Frequently Asked Questions
Related to COVID-19/Coronavirus
(***Updated 4-6-21**; 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 at the beginning of this document. For additional information, **scroll through** the questions and answers on **the following pages** organized by DECAL programs.*

*We update this document **when we receive new or revised questions and answers OR as new information becomes available.** Visit this webpage often for updates.*

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

Governor Brian Kemp signed new Executive Orders on March 31, 2021, extending the public health state of emergency and providing additional guidance for *Empowering a Healthy Georgia in response to COVID-19*, effective April 8, 2021 through April 30, 2021. The complete Executive Orders can be found at:
https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2021-executive-orders

Current Questions regarding Child Care Licensing (in response to March 31 Executive Order):

Field trip guidance was not included in the Governor's March 31, 2021 Executive Order. Can we now resume field trips?

Field trips are still not allowed. The Governor signed a new Executive Order on March 31, 2021, effective April 8, 2021 through April 30, 2021. However, a previous Executive Order signed by the Governor on March 24, 2020, suspended field trips due to a public health state of emergency. Field trips remain suspended until the public health state of emergency ends.

Family access to child care classrooms was not included in the March 31, 2021 Executive Order. After April 8, 2021 are families allowed to enter classrooms?

Families must continue to drop their children off at the front door of the facility or at the child's classroom door. The Governor signed a new Executive Order on March 31, 2021, effective April 8, 2021 through April 30, 2021. However, a previous Executive Order signed by the Governor on March 24, 2020, required parents to drop off and pick up children at the door of the facility or at their child's classroom door due to the public health state of emergency. This practice is required until the public health state of emergency ends.

Are child care programs allowed to have in-house field trips, including individuals who conduct their enrichment programs outdoors, such as sports, science, and magic programs?

The Executive Order of March 31, 2021 states that unnecessary visitors are not allowed in child care programs.

Are child care programs allowed to mix classrooms at the beginning and end of the day?

The Governor signed a new Executive Order on March 31, 2021, effective April 8, 2021 through April 30, 2021. However, a previous Executive Order signed by the Governor on March 24, 2020, requires child care providers to continue to practice social distancing due to the public health state of emergency. This practice is required until the Public Health State of Emer public health state of emergency ends. In child care, social distancing means keeping each group of children contained to their own classroom, not combining classes, and not sharing playground and mealtime space with other classes.

Sign-in and sign-out procedures were not included in the child care section of the March 31, 2021 Executive Order. What are the required sign-in and sign-out procedures?
Child care licensing rules and regulations require children to be signed in and out of the child care program every day of attendance. Sign-in and sign-out procedures are addressed in the Industry, Commerce, & Organization Section of the March 31, 2021 Executive Order. It states the following procedures are required for businesses: Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces regularly including, but not limited to, PIN entry devices, signature pads, and other point of sale equipment, door handles, and light switches.

The following items were not addressed in the March 31, 2021 Executive Order; however, strict attention to sanitation is recommended, and all child care sanitation and hygiene rules and regulations must continue to be followed. Additionally, it is recommended that child care programs follow DPH and CDC recommendations as outlined in the COVID-19 Guidance for Georgia Child Care Programs.

- Providing meals in classrooms rather than in congregated or communal settings where possible.
- Surfaces and objects that are frequently touched must be sanitized regularly including, but not limited to, toys, games, and objects not ordinarily cleaned daily.
- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions should be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves.
- Items that need to be cleaned should be set aside in a dishpan with soapy water or in a separate container marked for soiled toys.

DECAL Main Office Reopened:

DECAL's main office at 2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE, 754 East Tower, Atlanta, GA 30334 has reopened with a skeleton crew (including a member of the Commissioner's Executive Cabinet) to receive visitors on **Tuesdays** and **Thursdays** only.

Access to the Twin Towers, where DECAL's main office is located, is managed by the Georgia Building Authority (GBA) and the Department of Public Safety. GBA will encourage the public to wear face coverings but will not deny access for failure to do so. GBA will place infrared temperature screening scanners at public entrance points, and all employees and the public will be screened to determine if an individual has a temperature at 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher; if so, the individual will be denied access. Other strategies to help ensure the health and safety of employees and the public (i.e., social distancing, handwashing, frequent disinfecting/cleaning of the office space, etc.) will be in effect.

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

On March 12, 2021, Governor Brian P. Kemp issued an Executive Order providing revised and continued guidance for *Empowering a Healthy Georgia* in response to COVID-19 effective **March 16, 2021 through March 31, 2021.** The complete Executive Orders can be found at:
https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2021-executive-orders

On November 30, 2020, Governor Brian P. Kemp issued an Executive Order providing additional guidance for *Empowering a Healthy Georgia* in response to COVID-19 effective **December 1, 2020 through December 15, 2020**. The Public Health Emergency is in effect through **January 8, 2021**. The complete Executive Orders can be found at:

https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders

On October 15, 2020, Governor Brian P. Kemp issued an Executive Order providing additional guidance for *Empowering a Healthy Georgia* in response to COVID-19 effective **October 16 through October 31, 2020**. The Public Health Emergency is in effect through **November 9, 2020**. The complete Executive Order can be found at:
https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders

On August 31, 2020, Governor Brian P. Kemp issued two Executive Orders providing additional guidance for *Empowering a Healthy Georgia* in response to COVID-19 and renewing the Public Health Emergency in Response to COVID-19 through October 10, 2020. Both Executive Orders can be found at:
https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders

On July 15, 2020, Governor Brian P. Kemp issued an Executive Order providing additional guidance for *Empowering a Healthy Georgia* in response to COVID-19 effective **July 16 through July 31, 2020**. The complete Executive Order can be found at:
https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders

On June 29, 2020, Governor Brian P. Kemp issued an Executive Order renewing the Public Health Emergency and guidance for *Reviving a Healthy Georgia* in response to COVID-19 through **August 11, 2020**. The complete Executive Order can be found at:
https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders

On June 11, 2020, Governor Brian P. Kemp issued an Executive Order effective **June 16** through **June 30, 2020** providing additional guidance for *Reviving a Healthy Georgia* in response to COVID-19. The complete Executive Order can be found at:
https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders

On May 28, 2020, Governor Brian P. Kemp issued two Executive Orders providing additional guidance for *Reviving a Healthy Georgia* in response to COVID-19 and extending the Public Health Emergency in Georgia until July 12, 2020. The complete Executive Orders can be found at:
https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders

On May 12, 2020, Governor Brian P. Kemp issued an Executive Order providing additional guidance for *Reviving a Healthy Georgia* in response to COVID-19, including guidance affecting child care. The complete Executive Order can be found at:
https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders

On April 23, 2020, Governor Brian P. Kemp issued an Executive Order titled *Reviving A Healthy Georgia*, effective May 1, 2020, at 12:00 a.m. through May 13, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. Among other instructions, this Executive Order addresses how licensed child care learning centers and family child care learning homes will operate under Section VII Education and Children. The complete Executive Order can be found at:
https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders.

On April 8, 2020, Governor Kemp signed an executive order **extending Georgia's public health state of emergency** through **May 13, 2020** and extending the **statewide shelter in place order** through **April 30, 2020**. All provisions of the statewide shelter in place order remain in effect.

On April 2, 2020, Governor Brian Kemp issued an Executive Order requiring Georgians to shelter-in-place to stop the spread of COVID-19. The Executive Order can be found at: https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders.

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.

Questions regarding COVID-19 Vaccinations:

Who is eligible to receive a vaccine?
Any employee of a DECAL licensed or exempt program or a Georgia's Pre-K Programs is eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine as of March 8, 2021.

How do I register for a COVID -19 vaccination appointment?
For locations and COVID-19 appointment registration, go to https://myvaccinegeorgia.com/ or www.dph.georgia.gov/covid-vaccine.

Will I have side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine?
Although often mild and short-lived, side effects can persist after vaccination for 48 hours. These can include chills, fever, fatigue, headache, and aches that may interfere with an individual's ability to work. The Department of Public Health recommends scheduling vaccinations when staff have 24-48 hours to recover. Additionally, it is recommended that employees stagger their vaccination times in case multiple people experience side effects.

Can I still test positive for COVD-19 after I am vaccinated?
Vaccination has been shown to protect individuals from severe disease and death. However, you can still test positive or have symptoms from COVID-19 after vaccination. Positive personnel still need to isolate for the full period as defined by CDC. Staff with symptoms should stay home and get tested for COVID-19 immediately.

After my vaccination, is it safe for me to stop wearing a mask and practicing social distancing?
Continued mitigation measures should still be used to prevent spread. This includes using masks indoors, maintaining six feet between individuals, contact tracing, and continuing to work with your local health department. Child care guidance can be found on the DECAL website.

What should I do if I am exposed to COVID-19 after I am vaccinated?

The CDC has updated guidelines for quarantine of individuals who are exposed to COVID-19 after vaccination. Vaccinated persons exposed to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they meet **all** of the following criteria:

- Are fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥2 weeks following receiving the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥2 weeks following receiving one dose of a single-dose vaccine);
- Are within three months following receiving the last dose in the series; and
- Have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure.

Persons who do not meet all three of the above criteria should continue to follow current quarantine guidance after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

For Providers regarding STABLE Payments, Round 2:

Are a provider's children allowed to be counted for the STABLE payment if they are there for a day or homeschooling, etc.?
Providers cannot count their own children when completing attendance for the STABLE application.

Are we getting money for attending students during October or all students who could have attended based on the center capacity? or both? We had very low enrollment in October because very few children have come back. We are in the red because they are not in attendance as they are scared to come back due to the virus. We are at 35% compared to last February roster?
Attendance for the application will be based on October attendance at your program location. Eligible October attendance is the total of all children, of all ages, who attended **in-person at least once in the month of October**. Virtual attendance cannot be included unless a child is attending a Georgia's Pre-K class virtually. So, for a program that is Open during the application period from 12:01 a.m. on 11/16/20 through 6:00 p.m. on 12/2/20 but was closed in October, they would report 0 attendance on the application but would still be eligible for a $2,000 benefit payment.

Can we count as attendance one child that for health reasons does not come to the center but we provide for this child virtual learning every day?
Virtual attendance cannot be included unless a child is attending a Georgia's Pre-K class virtually.

Can we count before and after school children's? Or just full day attendance?
Eligible October attendance is the total of all children, of all ages, who attended in-person at least once in the month of October. If a child attends full day and before and after, or just after school, you may count that child only once.

To be clear, is the "$240 per child in attendance in October" for both in person and distance learners? We offer both.
Virtual attendance cannot be included unless a child is attending a Georgia's Pre-K class virtually.

Do I count private school students in the Pre-K setting?
Children attending a licensed center in a non-Georgia Pre-K classroom can be counted in the attendance for the STABLE application. They should be counted in the appropriate age group category as outlined in the application instructions.

Do virtual Georgia Pre-K classes count for the STABLE payment?
Yes, a child attending a Georgia's Pre-K class virtually can be counted for the STABLE payment.

Do we need to send any attendance sheets with application?
When applying for STABLE, providers do not need to submit any documentation, but you must maintain documentation for the attendance you counted in the application in the event of an audit by DECAL.

I am a family day care and keep 6 kids most days, but some days I have kids out and take drop-in kids and also have 2 after school kids. Can I count the drop-in kids?
Eligible October attendance is the total of all children, of all ages, who attended in-person at least once in the month of October. Drop-in children should be included in this count since they attended at least once in the month.

Will the amount of the STABLE payment be according to the licensed capacity or the number of students we had in October??
The maximum payment will be based on the licensed capacity of each program location. This means that when calculating the total benefit payment amount based on Total Attendance reported for October, the rate of $240 per child will not apply when attendance has exceeded the total capacity.

I'm a home day care. I have 6 for pay and 6 nonpay. Can I claim 12 kids for the STABLE payment?
As a family child care learning home, you should count only your for pay children. A minimum benefit payment of $2,000 will be made on all applications. This means that if the total attendance reported for October is 8 or fewer, including 0, the payment will be $2,000.

If a child is enrolled in public school Pre-K virtually and has come to day care every day, do we put them in the Pre-K box or leave them as private pay, which is what they are?
Since that child is in your care as private pay, you would count that child as private pay by counting them in the appropriate age category but do not count them as Georgia Pre-K since they are not attending your Georgia Pre-K class.

We use a couple of our classrooms for a 1/2 preschoolers and then after cleaning the rooms, they are used for children in our afterschool program. How do we show that in applying for STABLE by looking at our max capacity for the center?
Eligible October attendance is the total of all children, of all ages, who attended in-person at least once in the month of October. The maximum payment will be based on the licensed capacity of each program location even if the total attendance is greater than the licensed capacity. This means that when calculating the total benefit payment amount based on total attendance reported for October, the rate of $240 per child will not apply when attendance has exceeded the total capacity.

We have school age children at our school but that program is exempt. Can we receive funds for them?
STABLE is for licensed programs only. Children attending licensed exempt classrooms or programs cannot be counted in the total attendance for the STABLE application.

What about children who still receive online learning with teachers? We still provide materials weekly and a special online instructor who was hired specifically for these children who were worried about attending in person.
Virtual attendance cannot be included unless a child is attending a Georgia's Pre-K class virtually.

What if you are open but have no attendance for October?
You should still apply and will be eligible to receive the minimum payment amount of $2,000.

What if your attendance changed in November, for example, if your number increased?
While we understand there may be a fluctuation in month-to-month attendance. We are using October as the basis for all providers as that is the last full month for which we can measure attendance. Eligible October attendance is the total of all children, of all ages, who attended in-person at least once in the month of October.

What is private attendance?
Private attendance is the attendance for which no public funds are offsetting the cost of caring for children in attendance at your program.

Will the STABLE grant take into account the 24-hour centers (that have 3 shifts)?
Yes, however the maximum payment will be based on the licensed capacity of each program location even if the total attendance is greater than the licensed capacity. This means that when calculating the total benefit payment amount based on total attendance reported for October, the rate of $240 per child will not apply when attendance has exceeded the total capacity.

Payment Amount
If as a family daycare provider, we had only 4 children, does that mean we do not qualify because that would be less than the minimum of $2,000.
A minimum benefit payment of $2,000 will be made on ALL applications. This means that if the total attendance reported for October is 8 or fewer, including 0, the payment will be $2,000.

Is there a maximum amount per center for STABLE funds?
The maximum payment will be based on the licensed capacity of each program location even if the total attendance is greater than the licensed capacity. This means that when calculating the total benefit payment amount based on total attendance reported for October, the rate of $240 per child will not apply when attendance has exceeded the total capacity.

My day care capacity is 8 children, but as of October, I had only 5 children enrolled due to COVID-19. Do I get $1,200 for the 5 children or $1,920 for my number of 8 capacity?
A minimum benefit payment of $2,000 will be made on all applications. This means that if the total attendance reported for October is 8 or fewer, including 0, the payment will be $2,000.

Program Eligibility
Are licensed exempt providers eligible for the STABLE funding?
No, license exempt providers are not eligible for STABLE.

Are afterschool programs eligible for this benefit?
Yes, if you are a licensed provider and have an operating status of Open, you are eligible to apply.

Can you qualify for STABLE if you received a PPP loan/grant?
Yes, receiving PPP funds does not prohibit an eligible provider from applying.

Do we have to be Quality Rated to receive the STABLE, Round 2?

No, being Quality Rated is not an eligibility requirement for STABLE.

Has there been any further discussion on allowing exempt programs that are specifically offering E Learning care (full day) to families where their district is not open full in person instruction? Our E-learning has more children enrolled than our licensed child care program.
STABLE was designed to be a benefit of being a licensed child care program in Georgia and cannot be provided as a benefit to license exempt programs based on the state and federal regulations that govern how DECAL is able to pay sub-recipients.

If a center has more than one location, operating under same tax ID #, can we apply for STABLE for each center?
Yes, an owner may submit a STABLE application for each licensed location.

If centers are providing only virtual learning, will they be eligible for STABLE funds?
Yes, however since virtual attendance cannot be counted, you would only be eligible for the minimum amount of $2,000.

If you purchased a facility on 10/23, would you be eligible to apply for this grant?
Yes, if you purchased and program and the change of ownership process has been completed and permission to operate has been granted, you may use the October attendance records from the prior owner to apply. If you are unable to obtain those records, you would still be eligible to apply for the minimum payment of $2,000.

Reporting Requirements
Where can I find the STABLE spending reporting procedures?
Refer to the instruction document in the application or request the procedures by email to stable@decal.ga.gov.

When is the documentation for the first STABLE payment due?
Providers are not required to submit any documentation to DECAL except when requested through an audit by DECAL.

Other
Are the STABLE funds going to be considered as taxable income for 2020?
Yes, STABLE funds are considered taxable income.

I have about 1/2 enrollment for October but still have full enrollment expenses. Can STABLE grants be adjusted to reflect actual expenses to help centers stay open and solvent?
No, STABLE was designed to be a benefit of being a licensed child care provider in Georgia and required the use of a consistent process and methodology that enabled DECAL to disperse the funds rapidly.

When will the next round of STABLE funds be issued to our banks after we apply?
For providers who received a payment through the first round, we anticipate your payment will be deposited between December 8th and 23rd. Providers who have to complete the payment validation process, they must begin that process by January 15, 2021 in order to receive their payment.

If we plan to use funds for payroll, would that fall under "retaining & hiring current teachers/staff"?

Yes.

If I cannot complete the application in one sitting, will I be able to save the information and come back to where I left off?
The application is not set up to save your information. The application instructions include a worksheet you can use to prepare your information and quickly complete the application.

Exempt Program Assistance
Are there any assistance benefits for license exempt programs?
DECAL has limited resources to address the needs of child care in Georgia and at this time it is unknown whether or not funding opportunities will be made available to license exempt programs.

FOR PROVIDERS: Regarding Georgia's Pre-K Program

What is the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) benefit and what Georgia's Pre-K Program families are eligible?
The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) of 2020 includes a benefit called Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) for children who received free or reduced-price school meals in the 2019-2020 school year, but their public school was closed. Following is more information about the P-EBT:

- Only children who were enrolled in a **public school Pre-K program** and received free or reduced-price school lunch/breakfast LAST school year (beginning in March) are eligible to apply for the benefits.
- Pre-K students who attended Pre-K in a child care program are not eligible. The P-EBT funds come from the National School Lunch Program, not CACFP. Under the FFCRA children who would have received free or reduced-price meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act **if the school had not been closed** are eligible to receive P-EBT benefit.
- Children enrolled for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year aren't eligible.
- If the family does not know their child's testing ID number (which is needed to apply), they should contact their local public school system. School systems have been authorized to give a student's testing ID number to the student's family.
- Families may apply for the P-EBT from 7/28/2020 through September 25, 2020.
- To access the application, families should go to https://dfcs.georgia.gov/pandemic-electronic-benefit-transfer.

REMEMBER: Updates for Georgia's Pre-K Program for the 2020-2021 school year can be found at: http://www.decal.ga.gov/PreK/ProjectDirectors.aspx

Is there additional guidance for programs regarding Work Sampling Online (WS0) for the 2019-2020 school year?
Guidance for bringing closure to WSO is included in the *Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines Addendum* posted at http://decal.ga.gov/PreK/GuidelinesandAppendix.aspx on April 21, 2020. Also, guidance for WSO closure was emailed to Georgia's Pre-K lead teachers and program directors the week of April 20, 2020.

Is there additional guidance for programs regarding close-out for the end of the Pre-K school year?
Guidance for closing out Pre-K is included in the *Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines Addendum* that was posted at http://decal.ga.gov/PreK/GuidelinesandAppendix.aspx on April 21, 2020.

When will applicants be notified about Georgia's Pre-K grant awards for the 2020-2021 school year?
Due to the public health emergency, the 2021 budget for the State of Georgia has not been appropriated. Pre-K grant agreements for the upcoming school year will be delayed until the budget is approved and signed by the Governor.

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) and Day Camps

KOALA

During COVID AND holidays, we operate shorter hours. Can you add this option to KOALA rather than requiring us to complete a license amendment?
The rules and regulations require that an amendment be submitted to change a licensed program's operating hours. DECAL will consider adding application for amendments to future enhancements for DECAL KOALA so that programs can submit these requests through DECAL KOALA.

Where can we get refreshed on steps to update our operating status in KOALA?
DECAL held a provider webinar on the Required Reporting updates in DECAL KOALA in which we walk programs through how to update their program's operating status. The webinar and presentation are posted at http://www.decal.ga.gov/CCS/Notifications.aspx. Click on the Webinar tab and go to DECAL KOALA Required Report Upgrades.

How do I enter closure dates in KOALA?
DECAL held a provider webinar on the Required Reporting updates in DECAL KOALA in which we walk programs through how to update their program's operating status, including submitting dates for temporary closures. The webinar and presentation are posted at http://www.decal.ga.gov/CCS/Notifications.aspx. Click on the Webinar tab and go to DECAL KOALA Required Report Upgrades.

Other

About First Aid and CPR training: Because outside visitors cannot be allowed into the building, could we host a First Aid class after hours since it is required for staff?
The Executive Order currently in effect limits outside visitors to child care programs. First Aid & CPR classes can be scheduled after business hours if trainers do not have another training location; however, no more than 50 people can be in attendance. Also, social distancing and the use of PPE must be observed.

Is it necessary to report closures on MAJOR holidays?
Yes, licensed programs are required to report all temporary closures. This is important information for DECAL to have so we can direct families who need child care to programs that are open on major holidays.

COVID Rules/Guidance

Can we use the sand and water tables now or do they still need to be individual boxes?
To prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the child care environment, it is recommended that you prohibit water play using water tables and sensory play activities using items such as rice, beans, sand, or playdough.
http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/covid_guidanceGeorgia_ChildCare_8_12_2020.pdf

Do centers have the right to restrict therapists. Therapists are going in and out of schools and centers. We have asked parents to see therapists at their offices, not onsite at our center.
Child care facilities are required to prohibit unnecessary visitors, and it is recommended that only children and staff required for daily operations are allowed inside the building and classrooms…with the following exceptions (these individuals can enter once screened): Health professionals who support children with special healthcare needs, early intervention service coordinators and providers for children with individualized Family Services Plans (IFSP). Also, itinerant teachers and related service providers for children with Individual Education Plans (IEP) working in compliance with their agency protocols are allowed to be in the classroom once screened. **Providers are encouraged to work collaboratively with professionals to safely meet the needs of children in their care.**
http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/covid_guidanceGeorgia_ChildCare_8_12_2020.pdf

Has the requirement that parents sign their children in and out of child care resumed yet?
No. While a child must be signed in/signed out at drop-off and pick-up, it is acceptable for center staff to sign the child in/out. If a computer or keypad system located inside the facility is used for sign in/sign out, either the parents OR child care staff can sign children in and out. The computer or keypad system must be disinfected after each use. If a tablet located outside the facility is used by families during drop-off and pick-up, the tablet must be disinfected after each use. If a paper sign-in system is used for sign-in, writing utensils should be sanitized after each use if families are permitted to sign children in themselves. The COVID-19 Guidance for Georgia Child Care Facilities can be accessed at
http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/covid_guidanceGeorgia_ChildCare_8_12_2020.pdf

I've seen many child care FB posts on in-house field trips in programs. Aren't field trips still restricted?
Per Executive Order, field trips and non-essential visitors are prohibited. The COVID-19 Guidance for Georgia Child Care Facilities can be accessed at
http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/covid_guidanceGeorgia_ChildCare_8_12_2020.pdf

Are we allowed to have extracurricular providers come into the school?
Per Executive Order, non-essential visitors are prohibited. The COVID-19 Guidance for Georgia Child Care Facilities can be accessed at
http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/covid_guidanceGeorgia_ChildCare_8_12_2020.pdf

What are the transportation rules for child care?
Governor Kemp's July 15 Executive Order does not specify any requirements pertaining to the transportation of children; however, Governor Kemp's March 24, 2020, Executive Order prohibits field trips by suspending rule 591-1-1-.13. The field trip restriction in the March 24th Executive Order is valid until the Public Health Emergency Order is terminated or ceases to be renewed by the Governor.

Child care programs may continue transporting children to and from children's homes and can now transport to and from school to facilitate access to the program, but field trips that require children to be transported are still prohibited as it relates to social distancing to mitigate COVID-19 spread. Providers are strongly encouraged to practice social distancing during transportation and to disinfect vehicles before and after each trip.

Referencing CDC guidance, if transport vehicles are used by the program, drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g., hand hygiene, cloth face coverings). For instructions on cleaning and disinfecting transport vehicles, reference CDC guidance for bus transit operators.

The June 11, 2020 Executive Order bans all gatherings of more than 50 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 50 people, including staff, to follow the order. NOTE: Staff: child ratios must be followed per the rules and regulations.

Are behavioral or other types of therapists allowed to visit a licensed child care program?
If a therapist must visit a child in a licensed child care program, the therapist must be counted in the group size of 50 persons in a self-contained classroom. The therapist must follow all requirements including initial health check upon arrival, before entering the program, maintain social distance, and not visit other classrooms, programs, or schools. Additionally, the program must ensure that criminal background check rules are followed. Visitors to child care programs are currently limited, and if possible, therapy should not take place at the child care program. Contact your licensing consultant if the child care setting is the only option for therapy.

Can you explain the group limit situation? So, we can have 50 persons per room but do not have to remain six feet apart?
The June 11, 2020 Executive Order allows 50 persons in a space without having to maintain six feet apart. The 50 persons include campers and staff members.

How does this work when it comes to contact sports/recreational programs? What is recommended when it comes to social distancing guidelines in the gym?

The group size should remain no more than 50 persons because children interact closely together. Consider implementing activities that do not require physical contact with one another.

Does the 50 people max also apply to outdoor classrooms and playgrounds?
Yes. There can be no more than 50 individuals in a group 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 the partitions in the shared classrooms are full length accordion walls and each has a bathroom and outside door, does the 50 people rule still apply?
If the room has an accordion wall, the accordion wall may be used:

- if the accordion wall runs floor to ceiling with no more than a one-foot space between the top of the accordion wall and the ceiling; AND
- once the accordion wall is opened to create two self-contained classrooms, if each classroom has their own entrance, the accordion wall must always remain closed. If the room does not have two entrances, programs must ensure that at any given time no more than 50 people are within each space, and if people must pass through the room to access the other room, they must maintain appropriate social distancing of six feet between themselves and others as they pass through; AND
- there are no fire marshal restrictions to use the space as two separate rooms.

What would be the process for having additional space licensed to help meet the lower group size of under 50?
The program director should complete an amendment request form and submit the form to the program's assigned licensing consultant, including the floor plans with the approximate room measurements. CCS will process the amendment based on limiting the classroom to 50 occupants as per the Executive Order. Once the public health emergency is lifted, the consultant will then visit the program to measure the space and amend to provide the correct room measurements. The form can be found at http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/AmendmentForm.pdf.

Is my licensed child care program allowed to conduct field trips as a part of our summer camp program?
On June 11, 2020, Governor Brian Kemp issued another Executive order that prohibits child care programs from transporting children, other than programs that provide transportation to and from children's homes. Field trips that require children to be transported are not allowed at this time. The Executive Order also prohibits unnecessary visitors to licensed child care programs; therefore, on-site field trips are currently not allowed. Additionally, staff and children should refrain from visiting other locations where cross-contamination may be more likely to occur with the exposure to other persons and areas.

My licensed child care program offers a summer camp option for school-age children on summer break from school. The May 12, 2020 Executive Order signed by Governor Kemp included a section on Summer Camps which includes 32 requirements that these programs must follow. Does my licensed child care program have to follow each of these 32 requirements?
The Summer Camp section of the Executive Order includes overnight summer camps and programs that have applied for and received an exemption for Day Camps through DECAL. If your program has an approved exemption for Day Camps, then you must follow the 32 requirements. If the summer camp is operated under the licensed program, you are not required to follow the 32 requirements. You are,

however, required to follow the requirements under the Education and Children section of the Executive Order.

What is the guidance around swimming pools, water slides, inflatable water slides, and other water activities?
If swimming facilities are available, the program must ensure that the facility has the proper local approvals. The program must allow each group to swim only once per day and to stagger swimming times to avoid crowding at the swimming facilities. If a program chooses to use water slides, inflatable water slides, or other water activities, DECAL recommends that programs follow CDC guidelines for public pools, hot tubs, and water playgrounds including but not limited to cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, ensuring that children's clothing and towels for the water activity be kept separate before and after the activity (example – storing in individual Ziploc bags or other sealable containers). CDC guidance can be found at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/aquatic-venues.html. Swimming and Water Activities rules and regulations must also always be followed.

The Executive Order indicates that licensed programs must "Prohibit unnecessary visitors." What visitors are considered unnecessary? Programs must ensure that only individuals with a specific need in supporting the care of enrolled children are allowed at the child care program. CDC guidance for child care programs can be found at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-faq.html.

ABOUT DAY CAMPS

How should I decide whether to open a day camp under COVID-19 conditions?
To help you decide about opening a day camp this summer, reference the information provided by the CDC at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/Camps-Decision-Tree.pdf. Consider if the program can comply with the requirements of the Executive Order signed on May 12, 2020. Additionally, the Executive Order states that summer camps must follow CDC recommendations. Reference information found at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html.

Is a license-exempt day camp allowed to conduct field trips?
The Executive Order states that if camp vehicles are used to transport to on-site or off-site activities, the vehicle should be sanitized before and after each trip. Though the order permits transportation to take place, it does not state that field trips may be conducted. A day camp might conduct their own off-site activities outside of the day camp location. It is best practice to mitigate transmission of potential virus by not exposing children to other persons and environments outside control of the day camp. The camp should use the largest vehicle available to place children as far apart as possible, wear facemasks, and maintain hygienic and sanitation practices.

Are church VBS programs considered "day camps" and thus must follow these same guidelines?
It would be best practice for all programs to follow the Executive Order so that the health and safety of children, families, and staff are best protected.

It was mentioned that only individuals working with the youth are allowed in the building. My organization runs a lot of programs and not just youth programming. Does that mean we can't open yet?
Community centers and similar types of facilities might have activities occurring other than the day camp. These other programs can occur simultaneously, but the participants must be kept in different areas separate from and in no contact with the day camp program participants.

How do we handle the drop-off and pick-up processes?
Consider staggering times of arrival and departure in specific windows of time. Arrange for enough staff to be present to receive children, sign them in, perform health screenings, and escort children to their assigned spaces. Set up hand hygiene stations at entrances. At departure time, staff should sign out the campers and escort them to their families/vehicles.

On room barriers, could we have floor to ceiling walls professionally installed to create 2 classrooms?
Rooms divided by a full wall may be considered two separate rooms.

With everything opening back up and kids returning to care as parents go back to work, how and who do we tell who can attend and those who cannot attend?
Providers should update their open/close status in KOALA, so parents searching for child care know you are open. It is the provider's decision who may attend, but priority may be given to essential workers.

Should playgrounds and shared equipment be cleaned/sanitized between groups?
Follow CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfection recommendations.
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#CleanDisinfect.

What are the plans for hours outside of school like summer camp? Have guidelines or plans been created to help assist?
Guidelines for day camps remain the same as the guidelines for licensed programs due to the Executive Order that applies to all child care programs, licensed or exempt. A checklist and a guidance tool have been created to help all programs implement best practices to meet CDC recommendations and the Executive Order. Reference the DECAL COVID-19 webpage for these resources.

Can operating hours be adjusted to give staff time to clean before opening and closing?
Yes, a program operator can determine to adjust their hours as needed. Be sure to notify families so that they are aware of the plans. DECAL does not provide guidance on the hours of operation, though an amendment should be submitted if the hours will be adjusted for an extended time.

What if a consultant needs to come out to review new classrooms?
Amendment requests to add additional classrooms will be handled by remote methods during the current time.

Is every item on the COVID-19 checklist required? And since there is a space for the date, do we need to have one completed for each date and kept on file?
Items listed in the checklist are to ensure compliance with the Executive Order. This checklist is not required to be completed; however, it is recommended to help programs maintain compliance with the Executive Order.

Who do we contact if we have not received the COVID-19 Checklist?
Contact your regional licensing consultant.

Outside time: Since group sizes have changed, how can we accommodate the 45-minute rule?
Programs should consider staggering outdoor times for children in care to meet the amount of time children are required to be outside. Programs can consider scheduling outdoor times earlier in the mornings and later in the afternoon to meet this rule.

Will I be required to take temperatures before people enter my facility?
Providers should have the necessary equipment to provide temperature checks for children and staff on arrival.

Are staff required to wear a mask at all times?
Based on the CDC recommendation, when feasible, staff members and older children should wear face coverings within the facility. Cloth face coverings should NOT be put on babies and children under age two because of the danger of suffocation.

Can you detail the requirements of PPE?
Staff conducting daily health screenings should use the appropriate PPE, such as a face mask, gloves, and an outer garment that can be easily removed.

Can children age 3 and up remove masks during nap?
Yes. Masks not in use should be stored in individual, labeled bags or containers. If possible, at nap time, ensure that children's naptime mats (or cribs) are spaced out as much as possible, ideally six feet apart. Consider placing children head to toe to further reduce the potential for viral spread.

What are the requirements for returning to a center if a child has been sent home sick or not allowed to stay due to fever, etc.?
Follow DECAL's current communicable disease chart of recommendations for excluding sick children and readmitting them.

What are the details about virtual visits?
During COVID-19, the Child Care Licensing Division has adopted an alternative method to help monitor licensed opened programs. The virtual visits are being completed in two phases – Phase 1 will consist of uploading documents into DECAL KOALA for the Administrative Review Process, and Phase 2 will consist of a virtual visit for which providers would need Internet access, a smart phone device, or tablet to conduct.

Is there a waiver/hold harmless agreement providers should have families and staff sign when they reopen to avoid getting sued if someone contracts COVID-19?
DECAL cannot give legal advice to child care providers and will not require or provide a COVID-19 waiver. If you have questions, we recommend that you check with your program's attorney or legal advisor to help you make an informed decision.

Does the CDC recommend that children age three and older wear masks?

The CDC recommends that children, age three and above, wear face masks in public places. Because child care is considered a public place, business owners can decide how to best follow the CDC's guidance in their programs. Expecting young children to keep masks on…and keeping the masks clean… presents challenges to providers. Some children, after seeing their parents wear masks, might be comfortable wearing a mask, but others may be afraid or upset by a mask. If you choose to use face masks at your facility, any mask not in use must be kept in an individual, labeled Ziplock bag to ensure it remains sanitized. All reusable masks must be washed at the end of the day.

My CPR and first aid certification will expire soon. Can I still find training?
The American Red Cross continues to publish First Aid and CPR training by approved entities at locations throughout the state on their website at: https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class. Some published trainings include additional precautions trainers are taking during the COVID-19 event. CPR training by the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, the National Safety Council, and the American Safety and Health Institute are all acceptable. Also, a licensed or certified health care professional who meets the rule requirement can provide this training. CPR training is required to include hands-on training; therefore, CPR training conducted solely online does not meet the rule requirement. If you are having difficulty finding CPR training that includes the hands-on portion and the staff member's training expired on or after March 1, 2020 through the duration of the COVID-19 event, contact your Child Care Services regional consultant for guidance.

My child care program is currently doing drop-off and pick-up at the front door. How should we have families sign their children in and out each day?
The purpose of having families sign their children in and out each day is to ensure center staff can account for all children at any given time, in the event of a fire or similar type of emergency; therefore, child care programs should continue to follow a sign in/out procedure. During this time when access to facilities is limited, child care providers can sign children in and out for the parents if they are using a computer system. They can also use a tablet outside of the building during drop-off and pick-up to allow families to complete the check-in/check-out process, but the tablet would need to be disinfected after each use. A third option is to sign-in and out on paper. Programs should also maintain documentation as required by the rules and regulations. Programs can take extra precautions if pens are used by having multiple pens available. The pens should be sanitized with a disinfectant wipe or other means before another person uses the pen.

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 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.

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.

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.

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?

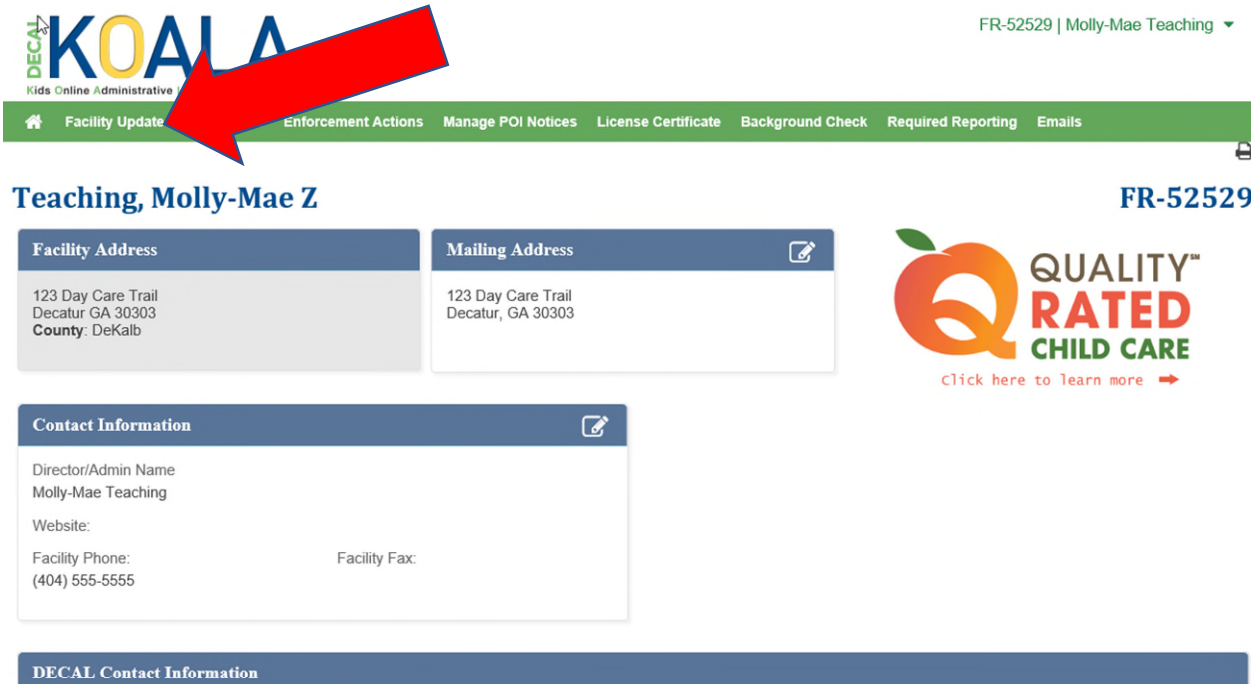
If your open/closure status changes, we ask that you inform us immediately. It is important that DECAL keep up to date open/closure information. If you have a question about how your open/closure status should be noted, contact your specific child care consultant.

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:

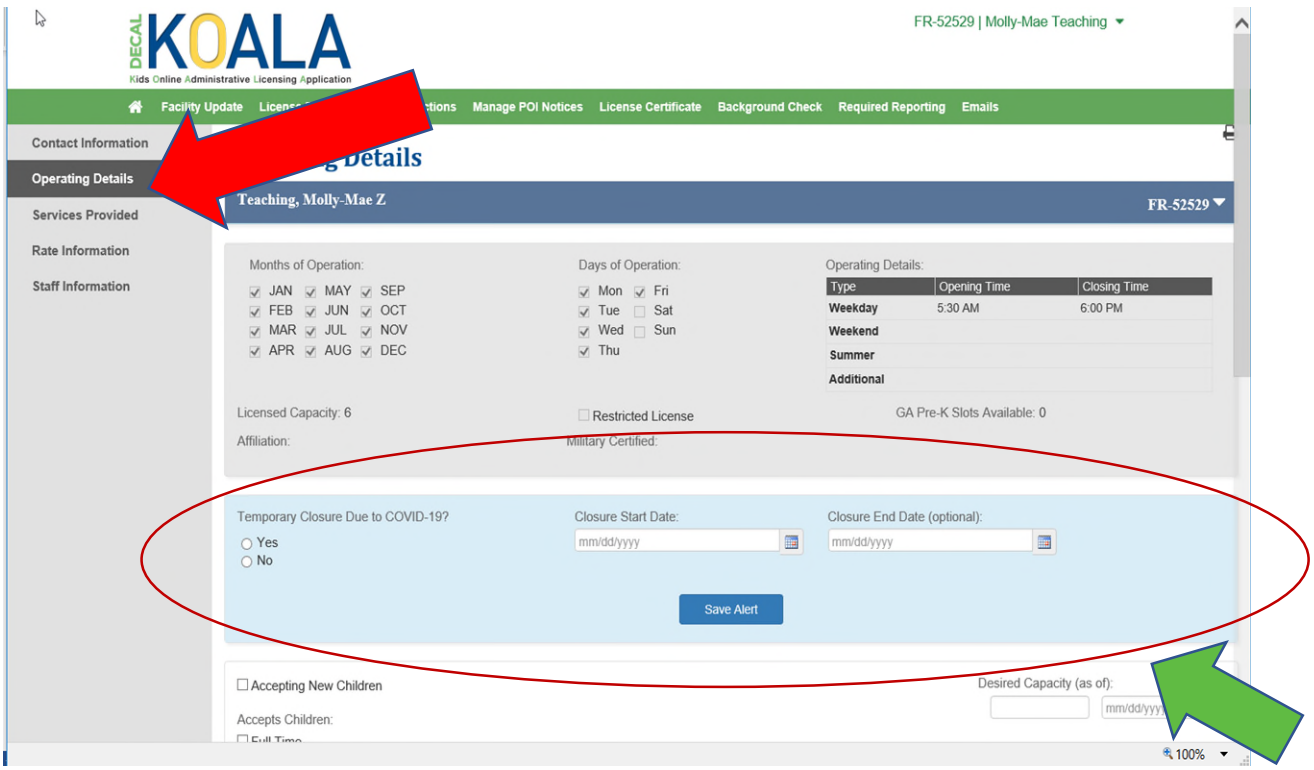
- Log in to your DECAL KOALA account at www.decalkoala.com
- From the Green Menu Bar, click Facility Update
- Click Operating Details
- Enter your program's COVID-19 info in the Blue area

Screenshot for logging into DECAL KOALA:

Once logged in Click Facility Update:



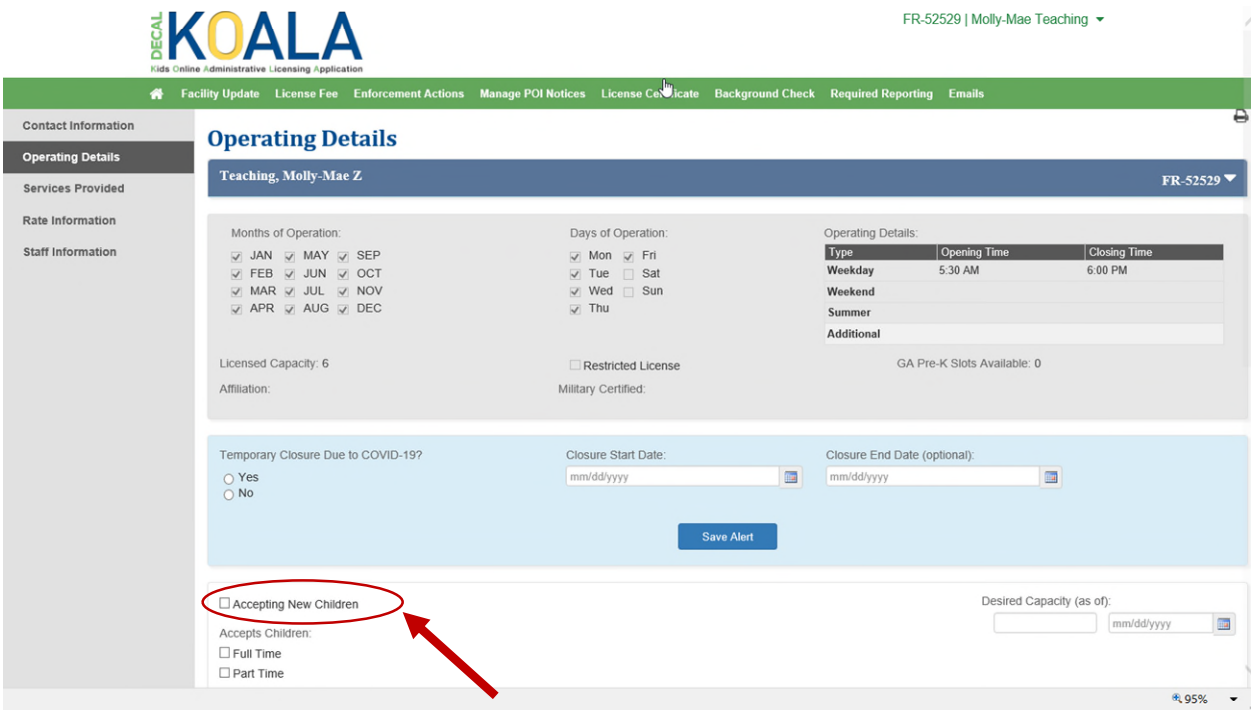
Next, click on Operating Details and enter if program is Operating or Closed:



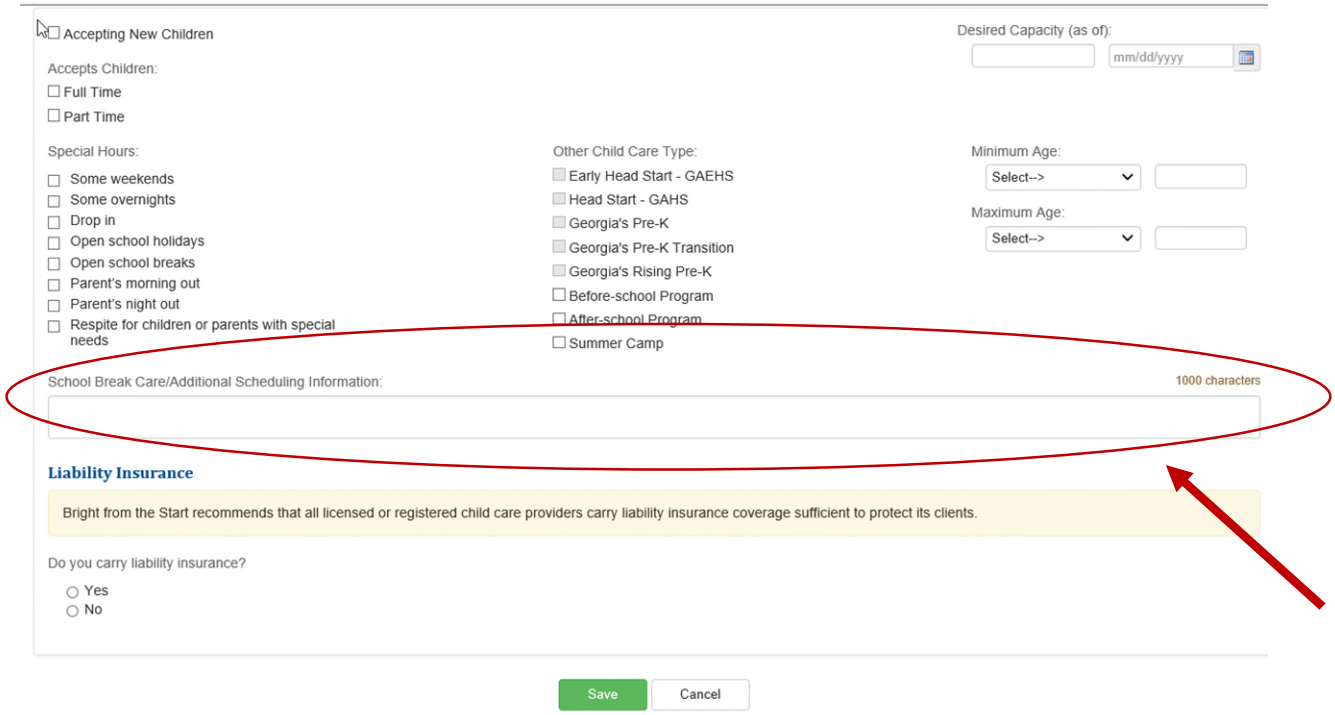
What programs have access to DECAL KOALA?
Currently, child care learning centers, family child care learning homes and license-exempt programs can create and maintain DECAL KOALA accounts. Local School Systems (LSS) and other programs with GA Pre-K, but are not licensed or license-exempt, can report 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:

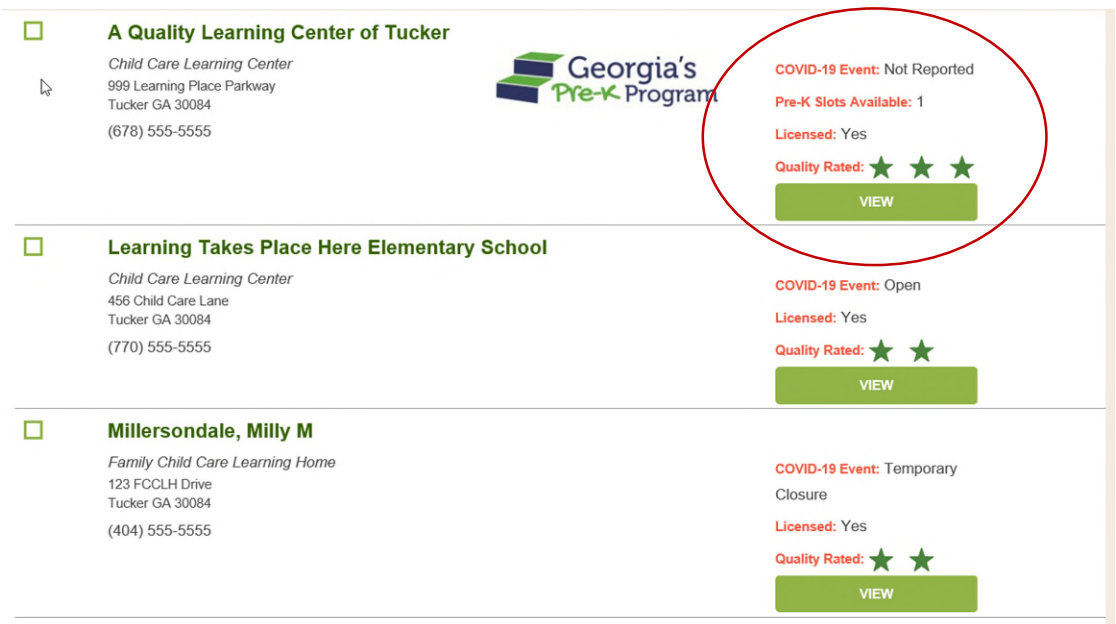


Programs can also enter information (text) in the School Break/Additional Scheduling Information – see screenshot below:

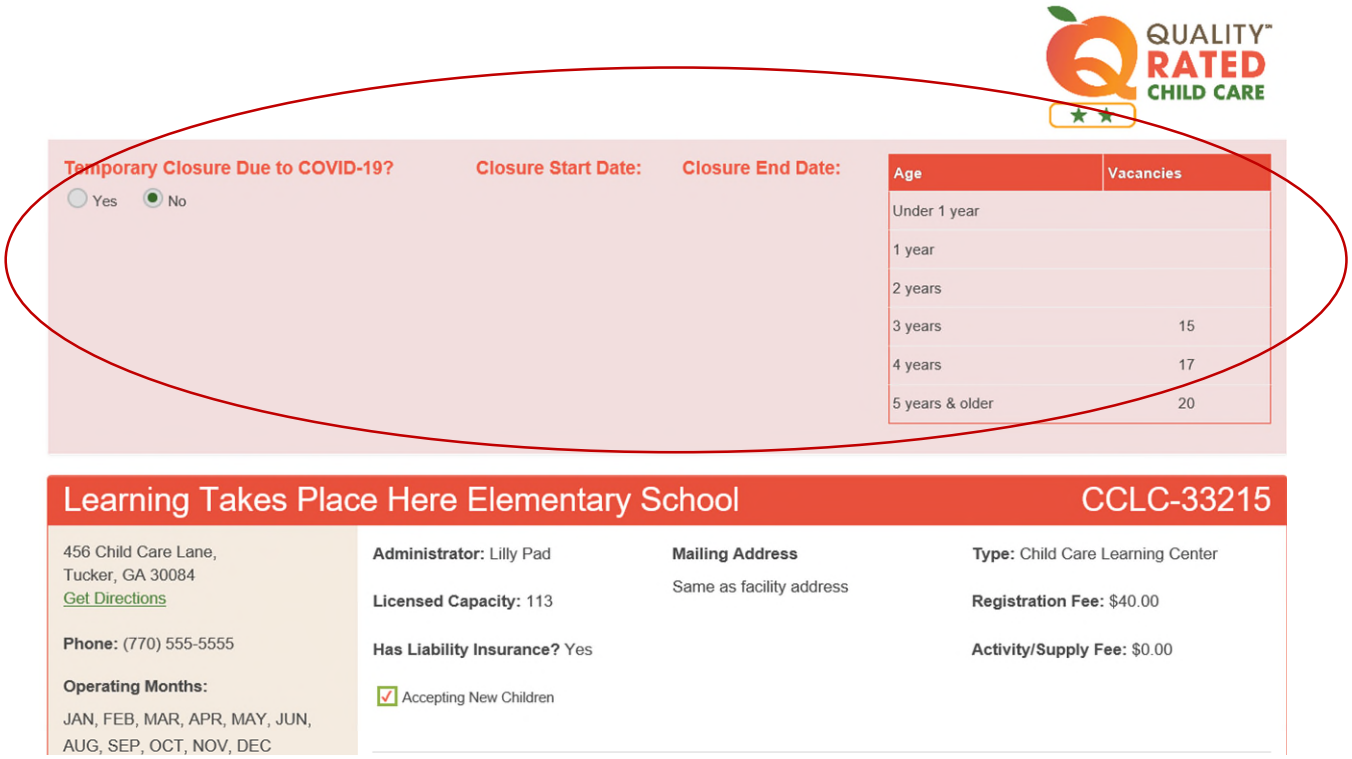


Once a program updates their information in DECAL KOALA, what does it look like when someone searches www.qualityrated.org or www.decal.ga.gov. What do they see?

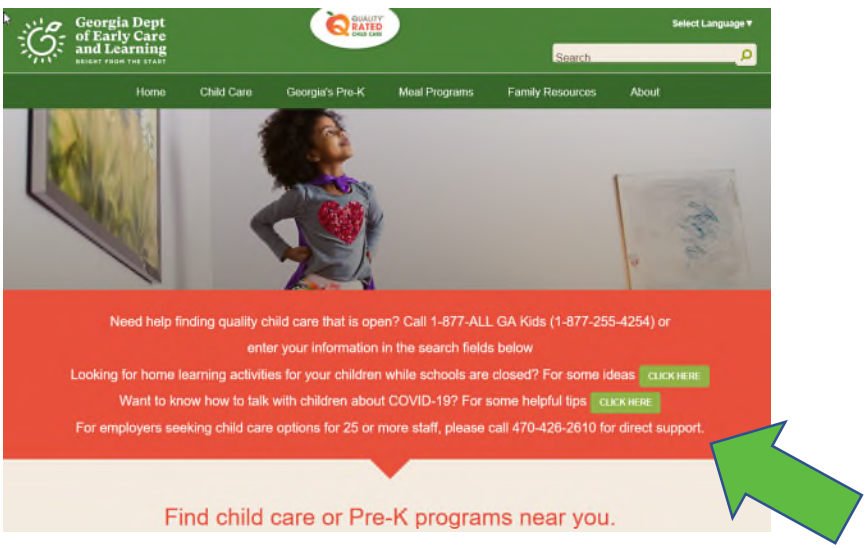
If a person enters a zip code in the search engine, the results will populate in a list that looks like this:



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.

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.

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

Am I still able to apply for CAPS under the Essential Services Workforce priority group?
As of October 1, 2020, CAPS will no longer accept applications under the Essential Services Workforce priority group. However, you may still be eligible for CAPS under a different priority group, or you may be eligible for the SOLVE scholarship program. More information on CAPS eligibility requirements is available at https://caps.decal.ga.gov/en/. Information on the SOLVE scholarship program is available at http://www.decal.ga.gov/CAPS/Solve.aspx.

If I am part of the essential services workforce, am I eligible for a CAPS scholarship?

In April 2020, CAPS introduced a temporary priority group called the Essential Services Workforce priority group to support certain members of Georgia's workforce during this public health emergency. As of October 1, 2020, CAPS will no longer accept applications under the Essential Services Workforce priority group. However, CAPS will re-open this priority group in the future if there is a great need for this priority group and if funding is available. We recommend exploring the eligibility requirements for CAPS (https://caps.decal.ga.gov/en/EligibilityRequirements) to determine if you might be eligible for a CAPS scholarship under a different priority group.

Are providers allowed to continue billing for children who have still only attended once since March 1, 2020?
Currently, providers can still bill for absent children if the child has attended the program at least once since March 1, 2020. However, the provider must be either open for care or experiencing a temporary closure.

Can I continue to bill for children with CAPS scholarships if my program is closed?
Effective Monday, October 26, 2020, child care programs must be open for care to bill for CAPS scholarships, except in the event of a temporary closure. Below, we define "Open for Care" and "Temporarily Closed." The child care provider must meet one of the following conditions to be eligible for payment from CAPS.

- Open for Care: Open for care means that a facility is currently serving children or is accessible to the public in an environment that is ready for operations and able to comply with all licensing regulations. The facility must be ready and available anytime during reported operating hours to participate in a licensing inspection.
- Temporarily Closed: Temporarily closed means that a facility is currently closed but is taking active steps to become "Open for Care" within 30 calendar days of the date of closure. If the facility is unable to open within 30 calendar days, the facility must get written approval from the Department of Early Care and Learning to maintain a status of "Temporarily Closed."

Can I get paid for children with CAPS scholarships if I am closed or open, but some children are not attending?
If your program is open for care or temporarily closed, you are eligible to bill for an absent child with an active scholarship who was present at least once since March 1, 2020. However, if the child's scholarship has expired, you can no longer bill for that child. Effective September 14, 2020, CAPS resumed paying the appropriate rate based on the school calendar or the type of care provided to the child. Additionally, providers must maintain accurate records required by CAPS policy, including sign in and sign out records.

Is CAPS continuing to offer Emergency Policy Waivers? If so, which waivers are still in effect?
Yes, CAPS is continuing to offer some Emergency Policy Waivers, though certain waivers have expired. The following Emergency Policy Waivers are still in effect:

- Emergency CAPS payment policies waiver as it pertains to active scholarships being billed if the child is absent and attended at least once since March 1, 2020.
- Emergency CAPS state-approved activity policies waiver.
- Temporary suspension of family signatures on CAPS arrival and departure records.

All other Emergency Policy Waivers have expired.

I am caring for a school-age CAPS student while they participate in their school's virtual learning during typical school hours. Can I charge CAPS for the full-time care of that child?
The current emergency CAPS payment policies waiver allows you to bill CAPS at the full-time rate for a school-age child. This means that CAPS will continue supporting families enrolling school-age children in child care programs while their children participate in distance learning and will pay at the full-time CAPS rate. However, the child must attend your program in-person as they engage in virtual learning. CAPS will not pay for the virtual care of a child.

If I choose to close, how can I bill so that CAPS will continue to pay me?
If you are temporarily closed, defined as a facility that is currently closed but is taking active steps to become "Open for Care" within 30 calendar days of the date of closure, you can indicate your temporarily closed status within the billing portal. Maximus sent instructions on October 31, 2020 that explain how to indicate that you are temporarily closed. Once you indicate that your program is temporarily closed, you can continue to bill as usual.

If you are not temporarily closed, or your facility is currently closed but is not taking active steps to become "Open for Care" within 30 calendar days of the date of closure, you are no longer able to bill for CAPS scholarships.

If I am caring for a child during typical school hours and am also caring for that child during typical before- and after-school hours, can I charge for both the full-time and before-and-after care rates?
CAPS will only pay for care up to the full-time rate. If a program cares for a school-aged child for an entire day (including typical before-and-after care hours), the program is providing full-time care.

Will CAPS continue to pay for the full-time care of a school-age child whose family elected to participate in distance learning, even if the school system did not mandate distance learning?
Regardless of whether a family chooses to enroll their child in distance learning or their school system is mandating distance learning, CAPS will continue to pay for the full-time care of that child.

If my CAPS scholarship(s) are due for renewal during the pandemic, is my family required to complete the renewal process?
Yes, families are still required to complete the renewal process, including families whose children are not attending their child care program and families whose child care program is closed. If a family is not able to meet the state-approved activity requirement due to COVID-19 related circumstances but meets all other eligibility requirements, the family will still be eligible for renewal. Also, if a family is having trouble obtaining adequate documentation for their renewal, the family should contact their Family Support Consultant, who will work with them to ensure that COVID-19 disruptions will not interrupt their scholarship.

What is the Emergency CAPS State-approved Activity Policies Waiver?
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 because of circumstances related to COVID-19, the lack of an activity will not impact eligibility.

Will families lose their CAPS scholarship if they do not return to their child care program?
CAPS recipients will not lose their eligibility if they do not return to their child care program when the CAPS emergency payment policy ends. However, typical CAPS policy requires children to attend during a given week for their child care provider to bill CAPS for the care of that child. Once we have returned to our typical payment policy, a provider will only be able to bill for a child who attended at least once during that week.

Will foster children be mandated to return to school?
Foster children are entitled to the same emergency policies as other CAPS priority groups and would not be mandated by CAPS to return to school. As with other priority groups, typical CAPS policy requires children to attend during a given week for their child care provider to bill CAPS for the care of that child. Once we have returned to our typical payment policy, a provider will only be able to bill for a child who attended at least once during that week.

One of my families lost their employment, education, or job training due to COVID-19, and their scholarship is up for redetermination. How will the change in their state-approved activity affect their scholarship?
We understand that many of our families are losing their jobs and are unable to attend an education/training program due to COVID-19. To address this issue, we established the Emergency Eligibility Policy. This emergency policy ensures that a family's lack of a state-approved activity at their redetermination will not impact their scholarship while this policy is in effect.

Some of my families are having trouble getting ahold of the documentation required for their renewals and are concerned that it will impact their scholarship. How can I support those families?
Advise families having trouble obtaining adequate documentation for their renewal to contact their Family Support Consultant, who will work with each family to ensure that COVID-19 disruptions will not interrupt their scholarship.

Can I bill for a child who enrolled in my program after March 1, 2020, and has not yet attended my program due to COVID-19?
A child must have attended your program at least one day since March 1, 2020, to be eligible for payment.

If a child's provider is closed and that child transitions to an open provider, which provider can bill for that child?
By law, we can only pay one provider for each active scholarship. CAPS will pay the program currently associated with that child's scholarship. If a family chooses to transition to a new provider and submits a provider change request to CAPS, CAPS will pay that family's new provider.

How can I maintain social distancing protocols while requiring parents to sign their children in and out of my program?
While COVID-19 affects our communities, we are waiving the requirement that parents must sign their children in and out of CAPS programs. However, it is still essential that you maintain accurate attendance records and know who is in your building. Coordinate alternate arrival and departure procedures that adhere to social distancing. For example, you can ask parents to drop their child off with a staff member at the door, and your staff member can sign that child in and out of the program.

If my program remains open, but my local school system and other child care programs in my area have closed, can I accept new children for care?
It is the child care provider's decision to accept new children for care. As a precaution, you can ask families if they have been contacted by or are being monitored by the local health department. This information can help you make informed decisions about whether to accept children into your program. Additionally, you can conduct daily health checks when children or other persons arrive at your program. These health checks might include taking the temperature of each child and adult who enters the building and asking questions about whether the child, or anyone to whom the child has been exposed, is experiencing a fever or cold-like symptoms.

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.

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 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.

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.

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.

FOR PROVIDERS: Regarding Quality Rated

After earning a star rating, what kind of incentives are available to programs?
Bonus packages may be available to programs depending on the Quality Rated application date and on the availability of funding. Materials received in the bonus package are determined by your star rating. In addition, programs rated under a 2020 cohort are eligible for a cohort sign-up bonus and workforce incentives. Amounts for each are based on the cohort selected. For more information about the 2020 Rating Incentives see the Rating Incentive FAQ on your QR account page:
https://qualityrated.decal.ga.gov/Shared/Help.aspx?v=ccrra

Can re-ratings apply to currently rated programs? We really want a chance to improve our 1-star rating.
Due to the number of programs that still need to receive an initial rating, traditional Requests for Reassessment will not be available in 2021. However, if your program received a temporary rating in 2020 that will expire in 2021, you can increase your rating when you choose Option B in Cohort 1 or Cohort 2, or by receiving a rating through the traditional rating process in Cohort 3 or Cohort 4.

When will 2021 cohort selection begin?
The cohort selection window varies, depending on a program's current rating status.
November 11th – November 24th: Unrated programs in Cohort 3 (2020) and Cohort 4 (2020) were automatically moved to Cohort 1 (2021); however, there is an opportunity during the cohort selection window to make a one-time cohort change.
November 25th – December 22nd: Required Reassessments that were due in 2020 but extended to 2021; Programs that received a temporary rating in 2020.
December 23rd – Ongoing: Any remaining programs that are seeking an initial rating.

When is Quality Rated moving to FCCERS-3?
Quality Rated staff will begin training on FCCERS-3 during 2021. Child care programs should not expect to be assessed with FCCERS-3 before 2022.

Cohort 3 portfolios are scheduled to be submitted in June. Will this date be pushed back due to the current situation?
We are suspending the submission of portfolios for Cohort 3 & 4 until we can set the new cohort dates, which will include updated portfolio submission dates and observation windows. Portfolios will remain open and accessible, allowing providers more time to work on their portfolio and classroom preparation

so that the information captured and scored in the portfolio will be the most up to date and relevant for each program.

Will there be any consideration regarding annual training hours?
For any portfolio submitted after May 15, 2020, 18 months of training will be counted instead of the usual 12 months. This temporary change will be in place through the remainder of 2020. This affects Standard 1.3 for administrators and Standard 1.6 for lead and assistant teachers. Example: Portfolio marked Ready to Submit on June 1, 2020 would have a training window of December 1, 2018 – June 1, 2020 (instead of June 1, 2019 – June 1, 2020).

My portfolio has been submitted for some time now, and I have not received an observation. What are my options for receiving a rating?
DECAL has made the unprecedented decision to offer Cohort 1 & 2 programs the choice of being awarded a temporary one-star rating if they receive 15 Structural Quality Points on their portfolio that is submitted by May 31st. Quality Rated management has been working hard to determine how to best support child care programs who were prepared to be observed this spring but, through no fault of their own, have been greatly impacted by this crisis. Cohort 1 & 2 providers will receive an email outlining their options and their required response if they choose to accept this offer.

What do programs do if they are submitting their QR portfolio and their program has been closed for 30 days before the date of submission? How should Ratios (Standard 5) be reported?
On the ratio screens, programs will need to enter a date that is no more than 30 days before the portfolio submission date. For the ratio counts, programs will need to enter ratios based on attendance from the last week that children were present.

Classroom Observations

How soon after this public health emergency will QR classroom observations resume?
Due to the public health emergency, we anticipate that all official classroom and family child care learning home observations will be suspended at least until June 30, 2020. This date will be revised as necessary.

Official observations are those that result in a rating. Quality Rated Assessors will need to conduct training observations and reliability rechecks before official observations can resume. These training observations and reliability rechecks may occur before June 30, 2020 if public health conditions allow.

Is it possible for ERS Assessors to conduct observations remotely using our program's classroom cameras or by sending us iPads to live stream our classroom activities?
Valid and reliable classroom observations cannot be conducted remotely.

Will Quality Rated issue new cohort observation dates for programs that were already registered for a cohort?
QR staff are evaluating the impact that COVID-19 has had on the ability to maintain the timelines for each cohort group. Observation windows and cohort dates will be updated for each cohort group when DECAL has a clearer understanding of when observations can occur.

Changes in the child care landscape after the crisis is over will also need to be considered. As DECAL plans for revising the cohort observation dates, all programs registered for an impacted cohort will be

notified of changes and the options available to them. These options will consider the vast changes that have occurred during the COVID-19 crisis and ensure that providers have the supports they need to be ready for their observation.

Programs in Cohort 1

Will the April 15 portfolio submission deadline for the Cohort 1 Reverse group be extended?
Yes, this date has been extended to May 31, 2020. Contact the Quality Rated Help Desk with specific questions related to specific providers and programs.

How will Quality Rated reschedule all the missed observations from Cohort 1?
When assessors resume observations on June 30, 2020, Cohort 1 providers not yet observed will be the first programs to be assessed. These programs will be contacted beforehand to ensure that they are ready for their observations. We will work with any program to ensure that providers have supports they need to be observed.

We had our observation visit already right before this started and were told we would receive our rating in May. Will that still happen?
Assessor teams and the report reviewers are continuing to process all completed observations, and you will receive your rating very soon if you have not already done so.

Programs in Cohort 2

Will the April 30 portfolio submission deadline for Cohort 2 be extended?
Yes, this date has been extended to May 31, 2020. We will continue to evaluate dates as we receive more information. If you think you will be closed longer than this time, contact the Quality Rated Help Desk.

Rating Incentive Bonuses

If I signed up for Cohort 1, but I receive my observation during what should be a later cohort 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.

If we wait until May 31, 2020 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 May 31 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.

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

Portfolio

Should I continue to work on my portfolio during this time?
Yes, if you can safely work on your portfolio, you can continue to access your QR account and update your portfolio during this time. If you have questions about your portfolio and the ability to complete specific standards, contact the Quality Rated Help Desk.

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.

CAPS Providers

I am a CAPS provider. Will I be able to accept new CAPS children after May 1, 2020 if I am not signed up for a QR cohort group or have my star rating?
This requirement has been suspended and will be updated when the new 2020 Goal date has been determined.

How has the COVID-19 public health emergency impacted the CAPS/QR 2020 deadline?
Because of the COVID-19 crisis, DECAL is extending the December 31, 2020 deadline requiring all CAPS providers to be Quality Rated (also known as the 2020 Goal).

A new deadline will be announced when this public health emergency subsides, and more is known about the overall impact of COVID-19. We expect that the new deadline will be on or after June 30, 2021.

All deadlines related to the 2020 Goal, including the May 1, 2020 date requiring providers to have registered for a Quality Rated slot to receive new CAPS scholarships, have been suspended. DECAL will communicate new dates and guidance for providers who have registered for a Quarter 2, 3, or 4 Observation Cohort. Many providers who were registered for Quarter 1 Observation Cohort were observed and are in the process of being rated. We will provide guidance to programs who were registered for the Quarter 1 Cohort but were not observed.

Annual Verification

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 June 30, 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.

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?
Providers who opted out of the rating extension in November 2019 and elected to be re-rated in 2020 are being contacted by QR staff to determine if they would like to take the extension now or remain on the list to be re-rated. If you choose to be re-rated your observation will occur later in the year once we are able continue conducting assessments. If your rating is due to expire before that time your rating will be extended to allow enough time for you prepare your portfolio for submission.

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.

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 and Personnel

I'm having a difficult time finding a fingerprint place that will do the fingerprints for the background check. Some locations are open but are not doing the service. What can I do?

I'm having many issues keeping teachers in the building. My committed teachers are following guidance about not coming to work if they are experiencing any symptoms. Therefore, I'm trying to hire some temporary substitutes to help during this time. However, I've called five of the closest locations to Canton, and none are doing the fingerprinting. How should I handle this?

If we have an employee who needs the Gemalto background clearance and can't find a facility in their area to conduct the fingerprinting...what are the guidelines for this?

I need to start hiring for fall. Are CRCs available during this time to run those for future hires?
According to Gemalto, there are locations open in the state to complete background checks. Although there are fewer open locations, there are enough locations available in each of Gemalto's eight regions (https://www.aps.gemalto.com/ga/GA_regions_html/GA_Regions_Main.htm) for the state to comply with the mandatory background check requirements. DECAL acknowledges that many individuals might have to drive farther than normal to comply with this law. DECAL will continue to monitor the availability of open locations to obtain a background check.

I am trying to keep all my staff, but right now I cannot afford to. I went from 255 kids to 25. I am trying to divide hours for everyone and file unemployment, but I have one employee who refuses to work or give me an excuse why. Can I legally terminate her?
DECAL cannot give legal advice to child care programs, so we recommend that you check with your program's attorney or legal advisor.

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

Many counties and municipalities have passed their own shelter in place orders that can be read as more restrictive than the one the Governor issued. If the local shelter in place order is read to have closed child care or related functions, does the more restrictive order supersede the Governor's order?
In general, counties and municipalities have the authority to be more restrictive as long as they don't contradict a state law. However, in this specific instance, the statute (O.C.G.A. 38-3-51) grants the Governor the right to suspend any other government order(s) or regulation(s) that do not fully conform to the emergency order issued by the Governor. Since the Governor's order would allow child care facilities to remain open as a minimum basic operation, any action closing a facility by a local municipality became null and void.

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.

About the Office of State Administrative Hearings

Will the Office of State Administrative Hearings (OSAH) be scheduling or hearing DECAL appeals?
Yes, OSAH is currently scheduling and holding in person hearings at their office. If you are unable to attend a hearing in person, you must contact OSAH at (404) 657-2800 or general@osah.ga.gov and request that the hearing be held by telephone or video. If you have a matter before any court other than OSAH, you will need to contact that court system directly.

FOR PROVIDERS: Miscellaneous Resources

For new guidance on COVID-19 for child care providers, go to:
https://decaldownload.buzzsprout.com/211637/5054117-episode-57-covid-19-guidance-for-georgia-child-care-programs

Where can I access the recording of the Town Hall in which Governor Kemp and Dr. Toomey from the Georgia Department of Public Health spoke to child care providers?
Go to http://www.decal.ga.gov/Video/2020-08-11_Georgias_Virtual_Child_Care_Provider%20_Town_Hall_with_Governor_BrianKemp_and_Dr_Kathleen_Toomey.mp4 to access the recent Town Hall meeting hosted by DECAL.

Where can I get supplies to meet CDC guidelines and the requirements in the Governor's Executive Order such as PPE and sanitizer?
DECAL does not endorse third party vendors. However, DECAL is providing the following charts of vendors whom providers can contact about purchasing PPE and other needed supplies. This list is provided for your convenience only and is NOT an endorsement of any vendor. DECAL does NOT guarantee any of the representations made by any vendor. DECAL does not benefit in any way from the posting of this information. If a dispute or conflict arises with any vendor, DECAL will not be a party to the matter, and the dispute must be resolved between the provider and the vendor.

N-95 Masks

Company Name	Contact Name	Telephone/Contact Info
Fastenal	Customer Service	404-351-7881
SI Medical	Jeffery Sterling	866-827-4104
Streamline	Rhonda Polhill	770-289-9338
Body Amour	Chris Lizotte	603-567-4506
Day to Day Necessities	Kim Craig	248-773-2829

Nitrile Gloves

Company Name	Contact Name	Telephone/Contact Info
Fastenal	Customer Service	404-351-7881
Sara Glove	Customer Service	866-664-7272 Ext. 106
Grainger	Aaron Shoemaker	404-909-4024
Uline	Customer Service	800-295-5570
Airgas	Judy Robledo	855-625-5285 Ext. 3649
VWR/Avantor Sciences	Nicole Clark	404-693-7963
CMC Medical	Greg Meerbaum	561-703-8865
RJ Medical	Mark Jackson	205-259-9212

Isolation Gowns

Company Name	Contact Name	Telephone/Contact Info
Sourceline	Paulette Rakestraw	770-294-1039
CMC Medical	Greg Meerbaum	561-703-8865

Surgical Gowns

Company Name	Contact Name	Telephone/Contact Info
Sourceline	Greg Meerbaum	561-703-8865
Sara Glove	Customer Service	866-664-7272 Ext. 106
Day to Day Necessities	Kim Craig	248-773-2829
CMC Medical	Greg Meerbaum	561-703-8865

Surgical Masks

Company Name	Contact Name	Telephone/Contact Info
US21	Daniel Leija	703-560-0021 Ext. 143
Fastenal	Customer Service	404-351-7881
Streamline	Rhonda Polhill	770-289-7881
Cintas	Craig Frayall	770-987-3007
F3EA	Raul Joyner	912-659-4064
Flagrant International	John Ramirez	954-804-5150
Elixir Therapeutic	Martin Hudler	917-991-7665

DuPont Tyvek Suits

Company Name	Contact Name	Telephone/Contact Info
CMC Medical	Greg Meerbaum	561-703-8865
Airgas	Judy Robledo	855-625-5285 ext. 3649
Grainger	Aaron Shoemaker	404-909-4024
Coveralls Direct	www.coverallsdirect.com	770-987-3007

Vendor	Contact Name	Contact Phone Number	Contact Email Address
Blue Hill Buffalo Consulting, LLC	Andrew Holt	917-476-5818	aholtnyc@gmail.com

Contract Furnishing International, Inc.	Joe Griffin	941-374-3960	joe@contract-furnishings.com
Fastenal	Richard Warren	252-944-1772	riwarren@fastenal.com
Fisher Scientific	David Holden	832-385-2187	david.holden@thermofisher.com
FRC global Group, LLC	Richard Cohen	631-252-4169	covid19@frcglobalgroup.com
Henry Schein	Rob Irwin	661-244-7090	Rob.Irwin@HenrySchein.com
Medical Solutions Inc.	Pat Willette	952-484-5454	pwillette@medicalsolutionsinc.com
Medline	Lucas McGovern	847-837-2820	lmcgovern@medline.com
MedSupply Partners	Clifford Collins	770 973-0250	ccollins@medsupplypartners.com
Procom Products, Inc.	Nickholas Doty	574-387-0866	ndoty@procomproducts.com
Red One Medical Devices, LLC	Cal Chancy	912-704-5502	cchancy@redonemedical.com
The HB Group	Henri Bonan	801-580-5138	henri.bonan@thehbgroup.com
Thomas Scientific	Lewis McMillan	484-280-8133	lewis.mcmillan@thomassci.com
VWR	Nicole Clark	404-693-7964	nicole.clark@avantorsciences.com

A DECAL partner shared the following link as a resource for PPE and other supplies to help combat COVID-19: public facing COVID-19 Essential supplies access request page.

Is there or will there be any financial support for programs impacted by COVID-19?
The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation has launched the **Save Small Business Grant Fund**. Funded by contributions from corporate and philanthropic partners, the program provides $5,000 supplemental grants to small employers in economically vulnerable communities. These grants will be available to businesses employing between 3 and 20 staff in certain Zip codes. The grant application opens on **April 20, 2020**.

Visit the Save Small Business Fund page for more information, including eligibility and applications.

Can you provide additional information on the Paycheck Protection Program?
After the provider webinar on April 8, 2020, we received several questions about the Paycheck Protection Program small business loans. Information about these loans can be found at https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/paycheck-protection-program-ppp.

Can you provide additional information related to potential funding and/or supports from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act?
As of 4/13/2020, DECAL has not received any official notification or guidance related to the CARES Act. Because we know there are funds earmarked for supporting child care, we are preparing to quickly disburse funds awarded from the CARES Act. However, we cannot release those plans and begin the process for disbursement until we receive official notification and guidance. We anticipate that any plan will include direct supports to child care providers, including child care learning centers and family child care learning homes.

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)

Are there any mealtime restrictions specific to CACFP during the public health emergency?

As of March 20, 2020, the USDA approved a nationwide waiver to allow flexibility in meal service time requirements to support streamlined access to nutritious meals. **NOTE**: Nutrition Services implemented a new process for Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators to request COVID-19 related USDA nationwide waivers. Beginning March 15, 2021, any **new** requests for waivers must be completed through an online Waiver Participation Form in the new **USDA Waivers Module** in GA ATLAS. Operators will still be required to complete the applicable Waiver Request Form located on DECAL's website under COVID-19 Resources; however, these forms must now be uploaded to the USDA Waivers Module as part of the new process. A Memo Monday recording on how to use this new feature can be found on the Training and Technical Assistance webpage, and the GA ATLAS Waiver Guide can be found under COVID-19 Resources in the *Nutrition Waivers – Waiver Request Forms* section. **NOTE: If you have already submitted and have been approved to use a waiver, you do not have to submit the request again.**

For general questions about the waiver, contact Tammie Baldwin at Tammie.Baldwin@decal.ga.gov or 404-656-6332. You may also contact your assigned Technical Assistance Coordinator or the Nutrition TA mailbox at NutritionTA@decal.ga.gov.

Can CACFP Institutions deliver meals?
Yes. If the CACFP operator determines there is a need and it is logistically feasible to deliver meals directly to homes, it may do so with state agency approval and adherence to all federal confidentiality requirements. If applicable, any state agency meal service times would also have to be waived, per the Meal Service Time nationwide waiver. Delivery could be completed by mail or delivery service, or hand delivered by CACFP staff, volunteers, community organizations, or others. This option is available only to CACFP operators that provide care for enrolled children. **NOTE:** Nutrition Services implemented a new process for Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators to request COVID-19 related USDA nationwide waivers. Beginning March 15, 2021, any **new** requests for waivers must be completed through an online Waiver Participation Form in the new **USDA Waivers Module** in GA ATLAS. Operators will still be required to complete the applicable Waiver Request Form located on DECAL's website under COVID-19 Resources; however, these forms must now be uploaded to the USDA Waivers Module as part of the new process. A Memo Monday recording on how to use this new feature can be found on the Training and Technical Assistance webpage, and the GA ATLAS Waiver Guide can be found under COVID-19 Resources in the *Nutrition Waivers – Waiver Request Forms* section. **NOTE: If you have already submitted and have been approved to utilize a waiver, you do not have to submit the request again.**

For general questions about the waiver, contact Tammie Baldwin at Tammie.Baldwin@decal.ga.gov or 404-656-6332. You may also contact your assigned Technical Assistance Coordinator or the Nutrition TA mailbox at NutritionTA@decal.ga.gov.

Why is CACFP not included in the Food Service Management Company (FSMC) contract nationwide waiver?
On January 6, 2021, FNS extended the *Nationwide Waiver of Food Service Management Contract Duration in the National School Lunch Program and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)* waiving, for all state agencies, school food authorities (SFAs), and SFSP sponsors the FSMC contract duration requirements at 7 CFR 210.16(d) and 225.6(h)(7). FSMC contracts that expire by or around June 30, 2021, may be extended through school year 2021-2022 (June 30, 2022). To ensure program integrity during this time, extended FSMC contracts are limited to one-year only.

Additionally, SFAs and SFSP sponsors may, pursuant to 2 CFR 200.320(f)(2), use the emergency noncompetitive procurement method to negotiate a new one-year contract for school year 2021-2022. To ensure program integrity moving forward, contracts resulting from noncompetitive proposals may not exercise renewal options. CACFP was not included in this nationwide waiver because CACFP regulations do not have similar restrictions on the duration of FSMC contracts. Although flexibilities provided at 2 CFR 200.320(f)(2), noted above, apply to all child nutrition programs, including CACFP.

What is acceptable sign-in and sign-out documentation during COVID-19?
A facility (center/home) that provides onsite care or virtual instruction during COVID-19 may use the following methods to record sign-in and sign-out documentation (also called time-in and time-out documentation, which records the time-in daily attendance). Note: Accurate daily attendance records must be recorded separately from a facility's meal count records.

1. If the facility (center/home) has a computer or keypad system inside, facility staff may sign children in and out of care or record daily attendance during virtual instruction. This is only acceptable if no other option is available.
2. If the facility can set up a tablet outside, families may sign children in and out of care electronically. The tablet must be disinfected after each use.
3. If the facility uses a paper sign-in system outside, families may sign children in and out of care. The writing utensils must be sanitized after each use.
4. If the facility uses an online platform (i.e., GoToWebinar or GoToMeeting) to provide virtual instruction, facility staff may download and print daily attendance from the online software used to deliver virtual instruction.

Can CACFP providers allow parents or guardians to pick up meals?
Yes. Under the nationwide non-congregate feeding and parent pick-up waivers, a parent or guardian of an eligible child(ren) may pick up meals. The maximum number of meals that may be offered to each child remains the same as under regular CACFP operations. The state agency may approve a distribution or pick-up approach that includes meals for multiple days, up to one week at a time.

Can School Food Authorities (SFAs) distribute more than seven (7) days' worth of meals, at once, during extended school breaks, such as winter vacations?
Yes. SFAs that operate the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program during school year 2020-2021, may offer additional meals during the holiday or school breaks. Program operators must ensure that they have submitted a Combined Waiver Form and meet the criteria outlined in question #18 of the SP 13-2020 Child Nutrition Program Nationwide Waivers: Questions and Answers.

Is there a start date for the CACFP non-congregate feeding and the mealtimes waiver?
These waivers are currently in effect. Refer to the table/chart at the end of this FAQ document under *Additional Resources for Nutrition Programs* for details on all current waivers. These waivers are also posted on the DECAL website under COVID-19 Resources.

Do sponsoring organizations have to adhere to the monitoring requirements outlined in policy memo, *Monitoring Requirements* dated March 18, 2005, during the public health emergency?
Yes, the Nationwide Waiver of Monitoring Requirements for Sponsors in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, dated March 27, 2020 and the extension dated June 8, 2020 (COVID-19, Child Nutrition Response #27), expired on August 31, 2020; therefore, if the sponsor anticipates challenges with meeting the monitoring requirements for all facilities required per 7 CFR 226.16(d)(4)(iii) in FY 2021, the

sponsor may submit an official waiver request to DECAL that will be submitted to USDA for consideration. Sponsors interested in submitting a waiver must review the DECAL Policy Memorandum, *Child Nutrition Program Waiver Request Guidance and Protocol (Revised)*, July 13, 2018 and respond to items #4, #5, #6 and #8 in a Word document. NOTE: Sponsors are also required to issue a notice informing the public that a waiver request has been submitted to DECAL. Submit the official waiver request and a copy of the public notice to Sonja.Adams@decal.ga.gov. A copy of the memorandum can be found here.

Also, DECAL has developed monitoring guidance to ensure the health and safety of sponsored staff and facilities can be maintained and to assist our CACFP sponsors in developing an alternate virtual monitoring process (desk review/audit) to ensure sponsors comply with monitoring requirements per USDA regulations 7 CFR 226.16(d)(4)(iii). A link to the documents is found below. The documents may also be found on the Nutrition page of DECAL's website under COVID-19 Resources>Resources.

- **CACFP Sponsor Monitoring Guidance during COVID-19**
- **Record Request Checklist Template**

Are state agencies and sponsoring organizations required to conduct pre-approval reviews for new CACFP centers and day care homes during the coronavirus pandemic?
Yes, to ensure program integrity during the public health emergency, state agencies and sponsoring organizations are still required to conduct pre-approval reviews for new institutions and facilities. However, through authority established by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127), FNS granted nationwide waivers of onsite monitoring requirements for state agencies and onsite monitoring of new facilities for sponsoring organizations. State agencies and sponsoring organizations that elect to use these waivers may conduct pre-approval reviews offsite through a desk audit. NOTE: Sponsoring organizations should record details to thoroughly document offsite monitoring, including but not limited to:

- The time and date the review was conducted
- Names and contact information of center or facility staff with whom the sponsoring organization interacted virtually
- Any technical assistance the sponsoring organization provided

DECAL has developed CACFP monitoring guidance to ensure the health and safety of sponsored staff and facilities can be maintained and to help CACFP sponsors develop an alternate virtual monitoring process (desk review/audit). A link to the documents is found below. The documents may also be found on the Nutrition page of DECAL's website under COVID-19 Resources>Resources.

- **CACFP Sponsor Monitoring Guidance during COVID-19**
- **Record Request Checklist Template**

If any of the required review elements cannot be fully completed with the required review timeframe, sponsoring organizations may request additional waivers of statute or program regulations to ensure compliance with oversight responsibilities. Sponsors interested in submitting a waiver should carefully review the instructions in DECAL Policy Memorandum, *Child Nutrition Program Waiver Request Guidance and Protocol (Revised)*, July 13, 2018. Sponsors are also required to issue a notice informing the public that a waiver request has been submitted to DECAL. Submit the official waiver request and a copy of the public notice to Leslie.Truman@decal.ga.gov. For more information on offsite monitoring strategies and documentation, refer to the *Sponsoring Organization Monitoring of the Child and Adult Care Food Program Federal Fiscal Year 2021* Fact Sheet.

Can current tier II family day care homes be moved to tier I with one month's worth of income during COVID-19, due to lower attendance or income, even if this does not reflect the yearly average? Can a tier I home's eligibility to claim their own child be re-determined during this time based on provider's income from the past month?
Yes. A tier II family day care home's eligibility for tier I reimbursement may be re-determined with one month's worth of income, even if this does not reflect the yearly average. A tier I family day care home's ability to claim their own child may also be re-determined based on the provider's income from the past month.

As child care centers/homes continue to open, they may have limited schedules and hours of operation. Can centers/homes provide a combination of congregate and non-congregate meals?
Yes. Under the nationwide waivers, child care centers/homes that remain open can provide congregate meal services to children in attendance and arrange for non-congregate meal service pick-up or delivery for the children who are not in attendance. For example, a center/home that is open only until 2:00 p.m. may serve breakfast and lunch to children in a congregate setting and then send the children home with an afternoon snack. The center/home must ensure that each child receives no more than one (1) of any type of meal each day. For example, a child may not receive a congregate and a non-congregate lunch on the same day. The center/home must also ensure that is does not claim more than two (2) meals and one (1) snack per child, per day.

May a child care center or day care home claim reimbursement for CACFP meals that children take home to consume on weekend days when they are not in care?
CACFP centers and day care homes that are approved for non-congregate feeding and meal service time waivers may provide meals for a child to consume on weekends as long as the center/home is approved to serve meals on weekends and the child is enrolled for weekend care. That means, the center/home must be licensed and approved to provide weekend care, even if the center or day care home is not providing care onsite due to COVID-19. The state-sponsor agreement must indicate the days and types of meals for which the center/home is eligible to claim reimbursement. For example, if a center is licensed to provide child care seven (7) days a week and a child is enrolled to attend child care Thursday through Saturday, the center may claim meals served to the child on those days, even if the child is not physically in care due to COVID-19.

May school-age children who are attending school virtually and who are also enrolled and attending child care during the day receive meals through both CACFP and school meals programs?
Yes. Students enrolled in both school and child care may receive meals through multiple Child Nutrition Programs. However, the state agency plan must be followed to ensure that program accountability is maintained and that program meal limits are not exceeded for the School Breakfast Program (SBP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and CACFP.

Can CACFP facilities provide non-congregate meals during this public health emergency?
Yes. As of March 20, 2020, the USDA approved a nationwide waiver to allow non-congregate feeding in CACFP. 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. This waiver has been extended until June 30, 2021. Click here to access the waiver.

Will CACFP training sessions still be offered during this time?

Yes. Nutrition Services is currently offering all CACFP Orientation and Program Training sessions virtually. Contact Nutrition Services at 404-657-1779 to register for one (1) of the available virtual training sessions.

Do I have to adhere to CACFP monitoring requirements during this public health emergency?
With waiver approval, CACFP annual 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.

Sponsors must contact Leslie.Truman@decal.ga.gov if they plan to utilize this waiver.
Waiver in effect through June 30.

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 Sonja.Adams@decal.ga.gov.

Do traditional CACFP program operators (institutions, sponsoring organizations, and centers) need to maintain daily attendance records?
Through authority granted under the COVID–19 Child Nutrition Response Act (the Act) (H.R. 6201, Title II), FNS waived the requirements to serve CACFP meals in a congregate setting in COVID–19: Child Nutrition Response #2, Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-congregate Feeding in the Child Nutrition Programs, dated March 20, 2020.

For states that elect to use the non-congregate waiver authority, CACFP program operators only need to maintain daily attendance records for eligible children attending the center. For those not in daily attendance, state agencies must have a plan for ensuring that program operators can maintain accountability and program integrity. This includes implementing processes to ensure that meals are distributed only to parents or guardians of eligible children and that they do not distribute duplicate meals. This could be done by checking off participants picking up meals against enrollment records, using sign-in sheets, or other methods which result in accurate recording of eligible program participants, or their parents, receiving meals. CACFP program operators are still required to maintain daily meal counts and enrollment records under this authority.

Can CACFP sites that remain open implement the non-congregate and meal time nationwide waivers?
The nationwide waivers to allow meal service time flexibilities and non-congregate feeding in the Child Nutrition Programs during the coronavirus pandemic do not require that a CACFP site be closed. Under these waivers, day care homes and centers that are still open can provide meal service on site to participants in attendance. They can also arrange meal service pick-ups and/or provide meal delivery for participants temporarily not in attendance. If the CACFP operator determines there is a need and it is logistically feasible to implement these options, it can do so for all or part of its participants. As indicated in SP 14-2020, Child Nutrition Program Meal Service during Novel Coronavirus Outbreaks: Questions and Answers #3 (https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19/meal-service-during-novel-

coronavirus-outbreaks-qas), CACFP operators may provide meal delivery only to enrolled children and adult participants due to confidentiality and logistical requirements.

Can Head Start programs deliver meals to children enrolled in the home-based program option?
Head Start programs may distribute meals only to children who were already receiving meals through CACFP or the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Under the non-congregate waiver, these meals can be provided through a state approved meal distribution method. Head Start children who do not normally receive meals under CACFP or NSLP, such as children in the Head Start/Early Head Start home-based program option, can use open SFSP or NSLP Seamless Summer Option (SSO) sites in their community to get meals. The USDA Meals for Kids Site Finder at https://www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids can help Head Start families locate open meal sites.

Can CACFP state agencies and sponsoring organizations add new centers and facilities during the COVID-19 emergency?
Yes, state agencies and sponsoring organizations can add new centers and day care homes that are providing care during the coronavirus pandemic. However, state agencies and sponsoring organizations must complete all aspects of the application and approval process. It is up to each state agency or sponsor to determine if they have the capacity to add centers and facilities based on their systems and other resources, such as the availability of inspections and licensing.

What funding is available for meal delivery?
There is no additional reimbursement for home delivery or mobile meals delivery, but related expenses, such as postage or delivery service fees, would be considered an allowable cost under the CACFP. Delivery costs could also be paid with non-program funds such as state or local funds, or private donations.

What are the requirements for initiating home meal delivery for a household?
CACFP operators must first obtain written consent from households of enrolled children (including by email or other electronic means) that the household wants to receive delivered meals. CACFP operators should also confirm the household's current contact information to ensure meals are delivered to the correct location.

It is critical that CACFP operators protect the confidentiality of children and their households throughout this process. The National School Lunch Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) do not authorize release of household contact information for children without first obtaining the written consent of the child's parent or guardian. The CACFP operator must make the first contact about meal delivery with the households of enrolled children, and adult participants, and must notify them if contact information will be shared with an external organization, for example, a local non-profit that will provide meal delivery. Once the CACFP operator receives written consent from the parent or guardian to release contact information, the information may be shared with other organizations involved with meal delivery.

Do home-delivered meals need to be shelf stable?
No. The type of meal offered will depend on the resources and capacity of the program operator. Programs that can prepare ready-to-eat meals and have the capacity to deliver meals daily in a way that meets state or local food safety requirements may do so.

Does the child or adult participant need to be present for home meal delivery?
No. If the CACFP operator has obtained the household's written consent to deliver meals and has verified the current address, the child or adult participant does not need to be present at the time of delivery. If the meals are shelf stable, no one needs to be present if the address has been verified. Consider state and local food safety requirements and best practices.

Can a child care center that operates CACFP and is closed due to COVID-19 provide non-congregate meals to enrolled children?
The waiver provides CACFP institutions and facilities the ability to provide meals through a variety of methods, including pick-up schedules with designated times for distribution as long as these are previously approved by the state agency. The maximum number of meals that may be offered to each child remains the same as under regular CACFP operations. The state agency may approve a distribution or pick up approach that includes meals for multiple days, up to one week at a time.

Because non-food items are allowable items through CACFP, can we provide such items to families who may need them in addition to food items?
CACFP requires that operational costs are limited to the institution's allowable expenses of serving meals to eligible participants in eligible child and adult care centers, except as provided in §226.18(a), sponsors of day care homes do not have allowable operating expenses.

Non-food supplies are an allowable operational cost, including those required for preparing and serving meals (e.g., plates, plastic forks, napkins, etc.) These items should be provided directly to program participants with the meals. Institutions should provide the number of non-food items needed for the number of meals provided.

Institutions must document the costs of these items with receipts and invoices.

Is the meal pattern waiver a sponsorship waiver to be administered case by case, or is it an approval for specific center or homes? What is required to be submitted for approval?
It is both. If you are having a problem meeting the meal pattern requirements at all your sites, complete part 1 of the meal pattern waiver. If you are having a problem meeting the requirements at individual sites, you need to complete only part 2 of the form. The waiver start date, meal component, and a written justification is required for approval.

My center shut down temporarily. Do I need to complete paperwork until we reopen?
If your center is closed, it is expected that you report that information to DECAL's licensing unit and email Leslie Truman, so Nutrition Services will have a record of it. If you are not serving meals, there are no CACFP records you would be expected to maintain for the time period in which the facility was closed.

We currently have an agreement with the school system to provide our food; however, since the schools are closed, the school system no longer has capacity to provide our meals. We currently serve supper. Is it possible that we could switch to a healthy snack?
Yes, you can switch from supper to a snack. Be sure to update your application to reflect the meal you are serving, so when you file your claim, the application in ATLAS matches your current operation.

We want to maximize our impact and serve more children or adults who need healthy meals. How can we serve more meals in our center or our community?
We recommend that you issue local media releases and use social media to announce that you are serving meals in your community. You can also use some of the flexibilities including distributing multiple meals at once, allowing parents/guardians to pick up meals, and serving meals in non-congregate settings. Additionally, you can deliver meals for children and adult participants with state agency approval.

When providing meals for the children, can we provide them with both lunch and breakfast items and account for those on the Meal Count Sheet as a breakfast and lunch item, or are we only focused on lunches at this time?
Yes, you can serve both lunch and breakfast. You will want to keep track of those meals separately, because they have different reimbursement rates and meal pattern requirements. We also encourage you to serve meal types – other than lunch – at this time.

How should milk be properly handled and distributed?
You must maintain milk at the appropriate temperature of 40 degrees or less. Additionally, you need to ensure you have appropriate holding facilities to keep the milk at the right temperature. If you are sending milk home, the easiest way to provide it is in individual servings.

When providing meals for families, how are we determining the income eligibility statement (IES) for the students receiving meals who are not directly associated with our school?
To claim a meal in CACFP, you must provide proof of enrollment for that child at your center. If you don't have an IES for a child, you will need a different method of enrollment, but you can still claim the meal. However, the reimbursement rate is based on whether the child qualifies for free or reduced-price meals. If you have a separate form of enrollment but don't have an IES for that child, you will be reimbursed at the paid rate which is a lower rate than the free and reduced rate.

Are we able to provide meals several days at a time?
Yes. If you are claiming the meals, make sure the meals meet the required meal components and quantities are being met.

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.

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.

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 sonja.adams@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.

AT-RISK AFTERSCHOOL

Do CACFP at-risk afterschool centers need to maintain daily attendance records? How can CACFP at-risk centers track attendance to claim reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children participating virtually?

At-risk centers approved to participate under the COVID-19 waivers must continue to maintain attendance records as stated under 7 CFR 226.17a(o)(1). This includes daily attendance rosters, sign-in sheets, or, with state agency approval, other methods that result in accurate recording of daily attendance. When children participate virtually, flexibility in using other methods may be approved. For example, DECAL may accept the following methods for recording virtual daily attendance.

1. Child/Parent/Guardian documenting the child's first and last name on daily attendance sheets,
2. Meal pick-up and/or delivery records with child's first and last name,
3. Printed daily attendance sheets from an online platform used to provide virtual instruction (i.e., GoToWebinar or GoToMeeting), or
4. Staff documenting a child's first and last name on daily attendance sheets if no other option is available.

Note: Prior approval of methods to capture attendance is not required. However, program operators are responsible for implementing methods that result in accurate recording of daily attendance. This includes recording daily attendance separate from meal count records, recording daily attendance per child (an aggregate total of attendance for the day is not acceptable), and when delivering meals/snacks for multiple days, staff must maintain a record of participants (first and last name) who received a meal and/or snack. DECAL will ensure that program operators can maintain accountability and program integrity, including implementing processes to ensure that meals are provided for eligible children and duplicate meals are not distributed. Institutions may also use DECAL's Monthly Attendance Record to meet these requirements. For more information, see *Questions and Answers Relating to the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations during School Year 2020-2021 – Q&A #4*.

For CACFP at-risk afterschool programs, if the educational or enrichment activity is electronic and a child does not have access to the required electronic device, is the activity still considered available to all?

As program operators begin to plan enrichment activities for participating children, the state agency encourages operators to consider the ability of children to access various activities. It may be appropriate to offer some activities that children could participate in without Internet access or electronic devices, such as books, activity packets or coloring sheets. Team Nutrition offers a variety of games, books, and nutrition education activities for children on the Digital Nutrition Resources for Kids webpage. Although children are not required to participate in or complete an activity to receive an afterschool meal and/or snack, activities offered should include options that are accessible to all participating children.

May CACFP at-risk centers providing extended care during the day (both school hours and afterschool hours) claim reimbursement for a breakfast and/or lunch served in addition to the one (1) meal and one (1) snack allowed for at-risk?

No. Institutions that are only approved to operate under the CACFP At-risk Afterschool Meals Component may not claim reimbursement for meals that exceed their program meal limitation of one (1) meal and one (1) snack per child, per day. CACFP child care centers/homes that operate a separate daytime child care program and an at-risk afterschool program may be approved to claim reimbursement for up to two (2) meals and one (1) snack or one (1) meal and two (2) snacks per child,

per day. This applies to children who attend just the daytime child care center/home or attend both programs (child care center/home and at-risk afterschool program). For children who attend both programs, the center/home must ensure duplicate meals and/or snacks are not claimed.

May CACFP at-risk sites/sponsors that did not serve weekend meals prior to COVID-19 expand to provide weekend meals with a non-congregate enrichment activity?
Yes. Consistent with 7 CFR 226.17a(b), CACFP at-risk centers that provide care for children on weekends during the regular school year may claim meals served on weekends. However, when making decisions about whether a program should operate on weekends, at-risk sponsors and centers are encouraged to tailor their operations to the needs of the community. The state agency will ensure that CACFP at-risk centers serving weekend meals and/or snacks also provide weekend at-risk enrichment activities, either virtually or in person, on the days for which meals and/or snacks are served. For example, if an at-risk center serves a meal and/or snack intended for consumption on Saturday, the center must provide access to an enrichment activity on that Saturday.

For CACFP at-risk afterschool care programs that are providing onsite care to children attending school virtually, what meals may be served?
Per federal regulations at 7 CFR 226.17a(m), when school is in session, a CACFP at-risk meal and/or snack must be served after the child's school day. Schools that are operating virtually are considered in session; therefore, the afterschool program would need to plan their meal service around the time virtual school is operating. Only a meal and/or snack served after the virtual school day is over would be reimbursable.

FNS understands that programs caring for students in virtual school would be able to serve meals during the school day. CACFP at-risk afterschool care programs may contact Nutrition Services to explore operating as an SFSP sponsor or site while the *Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through School year 2020-2021- EXTENSION, October 9, 2020* is in effect. An at-risk program may also apply to operate CACFP as a child care center. Under SFSP or regular CACFP, the program would have more flexibility when a meal and/or snack could be served; however, only the maximum number of meals and/or snacks allowed under the program would be reimbursable.

May CACFP at-risk afterschool care programs that are not caring for children onsite provide meals through alternate meal service options?
Yes. Under the nationwide non-congregate feeding and parent pick-up waivers, at-risk programs may provide meal deliveries and grab-and-go meals. Meal service times may also need to be waived, using the *Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Service Time Flexibility in the NSLP, SBP and CACFP- EXTENSION #2, June 25, 2020*. In all instances, some type of enrichment activity must be included, either virtually or in person, on the day(s) a meal and/or snack are intended for consumption. In addition, when a meal and/or snack are being provided for children that are not in care onsite, at-risk suppers and/or snacks may be distributed before the end of the school instructional day.

For meal deliveries, the processes outlined in questions #9-13 of the *Child Nutrition Program Meal Service during Novel Coronavirus Outbreak: Questions and Answers #3* must be followed. NOTE: Meal deliveries would be limited to children who are enrolled in the at-risk afterschool care program. Therefore, the program would need to collect appropriate information to conduct and track deliveries.

During the public health emergency, are centers and/or sites participating in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Component required to be located in the attendance area of a school in which at least 50% of the enrolled children are certified eligible for free or reduced-price school meals?
No, the newly extended *Nationwide Waiver of Area Eligibility in the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Care Component - EXTENSION*, allows schools and afterschool care centers/sites, regardless of their geographical location, to serve at-risk afterschool meals and snacks to students after the regular school day through June 30, 2021. Institutions and sponsors that would like to implement this waiver, notify your assigned Application Specialist or Business Operations Specialist. Reference the following table to determine your assigned Application/Business Operations Specialist.

Institution Assignment	Application Specialists or Business Operations Specialist	Email	Phone Number
0 (zero)—G	**Paula Lawrence**	Paula.Lawrence@decal.ga.gov	(404) 463-2111
H—P	**Shericka Blount**	Shericka.Blount@decal.ga.gov	(404) 656-6411
Q—Z	**Temika Moore**	Temika.Moore@decal.ga.gov	(404) 463-1494

During COVID-19, how may we offer the enrichment activity if we are operating in a non-congregate setting for social distancing and safety?
All At-Risk afterschool care providers, including those approved for non-congregate meals, still must meet the requirement to provide an education or enrichment activity [7 CFR 226.17a(b)(1)]. However, with approved non-congregate and parent pick-up waivers, these activities may be conducted virtually or in other non-congregate ways.

Program operators may use alternative methods to meet this requirement including but not limited to online homework assistance, activity packets, electronic games and books or other e-learning activities for the children to partake in at home. For example, Team Nutrition offers a variety of online games, books, and nutrition education activities for children at https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/digital-nutrition-resources-kids. Although children are not required to participate in or complete the activity to receive an afterschool meal or snack, the afterschool care provider must offer the activity.

Are educational or enrichment activities required for the At-Risk Afterschool Meal programs during the public health emergency?
Yes. The USDA nationwide waiver for offering enrichment or educational activities ended on June 30, 2020. Therefore, when the FY 2020-2021 school year begins, At-Risk Afterschool Meal programs must offer a program that includes regularly scheduled and planned educational and/or enrichment activities in a structured and supervised setting.

Can my At-Risk Afterschool sites continue to serve meals now that the school year has ended?
CACFP At-Risk Afterschool care centers may choose to end At-Risk operations at the end of the planned school year or continue to operate under the unanticipated school closure waiver until June 30. Once the state or school district transitions to traditional SFSP, At-Risk operations will cease. Therefore, after

the end of the planned school year or June 30th, At-Risk programs can no longer claim meals through the At-Risk Afterschool program but may choose to operate as SFSP sponsors or sites if eligible and approved by DECAL.

How can I apply to serve At Risk meals when the new school year begins?
When the new school year begins, sponsors can transition to the **At-Risk Afterschool Meals** component of the CACFP. Through the Afterschool Meals program, healthy meals and snacks can be served to children and teenagers who participate in afterschool programs in low income areas. CACFP is available to afterschool programs only during the school year when classes are in session.

Sponsors must hold a child care license or request an exemption from Child Care Services (CCS) before they can register for training. For more information about exemptions, visit: http://decal.ga.gov/CCS/Exemptions.aspx. Sponsors may contact Leslie Truman at Leslie.Truman@decal.ga.gov or at 404.657.1779 to register for training.

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)

On the last day before expiration of the waiver to allow non-congregate feeding, can an SFSP sponsor serve multiple meals that would extend beyond the expiration of the waiver? For example, on September 30, 2021 can the sponsor deliver meals that are intended to be consumed on October 1-4, 2021?
The state agency would not be able to approve a distribution approach that includes a sponsor claiming non-congregate meals intended for consumption after September 30, 2021 or after the duration of summer operations, whichever is earlier*: Child Nutrition Response #75 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-congregate Feeding for Summer 2021 Operations – Extension 6, March 9, 2021 (SFSP)*.

Can closed enrolled sites use area eligibility instead of collecting income eligibility statements?
Yes, the closed-enrolled eligibility waiver allows sponsors to use area eligibility instead of collecting income eligibility statements. However, camps are not closed enrolled sites. They cannot use area eligibility in lieu of collecting income eligibility statements. Camps are required to collect income eligibility statements, and meals are reimbursed only for children who qualify for free and reduced priced meals. **Reference the Waiver Chart at the end of this FAQ document to view all waiver effective dates. The chart is under the *Additional Resources for Nutrition Programs* section.**

Does the First Week Site Visit Waiver allow sponsors to forego the full review of site operations at each site within the first four weeks of operations?
SFSP sponsors are required to visit their sites within the first week of operation and complete a full review of the first four weeks of operation. With waiver approval, SFSP sponsors are not required to visit

sites within the first week of operation if the site operated successfully in the previous year and if sponsors successfully participate in the CACFP or the NSLP. The four-week review is still required, but sponsors do have the flexibility to conduct the review via desk audit.
Reference the Waiver Chart at the end of this FAQ document to view all waiver effective dates. The chart is under the *Additional Resources for Nutrition Programs* section.

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)**
*However, USDA has released the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option. Click here to access the waiver.

I am a SFSP sponsor. Do I have to adhere to monitoring requirements during the public health emergency?
Yes, the Nationwide Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements for Sponsoring Organizations in the Summer Food Service Program-Extension 2 (COVID-19, Child Nutrition Response #42), dated August 4, 2020, specifically allows for offsite monitoring via desk review/audit through September 30, 2021 to SFSP sponsors who have requested this waiver and received approval from DECAL. To ensure program integrity during this time, sponsoring organizations should, to the maximum extent practicable, continue monitoring activities of program operations offsite (e.g., through a desk audit).

This waiver allows for offsite monitoring and is effective immediately and remains in effect through September 30, 2021. **NOTE:** Nutrition Services implemented a new process for Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators to request COVID-19 related USDA nationwide waivers. Beginning March 15, 2021, any **new** requests for waivers must be completed through an online Waiver Participation Form in the new **USDA Waivers Module** in GA ATLAS. Operators will still be required to complete the applicable Waiver Request Form located on DECAL's website under COVID-19 Resources; however, these forms must now be uploaded to the USDA Waivers Module as part of the new process. A Memo Monday recording on how to use this new feature can be found on the Training and Technical Assistance webpage, and the GA ATLAS Waiver Guide can be found under COVID-19 Resources in the *Nutrition Waivers – Waiver Request Forms* section. **NOTE: If you have already submitted and have been approved to utilize a waiver, you do not have to submit the request again.**

For general questions about the waiver, contact Tammie Baldwin at Tammie.Baldwin@decal.ga.gov or 404-656-6332. You may also contact your assigned Technical Assistance Coordinator or the Nutrition TA mailbox at NutritionTA@decal.ga.gov.

DECAL has developed SFSP monitoring guidance to ensure the health and safety of sponsored staff and sites can be maintained and to help SFSP sponsors develop an alternate virtual monitoring process (desk review/audit) to ensure sponsors are in compliance with monitoring requirements per USDA regulations during the public health emergency. Also, this guidance provides additional direction regarding on-going site monitoring after the first-and fourth-week visit/review. **Effective January 4, 2021**, DECAL recommends that, in addition to the first-and fourth-week visit/review, all sponsoring organizations

conduct on-going quarterly monitoring reviews for all sites in operation during FY 2021. A link to the documents can be found below. The documents may also be found on the Nutrition page of DECAL's website under COVID-19 Resources>Resources.

- SFSP Sponsor Monitoring Guidance during COVID-19
- Record Request Checklist Template

If a Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsor would like to implement home meal delivery, what site type must be selected in the Site Application?
Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors may implement home meal delivery for all site types. Sponsors must ensure that all eligibility requirements are met for the site type selected. Therefore, sponsors should select the appropriate response that describes the site type (for each site) in the online Site Application. Sponsors must also attest to required information listed in the Combined Waiver Request Form for home meal delivery.

- Written consent from households of eligible children and/or adult participants that the household wants to receive delivered meals
- The number of children/adults being served
- The household's current contact information (address)

Sponsors are required to submit and upload the household's current contact information into GA ATLAS *Attachment List* section via a list or an Excel spreadsheet. The documentation must also be maintained on file and made available upon review. NOTE: Sponsors are required to notify households that their contact information will be shared with DECAL. Additionally, if a household does not want to share their contact information with DECAL, then the home delivery household/address would not be eligible for reimbursement. In that case, refer the household to a non-congregate (grab and go) meal site in their area. Ensure that the households you serve are aware of safeguard measures that your organization has in place to preserve their confidentiality. For more information on other requirements for meal delivery click on *Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Meal Delivery Using Existing Authority, Questions and Answers*.

How do you calculate the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) in the Site Application when delivering more than one (1) day worth of meals *only* once a week?
The average daily attendance (ADA) should be based on the average number of meals for one (1) day. For example, if a sponsor *typically* distributes 1,000 meals every Thursday for five (5) days' worth of meals, that will equal 200 meals per day (*1,000 divided by 5 = 200*]. The sponsor must also determine and enter the number of days meals will be served for the month. If the sponsor is delivering every Thursday in January (four Thursdays in January), then the number of day meals served for the month should reflect 20 (*5 days' of meals multiplied by 4 Thursdays = 20*).

Can SFSP sponsors claim meals prior to their approval?
Yes. On September 11, 2020, FNS issued a nationwide waiver to allow state agencies to reimburse Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors for meals served before the sponsor was notified that the sponsor or site was approved to participate in the program. Click on Response #57 to access the waiver. Sponsors who would like to use this waiver must update their FY 2021 SFSP Site Application(s) in GA ATLAS to reflect changes (e.g., new operating dates, meal times). Once changes are made, sponsors must complete the SFSP Site Update Form, Attachment Q and send the completed form to their assigned Business Operations Specialist. NOTE: Sponsors are eligible for reimbursement only for meals actually served. Supporting documentation for all meals served must be maintained on file.

Are children allowed to take SFSP meals offsite for other people such as: brothers, sisters, or parents? Can a child take home more than one (1) breakfast, lunch, or snack each day and all these meals be claimed as first meals?
Children are not allowed to take meals offsite for other people, even siblings, to consume. In addition, parents/guardians may pick-up meals or snacks for their own children **only** and not for other children, parents, or neighbors. However, program operators participating under the nationwide meal service time and non-congregate feeding waivers may allow children to pick-up multiple meals at one time or for more than one (1) day. Each set of multiple meals (such as meals for two [2] days) is for consumption by one (1) child and is claimed as first meals. The maximum number of meals that may be served to each child, each day, and claimed for federal reimbursement under 7 CFR 225.16(b) has not changed.

My FSMC contract is set to expire around the start of SFSP FY 2021, and I do not have any available renewals. Can I take advantage of the FSMC waiver by executing a one-year noncompetitive contract?
Yes. If your contract is set to expire for SFSP FY 2021 (by or around June 30, 2021) and you do not have any available renewals, you may use emergency noncompetitive procurement to extend your current contract for one additional year or proceed with a new one-year emergency noncompetitive contract.

NOTE: The emergency noncompetitive contract is only valid for one year, through June 30, 2022 with no options to renew. In addition, the use of this waiver is available until June 30, 2021 or until the expiration of the federally declared public health emergency. To use this waiver, complete the Combined Waiver Request Form and select the "FSMC Waiver (Vended Meals Only)" waiver option. Send your request to Leslie.Truman@decal.ga.gov. If you have any questions, contact LaMonika Jones, Procurement and Purchasing Compliance Officer at (404) 656-2472 or LaMonika.Jones@decal.ga.gov. You may also reference the *Nationwide Waiver of Food Service Management Contract Duration in the National School Lunch Program and Summer Food Service Program Extension*.

Can a School Food Authority (SFA), operating an open SFSP site with non-congregate meal service, serve meals to children not enrolled in the school, such as preschoolers?
Yes. In 7 CFR 225.2, an open site is defined as one located in an eligible area and makes meals available to *all* children in the area in which the site is located. The SFA may serve those meals on a first-come, first-serve basis, as described in *Summer Food Service Program Questions and Answers*, dated January 10, 2017. If an SFA determines it can offer meals to enrolled children and non-enrolled children, an open site is the appropriate meal distribution approach. If an SFA only has the capacity to serve enrolled children, a closed enrolled site is the appropriate choice. NOTE: Open sites may be approved to operate outside eligible areas under COVID-19 *Nationwide Waiver to Extend Area Eligibility Waivers* - EXTENSION 2.

For SFSP sites that will be able to serve congregate meals to a limited number of participants under COVID-19 restrictions, will they also be able to serve non-congregate meals to the remainder of participants?
The nationwide waivers to allow meal service time flexibilities and non-congregate feeding in the Child Nutrition Programs during the coronavirus pandemic do not prohibit the service of congregate meals onsite. Under these waivers, SFSP sites can provide meal service onsite to participants in attendance. They can also arrange meal service pick-ups and/or provide meal delivery for participants who cannot remain onsite due to group restrictions related to COVID-19. If the program operator or site determines there is a need, and it is logistically feasible to implement these options, it can do so for all or part of its

participants. NOTE: For meal delivery service, SFSP sponsors must follow guidelines outlined in the *Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Meal Delivery Using Existing Authority*.

Can residential child care institutions (RCCIs) operate SFSP under the *Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through School Year 2020-2021*?
Yes. School Food Authorities (SFAs) operating RCCIs are permitted to operate SFSP under the *Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through School Year 2020-2021* to safely serve nutritious meals during COVID-19. Similarly, RCCIs may benefit from the additional flexibilities provided by SFSP during COVID-19.

RCCIs meet the definition of a school [42 USC § 1760(d)(5), 7 CFR 210.2 (School)] and public or nonprofit private SFAs are eligible to sponsor SFSP/SSO (7 CFR 225.14 (b)(1)). Additionally, the *Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through School Year 2020-2021* states that SFAs may choose to serve meals through the SFSP or SSO, or may opt to participate under the School Meals Programs. Therefore, the *Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through School Year 2020-2021* may apply to SFAs responsible for meal service at an RCCI.

SFAs providing meal service at RCCIs were not explicitly authorized to operate the SFSP/SSO under the flexibilities offered during school year (SY) 2019-2020; because, due to their residential nature, RCCIs were able to continue to serve children onsite. The flexibility was offered to traditional schools due to disruptions in onsite instructions. During SY 2019-2020, SFAs were able to participate in SFSP because the school closures were considered an unanticipated school closure. Because RCCIs were not closed, but continued to provide meals to children housed onsite, they were not considered *operating* under an unanticipated school closure. However, for SY 2020-2021, FNS is extending the summer program due to COVID-19, this allows all SFAs to consider operating the SFSP or SSO.

Can SFSP sponsors continue serving children after September 30, 2020 during the public health emergency? If so, what are the requirements?
SFSP sponsors currently approved to serve meals under traditional SFSP are permitted to extend their operations until June 30, 2021. Sponsors who wish to continue serving meals through December 31, 2020 *only* must complete the requirements listed in the instructions for *Extending SFSP Operations through December 31, 2020*. However, sponsors who wish to continue serving meals through June 30, 2021 must also complete the requirements listed in the instructions for *Extending SFSP Operations through June 30, 2021* that were disseminated via email to SFSP sponsors. Reference the *Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through School Year 2020-2021- Extension*.

Can the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Component of the CACFP operate simultaneously with the SFSP/SSO?
Yes. The At-Risk Afterschool Meals Component of the CACFP, which operates during the regular school year, may operate simultaneously with the SFSP/SSO. However, the maximum number of meal(s) and/or snack(s) allowed for each Child Nutrition Program (e.g., SFSP; CACFP; SSO; NSLP) cannot be exceeded.

Can a School Food Authority (SFA) serve meals through the NSLP and/or SBP between the beginning of the school year 2020-2021 through June 30, 2021 and claim those meals under SFSP?
Yes, if an SFA is approved to extend summer operations under waiver Response 59, meals served in the NSLP and SBP through the school year 2020-2021 may be claimed under the SFSP. In addition, reimbursement for these meals may be claimed at the free rate. However, any student who paid for their meals must receive a refund for their meal payments.

Can a School Food Authority (SFA), approved to serve meals until June 30, 2021 under waiver Response 59 serve meals on the weekends and serve children up to 18 years of age, regardless of whether the children are enrolled in the SFA?
Approved open sites must serve all children who request a meal from those sites. SFAs may elect to operate closed enrolled sites that serve only enrolled students. All SFSP sponsors are encouraged to tailor their operations to the needs of the community. Pursuant to SFSP regulations, meals may be offered on weekends and holidays. Note: the continuation of waiver Response #59, *Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through School Year 2020-20 2- Extension* is contingent on the availability of funds.

Can SFSP sponsors claim meals prior to their approval?
Yes. On September 11, 2020, FNS issued a nationwide waiver to allow state agencies to reimburse Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors for meals served prior to the sponsor receiving notification that the sponsor or site was approved for participation in the program. Click here to access the notification. Sponsors who would like to utilize this waiver must update their FY 2020 SFSP site application(s) in GA ATLAS to reflect changes (e.g., new operating dates, mealtimes). Once changes are made, sponsors must complete Attachment Q–Sponsor Update Form, and send the completed form to their assigned Business Operations Specialist. Click here to access Attachment Q–Sponsor Update Form. **Note:** Sponsors are only eligible for reimbursement for meals actually served. Supporting documentation for all meals served must be maintained on file.

When distributing multiple meals for the entire week, can we distribute a half-gallon or a larger container of milk instead of multiple 8-fluid ounces (fl. oz.) cartons of milk?
Please reference the Summer Food Service Program: Providing Multiple Meals at a Time During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic resource document located on our website under the COVID-19 Resources section. The document states that, "*Under state-approved non-congregate feeding and mealtime waivers, program operators may provide bulk food items that contribute to multiple meals for children. Program operators can provide menus and instructions with the foods to communicate to children and their parents or guardians how to portion and serve foods at mealtime. For example, the program operator could provide a half-gallon of milk, instead of multiple 8-fluid ounces (fl. oz.) cartons of milk, along with a menu showing that an 8 fl. oz. (1 cup) serving of milk is part of each breakfast and lunch meal*." Therefore, providing milk in larger containers would be acceptable if approved for a non-congregate and mealtime waiver. Documentation must be maintained that shows the total amount of milk needed for the number of meals served was purchased and available.

On the last day before expiration of the waiver to allow non-congregate feeding, can an SFSP sponsor serve multiple meals that would extend beyond the expiration of the waiver? For example, on December 31, 2020 can the sponsor deliver meals that are intended to be consumed on January 1-4?
The state agency would not be able to approve a distribution approach that includes a sponsor claiming non-congregate meals intended for consumption after December 31, 2020 or after the duration of

summer operations, whichever is earlier, the date that *COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #22 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-congregate Feeding in the Child Nutrition Programs – EXTENSION* expires.

Can closed enrolled sites use area eligibility instead of collecting income eligibility statements?
Yes, the closed-enrolled eligibility waiver allows sponsors to use area eligibility instead of collecting income eligibility statements. This waiver is in effect until December 31, 2020. However, camps are not closed enrolled sites. They cannot use area eligibility in lieu of collecting income eligibility statements. Camps are required to collect income eligibility statements, and meals are reimbursed only for children who qualify for free and reduced priced meals.

Can SFSP sponsors continue serving children after September 30, 2020 during the public health emergency? If so, what are the requirements?
SFSP sponsors currently approved to serve meals under traditional SFSP are permitted to extend their operations until December 31, 2020. Sponsors who wish to continue serving meals through December 31, 2020 must complete the requirements listed in the *Instructions for Extending SFSP Operations through December 31, 2020*. The instructions can be found here. Also reference the newly released USDA *Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through December 31, 2020*.

Which Child Nutrition Programs may school food authorities (SFAs) and sponsors operate during the waiver period?
SFAs may operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP), the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) and/or the Summer Food Service Program. SFSP sponsors who are not SFAs may operate the SFSP. All sponsors may also operate the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Component of the CACFP concurrently with the SFSP.

Can the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Component of the CACFP operate simultaneously with the SFSP/SSO?
Yes. The At-Risk Afterschool Meals Component of the CACFP, which operates during the regular school year, may operate simultaneously with the SFSP/SSO. However, the maximum number of meal(s) and/or snack(s) allowed for each Child Nutrition Program (e.g., SFSP; CACFP; SSO; NSLP) cannot exceed two (2) meals and one (1) snack or one (1) meal and two (2) snacks per child, per day. Sponsors who wish to continue serving meals through December 31, 2020 must complete the requirements listed in the *Instructions for Extending SFSP Operations through December 31, 2020*. The instructions can be found here. Also reference the newly released USDA *Questions and Answers Relating to the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through December 2020*.

May SFSP sponsors amend their applications to reflect continuation of operations through December 31, 2020? Or should they submit a new application to determine which sites can operate SFSP?
The state agency has discretion regarding the process used to extend SFSP applications. SFSP sponsors currently approved to serve meals under traditional SFSP are permitted to extend their operations until December 31, 2020. Sponsors who wish to continue serving meals through December 31, 2020 must complete the requirements listed in the *Instructions for Extending SFSP Operations through December 31, 2020*. The instructions can be found here. Also reference the *Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through December 31, 2020*.

Can a School Food Authority (SFA) serve meals through the NSLP and/or SBP between the beginning of the school year 2020-2021 through December 31, 2020 and claim those meals under SFSP?
Yes, if an SFA is approved to extend summer operations under waiver **Response #56**, meals served in the NSLP and SBP from the beginning of the school year 2020-2021 until December 31, 2020 may be claimed under the SFSP. In addition, reimbursement for these meals may be claimed at the free rate. However, any student who paid for their meals must receive a refund for their meal payments.

Can a School Food Authority (SFA), approved to serve meals until December 31, 2020 under waiver Response #56, serve meals on the weekends and serve children up to 18 years of age, regardless of whether the children are enrolled in the SFA?
Approved open sites must serve all children who request a meal from those sites. SFAs may elect to operate closed enrolled sites that serve only enrolled students. All SFSP sponsors are encouraged to tailor their operations to the needs of the community. Pursuant to SFSP regulations, meals may be offered on weekends and holidays. Note: the continuation of waiver Response #56, *Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through December 31, 2020* is contingent on the availability of funds.

May a state agency approve a school food authority (SFA) to operate SFSP/SSO at some schools and NSLP/SBP at other schools?
There is no federal requirement that an SFA can only be approved to operate one (1) Child Nutrition Program in all schools with the SFA. State agencies may approve SFAs to operate different Child Nutrition Programs based on the needs of each school. FNS strongly encourages state agencies and SFAs to provide the flexibility needed to meet varying school circumstances. State agencies may choose not to approve SFAs to operate different Child Nutrition Programs at their individual schools if operational impediments exist that would prevent them from effectively managing such arrangements.

On the last day before expiration of the waiver to allow non-congregate feeding, can a SFSP sponsor serve multiple meals that would extend beyond the expiration of the waiver? For example, on September 30, can the sponsor deliver meals that are intended to be consumed on October 1-4?
The State agency would not be able to approve a distribution approach that includes a sponsor claiming non-congregate meals intended for consumption after September 30, 2020 or after the duration of summer operations, whichever is earlier, the date that *COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #22 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-congregate Feeding in the Child Nutrition Programs – EXTENSION* expires.

Can closed enrolled sites use area eligibility instead of collecting income eligibility statements?
Yes, the closed-enrolled eligibility waiver allows sponsors to use area eligibility instead of collecting income eligibility statements. This waiver is in effect until September 30, 2020. However, camps are not closed enrolled sites. They cannot use area eligibility in lieu of collecting income eligibility statements. Camps are required to collect income eligibility statements, and meals are only reimbursed for children who qualify for free and reduced priced meals.

The executive order issued by Governor Kemp allows child care facilities to increase the number of people allowed in a single classroom from 25 to 50. Does that requirement also apply to SFSP sites?
Unless six feet of distance can be maintained at all times, according to the executive order effective June 11, 2020, SFSP meal sites may operate in groups up to 50 including staff.

How can I operate a feeding site that complies with the Governor and local executive orders regarding social distancing?
Below are suggestions that may comply with the Governor's executive order effective June 11, 2020 to allow gatherings up to 50 individuals unless six feet of distance is always maintained. However, sponsors and sites should ensure they review and comply with any local orders that may be in place.

Organizations are solely responsible for interpreting all orders to ensure you can operate and are not violating any jurisdiction's requirements. DECAL offers limited guidance below; however, DECAL's interpretations are the department's alone and shall not be used as the only criteria to determine if a program should maintain or cease operations.

- Allow the children to 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 50 or less
- Limit number of staff working in the kitchen at the same time
- Clean surfaces that are frequently touched including shared countertops, kitchen areas, and doorknobs

How do SFSP sponsors and/or site supervisors complete the Racial and Ethnic Data Collection Form if the site is utilizing the nationwide waiver to allow parents or guardians to pick-up meals for children or implementing home delivery?
SFSP sponsors may conduct visual identification based on the parent, guardian, or student picking up the meal or the household members residing in the home if the meal is being delivered. For example, if a white parent is picking up 10 meals for children who reside in the household, indicate 10 participants under the non-Hispanic *ethnic category* and 10 participants under the white *racial category*. For collection purposes, a participant may be included in the group to which he or she appears to belong, identifies with, or is regarded as a member of the community. Program officials must use safeguards to prevent the data from being used for discriminatory purposes. Such safeguards include allowing access to this data only to authorized personnel.

If an SFA or SFSP sponsor with an FSMC contract is closed and not serving meals, can the FSMC continue to charge maintenance fees?
Maintenance fees, using a 'meals x rate' price, are not eligible for payment when program meals are not served. Other maintenance fee payment provisions that may exist are subject to state or local legal counsel review and feedback for compliance with federal, state, and local procurement standards.

If an SFA and SFSP sponsor would like a change to meal service (e.g., begin weekend meal service) which is not captured in an existing FSMC contract, is this a material change to an FSMC?
Contract modifications are subject to a cost or price analysis found in 2 CFR 200.323(a). *The non-federal entity must perform a cost or price analysis in connection with every procurement action in excess of the Simplified Acquisition Threshold including contract modifications.* Once the cost or price analysis is obtained, the SFA or state agency legal counsel may determine if the change is material. State agency review and approval of such amendments is required prior to execution. 7 CFR 210.19(a)(5)

Alternatively, during COVID-19 operations, SFAs and SFSP sponsors may also use the micro-purchase method in 2 CFR 200.320(a) or non-competitive proposals as explained in 2 CFR 200.320(f)(2) to obtain

the additional goods and services needed to offer weekend meal services. When using the micro-purchase method, SFAs and SFSP sponsors are reminded that while price quotes are not required, prices must be reasonable and purchases equitably distributed among qualified suppliers. To ensure program integrity moving forward, contracts resulting from non-competitive proposals may not exercise renewal options. All costs must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to be paid using federal funds (2 CFR 200.403).

SFAs and SFSP sponsors with FSMC contracts are having to purchase different items to accommodate grab and go. For the contracts that are fixed-priced, should the cost of the paper products be included, or should they bill the school or sponsor for those additional products?
Billing of additional costs depends on what costs are included in the existing fixed-price contract. Additional costs amending an SFA-FSMC contract in excess of the Simplified Acquisition Threshold will be subject to 2 CFR 200.323(a), which requires a cost or price analysis in excess of the Simplified Acquisition Threshold, and 7 CFR 210.19(a)(5), which requires state agency review and approval of amendments prior to execution [7 CFR 210.19(a)(5)].

During the COVID-19 operations, SFAs and SFSP sponsors may use the micro-purchase method in 2 CFR 200.320(a) or a non-competitive proposal as explained in 2 CFR 200.320(f)(2) to obtain the additional goods. SFAs and SFSP sponsors may obtain additional services using these same procurement methods if applicable. To ensure program integrity moving forward, contracts resulting from non-competitive proposals may not exercise renewal options. All costs must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to be paid using federal funds (2 CFR 200.403). When using the micro-purchase method, SFAs and SFSP sponsors are reminded that while price quotes are not required, prices must be reasonable and purchases equitably distributed among qualified suppliers. Amending contracts executed using non-competitive proposals in 2 CFR 200.320(f)(2) must follow 2 CFR 200.323(a) as applicable, and as noted above, obtain state agency prior review and approval prior to execution.

Can SFAs or SFSP sponsors extend contracts with food distributors and milk, dairy, and other suppliers with contract duration periods ending on or around June 30, 2020?
Program operators seeking to extend supplier contracts expiring on or before June 30, 2020, will need to consult state and local procurement standards to determine if contract extensions are allowable. If contracts expire, however, federal regulations allow program operators to use a non-competitive proposal in 2 CFR 200.320(f)(2) to negotiate one-year contracts given the public health emergency.

For SFAs and non-SFA (community organization) sponsors serving non-congregate meals via home meal delivery models that utilize bus routes or mobile meal routes, should each stop be considered a SFSP site? Do they have to adhere to site requirements for a mobile meal service?
No. When performing home delivery of SFSP meals for a COVID-19 food service, even though the meals may be delivered via a school bus route or a mobile meal route normally used for SFSP congregate meal service in the summer months, each home would not be considered a site. Therefore, the SFSP site requirements, including site approval by the state agency, do not apply. Instead, the SFSP sponsor should ensure that the operation adheres to requirements for home meal delivery in *COVID-19 SFSP and Seamless Summer Option Meal Delivery Using Existing Authority*, March 9, 2020. For more information, click here.

Do the other nationwide waivers continue to apply once the transition is made to traditional SFSP/SSO?

Yes. The policy flexibilities offered by the collective nationwide waivers for COVID-19 operations continue to apply after program operators transition to traditional SFSP or SSO operations. FNS will continue to assess conditions and will consider extending the nationwide waivers if the need for policy flexibilities continues.

Can schools that have been approved for non-congregate feeding through SFSP or SSO deliver meals directly to students' homes? Also, may SFSP sponsors who are not school food authorities (SFAs) also serve non-congregate meals via meal delivery?
Yes. SFSP sponsors and School Food Authorities (SFAs) may serve non-congregate meals via meal delivery. If an SFA and SFSP sponsor 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.

Sponsors who are not working in coordination with an SFA will not have access to school rosters of eligible children. For that reason, these sponsors must develop a method of notifying households in an area-eligible community that SFSP meals are available to all children who request them. These sponsors must also develop a method for households to provide written consent to initiate meal delivery, to confirm the household's current contact information and delivery location, and to confirm the number of children in the household who need meals. Households also must have a way of notifying the sponsor of the need for individual substitutions due to medical or other special dietary needs.

All other requirements for meal delivery in *COVID-19 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Meal Delivery Using Existing Authority, Questions and Answers* apply. For complete information, click here.

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. All SFSP Orientation and Program Training sessions have been conducted for FY 2020.

Are new SFSP sponsors allowed to utilize waivers in the SFSP?
Once a new sponsor's full application has been approved, they are eligible to utilize the waivers after the sponsor receives waiver approval from DECAL.

What is a noncompetitive procurement?
Noncompetitive procurement is a contract awarded without any competition. Noncompetitive contracts do not include sole source contracts or contracts awarded under noncompetitive negotiation, both of which require negotiation. Noncompetitive contracts may be used when the public exigency or emergency for the requirement will permit a delay in competitive solicitation.

If my summer sites won't serve meals this year, for example, on a college campus that won't be open, will I have to attend new sponsor training next summer?
Yes, your organization would be required to attend two-day new sponsor training in the year that you would like to participate again. All sponsoring organizations that don't participate in SFSP for a summer

season are required to attend two-day new sponsor training to resume their participation. New policies, guidance, or updates to federal regulations are issued throughout the year, and we want to ensure you are up to date on the current requirements.

With the current COVID-19 pandemic, why are we required to get a permit for the kitchen in the name of our organization when the kitchen we are renting for the SFSP already has permit? Can we waive this requirement in a time like this, so we can serve our community?
The requirement for the food service permit is a Department of Public Health requirement. The regulations require that we adhere to all the local health and sanitation requirements applicable to our state. As it stands, DPH requires that the food service permit is required if an organization is self-prepping their meals, and the permit must be in the name of that organization. If sponsors desire an exception to the permit requirement, they should contact their local health department.

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.

<u>FOR BOTH CACFP & SFSP</u>

Do I need to complete the meal pattern waiver if I am having a problem finding milk?
Yes. Institutions or sponsors who cannot provide certain meal components due to a food shortage need to request a waiver and document the shortage of that meal component. Institutions or sponsors may be able to claim the meal without the required meal component if they have an approved meal pattern waiver for the component not served. **NOTE:** Nutrition Services implemented a new process for Child

Nutrition Program (CNP) operators to request COVID-19 related USDA nationwide waivers. Beginning March 15, 2021, any **new** requests for waivers must be completed through an online Waiver Participation Form in the new **USDA Waivers Module** in GA ATLAS. Operators will still be required to complete the applicable Waiver Request Form located on DECAL's website under COVID-19 Resources; however, these forms must now be uploaded to the USDA Waivers Module as part of the new process. A Memo Monday recording on how to use this new feature can be found on the Training and Technical Assistance webpage, and the GA ATLAS Waiver Guide can be found under COVID-19 Resources in the *Nutrition Waivers – Waiver Request Forms* section. **NOTE: If you have already submitted and have been approved to utilize a waiver, you do not have to submit the request again.**

For general questions about the waiver, contact Tammie Baldwin at Tammie.Baldwin@decal.ga.gov or 404-656-6332. You may also contact your assigned Technical Assistance Coordinator or the Nutrition TA mailbox at NutritionTA@decal.ga.gov.
****Reference the Waiver Chart at the end of this FAQ document to view all waiver effective dates. The chart is under the *Additional Resources for Nutrition Programs* section.****

Will there be leniency with meal pattern compliance due to food shortages?
With waiver approval, the requirement to serve meals that meet the meal pattern requirements is waived during the public health emergency. Institutions or sponsors who cannot provide certain meal components due to a food shortage may request a waiver and document the shortage of that meal component. Institutions or sponsors may be able to claim the meal without the required meal component if they have an approved meal pattern waiver for the component not served. **NOTE:** Nutrition Services implemented a new process for Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators to request COVID-19 related USDA nationwide waivers. Beginning March 15, 2021, any **new** requests for waivers must be completed through an online Waiver Participation Form in the new **USDA Waivers Module** in GA ATLAS. Operators will still be required to complete the applicable Waiver Request Form located on DECAL's website under COVID-19 Resources; however, these forms must now be uploaded to the USDA Waivers Module as part of the new process. A Memo Monday recording on how to use this new feature can be found on the Training and Technical Assistance webpage, and the GA ATLAS Waiver Guide can be found under COVID-19 Resources in the *Nutrition Waivers – Waiver Request Forms* section. **NOTE: If you have already submitted and have been approved to utilize a waiver, you do not have to submit the request again.**

For general questions about the waiver, contact Tammie Baldwin at Tammie.Baldwin@decal.ga.gov or 404-656-6332. You may also contact your assigned Technical Assistance Coordinator or the Nutrition TA mailbox at NutritionTA@decal.ga.gov.
**** Reference the Waiver Chart at the end of this FAQ document to view all waiver effective dates. The chart is under the *Additional Resources for Nutrition Programs* section.****

Will I be able to continue to offer grab and go or mobile meals this summer?
Yes, sponsors who have been approved to use the non-congregate waiver will be allowed to offer grab and go or mobile meals. The meal times and non-congregate waiver also allows you to distribute multiple meals for the entire week.
**** Reference the Waiver Chart at the end of this FAQ document to view all waiver effective dates. The chart is under the *Additional Resources for Nutrition Programs* section.****

Are we required to follow the standard mealtime requirements during COVID-19?

With waiver approval, the requirement that meals must follow meal service time requirements is waived during the public health emergency. This waiver waives the requirement that a certain amount of time must lapse between meal services and the requirement that the meal service be limited to a certain amount of time. However, the waiver still requires sponsors to establish a meal service time. Keep your application current with meal service times. DECAL must know your actual meal service times so that DECAL reviewers will know what time meal services will begin and end.
*** Reference the Waiver Chart at the end of this FAQ document to view all waiver effective dates. The chart is under the *Additional Resources for Nutrition Programs* section.***

How do I submit a waiver request?
Nutrition Services implemented a new process for Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators to request COVID-19 related USDA nationwide waivers. Beginning March 15, 2021, any **new** requests for waivers must be completed through an online Waiver Participation Form in the new **USDA Waivers Module** in GA ATLAS. Operators will still be required to complete the applicable Waiver Request Form located on DECAL's website under COVID-19 Resources; however, these forms must now be uploaded to the USDA Waivers Module as part of the new process. A Memo Monday recording on how to use this new feature can be found on the Training and Technical Assistance webpage, and the GA ATLAS Waiver Guide can be found under COVID-19 Resources in the *Nutrition Waivers – Waiver Request Forms* section. **NOTE: If you have already submitted and have been approved to utilize a waiver, you do not have to submit the request again.**

Once your waiver form(s) is/are submitted, allow DECAL adequate time to process the information and respond with either an approval or denial of each request. Approved nationwide waivers include those for meal times, meal patterns, non-congregate feeding, parent pick-up, monitoring requirements, FSMC contract, and area eligibility.

For general questions about the waiver, contact Tammie Baldwin at Tammie.Baldwin@decal.ga.gov or 404-656-6332. You may also contact your assigned Technical Assistance Coordinator or the Nutrition TA mailbox at NutritionTA@decal.ga.gov.

Do I need to apply for the waivers, or can I automatically use them?
While DECAL has opted to participate in several USDA waivers, sponsors must request and receive approval to use the waivers. This applies to waivers used in the CACFP and SFSP. **NOTE:** Nutrition Services implemented a new process for Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators to request COVID-19 related USDA nationwide waivers. Beginning March 15, 2021, any **new** requests for waivers must be completed through an online Waiver Participation Form in the new **USDA Waivers Module** in GA ATLAS. Operators will still be required to complete the applicable Waiver Request Form located on DECAL's website under COVID-19 Resources; however, these forms must now be uploaded to the USDA Waivers Module as part of the new process. A Memo Monday recording on how to use this new feature can be found on the Training and Technical Assistance webpage, and the GA ATLAS Waiver Guide can be found under COVID-19 Resources in the *Nutrition Waivers – Waiver Request Forms* section. **NOTE: If you have already submitted and have been approved to utilize a waiver, you do not have to submit the request again.**

For general questions about the waiver, contact Tammie Baldwin at Tammie.Baldwin@decal.ga.gov or 404-656-6332. You may also contact your assigned Technical Assistance Coordinator or the Nutrition TA mailbox at NutritionTA@decal.ga.gov.

What documentation must be collected, submitted, and maintained for home meal delivery?
To ensure program compliance, DECAL must verify that actual meals are delivered to households. Therefore, CNP operators must collect the following information for home meal delivery. Operators must also attest to this information when completing the Combined Waiver Request Form for home meal delivery.

- Written consent from households of eligible children and/or adult participants that the household wants to receive delivered meals
- The number of children/adults being served
- The household's current contact information (address)

Sponsors are required to submit and upload the household's current contact information into GA ATLAS *Attachment List* section via a list or an Excel spreadsheet. The documentation must also be maintained on file and made available upon review. NOTE: Sponsors are required to notify households that their contact information will be shared with DECAL. Additionally, if a household does not want to share their contact information with DECAL, then the home delivery household/address would not be eligible for reimbursement. In that case, refer the household to a non-congregate (grab and go) meal site in their area. Ensure that the households you serve are aware of safeguard measures that your organization has in place to preserve their confidentiality. For more information on other requirements for meal delivery click on *Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Meal Delivery Using Existing Authority, Questions and Answers*.

May a Child Nutrition Program operator donate leftover food or milk to a CACFP day care home provider?
Section 9(1) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act allows leftover foods to be donated to eligible local food banks or other charitable organizations. This includes any food bank or charitable organization that is exempt from tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 {26 U.S.C § 501(c)(3)}. Therefore, if the CACFP day care home provider has 501(c)(3 status, they are eligible to receive donations from other Child Nutrition Program operators.

SP 11-2012, CACFP 05-2012, SFSP 07-2012 Guidance on the Food Donation Program in Child Nutrition Programs encourages schools, CACFP institutions, and SFSP sponsors to maximize using leftover food before discarding it. The memo allows leftover foods to be used in subsequent Child Nutrition Program meal services or transferred to other meal sites. However, Child Nutrition Program operators must check state and local food safety requirements before transferring or donating leftover food and milk. If a school, CACFP institution, or SFSP sponsor has leftover food on a frequent basis, menu planning and production practices should be adjusted to reduce leftovers. For more information, see *Questions and Answers Relating to the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations during School Year 2020-2021 – Q&A #4*.

Do stimulus payments or the weekly unemployment insurance payments provided through the CARES Act and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 count as income when determining eligibility for Child Nutrition Programs?
COVID-19-related stimulus payments do not count as income for determining free and reduced-price eligibility for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP) or eligibility for tier I reimbursement for CACFP. Because these payments are tax rebates, they "shall not be taken into account as resources for a period of 12 months from receipt, for purposes of determining the

eligibility of such individuals (or any other individual) for benefits or assistance (or the amount or extent of benefits or assistance) under any federal program or under any state or local program financed in whole or in part with Federal funds" (26 U.S. C ode § 6409). The IRS also clarifies that these specific coronavirus payments will not affect income for purposes of determining eligibility of federal government assistance or benefit programs.

However, the weekly COVID-related supplemental unemployment benefits provided through the CARES Act and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 do count as income for means-tested benefits (other than Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program), including free and reduced-price meals (U.S. Senate Committee on Finance FAQ). Food and Nutrition Service Income Eligibility Guidelines also indicate that unemployment benefits must be counted as income. For more information, see *Questions and Answers Relating to the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations during School Year 2020-2021 – Q&A #4*.

May Child Nutrition Program operators who have received a loan through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) from the Small Business Administration and qualified lending partners use SFSP or CACFP program funds received from the state (Child Nutrition Program federal funds) to pay back a PPP loan?

Congress authorized the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) through the CARES Act and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 to help businesses facing extenuating circumstances, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, cover their payroll expenses. Some sponsors have used PPP funds to pay for Child Nutrition Program labor expenses.

Under certain circumstances, a PPP loan may be forgiven.

- **If the PPP loan is forgiven:** Any Child Nutrition Program expenses paid for using those forgiven PPP funds may not be claimed using Child Nutrition Program funds since they have *already* been paid with another source of federal funding.
- **If the PPP loan is not forgiven:** Child Nutrition Program funds may only be used to repay that portion of the loan that was used to cover allowable Child Nutrition Program expenses. This is consistent with existing guidance outlined in the FNS Instruction 796-2 Rev. 4 (refer to the heading titled, *Cost Funded from Other Sources and Under Recovery of Cost*). Program operators using Child Nutrition Program funds to repay any portion of a PPP loan must fully document such repayments, be able to demonstrate that funds were properly allocated, and that such repayments were limited to the portion of the loan that was used to cover allowable expenses under Child Nutrition Programs. In most circumstances, FNS anticipates that the same payroll cost allocation used by the program operator under normal procedures will continue to apply when considering PPP repayments, though exceptions may occur.

However, note that interest due in connection with a PPP or other loan repayment is *not* an allowable cost and may not be paid using federal Child Nutrition Program funds, per requirements at 2 CFR 200.449(a). Program operators are further reminded that Child Nutrition Program funds may only be used to pay for allowable Child Nutrition Program expenses. For any portion of a PPP loan that was used to pay for non-Program expenses, Child Nutrition Programs funds may not be used for repayment. See *Questions and Answers Relating to the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations during School Year 2020-2021 – Q&A #4*.

The Monitoring Nationwide Waivers ask state agencies and local operators to continue monitoring activities of program operations offsite to the maximum extent practicable. Which portions of the review could a state agency conduct offsite?
During the public health emergency, state agencies and sponsoring organizations should review to the best of their ability all elements of program operations that would normally be reviewed onsite. This includes all the review elements found in 7 CFR 226.16(d)(4)(i) for CACFP and 7 CFR 225.15 for SFSP. Offsite monitoring through a desk review can be conducted by reviewing records that have been emailed, faxed, or delivered. In situations where direct observation normally occurs, such as observation of meal service, point of service, health and safety, alternative observation can be conducted virtually by using video and/or photos of meal service. Sponsoring organizations may also conduct interviews with program staff and participants via phone or video conference to verify information in photos.

When using technology such as a video or photos, sponsoring organizations should follow any federal and state laws related to technology use and privacy. Information that contains Personally Identifiable Information (PII), such as applications or eligibility status, should be protected. Information shared by programs should be password protected or sent via other secure methods to ensure privacy. For more information on offsite monitoring strategies and documentation, refer to the applicable *Child Nutrition Programs Offsite Monitoring Fact Sheets* posted on the DECAL website under COVID-19 Resources.

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.

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- 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 Supervisor at Shonda.Franklin@decal.ga.gov

Are we required to follow the standard mealtime requirements during COVID-19?
With waiver approval, the requirement that meals must follow meal service time requirements is waived during the public health emergency. This waiver waives the requirement that a certain amount of time must lapse between meal services and the requirement that the meal service be limited to a certain amount of time. However, the waiver still requires sponsors to establish a meal service time. Keep your application current with meal service times. DECAL must know your actual meal service times so that DECAL reviewers will know what time meal services will begin and end.
Meal Times Waiver is in effect until **December 31, 2020 for SFSP** and **June 30, 2021 for CACFP**

Due to COVID-19 and social distancing, can Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators provide online training to program staff?
Yes, if onsite training is **not** conducted due to social distancing, program operators may conduct online training via webinar or provide staff and/or sponsored sites with training materials via other methods, such as email. If internet access is unavailable, staff and/or sponsored sites may pick up hard-copies of training materials. Training materials may include, but are not limited to:

- PowerPoint presentation
- CACFP/SFSP Handbooks (*Independent Child Care Center CACFP*; *At-Risk Afterschool Meals Handbook; SFSP Administrative Guide*)
- CACFP/SFSP policies/memos
- Assessment (optional)

Program operators must collect and maintain documentation to verify that all staff and/or sponsored sites have been trained. If written signatures are **not** obtained on sign-in sheets, the program operator may request an email confirmation from staff and/or sponsored sites to certify that training materials were received and reviewed. Or the program operator may create and disseminate an assessment to staff and/or sponsored sites to complete and return to verify training completion. In summary, the following documentation must be maintained.

- Training Agenda
- A list of staff members that received training materials
- Date training materials were disseminated
- How training materials were disseminated (webinar; web-based; email; hard-copy)
- Printed email from staff to certify that training has been received and reviewed **or** a completed, printed assessment from staff

Frequently Asked Questions
Related to COVID-19/Coronavirus
*(**Updated 4-6-21**; most recent Q&A's or updated answers in **red**)*

Contact your assigned Technical Assistance Coordinator or the Nutrition TA mailbox at **NutritionTA@decal.ga.gov** with questions/concerns.

Name	Title	Phone	Email	Region
LaKisha Robinson	TA Coordinator	(478) 314-2806	LaKisha.Robinson@decal.ga.gov	Southeast
Deidrea Thompson	TA Coordinator	(866) 370-3203	Deidrea.Thompson@decal.ga.gov	East
Victoria Thomas	TA Coordinator	(470) 532-0873	Victoria.Thomas@decal.ga.gov	Southwest
Nkem Ijeh	TA Coordinator	(404) 973-4099	Nkem.Ijeh@decal.ga.gov	North/NW
Tanya Coleman	TA Coordinator	(470) 373-7826	Tanya.Coleman@decal.ga.gov	Metro West

What resources or policy guidance is available relating to 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
- 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

Am I able to donate leftover perishable food items to my children during the public health emergency?
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

When do the waivers end?
All of the waivers are located on the COVID-19 resources page. Click on the document to see the end date for each waiver. A convenient chart that includes the waiver duration and description is available in the **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR NUTRITION PROGRAMS** section of this document.

What food items may be provided in bulk when providing multiple meals at a time during COVID-19?
The following food items may be provided in bulk.

- Foods that normally credit towards reimbursable meals under the CACFP or SFSP.
- Foods that are recognizable as a meal component in a reimbursable meal.
- Foods that do not require much preparation or the addition of other ingredients (aside from water) before eating.

Can frozen, bulk foods be provided when serving multiple meals at a time during COVID-19?
Yes. Frozen foods, which require minimal preparation other than heating, may be provided as part of meals if they meet meal pattern requirements. Providing foods in a frozen state may present a safe way to offer perishable foods for consumption later in the week (e.g., four or five days after distribution).

What documentation is required when providing multiple meals at a time during COVID-19?
When providing multiple meals at a time, program operators must continue to maintain documentation and menu records that show the served meal components and quantities for each age group. Program operators must keep supporting menu documentation, such as labels, recipes, and manufacturer specifications in accordance with program regulations.

Are we required to provide meal accommodations when providing bulk food items and/or providing multiple meals at a time during COVID-19?
Program operators must continue to provide reasonable modifications to program meals or the meal service to accommodate children with disabilities.

What should program operators consider when deciding how many days of meals to provide at a time during COVID-19?
Program operators should consider the following when deciding how many days of meals to provide at a time.

- How long foods may be safely stored before eating?
- How long foods can be stored before food quality suffers?
- Participants' access to refrigeration and freezer space for the amounts of food and milk provided.
- Food storage space at the child care site and on meal delivery vehicles (such as buses or food trucks).
- Whether fewer pick-up days and times will decrease access to meals for some children.

Can children, or in CACFP, adult participants, pick up multiple meals at the same time?
Yes. Under the Meal Service Times Flexibility waiver, program operators are not required to serve meals at a certain time, or to allow a certain amount of time to elapse between meals. Therefore, program operators participating under this waiver and the Non-Congregate Feeding waiver may allow children or adult participants to pick up multiple meals at one time, up to one week at a time. The maximum number of meals that may be served and claimed for federal reimbursement per child or adult participant per day remains the same; however, the state agency may approve a distribution approach that allows children or adult participants to pick up meals for multiple days, up to one week at a time. Program operators must continue to maintain documentation and menu records that show the served meal components and quantities for each age group. Program operators must keep supporting menu documentation, such as labels, recipes, and manufacturer specifications in accordance with program regulations.

Is the purchase of personal protective equipment or other supplies to prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19 an allowable cost?

Yes. Personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves and face masks) and cleaning and sanitary supplies are allowable costs during the current public health emergency, provided that such purchases are made in support of child nutrition program operations. All purchases must continue to meet the required criteria of being reasonable, necessary, and allocable (refer to 2 CFR 200.404 and 200.405).

May funds from the nonprofit food service account be used to purchase bottled water (as an alternative to water fountains and other onsite options) for non-congregate meals served during the public health emergency?
Yes. The purchase of potable, bottled water to supplement meals served in non-congregate settings is an allowable cost. For more information, click on the following policy memorandums: *Water Availability in CACFP* and *Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities*. State and local agencies should remember that milk is expected to be served as part of each reimbursable meal, and potable water may not be provided as a substitute for milk.

May local program operators pay staff salaries using funds from the nonprofit food service account when employees are unable to work due to mandatory closures related to the current public health emergency? Is compensation in the form of hazard pay for employees who are still working also allowable?
Yes, but only when such employee absences are covered under the local program operator's written Compensation Plan or established personnel policies. FNS has determined that local program operators with such policies may continue to pay out salaries and benefits to their employees during mandatory closures due to COVID-19, which qualify as an "authorized absence from the job" for affected employees in accordance with the requirements of 2 CFR 200.431(b). These payments must be consistent with the program operator's Compensation Plan of paying salaries (under unexpected or extraordinary circumstances) from all funding sources, federal and non-federal, and must be fully allocable. Compensation in the form of hazard pay for employees continuing to work is further considered an allowable cost, provided that such compensation is similarly permissible under the program operator's Compensation Plan, and the hazard pay in question is reasonable.

Any of these covered personnel costs may be charged retroactively to the date on which mandated staff absences and/or work that occurred when the hazardous conditions related to COVID-19 began. Program operators may draft or update their Compensation Plan to include leave, salaries, and benefits during unexpected and extraordinary circumstances if it is not already in place. Any new or updated policies to the Compensation Plan must also be fully in accordance with the requirements of 2 CFR, and consistent in their payment of salaries and benefits regardless of the funding sources used/available, both federal and non-federal (as described above).

How should SFAs, institutions, or other grantees treat non-refundable costs for events and activities that were cancelled due to COVID-19 closures and social distancing protocols?
If an institution or other child nutrition program grantee had expended funds for an approved and otherwise allowable program cost (e.g., travel, meeting registration, supplies) for an event or activity that was cancelled due to COVID-19 closures, and those costs were not refunded by the vendor, the grantee may charge those costs to their program. Grantees should keep records of the original expense, and their attempt to obtain refunds. Grantees should also ensure that any materials of value, such as travel vouchers, supplies, materials, etc., that can be repurposed or used later, are used for the operation of the child nutrition program or a related activity. This flexibility applies only to costs incurred before the expiration of OMB Memo, M-20-17, *Administrative Relief for Recipients and*

Applicants of Federal Assistance Directly Impacted by the Novel Coronavirus, Due to the Loss of Operations.

Can neighborhood representatives or community members pick up meals on behalf of various households?
No. Only the actual parent or guardian of the eligible child may pick up meals. Sponsors requesting to utilize the parent pick up waiver will be required to demonstrate that controls are in place to ensure that only parents or guardians pick up meals for eligible children and adults and that they are not receiving duplicate meals.

Can Head Start programs serve meals during the public health emergency?
Head Start locations may continue to participate in the CACFP in the summer but will need to update their site applications to reflect the new operating dates and notify their Business Operations Representative of the change. Alternatively, Head Start locations may serve meals under an existing SFSP sponsor. There are several waivers that 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. For additional information, contact Leslie.Truman@decal.ga.gov.

Will the meal reimbursement rate increase, given the fact that food costs have increased dramatically?
We are not aware of any changes in the meal reimbursement rates. If the rates do change, we will communicate that information to you as soon we receive it.

How do I keep my meal sites safe?
We know you are taking every precaution to protect the employees, volunteers and families at your meal sites. If, however, you learn that an individual at your meal site (be it a child, parent, or staff member) becomes ill and tests positive for COVID-19, follow the procedures below immediately:

- ***cease** the meal service*
- ***report** the case to your local health department*
- ***contact** your application specialist or Leslie Truman at 404.657.1779*
- ***quarantine** the area and persons impacted for 14 days*

If you need additional guidance, visit the CDC website **here**.

For portions of the review where direct observation is normally required, what alternatives may states and locals use to complete reviews offsite?
In situations where direct observation normally occurs, such as observation of meal preparation, meal pattern components, verification of attendance, and food safety issues, examples of alternatives include state and local program operators conducting alternative observation using video or photos and/or pictures of meal preparation and meal service. States may also conduct interviews with staff and program participants via telephone or video conference to verify information in photos.

Is the Nondiscrimination Statement required on informational materials and websites?
States must comply with their obligation to include the required Nondiscrimination Statement (NDS) on all printed and electronic program materials made available to applicants, participants, and potentially eligible persons for public information, public education, or public distribution. This includes, but is not limited to, information pertaining to eligibility, benefits, services, the location of local facilities or service

delivery points, and hours of service.

If the size of the material is too small to include the full statement, the material must, at a minimum, include the following statement in print in the same font size as the main text: "This institution is an equal opportunity provider." On websites, the Nondiscrimination Statement (NDS) or a link to it, must be included on the home page of the program information.

Can children, or in CACFP, adult participants pick up multiple meals at the same time?
Yes. Under the Meal Service Times Flexibility waiver, program operators are not required to serve meals at a certain time or to allow a certain amount of time to elapse between meals. Therefore, program operators participating under this waiver and the Non-Congregate Feeding waiver may allow children or adult participants to pick up multiple meals at one time, up to one week at a time. The maximum number of meals that may be served and claimed for federal reimbursement per child or adult participant per day remains the same; however, the state agency may approve a distribution approach that allows children or adult participants to pick up meals for multiple days, up to one week at a time. Program operators are also required to maintain accurate meal counts by program and submit claims by program.

If a CACFP site closes as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, can it become an SFSP site and offer meals? What if schools in the area have or have not closed?
A CACFP site that is closed during the pandemic may become an SFSP site under an SFSP sponsor that has been approved by the DECAL. If the sponsor intends to operate the site as an open site and serve the community at large, the site must be in an eligible area, unless the state agency has approval to waive the area eligibility requirement and has approved the site to operate under the waiver. SFSP sites may only operate during the regular school year in cases of unanticipated school closures, or during breaks for schools operating on a continuous calendar. If schools in an area are open, meals would be served under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, and SFSP would not be an option.

If a child care center or day care home continues to provide CACFP meals and snacks during the COVID-19 pandemic, can the facility also be approved to operate as an SFSP site?
Yes. CACFP institutions that have developed a separate food service program for children who are not enrolled in their day care homes or centers may be approved to participate as an SFSP site under an SFSP sponsor that has been approved by the DECAL. The CACFP institution must meet SFSP eligibility criteria, ensure that the same children are not served meals in both programs, and keep separate records for each program. To operate as an open SFSP site, the facility must be in an "area in which poor economic conditions exist," as defined at 7 CFR 225.2 of SFSP regulations, unless the state agency is approved to grant waivers of the restrictions on site eligibility. SFSP sites may only operate during the regular school year in cases of unanticipated school closures, or during breaks for schools operating on a continuous calendar. If schools in an area are open, meals would be served under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, and SFSP would not be an option.

Will racial and ethnic data be collected if it is not provided by applicants during telephone interviews and online systems?
For current households, states may use existing school meal enrollment applications. For new applications, states are encouraged to use information from other State Education Agencies, or from

other household public assistance benefits received such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Will meal pattern waivers affect a program operator's responsibility to make meal modifications for participants with disabilities?
During this public health emergency, states and program operators are not relieved of their obligation to provide meal modifications for participants with disabilities. When planning a non-congregate meal service, state agencies and program operators should consider how individuals who require meal modifications will be identified and served.

May program operators provide non-congregate meals at different locations that were not previously approved by the state agency?
No. The state agency must approve all locations for distribution of meals.

Under the current nationwide waivers allowing non-congregate feeding and no meal time restrictions due to COVID-19, may Child Nutrition Program operators provide food items in bulk, either through pick up or home delivery, without additional waivers?
Under current statutory and regulatory authority and in conjunction with recent COVID-19 waivers allowing non-congregate feeding and no meal time restrictions when providing multiple meals at one time, program operators may provide bulk items as long as individual meals are easily identifiable as a reimbursable meal. When implementing such a delivery mechanism, program operators:

- Must include the required food components in the proper minimum amounts for each reimbursable meal being claimed;
- Must ensure that food items are clearly identifiable as making up reimbursable meals;
- Are strongly encouraged to provide menus with directions indicating which items are to be used for each meal and the portion sizes;
- Should consider if households have access to refrigeration, stoves, microwaves, etc., when providing food that requires refrigeration or further preparation, such as reheating; and
- Should ensure that only minimal preparation is required, i.e., that food provided as ingredients for recipes does not require chopping, mixing, baking, etc.

Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 226.6(i)(11), state agencies may approve requested flexibilities for unitized meals prepared by food service management companies or delivered to CACFP outside-school-hours care centers.

Do you need to have "And Justice for All" (AJFA) posters on mobile routes for COVID-19 meal distribution?
The AJFA poster must be prominently displayed in all facilities and locations that distribute program benefits or administer services. Due to COVID-19, if printed AJFA posters are not available for display, paper copies may be substituted as necessary, including use of the 2015 AJFA poster, if you have not received new (2019) posters. Meals delivered from stationary vans or buses should display the AJFA poster. For vehicles making door-to-door deliveries at homes and businesses, the AJFA poster does not need to be displayed.

What is the maximum number of program meals and snacks that can be claimed for federal reimbursement each day?

The maximum number of meals or snacks that can be claimed for federal reimbursement, per child or adult participant, per day, varies by program:

- NSLP: Up to one lunch per child per day;
- NSLP Afterschool Snack Service: Up to one snack per child per day;
- NSLP Seamless Summer Option: Up to two meals, or one meal and one snack, per child, per day, in any combination except lunch and supper;
- SBP: Up to one breakfast per child per day;
- CACFP Child and Adult Care: Up to two meals and one snack, or two snacks and one meal, per child or adult participant per day;
- CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Component: Up to one meal and one snack, per child per day;
- CACFP Emergency Shelters: Up to three meals, per resident 18 years and younger, per day; or
- SFSP: Up to two meals, or one meal and one snack, per child, per day, in any combination except lunch and supper.

Some program operators participate in multiple programs. For example, under typical circumstances, in one day, a program operator may serve a child breakfast through SBP, lunch through NSLP, and supper and snack through CACFP At-Risk. Under the waivers, a child may still participate in more than one program, but in no circumstances shall a child receive more than the number of meals allowed in each program for which they are eligible. Operators must also ensure children do not receive duplicates of the same meal.

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.

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.

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).

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
Temika Moore, Business Operations Specialist
404-463-1494
Temika.Moore@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

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

DECAL Participation of 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 table lists all waivers that DECAL has elected to utilize and has communicated to USDA's Southeast Regional Office (SERO).

Organizations that wish to utilize any of the waivers in the table must first notify Leslie Truman at Leslie.Truman@decal.ga.gov.

Waiver Type	Applicable Program(s)	Brief Description of Waiver (*For full details, please refer to the actual waiver memo*)
Activity Requirement in At-Risk Afterschool	CACFP	The requirement that at-risk afterschool care centers/sites serve afterschool meals and snacks in a structured and supervised environment, with an educational or enrichment activity is waived during the public health emergency. *****Waiver expired on June 30, 2020*****
Waiver of Monitoring Requirements for CACFP 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. *****Waiver expired on August 31, 2020*****
(60) Day Reporting Requirements for January and February 2020 Claims	CACFP & SFSP	***The requirement to submit claims for reimbursement no more than 60 days after the last day of the month has been waived for claims covering operations during the months of January and February 2020.*** *****Waiver is no longer in effect*****
Area Eligibility in At-Risk Afterschool	CACFP	The requirement that at-risk afterschool care centers must be located in the attendance area of a school in which at least 50% of the enrolled children are certified eligible for free or reduced-price school meals is waived during the public health emergency. *****Waiver in effect until June 30, 2021*****
Meal Pattern Flexibilities	CACFP	The requirement to serve meals that meet the meal pattern requirements is waived during the public health emergency. *****Waiver extended until June 30, 2021*****
Meal Times Waiver	CACFP	The requirement that meals must follow meal service time requirements is waived during the public health emergency. *****Waiver extended until June 30, 2021*****
Non-congregate Feeding	CACFP	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. *****Waiver extended until June 30, 2021*****
Parent Pick-Up	CACFP	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. *****Waiver extended until June 30, 2021*****

Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements for CACFP Sponsoring Organizations	CACFP	***For sponsors only*** – FNS waives, for all CACFP sponsoring, that CACFP monitoring requirements included at 7 CFR 226.16(d)(4)(iii) be conducted onsite. *****Waiver extended until September 30, 2021*****
Waiver to Extend Unanticipated School Closure Operations	SFSP	This waiver delays transition from SFSP operations during unanticipated school closures associated with COVID-19 to traditional SFSP operations. *****Waiver expired on June 30, 2020*****
Waiver to Allow Reimbursement for Meals Served Prior to Approval	SFSP	The requirement that reimbursement shall not be paid for meals served at a site before the sponsor has received written notification that the site has been approved for participation in the Program is waived during the public health emergency. *****Waiver extended until June 30, 2021*****
Waiver to Extend the SFSP Operations	SFSP	This waiver allows the Summer Food Service Program to continue operation through June 30, 2021. **** Waiver in effect until June 30, 2021****
Meal Pattern Flexibilities	SFSP	The requirement to serve meals that meet the meal pattern requirements is waived during the public health emergency. *****Waiver extended until June 30, 2021*****
Meal Times Waiver	SFSP	The requirement that meals must follow meal service time requirements is waived during the public health emergency. *****Waiver extended until September 30, 2021*****
Non-congregate Feeding	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. *****Waiver extended until September 30, 2021*****
Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements for SFSP Sponsoring Organizations	SFSP	***For sponsors only*** – FNS waives that SFSP monitoring requirements included at 7 CFR 225.15(d) be conducted on site. *****Waiver extended until September 30, 2021*****
Parent Pick-Up	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. *****Waiver extended until September 30, 2021*****
Closed Enrolled Site Eligibility	SFSP	Under this waiver, for all states, SFSP and National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO) closed enrolled sites during the COVID-19 public health emergency may determine site eligibility through area eligibility without collecting income eligibility applications. *****Waiver extended until September 30, 2021*****
First Week Site Visits	SFSP	(1) FNS waives, for all states, the requirement that SFSP sponsors are required to visit each of their sites at least once during the first week of operation. (2) This waiver applies to state agencies administering and local organizations that have operated the SFSP successfully in the previous year, and SFSP sponsors in good standing that have successfully participated in the CACFP or the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). *****Waiver extended until September 30, 2021*****
Waiver of Food Service Management Contract Duration	SFSP	This waives, for all state agencies, school food authorities, and SFSP sponsors the food service management company contracts

		duration requirements at 7 CFF 210.16(d) and 225.6(h)(7). FSMC contracts that may expire by or around June 30, 2021, may be extended through school year 2021-2022 (June 30, 2022). To ensure program integrity during this time, extended FSMC contracts are limited to one-year only. *****Waiver extended until June 30, 2021*****
Waiver to Extend Area Eligibility for Open Sites	SFSP	FNS waives, for all states, the requirement that SFSP sponsors are required to operate open sites in *"areas in which poor economic conditions exist."* *****Waiver extended until September 30, 2021*****

Transitional Menu Planning Tool

Click here to access the Transitional Menu Planning Tool. The Texas Department of Agriculture developed this great tool for menu planning during COVID. Written for schools, this can also help Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators as they consider menu and service needs. Start planning now to be prepared for the fall. Service style may change but your menus and products can stay the same. By planning a quality, transitional menu now, you will be prepared for any service style.

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service has released two new Team Nutrition resources that address meal service flexibilities during the coronavirus public health emergency. Regional offices and state agencies are encouraged to share these resources with Child Nutrition Program operators. Both resources are available for download from the Team Nutrition website.

- Child Nutrition Program Meal Service During COVID-19: Best Practices for Parent Pick Up https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/child-nutrition-program-meal-service-during-covid-19
- Feeding Kids When Schools Are Closed Due to Coronavirus (COVID-19) https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/feeding-kids-when-schools-are-closed

Click here to access the Nutrition Services Emergency Feeding Vendor Resource List. This resource provides a list of vendors that offer essential supplies including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), food service, disposable food items and more.

As we practice social distancing and self-quarantine, finding activities and things to do with young children can be challenging. Following are gardening, cooking, and other outdoor activities/resources for families and providers.

- Go to Farm to ECE Resources for At-home Activities for children's books, songs, and free curriculum related to gardening, food, and nutrition.
- Go to Tree Exploration Activity for a specific outdoor activity.
- Go to Gardening and Cooking Songs, Books, and Tips for Families for fun *Farm to ECE* activities.

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.

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 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

Will CAPS continue to pay my provider if my child is absent?
If your provider is still open, and your child does not attend the program, or if your provider is temporarily closed, CAPS will continue to pay your provider if your child attended at least once since March 1, 2020.

I'm having trouble getting ahold of the documentation needed for my renewal because my work, educational institution, or child care provider is closed. How will this impact my scholarship?
If you are having difficulties obtaining adequate documentation for your renewal, let your Family Support Consultant know, and they will work with you to identify how to ensure that COVID-19 related disruptions will not impact your scholarship.

If my provider is closed or if I choose not to send my child to my provider at this time, will I lose my CAPS scholarship?

No, you will not lose your CAPS scholarship if your child care provider is temporarily closed or if you choose to keep your child home. However, if your CAPS scholarship is due for its annual redetermination, you must complete your renewal application on Georgia Gateway (www.gateway.ga.gov) and submit your verification documentation (if available) before the end date of your CAPS scholarship. If you fail to renew your CAPS scholarship, your case may be closed, and you will need to reapply.

Do I still have to pay my provider if my child is absent or if my provider is closed?
If your CAPS scholarship does not cover your child's total tuition, and you usually pay your provider the difference, your provider may expect you to continue to pay that difference. Talk to your provider about their payment expectations for COVID-19 related absences or closures.

Will CAPS continue to pay my provider if my child is absent?
If your provider is still open, and your child does not attend the program, or if your provider is closed, CAPS will continue to pay your provider if your child attended at least once since March 1, 2020.

My child care provider is still open, but I'm concerned that it's not safe for my child to attend the program. How can I be sure that my child is safe at this time?
DECAL is committed to the health and safety of your child. To maintain safe environments during COVID-19, we are asking our providers to take several precautions, including:

- Using proper handwashing techniques
- Frequently cleaning and disinfecting surfaces
- Having sick children and employees stay home
- Limiting classrooms to 10 individuals or less
- Adjusting pick-up and drop-off procedures to encourage social distancing

How do I sign my child in and out of their program while meeting CAPS attendance requirements?
During the COVID-19 crisis, we're waiving CAPS requirement that families sign their child in and out of their program. However, it is essential that your provider knows when your child is dropped off and picked up, so they can know who is in their building during the day. You should drop off and pick up your child with a staff member at the door, and the staff member can sign your child in and out for you. Follow alternate arrival and departure procedures your provider has put in place to adhere to social distancing.

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

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. The USDA's "Meals for Kids" interactive map also directs people to local sites where kids can get free meals. The map will be refreshed and published weekly, as is the normal cycle over the summer. The map is available in English and Spanish at www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids.

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.

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/