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**Georgia's CAPS Program Expands Child Care Assistance to
Essential Services Workforce Serving During COVID-19 Pandemic**

*Tier 2 Funds for Grocery Store Employees, Farming, Food Delivery and Pick-up
Available May 1, 2020*

ATLANTA, Ga., (May 1, 2020) – Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services, or CAPS Program, is expanding its new priority group for the Essential Services Workforce during COVID-19 to include those who work within the food supply chain like grocery stores, farming, and food delivery and pick-up. CAPS provides scholarships to help with the cost of child care so parents can work or attend school. The program not only helps families navigate their children's early years, but also connects families with resources to help them become self-sufficient.

Earlier this month, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) added the new CAPS Priority Group for medical personnel, first responders, child care personnel, and others on the frontlines fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. DECAL has a three-tier definition of eligible families for the program. Only tier one is currently open which includes law enforcement, public safety, first responders, medical personal, pharmacy staff, and child care personnel. Beginning May 1, 2020, DECAL will open Tier 2 to additional categories, that could include grocery store employees, farming, and food delivery and pick-up. A complete list of who could be included can be found [here](#).

DECAL has allocated 500 slots for the Essential Services Workforce. On average statewide each slot is valued at \$5,500 to \$6,500 annually but may be lower or higher depending on specifics.

“Emergency child care scholarships are being issued for three months and will be extended as long as the current state of emergency continues,” said Elisabetta Kasfir, Deputy Commissioner for Georgia’s CAPS Program. “This is a new priority group created by CAPS to support certain members of Georgia’s workforce during this public health emergency.”

“This support is helping first responders and other essential workers pay for child care so they can help stop the spread of COVID-19 and support our communities with essential services,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs.

Eligibility requirements for the Essential Services Workforce Priority Group are detailed on the application available at www.qualityrated.org or by calling 1-833-4GA-CAPS. For further assistance locating available child care call 1-877-ALL-GA-KIDS.

About DECAL

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program; licenses child care centers and home-based child care; administers Georgia’s Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) Program and federal nutrition programs; and manages Quality Rated, Georgia’s community-powered child care rating system.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.decal.ga.gov.