



June 15, 2026

## Celebrate Farm to Summer Week

June 22 – 26, 2026



DECAL's Nutrition Services will celebrate **Farm to Summer Week** from June 22–26, highlighting how child nutrition programs can connect children to Georgia's summertime agricultural abundance through fresh, locally sourced foods and hands-on learning experiences.

Through fun activities like gardening, cooking, taste testing, and agriculture-based learning, Farm to Summer improves the quality and appeal of summer meals while keeping children nourished, active, and excited about healthy foods, all while supporting Georgia farmers and local communities.

Each day of the week features a special theme to inspire learning and creativity:

- **Monday – What is Farm to Summer?** Introduce children to the concept of Farm to Summer and explore how food travels from the farm to their plates.
- **Tuesday – Gardening & Physical Activity:** Get moving with garden-based activities that teach how food grows while encouraging physical activity.
- **Wednesday – Cooking & Taste Testing:** Involve children in preparing and tasting fresh fruits and vegetables to build healthy habits and curiosity around food.
- **Thursday – Locally Grown Food in Meals & Snacks:** Highlight Georgia-sourced foods in meals and snacks and discuss the importance of supporting local farmers.
- **Friday – Literacy, Music & Movement:** Wrap up the week with farm-themed books, songs, and movement activities that make learning about food fun and memorable.

We encourage all CACFP operators to participate by incorporating these themes into your activities throughout the week. Whether it's planting an herb in a container children can take home and care for with their families; hosting a taste test featuring Georgia-grown fruits and vegetables like peaches, strawberries, tomatoes, or okra; or reading a farm-, gardening-, or cooking-themed story, every activity helps children build a stronger connection to healthy food and where it comes from.

## USDA Final Rule Expands Milk Options

*Effective June 8, 2026*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has published a Final Rule titled [Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs | Food and Nutrition Service](#), which includes updates that will impact the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The rule became effective June 8, 2026.

Through this rulemaking, USDA is updating program regulations to allow whole and reduced-fat milk to be offered to participants ages 2 and older in several Child Nutrition Programs, including CACFP.

Under the updated guidance:

- Children 1 year old must continue to be served unflavored whole milk.
- Children ages 2 through 5 years old may now be served unflavored whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free milk.
- Children 6 years and older and adult participants may be served unflavored or flavored whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free milk.

This change applies to CACFP as well as the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Special Milk Program (SMP).

DECAL Nutrition Services is currently working to update applicable policies, forms, guidance documents, and other program materials to align with the new requirements. Additional implementation guidance will be shared as it becomes available.

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## Ability to Claim Meals for No Pay Children

DECAL Nutrition Services received significant feedback recently regarding family child care learning homes' ability to claim meals for No Pay children.

We have reviewed guidance on this issue and are distributing this quick guide to clarify what is allowable. We are currently working to update policies and training materials but wanted to provide this clarification in writing that can be shared with all family child care learning homes.

### CCS Licensure Capacity Rules

These rules determine how many children you may legally care for in your home.

#### **Unrelated Children**

- You may care for up to six unrelated children total, whether for pay or not.

#### **Children “For Pay”**

- You may have no more than six children for pay, whether related or unrelated.

#### **Total Children in the Home (Including Your Own Children)**

- You may have up to 12 children total under age 13. This includes children who live inside or outside of the provider's residence. Note that the provider's children are included in this count.
- You must still meet space requirements (35 sq. ft. per child).

#### **Temporary Additional Capacity**

- You may request approval to care for two additional children (age 3 or older) for two- one hour periods per day.

### CACFP Reimbursement Rules

#### **CACFP may reimburse meals only for:**

- Children who are enrolled
- Children who are in attendance at meal service time

- Meals served to the provider's own children can only be claimed when:
  1. such children are enrolled and participating in the child care program during the time of meal service,
  2. enrolled non-resident children are present and participating in the child care program, and
  3. providers' children are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals. Reimbursement may not be claimed for meals served to children who are not enrolled, or for meals served at any one time to children in excess of the home's authorized capacity or for meals served to providers' children who are not eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
- Providers may claim meals for the capacity authorized by Child Care Services. Meals can be claimed for up to 12 children under the age 13 as long as the criteria noted above are met.

If you have any questions, contact your technical assistance coordinator.

Please note that temporary additional capacity does not increase the maximum number of children allowed in care. Family day care homes may not exceed the established limit of 12 children, even when temporary additional capacity has been approved.

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## 2026 CACFP Summit

### *Registration Now Open*

Nutrition Services will host the 2026 CACFP Summit on Friday, August 28, 2026, at the Hilton Peachtree City Atlanta Hotel & Conference Center.

All CACFP institutions are invited to attend this exciting professional development opportunity to strengthen program operations, enhance compliance, and provide valuable resources for success.

Topics will dive into the heart of CACFP exploring: infant feeding, meal pattern requirements, creative and engaging menu ideas, physical activity, smart financial management, and practical; tips to confidently stay compliant through audits, renewals, day-to-day program operations, and more. **State-approved training hours will be provided.**

**More than one representative from your organization may attend the summit; however, each individual must register separately to participate.**

Whether you are new to CACFP or an experienced provider, the summit offers practical tools, best practices, and networking opportunities to help support your program.

Click [here](#) to register today.



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## A Resource Hub for Food Industry Partners

### *New Food Industry Toolkit*

The new USDA child nutrition programs **Food Industry Toolkit** provides a consolidated page of Team Nutrition resources dedicated to our food industry partners.

These resources support food products available to organizations operating school meal programs, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Summer Food Service Program. Resources are grouped by topic, including child nutrition (CN) labels, Product Formulation Statements, crediting, and more.

The toolkit is ideal for orienting new food industry staff and refreshing existing partners. It aims to provide all relevant resources in one place and reduce the time needed to access information that supports USDA's child nutrition programs.



## Help Children and Adults Stay Hydrated In The Summer Heat

Summer in Georgia brings sunshine, long days, and lots of active play, but it also brings high temperatures and humidity that can lead to dehydration. As outdoor temperatures rise, making hydration a daily priority is

essential for the health and comfort of children and older adults.

Keep water easily accessible and plan regular water breaks every 15–20 minutes during outdoor play. Since children and older adults may not recognize when they need fluids, offer water frequently and watch closely for signs of dehydration.

To make water more fun and appealing, try infusing it with fresh fruits, vegetables, or herbs for a naturally refreshing drink. Try these recipes:

- [Drink Water, Georgia](#)
- [Quality Care for Children’s Kids in the Kitchen Cookbook](#)

There is no recommendation on the amount of plain water that children and adults need each day. Water and fluid recommendations vary by age group:

- **Infants from 0-6 months** should meet all their fluid needs with breastmilk or iron-fortified infant formula. Their kidneys are not yet ready for water.
- **Infants from about 6-12 months** can enjoy sips of plain water from a cup. Outdoor play is a great time to practice taking sips from an open cup since it can be a little messy!
- **Older children and adults** can meet their fluid needs with a combination of water, milk, and food. Choose “juicy” fruits and vegetables such as cucumbers, zucchini, lettuce, tomatoes, melons, strawberries, oranges, peaches, and grapefruit.

In the CACFP, child care centers and homes are **required** to offer water throughout the day. Sites are encouraged to make water available to adult participants as well. Water is **not** a meal component in the CACFP. However, water may be served: together with meals and snacks; in between meals and snack; and as requested by the adult or child.

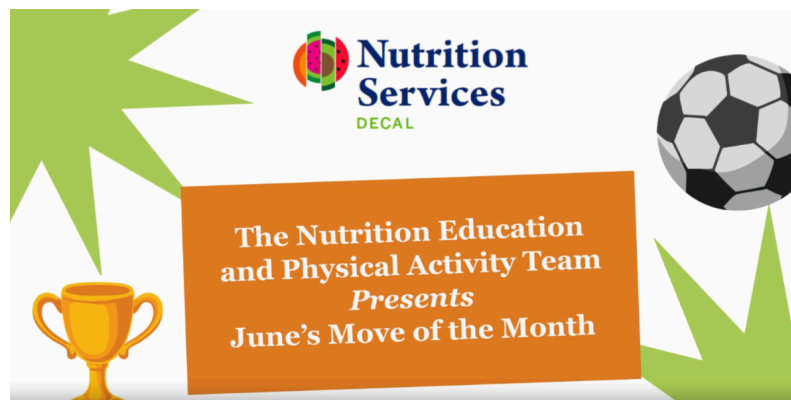
Learn more about serving water with this [handout: Offering Water in the USDA CACFP](#).

Knowing the signs of dehydration in [children](#) and [older adults](#) can help providers act early. If symptoms do not improve, or you notice signs of severe dehydration, call 911 or seek emergency care.

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## Move of the Month

*Video: Summer Dribbling Fun*



This month's Move of the Month encourages children to stay active this summer through fun dribbling activities using balls, jump ropes, and other movement games.

Activities like dribbling, bouncing, and jumping help strengthen foot-eye coordination, balance, focus, and motor skills, while keeping children engaged during the summer. Simple active play is a great way to encourage healthy movement and summertime fun.

[Click](#) on the graphic to watch this month's video.

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## DECAL Nutrition Welcomes Kayla Moss

Join us in welcoming Kayla Moss to the Nutrition Services team.

Kayla joins us as the newly created Financial Reconciliation Specialist, where she will play a key role in processing weekly CACFP and SFSP claims, assessing viability screenings for organizations applying to participate in our programs, reviewing annual reconciliations, and managing the division's vendor management process.

Kayla brings more than 12 years of accounting experience and a strong background in financial management. Before joining DECAL, she worked in payroll accounting at Georgia Tech and held several accounting positions with Fulton County Schools. Her professional experience also includes seven years in government accounting with Auburn University.



Originally from Loachapoka, Alabama, a small town she proudly calls home, Kayla relocated to the Metro Atlanta area in 2015.

Family is very important to Kayla. She is the proud mother of three adult children: Terrell, a teacher; Niya, a paraprofessional and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) technician; and Ashley, a banker. She is also a proud grandmother to her 2-year-old grandson, Kaysen.

When she's not working, Kayla enjoys watching her favorite television show, *The Walking Dead*. In fact, she has watched the entire series nearly 10 times.

We are excited to have Kayla on the team and look forward to the expertise, dedication, and collaboration she will bring to Nutrition Services.

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## Grushan Blake Reaches 10-Year Service Milestone



This month, the Nutrition team is proud to celebrate a major milestone. Grushan Blake achieved 10 years of dedicated service to the State of Georgia.

As the Nutrition Training Manager, Grushan manages the Training Coordinator and Technical Assistance Team. She oversees specialized training materials and designs guidance to help program partners comply with USDA regulations.

*Pictured L to R: Tamika Boone, Director of Nutrition Services and Grushan Blake, Training Manager.*

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## How to File a CACFP Claim for Reimbursement

To receive reimbursement, institutions must submit monthly CACFP claims through the GA ATLAS system. Original claims must be submitted within 30 days after the end of the claiming month, with up to two revisions allowed within 60 days.

Before submitting, ensure all records are complete and accurate, including menus, attendance, enrollment, and Income Eligibility Statements (IES). All information must be reconciled to confirm that only eligible meals and participants are included.

For-profit centers must also meet the 25% eligibility requirement each month to qualify. Accurate reporting and timely submission help ensure compliance and prevent delays in reimbursement.

View the full instructions [here](#).

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## Unanticipated School Closure Waivers

### *Waivers Available Through June 30*

On July 30, 2025, Nutrition Services received USDA approval for statewide waivers for CACFP institutions to use during unanticipated school closures.

The waivers are available during unanticipated school closures when meal service operations are limited due to natural disasters, unscheduled major building repairs, court orders relating to school safety or other issues, labor-management disputes, or when approved by the state agency for similar unanticipated causes.

The following approved waivers are available when schools are closed with no virtual learning/classes:

- Non-Congregate Meal Service
- Parent and Guardian Meal Pick-up
- Meal Service Times
- At-Risk Enrichment Activities

The waivers listed above are available through June 30, 2026.

For a CACFP facility to use the above-mentioned waivers, the facility:

- Must be approved to operate the CACFP (child care centers, adult day care centers, emergency shelters, day care homes, outside-school-hours care centers, and/or at-risk afterschool sites);
- Must be located in an area impacted by an unanticipated school closure resulting from natural disasters, unscheduled major building repairs, court orders relating to school safety or other issues, labor-management disputes or when approved by DECAL for similar unanticipated causes; and
- Must limit the use of the waivers to no more than 10 consecutive days. In situations that may warrant a longer time period, Food Nutrition Service (FNS) approval will be required.

CACFP institutions interested in applying for these waivers during unanticipated school closures must submit waiver requests via the Waiver Module in GA ATLAS.

**Note:** To use the Home Delivery or Parent/Guardian Pick-up meal service models, CACFP organizations must complete and attach in the waiver module, the USDA Waiver Request Addendum, found [here](#).

**Note:** Home Delivery does not apply to day care homes.

For questions, contact [Melissa.Stanley@decals.ga.gov](mailto:Melissa.Stanley@decals.ga.gov) or [Tammie.Baldwin@decals.ga.gov](mailto:Tammie.Baldwin@decals.ga.gov).

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## Upcoming Training Dates:

**July 7, 2026**

**Tuesday Tip: Mealtime with Toddlers in the CACFP**

**1:30 - 2:15 pm**

Are you making memorable moments during mealtimes for toddlers? Join this webinar to learn:

- Tips for creating positive mealtime environments,
- Engagement opportunities for toddlers during mealtime, and
- Essential strategies for choking prevention.

**Participants can earn one-third [0.75] state-approved hours for attending this training in its entirety.**

[\[Register Now\]](#)

**July 20, 2026**

**Memo Monday: CACFP Policies**

**10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

This training will provide an overview of new and/or revised CACFP policies and memos.

[\[Register Now\]](#)

**July 22, 2026**

**CACFP Budget Readiness 1**

**1:00 - 3:00 pm**

This training will answer common budget questions, address challenges, provide guidance when developing a budget, share budget regulations, requirements, and processes.

[\[Register Now\]](#)

#### **Notes:**

**Registering for training 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](mailto: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 in the Training Confirmation email.**
- If you have an issue with registering, contact [Leslie Truman](#) before the day of the training.
- [Click here](#) if you need a refresher on how to register for training in GA ATLAS.

**NOTE:** Only the Program Contact (PC) can self-register within GA ATLAS. If an additional person will be attending, contact [Leslie Truman](#), Administrative Assistant, at (404) 657-1779 for assistance.

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## **In Case You Missed It:**

### *Webinar Recordings Now Available*

If you missed a webinar, visit the [Training and Technical Assistance](#) webpage for previously recorded webinars.

This month's training highlight is the [FY 2026 CACFP Renewal Readiness](#) webinar that provided step-by-step instructions on how to complete annual renewal requirements for FY 2026.

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## **Looking For Seasonal Summer Recipes?**

Looking for fresh, fun, and nutritious ideas to celebrate the summer season in your program? Summer is the perfect time to introduce children to colorful fruits, vegetables, and seasonal flavors while encouraging healthy eating habits.

Explore these recipes designed specifically for child care centers and family child care homes.

- [Child Care Centers](#)
- [Family Child Care Homes](#)

Tip: Consider involving children in simple food preparation activities or discussions about seasonal foods to enhance learning and excitement.



## Explore the New Youth Garden Funding Finder



Looking to start, maintain, or expand your Farm to ECE program? New funding opportunities are available to support gardening initiatives.

The [Youth Garden Funding Finder](#) is a helpful resource to connect programs with grant opportunities at the local, regional, and national levels.

This easy-to-use tool allows you to:

- Search for grants tailored to your program
- Discover funding to expand gardens and outdoor learning spaces
- Identify opportunities that support nutrition education, sustainability, and local procurement efforts

Be sure to bookmark the [Youth Garden Funding Finder](#) and check back often for new opportunities.

## Physical Activity Corner

### *Celebrating Days of Play*

CACFP continues to support healthy habits that help children grow, learn, and thrive, especially through joyful movement and active play. Daily physical activity is an essential part of a quality CACFP environment and contributes to children's school readiness, wellness, and development.

Promote active play and outdoor fun by recognizing **June 21 – Longest Day of Play**.

Here are some ideas for ways to celebrate:

- Provide extra outdoor playtime
- Let children choose play activities
- Set up safe play spaces and environments that are supportive and promote success
- Introduce a new game or movement activity
- Incorporate active transitions throughout the day
- Share celebration photos or notes with families

A vertical graphic titled "UNLEASHING THE POWER OF PLAY". At the top, it states: "Active play is essential for young children because it supports healthy development across every major area of growth - cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and language. Far from being 'just fun,' play is how young children learn best. The following resources share simple and engaging play ideas families can enjoy together." Below this are four resource cards, each with a QR code and an icon:

- Harvard University - Brain-Building Through Play**: Harvard's Center on the Developing Child encourages brain-building through play by sharing age-appropriate activities that help children develop attention, memory, self-control, and other executive skills.
- Pathways - Baby Games**: Pathways.org provides a range of games and activities aimed at helping babies reach important developmental milestones. These resources are designed by pediatric experts and are accessible through their website and mobile app.
- SHAPE America - Early Childhood Activities**: SHAPE America's early childhood resources share simple ideas and strategies families can use at home during the spare they have, everyday materials, and busy schedules to encourage healthy habits and physical activity.
- Active for Life - Activities & Games**: A collection of activities and games that can be sorted by age and skill, developed by physical literacy experts.

At the bottom right is the logo for "NATIONAL CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE".

- [Unleashing the Power of Play](#) handout with families so they can stay active at home

Active play activates the brain and gives children opportunities to practice gross motor skills, try balance skills, learn concepts, and use their social-emotional skills. Together, we can make this summer and every season full of movement, play, and joy.

### Share Your Story

We'd love to feature your CACFP program in an upcoming newsletter or on social media. Share your stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist Tina McLaren at [tina.mclaren@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:tina.mclaren@dec.al.ga.gov).

## Follow DECAL on Pinterest

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

To 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.

Submit questions or suggestions to [morgan.chapman@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:morgan.chapman@dec.al.ga.gov) or [tina.mclaren@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:tina.mclaren@dec.al.ga.gov).



## Eat Healthy and Live Active

### Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 2025-2026 Calendar

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

Visit [EatLearnGrowGA](http://EatLearnGrowGA.org) to access classroom activities aligned with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), recipes, book lists, family newsletters, and more to help you incorporate a new vegetable or fruit each month in the classroom, kitchen, and home.

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:

- [CACFP Crediting Handbook Revised](#)
- [CACFP Area Eligibility Interactive Map Updated for FY26](#)
- [Recordkeeping Requirements in the CACFP](#)
- [Revised Product Formulation Statement \(PFS\) Templates and Samples](#)
- [Waivers Available during Unanticipated School Closures](#)
- [FNS Issues Guidance on Using Federal Funds to Purchase Local Foods](#)
- [At-Risk Afterschool Waivers Available during Unanticipated School Closures](#)

- [Reimbursement Rates for CACFP Providers](#)
- [How to File a CACFP Claim for Reimbursement](#)

You can find archived CACFP Newsletters [here](#).

## Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENTS
June	Harvest of the Month: Cucumbers
June 19	State Holiday: Juneteenth
June 22 - 26	Farm to Summer Week
June 30	Unanticipated School Closure Waivers Available through June 30, 2026
July 3	State Holiday Observed: Independence Day
July 4	Independence Day
July 7	Tuesday Tip: Mealtime with Toddlers in the CACFP - Webinar
July 15	CACFP Annual Training Opens
July 20	Memo Monday: CACFP Policies - Webinar
July 22	CACFP Budget Readiness 1 - Webinar
August 28	CACFP Summit- In Person

## DECAL Download

### 2026 Legislative Review



On this week's episode of DECAL Download, we take a closer look at the legislative developments emerging from the 2026 Georgia General Assembly and what they mean for early care and education across Georgia.

As new laws and policies are enacted, they have the potential to shape the future of Georgia's youngest learners, impacting families, early childhood programs, educators, and communities

statewide. Our discussion explores key legislative changes and their implications for the work being done to support Georgia's children and families.

Joining us for this important conversation are Liz Young, Director of Government Relations, and Rian Ringsrud, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration. Together, they provide valuable insight into the legislative process, highlight significant updates affecting DECAL programs, and discuss what these changes may mean moving forward.

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.*

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