Nutrition News

Happy Helpings

Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

November 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 remaining months of 2022:

November:

- Take time to reflect on the summer with site administrators and determine what could be improved or what worked.
- Reflect on the service provided by your vendor. Ensure the food was well-received by the children.
- Revise menus as needed. Review unserved and underserved areas near current sites.
- Recruit sites to these areas of need.
- Compare participation from this year to that of prior years, as well as current participation for free and reduced-price meals in local schools.
- Consider providing non-monetary awards to recognize sites that excelled during the summer.
- Reach out to sites that were underutilized and offer support to increase participation for the coming year.
- Set participation goals for the next summer and plan how you will accomplish them.
- Look out for dates on mandatory sponsor training from DECAL.
- Begin developing a marketing and outreach campaign.

December:

- 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. Continue developing a marketing and outreach campaign.

Procurement Updates

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.).

DECAL Representative must be present for formal procurement bid process

A DECAL representative must be present (via virtual or in-person) during all Happy Helpings formal procurement bid openings. Specifically, Happy Helpings Sponsors are to ensure the following:

- Submit a draft of the bid advertisement and Invitation to Bid (IFB) to DECAL for review/approval.
- Once approved, publicize the bid advertisement 14 calendar days before the Bid Opening date.
- Notify and invite DECAL to the opening 14 days before the bid opening date.

Updated Procurement Manual and Templates

As a reminder, all procurement documents were revised in May 2022 to reflect the updated Non-Discrimination Statement. Please use the most recent version of all formal and informal agreements, Invitation for Bid, Request for Proposal templates, and the Procurement Policy Template. The updated documents and the **Procurement Manual** are located on the DECAL website which can be accessed **here**.

For questions regarding the procurement process, please contact Tempest Harris, Procurement Compliance Specialist, at **Tempest.Harris@decal.ga.gov**.

Happy Helpings Year-End Reconciliation Memorandum Revised

The policy memorandum, ***Simplified SFSP and Bright from the Start's Annual Year-End Reconciliation Process***, was revised to provide further guidance on the required submittal of the Annual Year-End Reconciliation Form and supporting Happy Helpings financial records. The memorandum now also includes additional information pertaining to the use of excess Happy Helpings funds towards the Happy Helpings program, the CACFP, and other child nutrition programs (CNPs).

In addition, guidance is provided on the Excess Funds Request form which is required to be completed and submitted by Happy Helpings sponsors who desire to use excess Happy Helpings funds towards the operations of other CNPs (e.g., CACFP, NSLP, SBP).

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**.

Get Informed: Training Resources

December 12, 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 memos during our December *Memo Monday!*

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

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.

SFSP Transition to CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Webinar Recording *Now Available!*

Are you interested in serving meals year-round when school is in-session? Register below to learn:

- the overview of the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program, and
- eligibility, application, licensing, and exemption requirements to participate.
- [**Register Now**]

Crediting Tip Sheets in Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) *New Tip Sheet Added!*

Team Nutrition developed tip sheets that include **Crediting Fruits and Crediting Vegetables in Child Nutrition Programs**. This handy reference for Program operators across all Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs) is a simple and easy-to-use resource that highlights the basics of crediting for the meats/meat alternates component. Printed versions of the tip sheet series will be available at a later date.

- [**Download Fruit Tip Sheet**]
- [**Download Vegetable Tip Sheet**]
- [**Download Meat/Meat Alternate Tip Sheet**]
- [**Download Milk Tip Sheet**] ***New!***

Farm to Table Activity Pages

The **National CACFP Sponsor Association** has developed fun Farm to Table activities centered around learning, playing, cooking and more.

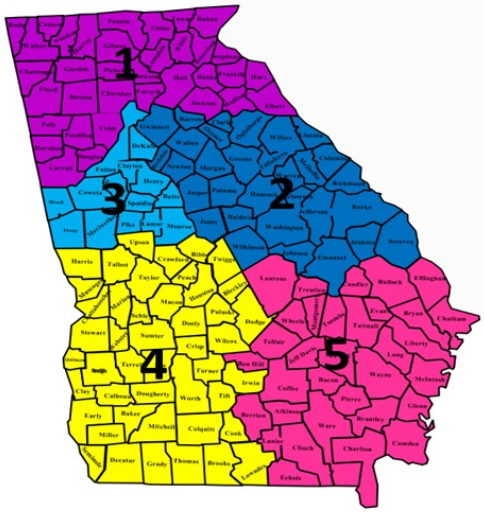
- [**Download in English and Spanish**]

Grains Mini Book

Team Nutrition has developed a mini book to help children learn about what foods are grains and has coloring pages to introduce meal pattern components. Available in both English and Spanish.

- [**Download the Book in English and Spanish**]

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.

Youth Garden Grant

Deadline to Apply: December 2

Since 1982, the Youth Garden Grant has supported school and youth educational garden projects that enhance the quality of life for youth and their communities. In early 2023, fifty organizations will be awarded $500 in funding and a collection of gardening supplies for their youth garden program.

Application materials and support are available in both **English** and **Spanish**.

Nutrition Ed Nook

The Healthy Potato

Sweet potatoes are the November Harvest of the Month spotlight (**English** and **Spanish**). This is the perfect dish as we get closer to the Thanksgiving holiday. These root vegetables are nutritional powerhouses packed with vitamins A and C, niacin, potassium, fiber, and other vitamins and minerals.

Sweet potatoes come in an array of colors, shapes, and sizes. The most common types have orange, white, or purple colored flesh. Each type has a different level of sweetness and other flavors. Small-or medium-sized sweet potatoes tend to be sweeter and creamier.

In Georgia, sweet potatoes are in season July through November. Enjoy them baked, boiled, grilled, mashed, roasted, sautéed, or steamed. They are versatile in cooking and are a great way to add flavor and nutrition to all kinds of recipes.

Fun Fact: Sweet potatoes are a root vegetable, meaning they grow underground. Other root vegetables including beets, carrots, and radishes are the March Harvest of the Month spotlight.

Integration:

- **Sweet Potato Pancakes**
- **Mashed Sweet Potatoes**
- **Apple Glazed Sweet Potatoes**
- **Sweet Potato and Orange Muffins**
- **Sweet Potato Pumpkin Soup**
- **10 Ways to Enjoy Sweet Potatoes**

Education:

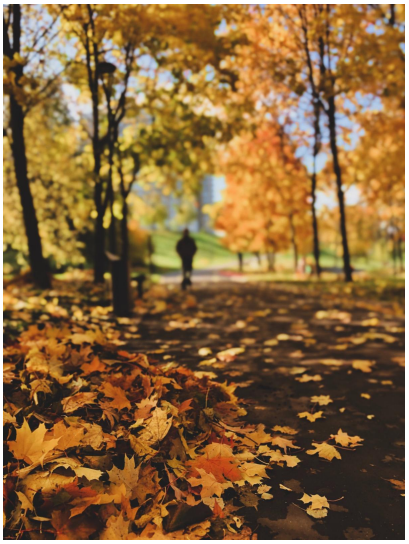
- ***Plan a meal*** with your program participants that includes sweet potatoes. Make sure they include an item for each meal component (i.e., fruit, vegetable, grain, meat/meat alternate, and fluid milk).
- ***Compare & Contrast*** Make a list of similarities and a list of differences between sweet potatoes and white potatoes. How are they similar? What are the key differences?
- ***Talk*** with families about how participants can help with meal preparation such as picking which sweet potatoes to purchase at the supermarket or read from a recipe.

***Bonus*:** Send recipes that incorporate sweet potatoes home for families to try together!

Conversation:

- Have your program participants eaten sweet potatoes before?
- What is their favorite way to eat sweet potatoes?
- What are some examples of other root vegetables?

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



Physical Activity Corner:
Stay Active This Holiday Season

Power Up – The holiday season is here! It is the most celebrated and busiest time of the year.

What is the key to holiday exercise? Make it fun! The power of regular exercise is an important part of staying healthy, managing stress, and improving your mental health. Studies have found a strong connection between regular exercise and increased levels of movement to help with sleep, reduce fatigue, and improve concentration and learning.

For overall health and wellness, it is recommended that children engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day to stay healthy and fit, both mentally and physically. We encourage families to spend quality time together in their garden — planting, raking, pruning, and watering the plants, take a walk together in your community, or walk to your local farmer's market to choose new fruits and vegetables to enjoy.

Remember to keep your body hydrated daily and get eight (8) hours of sleep per night. Engaging in healthy eating habits and being physically active can help avoid holiday weight gain and get a great jumpstart to the holiday season.

Integration:

- **Family Fitness During the Holiday Season**
- **Holiday Events in Georgia**
- **Holiday Family Fun Fair in Georgia**
- **Core Exercises for Preschoolers**
- **All Weather Activities**
- **Physical Activity Cards for All Ages**

Education:

- **Read** aloud the book **"Get Up and Go" by Nancy Carlson**
- ***Watch*** the video on **Staying Active during the Holidays.**
- **Talk** with families about ways to incorporate fitness into their daily lives.**Bonus:** Send home #HolidayWalk, #Holiday5KRun #HolidayMarathon #HolidayExercise pictures and events that are happening in your community

Conversation:

- What type of exercise can I do during the holiday season?
- Why it is important to exercise during the holidays?
- How can I stay active and motivated during the holidays?
- What is a fun fitness activity to do as a family?

Share your **#HolidayGear**, **#HolidayExercise**, **#HolidayMotivation** stories and photos

with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren at **tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov**.

DECAL's Nutrition Spotlight: *Meet Tempest Harris, Procurement Compliance Specialist*

Tempest Harris recently joined the Nutrition Services Division as the Procurement Compliance Specialist. In her position, Tempest will monitor and evaluate food costs, monitor contract bidding processes, provide procurement training and best practices, and offer best practices to increase local purchases from farmers.

Over the last 15 years, Tempest worked with the USDA's Food and Nutrition Services programs that include Women Infant Children, the National School Lunch Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food. Most recently, she worked with the Douglas County School Nutrition Program, where she served as the Training and Development Manager. Tempest holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Food Science and Nutrition from Georgia Southern University and a Master of Public Health degree from Armstrong Atlantic State University.

Tempest loves anything and everything nature. Her true joy comes from spending time with family and friends to create lasting memories, which is why she values the people in her life the most. When commenting on her new role, Tempest shared, "Covid-19 was a microscope to highlight the pandemics in society such as food insecurity. Food insecurity limits food options for families. The CACFP and Happy Helpings programs offer families the right to adequate food and food security." Tempest went on to say that it is an honor to help centers navigate procurement regulations, processes, and local food purchases. "I am here to support the mission in the DECAL Nutrition Division and, most notably, the families that the centers serve daily."

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:	2022 Events
November	• Harvest of the Month: Sweet Potato • Start Planning for Summer 2023
December 12	• Memo Monday!

Happy Helpings Resources:

The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:

- **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

How was my customer service?

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

NEW DECAL Download

Meet out Georgia Pre-K Teachers of the Year 2022-2023

Last month, DECAL named our Georgia's Pre-K Teachers of the Year for the 2022-2023 school year just in time for the annual Georgia's Pre-K Week held the first week of October.

The public-school winner is Shannon Gibson from Baldwin Elementary School in Baldwin. The private child care center winner is Alaina Jones from Akers Academy in Cumming. Commissioner Jacobs and other DECAL staff were able to visit both programs and surprise both Shannon and Alaina with the good news. You can see recaps of those visits on DECAL's YouTube page by following the two links below.

Alaina's visit recap: **https://youtu.be/iC7DLzmvlVQ**
Shannon's visit recap: **https://youtu.be/K3BCpnrJojo**

Joining us this week to talk about their experience of being selected Georgia's Pre-K Teachers of the Year are Shannon Gibson and Alaina Jones. We are also joined by Meghan McNail, our Summer Transition Program and Outreach Manager, who oversees the Teacher of the Year recognition each year.

Listen to the episode **here**.

Nutrition Services
DECAL

Nutrition Division
Marketing & Outreach Team

Cindy Kicklighter
Carl Glover

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