



September 3, 2024

We'd Love Your Feedback

End-of-the-Season Survey: Respond by September 17

DECAL's Nutrition Services Division appreciates your participation in Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program.

To better understand your experience as a Happy Helpings Sponsor, we have created an end-of-the-season survey. You may choose to respond anonymously or add your name to the survey.

We will use the information to ensure we are providing the resources you need to have a successful summer meals program.



Please [click here](#) or scan the QR code to participate in the survey. Please respond by **September 17, 2024**.

Again, thank you for your commitment in serving free and healthy meals during the summer months.

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 training.
 - If you have questions or are interested in registering for training, please contact [Leslie Truman](#) at 404.657.1779
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Happy Helpings Reconciliations Due October 31

Annual Year-End Reconciliation Requirement for FY2024 Happy Helpings (May 2024-August 2024)

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 has **all Happy Helpings activity** accounted for.

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@dec.al.ga.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@dec.al.ga.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.

Meet Joann Kilpatrick, Marketing and Outreach Nutrition Specialist



We are thrilled to announce that Joann Kilpatrick has joined the Nutrition Services Division as the Nutrition Marketing and Outreach Specialist.

In this role, Joann will spearhead community outreach efforts to recruit and retain providers for Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program. She will develop and implement strategies to enhance program visibility, produce newsletters, coordinate social media and assist with organizing events.

Joann brings six years of dedicated experience in Nutrition Services to her position. Most recently, she served as the point of contact for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Georgia, where she managed sponsor relations and developed a strong familiarity with DECAL's programs. Her positive experiences with DECAL and its training programs inspired her to join our team.

Joann is a natural caregiver who thrives on teaching and learning from others. She values the responsiveness and comprehensive training she received from DECAL, and is committed to ensuring that other providers and program contacts across Georgia have a similarly supportive experience.

Residing in Macon, Georgia, with her husband Justin and their two children, Joann enjoys spending time with her family and exploring the outdoors. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Nutrition from Purdue University Global.

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.

Nutrition Ed Nook

Crisp and Delicious Apples

Crisp and Delicious Apples are September's Harvest of the Month spotlight. Apples are a great low-calorie snack that are naturally fat- and sodium-free. Apples are a good source of fiber, which helps keep you regular, controls blood sugar and lowers cholesterol, and vitamin C, which supports healthy gums,



skin and blood. Eat the peel to get the most from this nutritional powerhouse!

Apples are in season in Georgia from around August through October. North Georgia is the center of the state's apple industry with more than 85% grown in Gilmer and Fannin counties. Georgia's apple varieties include Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Fuji, Granny Smith, and more.

Fun Fact: Georgia's Apple Festival is hosted annually during October in Ellijay, Georgia.

Integration:

- **Apple Pancakes**

- **Pumpkin Applesauce**
- **Cranberry Applesauce**
- **Chicken Apple Salad Wrap**
- **Fall Apple Pumpkin Oatmeal**
- **Fruit and Nut Butter Pita Pockets**

Education:

- **Watch** [Fruit for Kids with Blippi | Apple Fruit Factory Tour](#) video to learn how apples get to the grocery store. You'll visit the orchard and tour inside the apple factory, Blippi will help your participants learn about fruit.
- **Compare & Contrast** different apple varieties, such as Granny Smith, Gala, Fuji, using the five senses, look, feel, taste, sound, and smell.
- **Read aloud** [Apple Farmer Annie by Monica Wellington](#). Follow along with Annie, a busy apple farmer, as she picks, counts, sorts, bakes tasty treats, and sells her best apples.
- **Talk** with families about how participants can help with meal preparation such as choosing which apples to buy at the store or rinsing apples under cool running water.
- **Bonus:** Send recipes home with families for them to incorporate apples into their meals! Check [Pinterest](#) for recipe inspiration.

Conversation:

- Have your program participants eaten apples before?
- Which apple variety is their favorite?
- What is their favorite way to eat apples?

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

Physical Activity Corner

Time for Play, Games, and Movement

Physical activity, exploration, and play are critical for all ages, especially our youngest learners. Through this, children develop coordination and strong, healthy bodies and exercise their minds through sensory play, including touching, reaching, grasping, and exploring.

Play is one of the main ways that children learn, develop, and grow. Each new phase of physical activity development brings new opportunities for learning and development. An infant might explore by tummy time, touching books, grasping blankets, banging toys, or

crawling. A toddler might explore by walking or climbing. Young children are naturally curious and excited to learn about their surrounding environment.

According to CDC, physical fun such as free unstructured games during playtime helps children develop motor and coordination skills, prevent childhood obesity, and build social and emotional intelligence. A child builds their confidence in a safe enjoyable environment.

Enjoy these fun ideas to get our younger children moving:

- Provide child-friendly sports equipment, like **balls**, poms, or throwable beanbags.
- Make time for **outdoor play** at a park or **playground**, in the backyard, on a beach or at a football field. Moving around on various surfaces develops strength, balance, and coordination.
- Make an obstacle course or **treasure hunt**.
- Provide chalk to draw outside with a child.
- Go for a **nature walk**. This gets a child moving, and they can also collect leaves, sticks, or pebbles for crafts or pretend play when you get home.
- Younger children can practice coordinating the small movements of their fingers through playdough, blocks, and drawing activities.

Providing children plenty of opportunities to play is one of the best ways to help them grow into curious, creative, healthy, and happy adults equipped with the skills they need today.

Integration:

- **Georgia's Early Care and Learning Standards (GELDS) – Songs, movement, and play**
- **Playgrounds in Georgia**
- **Active Play: Healthy Habits Start Early**
- **CDC – Making Physical Activity a Part of a Child's Life**

Education:

- **Read aloud, ‘Are You Ready to Play Outside?’ by Mo Willems.**
- **Watch the video** on Movement and Play: “**Play-based Learning with Dr. Peter Gray.**”
- **Talk** with families about ways parents, educators, and communities can promote physical activity, movement and play all year round, whether at home, outside, in their local community, at your childcare site, or at their local community recreational areas.
- **Bonus:** Share #ActivePlay, #OutdoorGames, #MovementandPlay, #MoveYourWay, and #LovePlay pictures and events that are happening in your communities.

Conversation:

- How do you encourage parents, educators, and staff to engage in physical activity?
- What are fun physical activities for family?
- How do you play with children of different ages?
- Why is family engagement, movement, and play important in physical activity?

Share your #ActivePlay, #OutdoorGames, #MovementandPlay, #MoveYourWay and #LovePlay stories and pictures 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

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, Georgia SNAP-Ed[MC1], 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 [webpage](#). Upon viewing, you can find tips and tricks for preparing produce items, curriculum connections, activity lists and book alignment for your early care classrooms.

Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENTS
September	Harvest of the Month: Apples
September 2	Labor Day Holiday
September 17	Deadline for Happy Helpings Sponsor Survey
October 31	Annual Year-End Reconciliation

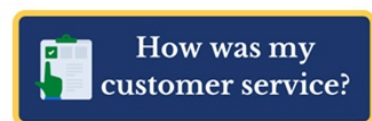
Happy Helpings Resources:

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.

NEW DECAL Download

Preparing for Georgia's Pre-K Program



Licensed Family Child Care Learning Homes and Child Care Learning Centers in Georgia who are two or three-star Quality Rated are eligible for grants aimed at fostering early language and literacy skills of infants and toddlers.

The LITTLE grants, standing for Lifting Infants and Toddlers Through Language-Rich Environment's, equips providers with increased knowledge and skills in

building responsive relationships, and developing and maintaining a social, emotional, and intellectual climate that supports child-initiated and child-pursued learning.

Joining us to talk about LITTLE grants, as well as other services available through our Infant Toddler Specialists, is Thea Stevens, Infant Toddler Program Manager; Latasha Bailey, an Infant Toddler Specialist for the Central East Region, and Cindy Lancaster with Lemon Tree Academy-Monroe who is a previous LITTLE grantee.

Listen to the episode [here](#).



Nutrition Division

Marketing & Outreach

Cindy Kicklighter
Joann Kilpatrick

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