Nutrition News

Happy Helpings

Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

December 1, 2022

Summer 2023 Will Be Here Soon

Start Planning Now

Providing summer meals is a year-round effort. At any point throughout the year, there are things you can do to prepare for next summer!

Here's a guide for the new year:

January

- Begin to determine which sites are returning, explore new site options, and meet with community partners.
- Plan site staff training, meal production and delivery, and programs and activities.
- Begin exploring the potential for serving mobile meals.
- Begin developing a marketing and outreach campaign.
- Develop a plan for the Food Service Permitting process, if applicable.

Procurement Helpful Hints

Monitoring Executed Contracts, Agreements, and Services

As a reminder, organizations are encouraged to monitor and evaluate executed contracts, agreements, and invoices frequently, and assess current and potential meal sites. Monitoring contracts, agreements, and services may help with the following:

- Finding unexpected changes by the vendor on prices or supplies.
- Inspecting unanticipated changes in the number of meals served to apply in the upcoming Program year.
- Discovering a need for a new vendor based on unfilled terms in the agreement or contract.
- Preparing for the end of the contract.
- Identifying there are no remaining renewal options.
- Determining an alternative procurement method to use compared to the prior year (i.e., new bid process, new agreements, amendments, change in procurement method overall, etc.).

Planning Purchases for Happy Helpings

Estimated Food Cost Predicted to Increase

As the purchasing process begins for Happy Helpings, remember that planning is critical. Before purchasing any goods or services, the institution should determine the anticipated cost of the goods or services. In the last year, the cost of food globally has increased substantially. According to the USDA's Economic Research Services, in 2023, all food prices are predicted to increase between 3.0 and 4.0 percent (1).

When calculating the estimated food cost for Happy Helpings, consider the institution's projected average meals served and factor in the 3.0 to 4.0 percent food cost upsurge. For the best value during procurement, compare food items competitively and equally among purveyors, grocery stores, local farmers, and producers. Procuring local food items from farmers can help neutralize some of the anticipated increased food prices. Become familiar with the local farmers in the institution's area and visit the **USDA Local Food Directories**.

1. Matthew MacLachlan and Megan Sweitzer. "Summary Findings Food Price Outlook, 2022 and 2023". Economic Research Service U.S. Department of Agriculture, located **here** (November 10, 2022).

Apply for a No Kid Hungry Grant Today

A key part of No Kid Hungry's strategy is building partnerships and supporting child nutrition efforts through grantmaking. Their grants provide schools and community-based organizations with the financial support they need to ensure kids have access to the nutritious food needed to live, learn and play.

Please complete the following form **here**, where the No Kid Hungry team will reach out if grant funding is available for your program.

Happy Helping Waivers available during Unanticipated School Closures

On May 18, 2022, DECAL received approval from the USDA for the following statewide waivers which are available during unanticipated school closures. These waivers are in effect October 1, 2022 through April 30, 2023. The waiver approval letter can be found **here**.

Please note: For the purposes of these waivers, unanticipated school closures only occur when instruction is not provided to children. If a school plans to offer virtual learning or a mix of in-person classes and virtual learning, then the school would be considered open and not in an "unanticipated school closure" status.

- **Waiver 16: Non-Congregate Meal Service during Unanticipated School Closures** waives the requirements that meals must be served in a congregate setting and be consumed by participants on site.
- **Waiver 17: Parent and Guardian Meal Pick-Up during Unanticipated School Closures** waives the requirement that meals be served directly to eligible participants.
- **Waiver 18: Meal Service Times for Unanticipated School Closures** waives meal service time requirements.
- **Waiver 19: Service of Meals at School Sites during Unanticipated School Closures** waives the requirement that State agencies are to only approve meal service operations at non-school sites.

These waivers are only applicable when the congregate meal service is limited by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the following criteria is required for these waivers to be approved and used by Happy Helpings sponsors during unanticipated school closures. Waiver requests must be based on at least 1 of the following criteria:

Criteria 1:
The site must be located in a county that is designated as High, Substantial, or Moderate regarding COVID-19 community transmissions as determined by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and/or Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) websites:

- CDC, **listed here** – Under the "Data Type" pull down menu (located mid-page), the user would select "Community Transmission" to access a county's designation; and/or
- DPH, **listed here**- The user would select the most recent County Indicator Report and

click "Community Transmission" in the top right corner of the page to access a county's designation.

Criteria 2:
Sponsors can provide official documentation affirming a meal service has been impacted as a result of COVID-19 transmission. The documentation must be issued by the following:

- A public state, local, or county official
- A school superintendent or principal
- An SFSP Sponsor reporting a documented case of COVD-19 at an SFSP Site. Documentation to support the documented case of COVID-19 could be a letter or email that was sent to parents, staff, or site location such as an apartment complex advising of the documented case.

These waivers will be effective for **30 days** upon approval, with the option to re-apply for an additional 30 days, if the criteria are met using the most current data from the CDC, GA DPH, or with new documentation affirming that meal services have been impacted.

Happy Helpings sponsors interested in applying for these waivers during unanticipated school closures must submit waiver requests via the Waiver Module within GA ATLAS.

*Documentation to support the criteria chosen must be uploaded with the waiver request in GA Atlas. Additionally, waiver requests for sponsored sites will be reviewed and approved upon the site's approval to operate the Program.

More Information on Requesting a Waiver: For information on requesting a waiver, please access the following resources:

- **USDA Waiver User Guide** - Provides step by step instructions on how to submit a waiver request in GA Atlas (applies to both CACFP and SFSP).
- **Important Reminders when using USDA Approved Waivers** - Discusses key recordkeeping requirements.
- **USDA Waiver Addendum** - Required when using the Parent Pick-up waiver or when conducting home delivery under the Non-Congregate waiver.

For general questions on requesting a USDA approved waiver, please contact **Tammie.Baldwin@decal.ga.gov**.

For specific policy questions pertaining to waivers, please contact **Robyn.Parham@decal.ga.gov**.

Training Dates

December 19, 2022 - *Memo Monday!*
Regulations are constantly changing and interpreting all the policies and memorandums can be a challenge. Therefore, Nutrition Services will discuss the following policy memo(s) during our December *Memo Monday*.

- ***Requirements for Obtaining a Food Service Permit*** (Dated 4.17.19)
- **Food Service Permit Inquiry Form** (Revised July 2022)

Get Informed: Training Resources

In Case You Missed It: Webinar Recordings Now Available!
If you missed a webinar, please visit the **Training and Technical Assistance** webpage for previously recorded webinars. This month's training highlight is the **Happy Helpings Budget Readiness Training** webinar. It discussed the purpose of the budget package, the purpose of all the budget line items in GA ATLAS, and how to prepare & develop a complete GA ATLAS budget package.

Local Purchasing for Family Child Care Providers
National Farm to School Network developed this resource to help Program operators learn how to purchase from farmers' markets, grocery stores, food co-ops, CSAs and more

- [**Learn Local Option**]

Food & Fiber Fact Sheet
The International Food Information Council has developed this fact sheet to share the definition of fiber, foods that contain fiber and the benefits of consuming fiber.

- [**Finding Fiber**]

PHA's Veggies Early and Often Resource List
Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) has developed this resource list to offer Program operators easy steps to raise a generation of veggie lovers during and outside of mealtime.

- [**Read the Resource List**]

Upcoming Sponsor Training

Registration Opens Soon

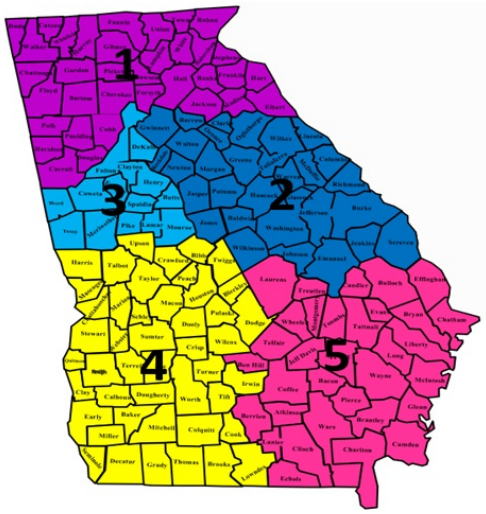
HH SFSP Experienced Sponsor Training (1 Day)

- February 16, 2023
- February 23, 2023
- April 13, 2023

HH SFSP New Sponsor Training (2 Days)

- January 25-26 2023
- February 8-9 2023
- April 26-27 2023

Training & Technical Assistance



The goal of the Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Unit is to improve performance and better equip new and participating institutions and sponsors by providing practical, user-friendly resources and guidance materials that strengthen internal controls and result in successful, sustainable Program administration and operation. We want to ensure that we continue to meet this goal during any transitions and/or position changes.

Therefore, sponsors that reside in**region 2** listed in the map above, please contact our Nutrition TA mailbox at **NutritionTA@decal.ga.gov** with any needed technical assistance.

You may also visit our**Training and Technical Assistance** webpage for Program resources and recorded webinars.

Nutrition Ed Nook

Lettuce Eat

Lettuce is the December Harvest of the Month spotlight (**English** and **Spanish**). Lettuce is high in fiber and contains good amounts of vitamins A

and C, calcium, potassium, folate, and iron, however, nutritional value varies by variety. The leafy vegetable comes in many different varieties and colors. Types of lettuce include Iceberg, romaine, green leaf, arugula, and red leaf. Some lettuce may be purple, red, bright green, dark green or speckled. Most people consume it raw, but some recipes require lettuce to be cooked.

In Georgia, lettuce is in season mostly year-round, except July and August. It is a cool-season vegetable that can be planted in early fall or early spring and can even tolerate a light frost.

Fun Fact: People in Georgia eat more than 285 million pounds of lettuce a year, but we grow less than 0.1 percent of that.

Integration:

- **Teriyaki Lettuce Wraps**
- **Ground Chicken Lettuce Wraps**
- **Mini-Burgers**
- **Salmon Patties**
- **Tasty Tostadas**

Education:

- ***Grow*** lettuce. Lettuce is an excellent item for growing in raised beds or containers, with moist, soggy soil. Lettuce enjoys cool temperatures. Choose an area that receives at least 8 to 10 hours of sunlight per day.
- ***Read*** **Lettuce! by Diana Kizlauskas** with your program participants. Kizlauskas' thoughtful, fun, and compelling tale focuses on Rabbit, who finds that lettuce he has planted has grown as big as a building and must figure out what to do with it.
- ***Talk*** with families about how participants can help with meal preparation such as tearing lettuce for salads and sandwiches. **Bonus:** Send recipes home with families for them to incorporate lettuce into their meals.

Conversation:

- Have your program participants eaten lettuce before?
- What is their favorite meal that includes lettuce?
- What other green vegetables do they like to eat?

December's Harvest of the Month BONUS Item:
Citrus

Citrus is the December Harvest of the Month spotlight bonus. Citrus refers to juicy fruits that grow on trees and have a bitter outer skin that must be peeled before eating the juicy inner fruit. This fruit comes in shades of green, orange, and yellow and can be sweet or sour.

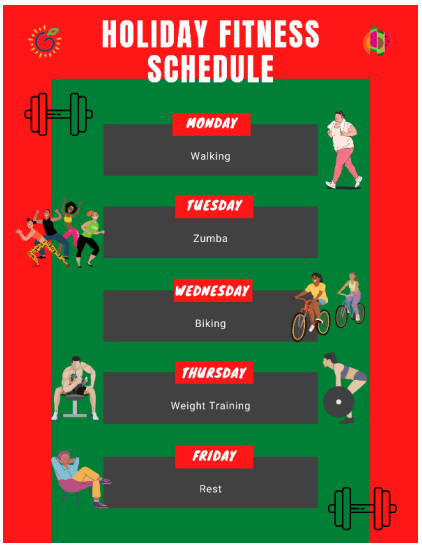
Variations of the fruit include clementines, grapefruit, lemons, limes, tangerines, oranges, blood oranges, and mandarin oranges. Most of them are very high in vitamin C, which helps heal cuts and supports healthy skin. They are also a good source of fiber. Citrus fruits make refreshing, juicy snacks, whether eaten alone or added to a salad.

Fun Facts: It takes about ten years before an orange tree grown from seed will grow fruit. Orange trees live for a very long time, often from fifty to eighty years. A full-sized orange tree

grows an average of 1,500 oranges per year.

- **Citrus Salad**
- **Glass of Sunshine Flavored Water**
- **Baked Lemon Chicken**
- **Fresh Salsa**

Share your Harvest of the Month stories and menu integration of lettuce and citrus with Nutrition Education Specialist, Morgan Chapman at **morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov**.



Physical Activity Corner:
Stay Active This Holiday Season

New Month, New You - Energize Your Health! It is that time of the year when loved ones, co-workers, and friends gather during the holiday seasons, such as Christmas, Diwali, Hannukah, Kwanza, and to celebrate the New Year.

Make it exciting, entertaining, and stress free for you and your loved ones. Here are some simple active ways to stay active and stress-free. Reduce screen time, add exercise, and move. You and your loved ones can create calendars of fun and easy fitness activities for the month of December. This will include indoor and outdoor activities, such as biking, dancing (Zumba), doing sit-ups, gardening, jogging/walking, jumping rope, playing basketball and soccer, and yoga.

Post and write small specific measurable exercise goals in a visible area, such as on the refrigerator, holiday calendar, and white board. Encourage each other to set active habits. Furthermore, do some stretching hours before bedtime to help with relaxation and sleep. Make physical activity a part of the joyous and fun holiday season.

Integration:
- **Twelve (12) Days of Activities on the holidays**
- **Move Your Way: Tips for Getting Motivated**
- **Outdoor Holiday Activities for Children**
- **Winter Holiday Events in Georgia**

Education:
- **Read** aloud the book, ***"Grow Strong! A Book About Healthy Habits*** **," by Cheri J. Meiners.**
- **Watch** the video on **"Move Your Way: Tips for Getting Active as a Family."**
- **Talk** with families about ways to integrate fitness into the holiday winter season. **Bonus:** Share #HolidayWorkout and #HolidayFitnessGoal pictures and events that are happening in your communities and add #DECALPhysicalActivity.

Conversation:
- What is your favorite fitness activity to do during the holiday winter season?
- How do you stay physically active during the holidays?
- Why is it important to exercise during the holidays?
- What is a stress free and easy exercise to do in the holidays?

Share your #HolidayFitnessChallenge, #HolidayFitnessGoals, and #HolidayWorkout stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren at tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov.

DECAL's Nutrition Spotlight:

Meet Nkem Ijeh, Technical Assistance Coordinator and Trainer

Nkem is a Technical Assistance Coordinator and Trainer for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program in the North/North West region. In this role, Nkem supports sponsors and institutions by helping them successfully navigate program requirements and to maintain compliance. She loves assisting partners, teaching new policies, and ensuring that program compliance and expectations are met.

Nkem is a compassionate person and loves helping people. She has a knack for learning and becoming more knowledgeable in her field. "The ability to support and be in a supportive role is so gratifying. I enjoy the process of assisting an institution." Nkem understands that there is a lot of information to comprehend about CACFP and Happy Helpings, and she wants to make sure she can help lighten the burden. "The challenge of learning new information and becoming an expert in that subject is exciting to me. It brings me joy when I can explain a certain policy to an institution or site and I see the connection made."

The best aspect of the job for Nkem is witnessing programs that exposechildren to new foods where; otherwise, they might not know about. "I always get so moved and touched by the levels of commitment and passion from the sites that serve their community. Many children just do not have the means to access nutritious meals. It is so touching when I see children receive those meals," said Nkem. "It seems like such a small gesture, but the picture is much bigger than it seems" she added.

Nkem graduated from Georgia State University with a bachelor's in Psychology and later obtained her master's in Public Health from Mercer University School of Medicine. Her education afforded her the opportunity to work for a leading non-profit agency, where she spent seven years in various roles and leadership positions, including serving as a Maternal and Child Health Program Coordinator where she expanded her passion of training.

Eat Healthy and Live Active

Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 22-23 Calendar

Harvest of the Month (HOTM) is the Georgia Department of Education School Nutrition Program's farm to school initiative that highlights an item each month that can be sourced locally and served in Georgia's school meals.

DECAL's Harvest of the Month calendar aligns with the Georgia Department of Education's Harvest of the Month initiative and was created in partnership with Quality Care for Children, Georgia Organics, and the Farm to Early Care & Education (ECE) Coalition for ECE settings.

Visit the **Georgia Department of Education's HOTM webpage** and **Quality Care for Children's HOTM webpage**. Upon viewing, you can findtips and tricks for preparing produce items, curriculum connections, activity lists and book alignment for your early care classrooms.

Dates To Know

DATE:	EVENTS
December	• Harvest of the Month: Lettuce and Citrus • Start Planning for Summer 2023
December 19	• Memo Monday!
January 25-26	• Happy Helpings New Sponsor Training
February 8-9	• Happy Helpings New Sponsor Training
February 16	• Happy Helpings Experienced Sponsor Training
February 23	• Happy Helpings Experienced Sponsor Training

Happy Helpings Resources:

The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:

- **Happy Helpings Year-End Reconciliation Memorandum Revised**
- **Thank You Happy Helpings Sponsors**
- **Statewide Happy Helpings Waivers Available**
- **After School Programs Required to Apply for License or Exemption to**

Participate in At-Risk
- Transitioning from Happy Helpings to CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals
- HH Sponsors: Pictures of High Quality Meals
- Check your Email Messages in GA ATLAS
- Reimbursement Rates for Summer 2022

How was my Customer Service?

Provide feedback on your experience with the Nutrition Team

Click on the icon at right to participate in the customer service survey. Responses are anonymous.

NEW DECAL Download

Quality Rated honors Governor Deal

As part of Quality Rated's "Decade of Stars" tenth Anniversary celebration, DECAL has named 126 child care providers to the exclusive Quality Rated Class of 2012.

The agency also recognized former Governor Nathan Deal for his leadership and inspiration in launching Quality Rated, beginning in 2012. The Metro Atlanta anniversary celebration was held on Friday, November 18, 2022, at the Georgia Piedmont Dekalb Conference Center, in Clarkston, Georgia.

In this episode of DECAL Download, we take you to that event, where you will hear from a host of speakers including Commissioner Amy Jacobs and former Governor, Nathan Deal.

Listen to the episode **here**.

Nutrition Services
DECAL

Nutrition Division
Marketing & Outreach Team

Cindy Kicklighter
Carl Glover

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