



## The GA Pre-K 411: Teacher Edition



### Welcome Back, Georgia's Pre-K Teachers!

The classroom is ready. The shelves are stocked, the centers are taking shape, and those first-day butterflies are starting to flutter! A new school year is here, bringing with it a fresh opportunity to build relationships, spark curiosity, and create a classroom where every child feels welcomed, valued, and ready to learn.

As you settle into the new school year, remember that some of the most important moments happen in the little things—learning a child's favorite book, listening to a story about their family, celebrating a new accomplishment, or simply letting a child know, "I'm glad you're here." These everyday connections are the foundation for a year of learning and growth.

Whether you are welcoming your very first class or beginning another year in Georgia's Pre-K, we hope you feel excited, supported, and proud of the important work ahead. There will be busy days, unexpected moments, joyful discoveries, and plenty of opportunities to learn right alongside your students.

Here's to a wonderful new school year filled with curiosity, connection, laughter, and lots of learning.

Welcome back—we are so glad you're here!

*Georgia's  
Pre-K :)*

### Get Ready for Georgia's Pre-K Week! October 5 - 9, 2026



Stay tuned for more details!



#### In this newsletter you can find...

Updating  
Credntials in  
GaPDS

Back to School  
Resources

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Training

WSO Tips +  
Reminders

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DECAL FAST

Welcome Back  
from SEEDS

GA Pre-K Teacher  
of the Year  
Finalists

# The Pre-K Scoop

## ☀️ Don't Forget to Update Your GaPDS When You Earn a New Credential! ☀️

Have you recently completed a new degree, earned a higher credential, or upgraded your certification?

If so, it's time to update your Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS) profile!

Updating GaPDS is essential because it ensures:

- ✓ The teacher's highest credential earned is recognized.
- ✓ The teacher's updated information in GaPDS integrates with GAPREK.
- ✓ The teacher's eligibility to qualify for a Georgia's Pre-K teaching position.
- ✓ The teacher's employer can report correct data for compliance and accurate compensation.

A teacher's GaPDS profile does not update automatically. Whenever you earn a new credential—such as:

- CDA, TCD, or TCC in Early Childhood Education.
- Complete a higher degree like an AA, BA, or MA.
- Obtain a new or renewed teaching certificate.

You must log in and manually update your profile to reflect these accomplishments.

### 👉 What You Need to Do:

1. Log in to your GaPDS account
2. Upload your newest documentation (diploma, degree, transcript, certificate, etc.)
3. If there is an update with your GaPSC teaching certificate Click "Refresh PSC data"
4. Verify that your profile, PSC certification, and education information displays correctly

⌚ Do this as soon as you earn your new credential!

If you need help, contact GaPDS at 404-267-2760 or [gapds@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:gapds@dec.al.ga.gov) for additional questions.

### 🔄 What Happens Next?

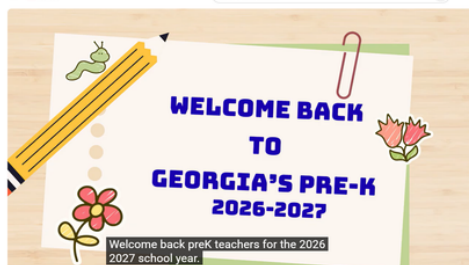
Once your information is submitted, GaPDS data will integrate with GAPREK. This integration allows your professional learning records to be securely and automatically shared for reporting and compliance purposes. No additional action is required from teachers once documents are submitted and verified.

If you have not recently reviewed your GaPDS profile, please log in to ensure your profile is accurate and up to date.

## 2026-2027 Regional Meeting

Georgia's Pre-K Specialists across the state enjoyed sharing this year's 'Back to School' information with programs! Did you miss your back to school meeting or see something you'd like to revisit?

The Regional meeting has been recorded for you! Click the graphics to take you there.



## IQ Guides + FAQ Documents

Instructional Quality (IQ) Guides are used as guidance documents for teachers. There are 4: Learning Environment, Planning Instruction, Daily Schedule, and Assessment.

FAQ documents provide clarification and definitions that align with the IQ Guides.

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE  
YOU TO THE  
DOCUMENTS](#)

# More to Know!

## DECAL Teacher Training Info

Be sure to read your confirmation email\* from GaPDS Support completely so you can save the date and make appropriate arrangements for class coverage, travel, children, pets and other obligations.

Prior to attending New Lead or Assistant Teacher Training you are REQUIRED to watch this 1-hour [Pyramid Model overview podcast](#). The link will also be in your confirmation email. If you are attending Understanding Challenging Behavior, you are encouraged to watch the podcast as a refresher before training.

Remember that every training has online coursework to be completed after attending face-to-face training. You will find instructions for logging in and the link to the platform here: [Online Coursework - Best Practices Training \(gsu.edu\)](#). It is recommended that you complete the quiz and assignment within four weeks of attending training.

Within your online coursework this year is also a one-hour podcast entitled "Voices Beyond Words." It is based on research from the Science of Reading and provides strategies for working with children who demonstrate limited verbal communication. This podcast complies with requirements of the Georgia Early Literacy Act and may be taken before or after attending training.

\* Your training confirmation email is sent to the email address you have on file with your GaPDS account/profile.

### WSO Tips + Reminders

- The Work Sampling Online (WSO) system opens on Monday, AUGUST 17th for teachers.
- If you have changed schools, submit a WSO Help Ticket so that we can transfer your login to your new school.
- **Returning teachers:** If you do not remember your password, click on the 'Forgot Password' link on the WSO login page. If you do not remember your WSO username, or if you have changed schools, use this link to submit a WSO Help Ticket: [Georgia's Pre-K Work Sampling System Assessment Program](#).
- **New teachers:** Once your director sets up your WSO account, you will receive an email from [WSOsupport@pearson.com](mailto:WSOsupport@pearson.com). The email will provide instructions on how to create a WSO password. Teachers MUST login, create their class, and enter their class roster BEFORE attending WSO training (Day 1 of New Lead Teacher Training). Be prepared to bring a laptop to work on during training.
- If you need assistance with WSO, submit a WSO Online Help Ticket at: <http://www.dec.ga.gov/Prek/PreKChildAssessmentProgram.aspx>.





# Did You Know!?!

## Learning, Playing, Growing: GELDS Updates



The Georgia Early Learning & Development Standards (GELDS) revision project continues to make great progress! The Communication, Language & Literacy (CLL) domain revisions, including updated examples, are now available on the GELDS website. The revised standards feature enhanced examples and a new Home Connection Activity section designed to strengthen the connection between classroom learning and family engagement at home.

Revisions for the remaining GELDS domains are currently underway and are expected to be posted by **December 2026**.

The GELDS can be found on the **GELDS website**: <https://gelds.dec.al.ga.gov/>

To support educators throughout the revision rollout, resources are available on the DECAL **Workforce Supports & Learning** webpage: [Workforce Supports and Learning](#).

As each updated domain is released, DECAL will host an informational webinar as part of the **Play to Learn: Learn to Thrive** webinar series. The first webinar, **Little Learners, Big Language: Growing Communication, Language, & Literacy (CLL) Through Play**, highlights the newly revised CLL standards and provides practical strategies for implementation.

You can watch the first webinar now on YouTube:

[Play to Learn CLL Webinar](#)

Stay tuned for future webinar announcements as additional GELDS domains are released and updated resources become available. As the domains are released there will be additional webinars that you can register for – keep your eye on the **Bright from the Start social media sites** (Facebook, Instagram, X) for announcements and registration links.

Can't make the live webinar? Never fear! All GELDS webinars will be recorded and posted on the Bright from the Start YouTube page.



<https://families.dec.al.ga.gov>

DECAL launched a new family portal called **DECAL FAST: Family Access to Services & Tools** to support Georgia's families looking for childcare or early education services.

This new portal offers families a more intuitive experience, making it easier for them to find information and connect with early care and education services, tools, and resources. A key feature of the portal is CALi, an AI chatbot, that will help families self-navigate through the portal and quickly find the information they need. CALi will provide timely, intuitive support that will make DECAL resources more accessible, easy to find, and user-centered.

DECAL FAST is fully ADA compliant and accessible for all users, including those who use screen readers or have other vision challenges. The design ensures easy and intuitive use on mobile devices. All content, except legal information, is also available in Spanish.





# Welcome back from SEEDS!



## Welcome

The SEEDS Program Department extends a warm welcome to Georgia's Pre-K teachers, staff, and programs as we begin another exciting school year. Thank you for your dedication to creating engaging and nurturing learning environments that support the success of Georgia's youngest learners.

### Supporting Children During the First Six Weeks

The first six weeks of school are an important adjustment period as children learn new routines, build relationships, and develop confidence in the classroom. While some children transition easily, others may need additional support as they adapt to their new environment.

Three effective strategies to support children during this time include:



**ESTABLISH PREDICTABLE ROUTINES TO HELP CHILDREN FEEL SECURE AND UNDERSTAND CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS.**



**BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH POSITIVE INTERACTIONS, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION WITH PEERS AND TEACHERS.**



**MAINTAIN ONGOING FAMILY COMMUNICATION TO SHARE SUCCESSES, ADDRESS CONCERNS, AND CREATE CONSISTENCY BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL.**

FOCUSING ON CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THESE EARLY WEEKS HELPS CREATE A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR LEARNING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

## Adaptive Learning Mini-Grant Opportunity

The SEEDS Support Department remains committed to helping teachers provide accessible learning experiences for all children. Programs may apply for an Adaptive Learning Mini-Grant to support children with diagnosed disabilities through adaptive materials, specialized equipment, assistive technology, or other resources that enhance participation and learning in the Georgia's Pre-K classroom.

## SEEDS Helpline

For classroom support or more information about the Adaptive Learning Mini-Grant, contact the SEEDS Helpline at 1-833-354-4357 or [seedshelpline@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:seedshelpline@dec.al.ga.gov).

Thank you for your commitment to creating supportive environments where every child can learn, grow, and succeed. We wish you a successful start to the school year and look forward to partnering with you throughout the year.

Welcome back, and best wishes for a wonderful school year from the SEEDS Support Department!



# Meet the 2026-2027 TOTY Finalists!



We are thrilled to celebrate these six incredible teachers as they begin their journey this fall toward becoming one of our **2026-2027 Georgia's Pre-K Teachers of the Year!** Each finalist will participate in an interview panel, a classroom observation, and a review of lesson plans as part of the final selection process. Our two winners will be announced in October!

Please join us in sending these outstanding teachers our **happiest congratulations** and **best wishes** as they take this exciting next step!



## Thank you for reading!

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