



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



# Child Care Services Summer 2024 Newsletter

Dear Child Care Provider,

Here are a few reminders regarding criminal background check requirements from the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) to help ensure that everyone can enjoy a stress-free summer!

First and foremost, if you are unsure of anything regarding background checks I strongly urge you to contact your Consultant for assistance and/or to check the DECAL website ([GA Decal Bright from the Start](https://www.decals.ga.gov)). On the DECAL website there is a green box on the right side of the screen labeled "[Criminal Records Check](#)". If you click that box, it will take you to DECAL's Criminal Records Check page that has a wealth of information for you!

The list below is just a snapshot of some of the information you can find:

- Background check news
- How to contact the Criminal Records Check division within DECAL
- Fingerprinting site information
- Instructions for out of state contacts
- How to submit the online records check application in DECAL KOALA
- Videos & webinars
- Other helpful documents (including the Comprehensive Background Check Policy)

Also, please remember these three steps to help you with a successful background check determination (please click this link for more detailed instructions regarding each step: [LivescanFingerprintInstructions.pdf \(ga.gov\)](#))

1. Complete a Criminal Background Check (CBC) Application in [DECAL KOALA](#).
2. Complete the fingerprinting registration process.
3. Go to the fingerprint location where you made the appointment at the appointment time.

If you ever receive any type of error, a background check letter that is **not** the DECAL background check letter, or are unsure of something in this process please do not hesitate to reach out. We are here to help and want to ensure that you are successful in keeping the children of Georgia safe every day. You can

always reach out to your Consultant or to the Criminal Records Check division directly at: [CRC@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:CRC@dec.al.ga.gov) or call 1-855-884-7444.

Take care and have a great summer!

*Pam Stevens*



Pam Stevens  
Deputy Commissioner  
for Child Care Services

CONTACT US



Georgia's Path2College 529 Plan and the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) have partnered to offer the "**We Care Child Care**" sweepstakes. The promotion is open to families of children who are attending a Georgia Child Care program this summer.

Enter the sweepstakes between July 1 and July 31, 2024 for your chance to win **\$1,529**. Four randomly selected **winners will receive a \$1,529** contribution to their Path2College 529 Plan account, and **their Child Care program will also win \$1,529**.

**ENTER NOW!**

## Get FREE Business & Financial Training from the DECAL Thriving Child Care Business Academy



*Training Hours & Stipends Available!! Sign Up Today!!*

Child care owners and administrators who want **FREE** training to develop the skills and knowledge to make their

centers and learning homes thriving businesses can sign up now for DECAL's Thriving Child Care Business Academy Webinars, Small Study Groups, and Individual Coaching Sessions covering aspects of financial and tax planning; business management; recruiting and retaining staff; marketing; and growth and sustainability.

Civitas Strategies conducts the Webinars and Study Groups, as well as Individual Coaching Sessions. State-approved training hours are available for the Webinars and Study Groups. **Those who complete a small study group series will also receive a \$300 stipend until September 2024.** There is no cost for any of the trainings.

The Webinars are an hour long, offered in English and Spanish simultaneously, and will be recorded and posted online. Participants earn one (1) training hour. No training hours will be given for viewing recorded sessions. To register:

- Go to the Academy's [Schedules & Registration page](#)
- Click on the green box about the "4-Step Shortcut to Register" to go to the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS) site
- Scroll down to Specialized Searches on the GaPDS page
- Check the box beside Thriving Child Care Business Academy
- Hit Search Training Button to see a list of scheduled Academy trainings
- You will have to log in or create a GaPDS account before you can register

Each Small Study Group includes 4-10 providers with similar business types (all centers or all family homes), sizes, skill levels, and need who meet for four (4) sessions and learn about a selected business topic through book study. The groups are led by a Civitas trainer who tailors the content to give participants what they need to stabilize their businesses and increase their knowledge. By the end of the series, providers will produce an action plan describing how they will apply what they learned to their businesses. The book studies are divided into five (5) topic areas: Financial Foundations; Staff Recruitment & Retention; Mitigating Risk; Sales & Marketing; and Tapping into Revenue & Growth. Participants who complete a study group

series will earn four (4) training hours and, until September 2024, a \$300 stipend. To register:

Go to the Academy's [Schedules & Registration page](#)

- Click on the yellow box at the bottom of the page to go to the Intake Assessment
- Complete all sections of the Intake Assessment and hit the Submit button
- Someone from Civitas Strategies will contact you to complete the process

Civitas coaches will also schedule 30-minute Individual Coaching Sessions with providers who have completed at least one study group or have advanced management knowledge and skills but need specialized, complex technical assistance. No training hours are given. To register, follow the instructions above, complete the Intake Assessment and hit the Submit button. Someone from Civitas will contact you to complete the process.

We hope this information helps you to navigate the Thriving Child Care Business Academy and find beneficial free training and resources. Please visit the Academy website at <https://www.decal.ga.gov/Thriving.aspx> for more information. Email questions to [thriving@decal.ga.gov](mailto:thriving@decal.ga.gov).

## Free Family Engagement Training on GaPDS

"Family Engagement in Child Care Programs" is a free training in the Georgia Professional Development System ([GaPDS](#)) that provides strategies for early care and learning programs to partner with families to improve child outcomes. This self-paced training is available in both English and Spanish, can be easily accessed on GaPDS' Online Learning Library (OLLI) and providers who complete it get 1 hour of training credit.

"Family Engagement in Child Care Programs" covers the following topics and objectives:

- The many types of families
- The importance of building strong relationships with families
- The components of the Family Strengthening Protective Factors Framework
- Integrating the Protective Factors Framework into child care programs
- Building relationships with all families

To find this training, log into [gapds.decal.ga.gov](http://gapds.decal.ga.gov) and select "Find OLLI Trainings" under the Trainings tab. Then search for "**Family Engagement in Child Care Programs**". If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact us at [childdevelopment@decal.ga.gov](mailto:childdevelopment@decal.ga.gov).

# 5 WAYS TO MANAGE WORKPLACE CONFLICT



**RELOVEUTION.**

Conflict at work? Don't fret! It's bound to happen, but guess what? It can actually be a good thing! Did you know that employees in the US spend about 2.8 hours a week dealing with conflict? But here's the kicker: less than a third of managers feel confident in handling it, and my organizational partners struggle with it too! Don't worry, though! Conflict itself isn't the issue. It's how we deal with it that can make or break the situation. In fact, conflict can lead to growth, learning, creativity, and innovation! It opens doors to new perspectives and helps us make better decisions!

So, you're probably wondering, how can we manage workplace conflict and benefit from it? Well, we've got you covered! Here are 5 things we teach in our Conflict Competence Learning Series:

1. Know and understand your own natural reactions to conflict at work (including your triggers) and practice disrupting counterproductive behaviors proactively. Manage yourself first before trying to manage others.
2. Get to know and understand the natural conflict patterns of the people on your team (including their triggers), and work to create accountability systems to address counterproductive (or countercultural) behaviors proactively.
3. Learn about how conflict escalates and work to recognize and intervene when you or your teammates become triggered or agitated. It is much more powerful to intervene before conflict reaches its peak.
4. Build relationships and trust when things are calm so that you can rely on them when things get messy or hard.
5. Remember that conflict is not about YOU. Shift from a "me" stance to a "we" stance to help find common ground and move through conflict in a healthy way.

*Written by Marissa Badgley, founder of **Reloveution**. For more information on Reloveution, or to register for a Reloveution Power Hour, live sessions focused on a power question, [click here](#).*

## DECAL's Child Health & Wellness Resources

Child care programs play an important role in serving nutritious and

appealing foods. Teaching children about healthy food choices and the food groups at a young age will help in setting the foundations for developing lifelong healthy eating behaviors. Nutrition Education is a vital part of a comprehensive health education program and empowers children with knowledge and skills to make healthy food and beverage choices. By providing healthy environments including nutrition and physical activity education, child care programs can directly affect the health and wellbeing of children in their care to build a foundation for healthy living. One of the goals of the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is to provide child care programs with information to improve child health and wellness.

Click to Learn  
More

During the summer, it is important for children to consume a balanced diet to supply their bodies with the energy needed to play and be active. Try these easy summer snacks and activity ideas from Summer Food, Summer Moves.

**USDA**  
United States Department of Agriculture

# Eat Smart To Play Hard

## Try These Quick and Easy Summer Snacks\*

- CARROTS + HUMMUS
- APPLE + PEANUT BUTTER
- DRINK WATER WITH YOUR SNACK INSTEAD OF SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES.
- BROCCOLI + LOW-FAT VEGGIE DIP
- FRUIT + LOW-FAT YOGURT
- PEACH + LOW-FAT COTTAGE CHEESE
- CHERRY TOMATOES + LOW-FAT CHEESE
- BEAN DIP + BAKED CHIPS

\* Children under 4 years of age are at the greatest risk of choking. It is important to make sure that food is served in the appropriate sizes, shapes, and textures to reduce the risk of choking. For more information on choking prevention, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/supplementA.pdf>

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**Move More. Sit Less.**  
**Get at Least 60 Minutes of Physical Activity Every Day!**

**GO SWIMMING**  
at your local community pool

**HAVE A DANCE PARTY**

**RIDE YOUR BIKE**

**PLAY CATCH**

**HAVE A RELAY RACE**

**KEEP THE HOOP MOVING**

**MAKE UP YOUR OWN way to exercise and have fun!**

**TEAM**

**SUMMER FOOD SUMMER MOVES**

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Website

## Healthy Eating Schedule: Toddlers and Preschoolers

Article by [Strong4Life](#)

Children may act like they can do everything without your help, but in reality, they still crave routine and structure. Developing a daily schedule for meals and snacks is a great way to help children learn healthy eating habits, and having a mealtime schedule makes caregiver's life easier too!

### Why have a schedule?

One of the most important things you will do as a caregiver is provide healthy meals for the children in your care, and we're not just talking about what you feed them. Establishing a consistent mealtime schedule is just as important in helping children develop healthy eating habits, such as knowing when their tummy is full and how to enjoy family meals.

In addition to helping children develop a healthy relationship with food, scheduling meals and snacks gives children a sense of security because they know they'll have another chance to eat soon. Knowing when the next snack or meal will be helps take away any pressure for children to eat when they're not really hungry, and it can also help prevent hunger-related tantrums.

## Sample meal and snack time schedule

Children's eating schedules will depend on what time they usually wake up in the morning, when they take their nap and your program's daily routine. The goal is to try to keep meals and snacks scheduled around the same time each day, but don't stress if it's not exact. For example, a child might eat lunch at noon one day and 12:15 p.m. the next, and that's OK. This helps children listen to their body's cues that their tummy is full, lets them know another snack or meal is coming, and makes sure they're hungry enough (but not too hungry) at the next mealtime. Most young children need 3 meals a day, with healthy snacks in between. Scheduling snacks so they eat every 2 to 3 hours is ideal.

Sample eating schedule:

- Breakfast: 7 a.m.
- Snack: around 9:30 a.m.
- Lunch: noon
- Snack: 3 p.m.
- Dinner: 6 p.m.

Click [HERE](#) to read more.

## Cookie Monster Learns About Healthy Eating

by the Sesame Workshop



# Nutritional Milestones by Age

by [Sesame Workshop](#)

The early years are important for developing healthy habits for life, especially as children begin to develop more independence. Here are age-by-age milestones and tips.

Most **babies** are ready for solid food at six months. As they transition to solid food, remember that learning to eat—using their jaws to chew and their mouths to swallow in a new way—takes time! This new experience of using their senses and holding their own food is big. They likely won't be able to eat enough to satisfy themselves, which is why milk is still important.

**1-year-olds'** eating habits can feel unpredictable! They may show much less appetite, or may refuse food after a few bites—that's because their growth is slowing down a bit, so they don't need quite as much food. Just holding a spoon is a big step in learning what eating is all about—a great example of how food is about the mind as well as the body! You can: Provide choices from all five food groups and let children experiment with a variety of tastes and textures.

[Click Here to Read Entire Article](#)

## Food Insecurity

By [Sesame Workshop](#)

Health and well-being are rights for all children, but food insecurity affects many families. Reaching out for help taking care of your family is a brave act of hope. Click **[Here](#)** for more information.



Resources for food-insecure families

Resources in Spanish

## How Much Water do Children Need?

By the American Academy of Pediatrics

At around 6 months, babies can be introduced to water. They only need about 4-8 ounces per day until they are a year old because the rest of their liquids are coming from breastmilk or formula.

To stay well hydrated, children ages 1-3 years need approximately 4 cups of beverages per day, including water or milk. This increases for older kids to around 5 cups for 4-8 year olds, and 7-8 cups for older children.

It should be noted that these amounts vary by individual and may need to be adjusted depending on levels of activity and environmental conditions like heat and humidity.

# WHY should kids #ChooseWater?

## Water is a great drink choice for kids!



**It's super healthy:**  
0 calories &  
no added sugar



**It's good for the body:**  
helps keep joints healthy, good  
for teeth, helps blood circulate



**It's good for the mind:**  
Staying hydrated helps  
concentration and focus



healthychildren.org  
Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents.  
from the American Academy of Pediatrics

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Click to Read Entire  
Article



## Clean Water for Georgia Kids™

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTING LEAD IN DRINKING WATER EXPOSURE

Lead is a toxic metal, and there is *no* safe level of exposure. Early childhood lead exposure can cause lifelong behavioral and cognitive deficits. Lead in water can come from various sources, including lead service lines, piping, and plumbing, including faucet fixtures and solder.

Fortunately, exposure is preventable!

The best way to prevent exposure is to test every tap used for drinking and cooking and take no-cost or low-cost steps to remove lead, if it is found.



The Clean Water for Georgia Kids is a free program, helping to identify and get the lead out of drinking and cooking water where children learn and play. This program is a partnership between RTI International, a nonprofit research institute, and the Georgia Department of Education.

Our approach is designed for easy online registration, enrollment, and participation!

To get started you can register for one of the 30- minute required webinars [here](#).

### How you can participate:

1. **Sign up** for a 45-minute pre-enrollment webinar on how to enroll and participate at <https://bit.ly/3hW66kN>. They are offered several days each month at 10 AM and 1 PM.
2. **Enroll** at [www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/Georgia](http://www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/Georgia) using the access code provided during virtual training.
3. **Collect and ship water samples** with trained facility staff (about 1-3 minutes per tap).
4. **Receive results** from RTI, along with no-cost and low-cost recommendations for action, if needed.
5. **Share results** five days after you receive your results via our facility data mapper, another tool to share your efforts to protect children's health with parents, caregivers, staff, and students.

Together with your help, we can protect and make positive changes in the lives of young children across Georgia. Sign up today for a brighter tomorrow!

For more information, visit [www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/georgia](http://www.cleanwaterforUSkids.org/georgia), call 1-855-997-3183, or scan the QR code!



## 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\*\*](#)

# Interested?

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