



*November 15, 2024*

## **DECAL Celebrated Farm to School & ECE Month in Polk County**

On Wednesday, October 2, in celebration of October Farm to School & Farm to Early Care and Education Month, representatives from DECAL's Nutrition Services Division, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Quality Care for Children (QCC) visited Rockmart Early Childhood Development Center, a Head Start under the Sponsorship of Tallatoona Community Action Partnership (CAP).



Located in Polk County, visitors had the opportunity to tour the facility, and to learn more about their innovative and expansive Farm to ECE program.

In recognition of the **ParSLAY the Day** Campaign, the toddlers and pre-school students made and tasted homemade herb butter from the herb lesson plan provided by **Quality Care for Children (QCC)**. The children took turns shaking the jar of heavy cream until it thickened into butter. They added herbs into the butter and tasted it on whole grain bread.

Afterwards, the children gathered to participate in worm composting, and they planted herbs in raised garden beds.

## **Thank You to Providers for Feeding Kids During Unanticipated School Closures**

When schools closed unexpectedly due to Hurricane Helene in Rome, and the BioLab explosion in Conyers, Bread of Life Development Ministries (BOLD) and The Young Men's Christian Association of Rome and Floyd County stepped up to feed kids through At-Risk Afterschool Meals.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the well-being of our children and for the critical role you played in these emergency efforts.

# FDCH Excess Carry Over Funds Due November 30

Family Day Care Home Sponsors (FDCH) with remaining administrative funds at the end of the fiscal year that exceed 10 percent of that fiscal year's administrative payments must return those excess funds to DECAL by November 30.

## Additional Requirements:

To support the calculation, a FDCH sponsor must submit a general ledger or the bank statement showing the total ending balance along with the FDCH Carryover Letter to the Budget Compliance Supervisor, [Gwendolyn Howard](#).

For more information, please refer to the CACFP Policy Memo, [Carry Over of Unused CACFP Administrative Reimbursement](#), dated October 1, 2020.

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## Stay Informed: At-Risk Afterschool Waivers Available during Unanticipated School Closure

On August 5, 2024, DECAL was approved by USDA to grant CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meal Component facilities waivers for the following:

- 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, 2025**.

The following 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.

DECAL cannot approve a waiver for more than 10 consecutive operating days without approval from Food Nutrition Services (FNS). You may access the USDA's approval [here](#). CACFP institutions that are approved to operate the At-Risk Afterschool Meal Component and are interested in applying for these waivers during unanticipated school closures must submit waiver requests via the Waiver Module in GA ATLAS.

Once institutions have submitted waiver requests, institutions should email [Tammie Baldwin](#) advising of the submittal. For questions, please contact [Robyn Parham](#).

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## Upcoming Training Dates:

### November 19, 2024 – Recordkeeping Requirements

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

Want to avoid the most common recordkeeping findings due to lack of supporting documentation and learn best practice tips to maintain a compliant child nutrition program? Join us to enhance your knowledge about recordkeeping requirements in the CACFP.

[\[Register Now\]](#)

### December 10, 2024 – Tuesday Tip! It's Snack Time!

**1:30 - 2:00 pm**

Do you need a quick refresher on serving snacks in the CACFP & Happy Helpings? Join this webinar to learn meal pattern requirements on incorporating creditable snacks into your meal service.

**Participants can earn one-half [0.50] state-approved hours for attending this**

training in its entirety.  
[Register Now]

## December 16, 2024 – Memo Monday

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Have you heard about the new meal pattern updates for the next fiscal year? Do you have questions about what changes will be made that are associated with CACFP? Would you like to serve credible smoothies in your CACFP and Happy Helpings Program?

Please join this webinar for a deeper dive into the following memos:

- **Meal Pattern Updates due to 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans- June 28, 2024**
- **Geographic Preference Expansion Related to the Final Rule titled, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans- May 22, 2024**
- **Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs with Questions and Answers- June 28, 2024**

[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](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 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@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:leslie.truman@dec.al.ga.gov) for assistance.

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## 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 **FY 2025 Renewal Readiness** webinar that discusses step-by-step instructions on how to complete Annual Renewal requirements.

### Snack Attack **New Recipes!**

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

- Rice cake and nut butter
- Ricotta cheese and pear slices
- Bell peppers and black bean hummus
- Cheese quesadilla
- Pretzel twists and dried cranberries

### 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.

- [Exhibit A Grains Chart](#)
- [The Danger Zone](#)
- [Crediting Tomatoes, Avocados and Pumpkins](#)
- [Sourcing Local Foods \*\*New!\*\*](#)
- [Product Formulation Statements \*\*New!\*\*](#)

## Eating Healthy with Soft Foods

My Plate in partnership with NCA has developed this guide for people with swallowing or chewing issues and who need softer foods, often referred to by your healthcare professional as soft and bite-sized, minced and moist, and mechanical soft, texture modification.

### Get the Guide

### Nutrient-Rich Food Sources

The **Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA)** has provided some handouts with examples of a variety of nutrient-dense foods and beverages that are some of the highest sources of calcium, potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin D, and iron. Ensure you and the little ones you serve are eating foods rich in these dietary components.

- **Calcium**
- **Potassium**
- **Fiber**
- **Vitamin D**
- **Iron**

Click [here](#) for more nutrient-rich food sources

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## Nutrition Ed Nook

### *The Healthy Potato*

Sweet potatoes are November's Harvest of the Month (**English** and **Spanish**) spotlight! Sweet potatoes are nutritional powerhouses packed with vitamins A & C, niacin, potassium, fiber, and other vitamins and minerals. Sweet potatoes are a root vegetable, and can be orange, purple or white.

Sweet potatoes grow underground and love hot, moist temperatures like our Georgia climate. August through November is sweet potato season in Georgia. They can be enjoyed mashed, baked, roasted, steamed, boiled, sautéed, or grilled. Versatile in cooking, sweet potatoes are a great way to add flavor and nutrition to all kinds of recipes.

**Fun Fact:** Ocilla, GA is home to the annual Georgia Sweet Potato Festival that has been celebrated since the 1960s.

### Integration:

- **Vegetable Chili**
- **Lentil Minestrone**
- **Holiday Cobb Salad**
- **Sweet Potato Pancakes**
- **West African Peanut Stew**
- **Chicken, Sweet Potato and Carrot Packets**

### Education:

- **Watch** the [Harvest with Holly](#) video that explores the Harvest of the Month spotlight, how these items grow, where they grow in Georgia, and how they get from the farms to school meals all across the state of Georgia.
- **Taste Test** sweet potatoes. Create an observation chart and ask children to describe how sweet potato sticks look, feel, smell, and taste. Provide each child with two of [Zoe's Roasted Sweet Potato Sticks](#), asking them to wait to taste them until everyone has been served. On the count of 3, have all children try their sweet potato sticks. Also, ask the children to rate their liking of the sweet potato sticks, thumbs up or down.
- **Read** the book, "[Sweet Potato Pie](#)" by Kathleen D. Lindsey. Loosely based on Lindsey's memories of her great grandmother's stories, the book shares how a large loving family finds a delicious way to earn the money they need to save their family



farm during a drought in the early 1900s. Sweet Potato Pie is a delicious affirmation of strong family ties and creative problem solving.

- **Talk** with families about how children can help with meal preparation such as scrubbing sweet potatoes under cool running water or pricking whole sweet potatoes with a fork before baking or microwaving.
- **Bonus:** Send recipes that incorporate sweet potatoes home for families to try together! Check [Pinterest](#) for recipe inspiration.
- **Want ECE sweet potato-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 in your care eaten sweet potatoes before?
- What is their favorite way to eat sweet potatoes?
- What are some examples of other root vegetables?

## Squash is the November Harvest of the Month Bonus Spotlight!



**Summer squashes** are high in vitamins A & C, and fiber. They grow quickly and have thin skin; to retain the most nutrients, leave their skin on while eating. In Georgia, summer squashes are in season from around May through October. Zucchini, yellow, and scallop squashes are three primary summer squashes.

**Winter squashes** are an excellent source of vitamin A and provide many minerals. Winter squashes have hard, thick skin that allows them to be stored in a dry, cool location for several months. In Georgia, winter squashes are in season from around September through March.

Edible pumpkins are one of many types of winter squash. Others include acorn, butternut, and spaghetti squashes.

### Integration:

- [Pumpkin Fruit Dip](#)
- [Three Sisters Soup](#)
- [Baked Zucchini Sticks](#)
- [Turkey Pumpkin Chili](#)
- [Butternut Apple Crisp](#)
- [Squash Blossom Quesadilla](#)

Share your Harvest of the Month stories and menu integration of sweet potatoes and squash with Nutrition Education Specialist, Morgan Chapman, MPH, MCHc at [morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov](mailto:morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov)

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## Physical Activity Corner

### *Stay Active during the Holiday Season*

Power Up – The holiday season is here! It is the most celebrated and busiest time of the year. What is the key to holiday exercise? Make it fun!

The power of regular exercise is an important part of staying healthy, managing stress, and improving your mental health. Studies have found a strong connection between regular

exercise and increased levels of movement to help with sleep, reduce fatigue, and improve concentration and learning.

For overall health and wellness, it is recommended that children engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day to stay healthy and fit, both mentally and physically.

We encourage families to spend quality time together in their garden — planting, raking, pruning, and watering the plants, take a walk together in your community, or walk to your local farmer's market to choose new fruits and vegetables to enjoy. Remember to keep your body hydrated daily and get eight (8) hours of sleep per night. Engaging in healthy eating habits and being physically active can help avoid holiday weight gain and get a great jumpstart to the holiday season.



### Integration:

- [How to Have Healthier Holidays in 1-2-3!](#)
- [Ways to Stay Fit During the Holidays](#)
- [Holiday Events in Georgia](#)
- [Core Exercises for Preschoolers](#)
- [All Weather Activities](#)

### Education:

- **Read** aloud the book, "[Turkey Goes to School](#)" by Wendy Silvano.
- **Watch** the video on "[Staying Active during the Holidays.](#)"
- **Talk** with families about ways to incorporate fitness into their daily lives.
- **Bonus:** Send home, #HolidayWalk, #HolidayGear, #Holiday5KRun, #HolidayMarathon, #HolidayExercise pictures and events that are happening in your community.

### Conversation:

- What type of exercise can you do during the holiday season?
- How can I stay active and motivated during the holidays?
- What is a fun fitness activity to do as a family?

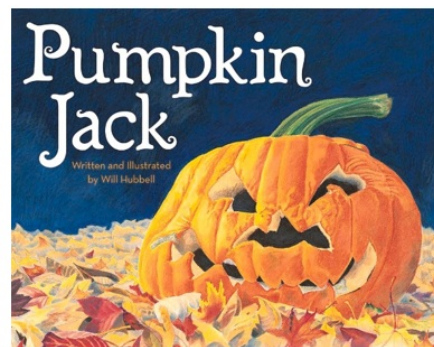
Share your #HolidayGear, #Holiday5KRun, #HolidayMarathon, and #HolidayMotivation stories and photos with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren, MPH at [tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov](mailto:tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov)

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## The Pumpkin ☐ Jack Experiment

As the aroma of pumpkin pie fills the air during the fall season, it's the perfect time to think about recycling those festive pumpkins.

The Pumpkin Jack experiment offers a wonderful way to repurpose used Halloween pumpkins, teaching children about the life cycle of plants and the importance of sustainability. By turning old pumpkins into a fun and educational activity, we can celebrate the season while promoting eco-friendly practices.



Click [here](#) to print these instructions or share them with other child care providers. Have fun exploring the life cycle of a pumpkin with the children! ☐ ☐



## 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](https://bit.ly/DECALPins).

Nutrition and Physical Activity pins are saved and added weekly.

Questions or suggestions, submit 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).

## 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](https://www.qualitycareforchildren.org) 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](https://www.doe.k12.ga.us).



## CACFP Resources:

*The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:*

- [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 Newsletters [here](#).

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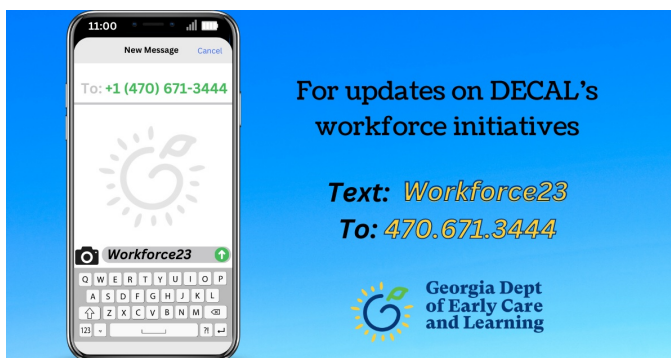
## Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENTS
November	Harvest of the Month: Sweet Potatoes and Squash
November 19	Recordkeeping Requirements Webinar
November 28	Holiday: Thanksgiving Day
November 30	FDCH Excess Carry Over Funds Due
December 10	Tuesday Tip! It's Snack Time!
December 16	Memo Monday

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## A Message for CAPS and Quality Rated Providers

*Download the FREE CAPS-QR Payments Estimator Tool*



CAPS and Quality Rated providers can [download the FREE CAPS-QR Payments Estimator Tool from the Thriving Child Care Business Academy Resources Page](#) to get an estimate of their rates under the new payments structure that went into effect this fall.

There's also an [Instruction Guide with FAQs](#) posted on the Resources page to help them use the Estimator

Tool. For more personalized, in-depth help, providers can register for the [FREE Navigating the CAPS-QR Policy Changes Small Study Group Track](#) as well as [Individual Coaching](#) led by trainers from Civitas Strategies.

The registration link can also be used to sign up for any of the 10 other FREE Small Study Groups offered in the Academy. Providers who complete a small study group series will be eligible for a \$150 stipend and four (4) state-approved training hours. No stipends or training hours are given for



Individual Coaching technical assistance, however.

- For more help with CAPS questions and supports, contact [the CAPS Provider Relations Team](#) or call 1-833-442-2277 and follow the prompts for Provider Relations. There's also important CAPS information and updates on the [Provider Relations web page](#).
- For more help with QR questions and supports, contact [QR Provider Support](#) or call 1-855-800-7747.

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## Join Us for a NEW DECAL Download!

### *Find Help Georgia Forum*



**On the next ...**  
**DECAL Download**   
New Episodes Every Wednesday!

**This Week's Topic:**  
**FIND HELP GEORGIA**

**Amy Roys**  
CAPS Director for Development and Partnerships

**Melinda Knowles**  
CAPS Development and Partnerships Project Manager

 **Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning**  
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Find Help Georgia is a one stop shop for community resources near you. Whether you're looking for financial assistance, child care, food pantries, and even medical care, this comprehensive online directory is available to strengthen Georgia families.

Joining us to talk about Find Help Georgia and the upcoming second annual Find

Help Georgia Forum is Amy Roys, the CAPS Director for Development and Partnerships, and Melinda Knowles, the CAPS Development and Partnerships Project Manager.

We'll also have a watercooler question for Commissioner Jacobs and the DECAL Download Quiz where you could win a prize from one of our sponsors.

Listen to the episode [here](#).

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## 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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