

April 15, 2025

DECAL Celebrates CACFP Week in Scottdale



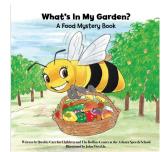
In celebration of National CACFP Week, March 16-22, DECAL's Commissioner Amy Jacobs, members of the Nutrition Services team, and representatives from Quality Care for Children (QCC) visited Scottdale Early Learning, Inc., a two-star Quality Rated early learning program participating in CACFP under QCC's sponsorship.

Morgan Birch, Director of Programs and Operations, led attendees on a tour of the facility, sharing insights into the program's history and upcoming projects.

Founded in 1977 in the Tobie Grant public housing community, Scottdale Early Learning, Inc. was established to provide affordable, quality child care. In 1996, Scottdale expanded its services by building a larger facility. Today, it serves a diverse group of children and families, representing approximately 13 nationalities, through both center-based and community-based services. The organization also operates another location in Decatur.

During the visit, attendees including DECAL Commissioner Amy Jacobs; Tamika Boone, Director of Nutrition Services; Cindy Kicklighter, Nutrition Marketing & Outreach Manager; Diana Myers, Nutrition & Physical Activity Supervisor; Morgan Chapman, Nutrition Education Specialist. DECAL was joined by QCC's Ellyn Cochran, President and CEO, Reynaldo Green, Vice President of Nutrition and Family Wellbeing; Monica Griffin, MS, RD, LD, Assistant Director of Nutrition and Wellness Initiatives; and Jemekia Bell, Nutrition Program Consultant.





Together, they read *What's in My Garden? A Food Mystery Book*, written by Quality Care for Children and the Rollins Center at the Atlanta Speech School, to children in infant, toddler, and Pre-K classrooms.

This engaging food mystery book encourages children to get excited about Georgia-grown vegetables and fruits, setting them on a path to becoming adventurous eaters! Attendees observed mealtimes in the classrooms, where Virginia Jones, Scottdale's nutritionist for over 20 years, regularly incorporates fresh fruits and vegetables into the meals. Ms. Jones engaged with the children, informing them about the day's menu and preparing their plates.

Scottdale integrates various partnerships and programs, including the Veggie Ready initiative with Small Bites Adventure Club, nutrition and physical activity with HealthMPowers, and physical activity,



nutrition education, and family engagement with BlazeTOTS. Upcoming projects include Literacy Day and Parents' Night Out.

A special THANK YOU to Virginia Baker, Executive Director, and Morgan Birch for their hospitality. The visit showcased how CACFP plays a vital role in ensuring children have access to healthy meals. It also highlighted the powerful connection between reading and food education and the positive impact of collaborative efforts in quality child care and family engagement.

Requesting Feedback & Pictures for CACFP Week

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to each of you for your participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Week celebration in Georgia! Your involvement and support have made this celebration truly special.

As we look ahead to next year, we would love to hear your feedback. Your insights and suggestions are invaluable in helping us plan an even better celebration. Please take a moment to share your thoughts and experiences with us through a short survey **here**.

Additionally, we are excited to announce that we will be featuring photos of CACFP mealtimes at the upcoming **CACFP Meal Service Summit on Friday**, **May 2**, **2025**. We invite you to submit pictures of your mealtime setups, activities, and the wonderful meals you provide. You did not have to participate in CACFP Week to submit pictures. Your photos will help showcase the incredible work you do and inspire others across Georgia.

Please send your photos tomorgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov with "CACFP Mealtime Pictures" in the subject line and include the name of your program in the email.

Thank you once again for your commitment and contributions. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing your amazing photos!







CACFP Meal Service Summit: Register Now

We are thrilled to announce that DECAL's Nutrition Service Division will host a CACFP Meal Service Summit on Friday, May 2, 2025,



from 8:30 am – 3:30 pm at the Hilton Peachtree City Atlanta Hotel & Conference Center (2443 Highway 54 West Peachtree City, GA 30269). Registration will open at 8:00 am and state-approved hours will be provided.

Register for the Summit to:

□ Cultivate Connections: Meet DECAL staff and build your CACFP network □ Foster Creativity: Unleash your innovative side with fresh ideas □ Learn About Resources: Discover tools that will boost your program □ Gain Knowledge: Master CACFP meal patterns, mealtime settings, recordkeeping, menu planning, food-based education, and serving high-quality meals across the lifespan

Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity to elevate your CACFP meal service program and continue to make an impact! Sign up today and join the fun!

Sustaining Farm to ECE Through Small Changes and Community Partnerships

With the vision of creating a community space where "learning and loving go hand in hand," Ginger Herring, owner, opened The Learning Tree Academy in 1993. Recognizing the need for quality child care and a program that emphasized early childhood education, she established the academy to meet these demands.

Today, locally owned and operated for over 30 years, The Learning Tree Academy provides programs for children ages six weeks to eight years, one of which is Farm to ECE. "Outdoor learning, nutrition, and physical activity are parts of



our passion and core values within our programming," stated Logan Harris, Director & Ginger's daughter.

The development of their program to its current state began with the observation of challenging behaviors in the classrooms. Upon investigating the root causes, Logan discovered that their community was under-resourced, and common issues such as inadequate nutrition, excessive screen time, and lack of physical activity. Recognizing these factors, they devised a strategy to create a program that would bring positive changes for the children and families they serve.

Click **here** to continue reading.

Celebrate Children's Mental Health Week *May 5 – 9, 2025*

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning will celebrate Children's Mental Health Week May 5 – 9.

Children develop social and emotional skills—mental health—through strong, nurturing relationships with the adults in their lives. There is a window of opportunity in



early childhood to establish relationships that build the foundation for a child's emotional wellbeing throughout life.

During Children's Mental Health Week, we promote activities that help children, and their caregivers recognize the importance of social and emotional development. We also celebrate early learning professionals and the important role they play in supporting early childhood mental health!

We have lots of fun activities planned for early care and learning classrooms for the week, and you can find out all about them on the **Children's Mental Health Week** webpage.

Be sure to check out the self-care resources for teachers

while you're there. Please share pictures of your class engaged in Children's Mental Health Week activities to social media using the hashtags **#TakeABreathTogether**, **#KidsMentalHealth** and **#DECALCMHWeek2025** during the week.

Questions? Contact Laura Lucas, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Director, at laura.lucas@decal.ga.gov.



Adult Care CACFP Boot Camp May 14, 2025

Join the National CACFP Association on Zoom from**11:00 am** to **4:45 pm** on **May 14** for the CACFP Boot Camp on Adult Care, so you can walk away with fresh ideas, practical solutions, and the confidence to elevate the care you provide to older adults. Discover simple ways to incorporate movement into daily routines, hands-on tips to enhance nutrition under CACFP guidelines, and bring your questions for industry experts.

Can't make it on May 14? Register and get access to on demand viewing through May 28!

Register here.

Helpful Hints for Completing the Child and Adult Care Food Program Application

Follow these tips to ensure that your Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Application is complete.

- To minimize confusion and delays, only the program contact and/or authorized representative should be contacting the application reviewer. Keep in mind that the program contact is responsible for entering the information in the online application in GA ATLAS.
- 15-day Review Contact- Your Specialist has 15 days to review and respond via email to your initial application (including the budget) once it has been submitted.
- Complete all forms in their entirety. This includes the full legal name of the institution without any abbreviations, complete signatures, dates, agreement numbers and all required notary information as requested.

Password Reset

• If you have forgotten your password for GA ATLAS, please complete and submitthe CACFP Electronic Enrollment/Change Form to NutritionVMFandEFF@decal.ga.gov

Institution Application

- CCR/SAMS Registration date should be updated annually.
- The Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is obtained from SAM.gov
- If utilizing a food service management company (FSMC) or acting as FSMC, ensure that you respond correctly in the institution application.

Board of Directors Section:

- Ensure that all sections are completed for each board member.
- Any changes made to the Board of Directors (BOD) need to be supported with board meeting minutes.
- Ensure that the "delegation of authority" form is completed and signed by an officer of the board (as defined on the form) and that the officer is currently listed in the board section of the online application.

Management Plan Section

- As you work to complete the Management Plan section, please save your work periodically. The system may "time-out" while you are working, and you may lose any unsaved data. It is recommended that the management plan information be typed into a word document and saved. If the typed information is not saved in the system, it can easily be copied and pasted.
- Be sure to read each question carefully as your response may require you to address more than one area.

Attachment List

- Supporting documents can be uploaded to the attachment list. To ensure that documents can be easily identified once uploaded in this section, please rename the document to include the Fiscal Year, Name of Program, i.e. CACFP, and the name of the document.
- Please keep documents that have multiple pages together in one attachment to be uploaded. Documents that support each other should be kept together as well. For example, the SAVE Affidavit and the form of ID used for verification should be uploaded together in one attachment.
- All documentation uploaded on behalf of the institution should be current and coincide with all the information entered into the online application. Submitting inconsistent documentation causes significant delays in the timeliness of the application process being completed.

Site Application

- All questions must be answered as they relate to your institution at the time of application submission.
- Driving Directions must be entered.

Budget

• When entering cost in the budget, you must select close at the end of each line item for the data to save.

Specific Prior Written Approval (SPWA) submission and approval process

- Sponsors with an emergency request, are required to email the <u>SPWA request</u> form with supporting documentation to <u>Gwendolyn.howard@decal.ga.gov</u> within 24hrs of purchase and then submit a budget revision to include the cost.
- For all other requests, sponsors are required to submit a budget revision to include the cost, upload the <u>SPWA request form</u> and supporting documents to the attachments list section in GA ATLAS and notify the budget team via email at <u>Nutritionbudget@decal.ga.gov</u> at least 3 days prior to making the purchase.
- DECAL will review the request and provide an approval or denial status in writing, including any special considerations or reasons. The SPWA will be signed and uploaded to the attachment list section in GA ATLAS.

Independent Centers who have questions or concerns regarding updates, please contact your assigned Application Specialist:

Application Specialists	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
Jerald Savage	o (zero)-G	<u>Jerald.Savage@decal.ga.gov</u>	(770) 405-7916
Shericka Blount	H-P	<u>Shericka.Blount@decal.ga.gov</u>	(404) 656-6411
Vanessa Goodman	Q-Z	<u>Vanessa.Goodman@decal.ga.gov</u>	(404) 591-6027

Sponsors who have questions or concerns regarding updates, please contact your assigned Business Operations Representative:

Business Operations Representative	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
Lavesia Ervin	o (zero)-C, H-P	Lavesia.Ervin@decal.ga.gov	(404) 293-5258
Joveta Watson	D-G, Q-Z	<u>Joveta.Watson@decal.ga.gov</u>	(706) 434-6831

Upcoming Training Dates:

April 22, 2025 Tuesday Tip! Active Play with Mixed Aged Groups 1:30 – 2:00 pm

Are you wondering how to engage and maximize active play in mixed age groups? If so, please join this session where participants will:

- review developmentally appropriate practices,
- discuss recommendations for active play for young children and
- apply these recommendations to adapt and design active play opportunities according to the needs of each age group.

Participants can earn one [0.50] state-approved hour(s) for attending this training in its entirety.

[Register Now]

April 23, 2025 PALS Session 4: Best Practice for Physical Activity in ECE Settings: Families, Training, Resources, and Policies

1:00 - 2:00 pm

Would you like to explore concrete strategies for family engagement around physical activity? During this session, participants will explore developmental milestones and tools from the CDC that support milestone tracking. In addition, this session where we cover the following objectives:

- how to recognize family engagement opportunities around physical activity,
- how to communicate with families about their children's physical activity, and
- ways to identify policy statements that follow the best practices for physical activity in ECE settings.

Participants can earn one [1.0] state-approved hour(s) for attending this training in its entirety.

[Register Now]

April 29, 2025 Product Formulation Statements (PFS) & Child Nutrition (CN) Labels Training 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Would you like an overview of Product Formulation Statements (PFSs), CN Labels and how these documents provide a way for a manufacturer to demonstrate how a processed food product may contribute to the meal pattern requirements in child nutrition programs (CNP)? Please join this webinar where we will dive deeper into understanding the importance and helpful tips to support a compliant nutrition program.

[Register Now]

May 14, 2025 PALS Session 5: Goal Setting and Action Planning 1:00 - 2:00 pm

Would you like to review your self-assessment, best practices note and identify some areas for improvement physical activity?

Please join this session where:

• we will develop action steps to meet goals and

• participants will leave with a plan to improve physical activity practices in their setting. *Participants can earn one-half [1.0] state-approved hour(s) for attending this training in its entirety.*

[Register Now]

May 20, 2025 Tuesday Tip! The Connections Between Active Play and Social-Emotional Learning in Early Childhood 1:30 – 2:00 pm

Are you coaching children on connecting the dots with physical activity and social-emotional intelligence?

Please join this webinar to learn:

- four [4] social emotional skills,
- how active play can encourage skill development,
- practices and activities to incorporate into a child's environment.

Participants can earn one [0.50] state-approved hour(s) for attending this training in its entirety.

[Register Now]

Notes: This is a two-step process:

• Step 1: After registering in GA ATLAS, you will receive a Training Confirmation email immediately from Georgia DECAL Help Desk -helpdesk@cnpus.com with a registration link to attend the webinar (check your spam/junk folder).

• Step 2: You must then register for the training using the link provided on the Training confirmation e-mail. If you should have an issue with registering, please contact Leslie Truman prior to the day of training.

Click here if you need a refresher on how to register for training in GA ATLAS.

Please note: Only the Program Contact (PC) can self-register within GA ATLAS. If an additional person will be attending, please contact Leslie Truman, Administrative Assistant, at (404) 657-1779 or email leslie.truman@decal.ga.gov for assistance.

In Case You Missed It: Webinar Recordings Now Available!

In Case You Missed It: Webinar Recordings Now Available!

If you missed a webinar, please visit the **Training and Technical Assistance** webpage for previously recorded webinars. This month's training highlight is the **Tuesday Tip! Creditable or Not in CACFP** webinar. It discussed food items that are creditable and an allowable cost in CACFP.

Snack Attack New Recipes!

The National CACFP Sponsor Association has shared snack options for program operators that are #CACFPCreditable.

- Pineapple and cottage cheese
- Carrots and yogurt
- Cereal and dried mango
- Bell pepper and hummus
- Apples and graham crackers

Meal Pattern Minute New!

The **National CACFP Sponsor Association** has developed quick CACFP meal pattern tips, recipes, resources, and videos. View the videos of the following meal pattern minute tips below.

- Tortilla Chips New!
- Serving Nuts and Seeds New!
- Beef Jerky Sticks New!
- Cheese Products New!
- Updated Sugar Limits in Breakfast Cereals New!

CACFP Vegetable and Fruit Snack Menu with Cultural Recipe Options Are you always seeking snacks to serve in your program? Check out this menu developed by the **Association of State Public Health Nutritionist (ASPHN)** that helps providers more easily plan, prepare and provide healthier snack options for children.

You may view the Menu by clickinghere

Nutrition Basics: Fiber

You may know that fiber is important, but do you understand why or how much you need? Find out more about fiber from the **Institute of Child Nutrition**.

Find out more about Fiber by clickinghere

Nutrition Ed Nook *Vegetable or Protein?*

Legumes are the April Harvest of the Month



(English and Spanish) spotlight.

Legumes are a nutritious staple in diets worldwide, as an inexpensive source of protein, vitamins, complex carbohydrates, and fiber. Along with being a highly nutritious food, evidence shows that legumes can play a crucial role in preventing and managing various health conditions.

Legumes have a nutrient profile similar to both the protein foods group and the vegetable foods group, making them versatile enough to be considered either a vegetable or a protein food. This class of plants includes beans, peas, and lentils.

Beans are incredibly versatile and packed with

protein, fiber, and essential vitamins and minerals like folate and iron. They are a great pantry staple, adding color, flavor, and texture to meals. Examples include kidney beans, pinto beans, white beans, black beans, lima beans, fava beans, and soybeans.

Peas are rich in vitamins A and C. Fresh peas are extremely versatile, paired well with many vegetables, herbs, rice, beans, grains, cheese, and more. Examples include chickpeas, black-eyed peas, pigeon peas, split peas, green peas, snow peas, and sugar snap peas.

Lentils are highly versatile, offering a rich, earthy texture that enhances any dish with added fiber and nutrients. They can add thickness and bulk to recipes and are an excellent source of protein and dietary fiber. Types include green, brown, black, red, yellow, and orange lentils.

Integration:

- Tuscan White Bean Pasta
- Beanie Dip
- Pea Guacamole
- Roasted Zesty Chickpeas
- Lentil Plantballs
- Barley Lentil Soup

Education:

- **Explore** legumes like beans, peas, and/or lentils with children using their senses to describe how they look, feel, taste, and smell. For example, compare the colors and textures of kidney beans and red beans, or the flavors of peas and lentils. Consider adding children's favorites to the menu based on their feedback.
- **Read** *One Bean*, by Anne Rockwell. What happens when you plant just one little bean? A fundamental childhood experiment charmingly unfolds in this first science book about planting and observation.
- **Grow** a bean in a bag with children! Place a damp paper towel inside a clear plastic bag, then add a bean seed. Seal the bag and tape it to a sunny window. Watch as the bean sprouts and grows over the next few days, observing the roots and shoots develop. This hands-on activity is a great way to learn about plant growth and the life cycle of a bean.
- **Talk** with families about how children can help with meal preparation such as finding and removing small rocks or other seeds and plant parts from dried beans and lentils. Bonus: Send recipes home with families for them to incorporate legumes into their meals!
- Want ECE legume-themed resources? Check out Quality Care for Children's Harvest of the Month toolkit for more ways to engage ECE students.

Conversation:

- Have the children you serve eaten any type of legumes?
- Which type of legume do they enjoy the most: beans, peas, or lentils?
- What different legume would they like to try?

Share your Harvest of the Month stories and menu integration of legumes with Nutrition Education Specialist, Morgan Chapman, MPH, MCHc at morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov

Physical Activity Corner Spring Into Action with Physical Activity

Spring is here – the perfect time of year to start fresh and keep moving. It's almost time to bring out those shorts, running shoes, bicycles, and get moving again after the cold winter.

Whether it's planting a garden, going for a run, or taking a walk around your neighborhood, there are plenty of activities to keep everyone moving and active outside this spring season. Simply moving and sitting less helps build the momentum of our bodies to move forward. This may include walking, running, jogging, visiting the gym, yoga, kickboxing, or dancing.

Be sure to be mindful of drinking water while being active, especially as we shift into the warmer months. Staying active contributes to a healthy lifestyle that decreases risk of chronic diseases, enhances mental health, and improves overall wellbeing. How will you get active?

Integration:

- Explore Georgia in Spring
- Georgia's Longest Hiking Trails
- Why Movement is Important for Kids?
- GA State Parks and Trails

Education:

- Read out loud, *I Am Spring*, by Rebecca and James McDonald.
- Watch the video on Healthy Lifestyles with the CRC: Strategies by Georgia Tech.
- **Talk** with families about ways to spring into action with fitness at home, in their community, childcare centers and adult care centers.
- **Bonus:** Share #KeepItMoving, #SpringIntoAction #HealthyLifestyle, #SpringFitness pictures and events that are happening in your communities.

Conversation:

- What is your favorite spring physical activities?
- How do you spring into action after a cold winter?
- Why is spring the best season to get outdoors and exercise?
- Why is it important to keep moving daily?
- What are the keys to a healthy lifestyle?

Share your #DECALPhysicalActivity, #SpringFitness, #SpringIntoAction, #HealthyLifestyle, #KeepItMoving stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren, MPH at tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov

Follow DECAL on Pinterest

Do you need ideas to help incorporate nutrition education and physical activity at your site?

Check out DECAL's Pinterest for CACFP, Happy





Helpings& Harvest of the Month recipes, physical activity ideas, healthy holiday celebrations, and more click **here**.

Nutrition and Physical Activity pins are saved and added weekly.

Questions or suggestions, submit to morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov or tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov.

Nourishing Healthy Eaters *Interactive, Online Courses by Nemours Children's Health*

As a child care professional, you work to ensure healthy development for those in your care. Making sure they eat nutritious foods and build healthy habits is a crucial part of their development.



Nemours Children's Health have an interactive course to help you learn how to nourish healthy eaters – they even have a course focused on preschool-aged children.

Nourishing Healthy Eaters and **Nourishing Preschoolers** are interactive, online courses for child care professionals (Head Start and Early Head Start teachers, family child care providers, child care providers) to explore the role of nutrition in early childhood development and deepen their understanding of how children learn to become healthy eaters.



Eat Healthy and Live Active *Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 24-25 Calendar*

The Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month is a collaborative campaign between Quality Care for Children, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Georgia Department of Human Services, and Georgia Organics. The campaign aims to encourage healthy eating habits by promoting a different local, seasonal fruit or vegetable each month.

Visit Quality Care for Children's Farm to ECE**webpage** to access a variety of classroom resources, ideas, a book list, and family newsletter to help you promote a new vegetable or fruit each month.

For school-age children resources, visit the Georgia Department of Education's Harvest of the month

webpage.

CACFP Resources:

The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:

- Updates to Child and Adult Care Food Program Procurement Documents
- Stay Informed: At-Risk Afterschool Waivers Available during Unanticipated School Closure
- Non-Congregate Meal Service Waivers during Ramadan
- Check your Email Messages & Update Your Email Address in ATLAS
- Educator and Staff Wellness Resources
- A Message for CAPS and Quality Rated Providers
- CACFP Policy 41 State Agency Monitoring Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Reimbursement Rates for CACFP Providers
- CACFP Learning Collaborative Launches FARMWISE
- Updated Procurement Forms to include Civil Rights Assurance Statement
- New CACFP Memo on State Agency Monitoring
- Updated Agreement for DCH Sponsors
- Thriving Child Care Business Academy
- Claim Deadlines Updated
- Get the Lead Out of Water Where Children Learn and Play
- Updated Agreements for DCH and Administrative Sponsors
- Updated Suspension & Disbarment Certification Information
- How to File a CACFP Claim for Reimbursement

You can find archived CACFP Newslettershere.

Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENTS
April	Harvest of the Month: Legumes: Beans, Peas, and Lentils
April 22	Tuesday Tip! Active Play with Mixed Aged Groups- Webinar
April 23	PALS Session 4: Best Practice for Physical Activity in ECE Settings: Families, Training, Resources, and Policies- Webinar
April 29	Product Formulation Statements (PFS) & Child Nutrition (CN) Labels Training- Webinar
May 2	CACFP Meal Service Summit
May 5 - 9	Children's Mental Health Week
May 14	Adult Care CACFP Boot Camp
May 14	PALS Session 5: Goal Setting and Action Planning- Webinar
May 20	Tuesday Tip! The Connections Between Active Play and Social- Emotional Learning in Early Childhood- Webinar

Join Us for a NEW DECAL Download! Atlanta History Center

This week's DECAL Download is dedicated to Georgia Pre-K Day at the Capitol.

Recently administrators and advocates for early childhood education visited the Capitol, where the House and Senate proclaimed that Georgia's Pre-K Week will be observed October



6-10, 2025.

That week legislators will visit classrooms to read to our young learners across the state. Joining us on this week's podcast is DECAL's own Meghan McNail, the Director of Pre-K Instruction and Regional Operations, and our Director of Government Relations and Special Projects, Liz Young.

We are also joined by Judy Fitzgerald, the Executive Director of Voices for Georgia's Children. You will also hear special audio from our day at the Capitol, proclamations in the House and Senate, and interviews with legislators.

Listen to the episode **here**.

How was my Customer Service?

Provide feedback on your experience with the Nutrition Team



Click on the icon on the right to participate in the customer service survey. Responses are anonymous.



Nutrition Services Marketing & Outreach Team

Cindy Kicklighter Joann Kilpatrick

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. Nondiscrimination Statement: English Nondiscrimination Statement: Spanish

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