



October 16, 2025



October Proclaimed Farm to School and Farm to Early Care and Education Month in Georgia

Nutrition Services is excited to share that Governor Brian Kemp has once again proclaimed October as Farm to School and Farm to Early Care & Education Month in Georgia. We are extremely appreciative to see Farm to School and Farm to Early Care and Education supported by the highest leadership office in our state. View the proclamation [here](#).

All October, Georgia is celebrating with the Apple of Our Eye Campaign—a time to inspire kids to eat, grow, and learn about locally grown fruits and vegetables. This year, we're shining a spotlight on one of fall's favorite fruits: apples.

Ways to Participate in October Farm to School & ECE Month

Visit the [Apple of Our Eye](#) webpage to access a free electronic toolkit filled with apple-themed activities, standards-based lesson plans, fact sheets, recipes, and more.

Share these apple themed activity sheets with the children in your care.

- [Apple Coloring Sheet](#)
- [Apple Memory and Coloring Worksheet](#)
- [CALi Maze Worksheet](#)
- [Red Apple Tree Tracing Worksheet](#)
- [Let's Get Moving Activity Worksheet](#)

Check out the [Toddler](#) and [Pre-K](#) lesson plans created for October Farm to School & Early Care and Education Month.

Check out DECAL's [Farm to School and Farm to Early Care and Education Toolkit](#) for recipe and activity ideas featuring apples.

Share your apple-themed activities and photos with us on social media using #GAFarmtoECE and #appleofoureye, or email to Morgan.Chapman@dec.al.ga.gov. Let's show how we're growing healthy habits—one apple at a time.

Recipients of Quality Rated Nutrition and Physical

Activity Endorsement Announced

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), in partnership with the Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning, has announced the inaugural recipients of the Quality Rated Nutrition and Physical Activity (NAPA) Endorsement. This new initiative recognizes early childhood education programs that demonstrate a strong commitment to fostering healthy habits through high-quality nutrition and physical activity practices.

The Quality Rated providers that have earned the inaugural NAPA Endorsement are:

- Appling County Head Start
- BC's Enrichment Kingdom LLC
- Enrichment Services Program, Inc. Early Head Start at Boxwood Place
- Forsyth County Head Start
- Kribs 2 Kollege
- Morrow Early Learning Center
- Pinecrest Child Care Center
- Pre-K Preparatory Learning Academy
- Teach "O" Rea Preparatory School
- The Greenbrier Preschool
- The Learning Tree Academy
- Tri-County Child Development Center
- Victory Kids' Academy

Launched in April 2024, the NAPA Endorsement pilot supported 13 child care programs across Georgia with targeted technical assistance, specialized training, and a one-time grant of up to \$5,300 to implement wellness-focused improvements. Participating programs were selected based on their Quality Rated star rating, involvement in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and experience with Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) programming.

Programs engaged in a comprehensive process that included:

- In-person Physical Activity Learning Sessions (PALS)
- Virtual Nutrition Education trainings
- Go NAPSACC nutrition and physical activity modules
- Mini-grants provided by the Foundation
- Ongoing technical support from DECAL's Nutrition Services team

Learn More: Explore research and evaluation findings related to this initiative:

- [Child Care Success Stories From Georgia's Nutrition and Physical Activity Endorsement Pilot](#)
- [Five Keys to Implementing Nutrition and Physical Activity Professional Development in Child Care Programs](#)



Nutrition Services Educates Providers on Choking Prevention

On Saturday, September 27, DECAL's Child Care Services (CCS) Division hosted a Super Saturday event aimed at helping child care providers learn how to enhance the safety and mealtime practices for infants and toddlers.

Representatives from the Nutrition team offered a session on *Mindful Munching: Keeping Infants and Toddlers Safe from Choking*. Participants learned how to recognize infant feeding skills, modify food textures, and how to safely introduce solid foods. They also discussed how to create positive mealtime environments, how to identify high-risk foods, and how to reduce

choking hazards for infants and toddlers.

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, DECAL's Child Care Services Technical Assistance Unit, the Infant Toddler Program, and the Child Development Team also participated in the event.

A second Super Saturday event will be offered on Saturday, November 15, 2025, in Dublin, Georgia. Providers are encouraged to register early through the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS) to secure their spot.

Register [here](#).

Coming Soon: DECAL's Choking Prevention Campaign

Happy Fall! This is such a great time of year with many opportunities for celebrations both at home and at child care. Often these celebrations include food. Lots of food.

This fun, festive season is a great time to launch our Choking Prevention Campaign. During the holiday season that starts with Halloween and ends New Years Day, children are often eating new and different foods at new and different places.

It's important to remember that our youngest children are new eaters, and safe eating is a developmental process. No matter the situation or the setting, food needs to be prepared and served to young children according to their age and developmental stage.

To support child care providers, teachers, cooks, and families, DECAL's Child Care Services (CCS) has created several tools to inform and remind all the adults in a child's life how important food safety is and how to implement best practices.

Over the next few months, Child Care Consultants will deliver posters, magnets, and flyers to your program. We hope these materials will be a quick and easy reminder for staff about serving food safely. We also hope you will share these resources with families.



Have You Thought about Feeding Kids this Summer?

Consider participating in Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program, ensures children 18 and under have access to nutritious meals and snacks during the summer when school is not in session.

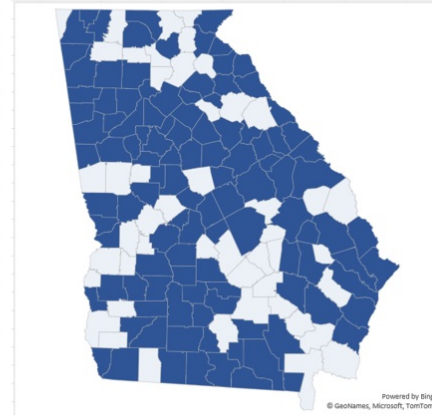
If your institution currently participates in at-risk afterschool meals, you are well-positioned to offer summer meals.

Training is offered in February or March 2026. There are 50 Georgia counties where children did not have access to a Happy Helpings' meal site during FY25.

If you are able, please consider expanding your meal service to offer meals in any of the counties listed below.

FY26 Areas of Need: 50 Counties

1. Bacon	11. Dawson	21. Johnson	31. Pickens	41. Towns
2. Banks	12. Dodge	22. Jones	32. Pierce	42. Treutlen
3. Berrien	13. Early	23. Long	33. Pike	43. Troup
4. Brantley	14. Evans	24. Marion	34. Pulaski	44. Union
5. Calhoun	15. Forsyth	25. Meriwether	35. Quitman	45. Webster
6. Camden	16. Gordon	26. Miller	36. Schley	46. Wheeler
7. Charlton	17. Grady	27. Montgomery	37. Screven	47. White
8. Coffee	18. Hall	28. Murray	38. Stewart	48. Wilkes
9. Crawford	19. Jeff Davis	29. Oconee	39. Taylor	49. Wilkinson
10. Dade	20. Jenkins	30. Oglethorpe	40. Telfair	50. Worth



Blue: Counties where HH Meals were available in FY25:
White: Counties where meals were not available in FY25

For answers to your questions, please contact Happyhelpings@decals.ga.gov

Stay Informed: New CACFP Memoranda

Requirement to Accept Medical Statements from Registered Dietitians for Schools and Child and Adult Care Institutions and Facilities, December 30, 2024.

This USDA guidance clarifies the updated regulatory requirement for Program operators to accept medical statements from registered dietitians. To access the guidance, click [here](#).

Policy Memo, Guidance on the Interpretation of Discrimination Based on "Sex" in USDA Child Nutrition Programs, July 7, 2025.

Notes changes to the USDA Non-discrimination statement for USDA Child Nutrition Programs. To access the guidance, click [here](#).

Please Note: Georgia DECAL will provide additional guidance to CACFP organizations in the months ahead.

Policy Memo, Statements Supporting Accommodations for Children with Disabilities in the Child Nutrition Programs October 15, 2025.

This memorandum was updated to include registered dietitians as persons authorized to write medical statements to request meal modifications on behalf of participants with disabilities in the CACFP. To access the guidance, click [here](#).

For questions or for additional information, please contact Melissa Stanley, Policy Administrator at Melissa.Stanley@decals.ga.gov.

Upcoming Training Dates:

November 4, 2025

Tuesday Tip! Choose Breakfast Cereals & Yogurt That Are Lower in Added Sugars

1:30 - 2:30 pm

Do you need a meal pattern refresher on breakfast cereals and yogurt?

Join this webinar to learn the new CACFP sugar limit requirements for serving breakfast cereals and yogurt, effective October 1, 2025.

Participants can earn one [1.0] state-approved hour(s) for attending this

training in its entirety.

[\[Register Now\]](#)

November 15, 2025 Free Super Saturday Training: Choking Prevention in Child Care session 8:30am- 4:45pm

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is thrilled to offer another FREE Super Saturday Training: Choking Prevention in Child Care session designed to strengthen safety practices and emergency preparedness for child care professionals.

Register [here](#).

November 17, 2025 Memo Monday 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Are you interested in operating an At-Risk Afterschool Program? If so, we invite you to join our upcoming webinar for an in-depth look at the latest policy memos outlining the new requirements for participation in the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program.

- **Policy CACFP #34 - Eligibility Requirements for Participating in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Component of the CACFP, CACFP #34 (07-34)**
- **Taking Food Components Offsite in the At-Risk Afterschool Component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program – May 3, 2017**

[\[Register Now\]](#)

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@dec.al.ga.gov for assistance.



Training Opportunities Available Through the National CACFP Association



October 23, 2025 Building Your CACFP Cycle Menu 2:00 - 3:00 pm

Menu planning is more than just demonstrating CACFP meal pattern compliance, it's a tool for staying organized, meeting requirements, and supporting child nutrition. Learn how to create a practical and compliant cycle menu using USDA's new resources, Let's Make a Snack and It's Breakfast Time.

Registration: [Click here](#)

October 29, 2025
Why Participate in the CACFP?
Discover the Power of the Food Program
2:00 - 3:00 pm and 8:00 - 9:00 pm

Know someone interested in the CACFP? Share this webinar so they can explore how this program can impact the children and families they serve.

Registration: [Click here](#)



November 4, 2025
Diabetes: Food for Thought
2:00 - 2:30 pm

Support healthy eating for individuals with diabetes. With diabetes continuing to impact millions of children and adults across the country, understanding how nutrition plays a role in prevention and management is more important than ever. Get a foundational overview of the different types of diabetes and explore practical,

evidence-based nutrition recommendations to support those living with the condition. Learn actionable insights to support healthy eating for all ages.

Registration: [Click here](#)

December 4, 2025
Head Start Boot Camp
11:00 am - 5:00 pm

Discover how nutrition and CACFP regulations work hand in hand with Head Start programs to support children and families. Walk away with strategies you can apply right away to build healthier habits and brighter futures in Head Start.



Registration: [Click here](#)

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 2026 CACFP Renewal Readiness](#) webinar. It provided step-by-step instructions on how to complete annual renewal requirements for FY 2026.

Snack Attack *New Recipes!*

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

- Mango and graham crackers
- Raisins and popcorn
- Rice cakes and peanut butter
- Plums and cereal
- Grape halves and fish-shaped 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.

- **Offering Water *New!***
- **Juice from Farm Stands *New!***
- **Serving Eggs to Infants *New!***
- **Gluten-Free Whole Grains *New!***
- **Sweet Toppings *New!***

Gluten-Free Diets

The **Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN)** has developed Mealtime Memos, and the September 2025 issue defines gluten and how it affects certain individuals, lists foods containing gluten, identifies gluten-free foods, and reviews how to accommodate children who require a gluten-free diet.

Get Gluten Facts



Nutrition Ed Nook

Crisp and Delicious Apples

Crisp and Delicious Apples are October's Harvest of the Month (**English** and **Spanish**) feature, and it also ties in perfectly with this year's October Farm to School & Early Care and Education (ECE) Month theme, ***Apple of Our Eye***.

Apples are a naturally sweet, low-calorie snack. They are a good source of fiber, which helps

support healthy digestion, manage blood sugar levels, and lower cholesterol. Apples also provide vitamin C, which supports healthy gums, skin, and blood vessels. For the most nutrition, encourage children to eat apples with the peel on.

Apples are a versatile fruit that can be enjoyed in many ways. Try offering apple slices with yogurt or nut/seed butter for dipping, or add chopped apples to salads, oatmeal, or baked goods for a naturally sweet crunch.

In Georgia, apples are in season from August through October. The state's apple industry is centered in North Georgia, with over 85% of apples grown in Gilmer and Fannin counties. Popular Georgia-grown varieties include Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Fuji, Granny Smith, and many more.

Fun Fact: In China, apples are a symbol of peace because the word for apple (píngguo, 苹果) sounds like the word for peace (píng, 平). Since red represents prosperity and good fortune, apples are often decorated and gifted for Christmas and Chinese New Year.

Integration:

- **Apple Cinnamon Bars**
- **Apple and Veggie Omelet**
- **Apple & Banana with Dip**
- **Fall Apple Pumpkin Oatmeal**
- **Apple-Solutely Delicious Chips**
- **Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples**

Education:

- **Watch **Fruit for Kids with Blippi | Apple Fruit Factory Tour**** video to learn how apples get to the grocery store. You'll visit the orchard and tour inside the apple factory, Blippi will help your children learn about fruit.
- **Taste Test** two different apple varieties—such as Granny Smith, Gala, or Fuji—using the five senses: look, feel, taste, sound, and smell. Then, create a chart for children to

vote for their favorite.

- **Read *Apples A to Z*** by Margaret McNamara. Fox, Bear, and their friends lead young readers through an apple alphabet--from apple buds and blossoms through nutrition and orchards to the X on an apple pie. Along the way, apple lovers will pick up a windfall of apple science and lore, as well as fun facts and child-friendly information. And twenty-six apple varieties are introduced, even ones for X, Y, and Z.
- **Talk** with families about how children can help with meal preparation such as choosing which apples to buy at the store or rinsing apples under cool running water.
- **Bonus:** Send recipes home with families for them to incorporate apples into their meals! Check [Pinterest](#) for recipe inspiration.
- **Want ECE apple-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 ever been apple picking?
- Which apple variety is their favorite?
- What is their favorite way to eat apples?

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

Physical Activity Corner

“Walk”tober Month: Let’s Get Walking

A new month, a new you, and a new start of the beautiful fall season. October is National Walk to School Month. Walking is one of the many physical activities people enjoy adding into their daily routine as the weather cools down.

Start the day by moving - go for a walk with you and your family to keep your heart rate up for at least 30-minutes every day. Walking helps to raise awareness on the importance of physical activity and supports good health for our families, schools, and neighboring communities.



As per the Centers for Disease Control's *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, physical activity improves sleep, reduces anxiety and depression, lowers risk of hypertension and type 2 diabetes, and other chronic diseases.

How To Observe #OctoberWalks

- At home: Break away from sitting less and *MOVE* more. Take a 15-minute walk early in the morning or during a lunch break. End a long day of work with a few stretches or a yoga session for quietness, tranquility, and peace of mind.
- To school (children/parents): As a family, go together with your children early in the morning to walk to and from school or after-school in the afternoon.
- With the family: Walk in with your neighborhood or community – to the park, local mall, local farmer's market, or a grocery store in the day or on a weekend. Be safe.
- At work (colleagues): Invite a colleague to take a 10-minute walk during your break from the computer/office. Take the stairs, instead of the elevators.

The “Power of Walking” is an International Walk to School Month celebrated in the month of October. Organize, plan, or coordinate a small walk community event or an activity with your family, school, work, or local communities.

To find out more, please, visit: www.walkbiketoschool.org or www.livesmartoni.com/walktober.

Integration:

- **Walk to School**
- **Georgia Safe Routes to School**

- State Parks and Trails in Georgia
- 2025 Georgia 2-Day Walk for Breast Cancer
- 15-minute Walking Workout

Education:

- **Read** aloud, *We Walk Through the Forest* by Lisa Ferland and Yana Popova.
- **Watch** the video on the [Benefits of Walking](#).
- **Talk with families about ways to incorporate walking into their daily lives.**
- **Bonus:** Send #WALKTOBER pictures and events that are happening in your home, early childcare centers, offices, schools, and communities.

Conversation:

- What is the best day and time to walk?
- Who do you enjoy walking with?
- What are the benefits of walking?
- How much should I walk a day?
- What is your favorite leisure place to walk (i.e., parks, trails, neighborhoods, schools)?

Share your #Walktober, #WalkDay, #Walkathon, #Walkclub, #WalkToSchool, #WalkToWork stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren, MPH at tina.mclaren@dec.al.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@dec.al.ga.gov or tina.mclaren@dec.al.ga.gov.



Eat Healthy and Live Active Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 25-26 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 [EatLearnGrowGA](#) to access a variety of 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:

- [FNS Issues Guidance on Using Federal Funds to Purchase Local Foods](#)
- [At-Risk Afterschool Waivers Available during Unanticipated School Closures](#)
- [Update on Cash in Lieu of Commodities \(CILC\) Rates and Claim Processing](#)
- [Helpful Hints for Completing the CACFP Application](#)
- [Supplier Change Request \(SCR\) Form and Updates](#)
- [Updates to Child and Adult Care Food Program Procurement Documents](#)
- [Check your Email Messages & Update Your Email Address in ATLAS](#)
- [CACFP Policy 41 – State Agency Monitoring Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)
- [Reimbursement Rates for CACFP Providers](#)
- [Updated Procurement Forms to include Civil Rights Assurance Statement](#)
- [Updated Agreements for DCH and Administrative Sponsors](#)
- [How to File a CACFP Claim for Reimbursement](#)

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

Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENTS
October	Harvest of the Month: Apples
October 23	Building You CACFP Cycle Menu- Webinar
October 29	Why Participate in the CACFP?- Webinar
November 4	Tuesday Tip! Choose Breakfast Cereals & Yogurt That Are Lower in Added Sugars- Webinar
November 4	Diabetes: Food for Thought- Webinar
November 15	Super Saturday: Choking Prevention in Child Care Training
November 17	Memo Monday: CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program- Webinar
December 4	Head Start Boot Camp- Webinar

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



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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