



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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nonprofit Organizations needed statewide to serve free meals & snacks to Georgia's children this summer.

Atlanta, Ga., (March 9, 2023) – The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is looking for nonprofit organizations to serve free healthy meals and snacks to children this summer through Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program. Organizations that are approved to serve meals will be reimbursed for every eligible meal that meets USDA's nutritional guidelines.

Happy Helpings is federally funded by the USDA and administered by DECAL's Nutrition Services Division. The program ensures that any child 18 and under has access to nutritious meals and snacks during the summer when school is not in session.

Organizations eligible to participate in Happy Helpings include units of government, private or public nonprofit organizations; camps; universities or colleges and schools. "Organizations across the state are needed to operate the Happy Helpings program this summer," said Tamika Boone, director of Nutrition Services. "However, there is an especially high need to provide access to meals in counties where the child food insecurity rate is greater than 30 percent. These counties include Clay, Crisp, Dougherty, Early Hancock, Macon, Terrell and Warren," she added.

Nutrition Services provides training and support relating to the application process; setting up and operating a successful meal site; and nutrition education. Technical assistance is also available to organizations while the program is operating.

Organizations may also participate in the program by operating a meal site, which is the location where children eat their meals in a supervised setting. The meal site must be located in school zone where 50 percent of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Meal sites are located in an area where children naturally congregate such as a church, apartment complex, park, community center or school.

For more information about Happy Helpings, please visit <https://happyhelpingsga.com/> or contact Cindy Kicklighter at cindy.kicklighter@dec.al.ga.gov or by phone at (678) 841.3170.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form.

To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages the voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.dec.al.ga.gov.