



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

Summer Transition Program 2026 Operating Guidelines



INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the requirements and regulations for operating a 2025-2026 Summer Transition Program (STP). To ensure program compliance and quality service, all STP providers must be familiar with and implement these guidelines. This document is intended to provide clarity and to offer guidance to STP providers. Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) makes all funding decisions for the Summer Transition Program. Pre-K specialists will be available throughout the program to review compliance and provide support. Providers who do not comply with the STP Guidelines may not be eligible to receive a STP grant during the 2026 - 2027 school year.

Summer 2026 Updates

This page highlights program guidelines updates for the 2026 Summer Transition Program. This is not a complete listing, please read the entire Summer Transition Program Operating Guidelines for all updates.

7.1 Program Administration and Supervision - A Project Director, Site Director, bus driver, or cook may not also serve as a STP Lead Teacher, Assistant Teacher, or Transition Coach.

11.3 Salary Chart - The Transition Coach salary has been reduced to \$3,539.20

15.1 Days of Service – Transition Coaches - Transition coaches will work 6-7 weeks or 140 hours per classroom. This is a one-week reduction in work hours from previous years. This change resulted in the updated salary for the Transition Coach position.

Remember:

- Providers are required to maintain a transition coach work schedule onsite for Specialist review.
- A STP Transition Coach may not also serve as Project Director or Site Director, bus driver, or cook.
- A [resource](#) has been created to assist you with understanding the coach role.

15.2 Credential Requirements- Transition Coaches – New approved credentials for Coaches
Transition coaches must have a CDA, TCC, TCD, Paraprofessional Certificate, Associate's Degree (AA, AS, AAS, AAT) or higher credential in child development, early childhood education, family and child development, elementary education, or educational leadership **and** experience working with families of young children.

18.1 Expenditure Guidelines – Ensure you are familiar with these guidelines and report them accurately during reconciliation. DECAL must be aware of how funds are being expended, including the various categories within operating costs.

19.2 Payments – updated payment amounts to reflect this summer's budget per class

19.3 Program Summary Charts – The total budget per class for Summer 2026 has been reduced from \$26,300 to \$25,840. This is due to the one-week reduction in work hours for the Transition Coach position.

19.4 Rosters – One roster submission this summer. The count date and due date are provided.

20.1 Reconciliation – STP Reconciliation dates are provided.

23.0 STP Inclusion Classrooms – New section to support programs with an approved inclusion model

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 General Program Operations and Services Information

- 1.1 Purpose of the Summer Transition Program
- 1.2 Days of Service
- 1.3 Program Service Hours

2.0 Child/Family Eligibility

- 2.1 Age Requirement
- 2.2 Family Income Requirement
- 2.3 Family Participation Requirement

3.0 Enrollment

- 3.1 Open Enrollment
- 3.2 Children Who are Experiencing Homelessness
- 3.3 Children in Foster Care
- 3.4 Children in Military Families
- 3.5 Enrollment Priorities
- 3.6 Child Registration Forms
- 3.7 Student Social Security Numbers
- 3.8 Procedures for Student Attendance
- 3.9 Low Student Enrollment

4.0 Student Support

- 4.1 Children with Identified Disabilities
- 4.2 Children with Developmental Concerns
- 4.3 Children with Behavioral Concerns
- 4.4 Student Discipline
- 4.5 Immediate Suspension

5.0 Instruction

- 5.1 Lesson Plans
- 5.2 Small Group Instruction
- 5.3 Religious Instruction
- 5.4 Record Keeping

6.0 Materials and Supplies

- 6.1 STP Classroom Materials and Supplies

7.0 Delivery of Services

- 7.1 Program Administration and Supervision
- 7.2 Classroom Delivery
- 7.3 Program Delivery
- 7.4 Orientation
- 7.5 Licensing
- 7.6 Substitutes

- 7.7 Rest Time
- 7.8 Program/Staff Hours
- 7.9 Transportation
- 7.10 Extended Day (Before and After School Care)

8.0 Family Support Services

- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Health Services
- 8.3 Family Engagement Activities
- 8.4 Student Transition Materials

9.0 Program Fees

- 9.1 Instructional Fees
- 9.2 Field Trips/ Special Experiences for Students
- 9.3 Transportation Fees
- 9.4 Meals

10.0 DECAL Monitoring and Technical Assistance

- 10.1 Pre-K Specialist Support

11.0 General Personnel and Training Information

- 11.1 Criminal Background Checks
- 11.2 Employees
- 11.3 Salary Chart
- 11.4 Employment Terms Document

12.0 Lead Teachers

- 12.1 Days of Service
- 12.2 Age Requirement
- 12.3 Credential / Certification Requirements
- 12.4 Salaries – Lead Teachers

13.0 Assistant Teachers

- 13.1 Days of Service
- 13.2 Employment Requirements
- 13.3 Credential/Certification Requirements
- 13.4 Salaries – Assistant Teachers

14.0 Substitute Teachers

- 14.1 Substitute Teacher Employment Requirements

15.0 Transition Coaches

- 15.1 Days of Service
- 15.2 Credential Requirements
- 15.3 Salaries – Transition Coaches
- 15.4 Salary Chart
- 15.5 Employment Terms Document

16.0 Professional Development

- 16.1 Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS)
- 16.2 Importance of Training
- 16.3 Professional Development Registration
- 16.4 Professional Development/Training Reimbursement to Staff

17.0 Grant Award Notification and Budgets

- 17.1 Awarding of Grant Agreements
- 17.2 Multi-County and Multi-Program STP Providers

18.0 Expenditure Requirements

- 18.1 Expenditure Guidelines
- 18.2 Record Keeping

19.0 Reimbursement Process

- 19.1 Automatic Deposit of Funds
- 19.2 Payments
- 19.3 Program Summary Charts
- 19.4 Rosters
- 19.5 Fraudulent Reporting on Rosters

20.0 Audit and Accounting Requirements

- 20.1 Reconciliation Report
- 20.2 Right to Audit/ Agreed Upon Procedures Review
- 20.3 Record Keeping Findings and Adverse Findings
- 20.4 Balances Due to DECAL
- 20.5 Audit Reconsideration
- 20.6 Random Reviews
- 20.7 Tracking of STP Funds
- 20.8 Fraudulent/ Inappropriate Use of Funds

21.0 Reporting Requirements

- 21.1 Pre-K Application and Database Access (GAPREK) Participation

22.0 Non-Compliance Funding Consideration

- 22.1 Non-Compliance

23.0 STP Inclusion Classrooms

- 23.1 Prior Approval
- 23.2 Enrollment
- 23.3 Teaching Staff
- 23.4 Transition Coach
- 23.5 Funding

1.0 General Program Operations and Services Information

1.1 Purpose of the Summer Transition Program (STP)

Rising Pre-K

The purpose of the Rising Pre-K program is to provide a summer intensive academic program to support children who are registered to attend Georgia's Pre-K or a Head Start Program for the 2026-2027 school year. Rising Pre-K is designed to support children whose home language is Spanish. A defining characteristic of the program is that at least one teacher must be bilingual, fluent in English and Spanish. The presence of the bilingual staff facilitates the strategic use of the home language to support young dual language learners' early language and literacy development in English.

Rising Kindergarten

The purpose of the Rising Kindergarten program is to provide a summer intensive academic program to support rising kindergarteners who either did not attend a Georgia's Pre-K or Head Start program or attended but need additional support before entering kindergarten.

1.2 Days of Service

STP providers are required to submit a calendar into the GAPREK System for approval. The STP calendar must document a minimum of 23 instructional days or the equivalent instructional hours (149.5 hours) for students and 3 professional development/planning days for lead and assistant teachers. DECAL will observe the Juneteenth and 4th of July holidays during STP. Providers are not required to observe these holidays.

1.3 Program Service Hours

The program should provide 6.5 hours of instruction daily, including a maximum of a one-hour rest period for children.

2.0 Child/Family Eligibility

2.1 Age Requirement

All children must meet age eligibility for the STP. Acceptable documentation of proof of age includes birth certificates, certificates of live birth, passports, official medical documents, legal documents, or official documents from other countries. Proof of age eligibility must be on file the day the child begins the STP.

Rising Pre-K

Children must be four years of age on September 1, 2026. Only children whose birthdates are from September 2, 2021, through September 1, 2022, are eligible for participation in the Rising Pre-K program. Children should be age-eligible to attend Georgia's Pre-K or Head Start for the 2026-2027 school year.

Rising Kindergarten

Children must be four years of age on September 1, 2025 and entering Kindergarten this fall. Only children whose birthdates are from September 2, 2020, through September 1, 2021, are eligible for participation in the Rising Kindergarten program. Children should be age eligible to attend kindergarten for the 2026-2027 school year.

2.2 Income Eligibility Requirement

There is no income eligibility requirement for a child to participate in the Summer Transition Program.

2.3 Family Participation Requirement

Each participating family must complete the *Summer Transition Program Parent Agreement* form. A parent or legal guardian must agree to send the child to the Summer Transition Program for 6.5 hours of instructional time for the full 23 instructional days. Programs should discuss this form and the importance of regular school attendance with families at orientations and parent meetings.

3.0 Enrollment

3.1 Open Enrollment

Enrollment for the program must be open and nondiscriminatory. Children cannot be denied participation in educational programs on the basis of race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Title II of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976); or disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990).

3.2 Children Who are Experiencing Homelessness

DECAL recognizes that children and their families who experience homelessness deal with many challenges. Pre-K providers are encouraged to examine their existing enrollment policies to address families experiencing homelessness who are seeking to enroll a child in a Summer Transition Program. Providers choosing to give priority to eligible children experiencing homelessness should clearly define this practice in their written enrollment policies. Providers should contact their Pre-K specialist if guidance is needed for families who do not have access to enrollment and eligibility documentation.

Children who are experiencing homelessness are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in emergency or transitional shelters, motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations. This also applies to those that have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; like cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings. This also applies to migratory children living in circumstances described in the above situations.

3.3 Children in Foster Care

STP providers are encouraged to examine their existing enrollment policies to address families seeking to enroll a child, who is in foster care, in a Summer Transition Program. Providers choosing to give priority to eligible foster children should clearly define this practice in their written enrollment policies. Providers should contact their Pre-K specialist if guidance is needed for families who do not have access to enrollment and eligibility documentation.

3.4 Children in Military Families

A child whose parent or guardian is on active duty in the United States armed forces and has received official military orders to transfer into or within this state shall be eligible for enrollment, in the same manner and time as for students residing within the local school system, in the public school of the attendance zone in which he or she will be residing. This can occur prior to physically establishing residency within the local school system, upon presentation of a copy of the official military orders to the local school system.

3.5 Enrollment Priorities

All students enrolled in the STP program (Rising Pre-K or Rising Kindergarten) MUST meet the eligibility requirement to be eligible to participate.

Rising Pre-K (Child must meet BOTH eligibility requirements)
Child is registered to attend a Georgia's Pre-K or Head Start Program in the 2026-2027 school year.
Spanish is the child's home language.

Rising Kindergarten (Child must meet ONE of the eligibility requirements)
Child did not attend a Georgia's Pre-K Program or Head Start program during the 2025-2026 school year.
Child attended a Georgia's Pre-K or Head Start program but did not attend the entire 2025-2026 school year.
Child attended a Georgia's Pre-K or Head Start program the entire school year and falls into one of the priority groups listed below: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child identified as needing additional academic support• Dual language learner (Home language is a language other than English)• Foster care placement• Child's family is without permanent housing (homeless as defined by McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)• Child has an Individual Education Program (IEP)

3.6 Child Registration Forms

The Summer Transition Program – Child Registration Form must be used when registering a child for the Summer Transition Program. Forms are available at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/Prek/SummerTransitionProgram.aspx>. A parent or guardian must complete and sign a registration form for each child registering in the program. The complete child registration form must be filed in each child's file and kept on-site for review.

3.7 Student Social Security Numbers

Social security numbers are used to help identify students on rosters. Providers should request a copy of each enrolled student's social security card; however, parents cannot be required to submit the information. If a parent chooses not to submit the social security card, providers should ask the parent to complete the *Student Social Security Number Information Form* which can be found at www.decal.ga.gov under the 2025-2026 Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines as Appendix B. If the provider has a similar form or SSN waiver, they may choose to use that form. A copy of each student's social security card or completed *Student Social Security Number Information Form* (or similar form) should be kept on-site for review by the Pre-K specialist.

3.8 Procedures for Student Attendance

Daily attendance records must be maintained on site and include the dates when a child is absent and the dates/times when a child arrives late or leaves early. STP providers should formulate written procedures for addressing issues regarding attendance and tardiness. The attendance procedures should specify actions to be taken by the STP provider if attendance issues become problematic. For the Summer Transition Program, it is expected that attendance issues be followed up on each day the child is absent or tardy by the transition coach. Virtual home visits, parent meetings or phone conferences should be conducted to address attendance issues. Documentation of each attempt to follow-up with families should be maintained on site. Written notification to families can be used to document follow-up but cannot be used as the sole follow-up activity. The goal of follow-up is to determine the reason(s) for the problem and identify ways to resolve the problem. The goal of the attendance policy is to assist families in establishing and maintaining regular school attendance patterns which will ensure success in kindergarten and future educational activities.

3.9 Low Student Enrollment

DECAL will review roster reports throughout the STP contact providers directly concerning classes that are not full; and make a final determination about continuation of funding.

4.0 Student Support

Children grow and develop at their own rate. Although there is a general predictable sequence of milestones, they may not proceed through these stages in the same way or at the same time. A child's development is influenced by many factors including the child's environment and experiences. Once children have had the opportunity to acclimate to the STP classroom environment, differences in skills and behavior may become apparent. A child may exhibit significant developmental, behavioral, or health concerns that require special considerations. Providers should work with their STP Pre-K specialist to ensure that support services are provided to children and their families. Programs may also contact the Inclusion and Behavior Support Unit at DECAL (1-833-354-HELP or seedshelpline@decal.ga.gov for assistance with referrals to services.

4.1 Children with Identified Disabilities

A child who is age-eligible for the STP and is identified as eligible for special education and/or related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) shall not be denied access to the STP program.

4.2 Children with Developmental Concerns

Providers with concerns about a child's development should contact their STP Pre-K specialist for support and guidance. Providers should ensure that appropriate instructional activities are planned to meet the needs of the individual children. The specialist may recommend contacting the local school system's special education services department or the Inclusion and Behavior Support Unit at DECAL (1-833-354-HELP or seedshelpline@decals.ga.gov) for information regarding the referral process.

4.3 Children with Behavioral Concerns

STP providers are encouraged to implement strategies in the classroom that prevent challenging behavior and support strong social and emotional development. Providers can request help in developing and implementing these strategies from their STP Pre-K Specialist and an Inclusion and Behavior Support Specialist. Providers that have implemented these strategies and still have concerns about a child's behavior should contact the Inclusion and Behavior Support Unit at DECAL by calling the SEEDS Helpline (1-833-354-HELP or seedshelpline@decals.ga.gov) for more specific support and guidance as soon as possible. A multi-tiered system of supports should be implemented within the program to help the child be successful before requesting more intensive interventions, such as modified day or extended suspension. An effective multi-tiered system of supports includes the child, family, and teacher. Building supports at every level is beneficial to the child's success.

4.4 Student Discipline

Georgia's Pre-K is a division within Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). Georgia's Pre-K Program's policy regarding discipline is consistent with the Core Rules in the Rules for Child Care Learning Centers, Chapter 591-1-1-.11 (discipline) as follows:

- (1) Disciplinary actions used to correct a child's behavior, guidance techniques and any activities in which the children participate or observe shall not be detrimental to the physical or mental health of any child in the STP.
- (2) Personnel shall not: physically or sexually abuse a child or engage or permit others to engage in sexually overt conduct in the presence of any child enrolled in their program; inflict corporal/physical punishment upon a child; shake, jerk, pinch or handle a child roughly; verbally abuse or humiliate a child which includes, but is not limited to, the use of threats, profanity or belittling remarks about a child or his family; isolate a child in a dark room, closet or unsupervised area; use mechanical or physical restraints or devices to discipline children; use medication to discipline or control children's behavior without written medical authorization issued by a licensed professional and given with the parent's consent; restrict unreasonably a child from going to the bathroom; punish toileting accidents; force feed a child or withhold feeding a child regularly scheduled meals and/or snacks; force or withhold naps; allow children to discipline or humiliate other children; confine a child for disciplinary purposes; commit any criminal act, as defined under Georgia law which is set forth in O.C.G.A. Sec 16-1-1 et seq., in the presence of any child enrolled in the program.

4.5 Immediate Suspension

DECAL strongly discourages the use of suspension with young children. Programs should contact the Inclusion and Behavior Support Unit by calling the SEEDS Helpline (1-833-354-HELP or seedshelpline@decals.ga.gov) for support prior to implementing a suspension for a child enrolled in the STP. However, an immediate suspension for up to two days can be made at any time the STP provider determines a child is causing an immediate danger to himself/herself or others. The purpose of immediate suspension is to allow the program an opportunity to plan for the child's successful participation in the STP and should not be used as punishment. At the time of the immediate suspension, programs must contact the Inclusion and Behavior Support Unit at DECAL (1-833-354-HELP or inclusion@decals.ga.gov) for assistance with developing a plan to support a child's successful participation in the STP classroom. Programs should also schedule a conference with the child's family to discuss strategies and options. Document the conference including next steps and follow up as agreed upon by all parties.

Programs can implement immediate suspension up to two days at a time (**no more than five total days during the STP**) per child. No DECAL prior approval is needed; however, the program's STP Pre-K specialist must be notified, using the **STP Suspension Notification Form**, that such action has been taken within 24 hours. The form can be found on the Project Director tab of the STP Webpage at <https://www.decals.ga.gov/Prek/SummerTransitionProgram.aspx>

If both immediate suspension days have been used and a child is a danger to self, peers, or staff, the child may be sent home for the day while developing a plan for the child's successful return.

Programs should use the following procedure:

- Contact the Inclusion and Behavior Support Unit at DECAL (1-833-354-HELP or seedshelpline@decals.ga.gov) and notify their STP Pre-K specialist immediately.
- Prepare all documentation of behaviors and intervention strategies used to address concerns. The documentation must state the behavior, how often the behavior occurs, the interventions used, and the child's response to the interventions.
- Documentation should also include support provided to the teacher to help the teacher address concerns (Inclusion and Behavioral Support Specialists, resources, professional development, etc.).
- Schedule a conference with the child's family to discuss strategies and options. Document the conference including next steps and follow up as agreed upon by all parties.

5.0 Instruction

5.1 Instructional Planning

STP teachers are required to use the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) to plan instructional activities in the STP. The curriculum approved for their Georgia's Pre-K class may be used as a supplemental resource for planning instruction. If programs have the OWL Summer School Curriculum, they can continue to use this as a supplement. Teachers should individualize instruction based on the needs of the students in their class.

For Rising Kindergarten classrooms, teachers are required to use the HATCH assessment program in their classrooms. Teachers should use the data collected from the HATCH Ignite system to individualize instruction and plan activities for students.

Teachers are required to use DECAL provided lesson plan templates or another approved template for STP instruction. All components of the lesson plans should be completed each week. Lesson plan templates, and sample copies of lesson plans are located at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/Prek/Planning.aspx>.

For Rising Pre-K classrooms, lesson plans should reflect instruction and accommodations for dual language learners.

For Inclusion classrooms, lesson plans should reflect instruction and accommodations for students with IEP's.

5.2 Small Group Instruction

STP teachers are required to use the DECAL provided Small Group Lesson Planning Templates or another approved template. Small group time should reflect differentiated instruction based on the individual needs of all of the children in the class, including any children with disabilities. Goals for each child should be established at the beginning of the STP. Small Group Lesson Planning Templates are located at <http://decal.ga.gov/Prek/Planning.aspx>

5.3 Religious Instruction

No part of the STP instructional day may be religious in nature. Programs may choose to offer religious instruction outside of the STP instructional day. No STP funding may be utilized for religious instruction.

5.4 Record Keeping

Current year records must be maintained at the STP site. The STP provider must retain the following records for a minimum of **three** years as specified in their grant agreement for STP services:

- STP Child Registration form
- STP Student Roster Information form
- STP Roster Form
- Daily child attendance records
- Class enrollment rosters
- Age documentation
- Documentation related to suspension and/or disenrollment
- Parent orientation documentation
- Receipts and other financial records supporting expenses charged to the STP program

6.0 Materials and Supplies

6.1 STP Classroom Materials and Supplies

STP providers must maintain adequate and appropriate equipment, materials, and supplies for each STP classroom. All equipment must be in good repair. Providers should refer to the *STP Basic Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Inventory List* for recommendations for the STP classrooms. Providers should purchase any items that are missing or damaged prior to the beginning of the STP. Providers are required to receive prior approval from their Pre-K Specialist to purchase any items that are not on the *STP Basic Equipment, Materials and Supplies Inventory List*.

Rising Kindergarten

HATCH tablets:

- Each RK classroom should have three tablets (or another type of touch screen tablet with a 10in or greater screen on which the HATCH Ignite application can be downloaded)
 - DECAL provides three tablets for all newly funded classrooms
- Tablets should be in working order for each classroom.
- If the tablets are missing, damaged, or broken, providers are responsible for replacing them and can use their STP funds to purchase new ones.
 - If a site needs to purchase a new tablet, there are 2 options:
 1. Purchase an official HATCH tablet. The HATCH tablet comes with a one-year warranty and tech support. Providers can contact Angela Kontos by email at akontos@hatchearlylearning.com or by phone at (800) 624-7968 x 1105 to purchase a new tablet.
 2. Purchase a touch screen tablet of their choosing (screen size should be equivalent to the HATCH tablet, which is 10.1 inches) and download the HATCH Ignite app from the app store. Tech support for the program would be available, but not for the device.

Rising Pre-K

Books, toys, CDs, environmental print, displays, and other materials in the classroom should be bilingual and reflect the children's home language.

7.0 Delivery of Services

7.1 Program Administration and Supervision

Each STP grantee must designate an administrator to oversee the program. Each separate site housing STP classes must have an individual designated to serve as Site Director. The Site Director should be located on site at the STP facility during the 6.5-hour instructional day. The designated Site Director can have other duties, but should be able to focus on the operation of the program during the 6.5-hour day. Persons with other responsibilities, such as teaching in another classroom or preparing meals, do not meet the requirements to serve as a Site Director.

A Project Director, Site Director, bus driver, or cook may not also serve as a STP Lead Teacher, Assistant Teacher, or Transition Coach.

7.2 Classroom Delivery

Each STP classroom must have the following (Rising Pre-K and Rising Kindergarten):

- Two adults (lead teacher, assistant teacher, and/or substitute) must be present and actively involved with children during the entire 6.5 hours of instructional time each day of operation, with the exception of nap time.
- Transition coach
- Approved equipment, materials, and supplies

Rising Kindergarten

- Maximum class size is 14 students

Rising Pre-K

- Maximum class size is 12 students
- At least one of the teachers (lead or assistant) must be bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish. The teacher must be able to speak, read, and write fluently in Spanish (failure to meet this requirement could impact future funding.)
- Transition coach who is bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish. The Transition Coach must be able to speak, read, and write fluently in Spanish (failure to meet this requirement could impact future funding.)

7.3 Program Delivery

The program will provide 6.5 hours of instructional time, a minimum of 23 days or the equivalent instructional hours 149.5 hours for eligible children. STP providers are required to prepare and provide a program calendar which includes a minimum of 23 days of instruction to children and 3 days of STP related activities/duties for teachers (pre- and post-planning, staff development, in-service days). DECAL will observe the Juneteenth and 4th of July holidays during STP. Programs are not required to observe these holidays.

STP providers should operate STP classes in the classroom space equipped for a Georgia's Pre-K classroom. If the class will not operate in the space used for Georgia's Pre-K, the provider must ensure that the space being used is adequately furnished and supplied with age-appropriate items. Refer to section 6.1 for additional information.

7.4 Orientation

Programs are required to provide orientation prior to the beginning of the STP; one for teaching and administrative staff and one for families.

Individual and/or group orientation for families should be provided **prior** to the beginning of the STP. Orientation can be conducted via a web-based platform (i.e. Skype, Zoom etc.), face to face, or by phone. During family orientation, parents should receive an overview of the program including any required parent involvement. Documentation of these orientation sessions should be available in program files.

The STP calendar should be shared with STP staff and with families during orientation meetings.

7.5 Licensing

The facility must meet the licensing requirements of the appropriate licensing agencies where applicable. At a minimum, the license must cover the 6.5-hour instructional program.

7.6 Substitutes

The STP provider must ensure that a substitute lead teacher and/or substitute assistant teacher is present and working in the STP classroom for each day that a lead teacher and/or assistant teacher is absent due to illness, required training, personal leave, etc.

7.7 Rest Time

To maximize instructional activities, rest time cannot exceed one hour per day except when necessary to address specific needs of individual children. Children who do not rest should be given quiet activities such as books and puzzles. All children must have a covering (sheet) on their individual rest equipment (mat or cot) and a covering (blanket or sheet) for themselves. These items may be purchased with STP funds or families may choose to supply them. During the scheduled rest period, a ratio of one adult providing direct supervision to the maximum number of students in the STP class is acceptable.

7.8 Program/Staff Hours

The 6.5 hours of instructional time should begin no earlier than 7:30 a.m. with hours of operation as delineated in the original approved application. The remaining working hours of the lead teacher and assistant teacher must be used for STP program activities such as parent conferences, meetings, instructional planning, preparing for the next instructional day, etc. Inappropriate duties for STP teachers (lead and assistant) during the workday include site director, substitute in another classroom, before/after care teacher/supervisor, bus driver, office manager, cook, and receptionist. Inappropriate use of STP staff is unacceptable and will make the grantee ineligible for future funding. This includes using staff during the STP day to supervise children not enrolled in the program.

7.9 Transportation

Transportation services may be provided for enrolled STP children at the discretion of the program. Transportation should only be provided for transporting children between their place of residence and the child care facility/school. STP funds can be used to cover the cost of transportation services. Parents cannot be charged any fees for transportation services.

7.10 Extended Day (Before and After School Care)

DECAL does not require STP providers to offer extended day services; however, providers are required to work with families needing extended day services to ensure the needs of the family are met. Families may receive services through the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program if they meet eligibility requirements. For questions related to CAPS and STP contact caps.stp@dec.al.ga.gov.

- **If a family is not already receiving CAPS**, the Transition Coach should assist the family in completing the CAPS application using Georgia Gateway (<https://gateway.ga.gov/>). After the family completes the application, the Transition Coach must obtain the following information from the parent:
 - Date of application submission
 - Confirmation number (starts with "T")

The Transition Coach must notify the CAPS program that the family has submitted an application by emailing caps.stp@dec.al.ga.gov and provide the confirmation number of the new application. If the family is eligible, CAPS will create the appropriate childcare certificates to subsidize before and after childcare services.

- **If a family already has a CAPS case**, the Transition Coach will instruct the family to submit a “Type of Care” change request on the Georgia Gateway website (<http://www.gateway.ga.gov>) to add the eligible child(ren) enrolling in STP to their current CAPS case. The Transition Coach will notify CAPS by email at caps.stp@dec.al.ga.gov to provide the Change Request confirmation number (starts with “T”). A CAPS Change Unit Specialist will contact the family to process the request.

8.0 Family Support Services

8.1 Objectives

Support services are a vital component to the success of the Summer Transition Program. Project directors are responsible for ensuring that transition coaches carry out the objectives (either directly or indirectly). The following objectives should serve as a guide for activities STP providers should provide to the children and their families:

Overall Objectives:

- Health – No child should exit the STP with an undetected condition that could hinder his/her ability to learn. Any child with identified needs should be referred to the proper resource or agency for access to and coordination of services. Documentation of referrals should be kept on-site.
- Child Development – Family knowledge of the child’s development and involvement in their child’s educational experience should be enhanced through informational seminars, volunteer opportunities at the center/school, parent/center conferences, etc. Families should be encouraged to read to their children daily and complete activities with their children.
- Community Resources – *Upon request*, families should be provided information about community resources such as GED, TANF, PeachCare for Kids, help in obtaining extended day services, etc.
- Kindergarten Readiness Initiative (Rising Kindergarten STP)– Assistance should be provided to obtain all necessary documentation and health related requirements for kindergarten registration prior to the end of the Summer Transition Program.

8.2 Health Services

Health screenings are necessary for STP students so that any problems that might interfere with the child’s ability to learn can be identified and addressed as soon as possible. All programs should ask parents the date of their child’s last health exam and provide a referral if an additional health screening is needed.

STP providers should ensure that all children have a current Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening (Georgia Department of Human Services Form 3300) and a DHS Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231). Form 3231 must have either the *date of expiration* or *school attendance* block checked. Children must be up-to-date on all immunizations required for school entry. **If children are missing forms, STP providers should help families obtain the required screenings prior to going to Georgia’s Pre-K or kindergarten.**

Children may register and begin attending before completion of these examinations and certificates. However, the DHS Certificate of Immunization and the Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening must be on file prior to the child completing the Summer Transition Program.

Expired certificates must be updated within 30 calendar days of the expiration date. An updated certificate, letter from a physician about continued treatment, or another appointment card should be included in the child's documentation as follow-up for children attending Georgia's Pre-K or kindergarten.

If a box on Form 3300 is marked Needs Further Evaluation, the transition coach must follow up on any "needs further examination" results and support families in identifying and receiving additional screenings, examinations, or treatments. Families should be asked to bring updated and completed certificates after each appointment and follow-up visit. The STP site should have documentation of the follow-up (i.e., doctor's notes, scheduled appointments, information from parents, etc.).

8.3 Family Engagement Activities / Workshops / Take Home Activities

The STP Transition Coach is required to conduct a **minimum of one** family activity **per week** (adult workshop or family engagement activity). Activities should be planned based on the needs of the families in the STP. Transition Coaches should survey families (either through a family survey or one-on-one discussions) to identify topics of interest and need as well as the type of delivery method they prefer (virtual, in person, or phone call). Providers should work with the Transition Coach to establish a budget to support the family activities each week.

- Family orientation does NOT count towards the weekly family activity requirement. Orientation should be held prior to the first day of the program and should be in addition to the weekly activity requirement.

*****Transition Coaches should NOT preplan activities until they have met with families to determine interest areas.**

To encourage participation, meals or snacks can be provided at family activities. Pre-K funds may be used to purchase door prizes and giveaway items. Examples of appropriate giveaway items include:

- Gift cards to purchase materials children can use in school
- Children's books
- Manipulatives
- Other learning materials.

Adult Workshops should be based on the needs of the families in the STP. Topics for workshops could focus on:

- Engaging fathers
- Self-care for parents
- Understanding the impact of trauma on child development
- Promoting family conversations
- Developmental stages for young children

- Healthy meal planning
- Banking basics
- Budgeting 101
- Career planning
- Internet safety
- DIY home repair
- Personal safety
- First aid
- Community resources for families
- Children with challenging behaviors
- Language and literacy and other topics of interest to promote learning.

STP funds may be used to pay outside trainers that specialize in a topic area.

Family Engagement Activities

Family engagement promotes children's healthy development and wellness, empowers parents, and improves family well-being. Examples of family engagement activities include but are not limited to:

- Kindergarten transition activities
- School readiness activities
- Family dance night
- Cooking activities
- Outdoor activities
- Literacy night
- Family photo shoots
- DIY activities
- Science experiments

Take-home family engagement activities may also be provided for families and should include the materials needed for the activity and directions on how to use the materials. Take-home activities should be supplemental to the required weekly in-person family activity.

Family engagement activities and workshops should be documented on the Transition Coach Activity Form and kept on file for review by the Pre-K specialist. The agenda and sign-in sheets for each activity should also be kept on file for review.

The Transition Coach Activity Form and an example of a family survey are located on the STP website at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/Prek/SummerTransitionProgram.aspx>

8.4 Student Transition Materials

Student transition materials are **individualized** items that help support or prepare students for their transition to Georgia's Pre-K or kindergarten. Programs will receive an additional \$600 per class in their STP payment to pay for these materials. The Transition Coach should meet with families individually to discuss their needs, then make a plan to purchase transition items for the students in the program.

*****Because family needs differ, programs should NOT buy the same items for all students in the STP.**

Examples of appropriate student transition materials include:

- Blanket for nap time
- Clothing or shoes for school
- School supplies
- Spirit wear from an elementary school
- Backpacks/book bags
- Water bottles
- Lunch boxes

No prior approval is needed to purchase student transition materials. During the STP program visit with the Pre-K specialist, the Transition Coach will share the program's plan for determining the items to purchase and the process for distribution of the items to the students.

9.0 Program Fees

9.1 Instructional Fees

Fees such as registration, curriculum fees, field trips, classroom supplies, etc. cannot be charged to any child/family for services needed to operate the instructional program.

9.2 Field Trips/ Special Experiences for Students

Field trips should be instructional in nature and be connected to topics of study in the STP classroom. It would be appropriate to also have in-house field trips or virtual field trips. Field trips broaden instructional activities and make a teaching topic more relevant. Acceptable field trips include the library, grocery store, post office, petting zoo, environmental center, botanical garden, museum, farm, children's theater, or animal shelter.

9.3 Transportation Fees

Providers may not charge fees for transportation services provided during the Summer Transition Program.

9.4 Meals

Summer Transition Program providers may not charge fees for food for any child. STP funds should be used to cover meal costs.

Summer Transition Program providers should have a written policy regarding meals served at the program including whether or not outside food for meals is allowed in the center. Programs may set up their own policies regarding outside food; however, if the center allows food to be brought in for any other age group, then children enrolled in the Summer Transition Program must also be allowed to bring in outside food. Policies regarding meals should reflect compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

STP providers can submit an application on or before May 15 to participate in Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program. Happy Helpings is federally funded by the USDA and administered by DECAL. The program provides reimbursement for nutritious meals and snacks

served to children in low-income areas when schools are closed for the summer. Sponsoring organizations must be nonprofit with a 501c3 designation. However, a for-profit organization can operate a meal site under an approved sponsor. The Happy Helpings program does not provide reimbursement to meal sites. Reimbursement is provided to the approved sponsor.

Once an organization's application has been approved and a successful pre-operational visit has been conducted, the organization will be considered an approved sponsor in the Happy Helpings program. Every organization must continue to comply with program regulations/guidance and maintain adequate records to support each monthly claim for reimbursement and costs charged to the program.

Specifically, organizations must serve meals and snacks that meet the USDA meal pattern and maintain daily records including, but not limited to, menus, number of participants in attendance, and number of meals served at each point of service. Organizations must also manage a fiscally sound and accountable program in which only reasonable and allowable costs are charged to the Happy Helpings program and must maintain related invoices and receipts. Moreover, sponsors must distribute and/or collect forms as required by the Happy Helpings program.

CACFP afterschool centers don't receive reimbursement during the summer months, so these Programs may convert to Happy Helpings to serve the same children that they serve during the school year.

In other cases, CACFP institutions that propose to participate in Happy Helpings must serve children who would not otherwise be served under CACFP. Institutions that propose to operate a separate meal service for children who are not enrolled in a CACFP child care center or day care home may be approved to participate in Happy Helpings if they meet eligibility requirements.

STP Providers that are interested in applying to participate in the Happy Helpings program must submit a two-part viability screening document to Nutrition Services. Recruitment for sponsoring organizations begins in October of each year. Both part 1 and part 2 of the viability screening document must be submitted by March 1, 2026. To request a viability screening, please visit the Happy Helpings website at <https://happyhelpingsga.com/sponsors/> or email Happyhelpings@decalfga.gov.

For more information, see the [Happy Helpings: Roadmap to becoming a Sponsor](#)

10.0 DECAL Monitoring and Technical Assistance

10.1 Pre-K Specialist Support

DECAL Pre-K staff work closely with STP providers and are available for consultation regarding technical assistance, questions about the program, problems with maintaining enrollment, approval of equipment/materials/supplies requests, training needs, etc. Staff will provide specific technical assistance to help bring providers into compliance with STP requirements.

11.0 General Personnel Information

11.1 Criminal Background Checks

Every employee must have a satisfactory record check determination to be present at a facility when children are present for care, as required by O.C.G.A. 20-1A-30 et. seq. and Rule 591-1-1-.09, Rules, and Regulations Child Care Learning Centers. If Grantee is not a licensed child care learning center and participates in the Summer Transition Program as approved by the Grantor, Grantee then must comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-1A-30 et. seq. or similar state or federal requirements. The grantee must allow, upon the request of the Grantor or its authorized representatives, the review of all necessary documentation for compliance purposes.

11.2 Employees

All STP site personnel are employees of the STP provider for whom they work, not DECAL or the State of Georgia.

11.3 Salary Chart

STP Salary Information	Salary Amount Funded by DECAL (Providers are required to pay 100% of the funded salary amount to the position)
Private Site Lead Teacher Salary	\$ 6,792.63*
Public School Lead Teacher Salary	\$ 6,792.63*
Assistant Teacher Salary	\$ 3,531.68*
Transition Coach Salary (Part-time Position)	\$ 3,539.20*

*** The salary rates reflect the gross amount, which is an individual's total earnings before any taxes or deductions.**

11.4 Employment Terms Document

It is **required** that all STP grantees have written documentation detailing the employment terms between the employer and all STP lead teachers. This written documentation is **recommended**, but not required, for STP assistant teachers and transition coaches. The written documentation should be developed by individual providers and shall include the following terms, at a minimum:

- Employment begin and end date
- Compensation information
- Benefits information
- Professional conduct expectation
- Broad scope or work
- Holiday pay
- Sick Leave

The written documentation can be an employment contract, work agreement or letter of intent signed by the employer, provided to each individual STP lead teacher, and kept on-site for review by DECAL staff. Providers may refer to the *Sample Georgia's Pre-K At-Will Employment Agreement (Appendix S)* for guidance in developing the employment terms document.

12.0 Lead Teachers

12.1 Days of Service

All lead teachers for the Summer Transition Program are funded based on 5 weeks of 8-hour work days (6.5 hours of instruction, 1.5 hours of planning). DECAL does not maintain personnel policies for teachers. Programs should provide teachers with a contract or work agreement outlining pay, including sick leave and holiday policies, for the Summer Transition Program. A STP Lead Teacher may not also serve as Project Director or Site Director, bus driver, or cook.

12.2 Age Requirement

All lead teachers must be 21 years of age or older. **Exception:** Lead teachers who have a valid bachelor's degree or higher teaching credential do not have to meet the minimum 21 years of age requirement. The teacher must, however, meet the age requirement for the facility's licensing agencies.

12.3 Credential / Certification Requirements

The minimum education requirement for a Summer Transition Program lead teacher is a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related degree. Lead teachers for the program must also have prior experience working with Georgia's Pre-K Program. Please refer to the Georgia's Pre-K Operating Guidelines Section 12 for specific credential requirements.

12.4 Salaries – Lead Teachers

Providers are required to pay teachers 100% of the salary funded by DECAL. Section 11.3 provides salary rates. The salary rates reflect the gross amount, which is an individual's total earnings before any taxes or deductions. Actual compensation may vary based on the number of days and hours worked

Benefits

Offering benefits is at the discretion of the STP provider. If an employer decides not to offer benefits or if benefits have been allocated during the regular school year, the benefits amount can be utilized to pay additional salary over the minimum salary requirement, or the funds can be expended in the *STP Operating Costs* category.

13.0 Assistant Teachers

13.1 Days of Service

All assistant teachers for the Summer Transition Program are funded based on 5 weeks of 8-hour work days (6.5 hours of instruction, 1.5 hours of planning). DECAL does not maintain personnel policies for teachers. Programs should provide assistant teachers with a contract or work agreement outlining pay, including sick leave and holiday policies, for the Summer Transition

Program. A STP Assistant Teacher may not also serve as Project Director or Site Director, bus driver, or cook.

13.2 Employment Requirements

An assistant teacher must be 18 years of age or older.

13.3 Credential/Certification Requirements

Assistant teachers must have a qualifying credential/certificate and prior experience working with Georgia's Pre-K Program. Please refer to the Georgia's Pre-K Operating Guidelines Section 13.4 and/or Appendix U for specific credential requirements.

13.4 Salaries – Assistant Teachers

Providers are required to pay teachers 100% of the salary funded by DECAL. Section 11.3 provides salary rates. The salary rates reflect the gross amount, which is an individual's total earnings before any taxes or deductions. Actual compensation may vary based on the number of days and hours worked

Benefits

Offering benefits is at the discretion of the STP provider. If an employer or system decides not to offer benefits or if benefits have been allocated during the regular school year, the benefits amount can be utilized to pay additional salary over the minimum salary requirement, or the funds can be expended in the *STP Operating Costs* category.

14.0 Substitute Teachers

14.1 Substitute Teacher Employment Requirements

The STP provider must ensure that a substitute lead teacher and/or substitute assistant teacher is present and working in the STP classroom (during the 23 instructional days) for each day that a lead teacher and/or assistant teacher is absent.

A substitute teacher must meet ALL of the following minimum requirements:

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Possess a high school diploma or its equivalent
- Satisfactory Records Check Determination

15.0 Transition Coaches

15.1 Days of Service

Transition coaches will work 6-7 weeks or 140 hours per classroom (each classroom is funded for a part-time position) to allow time for recruiting, program set-up, family workshops, family engagement activities and program closeout. Work hours should be flexible and will vary based on the best times to provide family engagement activities as determined by the parent surveys.

Providers are required to maintain a transition coach work schedule onsite for Specialist review.

- A STP Transition Coach may not also serve as Project Director or Site Director, bus driver, or cook.

15.2 Credential Requirements

Transition coaches must have a CDA, TCC, TCD, Paraprofessional Certificate, Associate's Degree (AA, AS, AAS, AAT) or higher credential in child development, early childhood education, family and child development, elementary education, or educational leadership **and** experience working with families of young children.

15.3 Salaries – Transition Coaches

Providers are required to pay transition coaches 100% of the salary funded by DECAL. Section 11.3 provides salary rates. The salary rates reflect the gross amount, which is an individual's total earnings before any taxes or deductions. Actual compensation may vary based on the number of days and hours worked

Benefits

Offering benefits is at the discretion of the STP provider. If an employer or system decides not to offer benefits or if benefits have been allocated during the regular school year, the benefits amount can be utilized to pay additional salary over the minimum salary requirement, or the funds can be expended in the *STP Operating Costs* category.

16.0 Professional Development

16.1 Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS)

The Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS) is a database specifically for those who work directly with young children or on their behalf.

For individuals, the GaPDS combines education, experience and training and assigns all registrants a level on the "Career Level" chart. Supporting documents must be submitted to confirm educational attainment and training. Supporting documents include official transcripts, training certificates, copies of CDAs and technical college credentials. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) reviews transcripts and credentials for the GaPDS to verify an individual teacher's credentials and degrees. Until a teacher is enrolled in the GaPDS, the eligibility to serve in the lead or assistant teacher role has not been established. Project Directors must enter staff in PANDA, but the GaPDS is an individual – based system and staff must enroll themselves.

STP Teachers (lead and assistant teachers) must be enrolled in GaPDS before a student roster is submitted where they are assigned as the lead or assistant teacher in a classroom. A teacher hired after a roster submission (between submissions) must be registered prior to the next roster submission. A GaPDS number is required in PANDA for all STP lead teachers and assistant teachers. If a teacher has been certified as a Georgia teacher or paraprofessional through the Professional Development Standards Commission (PSC), the teacher should indicate this when he/she registers in the GaPDS. If not, he/she will need to follow the instructions from the GaPDS and submit the requested proof of what he/she entered in the GaPDS. Any level of degree must

be supported by an official transcript from an accredited institution. If a teacher's credential cannot be verified, an email from PANDA will prompt the Project Director to have the teacher review their GaPDS profile and submit the appropriate credential information.

Failure to have credentials current and verified in the GaPDS will affect STP payments. It is imperative that Project Directors verify that credential information is correct on rosters. Project Directors should also confirm that teachers have registered in the GaPDS, submitted required documentation to the GaPDS, and the GaPDS has verified the credential.

Questions regarding enrolling in GaPDS or assistance with an account should be directed to gapds@decals.ga.gov or 404-267-2760.

Official transcripts must be submitted directly by the college or university in a secure electronic format to gapds@gapsc.com. All other documents, such as training certificates, CDA certificates, or technical college credentials should be uploaded directly into the user's profile in GaPDS. Certificates and transcripts must be submitted electronically; mailed documents are not accepted.

16.2 Importance of Training

To maintain quality standards, STP virtual training is available to programs. Staff attendance at required training sessions will be verified by a Pre-K Specialist. Failure of providers and their staff to participate in required STP training shall place their program in noncompliance and may jeopardize future STP funding. Training requirements for 2026 will be sent to programs in April.

16.3 Professional Development/Training Registration

The STP Project Director is responsible for distributing professional development and training information to their sites and all personnel. The Project Director must register staff for Pre-K training in the GaPDS. For help with professional learning needs, Pre-K providers should contact their Pre-K Specialist or email summerschool@decals.ga.gov.

16.4 Professional Development/Training Reimbursement to Staff

Summer Transition Program funds should be used to pay for salaries for staff when attending required STP professional learning sessions.

17.0 Grant Award Notification and Budgets

17.1 Awarding of Grant Agreements

Providers will receive their 2026 STP grant agreement through email (sent to the grant signatory listed in GAPREK) to sign via DocuSign. **For licensed childcare centers, the Verification of Lawful Presence must be completed before a grant agreement will be issued.** STP payments cannot be processed until the grant agreement has been signed and finalized by DECAL. Finalized grant agreements will be available in GAPREK on the document library tab.

17.2 Multi-County and Multi-Program STP Providers

DECAL will issue one operating grant agreement containing separate funding amounts for each site. Funds are class-specific; therefore, STP providers must spend the required minimum levels for teacher salaries, transition coach salaries and supplies for each class at each site.

18.0 Expenditure Requirements

18.1 Expenditure Guidelines

The following expenditure guidelines apply to all STP providers:

- Administrative Costs: The STP provider may use no more than six percent of the budget for administrative expenses (i.e. office supplies, accounting and/or clerical costs, Pre-K's portion of the director's salary and benefits). Any amount over 6% used for administrative expenses may result in funds due back to DECAL.
- Operating Costs: Appropriate expenditures for STP funds include, but are not limited to, classroom materials and supplies, transportation costs, student transition materials, family engagement activities and supplies, meal costs, replacement of HATCH tablets for Rising Kindergarten classes, and operating expenses. Any operating expenses should be prorated to determine the appropriate STP allocation.
- Student Transition Materials: All programs are required to spend a minimum of \$600 per classroom on Student Transition Materials. (See section 8.4)
- Salaries: Lead teacher, assistant teacher and transition coach salaries must be paid at 100%.
- Benefits: Offering benefits is at the discretion of the STP provider. Examples of benefits include health insurance, life insurance, flexible benefits such as dental or vision, dependent childcare, and the providers portions of federal and state taxes. If an employer or system decides not to offer benefits or if benefits have been allocated during the regular school year, the benefits amount can be utilized to pay additional salary over the salary requirement, or the funds can be expended in the STP *Operating Costs Category*.
- Expense Records: The STP provider shall maintain full and complete program funding and expense records pertaining to the grant agreement for a period of three years beyond the ending date, or until all litigation, claims, or audit/review findings involving the records have been resolved if such claim or audit/review is started before the expiration date of the three-year period.
- Credit Card Purchases: If STP purchases are made by credit card, the credit card balance for the purchase must be paid in full by July 31, 2026.

18.2 Record Keeping

The STP provider is required to keep all receipts and other records necessary to support figures reported on the annual reconciliation statements. If a STP provider is audited and receipts and other records are not available to support these amounts, funds must be returned to DECAL.

Examples of such records include, but are not limited to:

- Canceled check copies (front and back)
- Bank statements
- Paid invoices
- Federal and state payroll records
- EFTPS or other evidence of taxes remitted to regulatory agencies
- Timesheets
- Summer Transition Program Grant Agreement
- Original receipts for equipment, materials, and supplies for STP classrooms
- Documentation of the STP portion of operating expenses
- Appropriate allocation methodology

Misuse of funds may result in denial of current and future participation in Georgia’s Pre-K Program, Summer Transition Program and/or in prosecution.

19.0 Reimbursement Process

19.1 Automatic Deposit of Funds

All payments will be deposited in the provider’s bank account via an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) process. Appropriate forms and instructions to allow for EFT were included in the Georgia’s Pre-K Program application package. Providers are responsible for the correct routing of their payments by promptly notifying DECAL of changes in bank account information or ownership. Providers are responsible for reviewing their monthly payments and payment documentation each month.

19.2 Payments

Funds will automatically be deposited in accounts in two payments beginning in May. Once a payment is processed, the deposit will occur within 3 to 7 business days from the processed date in GAPREK. Payments may be delayed if the signed grant agreement is not returned or class roster information has not been successfully submitted. All payments are subject to state data processing and bank processing delays. Payment invoices will be available in GAPREK on the document library tab.

Schedule of Payments:

Payments	Payment Run Date	Total Amount per Class
Payment 1	Tuesday, May 12, 2026	\$ 12,920.00
Payment 2	Wednesday, June 10, 2026	\$ 12,920.00
TOTAL		\$ 25,840.00

19.3 Program Summary Charts

2026 – Private Site Per Class	
Lead Teacher Total Salary	\$6,792.63
Lead Teacher Benefits (23.760% of base salary)	\$1,613.93
Assistant Teacher Total Salary	\$3,531.68
Assistant Teacher Benefits (23.760% of base salary)	\$839.13
Transition Coach Total Salary	\$3,539.20
Transition Coach Benefits (23.760% of base salary)	\$840.91
Student Transition Materials	\$600.00
Operating Costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other STP Expenses (Appropriate expenditures include, but are not limited to, classroom materials and supplies, transportation costs, family engagement activities and supplies (food and giveaways), meal costs, HATCH tablet replacement, and general operating expenses.) 	\$8,082.52
Total Per Class	\$25,840.00

2026 – Public School Per Class	
Lead Teacher Total Salary	\$6,792.63
Lead Teacher Benefits (50.884% of base salary)	\$3,456.36
Assistant Teacher Total Salary	\$3,531.68
Assistant Teacher Benefits (23.760% of base salary)	\$839.13
Transition Coach Total Salary	\$3,539.20
Transition Coach Benefits (23.760% of base salary)	\$840.91
Student Transition Materials	\$600.00
Operating Costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other STP Expenses (Appropriate expenditures include, but are not limited to, classroom materials and supplies, transportation costs, family engagement activities and supplies (food and giveaways), meal costs, HATCH tablet replacement, and general operating expenses.) 	\$6,240.09
Total Per Class	\$25,840.00

19.4 Rosters

Roster data is critical and must be accurate for students and teachers. Roster information is subject to audit and must be substantiated by enrollment and attendance records for students and documentation of credentials for teachers. Inaccurate roster reporting may impact future participation in the Summer Transition Program and/or Georgia’s Pre-K Program.

The roster(s) must be completed and properly submitted through the GAPREK system. Children who have enrolled or registered for the STP but have not attended a scheduled STP instructional day should not be reported on the roster. Dates must be accurate for beginning and ending points for children and teachers. Continue to maintain accurate student enrollment in the Class Reporting Manager through the end of the program.

Summer Transition Program roster due date:

Rosters	Count Date	Due Date
Roster 1	Thursday, June 18, 2026	Thursday, June 25, 2026

Failure to submit rosters by the due date will result in delayed payments. Rosters submitted after the due date may result in payments being processed by DECAL after all other payments have been made.

19.5 Fraudulent Reporting on Rosters

Any person who knowingly and willfully makes a false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation in a statement to a government agency may be guilty of a felony of a violation of Code Section 16-10-20 of the Official Code of Georgia. Any person, firm, corporation, or other legal entity that 1) knowingly presents or causes to be presented a false or fraudulent claim for payment or approval or 2) knowingly makes, uses, or causes to be made or used a false record or statement material to a false or fraudulent claim, shall be liable for civil penalties. The civil penalty can range

from \$5,500 to \$11,000 for each false or fraudulent claim, plus three times the amount of damages sustained by the government because of such act pursuant to Code Section 23-3-121 of the Official Code of Georgia.

20.0 Audit and Accounting Requirements

20.1 Reconciliation Report

STP providers must provide DECAL with a reconciliation report spanning the dates of the grant agreement. The purpose of the reconciliation report is to provide an actual accounting of all of the providers expenditures related to the Summer Transition Program. This report shall demonstrate that funds were spent in appropriate categories for their intended uses. Supporting documentation must be maintained and provided upon request from DECAL. (See Section 18.1 and 18.2).

The STP Reconciliation Report dates are as follows:

STP Reconciliation Available/Opens in GAPREK	Monday, July 20, 2026
STP Reconciliation Due by 5pm in GAPREK	Friday, August 14, 2026

Failure to submit the STP Reconciliation Report by the due date may impact a program's good standing status. If a provider does not submit the reconciliation report, Pre-K payments for the 2026-2027 school year will be held until the report is received or Pre-K funding for the school year may be terminated.

Funds paid by DECAL for STP services can be used to cover costs of the STP program only and the STP program's prorated share of other allowable expenses expensed through normal operation of the facility. Allowable expenses are those ordinary and necessary expenses directly benefiting or resulting from STP operations.

Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) provides authoritative guidance that must be followed for identifying the appropriate basis for allocating shared costs. The basis of allocating costs should be similar to the unit of measure for incurring the costs or consuming the expensed item. Examples include using a square footage basis for rent/mortgage expenses and utilities, and a per person or average daily attendance basis is appropriate for office supplies, management staff, and transportation services if provided. Expenses must be allocated using the most logical basis for the costs incurred. For example, food costs would be allocated based on the number of children rather than square footage.

Expenses involving related parties must also be charged in accordance with GAAP. Related parties are one or more entities subject to the significant influence over the operating and financial policies of another entity. Providers involved in related party transactions with their centers should survey the surrounding business area and provide support that financial charges to the Pre-K program are within the range of same or similar arms-length transactions for their area. An example of related party transactions is when the owner of the facility is paid rent by the Pre-K program.

20.2 Right to Audit/ Agreed Upon Procedures Review

DECAL reserves the right to require an independent, certified financial audit of the Summer Transition Program at the Pre-K provider's expense. DECAL reserves the right to conduct Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) reviews.

DECAL may conduct audits and AUP reviews as specified in the Summer Transition Program Grant Agreement for the 2025-2026 school year, Section III, Part C::

Grantee agrees to cooperate fully with Grantor auditors and/or agents providing Audit or Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) review services. Grantee will coordinate with auditors/reviewers to have appropriate staff available during the scheduled audit/review period. Grantee will make advanced preparations for scheduled audits/reviews to make available for auditors or reviewers all identified documents, records, and entity related materials requested by the auditors/reviewers for the current school year, as well as for prior school years in which Grantee participated in Georgia's Pre-K Program as requested by the Grantor. Grantee's failure to substantially prepare for a scheduled audit engagement or provide requested documentation or information to an auditor/reviewer during the scheduled audit period may result in the withholding of grant payments. The failure of Grantor to review and/or inspect the services provided or to discover a breach of this Grant or any amendment thereto shall not subsequently operate as a waiver of any remedies available to the Grantor.

If during the course of an audit there are negative audit findings, the provider may be scheduled for an audit for the subsequent school year at the discretion of DECAL.

20.3 Record Keeping Findings and Adverse Findings

Findings noted during the course of the AUP review that do not result in a balance of funds due back to DECAL are considered Record Keeping Findings. Examples include:

- Understatements of reported expenses compared to the STP Reconciliation Report
- Overstatements of reported expenses compared to the STP Reconciliation Report
- Variances between the expenditures reported on the STP Reconciliation Report and the allocable Pre-K STP expenditures supported during fieldwork.

Findings noted during the course of the AUP review that result in a balance of funds due back to DECAL are considered Adverse Findings. Examples include:

- Failing to support unreimbursed food costs
- Failing to meet lead teacher, assistant teacher and transition coach salary requirements
- Failing to support that payroll taxes were forwarded to the relevant taxing authorities
- Failing to support that the use of all monies received from DECAL were used in accordance with applicable regulations and guidelines.

20.4 Balances Due to DECAL

If a STP program is unable to support its expenditures with receipts and other records as a result of having its financial records reviewed (AUP, audit, investigation), funds may be required to be returned to DECAL. There are three options regarding these outstanding funds:

- Remit the balance in full by the deadline date

- Submit a payment plan proposal with a 10 percent good faith payment by the deadline date
- Submit all source documentation by the deadline date, disputing the results of the AUP review findings.

20.5 Audit Reconsideration

In order for an AUP review to be re-considered, providers must submit a formal request. The request:

- Must be written
- Must be made within 15 days of the notice of balance due letter from DECAL
- Must include a detailed audit trail including all source documents necessary for DECAL to make a final decision in a timely manner.

20.6 Random Reviews

The STP provider is subject to random, unannounced expenditure reviews by DECAL or DECAL contract auditors during the program year. All records (programmatic and financial) must be retained for a minimum of three years as stated in the grant agreement.

20.7 Tracking of STP Funds

The provider must maintain financial records to track STP expenditures in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). All records must be retained for a minimum of three years as stated in the grant agreement.

The provider is required to keep all receipts and other records necessary to support figures reported on the STP reconciliation statement. If a program is audited and receipts and other records are not available to support these amounts, funds must be returned to DECAL. Examples of such records include federal and state payroll records to verify payment of lead teacher, teacher assistant and transition coach salaries, original receipts for equipment, supplies, and materials for STP classrooms, and documentation of the STP portion of operating expenses.

20.8 Fraudulent/ Inappropriate Use of Funds

The provider shall ensure that expenses charged to the STP funding source are not concurrently charged to another program funding source. Providers that participate in any federal programs operated by DECAL and who are terminated from a federal program because of fraudulent or misrepresentative submission of records and/or inappropriate use of funds as determined by the federal program, shall also be terminated from the Summer Transition Program and Georgia's Pre-K Program. The provider must ensure that no STP funds are used to pay penalties associated with adverse actions imposed by licensing or governmental agencies. STP expenditures should be identifiable as separate from federal expenditures (e.g., Head Start, CACFP).

Misuse of funds shall result in repayment of funds and denial of current and future participation in Georgia's Pre-K Program, Summer Transition Program, and/or in prosecution.

21.0 Reporting Requirements

21.1 Pre-K Application and Database Access (GAPREK) Participation

STP providers are required to use the GAPREK system to conduct STP related activities (rosters, application). Regular access to the internet and an e-mail address are required to use GAPREK. Using GAPREK allows providers to receive regular STP payments as quickly as possible and reduces duplication of provider efforts related to child roster data.

22.0 Non-Compliance Funding Consideration

22.1 Non-Compliance

Instances involving noncompliance with the *Summer Transition Program Operating Guidelines* can jeopardize future STP funding. A Summer Transition Program grant agreement may not be offered for the following reasons:

- Missing student enrollment and eligibility documentation (section 2.0)
- Failure to meet enrollment eligibility and priority levels (section 3.4)
- Low student enrollment in STP classes (section 3.9)
- Disenrollment or extended suspension without prior approval (section 4.5)
- Failure to offer the required number of family engagement activities (section 8.3)
- Lack of required/credentialed staff (sections 12.0, 13.0, 14.0 and 15.0)
- Pre-K Project or Site Director serving as the Transition Coach (section 15.1)
- Failure to attend required training (section 16.2)
- Failure to follow expenditure guidelines (section 18.0)
- Inaccurate roster reporting (section 19.5)
- Failure to submit required reports, information and documents to DECAL by due dates (sections 19.4 and 20.1)

23.0 STP Inclusion Classrooms

Any STP classroom may include a child with a disability. However, a STP Inclusion classroom refers to a designated classroom in which Georgia's Pre-K, the Local School System, and/or private child care provider implement an approved collaborative instructional model. In this model students with and without an Individualized Education Program (IEP) learn together.

25.1 Prior Approval

A STP program must have approval from DECAL before operating a STP Inclusion classroom (RK or RPK). Requests and questions regarding inclusion classrooms should be submitted via email to summerschool@dec.al.ga.gov.

25.2 Enrollment

Rising Kindergarten: 4 students with IEP's and 10 students without IEP's (class size: 14 students)
Rising Pre-K: 3 students with IEP's and 9 students without IEP's (class size: 12 students)

Students attending a STP Inclusion classroom should have an IEP through the Local School System. The student(s) with an IEP participate in the same classroom environment and daily

opportunities as their peers without IEPs. However, additional support and accommodations may be necessary based on a student's IEP. All students enrolled in a STP Inclusion class must be enrolled in accordance with the STP Operating Guidelines.

25.3 Teaching Staff

STP Inclusion classrooms are staffed with additional personnel to meet the needs of the enrolled students. Generally, the classrooms are staffed with three teachers; a full-time general education lead and assistant teacher, funded by DECAL, and a full-time or part-time Special Education support teacher (full-time or part-time is determined by the needs of the students with IEP's).

DECAL does not provide funding for Special Education Support Staff. If your program is not able to provide the Special Education Support Staff salary, you may choose to supplement/pay the salary by using any of the following:

- Transition Coach salary
- Transition Coach benefits
- Operating Costs

If an alternative personnel structure is desired, prior approval must be obtained from DECAL.

25.4 Transition Coach

The transition coach role is not required for STP Inclusion classrooms as DECAL is unable to provide additional funding for special education support staff. If your program cannot provide the special education staff salary, DECAL will allow you to forgo a traditional transition coach role for this classroom.

A Transition Coach is a valuable role in the summer and would be an asset to the families in your program if your budget allows.

If your STP Inclusion classroom will not be supported with a specified transition coach, the director or another staff member would be responsible for ensuring the transition coach duties are completed. These duties include recruitment, orientation, student files, attendance, Summer Transition Materials for students, and one required Family Engagement Activity (RK: Kindergarten Transition, RPK: Pre-K Transition or Literacy-focused). Other workshops and family engagement activities would be recommended. STP funds can be used to support these activities.

25.5 Funding

The budget for STP Inclusion classrooms is the same as all other STP classrooms.