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Hours of Operation:  
Monday - Friday  
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Child Care  
Resource &  
Referral of  
Central East  
Georgia



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

SUMMER 2024

## Early Care and Education BULLETIN!

Dear Child Care Professionals of Georgia:

You've probably heard by now that DECAL is revising the Quality Rated program. This is the first major revision since the program was established in 2012, and it presents an opportunity for us to reaffirm the core child care practices that help children grow, thrive, and succeed. Our hope is that the redesign of the rating process will also make the system more supportive and easier for providers to navigate.

When we at DECAL talk about high-quality child care, we're talking about the quality of child care environments that foster strong, positive relationships between young children and their classroom teachers, the other adults they interact with, and their peers. This understanding is shared across all DECAL programs—CAPS, CCS, Instructional Supports, Professional Development, Georgia's Pre-K, and Quality Rated.

Children's interactions with caregivers who are nurturing, supportive, and responsive to their needs and interests are the foundation of high-quality early care and learning, and this won't change with the new system.

The changes we will make with the new Quality Rated program are based in large measure on your feedback. Last year we collected extensive data from providers and other stakeholders about what it's like for you to complete the rating process. One of the things we heard from many providers is that the formal ERS observations can be stressful for classroom teachers and students. And therefore the ratings may not fully capture the quality of your work with children.

It is our goal for the new system to put you, the provider, in charge of a cycle of continuous quality improvement. You will have more options in the rating process, and we hope to include resources for a program improvement planning team. It is our plan to create a new structure that will make the formal observations more predictable and less stressful.

We will be soliciting feedback from providers and other stakeholders throughout the design and implementation of the new system. We held a webinar in May and fielded a stakeholder survey afterward. We are in the process of analyzing that feedback now, and we plan to hold another webinar later this year to update you on our progress.

We're all excited about creating a new system that works better for everyone, and we look forward to sharing it with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bentley Ponder".

Bentley Ponder  
Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations & Partnerships



# Attention CAPS Providers!!

*Announcing*  
**A SERIES OF WEBINARS**

*About*  
**IMPORTANT CHANGES TO**



**12:30–1:30 p.m.**  
**July 10, July 23, August 13, 2024**

**For Details & Registration Go To:**  
**<https://bit.ly/CAPSWEBINARSERIES>**



**Attention CAPS Providers! Please join DECAL for a series of Three Webinars About Important Changes To CAPS, on July 10, July 23, and August 13, 2024, 12:30–1:30 p.m. To make sure you don't miss any important information: Get More Details and Register Now for all the webinars by using the links found in the letter posted at <https://bit.ly/CAPSWEBINARSERIES>.**

## Georgia's New Pre-K System

The anticipated launch of the new Georgia's Pre-K System (GAPREK) is here! Starting today, you can say goodbye to the old PANDA system and hello to a refreshed, efficient, and user-friendly platform designed just for you.

In the spirit of the song, "My Favorite Things" from The Sound of Music, we want to take you on a virtual tour of OUR favorite things about GAPREK! Click below to check out the dashboard features that make this system a game-changer for Janika Young, Pre-K Regional Manager.

If you have any questions, contact your assigned Pre-K specialist or email [GAPREK.Support@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:GAPREK.Support@dec.al.ga.gov).



## Resource Roundup - Our Monthly Professional Development Newsletter

Resource Round-Up, our must-read monthly newsletter dedicated to supporting early childhood education providers. Our mission is to equip you with the latest tools, resources, and insights to help you create enriching, engaging, and effective learning environments for young children. If you are not currently on our mailing list for this newsletter, [send us a message](#) requesting to be added. You won't be sorry!



**For the latest updates on Training,  
please visit our website at  
<https://leapccrr.org/events/>.**



## Congratulations to Central East Georgia's Newest Quality Rated Providers

Adventure Alley Learning Center	★★	K.C.'s 24 Hr. Child Care Center	★
Anointed Hands Childcare	★★	Yellow Rocket Tech & Science Academy LLC	★★
Big Blue Marble Academy Dunwoody	★★	Lemontree Academy LLC	★★
Bizzy Bee's Learning Center LLC	★★	Lena's Lullaby Childcare, Inc.	★★
Bloom Learning Academy	★★★★	LIT Academy Inc.	★★
Bright Beginnings Learning Academy	★★	M & K Academy, Inc.	★★
Trecisa P Brown	★★	Mommy Angels Daycare	★★
Calvary Augusta Preschool	★★	No Limits No Boundaries Center	★
Childcare Network #50	★★	Peachtree Academy - East	★
Janice M Davis	★★★★	Diamond L Price	★★
Discovery Point #61	★★★★	Reading World Academy	★★
Discovery Zone Kids	★★	Saint Paul Ame Christ School	★★
Divine Care Children Center	★★	Nancy L Santos	★★
Epps Learning Center, Inc.	★	Sharon W Seaborne	★★
Fun Steps Ahead	★★	Elease L Sims	★★
JonEris Christian Academy	★★	Teresa D Smith	★★
Giselle Dumornay Early Learning Academy	★★★★	Stepping Stones Learning Ctr	★★
Grace Learning Academy	★★	The Astounding Academy LLC	★
Head of the Class Early Learning Center	★★	The Marks Academy	★★
Jiminy Cricket Playland	★★	Wilkes County Head Start	★★

*Ratings from 04/01/24 - 06/30/24*

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**Need child care?**  
**Are you looking for child care that is still  
open during the COVID-19 crisis?**  
**Visit [QualityRated.org](http://QualityRated.org), or call**

**877-ALL-GA-KIDS**  
(1-877-255-4254)

*"While we try to teach our children all about life, Our children teach us what life is all about."  
~Angela Schwandt~*



# Feed Kids this Summer by Operating a Happy Helpings Meal Site



It's not too late to participate in Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program this summer. Working with an approved sponsor, your organization can operate a meal site and kids can benefit from up to two free nutritious meals per day.

DECAL will provide your organization with a list of approved sponsors that serve meals in your area. Once you select the sponsor, they will provide the meals and any required training, The sponsor will also receive the reimbursement for the meals.

Meal sites can be located in a variety of places such as apartment complexes, community centers, parks, churches, summer camps, community pools, but they must be located in a school zone where at least 50% of the children enrolled qualify for free or reduced priced meals.

For more information about Happy Helpings, please contact Carl Glover at [carl.glover@decals.ga.gov](mailto:carl.glover@decals.ga.gov) or by phone at (404) 217.3312. You may also visit <https://happyhelpingsga.com/>.



Our office will be closed on **September 2, 2024** in observance of Labor Day.

Business will resume as normal the following business day.

For urgent matters, please email us at [leapccrr@augusta.edu](mailto:leapccrr@augusta.edu) and someone will get in touch with you immediately upon our return.



Join DECAL via Zoom for this month's Child Care Engagement Network meeting on **Thursday, July 25, at 12:00 PM**. Ann Panzica from DECAL's Provider Relations team will join us.

The Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program has several important changes coming this year that child care providers need to know. Ann will share those changes and be available to answer all your questions.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)