



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

Brian P. Kemp
Governor

Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DECAL and Child Trends Launch "DECAL Listens" Statewide Call-In Line to Gather Public Input on Child Care in Georgia

New 24/7 phone line invites Georgians to share experiences, concerns, and ideas to help shape the future of child care

ATLANTA, Ga. (October 5, 2026) – The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), in partnership with Child Trends, a nationally recognized nonprofit research organization, has launched DECAL Listens, a new statewide initiative designed to gather public feedback about child care in Georgia. Beginning today, anyone with thoughts, concerns, ideas, or experiences related to child care in Georgia can call 888-222-8740 at any time, day or night, and leave a message of up to two minutes. Callers may remain anonymous.

The information collected through DECAL Listens will become part of Georgia's Child Care Needs Assessment and help inform how the state prioritizes and invests more than \$400 million in federal discretionary child care funding in the years ahead.

The phone line is open to everyone, including parents, grandparents, child care professionals, business leaders, educators, advocates, and community members.

"Every family, educator, and employer experiences the child care system in a different way," said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. "Through DECAL Listens, we're creating a simple and accessible way for people across Georgia to share their experiences and ideas directly with us. Your input will help shape future investments and ensure that our decisions reflect the real needs of children, families, providers, and communities throughout the state."

Child Trends will independently review and summarize the feedback received through the phone line and provide findings to DECAL as part of the statewide needs assessment process. They won't share the actual recordings with anyone and can't respond to individual messages.

In addition to the call-in line, DECAL and Child Trends are gathering input through a variety of other outreach efforts, including surveys, stakeholder discussions, focus groups, and a series of regional DECAL Road Shows taking place across Georgia this month. The events will be held in:

Tifton – October 15
Cartersville – October 20
Morrow – October 22
Statesboro – October 29

The Road Shows will give child care owners and directors an opportunity to hear updates from DECAL leadership, participate in professional learning sessions, connect with agency staff, and provide direct feedback about the challenges and opportunities facing Georgia's early care and education system.

DECAL officials encourage all Georgians with an interest in child care to participate in DECAL Listens and help shape the future of early care and education in the state.

How to Participate

DECAL LISTENS

 888-222-8740

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Leave a message of up to two minutes sharing:

- Your experiences with child care in Georgia
- Challenges facing families or providers
- Ideas for strengthening child care services
- Suggestions for future investment and support

About Child Trends

Child Trends is a leading nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization dedicated to improving the lives and prospects of children, youth, and families through research, policy analysis, and evidence-based solutions. DECAL is partnering with Child Trends to conduct Georgia's Child Care Needs Assessment and gather feedback from stakeholders across the state.

About Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is the state agency supporting Georgia's children and families by overseeing and promoting access to high-quality early care and education programs. These programs include Georgia's Pre-K, child care licensing, CAPS, Quality Rated, nutrition programs, Head Start collaboration, and statewide quality improvement efforts. Get more information at www.dec.al.ga.gov.