



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



Child Care Services

Fall 2024 Newsletter

Dear Child Care Provider,

Happy fall! I hope the new school year is off to a great start for you and the families you serve!

Have you checked out the new CCS Resource Suite yet? I'm so excited to share this with you! It is full of printable handouts for programs to support licensing compliance and best practices, including some in Spanish! These are one pagers that easily and quickly show teachers the practices and procedures you really want them to know and understand. These handouts are a great tool for onboarding new teachers, helping substitutes understand expectations, and reminding veteran teachers about best practices. They can be found here: [What is Technical Assistance within Child Care Services? \(ga.gov\)](https://www.ga.gov/childcare/services/technical-assistance). We'll continue to add to this suite in the coming months as well, so check back often and make these a part of your routine to share with your staff!

Enjoy this beautiful time of year, and as always, thanks for all you do for Georgia's youngest learners!

Pam Stevens

Pam Stevens
Deputy Commissioner
for Child Care Services



**Child Care
SERVICES**

CONTACT US



Rule Changes Effective October 1, 2024 for Programs with License Exemptions

Child care programs that may qualify for an exemption must submit an online exemption application to the Department or complete an online self-assessment

to determine the exemption status using [DECAL KOALA](#), whichever is applicable. A program that holds more than one exemption will have the exemption categories migrated into one exemption category. Please refer to the [New vs. Old Exemptions Categories](#) list for updated exemption categories information.

On February 1, 2025, categories that are not required to maintain a DECAL KOALA account, will be closed. The accounts that will remain open are programs that hold an exemption category 1, 5, and 7. Programs can continue to complete a self-assessment to determine exemption or licensing requirements.

For additional information or questions, please email ExemptionRuleChanges@dec.al.ga.gov.

Frequently Asked
Questions

Visit Exemptions Website

Exemption Rule Changes

Self Assessment
Overview

Rule
Guidance

CCS is Going Paperless!

New Electronic Signature Process

In order to move to paperless visits, CCS has implemented a new electronic signature process for all regulatory visits. CCS has partnered with the company Docusign to electronically sign visit reports. Upon the completion of an onsite visit at your child care program, your assigned CCS Consultant will send your visit report to you via email to electronically sign through Docusign. You will have the opportunity to experience this process at your next visit, however, if you have any questions prior to that, please reach out to your assigned CCS Consultant, email ChildCareServices@dec.al.ga.gov, or call 404-657-5562.

Updated Communicable Disease Chart

The Communicable Disease Chart has been updated on the DECAL website to reflect the addition of the COVID-19 virus. Please print the updated chart and begin using at your program immediately. If you choose not to use the chart provided, the chart posted in your program must contain information concerning the COVID-19 virus.

[Click to View Updated Chart](#)

COMMON INFECTIOUS ILLNESSES

From birth to age 18

Disease, illness or organism	Incubation period (How long after contact does illness develop?)	How is it spread?	When is a child most contagious?	When can a child return to the childcare center or school?	Report to county health department*	How to prevent spreading infection (management of conditions)***
To prevent spreading infection for all eye, ear, nose, throat, and chest diseases: Good handwashing and hygiene; disposal of soiled tissues; avoid sharing linens; proper disinfection of surfaces and toys; cough into elbow or clothing when tissues unavailable.						
Bronchiolitis, bronchitis, common cold, croup, ear infection, pneumonia, sinus infection and most sore throats (Respiratory diseases caused by many different viruses and occasionally bacteria)	Variable	Contact with droplets from nose, eyes or mouth of infected person; some viruses can live on surfaces (toys, tissues, doorknobs) for several hours	Variable, often from the day before symptoms begin to 5 days after onset	No restriction unless child has fever, or is too uncomfortable, fatigued or ill to participate in activities (center unable to accommodate child's increased need for comfort and rest)	NO	Wash your hands often with soap and water. Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Stay away from people who are sick.
Cold sore (Herpes simplex virus)	2 days to 2 weeks	Direct contact with infected lesions or oral secretions (drooling, kissing, thumb sucking)	While lesions are present	When active lesions are no longer present in children who do not have control of oral secretions (drooling); no exclusions for other children	NO	Avoid kissing and sharing drinks or utensils.
Conjunctivitis (Pink eye)	Variable, usually 24 to 72 hours	Highly contagious; contact with secretions from eyes of an infected person or contaminated surface	During course of active infection	Once treatment begins	NO	Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. Wash you after contact with an infected person or items he or she uses touching your eyes with unwashed hands. Do not share item by an infected person.
COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2 virus)	2 to 14 days (usually 3 to 6 days from exposure)	Highly contagious; contact with droplets or aerosols from nose, eyes or mouth of infected person	Peak infectious time is two days prior to onset of illness through the completion of their isolation (5 days from symptom onset if symptomatic); or 5 days from test date if asymptomatic; May last up to 10 days or longer depending on course of illness and immune status.	Individuals with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status can return to child care or school after they have completed their isolation according to current Georgia Department of Public Health guidelines.	YES	The best way you can protect your child is by taking everyday actions to prevent your child and the entire household from the virus that causes COVID-19, including vaccination for the age of age to receive it, social distancing and wearing a mask
Diphtheria (Corynebacterium diphtheriae bacteria)	1 to 10 days (usually 2 to 5 days)	Contact with droplets and discharge from nose, eyes or mouth of infected person; contact with discharge from skin lesions of infected individuals; rarely through contaminated objects and raw milk or milk products	Onset of sore throat 2 days after treatment has begun, but may vary; if untreated, 2 to 6 weeks after infection	After 2 negative cultures are taken at least 24 hours apart	YES	Timely immunization beginning at age 2 months; booster do Tdap is recommended at age 11 years; all adults should receive booster of Tdap. Close contacts, regardless of immunization should be monitored for 7 days for evidence of disease and on antimicrobial prophylaxis; immunizations should be brought to date, if necessary
Influenza (the flu) (Influenza virus)	1 to 4 days	Highly contagious; contact with droplets from nose, eyes or mouth of infected person; virus can live on surfaces (toys, tissues, doorknobs) for several hours	Variable, from 24 hours before onset of symptoms to 7 days after onset; can be prolonged in young children	No fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications	NO for individual cases; YES for influenza associated deaths or novel influenza A virus infections	Annual influenza vaccine recommended for everyone 6 months and older (with rare exceptions).



Each year, Georgia Organics coordinates a statewide campaign to get kids eating, growing, and learning about a locally grown fruit or vegetable during October Farm to School Month. This year's campaign will be celebrating ParSLAY the Day!

To participate in *ParSLAY the Day* at your school, home, early care center, or in your community, visit bit.ly/parslaythedaysignup to register. Participants will receive access to a free electronic toolkit filled with parsley-themed activities, standards-based lesson plans, fact sheets, recipes, school nutrition resources, and more!



Share your *ParSLAY the Day* pictures and activities on social media with #parslaytheday. Each week during October, anyone who has used this hashtag will be entered to win a prize and at the end of the month there will be a grand prize winner.

Questions? Visit the [October Farm to School Month FAQ page](#) or email yaza@georgiaorganics.org.



Family Engaged Developmental Monitoring Made Easy

Family Engaged Developmental Monitoring refers to a family's ability to monitor their child's developmental milestones and communicate with others about their child's development. Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning ([DECAL](#)) and the Center of Disease



Control and Prevention's ([CDC](#)) *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* program have resources that allow families to easily follow their child's developmental milestones, monitor their progress, support their development, and communicate with others about what they are seeing.

The CDC's Milestone Tracker App is a free resource that is available in both English and Spanish and can be downloaded on any mobile device from the app store. It

has the following useful features:

- Enter the child's name and date of birth and it automatically populates with the age-appropriate milestones checklist. If a child was born prematurely, it adjusts accordingly.
- Photos and videos that show what many of the milestones look like.
- Tips and Activities to help support the child's growth and development at that age
- Generate a report to share with healthcare providers and other caregivers
- Keep track of appointments for the child
- Helpful resources for families, and information on when to act early if there are developmental concerns.

Sharing these resources with families in your program can help them to understand their child and better communicate with you to celebrate their accomplishments and effectively address any concerns. Milestones matter and with the [CDC's Milestones Tracker App](#), monitoring them can be easy and fun!



Clean Water for Georgia Kids™

Testing for lead is free with the Clean Water for Georgia Kids Program!



**No level of lead in drinking water is safe,
but exposure can be prevented.**

Schools and child care programs can enroll in 3 easy steps:



Attend a brief
training webinar at
<https://bit.ly/3jSMxg6>



Enroll at
[www.cleanwaterfor
USkids.org/Georgia](http://www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/Georgia),



Collect and ship your
water samples, and
receive your free results!



Visit Our Website:

www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/georgia



REGISTER NOW! DECAL Thriving Child Care Business Academy Has Free Trainings

The enthusiasm among Georgia child care providers for the **FREE** trainings and resources in the DECAL Thriving Child Care Business Academy over the past 11 months has been tremendous. The Academy team at DECAL is extremely pleased and gratified that many hundreds of you have taken advantage of the live webinars, small study groups, individual coaching, and the online self-study recordings and resources to enhance your skills and strengthen your businesses.

If you are new to the Academy, the team encourages you to visit the [website](#), view the [Trainings Handbook](#), or watch one of the [Information Webinars](#) to learn about all the FREE trainings and resources. Hopefully, you will decide to either begin your skill-building journey or continue your training plan during Year 2. Here's what you need to know:

STRENGTHENING BUSINESS PRACTICES:

The Strengthening Business Practices modules, which offer three (3) training hours and cover basic information on budget planning, finances, marketing, and staff recruitment and retention are now available. Search the Scheduled Trainings at [GaPDS](#) for more information and registration instructions.

UGA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER @ VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY (UGA SBDC)

The live webinars from Alyssa Foskey of UGA SBDC resume in October. They offer participants two (2) training hours and provide a great introduction to the basics of financial management, recruiting and retaining staff, marketing, and leadership. Search the Scheduled Trainings at [GaPDS](#) for more information and registration steps.

CIVITAS TRAININGS

Registration for all Civitas Year 2 offerings opened on September 11, and the trainings, study groups, and coaching sessions resume on October 1. Civitas is adding six (6) new small study group topics and 32 new self-study guides & videos to the training lineup. Everything has been curated by the Civitas experts, who look forward to sharing their knowledge to help you create a thriving child care business. Just like the existing content in the Business Academy, all of the new trainings will be FREE! Here's the list. Email gacoaching@civstrat.com for more details:

- Navigating CAPS-QR Policy Changes [recommended as a follow-up to the CAPS Webinar Series in July & August]
- Utilizing Technology
- Assessing Your Business
- Financial Planning
- Tax Preparation Strategies
- Building a Strong Work Culture
- **PLUS: 32 New Bilingual Self-Study Guides & Videos on Various Business Topics**

Once you decide where you'd like to start, follow these steps:

- To register for live Civitas large group trainings, UGA SBDC webinars, and Strengthening Business Practices training modules, click the Specialized Search box for **Thriving Child Care Business Academy Scheduled Trainings posted on GaPDS.**
- To sign up for Civitas study groups and individual coaching **if you are not already registered with Civitas**, download and complete the [Civitas Intake Assessment](#) hit the SUBMIT button. Someone from Civitas will contact you to start the process.
- To sign up for Civitas small study groups and individual coaching **if you are already registered with Civitas**, welcome back! There's no need to submit a new intake form. Civitas will send you an email containing a link to a document for selecting the tracks you want to add to your training plan.
- To choose a self-study guide or video, view **the list on the Academy website** and download them anytime.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email gacoaching@civstrat.com for help with Civitas trainings, or

Consumer Product Safety Commission Children's Products Recalls



Sign up today to receive up-to-date email notifications whenever children's products are recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

[Click Here to Enroll](#)

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