CACFP
Child & Adult Care Food Program

November 16, 2026

Have a Healthy and Happy Thanksgiving



Thanksgiving is a wonderful time to explore seasonal foods, get moving, and celebrate together. Encourage children to discover new flavors with festive recipes like Whipped Sweet Potatoes or Pumpkin Hummus and then keep the fun going with active games and hands-on activities.

Looking for inspiration? Explore our Healthy Holiday Celebrations: Thanksgiving Pinterest board for delicious recipes, fun physical activities, and creative ideas to make your Thanksgiving celebration both healthy and enjoyable.

Click here to explore our Pinterest board.

📸 We'd love to see your celebrations. Share photos of your healthy Thanksgiving foods and activities to inspire other ECE providers.

Nutrition Services Visits Bright Future Academy



DECAL Nutrition Services staff explore the greenhouse at Bright Future Academy.

In celebration of October Farm to School and Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Month, representatives from DECAL Nutrition Services and Community Partnerships visited Bright Future Academy in Dallas, Georgia to highlight the center's commitment to incorporating locally grown foods and hands-on gardening experiences into early childhood education.

Through DECAL grant opportunities and community partnerships, Bright Future Academy has enhanced its garden, greenhouse, and kitchen facilities, providing children with opportunities to learn about growing, preparing, and enjoying fresh, nutritious foods. The visit also featured a special planting activity with children and their grandparents.

Click here to read the full story and view photos from the visit.

Chop, Look, Listen: A Holiday Season Reminder



It has been one year since DECAL launched the Chop, Look, Listen campaign and its message remains as important. As the holiday season approaches and food becomes a big part of celebrations, now is a great time to revisit simple steps that can help reduce the risk of choking among young children.

Remember the three key messages:
🔪 **CHOP:** Prepare foods in safe sizes, shapes, and textures for young children.
👀 **LOOK:** Watch children while they eat for safe eating habits and be ready to teach them.
👂 **LISTEN:** Sit and engage with children closely while they eat to create connection while keeping them safe.

Providers can also help extend these important messages beyond the child care setting. Remind families that certain foods can pose a choking risk for young children, and encourage them to keep safe food preparation and supervision in mind during holiday meals and celebrations.

Visit the Chop, Look, Listen webpage to access resources you can use in the classroom, kitchen, and with families and help keep choking prevention top of mind this holiday season.

Reminder: Review Your Online CACFP Application

CACFP Institutions/Sponsors are required to review their online applications monthly in GA ATLAS and to ensure that any necessary updates are completed within 30 days.

Click here to access the CACFP Application Update Procedures.

Independent Centers with questions or concerns regarding application updates should contact their assigned Application Specialist using the information provided below.

Application Specialists	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
Jerald Savage	0 (zero) - G	Jerald.Savage@decal.ga.gov	(770) 405-7916
Shericka Blount	H-P	Shericka.Blount@decal.ga.gov	(404) 656-6411
Vanessa Goodman	Q-Z	Vanessa.Goodman@decal.ga.gov	(404) 591-6027

Sponsors who have questions or concerns regarding these updates are encouraged to contact their assigned Business Operations Representative using the information provided below.

Business Operations Representative	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
Lavesia Bolden	0 (zero) - G	Lavesia.Bolden@decal.ga.gov	(404) 463-1066
Dylan Uhlir	H-P	Dylan.Uhlir@decal.ga.gov	(404) 591-5813
Joveta Watson	Q-Z	Joveta.Watson@decal.ga.gov	(706) 434-6831

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 Financial Reconciliation Specialist, **Kayla Moss**.

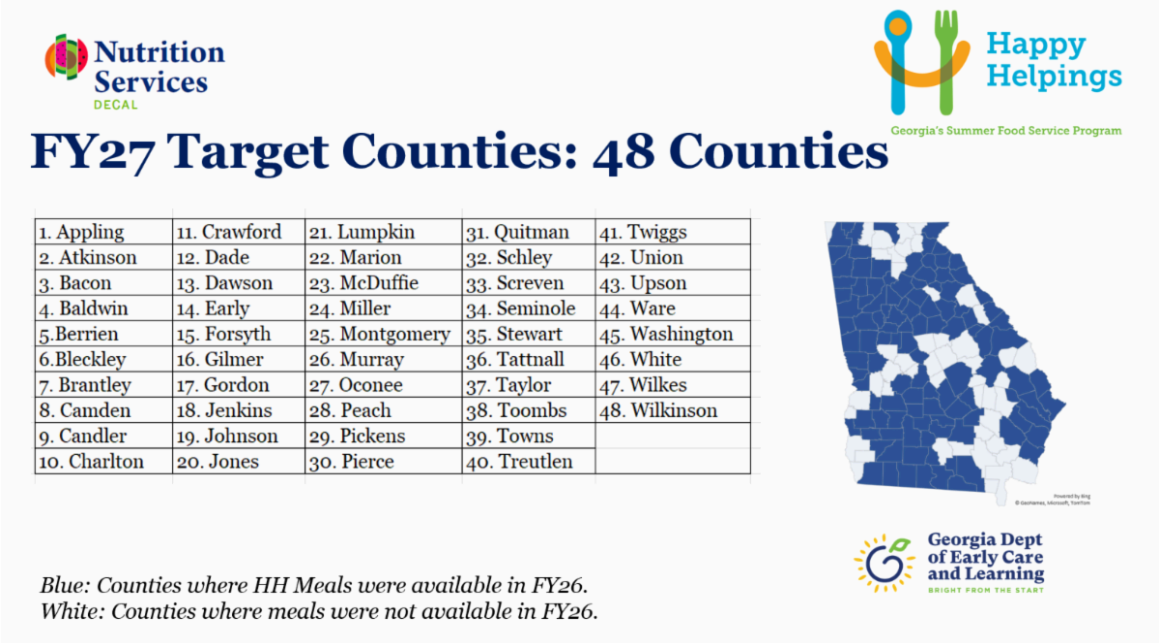
For more information, contact **Kayla Moss** and refer to the CACFP Policy Memo, **Carry Over of Unused CACFP Administrative Reimbursement**.

Think about Feeding Kids Next Summer

If your institution currently participates in at-risk afterschool meals, you are well-positioned to become a sponsor for Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program. Happy Helpings ensures children 18 and under have access to free nutritious meals and snacks during the summer when school is not in session.

Children in 48 Georgia counties did not have access to a Happy Helpings' meal site during FY26. If you are able, consider offering meals in any of the counties listed below.

New Sponsor Training will be offered in February and March 2027. To get started, complete the online form on the sponsor page at **https://www.happyhelpingsga.com/sponsors/** or contact **Joann Kilpatrick**.



Physical Activity Corner

Move, Play, Groove & Grow This Holiday Season

As we celebrate Thanksgiving and the season of gratitude, it is also a wonderful time to encourage our children to stay active.

Try these fun activities:

- 🦃 **Turkey Waddle Relay**: Invite children to pretend they are turkeys waddling to a finish line. Add challenges such as carrying a soft ball while waddling.
- ❄️ **Holiday Freeze Dance**: Dance to festive music and freeze when it stops.
- 🍂 **Leaf Hunt Adventure**: Take children outdoors. Encourage them to walk, hop, skip, tip-toe, or march as they collect leaves and see the signs of the season.
- ⭐ **Thankful Stretch Circle**: Gather children in a circle and invite them to share something for which they are thankful. After each child shares, everyone celebrates with a fun movement such as a stretch, jump, clap, or spin.

Wishing all CACFP providers, children, and families a happy, healthy, and active Thanksgiving season. 🍂🦃💛

Move of the Month: Parachute Play with Fall Leaves

What You'll Need:

- A parachute, bed sheet, or large blanket
- Real or artificial leaves

How to Play:

1. Spread the leaves across the center of the parachute.
2. Encourage children to gently shake the parachute to make the leaves dance and swirl like falling autumn leaves.
3. Try different movements:
    - Lift the parachute high to create a "fall leaf storm."
    - Shake it slowly to create a gentle breeze.
    - Shake it quickly to make leaves fly and swirl.
    - Count how many leaves stay on the parachute after each round.

Learning Benefits of Parachute Play:
✅ Builds gross motor skills
✅ Encourages teamwork and cooperation
✅ Develops listening skills and following directions
✅ Promotes active play through fun seasonal exploration

Nutrition Services recently visited Fayette County Head Start for this month's Move of the Month video. Join us as we encourage children to get moving, stay active, and have fun through physical activity.

Click **here** to watch the video.



🍁 **Safety Tips for Holiday Movement**

- Ensure activity spaces are free from hazards and clutter.
- Encourage children to wear proper footwear for active play outdoors.
- Provide water breaks throughout the day.
- Adapt activities so all children can take part and experience success.
- Always supervise movement activities closely.

We would love to feature your class in our next newsletter or on social media.

Share your Move of the Month photos and holiday activity ideas with Physical Activity Specialist Tina McLaren at **tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov**.

Explore DECAL's Redesigned Child and Family Development Webpage

DECAL has launched its newly redesigned Child and Family Development webpage, featuring helpful resources to support children's healthy growth and development.

The updated webpage now includes nutrition and physical activity resources for families, offering valuable information to encourage healthy habits at home.

CACFP institutions and sponsors are encouraged to explore the webpage and share these resources with the families they serve.

Click here to explore the updated webpage.

Upcoming Training Dates:

November 16, 2026
Memo Monday: CACFP Policies
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

This Memo Monday session will review CACFP policies related to Family Child Care Learning Homes, including requirements for claiming meals and recent changes affecting the eligibility and participation of day care and group day care homes in the CACFP.

- **The Claiming of Meals by Family Child Care Learning Homes Licensed by the State of Georgia, CACFP #12**
- **Changes to the Eligibility of Day Care Homes' and Group Day Care Homes' Participation in the CACFP**

Register Now

December 1, 2026
Tuesday Tip! Festive Flavors and Fun
1:30- 2:00 p.m.

Looking for new and creative ways to add excitement to your menus? Join this webinar to discover festive snack ideas inspired by upcoming holidays and seasons. Participants will learn healthy, simple snack ideas and active games that can add fun to your celebrations.

Participants can earn one-half [0.50] state-approved hours for attending this training in its entirety.

Register Now

December 12, 2026
Food Safety in Child Care
9:00- 11:00 a.m.

Children younger than five years old are at an increased risk of foodborne illness. This training will help cooks, nutrition staff, and administrators better understand how to prevent food-borne illnesses,

properly handle food allergens, and serve high-quality meals.

Participants can earn two (2) state-approved hours for attending this training in its entirety.

Register Now

December 14, 2026
Memo Monday Military Installations ONLY
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Training will provide an overview of procurement standards and financial management for military installations while answering common questions, and providing information on regulations, requirements, and procedures.

- **Standards for Development of Procurement Policy Consistent with CACFP and SFSP Federal Requirements (revised) - September 1, 2026**
- **Policy 39 - Financial Recordkeeping in CACFP and SFSP**

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 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 in GA ATLAS. If an additional person will be attending, contact **Leslie Truman**, Administrative Assistant, at (404) 657-1779 for assistance.

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.

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@decal.ga.gov** or **tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov**.

Harvest of the Month



Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 2026-2027 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, and the Georgia Department of Human Services. The campaign encourages healthy eating habits by promoting different local, seasonal fruits or vegetables each month.

Visit DECAL's **Harvest of the Month Pinterest Page** for recipes, culinary tips, classroom activity ideas, and more.

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**
- **Health Permit Verification Requirements**
- **FY2027 CACFP Reimbursement Rates**
- **CACFP Area Eligibility Interactive Map Updated for FY26**
- **A Resource Hub for Food Industry Partners**
- **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**
- **How to File a CACFP Claim for Reimbursement**

You can find archived CACFP newsletters **here.**

Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENTS
November	Harvest of the Month: Sweet Potatoes
November 16	Memo Monday: CACFP Policies - Webinar
November 26	State Holiday: Thanksgiving Day
November 27	State Holiday: Day After Thanksgiving
November 30	FDCH Excess Carry Over Funds Due
December 1	Tuesday Tip! Festive Flavors and Fun - Webinar
December 12	Food Safety in Child Care - Webinar
December 14	Memo Monday Military Installations ONLY - Webinar

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DECAL Download

Needs Assessment Survey



On this episode of the DECAL Download, we're talking about a recent opportunity for Georgia child care providers, educators, families, and other stakeholders to make their voices heard.

Every day, child care professionals across our state work tirelessly to support children and families. While this work is incredibly rewarding, it also comes with challenges. To better understand those challenges and identify ways to strengthen our early care and education system, we recently partnered with Child Trends to conduct Georgia's Child Care Needs Assessment.

Joining us to talk about the Needs Assessment is Dr. Bentley Ponder, Deputy Commissioner of Quality Innovations and Partnerships, and Shayna Funke, Director of Research Partnerships and Business Supports.

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 DECAL

Nutrition Services Marketing & Outreach Team

Cindy Kicklighter
Joann Kilpatrick

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
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