

Nutrition News



Happy
Helpings

Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

October 1, 2024

Thank You for Another Successful Summer Season *3.2 Million Meals Served during FY24*

Thanks to you, more than 3.2 million meals were served to Georgia's children this summer. On behalf of GA DECAL, we thank you for your commitment to serving these meals!

By the Numbers for FY24:

- 73 Sponsors were approved
- 1,026 Meal Sites were approved
- 103 Georgia Counties had Happy Helping Meal Sites
- 3,285,981 Meals were served

Target Counties for Summer 2025

One of Nutrition Services' goals is to have a meal site in every county of the state. Last summer, you played a crucial role in our significant progress toward that goal by expanding meal service to 103 counties in 2024! Thank you!

If your organization has the capacity to expand your meal service in 2025, please consider serving meals and snacks in any of the following target counties:



FY25 Target Counties: 56



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1. Atkinson	13. Crisp	25. Jeff Davis	37. Oglethorpe	49. Twiggs
2. Bacon	14. Dade	26. Jenkins	38. Pierce	50. Upson
3. Banks	15. Dawson	27. Jones	39. Pulaski	51. Webster
4. Berrien	16. Dodge	28. Lincoln	40. Quitman	52. Wheeler
5. Bleckley	17. Dooley	29. Long	41. Schley	53. Wilcox
6. Brantley	18. Echols	30. Lumpkin	42. Screven	54. Wilkes
7. Brooks	19. Forsyth	31. Madison	43. Stewart	55. Wilkinson
8. Camden	20. Gilmer	32. Marion	44. Sumter	56. Worth
9. Charlton	21. Gordon	33. Miller	45. Taylor	
10. Chattahoochee	22. Grady	34. Montgomery	46. Telfair	
11. Cook	23. Haralson	35. Murray	47. Towns	
12. Crawford	24. Harris	36. Oconee	48. Treutlen	



Transitioning from Happy Helpings to CACFP At Risk Afterschool Meals

Many existing Happy Helpings sites are well-positioned to offer afterschool meals during the school year through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Both organizations and communities benefit when meals are offered to children in low-income communities year-round.

Now that we are at the end of the summer season, the opportunity for sponsors to transition to At-Risk Afterschool Meals, a component of CACFP, is upon us. Here are a few things to consider:

- An application for Happy Helpings sponsors transitioning to CACFP is required upon initial entry to the CACFP. General updates and annual renewal will be required thereafter.
- As part of the current ATLAS CACFP application process, Happy Helpings sponsors are required to sign a CACFP agreement in addition to their existing agreement.
- Sponsors are required to adhere to all monitoring requirements.
- Sponsors are required to attend CACFP orientation training.

If you have questions or are interested in learning more, Please join our Memo Monday training on November 18, 2024 that will discuss the following memo:

[Transitioning from the Summer Food Service Program to Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\) At-risk Afterschool Meals.](#)

If you have questions or are interested in registering for training, please contact [Leslie Truman](#) at 404.657.1779.

Happy Helpings Reconciliations Due October 31

Institutions operating a FY2024 Happy Helpings Summer Food Program (May 2024- Aug 2024) must complete an Annual Reconciliation Form. The form should include all FY2024 Happy Helpings operating months.

Per SFSP Policy 5, sponsors are required to submit year-end reconciliation documentation as well as the bank statement and/or general ledger **supporting the ending balance on the reconciliation form.**

The Year End Reconciliation is completed after:

- The final claim is submitted to DECAL.
- All invoices are paid.
- Final reimbursement is received.
- Happy Helpings functional activity is closed.
- The last operating bank statement or general ledger, that includes all transactions for **Happy Helpings.**

The SFSP reconciliation form and final bank statement or general ledger is due October 31, 2024. Please submit the requested documents ASAP to avoid any delays in FY2025 Happy Helpings approval.

The reconciliation form and supporting financial documentation should be submitted together to nutritionbudget@decalfga.gov. **Include the name of the institution and agreement number in the subject line of the email.**

Please review the [reconciliation form](#) and [instructions](#).

Contact the budget team at nutritionbudget@decalfga.gov with any questions.

Unanticipated School Closure Waivers Available

On August 5, 2024, Nutrition Services received USDA approval for statewide waivers for Happy Helpings sponsors to utilize during unanticipated school closures.

The following waivers are available during unanticipated school closures when meal service operations are limited due to natural disasters, unscheduled major building repairs, court orders relating to school safety or other issues, labor-management disputes, or when approved by the State agency for similar unanticipated causes.

The following approved waivers are available when schools are closed with no virtual learning/classes:

- **Non-Congregate Meal Service**
- **Parent and Guardian Meal Pick-up**
- **Meal Service Times**
- **Service of Meals at School Sites**

The waivers listed above are available through **June 30, 2025**.

Once approved by Nutrition Services' Applications Unit to operate during unanticipated school closures, Happy Helpings sponsors interested in applying for the above-mentioned waivers must submit waiver requests via the Waiver Module within GA ATLAS.

Sponsors may only serve meals in a non-congregate setting, adjust the time of meal service, allow parent pick up, and allow service of meals at non-school sites once the sponsors are approved for the waivers.

Waivers cannot be approved for more than 10 consecutive operating days without approval from Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). In situations that may warrant longer approval periods, the FNS Southeast Regional Office (SERO) will work closely with Nutrition Services to determine if an extension is needed.

For questions, please reach out to Robyn Parham at robyn.parham@dec.al.ga.gov.

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 Reconciliation Training](#) webinar. It discussed detailed information on the annual Year-End Reconciliation process, how to complete the Reconciliation Form, and documents required for submission and potential next steps.

[Food Buying Guide \(FBG\) for Child Nutrition Programs](#) **Food Yields!**

New yields are now available in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Web-based (FBG) Tool and FBG Mobile App! New yield data is available for the following, which are identified as traditional Indigenous foods in Tribal communities: Huckleberries, bison, canned steelhead trout, halibut, walleye, white perch, and whitefish. Stay tuned for additional yield data releases coming soon.

Explore the [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) today!

DECAL Nutrition Spotlight:

Meet the Training and Technical Assistance (TA) Team

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.

The Technical Assistance (TA) Coordinators & Trainers provide training, technical assistance, guidance, and user-friendly resources to Child Nutrition (CN) Program operators.

Every institution is assigned a TA Coordinator based on the location of their site. Please don't hesitate to reach out to your assigned TA Coordinator if you ever have question or need training or technical assistance.



Nkem Ijeh **Region 1: North/Northwest**

Nkem Ijeh has served as the Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator for the North/Northwest Region for five years.

Nkem worked in various areas in maternal and child health, education, and promotion including leadership positions. She graduated from Georgia State University with a bachelor's degree in psychology and later obtained her master's in public health from Mercer University School of Medicine.

Nkem enjoys the challenge of learning new information, becoming an expert in that subject and seeing program providers make connections after sharing the knowledge. She has a passion for serving families and ensuring the health and wellness of children.

Email: Nkem.Ijeh@dec.al.ga.gov
Phone: **404-973-4099**

Julie Edwards **Region 2: East**

Julie Edwards has served as the Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator for the East Region for eighteen months.

Julie has 25 plus years of healthcare management experience. Prior to joining DECAL, she was the Director of an Adult Day Center in Augusta, Georgia.

She graduated with a Business Administration degree from the University of South Carolina. Julie is excited about teaching others and bringing her experience and knowledge to program providers.

Julie lives in Appling, Georgia, with her husband, Scott. Her hobbies include spending time on the boat at the lake.

Email: Julie.Edwards@dec.al.ga.gov
Phone: **404-796-1205**



Dr. Emilia Emmanuel **Region 3: Metro West**



Dr. Emilia Emmanuel has served as the Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator for the Metro West Region for two years.

Emilia is a trained Medical Physician/Health professional with over 13 years of experience in coordinating and management roles in Early Head Start/Head Start, community health education and advocacy services.

She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in nursing, and Doctor of Medicine from St. Mary's School of Medicine. She is also bilingual in English and Spanish.

Emilia enjoys combining the knowledge and skills she acquired in her years of medical education and work experiences to assist Georgia's children and their families.

Her hobbies include spending time with her family, cooking, reading, traveling, and exploring nature.

Email: Emilia.Emmanuel@decal.ga.gov

Phone: 678-337-9759

Leatha Bryant **Region 4: Southwest**

Leatha Bryant has served as the Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator for the Southwest Region for nearly two years.

Leatha has twenty plus years of management experience including leading work teams, structuring quality improvement systems, coaching and training key personnel. She holds an Associate Degree in Business Management and a Bachelor of Science degree from Troy University.

Leatha loves assisting others, teaching new policies, techniques and ensuring that providers are able to meet program compliance and expectations.

She believes in continuous education and takes every opportunity to not only help educate others, but she is a lifelong learner herself. Her passion is serving and mentoring youth and young adults.

Email: Leatha.Bryant@decal.ga.gov

Phone: 404-998-0721



LaKisha Battle **Region 5: Southeast**

LaKisha Battle has served as the Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator for the Southeast Region for nine years.

LaKisha has 20 plus years of healthcare experience. She worked as a Program Director of the Medical Assisting Program at Atlanta Technical College and Oconee Fall Line Technical College, where diet and nutrition were part of the curriculum she taught.

She earned a diploma and certification as Medical Assistant from the Heart of Georgia Technical College, a Bachelor of Health Science emphasis in Community Health Education degree from Georgia Southern University, and a Master's degree in Health Administration from the University of Phoenix.



She is also a member of the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) and a faithful member of the Church of Christ. LaKisha's top goal is to provide meaningful customer service to providers that impacts their managing of the food program.

Her hobbies include gardening, spending time with family, cooking, particularly trying new recipes, and hanging with her fur babies Blaze, Bestie, and Buddie. A fun fact about LaKisha is that she is a pretty awesome clarinet player!

Email: Lakisha.Battle@decal.ga.gov

Phone: 478-314-2806



Nutrition Ed Nook

ParSLAY the Day with Fresh Herbs

ParSLAY the DAY is this year's October Farm to School & Early Care and Education Month theme and October's Harvest of the Month (**English** and **Spanish**) feature, highlighting parsley and other fresh herbs.

Herbs are the leaves of plants used for flavor, fragrance/smell, or medicine and are used in cuisines all over the world. Used fresh or dried, herbs are a wonderful way to add a boost of flavor and color to dishes or drinks without adding salt and sugar. Herbs may help prevent and manage chronic illnesses and cancers. If using herbs for their health benefits, it is recommended to use fresh herbs at the end of cooking or as you serve to preserve these properties. Try sprinkling fresh herbs on soups, stews and casseroles, salads, drinks and more! Be adventurous with herbs.

Parsley is a versatile culinary herb with a long history, dating back to ancient Greece, and for most of its history was valued for its healing qualities and symbolic meaning. Parsley has a fresh, herbal aroma and tastes grassy and slightly bitter. It is part of the same plant family as carrots, celery, parsnips, dill, cumin and cilantro. Parsley has a significant amount of vitamin-K and is a fantastic source of folate. Parsley is also very rich in important antioxidants which lower the risk of certain diseases and cancers.

Examples of other herbs include basil, bay leaves, chili, chives, coriander, dill, fennel, garlic, ginger, lemongrass, mint, oregano, rosemary, sage, tarragon, and thyme.

Fun Fact: In Chinese culture, parsley represents prosperity and joy. Its bright green color symbolizes growth and renewal, making it a popular choice to incorporate in meals during special occasions.

Integration:

- [Tabbouleh](#)
- [Afghan Salata](#)
- [Sunny Lemon Chicken](#)
- [Creamy Vegetable Dip](#)
- [Argentinian Chimichurri Sauce](#)
- [Tuscan Smoked Turkey and Bean Soup](#)

Education:

- **Watch** a short video on [How to use Herbs and Spices- for Kids](#). Follow along with Nathan and Dillan to learn about herbs and spices as they use parley and cilantro to make a yummy mixture of chermoula herb sauce from North Africa.
- **Read** the book '[Zeit and Zaatar](#)' by Amany Isa. When one hungry boy discovers that his family is out of peanut butter, Momma suggests a snack that her Momma used to make in Palestine. Eager to try Zeit and Zataar, they made a song to explore the history

- of this tasty mix of olive oil, tangy herbs, and pita bread.
- **Explore** parsley and four other herbs (i.e., cilantro, thyme, mint, bay leaves among others). Create an observation chart for program participants to complete together. Have the participants to complete together. Have the participants describe how the herbs feel, look, taste and smell. Make sure your observation chart is in a centralized area where all participants can see it and participate in the discussion.
- **Talk** with families about how participants can help with meal preparation such as measuring and mixing ingredients together for a meal.
- **Bonus:** Send recipes home with families for them to incorporate different herbs into their meals! Check [Pinterest](#) for recipe inspiration.
- **Want ECE parsley and other herb-themed resources?** Check out Quality Care for Children's [Harvest of the Month Herb toolkit](#) for more ways to engage ECE students.

Conversation:

- Have your program participants eaten herbs?
- What herbs do their family use at home?
- What are the three main uses of herbs? (flavor, fragrance/smell, or healing/medicine)

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

Physical Activity Corner

“Walk”tober Month: Let’s Get Walking

A new month, a new you, and a new start of the beautiful fall season.

October is National Walk to School Month. Walking is one of the many physical activities people enjoy adding into their daily routine as the weather cools down.

Start the day by moving - go for a walk with you and your family to keep your heart rate up for at least 30-minutes every day. Walking helps to raise awareness on the importance of physical activity and supports good health for our families, schools, and neighboring communities.

As per the Centers for Disease Control’s Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, physical activity improves sleep, reduces anxiety and depression, lowers risk of hypertension and type 2 diabetes, and other chronic diseases.



How To Observe #OctoberWalks

- At home: Break away from sitting less and MOVE more. Take a 15-minute walk early in the morning or during a lunch break. End a long day of work with a few stretches or a yoga session for quietness, tranquility, and peace of mind.
- To school (children/parents): As a family, go together with your children early in the morning to walk to and from school or after-school in the afternoon.
- With the family: Walk in with your neighborhood or community – to the park, local mall, local farmer’s market, or a grocery store in the day or on a weekend. Be safe!
- At work (colleagues): Invite a colleague to take a 10-minute walk during your break from the computer/office. Take the stairs, instead of the elevators.

The “Power of Walking” is an International Walk to School Month celebrated in the month of October. Organize, plan, or coordinate a small walk community event or an activity with your family, school, work, or local communities.

To find out more, please, visit: www.walkbiketoschool.org or

Integration:

- **Walk to School**
- **Step It Up! The Surgeon's General Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities**
- **Georgia Safe Routes to School**
- **State Parks and Trails in Georgia**
- **2024 Georgia 2-Day Walk for Breast Cancer**

Education:

- **Read** aloud, "[We Walk Through The Forest](#)," by Lisa Ferland and Yana Popova.
- **Watch** the video on the [Benefits of Walking](#).
- **Talk** with families about ways to incorporate walking into their daily lives.
- **Bonus:** Send #WALKTOBER pictures and events that are happening in your home, early childcare centers, offices, schools, and communities.

Conversation:

- What is the best day and time to walk?
- Who do you enjoy walking with?
- What are the benefits of walking?
- How much should I walk a day?
- What is your favorite leisure place to walk (i.e., parks, trails, neighborhoods, schools)?

Share your #Walktober, #WalkDay, #Walkathon, #Walkclub, #WalkToSchool, #WalkToWork stories and photos with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren, MPH at tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov



Eat Healthy and Live Active

Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 2024-2025 Calendar

The Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month is a collaborative campaign between Quality Care for Children, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Georgia Department of Human Services, and Georgia Organics. The campaign aims to encourage healthy eating habits by promoting a different local, seasonal fruit or vegetable each month.

Visit Quality Care for Children's Farm to ECE [webpage](#) to access a variety of classroom resources, including activity ideas linked to the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), recipe ideas, a book list, and family

newsletter to help you promote a new vegetable or fruit each month.

For school-age children resources, visit the Georgia Department of Education's Harvest of the Month [webpage](#).

Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENTS
October	Harvest of the Month: Herbs
October 14	Columbus Day
October 23	Memo Monday
October 31	Happy Helpings Reconciliations Due

Happy Helpings Resources:

The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:

- [After School Programs Required to Apply for License or Exemption to Participate in At-Risk](#)
- [And Justice for All Posters](#)
- [Notify DECAL When Updating Your Banking Information](#)
- [Procurement Methods At-A-Glance](#)
- [Have You Determined this Summer's Food Cost & Procurement Methods?](#)
- [Budget Representatives Updated April 2024](#)
- [Identifying the Difference between Pre-Award Cost Request vs. Excess Funds](#)
- [Make your Local Farmers Market a Meal Site Option](#)
- [FY24 Reimbursement Rates Released](#)
- [Increasing Access to Food Through Mobile Feeding](#)
- [Check your Email Messages in GA ATLAS](#)

How was my Customer Service?

Provide feedback on your experience with the Nutrition Team



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



Nutrition Division

Marketing & Outreach

**Cindy Kicklighter
Joann Kilpatrick**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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