Georgia's Pre-K Program

# the GA Pre-K 411: Teacher Edition

## Fall is Here!

As we settle into the rhythm of the school year, I hope you take a moment to reflect on all that you and your students have already accomplished. The relationships you are building, the routines you are establishing, and the joyful learning experiences you create each day are laying a strong foundation for future success.

Fall is a season of change, growth, and discovery, and our Pre-K classrooms are full of all three. Every day, children are developing new skills, gaining confidence, and exploring the world around them through meaningful experiences you make possible.

Thank you for the care, creativity, and dedication you bring to Georgia's youngest learners. Wishing you a wonderful season ahead filled with learning, laughter, and growth.

Georgia's Pre-K :)

## 16th Annual Georgia's Pre-K Week

Thank you for your support, creativity, and participation in the 16th Annual Georgia's Pre-K Week! What a fantastic way to kick off October! Thank you for sending in your photos! We had a continuous stream of photos from your classrooms showcasing the many community members, state leaders, and other visitors reading as well as the fun dress-up and theme days, cooking and STEM activities, Every Amazing Song book activities, and more! Missed the photos or want to see what Pre-K teachers across the state shared? Click here to visit the photo gallery and vote for your favorite submission! Stay tuned for more activities around Every Amazing Song! (Hint: there might be another contest soon!)









In this newsletter you can find...

GA Pre-K Week a Success!

Meet the 2026-2027 Ga Pre-K Teachers of the Year

DECAL Teacher Training

WSO Tips + Reminders

GaPDS - Profile Help

Nutrition Education + Physical Activity Resources

Other Pre-K + Agency Updates

# The Pre-K Scoop

## Meet the 2026-2027 Georgia's Pre-K Teachers of the Year



### Skyla Holmes-Hood

Angel's Paradise Higher Learning Academy

I am Skyla Holmes-Hood. I have been a Georgia's Pre-K teacher since 2014 and have called Angel's Paradise Higher Learning Academy home since 2019. I am a certified Georgia teacher with degrees in Early Childhood Education, Special Needs Preschool, and Elementary Mathematics.

For me, teaching Pre-K is about so much more than getting children ready for kindergarten. I want my children to feel loved, seen, safe, and excited to come to school. I believe learning should include conversation, laughter, play, hands-on experiences, family and community connections, and, of course, a little fun! I am truly honored to represent Georgia's Pre-K and excited to share my love for early learning while celebrating the amazing teachers, children, and families who make Pre-K so special.

Outside of the classroom, I am a military wife and proud mom of two, including a little one experiencing Pre-K this year right along with me. Being both a Pre-K teacher and a Pre-K mom has given me an even greater appreciation for the trust families place in us every day.



### Leah Mays

Jefferson City Center for Early Learning

My name is Leah Mays. I live in Hoschton with my husband Bryan, and we are empty nesters after 31 years of marriage. We are blessed that both our daughter Kathryn and our son Hayden live close to home. I grew up in South Carolina, moved to Indiana during high school, and went on to graduate from Ball State University with a degree in Elementary Education (K–6) and an endorsement in Kindergarten.

Over the years, I have taught Kindergarten, First Grade, and preschool (2s and 3s). This is my fifth year teaching Pre-K at the Center for Early Learning with Jefferson City Schools. The littles truly make my heart sing! They are my people! I love that I get to sing, dance, read, and play every day. Watching the children discover something new or accomplish a skill for the first time, make new friends while learning to be away from their families, and curl up with a good book makes PreK my favorite!

Outside the classroom, I enjoy finding new teaching ideas, reading by the pool, trying new recipes, or taking a nap on our screened porch (especially on rainy days). Every fall, our family heads to the beach —my ultimate spot to relax and recharge.

## 2026-2027 Teacher of the Year Finalists

**Kellie McCormick**, Cedars Preschool at Hudson Bridge
**Shawn Meyers,** Sunrise Learning Academy
**Lacy Parish,** Robinson Elementary School
**Marisol Rivas,** West Green Elementary School

# The Pre-K Scoop

## WSO Tips + Reminders

- Unless you're a new lead teacher, you should have already entered all your students into WSO. Step-by-Step instructions for creating a class, adding students and creating checklists may be found in the WSO Training Manual (ga.gov) beginning on page 25.
- Ratings should be entered on the developmental checklist each week. Documentation must be provided to support your ratings in the Personal and Social, Language and Literacy, and Mathematical Thinking domains.
- When a student leaves your program, complete any outstanding data entry and 'archive' the student as quickly as possible.
- If you need assistance with WSO, submit a WSO Online Help Ticket at: http://www.decal.ga.gov/Prek/PreKChildAssessmentProgram.aspx.

## DECAL Teacher Training Info

Training is required for all Georgia's Pre-K teachers. Directors are responsible for registration. 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 Understanding Challenging Behavior or New Lead or Assistant Teacher Training you are REQUIRED to watch this 1-hour Overview of the Pyramid Model.

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.

## My GaPDS Profile Is Not Active—What Should I Do?

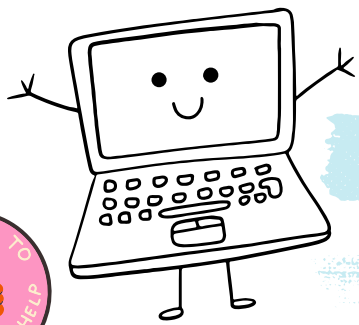
Only profiles with an **Active** status are shared between GaPDS and GAPREK. If your profile data is not shared between the systems, an incorrect credential may be assigned to your teacher record in GAPREK. If your status is **NHS, Incomplete, Pending, or Inactive**, review every tab in your profile and confirm the following:

- All required information has been entered.
- Your profile has been submitted.
- All required supporting documentation has been uploaded.

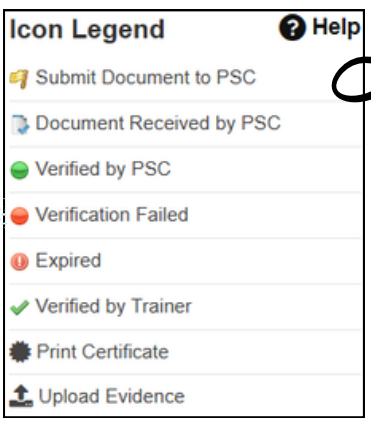
Supporting documents, such as transcripts, must be evaluated before your GaPDS profile can be marked **Active**. Missing or unverified documentation is one of the most common reasons a profile remains **Incomplete** or **Pending**.

**Important**: GaPDS requires official transcripts and does not accept unofficial transcripts from colleges or universities. Use the Icon Legend on the left side of your profile to identify missing or unverified documentation. Each icon corresponds to a symbol in the **Education Information** section of your profile.



Still need help?
Contact the GaPDS Support Team:
https://gapds.decal.ga.gov/Contact



# Agency Awareness

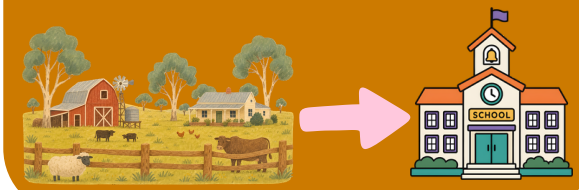
## Nutrition Education & Physical Activity Resources

Looking for new ideas and resources to support healthy habits in your classroom?
Check out these tools and opportunities from the Nutrition Education and Physical Activity Team!

### Farm to School and ECE Month

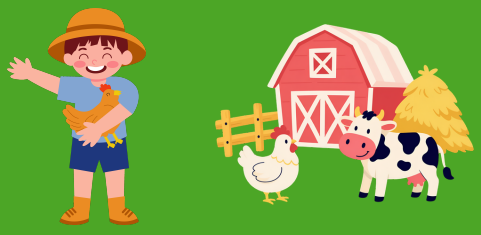
Did you know October is Farm to School and Early Care and Education (ECE) Month?

Visit our Farm to ECE Month Webpage for classroom activity ideas, farm-themed active games, state-approved training opportunities, a book list, and more!




### Move of the Month

To celebrate Farm to School and ECE Month, October's Move of the Month is Farmer Simon Says!



Move along with us on social media using #DECALPhysicalActivity or watch this month's video on DECAL's YouTube page.

### Harvest of the Month

Looking for simple ways to introduce children to seasonal fruits and vegetables?

Explore our Harvest of the Month Pinterest board for recipes, classroom activity ideas, and more that align with each month's featured item.



Nutrition Services DECAL

Find more resources to support early childhood health and wellness here.

### Plan a Healthy and Happy Holiday Season

Holidays can be both fun and healthy!




Visit our Healthy Holidays Pinterest board for festive snack ideas, nutrition activities, and movement games to inspire your Halloween, Thanksgiving and winter holiday celebrations!

## Thank you for reading!




### CONTACT /FOLLOW US!

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| Join us weekly on the DECAL Download Podcast | 800-413-9935 |
| | 2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SE Suite 745, East Tower, Atlanta, GA 30334 |