



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



Child Care Services Summer 2025 Newsletter

Dear Child Care Provider,

I hope your summer is going well and that you're finding opportunities to stay cool! Child Care Services implemented new rules on July 1, 2025. To access information on the new rules, please go to [Rules and Regulations](#). If you have questions about the new rules, please contact your Child Care Consultant.

I want to take a moment to focus on two of these rules. There were two choking deaths in Georgia child care in 2024. We want to do everything we can to prevent another choking death in licensed child care. Previously, child care staff had to be pediatric CPR/pediatric First Aid certified within 90 days of employment. The new rule shortens the timeframe to 45 days. The second rule requires a teacher who is pediatric CPR/pediatric First Aid certified be present in any open classroom whenever children are present.

We cannot stress enough how quickly choking can happen and how important it is that someone who knows what to do is there with children. We also know that changing rules isn't enough. Over the next several months, DECAL is launching a choking prevention campaign to support child care staff in safe feeding practices. There will be training opportunities as well as educational materials to reinforce best practices in serving food for teachers and cooks.

I encourage you to review the new rules as well as the indicator manual, and if you have additional questions, please reach out to the Child Care Services team.

Take care,

Pam Stevens

Pam Stevens
Deputy Commissioner
for Child Care Services



**Child Care
SERVICES**



Rule Changes Now in Effect!

On July 1, 2025, recently updated rules and regulations went into effect for both Child Care Learning Centers (CCLC) and Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLH). To ensure you have the most up to date versions of the rule books and are knowledgeable with the recent updates, please click and view the materials below:

[CCLC Rules & Regulations](#)[FCCLH Rules & Regulations](#)[Training FAQ](#)[Core Rules Information](#)

Rules and Regulations Indicator Manuals: Your Essential Guide

by Jennifer Waters, M.Ed., CPSI
CCS Technical Assistance Unit Manager

Whether you're a seasoned teacher, administrator, or new to child care, the Indicator Manual is your key to understanding the rules and regulations monitored by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.

Indicator Manuals are clearly designed to be more than just rulebooks—they're practical, user-friendly guides that help programs not only meet but exceed expectations.

Key Features:

- **Quarterly Updates:** Both the Child Care Learning Center and Family Child Care Learning Home manuals are updated quarterly to ensure they always provide up-to-date, thorough guidance.
- **Easy Search Features:** Manuals are searchable by chapter or keyword.
- **Clear Rule Types:** Rules are identified as Core or Non-Core. Core Rules pose the greatest risk to children's health and safety when not followed and significantly affect compliance outcomes.
- **Detailed Explanations:** Each rule is fully explained with its intent, clarifications on how to meet it, and the exact indicators licensing consultants will evaluate.
- **Best Practices and Tips:** Includes best practices and additional tips to help programs implement practices that will successfully

meet and exceed rule requirements.

With the indicator manuals, Child Care Services provides transparency and support for all rule requirements to assist programs in providing safe environments for children. Take advantage of these resources for all your licensing rule-related questions.

Explore the latest version, including licensing rule updates effective July 1, 2025, on [DECAL's official website](#). A "How to Use the Indicator Manual" guide is also available to help you navigate search features, rule types, and compliance indicators.

CCLC Indicator Manual

FCCLH Indicator Manual

How to Use the Indicator Manual

NEW OLLi TRAINING AVAILABLE!

Introduction to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECHM)

Looking for a training that counts towards your required Professional Development hours? Scan the QR code to learn how to register, attend and learn about Mental Health!



Questions:

gapds@dec.al.ga.gov

404-267-2760



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, 2025 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 receive \$1,529**.

ENTER NOW

It's never too early to start saving for college!

While you wait to see if your child wins the sweepstakes, consider opening a Path2College 529 Plan if you do not have an account already.

The Path2College 529 Plan is a tax-advantaged way to save for higher education, offering triple tax benefits:

1. Exclusive Georgia state tax deduction of up to \$8,000 per year, per beneficiary (if filing jointly, \$4,000 for single filers).
2. Tax-deferred growth on any earnings.
3. Tax-free withdrawals on qualified education expenses.

You can open an account in less than 15 minutes with just \$25.

OPEN AN ACCOUNT

Questions? Call [1-877-424-4377](tel:1-877-424-4377)

Beat the Heat: Indoor and Outdoor Activities in the Summer



HELLO SUMMER!

DECAL's Nutrition Services promotes safe, supportive environments where children can learn, grow, and move.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Summer is here, and it's the perfect time to get kids moving! Children need at least one hour of physical activity each day—but it doesn't have to feel like exercise. Games, dancing, and playing all count!

Outdoor play is great for development, but rising temps can be risky. Young children are especially vulnerable to heat-related illnesses like dehydration and heat exhaustion.

Tips for Safe Summer Play:

- Head outside early, before it gets too hot! It's okay to edit classroom schedules around weather conditions.
- Utilize playground shade structures. Also, use shade from tents, trees, and umbrellas.
- Offer of plenty of water for drinking.

Here are some fun physical activity ideas for small spaces, both indoors and outdoors, to keep children active. Be sure to click on the linked headings for additional information:

Indoor Activities:

1. **Dance Party:** Turn on some kid-friendly music and have a dance-off. It's a great way to get moving and have fun.
2. **Obstacle Course:** Use pillows, chairs, and toys to create an indoor obstacle course.
3. **Yoga and Stretching:** Follow along with a kid-friendly yoga video or do some simple stretches.
4. **Simon Says:** Play a game of Simon Says with active commands like jumping jacks, running in place, or hopping on one foot.
5. **Scavenger Hunt:** Create a list of items for kids to find around the classroom. Add physical challenges like "hop to the rug" or "tip toe to the cubbies."

Outdoor Activities (in shaded or cooler areas):

1. **Water Play:** Set up a small splash pad, sprinkler, or water table for some cool water fun. Ensure staff are within arm's length of children during all water play to provide constant supervision.
2. **Treasure Hunt:** Hide treasures around the play area and create clues for the children to find them. For example, "Look under the big tree" or "Find the red flower." This activity promotes problem-solving and exploration.
3. **Sidewalk Chalk Games:** Draw hopscotch or mazes for active play.
4. **Garden Planting:** Gather small pots, soil, seeds, and water. Under constant supervision, let the children plant seeds in small pots and water them. This helps kids hone their fine motor skills and learn about plant growth.

Tips for Staying Cool:

- **Hydration:** Make sure kids drink plenty of water before, during, and after activities.
- **Cool Clothing:** Dress children in light, breathable clothing.
- **Shade:** Utilize playground shade structures. Also, use umbrellas,

tents, or natural shade to stay cool.

- **Timing:** Schedule outdoor activities for early morning or late afternoon when it's cooler.

Physical Activity Resource:

- [Summer Safety Tips](#)

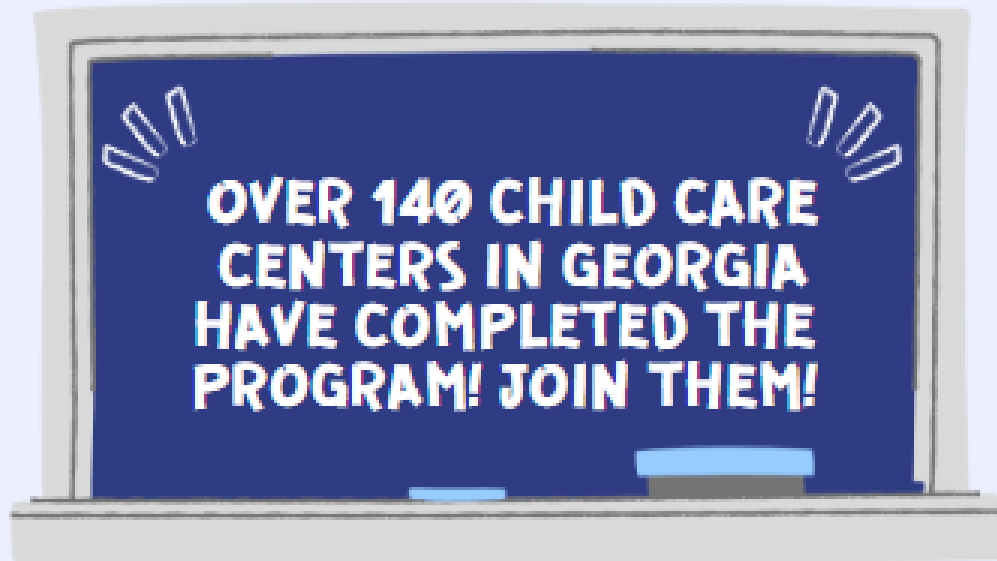
No matter the weather, children can stay active—even in small spaces. Always adhere to CCS's [Rules and Regulations](#) regarding [weather conditions](#) affecting outdoor play. If temperatures get too high, bring children indoors for physical activity. Keep children safe, hydrated, and healthy by staying alert and prepared. Have fun, stay cool, and enjoy a safe summer of play! ☐☐



Share your #SummerAdventures, #BeatTheHeat #Outdoor/Indoor stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren, MPH at tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov!



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Use no-cost and low-cost solutions by:

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or call 1-855-997-3183



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