



BRIGHT FROM THE START

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SE, Suite 754, East Tower, Atlanta, Georgia 30334
(404) 656-5957

Brian P. Kemp
GOVERNOR

Amy M. Jacobs
COMMISSIONER

March 15, 2020

Dear Child Care and Georgia Pre-K Providers,

I am writing to respond to questions I've received from many of you about the state closing child care or Georgia Pre-K programs during the current Covid-19 crisis. Following is information that explains DECAL's position on closing programs, on public health resources, and on financial policy decisions that DECAL has enacted.

In a public announcement yesterday, Governor Kemp encouraged child care or Georgia Pre-K programs to take necessary measures to keep students, providers, and families safe. Because the situation with the virus is different in different parts of the state, we believe that authorities in local communities...informed by guidance from the CDC and the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH)...should make decisions that impact their community.

However, the Governor and we at DECAL wholeheartedly encourage you to make decisions in the best interest of your children, families, and staff...decisions based on facts and data. The following resources can help you decide if you should close your program:

- DPH updates the numbers and locations of confirmed cases of the Coronavirus at noon each day.
Go to: <https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-19-daily-status-report>
- Your local health department

We recognize that many of you are worried about the financial impact of closing your doors. In response, we are modifying several policies that will ease the financial burden for programs that offer Georgia Pre-K and that serve children on Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) scholarships if you choose to close. These include:

- Georgia Pre-K payments will not be impacted, and Pre-K lead and assistant teachers will still be paid. Also, we will not require Georgia Pre-K classes to makeup days at this point. Children are not to be disenrolled if parents choose to keep their child out of school.
- For child care programs who receive child care subsidy (CAPS) payments from us, we will continue to pay for children who were in their care as of March 1st even if the children do not attend or the program closes.

Many of you are seeking our guidance on closure, but we cannot make one decision for all child care or Pre-K programs across the state. We are not medical professionals, so we are relying on information from the experts at the CDC and DPH...just as we recommend that you do.

But rest assured: Governor Kemp, the staff at DECAL, and I support whatever decision you make to ensure the well-being of your business, your staff, and the children and families you serve. And as always, we at DECAL are here to help you in your critically important work.

Please go to www.decal.ga.gov for a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the current situation... and check back regularly because we will update these FAQs every day.

Our state and country are in unprecedented times. But I assure you that the DECAL team is working diligently to answer your questions, respond to your concerns, and support you to the best of our ability. Together, we will get through these difficult days.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy M. Jacobs", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner