will Pre-K payments be paid on schedule? Yes, DECAL will execute payments on schedule even if the state office staff are teleworking or if the state office is closed. The April payment is scheduled on or before April 12, 2020. Payments will be based on the April roster count.

Should Pre-K students be counted as absent on days when the Pre-K program is closed? If the program/classroom is closed, the closure should be noted on the attendance roster.

Does DECAL recommend "digital learning" days for Pre-K students? The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than one hour of total screen time for children age 4. Screen time includes ALL screens including TV, laptops, and hand-held devices. DECAL does not support online learning days for Pre-K children and encourages families and Pre-K providers to limit screen time to no more than one hour a day in high quality digital content.

FOR PROVIDERS: Regarding Child Care Licensing (CCS)

With class sizes limited to no more than 10 including teachers, if I have too many children enrolled in a classroom, how do I decide who can attend?
Although no one wants to turn away families who are enrolled or wish to enroll, child care must adhere to Governor Kemp's Executive Order of March 23, which states that no more than 10 people can gather in one location unless six feet of social distancing can be maintained. For child care, this means that classrooms can have no more than 10 people, including teachers. If demand exceeds space at a licensed or exempt program, providers must make the business decision about who they will serve by prioritizing enrollment slots. DECAL recommends giving priority to families who are essential workers, so they can provide vital services to the community in this critical time.

My CPR and first aid certification will expire soon. Can I still find training?
CPR and first aid training are available online. Find information about CPR and first aid classes AND guidance on COVID-19 on the American Red Cross website at:
https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/search?cgid=first-aid&zip=atlanta%2C+ga&latitude=33.7489954&longitude=-84.3879824&zipcode=&searchtype=class

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https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/search?cgid=first-aid&zip=atlanta%2C+ga&latitude=33.7489954&longitude=-84.3879824&zipcode=&searchtype=class

Can you combine classes during afterschool hours if class size, including teachers, is no more than 10?
At the current time, all public schools in Georgia are closed. Children under three (3) years of age must be housed in a separate physical area from older children except during early morning times of arrival, and late afternoon times of departure, which generally means the first and last hour of the operating day. During these times when children are mixed, the ratios for the youngest child in the group must be followed, and no more than 10 people can be in the classroom regardless of age.

Does outdoor equipment have to be disinfected between groups that use the playground?
The CDC recommends that all surfaces that are frequently touched be cleaned and sanitized regularly. DECAL recommends that play equipment be disinfected between groups.

Do adjacent playgrounds separated by fencing count as separate locations?
If the barrier between playgrounds is a barrier four feet high or higher, the playgrounds should be counted as separate spaces. However, the limit of 10 per group would still be in place, and staff should consider staggering playground times so only one group is outside at a time. If unable to stagger playground times, then staff should ensure staff and children do not gather and socialize near the fence on adjoining playgrounds.

Do we have any information about how the Governor's Executive Order might affect summer camp?
Day camps may continue to operate according to the exemption approval the program has obtained. If a program needs to modify the hours or days served, the program director may download the exemption amendment form found at
http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/ApplicationExemptionAmendment.pdf

If our center is exempt from licensing (church based; only four hours per day for children over age two), what mandate regarding pay for staff do we follow?
DECAL does not provide guidance on staff pay for programs other than Georgia's Pre-K Program. Georgia's Pre-K Program is the only program fully funded by DECAL.

Does the limit of 10 people, including children and staff, apply to playgrounds?

Yes. There can be no more than 10 individuals in a group whether it's indoors or outdoors. Although there is often enough space for six feet of social distancing on playgrounds, we know that is not the way children play or interact.

If my classroom capacity is more than 10, do I still need to limit the class size to 10 including children and staff?
Yes. To comply with the Governor's Executive Order on March 23, 2020, there can be no more than 10 people in one location. For child care learning centers, a location is a classroom with four full walls and a door. For family child care learning homes, a location is the home.

I have a staff of five (5). We all have the same expiration date for CPR/first aid, which is April 27. Will there be an extension on expiration dates?
No extensions will be provided. At least one program administrator and one staff member at the program must have current CPR/First Aid certifications.

Does a child care program have to participate in Quality Rated for their COVID-19 open/closed status and children's vacancy information to show at www.qualityrated.org?
No, ALL licensed and exempt child care program's information can be seen by the public if entered in DECAL KOALA.

Can exempt faith-based morning preschools get a waiver to be open more than 20 hours per week in the short term to make up some of the hours missed due to closures?
If a program has an exemption for ages 2-6, four hours each day, and 20 hours each week, the program is limited to providing services only for these time periods. Beyond these limits, the program is required to be licensed. If you find the need to adjust your hours of operation, contact our office so we can discuss the licensure process with you.

Will there be an extension for staff's 10-hour health and safety orientation training?
Rule .33(3) allows for completion within the first 90 days of employment. At this time, there will not be an extension. NOTE: This training is available online.

I'm a Family Child Care provider. If I accept kids of first responders, can I care for them outside of my normal hours (2nd &/or 3rd shift)?
An amendment would need to be completed to update hours of care. If those hours consist of night time care, you would need to comply with night time care rules. Also, the limit of no more than 10 individuals, including children, staff, and residents of the home, would still apply. NOTE: FCCLHs may have no more than six children for pay present at any given time, and ratios must be maintained according to the rules and regulations.

How long do we close our day cares for?
The decision to close a child care learning center or family child care learning home or remain open is up to you as a business owner. DECAL advises owners and directors to consult their local health departments and to follow all local and state ordinances in making decisions.

How do we deal with parents that do not want to pay since they are keeping their kids at home, but we are still open?

As most child care programs are private businesses, policies related to tuition and family fees are left up to the individual programs. For programs receiving CAPS, Georgia's Pre-K, and other DECAL funding, we are continuing to make payments even if children are unable to attend. We hope that continuing these funds helps programs meet current challenges and minimizes burdens on families.

I just found out that a child care center in the community tested positive for coronavirus. How many child care centers have reported coronavirus?
Specific data that links COVID-19 and specific child care centers is unavailable. Programs are encouraged to contact their local health departments and to utilize data from the Georgia Department of Public Health website to learn about cases of coronavirus in local communities/counties.

My husband was exposed to the virus through the school system last week. I closed my home day care for the remainder of this week, but I plan to re-open next week (which would be six days closed…not the recommended 14-day quarantine). Is this adequate time to re-open?
As DECAL staff are not medical experts, we strongly recommend that programs with specific questions contact their local Department of Public Health.

What should we do about staff with underlying health conditions but aren't currently showing signs of the virus or aren't sick?
Programs are advised to contact their local Department of Public Health and review all CDC guidelines related to questions about specific COVID-19 risk factors.

What recommendations does DECAL have if an exposure happens within a facility? Should we only follow the Department of Health, or does DECAL recommend a closure time frame? What should we do if a parent/teacher/child tests positive for Covid-19 once we reopen?
DECAL advises programs to contact their local Department of Public Health about possible COVID-19 exposures.

We attempted to keep our program open, but our count was very low last week. So, we had to close. I sent in my closure status to DECAL Koala but am not sure how long we will be closed. What do we do now?
Thank you for entering your information in DECAL Koala. This is helpful in tracking and measuring access to available child care. When you reopen, be sure to update your status in DECAL Koala.

I have already seen on social media where people are setting up "group babysitting groups" in someone's home. I think we will begin to see many unregulated child care situations. Does DECAL have a plan to monitor or educate the public on this?
DECAL continues to monitor and work with all licensed child care. DECAL also provides information to programs who are seeking information about regulations and possibly seeking a licensing exemption. Any reports of unlicensed child care that should be licensed will be investigated.

I was told that if I close my center, I would not get reimbursement for this month. Is this right or I won't get reimbursed for the weeks I'm closed?
DECAL is continuing to make CAPS and Georgia's Pre-K payments for participating programs, including those who are closed. In terms of tuition-based reimbursement, how and what you collect is based on your policies and is at your discretion.

When is the Executive Order signed by Governor Kemp on March 23, 2020 in effect?
The Executive Order is in effect from noon on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 through noon on April 6, 2020.

The order bans all gatherings of more than 10 people unless the group can always maintain spacing of at least six feet between people. What does this mean for child care programs?
Because child care programs cannot always maintain six feet between people, group sizes must be no more than 10 people, including staff, to follow the order. NOTE: Staff: child ratios must be followed per the rules and regulations.

Does the Governor's Executive Order apply to family child care learning homes (FCCLH)?
Yes, the order applies to FCCLHs, so to comply with the order, each FCCLH must ensure that there are no more than 10 individuals present at a FCCLH at one time. This includes staff, residents of the home, family members, and enrolled children, regardless of pay status. NOTE: FCCLHs may have no more than six children for pay present at any given time, and ratios must be maintained according to the rules and regulations.

What does self-contained classroom mean?
To be considered self-contained, a classroom must be separated from other classrooms in the building by fixed walls, which can include windows/glass and doors. Large rooms split into multiple spaces using shelving units and other such dividers or partitions are not self-contained classrooms.

The Executive Order states that no one shall allow more than 10 persons to be gathered at a single location, if such gathering requires persons to stand or be seated within six feet of any other person. How do child care programs meet this requirement?
To meet this requirement, child care programs must ensure that groups of 10 or less children and staff are in self-contained classrooms.

Current guidelines around social distancing, primarily that individuals remain six (6) or more feet apart and that groups remain at less than 10, are hard to follow in child care settings. What are your recommendations?
We recommend that, where possible, class sizes remain at 10. We understand that six feet apart is not possible when caring for children. Therefore, it is critically important that you diligently maintain cleaning standards and implement strategies such as reducing the number of adults who can enter your program and conducting temperature checks on visitors and children.

How often do I inform DECAL of my business closure status? If I have a question about how to report my status, who do I call?
If your open/closure status changes, we ask that you inform us immediately. It is important that DECAL keep up to date open/closure information. If you have a question about how your open/closure status should be noted, contact your specific child care consultant.

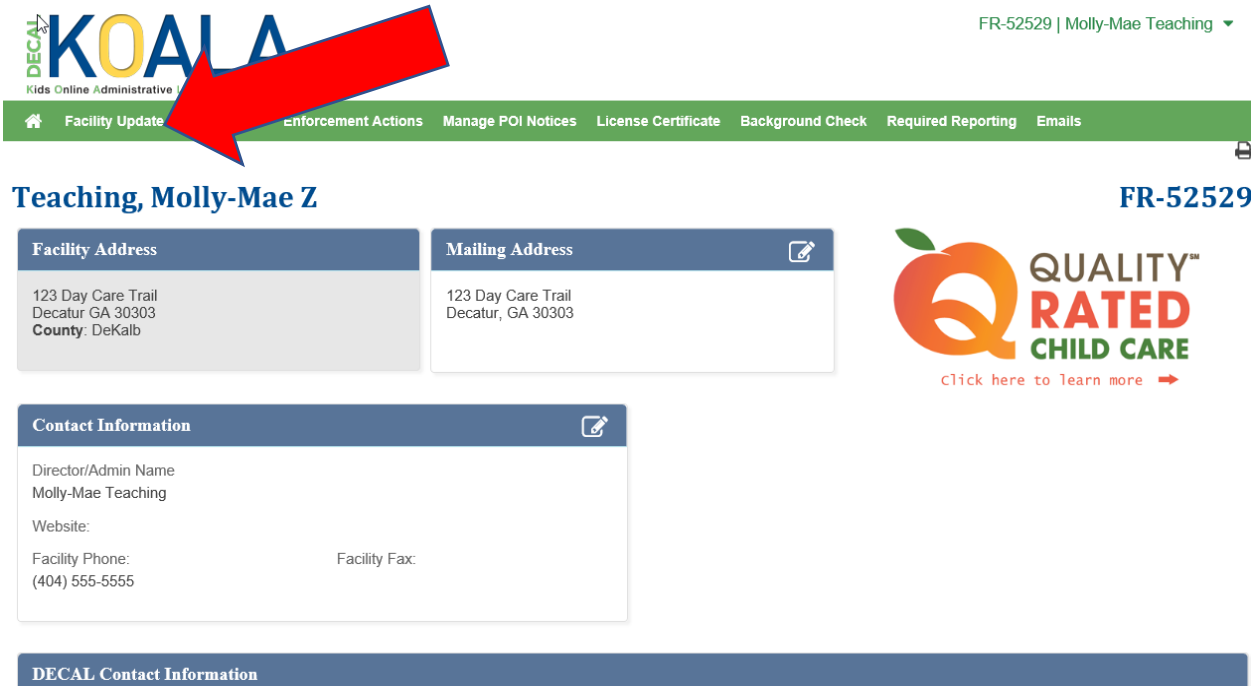
How do I report the operating status of my licensed or exempt child care programs?
You can use your DECAL KOALA account to report if your program is continuing to operate or if you have chosen to close your program. If you have already reported your status to your CCS consultant via email or telephone, they will enter the information in KOALA for you. If you have not yet reported this information to DECAL, follow these steps:

- Log in to your DECAL KOALA account at www.decalkoala.com

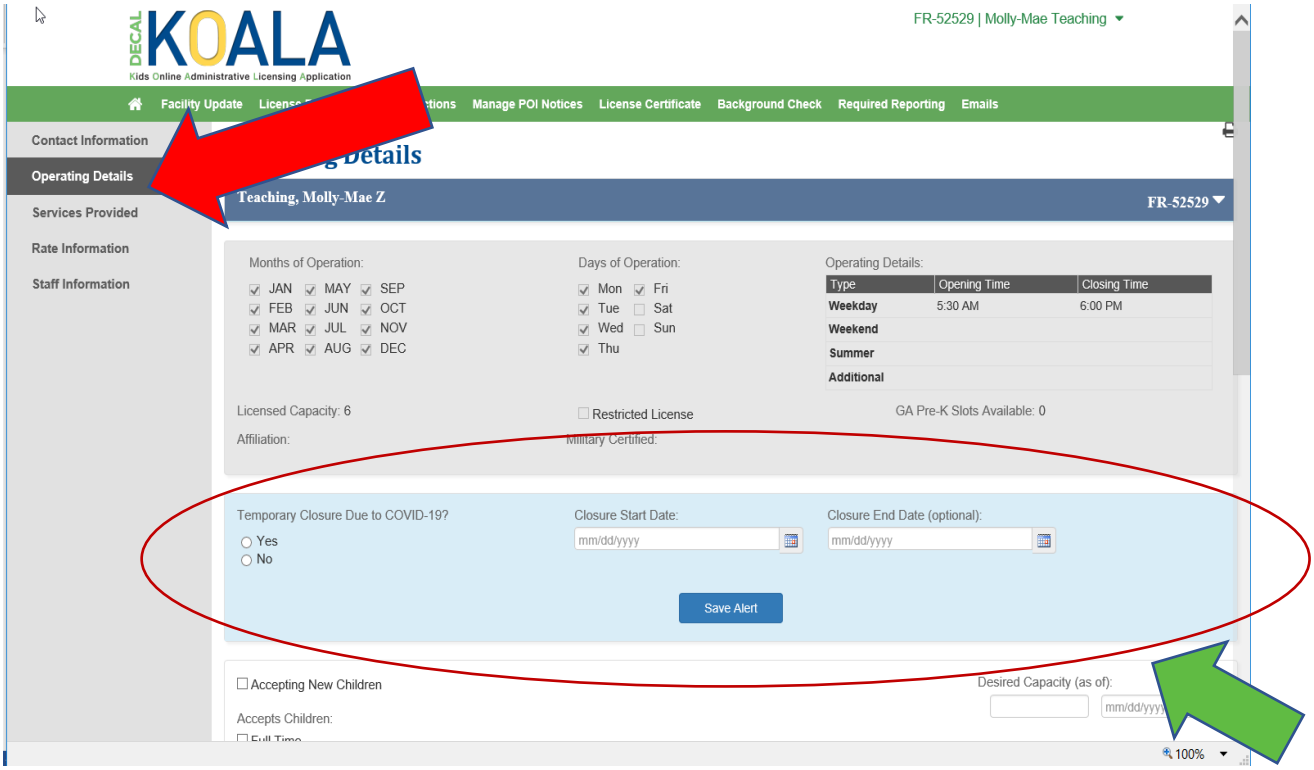
- From the Green Menu Bar, click Facility Update
- Click Operating Details
- Enter your program's COVID-19 info in the Blue area

Screenshot for logging into DECAL KOALA:

Once logged in Click Facility Update:



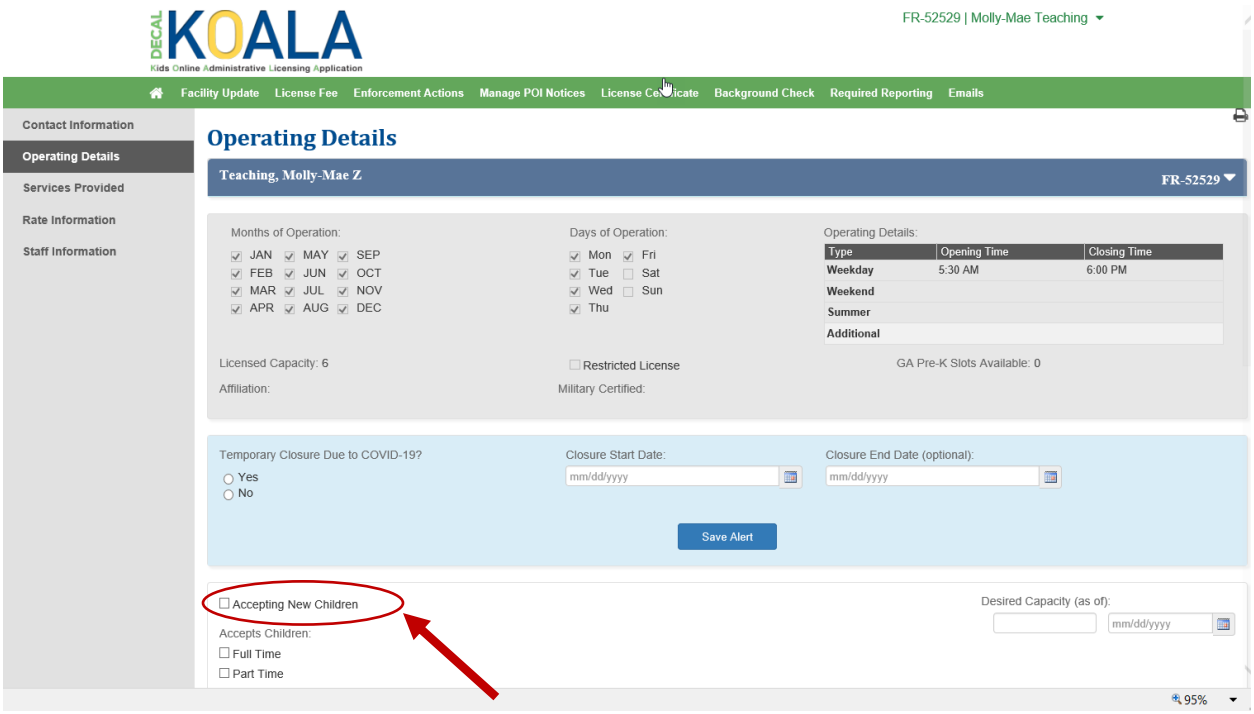
Next, click on Operating Details and enter if program is Operating or Closed:



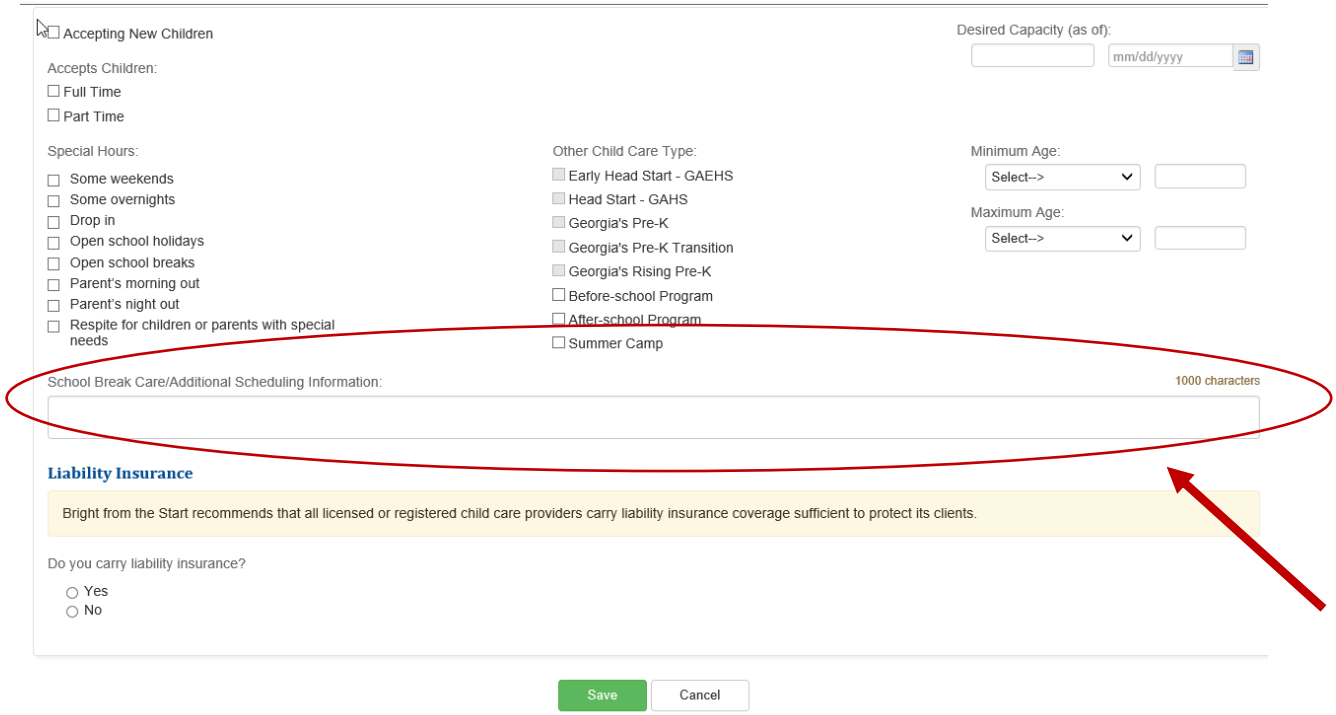
What programs have access to DECAL KOALA?
Currently, child care learning centers, family child care learning homes and license-exempt programs can create and maintain DECAL KOALA accounts. Local School Systems (LSS) and other programs with GA Pre-K, but are not licensed or license-exempt, can report closures to the call center (1-877-ALL-GA-KIDS) or to their Pre-K representative.

For programs that reported being open or closed but the dates initially reported have now changed, can I update the dates in DECAL KOALA?
Yes, please update the status of your program as it changes. Only the most current status is displayed, but the history of the changes is maintained by DECAL.

My program is open, but we are not accepting any new enrollees. Is it possible to update this information in DECAL KOALA?
Yes, you may update this information in DECAL KOALA/Facility Update/Operating Details – see screenshot below:

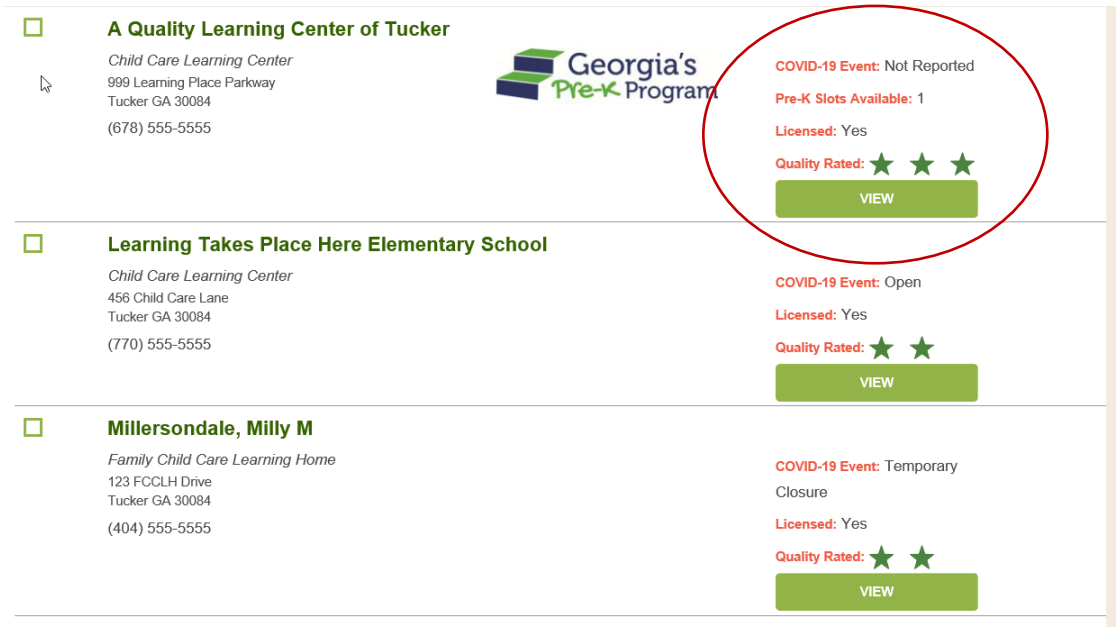


Programs can also enter information (text) in the School Break/Additional Scheduling Information – see screenshot below:

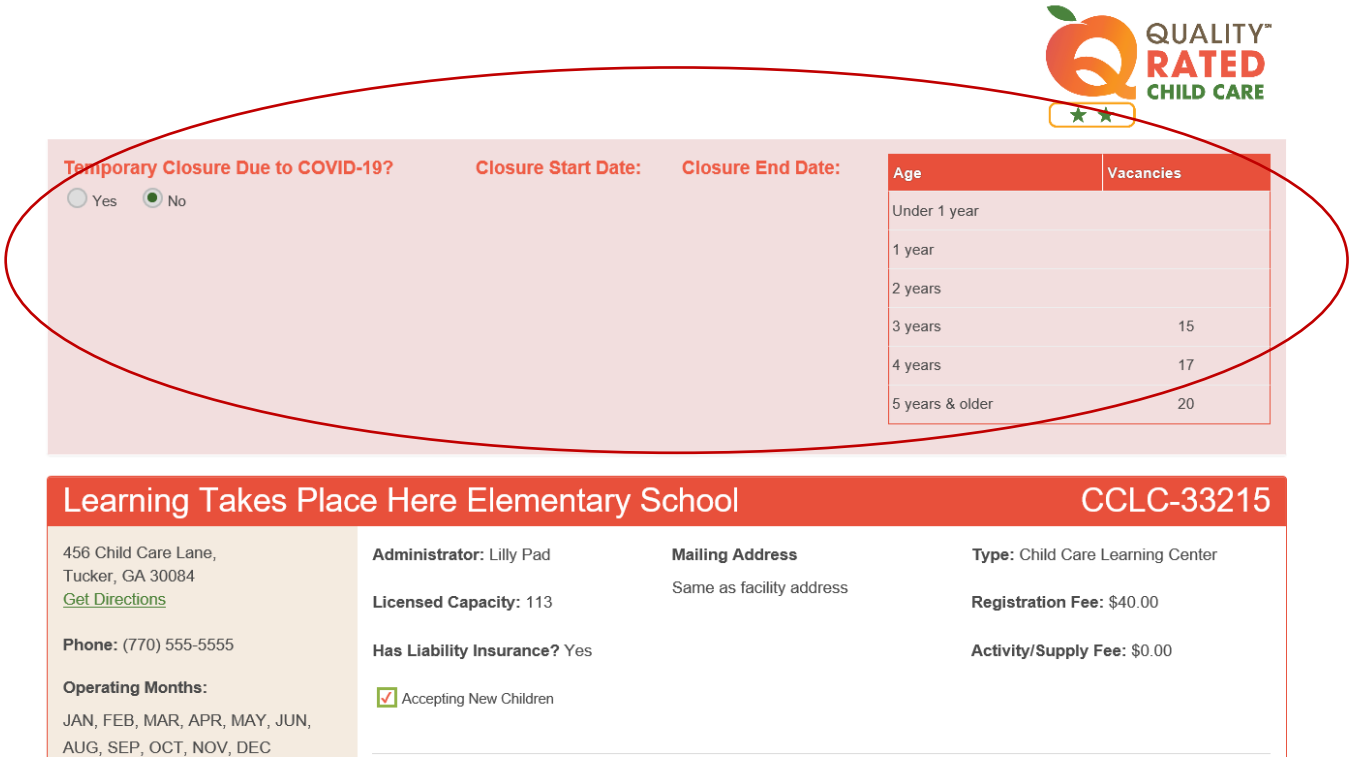


Once a program updates their information in DECAL KOALA, what does it look like when someone searches www.qualityrated.org or www.decal.ga.gov. What do they see?

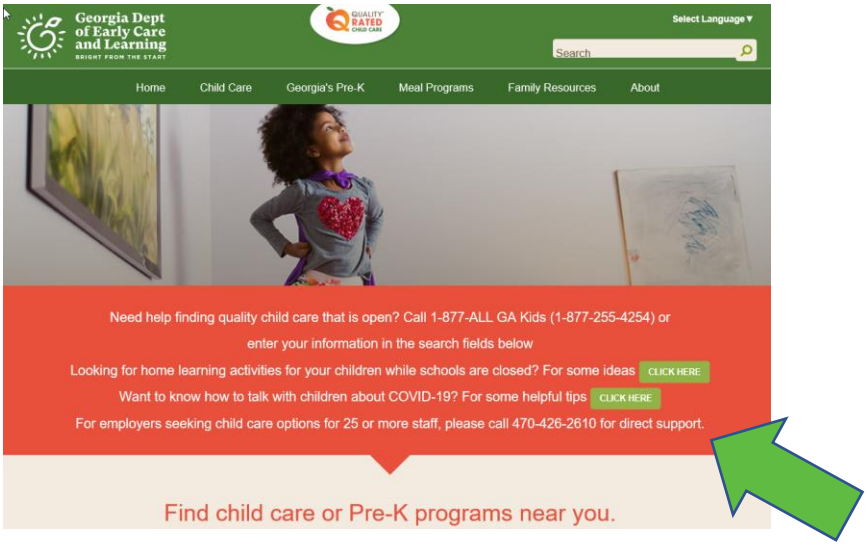
If a person enters a zip code in the search engine, the results will populate in a list that looks like this:



When the viewer selects a specific program from the list, they can click the green VIEW button to learn the operating details of the selected program; the details will vary based on what each program has reported/indicated through DECAL KOALA.



If an employer reaches out to my program seeking child care for more than 25 children or staff, and my program is unable to support them, where can I direct them?
An employer can call 470-426-2610 for direct support. This information is also listed at www.qualityrated.org.



Is there an alternative disinfectant that can be used in my facility, since there are shortages of disinfectant wipes, sprays, and cleaners?
Though commercial disinfecting wipes, sprays, and cleaners are convenient, a simple effective disinfectant can be made using bleach. This is the most recommended product for child care programs to use to disinfect surfaces.

- For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
  - Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against Coronavirus when properly diluted.
    - Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
      - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
      - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
  - Visit the following link for products approved by the EPA to fight emerging viral pathogens: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2 These solutions are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

Should I change any of my classroom practices because of the coronavirus?
You should continue your basic health and safety practices such as handwashing and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that could possibly pose a risk to children and teachers. Extra care and attention should be given to ensure you and your students use proper handwashing techniques. P*roper* basic *hand washing* involves using soap and warm water to wash hands for about 20 seconds. Children and teachers should also cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and immediately dispose of the tissue in a trashcan. For additional information, visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance for child care programs. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/checklist.html
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html

If my child care program is exposed to COVID-19, what steps should I take?

1. Immediately contact your local public health department.
2. Based on guidance from the health department, determine your next steps and notify parents, staff, and other individuals possibly impacted.
3. Contact Child Care Services Intake at 404-656-5957 within 24 hours to inform DECAL.

Did the Governor shut down schools and child care due to COVID-19?
Currently, the Governor is encouraging child care providers to make decisions about closing at the local level. If you feel it's in the best interest of the children, families, and staff at your program to close, notify your child care services (CCS) consultant.

What measures should child care providers take if parents are unable to pick up sick children?
Providers should continue with normal business operations and follow their established policy concerning children who are sick and need to be picked up.

What measures should child care providers take if a child is sick at the program?

Providers should follow normal procedures and policies.

Are additional rules and regulations going to be put into place soon to combat the spread of COVID-19?
Child care providers should continue to operate by the current child care licensing rules unless directed differently by the local health department. Pay strict attention to rules pertaining to hygiene, communicable diseases, cleaning, and sanitizing. If employees or children are sick, the CDC and the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) recommend they stay home.

The CDC is discouraging large events. Does the state have a position on larger child care learning centers as they may be more vulnerable to larger spread?
DECAL has not received direction from the Department of Public Health or the Governor's Office concerning large child care learning centers. We do not anticipate decisions being made based on program capacity.

Will DECAL be providing plans and/or guidance for child care learning centers and family child care learning homes regarding distance learning? Providers should consult Georgia's state licensing rules and *Caring for Our Children* regarding best practices for activities and schedules. Distance learning for young children is not considered best practice. The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommendations for children's media use. For children ages birth to 24 months, screen use is not recommended. For children ages 2 to 5, limit screen use to one hour per day of high quality programs. Screen time includes all screens including television, videos, and any hand-held devices.

Should providers continue to promote family style dining during meals?
DECAL will continue to monitor guidance from the DPH and the CDC for additional information related to the Coronavirus. At this time, there is no additional guidance, and providers should adhere to licensing rules regarding family style dining and other dietary considerations. Providers should use best judgment regarding changes in meal service.

If public schools in an area close, will the state allow child care programs to serve those children without being screened for the virus?
If the students have not been directed to self-isolate by the local public health department, they can be served in child care programs. The child care provider should ask that question at the time of enrollment. Remember that license capacity and staff: child ratios should be maintained in accordance with state rules and regulations in all classrooms.

If my local school system has closed, but my program remains open, is it safe to accept school age children for care?
It is the child care provider's decision who to accept care. Providers can ask the family if they have been contacted by, or are being monitored by, the local health department. This information can help providers make informed decisions about accepting children into their program.

If there are two degrees of separation between someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and someone at a child care facility, does that person need to self-isolate? For example: If a teacher at a facility had lunch with a friend who was exposed to COVID-19 but is not experiencing any symptoms, does the teacher need to self- isolate?

At this time, the public health departments are requiring self-isolation only for those with direct contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19. Exposure to COVID-19 is contact within six feet for a duration of ten minutes or more. If you have questions about exposure, contact your local health department.

Will a child care provider be notified if an employee or a child at their facility has COVID-19?
DPH conducts a thorough investigation when COVID-19 cases are confirmed or presumed. Anyone who may have been exposed to the patient is contacted and given direction for self-isolation and testing.

Can a child care program increase their capacity to serve additional children during the outbreak?
At this time, license capacity cannot be increased. We understand that you may be asked to care for additional children during this time; however, licensing regulations regarding license capacity are designed to best protect children.

Who should I contact with any questions not addressed in this FAQ?
General questions can be directed to DECAL's main office at 404-656-5957. The receptionist will direct callers to the most pertinent division. You may also directly contact DECAL divisions at:

Child Care Licensing: childcareservices@decal.ga.gov
Exempt Programs: CCSExemptions@decal.ga.gov
Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS): 1-833-4GA-CAPS or the *Contact Us* link on our website https://caps.decal.ga.gov
Quality Rated: 1-855-800-7747, qualityrated@decal.ga.gov
Nutrition: Kate.Alexander@decal.ga.gov or 404-651-8193
Pre-K: prek@decal.ga.gov or call 404-651-7420

FOR PROVIDERS: Regarding Child Care License Exemptions

May an Exempt Summer Program open to provide services for school age children during this period of emergency?
Yes, day camp programs may choose to operate during other school breaks if the program has an approved exemption to operate a day camp for school age children.

Should exempt programs log-in and report whether they are open or closed?
Yes, please do. Families may search for programs in their areas, and your program may be an option for them; or if you are closed, it is helpful for families to know that also. Be sure to also update your months and hours of operation in your DECAL KOALA account.

What are the regulations for license-exempt programs?
The regulations and application process for exempt programs can be found at http://www.decal.ga.gov/CCS/Exemptions.aspx

Will emergency flexibility be granted to exempt programs to stay open beyond four hours per day to accommodate parents who need child care during this critical time?
No, the program may need to apply for a different type of exemption or an emergency temporary license for this purpose.

FOR PROVIDERS: Regarding CAPS

I understand that I am supposed to bill on the child's scholarship with the highest rate if my center is still open, but a child is absent. However, for what amount of time should I bill? A single day, a few days, or a full week?
Providers can claim the full-week's rate for an absent child if that child has a scholarship for full-time care. The child must have been in care at least once since March 1, 2020 to be eligible for payment.

I know I must continue to maintain accurate attendance records per CAPS policy. However, will I get payment for a child if I mark that child as absent?
You will still be able to bill for children using the billing portal. However, we are making a change to the billing portal, so you can mark a child absent due to COVID-19 related circumstances. This change allows you to maintain accurate attendance records and ensures CAPS will continue payment for that child. However, the child must have attended at least one day since March 1, 2020 to be eligible for payment.

If I choose to close, how can I bill so that CAPS will continue to pay me?
Just as open providers will be able to indicate which children are absent due to COVID-19 related circumstances, closed providers will be able to indicate they have closed due to COVID-19. Closed providers will mark the COVID-19 indicator on one scholarship per child who was present at least one day since March 1, 2020.

If a CAPS child is absent, or if I am closed, can I still charge the family a copayment?
While you can still charge families a copayment, we encourage you to waive those fees under those circumstances. NOTE: If your facility is closed and one of your families still needs child care, they may have to pay a family copayment at the other facility as well.

Is CAPS currently accepting new applicants?
Yes, CAPS is currently accepting new applicants. However, applicants must continue to meet our established eligibility requirements. Information on our eligibility requirements is available at caps.decal.ga.gov. Families may apply online at www.gateway.ga.gov.

What is the Emergency Eligibility Policy?
While emergency CAPS policies remain in effect, families who permanently lose their employment or stop attending an education/training program due to matters related to COVID-19 can continue child care services at the current level through the end of their current certification period. The family does not need to report this permanent loss in activity; however if they do report, they may see a reduction in their family fee.

While emergency CAPS policies remain in effect, if the family is not meeting state-approved activity requirements at their annual redetermination as a result of circumstances related to COVID-19, the lack of an activity will not impact eligibility.

How can I bill for a child who was only attending my program part-time but now requires full-time care?
We have updated the billing portal, so you will have the option to bill for full-time care on a child with a variable scholarship whenever you bill for these affected weeks. For school-aged children who only have

a before and after school scholarship, but you are caring for full-time, you will be reimbursed the difference between the before and after rate and the full-time rate via a payment adjustment. Maximus will contact providers with affected scholarships to complete the appropriate form to receive the payment adjustment.

If my local school system has closed, but my program remains open, is it safe to accept school age children for care?
It is the child care provider's decision who to accept for care. Providers can ask families if they have been contacted by or are being monitored by the local health department. This information can help providers make informed decisions about whether to accept children into their program.

How will I be paid during this time?
The billing portal will remain open and providers can continue to submit invoices for payment processing. Payments can be processed by the CAPS program remotely. We anticipate no disruptions in payments to child care providers.

If a family is unable to pay their CAPS weekly assessed fee because they are temporarily not working, will CAPS pay the family fee?
Once the family reports this change in their circumstances to the CAPS program via Georgia Gateway, their family fee can be reduced accordingly by CAPS, and your payment will be adjusted based on the new amount.

Can I get paid for children with CAPS scholarships if I am closed, or if I am open, but some children are not attending?
Whether open or closed, a provider may continue to bill for any child with an active scholarship who was present at least once since March 1, 2020. When billing for absent children, or billing for a service week when the center is closed, providers should bill only on one scholarship per child using the scholarship with the highest rate. This emergency policy will remain in effect through service week ending March 29, 2020. Even though providers will be paid for all children in care since March 1, 2020, providers must still keep accurate records required by CAPS policy including sign in and sign out records.

FOR PROVIDERS: Regarding Quality Rated

Is the COVID-19 public health emergency impacting the Quality Rated annual verification process?
The Annual Verification Process consists of "check-in" for rated programs who are not required to be rerated. For most programs, their annual check-in will not be impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

DECAL has adopted an annual check-in process for programs who are not required to be rerated. The check-in process allows programs to select one of the following three options: 1) simply check-in and let DECAL know that they are content with their current rating and wish to do nothing; 2) request a continuous quality improvement grant; or 3) request a new observation. Programs that do not manually check-in are considered to have selected option 1.

In November 2019, DECAL announced that to meet the 2020 Goal mandatory and voluntary re-ratings would be suspended. Eligible programs had until November 30 to "opt-out" of this suspension and request to be rerated.

Annual Verification will continue for all programs currently star rated. The impact of COVID-19 will depend on if a child care program opted out of the suspension of Request for Reassessment. Programs that did not opt out of the suspension continue to have the option to select Check-In or CQI during Annual Verification. If programs do not log in to their QR account by their anniversary date, the system will automatically check them in; no further action is required by the program; and the current rating remains in place for the next year.

Programs that opted out of the suspension are required to submit their request for reassessment portfolio by their anniversary date. If the portfolio is not submitted by this date, the system will automatically check them in; no further action is required by the program; and the current rating remains in place for the next year.

Because observations are currently suspended until at least April 13, any pending request for reassessment observations will need to be rescheduled once observations are resumed. If a program is not able to submit its reassessment portfolio by its anniversary deadline but still wants to be considered for an observation and re-rating this year, the program director should contact the Quality Rated Help Desk. If the program opted out of the suspension but decided that it no longer wishes to be re-rated this year, no action is needed. At your annual verification period, the program can select Check-In or CQI or allow the system to automatically check in.

Will QR observations extend further than 4/13/2020 due to not being able to get rooms ready the past couple of weeks and possibly the next couple of weeks?

Because this is a constantly evolving situation, we will decide by April 3 if we will extend the current suspension of observations. We also understand that many programs may need additional time to plan and prepare their program for observation after the health emergency is over. Once we have determined the best course of action, we will notify all impacted programs who would be in the observation window for their cohort group.

Will the date to be Quality Rated by 12/31/20 be extended?
Currently, there has not been a decision to extend the CAPS/QR 2020 deadline into 2021. Because there were available slots in Cohort 3 and 4, we can still meet the required observation count within 2020. We also understand that this is a constant evolving situation and will consider needed extensions within the next few weeks.

For programs getting ready to submit their portfolios for QR, will there be any consideration for programs that cannot get CPR/FA renewals?
Due to limited in-person training availability during the COVID-19 health event, CPR and First Aid training for new staff hired after March 1, 2020, or for current staff whose training expired on March 1, 2020 or after, will continue to be counted as valid for Quality Rated portfolio scoring purposes.

Affected programs must upload a written statement in the portfolio indicating that training could not be obtained due to the current health situation. This statement must include the names of staff persons

who could not complete initial training or recertification and the expiration dates for CPR and First Aid training for current staff. The statement should be uploaded in the Written Health Information section in Standard 2.

When in-person CPR and First Aid training opportunities resume, expired dates will no longer be accepted, and notice will be provided.

Is Quality Rated currently conducting classroom observations? If observations are not suspended can Assessors conduct observations remotely using our program's classroom cameras or sending us iPads to live stream our classroom activities?
Quality Rated has currently suspended all classroom and family child care home observations until April 13, 2020. Valid and reliable classroom observations cannot be conducted remotely.

How is the cohort selection process being impacted?
Quality Rated is extending the dates that are considered for the first quarter. The quarter will be extended to April 30, 2020. Extensions for Cohorts 2, 3, and 4 will be considered later. The portfolio submission date for providers in the reverse process for Cohort 1 has been extended to April 15, 2020.

How will Quality Rated reschedule all the missed observations from Cohort 1?
When assessors resume observations on April 13, Cohort 1 providers not yet observed will be the first programs to be assessed.

If the remaining Cohort 1 providers are rescheduled for observations into April, what will happen to the Cohort 2 observations?
We are looking at the probability of restructuring the dates for Cohort 2. We will share more information directly with the impacted programs that signed up for Cohort 2 once decisions have been made.

If I signed up for Cohort 1, but receive my observation during what should be the Cohort 2 observation window, will I still receive the Rating Incentive Bonus for Cohort 1?
Yes, Rating Incentive Bonuses will be paid according to the cohort you originally signed up for, unless you receive a 0-rating and are re-rated under a later cohort; in that case, the later cohort's Rating Incentive Bonus would apply.

Are providers penalized if they are closed and miss their cohort/observation window?
No. Providers will receive their bonus payment for the cohort that they signed up for. QR staff will try to reschedule your observation for your current cohort or at a time closest to the cohort you signed up for. However, this may not be possible. In that case, your observation may occur later in the year.

I opted out of the rating extension and am due to be observed and renew my rating this year. Due to the COVID-19 situation, is it possible to request the rating extension now?
Yes, as COVID-19 continues to cause much uncertainty, any program whose rating is expiring this year and who opted out of the extension, can contact the QR Help Desk to ask to have their rating extended to 2021.

I opted out of the Request for Reassessment Suspension this year. Due to the COVID-19 situation, I will be unable to submit my portfolio. Is it possible to opt in to the suspension now?

Yes, a Request for Reassessment does not impact your star rating unless you complete the process and receive a new rating. This means that if you fail to submit your Request for Reassessment portfolio, your QR account will simply revert to a check-in for this year without any further action on your part, and your current rating will remain valid. You will have the option to resume with a Request for Reassessment at Annual Verification next year, unless your rating is expiring in 2021 at which time you will be directed to complete a Required Reassessment portfolio.

If I have opted-out of the rating extension to 2021, and my rating is due to expire within the next four weeks, will my rating be extended?
Yes, we will be extending ratings for all programs that have expiration dates that fall within the next three weeks. We will communicate with programs as decisions are made.

I am a Cohort 2 provider, and I will not be able to submit by portfolio by March 23rd. Will I forfeit my Cohort 2 observation slot if I do not submit my portfolio?
No, we have extended the submission window to April 30. We will be evaluating dates as receive we more information. If you think you will be closed longer than this time, contact the Quality Rated Help Desk.

If we wait until April 30 to submit our Cohort 2 portfolio, will we or will we not receive our bonus or grant money?
The Rating Incentive Bonuses will be paid according to when you signed up for the cohort and remain based on the Cohort you originally signed up for. If you signed up for Cohort 2 in December, you would receive the $500 signing bonus; if you signed up for Cohort 2 in January, you will receive the $200 signing bonus. We are working on setting up the system to make payments once portfolios are submitted, regardless of whether you wait until April 30 or not.

If you receive a 1, 2, or 3 Star Rating, regardless of whether your observation occurs in another cohort's Observation Window due to COVID-19, you will receive the Rating Incentive payments for Cohort 2. If you receive a 0-Star Rating and are re-rated under a later cohort, then that cohort's Rating Incentive would apply.

How does this situation impact the 2020 Goal?
The current situation does not impact the 2020 Goal. Cohorts 3 and 4 have open slots that can ensure all eligible providers are observed by December 31, 2020.

If my observation cannot be completed during my original 30-day window, will I receive a notice of the new window, and will I be allowed to pick additional blackout dates?
Yes, you will be notified of your new 30-day window. You will not be able to select any new black-out days during the new 30-day window, but you will have the opportunity to share any program closure dates.

FOR PROVIDERS: Regarding Quality Rated Subsidy Grants (QRSG)

Should QRSG/Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Subsidy Grant (EHS-CCPSG) students be counted as absent on days when the child care program is closed, when the student or a family member is quarantined, or when a family decides to keep a child at home due to COVID-19 concerns?
If the program/classroom is closed, the closure should be noted on the monthly attendance roster. If individual students are not present due to a quarantine, the absence should be marked as excused. Absences for students whose parents choose to keep them at home as a precautionary measure should also be marked as excused absences. Programs should not disenroll students who are not attending due to COVID-19.

If my QRSG/EHS-CCPSG program will be temporarily closing due to COVID-19, who should I contact? If you choose to close your program, QRSG Administrators and EHS-CCP Subsidy Grantees should contact their Quality Rated Subsidy Analyst. If your program is licensed, you must also follow child care licensing regulations and contact DECAL's child care licensing division.

How will I be paid during this time?
QRSG: The QRSG billing portal in PANDA/CAPS Maximus will remain open and providers can continue to submit invoices for payment processing. DECAL will process payments remotely. We anticipate no disruptions in payments to grantees.
EHS-CCP: The EHS-CCP Subsidy Grant rosters and payment invoices can continue to be sent electronically, and DECAL will process payments remotely. Again, we anticipate no disruptions in payments to grantees.

Can I get paid for children with a QRSG slot or EHS-CCP subsidy grant slot if the child care program is closed, or if the child care program is open, but some children are not attending?
Whether open or closed, a provider may continue to bill for *any child with an active subsidy grant slot* who was present at least one day during March 2020. Additional guidance on billing procedures for services rendered during March 2020 will be shared before the reporting due date of April 10, 2020. This emergency policy will remain in effect through service week ending March 29, 2020. Even though programs will be paid for all children in care since March 1, 2020, providers must maintain accurate records required by CAPS policy including sign in and sign out records. Providers may only bill for a child *with an active subsidy grant slot*.

FOR PROVIDERS: Regarding Staff/Workforce Training

How do I find DECAL-approved trainings that are offered online?
GaPDS includes a list of DECAL-approved online trainings through the *Find Scheduled Training Sessions* tab (https://gapds.decal.ga.gov/Trainings/Scheduled). Select "Online" under *Training Format* and hit the *Search Training* button. Information on approved online trainings will appear.

How do I know if a scheduled training is canceled?
If you or your staff registered for training through the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS), you will receive a cancelation email if the training is canceled. You may also check the Training Cancelations webpage on GaPDS for the most up-to-date information. If you or your staff did not register for the training through GaPDS, you will need to contact the trainer directly to find out if the training has been canceled.

FOR PROVIDERS: Regarding Criminal Records Checks

What is the rule for family child care background check?
The rules regarding background checks for family child care learning homes can be found in the document *Rules and Regulations Family Child Care Learning Homes* 290-2-3-.21.

What do we do about people needing background checks, or more specifically, updated background checks (due every five years)? Some cities, like Sandy Springs, have shuttered services. Does that apply to background checks?
Currently, there are enough fingerprinting locations open in the state. Currently, there are no changes to the background check requirements. All potential and current employees must have a valid background check to be present in the facility while children are present for care.

What are your suggestions for background checks if the fingerprinting place is closed?
Currently, there are enough fingerprinting locations open in the state. Currently, there are no changes to the background check requirements. All potential and current employees must have a valid background check to be present in the facility while children are present for care.

What about out-of-state background checks? We can't find a place open to do fingerprint cards.
You need to contact local law enforcement to see how they can help with fingerprinting cards to be sent to another state. If DECAL cannot get the necessary background check clearance information from another state, the department will cannot issue a satisfactory Comprehensive Background Check Determination; however, if the background check using Gemalto is clear, DECAL will issue a satisfactory determination permitting the employee to be present as long as they are supervised by a staff member who has a valid Comprehensive Background Check Determination.

How will you address background checks that are expiring? Our fingerprint location is closed right now.
Currently, there are enough fingerprinting locations open in the state. Currently, there are no changes to the background check requirements. All potential and current employees must have a valid background check to be present in the facility while children are present for care.

At this time will my requests for background checks be processed?
Yes, unless the DECAL offices are ordered closed, DECAL staff processing background checks will be in the office as usual.

FOR PROVIDERS: Regarding Shelter in Place Orders and Miscellaneous Items

Is there any liability to programs who choose to open during this time should someone become ill? That has been a concern for my program.
DECAL cannot give legal advice to child care programs, so we recommend that you check with your program's attorney or legal advisor.

What's the liability to a school who chooses to open and follows the amended rules reports a case of COVID-19? Can a school be sued by a family or staff member if they are exposed as a result?

DECAL cannot give legal advice to child care programs, so we recommend that you check with your program's attorney or legal advisor.

Do we need an "essential employee" document if more restrictions to the public are made?
You should contact the jurisdiction issuing the restriction to determine what is required to maintain compliance. If the Governor's Office issues any further executive orders pertaining to child care, DECAL will issue further guidance as needed.

If our county issues a shelter in place order, how will it affect our center?
Working in conjunction with the jurisdiction issuing the order and with their local public health department, business owners must evaluate the shelter in place order to determine how the order impacts their business.

FOR PROVIDERS: Miscellaneous Resources

Is there or will there be any financial support for programs impacted by COVID-19?
On March 27, the United States Congress passed legislation (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act- CARES) that includes support for early education programs. DECAL is closely monitoring upcoming legislation guidance and will work with the Governor's Office and other applicable agencies to implement this resource as soon as we receive more information.

Where can we find financial assistance for non-profit child care centers who would lose money weekly following the new guidelines.
DECAL has temporarily suspended some rules to meet the Governor's Executive Order and to best meet the challenges related to COVID-19. While we understand that these changes may have a financial impact, they are necessary to follow the guidelines highlighted in the Executive Order. DECAL is currently supporting programs by continuing to make payments where possible and will move swiftly to allocate any financial or state assistance allocated for early education in recently passed legislation.

If we choose to be open during these times, can providers receive help with cleaning supplies to continue sterilizing?
Any funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) allocated for this purpose will be distributed as soon as DECAL has guidance from the legislation and from the Governor's Office.

Is Pre-K the only program that will continue to receive funds?
No, DECAL is continuing to make CAPS payments.

If my child care business is closing, what resources are available to my business or my staff?
Governor Brian P. Kemp announced that Georgia has received an official statewide disaster declaration from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). This declaration will provide assistance in the form of SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans to impacted small businesses in all 159 counties in Georgia. The application is now live, and Georgia small business owners can go directly to the SBA for assistance. Small business owners should visit www.disasterloan.sba.gov for information and the application. Loans are available for small business and non-profit organizations. While terms will be established on a case-by-case basis, many will have a thirty-year repayment term with first payments not due for up to twelve

months. Businesses should expect to provide a tax transcript, financial statements, and a profit and loss statement. Interest rates will range from 2.75% to 3.75%.

Information on filing an unemployment claim, details on how employers must file partial claims, and resources for other reemployment assistance can be found at www.gdol.ga.gov, and Georgians may visit www.EmployGeorgia.com for access to today's job opportunities.

FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE LEARNING HOME PROVIDERS: Miscellaneous Resources

We in home day cares are also an important part in child care. If we're out of work because everyone is keeping their kids home, and we will not qualify for unemployment, we can't afford to take out a loan to pay later. What help are we going to get in this government bailout to help us through these hard times?
We understand the concerns and challenges related to family child care learning homes and COVID-19. We are including Family Child Care Learning Homes in our current supports, and we are waiting legislative guidance related to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act from the U.S. Congress. Any supports in legislation will include, if guidance permits, Family Child Care Learning Homes.

For CACFP or SFSP Sponsors/Participants

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)

Can CACFP institutions deliver meals?
Yes, DECAL encourages creative service methods including meal delivery during the public health crisis.

Will we be able to use CACFP funds if we have to close?
CACFP organizations may only use CACFP funds to operate their meal service program. Funds are only to be used on allowable CACFP costs while meal service is in operation. The organization must have a process in place to utilize its non-CACFP funding sources in the event of a temporary or unexpected closure.

Will there be any changes to the processing of new CACFP applications?
There are no changes to the CACFP application process at this time. Organizations interested in the CACFP should contact Leslie Truman at Leslie.Truman@decal.ga.gov and visit the DECAL website at: http://decal.ga.gov/CACFP/Applicant.aspx.

Is there a start date for the recently approved CACFP waivers for non-congregate feeding, activity requirements for at-risk afterschool, and the mealtimes waiver?
These waivers are effective immediately through June 30 or until the end of the federal declaration of a disaster, whichever comes first. These waivers are posted on the DECAL website at: http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/CACFPNationwideWaiversDuetoCOVID-19_03232020.pdf.

Center A is a non-CACFP site and is closing temporarily due to low numbers. The children from Center A are going to Center B, which is a CACFP site. This is a temporary center that is under review until we get through this health crisis.

a. **Do the children in Center A (non-CACFP site and is closing) need to enroll at Center B and do they need to fill out income eligibility forms?**
   If this is a traditional CACFP site, not at-risk afterschool, then the answer is Yes. Those children from Center A would have to enroll in Center B, and they must be present for the meal. Proof of enrollment for the children coming from Center A to B would be required. If the facility is using income eligibility forms as proof as enrollment, they would be required. If the center is using another type of document as an enrollment form, then an income eligibility statement would not be required. However, all meals served to those children who don't have an income eligibility statement would be reimbursed at the paid rate, which is a lower rate.
b. **If the combined enrollment disqualifies Center B, can the two centers "live" together but document meals separately for Center B to continue to claim for their children?**
   No, two sites cannot operate at the same location. Contact your application specialist for additional guidance.

How can I serve children in my community who are school aged and are NOT enrolled in my center? If so, do I obtain an Income Form?
As a CACFP provider/institution, you can serve school age children during school closures, but you will need proof of enrollment for that child in order to claim them. Income eligibility forms are available on our website under CACFP forms.

Can CACFP facilities provide non-congregate meals during this public health emergency?
Yes. As of March 20, the USDA approved a nationwide waiver to allow non-congregate feeding in CACFP and SFSP. The USDA recognizes that waiving the congregate meal requirement is vital to ensure appropriate safety measures for the purpose of providing meals and meal supplements. The waiver is effective immediately and remains in effect through June 30, 2020, or until the end of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier. DECAL will later provide additional guidance on implementing this non-congregate feeding waiver.

Are there any mealtime restrictions specific to CACFP during the public health emergency?
No. As of March 20, the USDA approved a nationwide waiver to allow flexibility in meal service time requirements to support streamlined access to nutritious meals.

Will CACFP training sessions still be offered during this time?
Web-based training sessions housed in GA ATLAS are still available. All CACFP sessions conducted via webinar will still be offered, i.e., Memo Monday. To view past Memo Monday sessions, visit our webpage. At this time, all face-to-face CACFP sessions have been temporarily postponed. Notification emails regarding these trainings were sent to those registered. Our office will correspond via email when the training sessions are rescheduled.

Should CACFP facilities that use pricing programs still charge families a meal fee if the facility is closed? What if a child is absent?
Meal fees for children enrolled in a CACFP participating facility should not be charged if the facility is closed due to the coronavirus outbreak. However, if the facility is open but the individual child is absent, the facility's existing meal policies should be followed.

For additional information, contact Kate Alexander, Policy Administrator, at Kate.Alexander@decal.ga.gov.

I am a CACFP sponsor. Do I have to adhere to monitoring requirements during unanticipated school closures?
Effective immediately, the USDA has approved a waiver suspending onsite monitoring to support social distancing while providing meals. This waiver applies automatically to all sponsoring organizations that elect to use it, without further application through June 30, 2020. However, sponsors must contact Kate.Alexander@decal.ga.gov if they plan to use this waiver. With this waiver, the following CACFP monitoring requirements have been waived:

- the requirement at 7 CFR 226.16(d)(4)(iii) that sponsoring organizations review each CACFP facility three times each year. **For a sponsor's current review year, CACFP sponsors may conduct two reviews of their CACFP facilities.**
- the requirement at 7 CFR 226.16(d)(4)(iii)(A) that at least two of the three reviews must be unannounced. **For a sponsor's current review year, only one CACFP facility review is required to be unannounced.**
- the requirement at 7 CFR 226.16(d)(4)(iii)(B) that at least one unannounced review must include observation of a meal service.
- the requirement at 7 CFR 226.16(d)(4)(iii)(D) that not more than six months may elapse between reviews.
- the requirement at CFR 226.16(d)(4)(iii)(C) that at least one review must be made during each new facility's first four weeks of program operations **has not been waived but allows sponsoring organizations to review new CACFP facilities as a desk audit.**

Do you recommend closing my child care center or day care home to prevent the spread of Coronavirus?
Considering the Governor's Executive Order, DECAL is providing the following guidance regarding the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP):

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.

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.

If you do decide to close your center/day care home, notify your application specialist or email Leslie Truman at Leslie.Truman@decal.ga.gov

If a statewide mandate was issued requiring child care centers and homes to close, would the USDA provide financial relief or advancement to relieve the impact to sponsors?
At this time, DECAL is not aware of any plans for USDA to provide funding during times in which child care centers or homes are closed and not serving meals to children. If we receive additional information from USDA, we will provide this information to all institutions.

Are there any plans to postpone or reschedule the National CACFP Childcare Conference in April?
The Conference Committee has determined that the best course of action for everyone in our community at this time is to CANCEL the National Child Nutrition Conference entirely. Full refunds to attendees, exhibitors, advertisers and sponsors will be issued. Continued patience is requested as these refunds are processed in the next 90 days.

AT-RISK AFTERSCHOOL

Can an existing CACFP/At-Risk program at a location submit emergency sites for off-site locations through our sponsor?
Only the organization that has a direct agreement with DECAL to operate the At-Risk Afterschool program may contact DECAL to add sites. If there are other organizations interested in becoming a site, they will need to contact the CACFP Sponsor. To qualify, they must be a licensed facility or approved for an exemption. After that, an add-a-site request must also undergo an application process for approval.

Are educational or enrichment programs required for At-Risk Afterschool programs during the public health emergency?
No. As of March 20, the USDA approved a nationwide waiver that does not require enrichment or educational activities during At-Risk After School programs. The waiver is effective immediately and remains in effect through June 30, 2020, or upon expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier.

Are At-Risk Afterschool centers allowed to continue serving meals and snacks during unanticipated school closures?
Yes. At-Risk afterschool centers may continue serving meals and snacks as part of the At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of CACFP. When operating during unanticipated school closures, afterschool centers must continue to meet At-Risk Afterschool requirements (For more information, reference the Q&A: **Are educational or enrichment programs required for At-Risk Afterschool programs during the public health emergency?**). On days when schools are closed, at-risk afterschool centers that normally offer a snack and supper after school may instead choose to offer either lunch and a snack or breakfast and a snack. These meals and snacks would be reimbursed through CACFP at the free rate. Additionally, CACFP sponsors may serve a snack and/or a meal at a site that has served meals earlier in the day by SFSP sponsors. For example, if an SFSP organization serves breakfast only at an approved site, a CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Program could serve lunch and/or a snack later the same day. Both organizations, however, cannot serve the same meal at the same time, on the same day, at

the site. NOTE: The total meals served to a child across all child nutrition programs cannot exceed two meals and a snack per day.

Can I claim reimbursement for meals served to children who did not typically attend my At-Risk afterschool program (e.g., siblings of enrolled children whose schools are closed due to coronavirus concerns)?
Yes, if the child is eligible to receive meals and all required records are maintained which include but are not limited to meal count records, attendance records, and menus. See CACFP Policy 18 at http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/CACFPPolicy18.pdf for recordkeeping requirements. Additionally, institutions should ensure the ATLAS application reflects current operations including the current average daily attendance and the types of meals served.

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP)

How many meals per child may be offered each day? Can supper be provided? Can meals be distributed for more than one day?
The maximum number of meals that can be offered remains the same for SFSP: up to two meals, or one meal and one snack, per child, per day, in any combination except lunch and supper. However, DECAL may approve a distribution approach that includes providing meals for multiple days. Sponsoring organizations must contact Kate Alexander at kate.alexander@decal.ga.gov if they plan to use this waiver.

I am a SFSP sponsor. Do I have to adhere to monitoring requirements during unanticipated school closures?
The USDA recognizes that in this public health emergency, suspending onsite monitoring is vital to support social distancing while providing meals. Therefore, a waiver has been approved to postpone required onsite site visits for all SFSP sponsoring organizations. NOTE: To ensure program integrity during this time, SFSP sponsoring organizations should, to the maximum extent practicable, continue monitoring activities of program operations offsite (e.g., through a desk audit). For SFSP sites who operate the program during normal summer operations (May through August), SFSP sponsors may also postpone required site visits until summer 2020. This waiver is effective immediately and remains in effect through June 30, 2020, or until expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier. Sponsors must contact Kate.Alexander@decal.ga.gov if they plan to use this waiver.

How can I operate an SFSP feeding site that complies with the Governor's and local executive orders regarding social distancing?
Below are suggestions that help comply with the Governor's executive order that limits groups to 10 or fewer individuals who always maintain at least six feet between individuals. Sponsors and sites should also review and comply with any local orders that may be in place. As private businesses, sponsors are solely responsible for interpreting all orders to ensure the site is able to operate and not violate any jurisdiction's requirements. DECAL offers the following guidance; however, DECAL's interpretations are the department's alone and should not be the only criteria considered when determining whether to maintain operations or to cease operations.

- Have the children walk up to the food counter one at a time
- Utilize the non-congregate waiver, and let the children pick up a meal and take it home
- Allow the children and their parent/guardians to enter the building and pick up meals in groups of 10 or less

- Limit number of staff working in the kitchen together
- Clean surfaces that are frequently touched including shared countertops, kitchen areas, and doorknobs

Can schools that have been approved for non-congregate feeding through SFSP or SSO deliver meals directly to students' homes?
If a School Food Authority (SFA) determines there is a need and it is logistically feasible to deliver meals directly to homes, it may do so with state agency approval, adherence to all federal confidentiality requirements, and with all necessary federal waiver approvals (including an approval for non-congregate feeding). Delivery could be accomplished by mail or delivery service, or hand delivered by school staff, volunteers, community organizations, or others. **This option is available to SFA sponsors of school sites only** due to student confidentiality and logistical requirements. Non-SFA sponsors are encouraged to work with local SFAs where possible.

How does the SFSP work during an unanticipated school closure?
In the event of an unanticipated school closure, SFSP sponsors may serve FREE nutritious meals to children in low-income areas. Program requirements are the same as traditional SFSP but occur during the school year when unanticipated school closures occur.

Am I eligible to serve SFSP meals during unanticipated school closures?
Sponsors who have participated in the SFSP within the past two years are eligible to serve meals during unanticipated school closures.

Am I required to submit an application to serve meals during an unanticipated school closure?
SFSP organizations are exempt from submitting new applications to participate if the sponsor participated in the SFSP during the current year or in either of the prior two fiscal years. In addition, new sponsors applying for participation in the program due to an unanticipated school closure are exempt from the application submission deadline. At a minimum, DECAL would still require the following documentation to be considered eligible for reimbursable meals during an unanticipated school closure:

- Site application identifying locations
- Food permit, if applicable (refer to the following link to determine if a food permit is required for the site. Click here to access food permit.
- Budget outline of projected expenses with supporting documentation. Click here to access a budget template. This template should only be used during unanticipated school closures.

What sites are eligible to serve SFSP meals during unanticipated school closures?
SFSP sites must still meet area eligibility requirements which means the site is in an area in which at least 50% of the children residing in the area are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals.

Can I serve meals at a new site?
Yes, sponsors may add new sites to serve meals during an unanticipated school closure if the site(s) meet the eligibility requirements noted above.

What are the options for SFSP meal service during unanticipated school closures?

- Breakfast only
- Snack only
- Lunch only

- Supper only
- Lunch and AM or PM Snack
- Breakfast and AM or PM Snack
- Breakfast and Lunch
- Supper and AM or PM Snack
- Breakfast and Supper
- AM and PM Snack

What is the meal pattern for SFSP during unanticipated school closures?
The meal pattern is the same as traditional SFSP. See https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/meal-patterns

Can we provide a SFSP sack meal for a child to take home and qualify for reimbursement?
Yes, based on the declaration of a public health emergency due to the novel coronavirus by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, FNS has approved DECAL's request to waive the requirement that, during unanticipated school closures, SFSP meals must be served in a congregate setting. Public notice of the approved waiver can be accessed at:
http://decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/PublicAnnouncement_PublicHealthEmergencyWaiverRequest.pdf

Are there plans to submit a waiver to allow sponsoring organizations to serve two meals and a snack during unanticipated school closures?
DECAL submitted a waiver to the USDA on March 18, 2020. The waiver would enable SFSP sponsors of open, restricted open, and enrolled sites who are in good standing, and within DECAL discretion, to serve up to two meals and a snack each day. This waiver requests that sponsors have the option to serve a lunch and supper as the two eligible meals to claim. Specifically, DECAL requests the following program regulation be waived: · 7 CFR 225.16(b)(3)(ii)

A copy of the official request can be found here:
http://decal.ga.gov/Nutrition/SFSPWaiverRequests.aspx

Has DECAL submitted other waiver requests to USDA FNS for the SFSP?
DECAL issued three (3) additional waiver requests to the USDA FNS Southeast Regional Office (SERO) for the SFSP. In the waivers, DECAL requested continued use of the following:
(1) Area Eligibility in Closed Enrolled Sites (7 CFR 225.15(f)) *
(2) Meal Service Times (7 CFR 225.16(c)) **(Approved by USDA)**
(3) First Week Site Visits (7 CFR 225.15(d)(2)) **(Approved by USDA)**
*DECAL is awaiting approval for the remaining request and will notify SFSP sponsors once additional information is received. State policy guidance is currently being revised to reflect all approved waiver requests.
Copies of the waiver requests and public announcements can be found on DECAL's website at: http://decal.ga.gov/Nutrition/SFSPWaiverRequests.aspx. DECAL strongly advises organizations to regularly check the DECAL website for waiver updates.

How can families find the meal sites located in their area or community?
DECAL is getting the word out about where families can find meals for kids during school closures. We're collecting updates from our sponsoring organizations across the state and posting them here. Share the link with your friends to help spread the news that there are opportunities around Georgia for kids to

get a healthy meal. Check back often for updates. Families may also text "Summer Meals" to 97779 or call 1-866-348-6479 to find a site.

Will SFSP training sessions still be offered during this time?
Web-based training sessions housed in GA ATLAS are still available. All SFSP sessions conducted via webinar will still be offered, i.e., Memo Monday, Procurement Readiness, Budget Readiness, SFSP, and Recordkeeping 101. To view past Memo Monday sessions, visit our webpage. For those already registered for upcoming SFSP New Sponsor Orientation training sessions, training will be delivered **virtually (webinar)** and **web-based (self-study)**. More information is forthcoming.

FOR BOTH CACFP & SFSP

Are there any funding opportunities available to help serve meals to children in response to the Coronavirus?
No Kid Hungry is offering emergency grants to support local school districts and nonprofit organizations in their efforts to ensure kids get the nutritious food they need. The grant request is specifically for school districts and community organizations to submit an inquiry for grants to support nutrition programs in their communities. No Kid Hungry is also in the process of developing a separate database to help families and individuals find help in their communities; they will provide a link here once that is ready. Click here to submit your request.

Can Head Start programs serve meals during the public health emergency?
During the public health emergency, only SFSP sponsors who are in good standing and who have participated in the program during the last two years can serve as an emergency feeding SFSP sponsor. However, Head Start locations may apply to operate as a feeding site under an existing SFSP sponsor or may operate At-Risk Afterschool sites as an independent center or as a site under an existing CACFP sponsor. Several waivers are now available for SFSP and CACFP. Head Start programs currently participating in the CACFP can notify DECAL if they wish to participate in the waivers. Contact Kate Alexander at Kate.Alexander@decal.ga.gov for additional information.

Some food items are difficult to locate right now. Will we be penalized if we can't serve a component for a meal due the current situation?
While the USDA expects and strongly encourages federal nutrition programs to maintain and meet the nutrition standards for each program to the greatest extent possible during this public health emergency, USDA recently announced a waiver to allow meal pattern flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs.

However, to participate in this waiver, sponsors and institutions must contact DECAL for approval, and requests will be approved on a case-by-case basis. Guidance will be distributed soon on how to request approval to use this waiver. In the meantime, if you have any questions about this waiver, contact Kate Alexander at Kate.Alexander@DECAL.ga.gov.

Can we provide hot supper meals at mobile sites? They would be set up so that children come through a line and pick up a to-go plate.
Summer food sponsors have the option of providing hot supper meals at mobile sites using to-go containers. CACFP providers/institutions now have the option of offering congregate feeding so you also

provide meals in a "take out" container through a mobile site or supper. Ensure that your application always reflects your current operations.

Is it allowable to freeze milk and use it after the expiration date?
Although unopened milk is safely stored in the freezer at 0ºF for up to three months, freezing milk is not recommended. Freezing milk, specifically high fat milk (whole milk), causes changes that will deteriorate the texture, preventing it from being used as fluid milk. Additionally, the CACFP Crediting Handbook provides guidance that foods past the expiration date are not creditable. Therefore, if the milk expires, the milk will need to be discarded even if it has been frozen.

What is an example of a non-congregate setting?
There are different variations. Some facilities provide meals packaged in a to-go box at their existing site that has already been approved. It's a complete unitized meal that the child picks up and takes home. This is also appropriate when serving meals to adults. Another option would be to provide meals at the door so that no one enters the facility.

Is there a list of approved vendors able to provide meals and/or individual food items during the emergency?
DECAL Nutrition Services currently does not have an "approved" list of vendors. However, following is a link to vendors and supplier currently serving our program providers.
http://decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/CACFP_SFSP_WebVendorList.pdf

Will claims be processed as usual or will they be delayed?
We don't anticipate any delays in claims processing. Continue to adhere to the claim's submission requirements, and you will be paid according to the regular schedule.

Can you open ATLAS, so we can process for March and get reimbursed quicker?
Unfortunately, no. March claims may be filed on April 1 to allow institutions and sites to claim for the entire month.

How do I add sites to my SFSP or CACFP application? Do we fax Add a Site packages to the DECAL Nutrition office?
Submit your emergency feeding sites to your business operations representative. Approving additional sites is a priority, so our Nutrition staff will process sites as quickly as possible. There are several options to submit information. You may email your business operations representative with the add a site information or you may upload it to ATLAS and alert your business ops specialist by sending them a notification email.

Do we have authorization to pay food service staff double time, such as cooks, when they come in to prepare meals?
We have not received specific guidance from the USDA on this topic; however, any CACFP institution should adhere to its approved budgeted amounts and compensation plan.

We are experiencing a milk shortage. Are there any flexibilities granted for the quantity and type of milk we can provide to children in our care?
Yes, DECAL can approve meals without milk, but we need a brief written notification explaining the interruption of milk service. An official request via email should include a list of site locations/addresses

experiencing a shortage of milk and the date the shortage began. Forward your request to your Application Specialist and copy Sonja Adams at Sonja.adams@decal.ga.gov

If we are experiencing a milk shortage, what beverage alternative can we serve?
When experiencing a shortage of cow's milk, non-dairy alternatives may be used. However, alternatives must be nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk. Requiring non-dairy alternatives to be nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk ensures children receive vital nutrients needed for growth and development. Alternatives served to children ages 1-5 must be unflavored due to the higher sugar content of flavored varieties.

Acceptable non-dairy or cow's milk alternatives include:

- Low-fat or fat-free lactose-reduced, buttermilk and acidified milk
- Goat milk, sheep milk, buffalo milk (must be pasteurized)
- Soy milk (calcium and vitamin D fortified)

Unacceptable non-dairy or cow's milk alternatives include:
(These are examples and do not represent a comprehensive list.)

- Juice
- Almond milk
- Rice milk
- Almond milk "plus"
- Cashew milk
- Coconut milk
- Water
- Hemp milk
- Oat milk
- Whole grain drink
- Flax milk
- Calcium-fortified orange juice

Yogurt may not be substituted for fluid milk for children of any age. This is because milk provides a wealth of nutrients growing children need, such as vitamin A and D, and comparable quantities of these nutrients are not currently found in commercially available yogurts.

If cow's milk and acceptable non-dairy alternatives on the above acceptable list are served, no special approvals or waivers are required. However, if cow's milk or acceptable non-dairy alternatives are not available, and you are a CACFP or SFSP participant, you may contact DECAL to discuss a waiver of the milk requirement. Approvals would be based on a reasonable and justified need (e.g., public health emergency).

What resources or policy guidance is available relating to unanticipated school closures and/or the Coronavirus?
To date, the following guidance was posted to the DECAL website:

- Child Nutrition Program Meal Service during Novel Coronavirus Outbreaks, March 13, 2020
- Meal Service during Unanticipated School Closures, March 13, 2020
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
    - http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/index.htm

  - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html
  - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf
- Georgia Department of Public Health
  - http://dph.georgia.gov/influenza-what-you-need-know
  - https://dph.georgia.gov/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-outbreak

Governor Kemp has ordered many state employees to work from home to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. Does DECAL plan to close their offices? If so, what is the best way to submit CACFP and/or SFSP documents to the team?
Currently, DECAL does not plan to close our offices although many DECAL employees are teleworking to ensure greater social distancing. Regardless, DECAL including the Nutrition Services division is conducting business as usual.

The Nutrition Division asks all institutions to submit CACFP and/or SFSP documents electronically via email or uploaded in GA ATLAS. If information is uploaded in GA ATLAS, notify your assigned Application Specialist or Business Operations Representative.

For CACFP/SFSP Applications, contact:
Institutions 0 (zero) - G
Paula Lawrence, Application Specialist
404-463-2111
Paula.lawrence@decal.ga.gov
Institutions H-P
Sherika Blount, Application Specialist
404-656-6411
Shericka.blount@decal.ga.gov

Institutions Q-Z
Brandi Banks, Application Specialist
470-725-6543
Brandi.banks@decal.ga.gov

For CACFP/SFSP Add-a-Site Packages or Sponsor Updates, contact:
Institutions 0 (zero) - G
Temika Moore, Business Operations Representative
404-463-1494
Temika.moore@decal.ga.gov

Institutions H-P
Kenya Taylor, Business Operations Representative
404-463-4040
Kenya.taylor@decal.ga.gov

Institutions Q-Z
Edith Pierre, Business Operations Representative
404-463-8314
Edith.pierre@decal.ga.gov

Are sponsors and institutions required to follow proper procurement procedures during an emergency?
Emergency purchases are defined as situations when the welfare of life, property, or the continuation of vital programs are in jeopardy and require immediate, on-the-spot purchases. Emergency purchases can be issued when there is limited time to purchase in the regular manner since the item or service is needed immediately. During an emergency, purchase, micro-purchase, and small purchase procedures are acceptable. Sponsors and institutions must have a process in place to document written quotes received via telephone and keep invoices and receipts on file. Contact DECAL if emergency purchases exceed formal procurement threshold limits.
See http://decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/ProcurementManual.pdf

Am I able to donate leftover perishable food items to my children in the wake of unanticipated school closings?
Currently, DECAL is not aware of any flexibility allowing excess food (specifically perishable food items) purchased for the CACFP or SFSP to be donated to program participants in the wake of unforeseen circumstances such as Coronavirus.

Because of unforeseen circumstances, occasionally there will be leftover food. All alternatives permitted by program regulations and state and local health and sanitation codes should be exhausted before discarding food. Options may include using leftovers in subsequent meal services, offering "sharing tables," or transferring food to other sites. (See attached: Donation of Leftover Foods from School Cafeterias, June 11, 1996). Where it is not feasible to reuse leftovers, excess food may be donated to a non-profit organization, such as a community food bank, homeless shelter, or other nonprofit charitable organizations. See:
https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP11_CACFP05_SFSP07-2012os.pdf

What is necessary to amend budgets to get approval for disinfectants, etc. when these products become more readily available?
Due to the current situation, cleaning supplies such as disinfectants would be considered necessary and reasonable costs. If an institution would like to charge these costs, the ATLAS Budget Detail (Non-food supplies budget category) must be revised if any of the following factors apply:

- A new cost is incurred that wasn't previously approved in the budget
- A line item increases or decreases by 20% or more. A line item is defined as the function level, Operating and Administrative and/or the Program level CACFP and SFSP. If a change impacts either level by 20% or more, a budget revision is required.
- When allocation methodologies change due to changes within the organization resulting in an increase or decrease of 20% or more.
- A new cost item will be incurred that requires prior or specific prior approval or special consideration (i.e., formal procurement)
- When an approved specific prior written approval item's actual cost is found to be more than the actual approved amount
- Costs that exceed established maximums are unallowable, and the 20% rule does not apply when established maximums are breached.

Once the budget revision is completed, notify the Budget Compliance Specialist at
Tremachel.Johnson@decal.ga.gov

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Serving Meals in CACFP During COVID-19
Helpful Guide for Meal Planning Alternatives
Use the "Serving Meals in the CACFP during COVID-19" resource to help in menu planning during COVID-19. Whatever challenges you are facing, we recognize that meals served during the pandemic will look different than normal with unique challenges arising. This resource may help in determining alternate meal components during times of food shortage.

FoodCorps Resources to Support Remote Education
FoodCorps shares their COVID-19 Resource Page which includes access to hands-on lessons that are best suited to do with kids at home.

DECAL Participation in Nationwide Waivers Due to COVID-19
Pursuant to the COVID–19 Child Nutrition Response Act (the Act) (H.R. 6201, Title II), and based on the exceptional circumstances of this public health emergency, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) established several nationwide waivers to support access to nutritious meals while minimizing potential exposure to the novel coronavirus.

Consistent with section 2202(a)(2) of the Act, while these waivers apply automatically to all states that elect to use them and without further application, state agencies must first inform their FNS Regional Office if they elect to be subject to the waiver(s).

The following chart lists all waivers that DECAL has elected to utilize and for which notice was previously given to USDA's Southeast Regional Office (SERO). Additionally, organizations who wish to use any of the listed waivers must first notify DECAL's Policy Administrator at Kate.Alexander@decal.ga.gov.

Waiver Type	Applicable Program(s)	Brief Description of Waiver (*For full details, refer to the actual waiver memo.*)
Activity Requirement in At-Risk Afterschool	CACFP	The requirement that At-Risk afterschool care centers serve afterschool meals and snacks in a structured and supervised environment, with an educational or enrichment activity is waived during the public health emergency.
Meal Pattern Flexibilities	CACFP & SFSP	The requirement to serve meals that meet the meal pattern requirements is waived during the public health emergency.
Meal Times Waiver	CACFP & SFSP	The requirement that meals must follow meal service time requirements is waived during the public health emergency.
Non-congregate Feeding	CACFP & SFSP	The requirement that meals be served in a congregate setting and must be consumed by participants on site is waived during the public health emergency.
Onsite Monitoring Waiver for SFSP Sponsors	SFSP	***For sponsors only*** – FNS waives that SFSP monitoring requirements included at 7 CFR 225.15(d) be conducted on site.

Onsite Monitoring Waiver for State agencies	SFSP	***For State agency only*** – FNS waives that SFSP monitoring requirements included at 7 CFR 225.7(d)(2)(ii) be conducted onsite.
Onsite Monitoring Waiver for State agencies	CACFP	***For State agency only*** – FNS waives that CACFP monitoring requirements included at Section 17 of the NSLA as well as 7 CFR 226.6(b)(1) and 226.6(m)(6) be conducted onsite.
Monitoring Waiver for Sponsoring Organizations	CACFP	***For sponsors only*** – CACFP monitoring requirements are waived as follows: (1) sponsors may conduct two reviews of their CACFP facilities; (2) only one CACFP facility review is required to be unannounced; (3) FNS waives that at least one unannounced review must include observation of a meal service; (4) FNS waives the requirement that not more than six months may elapse between reviews; and (5) allows sponsors to review new CACFP facilities as a desk audit.
Parent Pick-Up	CACFP & SFSP	Under this waiver, program operators in a state with an approved waiver allowing non-congregate meal distribution during COVID-19-related operations may distribute meals to a parent or guardian to take home to their eligible children.

Click here to explore the Captain Planet Foundation's recommended resources for learning at home. Our current situation highlights now, more than ever, the importance of kids understanding how to connect with nature, how to grow their own food, how to build their agency for problem solving, and how to be an empathetic global citizen. Captain Planet Foundation has pulled together a curated guide of free or low-cost resources for K-12 students to continue learning and explore their environment including live cooking classes with Chef Asata Reid, Life Chef and founder of Feed the People.

Resources for Farm to School and Farm to Early Care and Education
Click here to explore the National Farm to School Network's resources related to COVID-19 that are relevant to the farm to school and farm to early care and education community.

About Open Records Requests

Can I still submit an Open Records Request?
Yes, the Open Records staff will continue to operate at full capacity. Open Records staff will respond to all requests within 72 hours.

About the Office of State Administrative Hearings

Will the Office of State Administrative Hearings (OSAH) be scheduling or hearing DECAL appeals?
OSAH has cancelled all hearings at all hearing locations until March 31, 2020; cases will be rescheduled. Check your email for updates from OSAH or visit their website at https://osah.ga.gov. If you have a matter before any court other than OSAH, you will need to contact that court system directly.

About Head Start and Early Head Start Programs

Excerpted from ECLKC.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

What about wages & benefits for Head Start and Early Head Start staff?
The Office of Head Start (OHS) is directing programs to continue to pay wages and provide benefits for staff unable to report to work during center closures necessary to address COVID-19. This additional emergency response flexibility is important to ensure critical grants management activities can continue during closures. It will help ensure staff are ready and able to return to work as soon as it is possible to resume operations. This flexibility remains in effect through April 30, 2020 unless further extended by OHS.

What can Head Start programs do to support families?
During center closures, employees should continue to engage families and to deliver services to the extent possible, remotely. As for meals, see the prior referenced section on CACFP flexibilities. Head Start and Early Head Start programs may provide meals and snacks to children during center closures.

- Programs could assemble bags of food, including formula for enrolled infants, and deliver them to homes in agency school buses or other agency vehicles. Families could come out to collect the bags or they could be delivered to the door.
- Food could be assembled, and families could pick it up at a center or other location. Care should be taken to avoid large groups and prevent anyone who is sick from coming to collect food. This could include a "drive-through" station in areas where families have cars.
- Programs could check with local schools, churches, or other community organizations to see if there are partnership opportunities to increase the efficiency of food distribution.

FOR FAMILIES: Regarding CAPS

Is CAPS currently accepting new applicants?
Yes, CAPS is currently accepting new applicants. However, applicants must continue to meet our established eligibility requirements. Information on our eligibility requirements is available at caps.decal.ga.gov. Families may apply online at www.gateway.ga.gov.

How do I know if my child care provider or local school system is closed?
Contact your provider or local school system to verify closure. Local news stations will often list school closures. You can also visit www.gadoe.org for information on school closures.

If my local school system closes, can my child go to my child care provider?
If the child care provider is open, has space, and an active scholarship for your child, and the Department of Public Health or your local health department hasn't contacted you and instructed you to isolate at home, your child can attend that program.

What are my options for child care assistance if my child care program is closed, and I need child care to go to work or school?
When you arrange alternative child care for your child(ren), you must submit a *provider change request* as a case change on Georgia Gateway at https://gateway.ga.gov. The alternative provider must be approved to participate in the CAPS program.

If I have a CAPS scholarship, and I am instructed to isolate my child for 14 days, and my child doesn't attend the CAPS child care program, am I still required to pay the CAPS weekly assessed fee?
The family is responsible for paying the family fee to the child care provider if any child is in care; however, you should check with your child care provider about their payment policy when children are absent.

Am I responsible to pay my weekly assessed fee if I am on a temporary layoff because of an employer work stoppage?
You can report a change to your case through Georgia Gateway at https://gateway.ga.gov informing CAPS that you have experienced a temporary layoff. Your family fee may be reduced based on your change in income.

How will my application, renewal, or case change be handled if the due date occurs while CAPS offices are closed?
CAPS will work diligently to complete all applications, renewals, and change requests as quickly as possible. If State offices are closed, or staffing is limited, there could be some delays. Thank you for your patience as we process your application, renewal, or change request.

How would a state office closure impact my renewal that is due?
Renewals are not be impacted at this time because CAPS staff will be available to process renewals remotely. You can help in this process by uploading copies or by using your cell phone to take pictures of your documents and uploading them to Gateway at https://gateway.ga.gov.

How can I submit my renewal application and verification documentation if my local DFCS office is closed?
Families can use their phone or computer to apply for benefits and upload verification documents by taking a picture of their application and documents and uploading them to Gateway at https://gateway.ga.gov.

If I have a CAPS scholarship and my child care provider is not open for business, can I take my child to another child care provider?
Yes, you may take your child to any child care provider who may participate in the CAPS program. If you take your child(ren) to another provider, you must submit a *provider change request* as a case change on Georgia Gateway at https://gateway.ga.gov.

What is the best way to contact CAPS if I have questions related to my CAPS scholarships and/or any adverse actions taken on my case?
CAPS can be contacted by calling 1-833-4GA-CAPS or sending us communication by clicking the "Contact Us" link on our website https://caps.decal.ga.gov.

FOR FAMILIES: General Questions

My child is currently not attending child care, but my provider is still charging a weekly fee to hold her spot. Are they allowed to do that?

Tuition and fee agreements are between you and your child care provider and are outlined in the provider's policies and procedures that should be discussed when you enrolled your child. Fees charged during absences should be covered in the program's policies and procedures.

I usually have access to my child's classroom at any time. Can I still expect that?
To reduce the risk of exposure, child care programs now have the option to restrict families' access to parts of the program's facility. Specifically, families may be asked to stop at the front door of the facility or the door of the classroom.

Governor Brian Kemp issued an Executive Order that bans all gatherings of more than 10 people unless the group can always maintain spacing of at least six feet between people. What does this mean for child care programs?
Obviously, caregivers in a child care program must be near the children entrusted to their care. Because child care providers cannot always maintain six feet of distance between people, group sizes must be no more than 10 people, including staff, to follow the order. This means that children in care should be in classrooms in child care learning centers and family child care learning homes with no more than 10 people, including their caregivers.

My child care program usually takes children on field trips when school is not in session. Will they cancel previously scheduled field trips?
To ensure the safety of children, families, staff, and communities, all scheduled field trips should be canceled through April 6, 2020.

My child care provider is doing health checks at drop off every morning. Are they allowed to do that?
Some child care providers are doing health checks as children arrive each morning. These health checks could include taking the temperature of each child and adult who enters the building and asking questions about whether the child, or anyone the child has been exposed to, is experiencing fever or cold symptoms. This is just another way to protect the health of your child.

How can families find the meal sites located in their area or community?
DECAL is getting the word out about where families can find meals for kids during school closures. We're collecting updates from our sponsoring organizations across the state and posting them here. Share the link with your friends to help spread the news that there are opportunities around Georgia for kids to get a healthy meal. Check back often for updates.

My child's school is closed. Are there any activities we can do at home to help my child continue to learn?
Yes. There are lots of great online resources for home learning activities. Visit our GELDS resource page at: http://gelds.decal.ga.gov/Resources.aspx for a list of activities and resources. Family Connection Partnership has also created a list of family resources and digital learning activities. Go to: https://gafcp.org/coronavirus/.

What can my child and I do to stop the spread of COVID-19?

- Stay home if possible
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue; then dispose of the tissue in the trash.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Get a flu shot.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if my child exhibits symptoms?
Contact your primary care physician's office or your local public health department.

Are there any resources for supporting learning at home while child care and Pre-K programs are closed?
Below are resources by age group. Additional resources will be added as they are developed.

All Ages

- 49 Fun Physical Activities
https://activeforlife.com/49-fun-physical-activities-to-do-with-kids-aged-2-to-4/

Toddlers:

- Everyday learning activities for toddlers and three year olds
https://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/development/intellectual/everyday-toddler-lessons/?
- Fun, simple activities to engage your toddler and three year old in learning
https://thisreadingmama.com/simple-toddler-activities/
- Fun art, science, math and literacy activities for toddlers and threes
https://talkingisteaching.org/
- Great ideas to keep your toddlers busy and learning
https://busytoddler.com/category/activities/
- Tons of simple and fun activities to encourage literacy and school readiness
https://www.vroom.org/
- 20 learning activities for toddlers and threes that use items easily available around the house
https://www.powerfulmothering.com/20-easy-learning-activities-for-toddlers/

Preschool (3 & 4 year olds):

- 25 Indoor Play Activities from a Preschool Teacher
https://www.parentmap.com/article/25-indoor-play-activities-from-a-preschool-teacher
- 20 Indoor Activities besides TV
https://theartofsimple.net/20-indoor-activities-for-kids-besides-tv/