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Hours of Operation:
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Child Care
Resource &
Referral of
Central East
Georgia



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

WINTER 2024

Early Care and Education BULLETIN!

Dear Child Care Professionals of Georgia:

Happy New Year! I am writing to give you an update from DECAL's Nutrition Services team. Nutrition and physical activity are such an important foundation for children's growth, development, and learning; and we applaud everything you do for the children in your care to keep them active and well.

As you may know, Nutrition Services administers the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program. Both programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support the most vulnerable children and adults with improved nutrition. We work with local sponsors and other institutions that serve nutritious meals and snacks around the state. In the last federal fiscal year (ending September 30, 2023) 513 CACFP institutions served almost 65 million meals in 157 counties, and 69 Happy Helpings sponsors served almost 3 million meals in 101 counties. We are very grateful for their service.



This is the time of year when we begin recruiting sponsoring organizations to participate in Happy Helpings. This very important service provides meals and snacks for children in low-income areas during the summer months when they are not in school. Our goal is to have at least one meal site in each of Georgia's 159 counties. During the past two years, we received state funds that allowed us to offer start-up grants to new or experienced sponsors that enabled them to expand their meal service into previously unserved counties. Thanks to this funding and the initiative of sponsors, children had access to meals in 101 Georgia counties last summer. We are hopeful that we will be able to offer more start-up grants in the near future.

We would love to have your help reaching potential sponsors in any of the 58 unserved counties listed below. If you are affiliated with an organization that may be able to sponsor or operate a feeding site in one of these counties, please call 404-657-1779 or visit the Happy Helpings website at <https://happyhelpingsga.com/>.

Appling	Cook	Jenkins	Pickens	Turner
Atkinson	Dade	Johnson	Pierce	Union
Bacon	Dawson	Laurens	Pulaski	Warren
Banks	Dodge	Lincoln	Quitman	Webster
Berrien	Emanuel	Long	Schley	Wheeler
Brantley	Evans	Lumpkin	Screven	White
Brooks	Gilmer	Marion	Stewart	Wilcox
Calhoun	Gordon	Miller	Sumter	Wilkes
Camden	Haralson	Montgomery	Talbot	Wilkinson
Charlton	Heard	Murray	Telfair	Worth
Chattahoochee	Jasper	Oconee	Towns	
Clay	Jeff Davis	Oglethorpe	Treutlen	

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Thanks for helping us expand our reach. I hope you have a healthy and prosperous year!

Sincerely,



Rian Ringsrud
Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration

Early Childhood Educators of the Year for 2023-2024

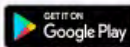
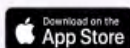
DECAL and the Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning have named their three winners for Georgia's Early Childhood Educators of the Year for 2023-2024.

The winner in the Infant Category is **Noel Weimer** from Water Oak Family Child Care Learning Home in Roswell; the winner in the Toddler Category is **Bianca Brown** from the Greenbriar School in Evans; and the winner in the Preschool Category is **Chantelle Hester** from Smart Starters Academy Family Child Care Learning Home in Savannah.

"Child care workers in infant, toddler, and preschool classes are our champions in the classroom," said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. "These early childhood educators are laying a solid foundation for children's academic, physical, and social development. This program rewards professionals who exemplify excellence in caring for Georgia's youngest learners in child care. Their dedication and commitment to providing high quality care and early education is impacting the future of our children, our communities, and our state. We are so proud to celebrate and recognize these educators."



Congratulations



Download CDC's free
Milestone Tracker app

One million downloads and counting!

Learn more at cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker



Enrollment in Georgia's Pre-K Program

Need a quick start guide for determining eligibility, locating and enrolling a child in Georgia's Pre-K and answers to commonly asked questions regarding the program? There is help available!

Follow the link [here](#) to learn more.



Need child care?

Are you looking for child care that is still
open during the COVID-19 crisis?

Visit QualityRated.org, or call

877•ALL•GA•KIDS

(1-877-255-4254)

Challenging Behaviors

It's no surprise that challenging behaviors in the early childhood classroom are on the rise. But how do we move from the chaos of overstimulation to the happy hum of a room where children are engaged in learning?

"While there are many variables outside our control, we as educators can mindfully work to create an environment that supports children," writes educator, Lauren Maples. In her article "Supporting the Whole Child: Creating Learning Spaces with the Nervous System in Mind", Lauren offers practical suggestions for creating low stress environments for children where they can play and learn. Read [here](#).



For the latest updates on Training,
please visit our website at

<https://leapccrr.org/events/>.



Congratulations to Central Georgia's Newest Quality Rated Providers

A Child's Campus	★★	La Petite Academy - Panola	★
A Step Above Preparatory Academy	★★	Little Creative One's Learning Center	★★
Amazing Hearts Child Development Center	★★	Loftin Learning Center	★
Briarcliff Child Care Center	★★	Love and Grace Christian Academy	★★
Bright Minds Academy	★★★★	Love and Jerry Road to Excellence Academy	★★
Bright Minds Learning Center	★★	Misty Sue's Christian Childcare Center	★★
Brookhaven Christian CDC	★★	Gayla Morehead	★
Cathy's Daycare Learning Center #2	★★	Morgan's Academy, Inc.	★
Champions Preparatory Academy LLC	★	New Beginnings Child Care, LLC	★★
Childcare Network #250	★★★★	Next Generation Learning Center	★★
Childcare Network #296	★★	Next Level Enrichment Academy	★★★★
Cornerstone Learning Center #3	★★	Vera Pickett	★★★★
Decatur Adventist Learning Center Corporation	★★	Powell's Learning & Development Center, Inc.	★★
Marsha Dennis	★★	Gloria Smith	★★
Developing Minds Academy V	★★★★	The Amazing World of Learning Center	★
Discovery Point #59	★★	The Chestnut Treehouse	★★
East Lake Early Learning Academy	★	The Elaine Clark Center, Inc.	★★
Eye on Your Child Care Center, Inc.	★★	The Frazer Center	★★
Future Leaders Christian Academy Decatur	★★	The Pangea Schools	★★
Glenwood Scholar Academy	★	Cherese Thomas	★
Higher Calling Christian Academy	★★	TOTally Kids Childcare	★★
Rebecca Holmes	★★	Phyllis Wallace	★★★★
iAchieve Academy	★★	Ora Wiley	★★★★
Trecia Johnson	★★	Bridgette Willis	★
Vanessa Johnson	★★	Wings of a Dove Christian Preparatory Academy	★★
Jungle of Joy Childcare Learning Center, LLC	★★	A World of Hope Child Care Learning Center	★★
Kindercare Learning Center #408	★★	Kingdom Kids Development Center	★★

Ratings from 10/01/2023 - 12/31/2023

**THE OBJECT OF TEACHING A CHILD IS TO ENABLE HIM TO GET
ALONG WITHOUT A TEACHER.**

~Elbert Hubbard~