



October 20, 2020

CACFP Spotlight:

My Little Geniuses' Maria Claudia Ortega shares her Farm to ECE Philosophy

In celebration of Farm to Early Care Education (ECE) Month, we introduce you to **Maria Claudia Ortega** of **My Little Geniuses** in Marietta, GA, a long-time Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provider and Farm to ECE educator. After immigrating from Colombia, she opened a home-based childcare facility and has been a passionate educator for early care learning in Georgia ever since.

Introducing healthy foods at a young age sets the foundation for a healthy future so Maria teaches her children where certain foods come from and how they are grown. A few years ago, she was the recipient of the Farm to ECE grant which has allowed her to align the program with CACFP.



In My Little Geniuses' backyard, there is a garden with a variety of fruits and vegetables that are planted and grown for the children to learn the process and gain first-hand experience. By participating in the growing process, the children are more likely to try fruits and veggies and share the excitement with their families as well. She shared that some of her kids will ask their parents, much to their surprise, to purchase broccoli, spinach or squash at the grocery store.

By providing hands-on experience, she asks the kids to help wash the fruits and veggies in the outdoor sink prior to tasting them. In the garden, they grow a myriad of items such as broccoli, kale, cauliflower, garlic, green pepper, potatoes, cilantro and more. The kids get to plant their own veggies, caretake for them along the way, observe their growth and try the final product of their hard work. She explains, "all day the kids are exploring and learning by hands-on experience."

Another advantage is that her garden-grown produce is organic, never using harmful

chemicals, and using only sustainable ingredients in the soil. With the crops that are grown in the garden, she explains, “I cook every day. I also cook [foods] from my culture: soups, beans, rice, and chicken.” She says that the trick to having the children try all these healthy foods that they would not normally eat or like, is how you serve them. Maria makes healthier substitutes for ranch dressing using Greek yogurt or prepares vegetables in her air-fryer. She never uses ketchup or mayo, using minimally processed foods, always only using natural ingredients, which the kids love.

Maria motivates the children to eat these healthy foods by telling them they will grow stronger if they eat them. She says that after eating certain fruits and veggies, the kids will tell her, “Look! My hair is growing longer, my nails are growing, and even my heart is stronger.” By experiencing the growth of produce in the garden, Maria also teaches them shapes, colors and numbers in both English and Spanish.

Just this past month, Maria was the recipient of the 2020 Todos Somos Heroés (We Are All Heroes) Educator Hero Award from the local Spanish network, Telemundo Atlanta. She was commended for her “care and deep-rooted interest [she has] in [her] students and families enrolled in My Little Geniuses.” During the challenges of COVID-19 in the past few months, Maria made sure to send fresh fruits and vegetables to the families while her students were unable to attend My Little Geniuses. Maria’s passion and love for the children shines as she provides a healthy foundation for them through her early care learning.



For more information on Maria Ortega and My Little Geniuses, please visit their [Facebook Page](#).

Last Chance to Complete CACFP Renewal *Deadline is October 31*

All participating institutions and sponsors are required to complete annual renewal requirements in order to continue participation in the CACFP.

CACFP Annual Training & Assessment

Registration opened for FY2021 CACFP annual training on **July 15, 2020**, in GA ATLAS. The annual training assessment must be completed and submitted prior to receiving access to the 2021 CACFP application.

For instructions on how to register and complete FY2021 Annual Training and Assessment Questions, [click here](#).

CACFP Annual Renewal Documentation Requirements

Upon completion of the Annual Training and Assessment, the CACFP application for the associated program year will change the institution or sponsor’s status to “Not Enrolled” and the “Enroll” button will be available. The FY2021 Application opened on **August 15, 2020**. Institutions and sponsors can now “Enroll” in FY2021 once the training and assessment is complete.

The 2021 CACFP application must be submitted on or before **October 31, 2020**. [Click here](#) to access the FY2021 CACFP Annual Renewal Documentation Requirements to determine if your institution/sponsoring organization is required to submit annual

documents.

Original or Annual Budgets and Budget Amendments must be submitted on or before **October 31, 2020**.

If you have any questions, please contact your assigned Application Specialist:

Application Specialists or Business Operations Specialist	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
Paula Lawrence	o (zero)-G,	Paula.Lawrence@dec.al.ga.gov	(404) 463-2111
Shericka Blount	H-P	Shericka.Blount@dec.al.ga.gov	(404)656-6411
Temika Moore	Q-Z	Temika.Moore@dec.al.ga.gov	(404) 463-1494

How to Handle FDCH Carry Over

According to the CACFP Policy Memo, [Carry Over of Unused CACFP Administrative Reimbursement](#), dated October 1, 2020, Family Daycare Home (FDCH) Sponsors may only carry over 10% of administrative payments received into the succeeding fiscal year. Funds exceeding 10% must be returned to Bright from the Start or used in another USDA Child Nutrition Program. If the 10% carryover funds are not expended in the succeeding fiscal year, you are required to return the unused funds to Bright from the Start. FDCH sponsoring institutions also have the option of returning all excess funds without carrying funds into the subsequent period.

Additional Requirement:

To support the calculation, a FDCH sponsor must submit a general ledger or the bank statement showing the total ending balance with the FDCH Carryover Letter to the Budget Compliance Supervisor, [Shonda Franklin](#), by **November 30** of each year.

Is Your Institution Required To Submit An Annual Budget?

Original or Annual Budgets and Budget Amendments must be submitted on or before **October 31, 2020**. At a minimum, annual budgets are required when:

- An Independent Center that will have administrative costs, costs that require prior approval or specific prior written approval, formal procurement, a budget line item that will increase or decrease by 20% or more, and/or new costs that were not previously approved in the budget.
- An Independent Center with an approved budget in FY2020 with approved costs and the same costs in FY2021, **but new supporting documentation must be submitted for review and approval** (e.g., lease agreements for center space, equipment rental, etc.).
- All Administrative, Center and DCH sponsoring organizations **must** submit an annual budget.

Please follow links below for budget related tools

and references:

- [Budget Guidance Manual](#)
- [Budget Checklist](#)
- [Budget Allocation Worksheet](#)

When can our Institution start working on the FY2020-2021 budget?

August 15 - October 31, 2020

Where should I send my budget revisions?

The documentation to support costs can be uploaded in GA ATLAS. After completing this step, please notify the Budget Compliance Supervisor, [Shonda Franklin](#). All costs must be approved in the budget prior to using CACFP reimbursements to pay for the cost. Please refer to the [Budget Guidance Manual](#) for guidance on budget revisions.

For questions regarding the budget please contact the Budget Compliance Supervisor, [Shonda Franklin](#) or (404)-651-7181.



New “Submit for Approval” Button Added to the Budget Detail

Please note there has been an update to the Budget Detail in [GA ATLAS](#). The update will impact **how a budget is submitted for review and approval**.

Institutions will no longer utilize the Save button to submit its budget to DECAL for review and approval. The Save button will now function as a save data option only until the budget is complete and ready to be submitted to DECAL for review and approval.

A new "Submit for Approval" button was added to the Budget Detail. Institutions will now utilize the "Submit for Approval" button to submit the complete budget to DECAL for review and approval. Once the "Submit for Approval" button is selected the institution will receive a Save Confirmation message.

If the Save Confirmation message states the form contains errors, the institution will need to **Edit** the budget before selecting **Finish**. If the Save Confirmation message states the form has been submitted without errors, the institution will need to select **Finish**.

Please see the screenshots below. If you have any questions, please contact [Shonda Franklin](#).

Comments to Institution:

Created By: FNSA on: 8/12/2020 3:56:56 PM Modified By: FNSA on: 8/12/2020 3:56:57 PM

[VIEW](#) | [MODIFY](#) | [DELETE](#)

Save Confirmation

The form contains **errors**.

Save Confirmation

Congratulations!

The form has been submitted without errors.

< Edit Finish

Get Informed: Upcoming Training Opportunities

Upcoming Training and Technical Assistance

November 12, 2020 – Budget Readiness Webinar

Do you have the budget basics? Join this webinar session to learn:

- the purpose of the budget package,
- the purpose of all the budget line items in GA ATLAS, and
- how to prepare & develop a complete GA ATLAS budget package.



**Registration
Coming Soon**

November 16, 2020 - Memo Monday!

Regulations are constantly changing and interpreting all the policies and memorandums can be a challenge. Therefore, Nutrition Services will discuss the following policy memos during our November *Memo Monday*.

- *Carry Over of Unused Administrative Reimbursement in the CACFP* dated 10.1.2020
- *Charging Net Allowable Administrative Cost to the CACFP* dated 10.1.2020
- *Ensuring Institutions Implement Adequate Oversight and Internal Controls of CACFP Operations* dated 10.1.2020

November 19, 2020 – Procurement Readiness Webinar

Planning for proper procurement? Join this webinar session to learn:

- procurement practices when procuring food & non-food items,
- how to develop solicitations,
- how to incorporate local sourcing, and
- how to implement Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) practices into meal service.

USDA Announces Claim Deadlines for FY 2021

State policy requires that original claims be submitted within 30 calendar days following the last day of the full month covered by the claim. Federal regulations require institutions to submit their final reimbursement claims including any revisions within 60 calendar days following the last day of the full month covered by the claim.

The sponsors and/or institutions original claims not postmarked and/or submitted within 30 calendar days will be required to fill out a late claim explanation form after trying to submit a claim that is outside the state's 30 days deadline. Claims not postmarked and/or submitted within 60 calendar days cannot be processed unless DECAL and/or FNS determines that an exception should be granted. For example, ABC Day Care must submit their original claim for March reimbursement claim no later than April 30, and the final including any revision for March reimbursement claim no later than May 30.

Claim deadlines can be found on the [DECAL website](#).

Contact the Senior Manager of Provider Services by email at Sonja.Adams@decals.ga.gov with questions.

USDA releases Training Modules on Food Buying Guide



Have you heard? The USDA's Team Nutrition has released three new training modules on the **Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs**. They are designed to take you step-by-step through using the **Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG)**. Each module will provide an in-depth look at the FBG with interactive knowledge checks to assist the learner.

Topics covered include:

- **An introduction to the FBG**
- **The Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW)**
- **Child Nutrition (CN) Labels** and Product Formulation Statements (PFS)

These modules and other training sessions such as webinar recordings can be accessed on the **Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs: Training Resources** site. Also check out the modules on the Institute of Child Nutrition's **eLearning Portal**.

CACFP Waiver Survey Due by October 26

DECAL's Nutrition Services Division appreciates your commitment to serving children healthy meals during COVID-19.

As you know, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) established several nationwide waivers to support access to nutritious meals while minimizing potential exposure to COVID-19. Each state is required to report how many CACFP Childcare Centers and Day Homes utilized these waivers.

To meet this reporting requirement, we are asking each sponsor and institution to complete the following short survey by **October 26, 2020**.

Please [click here](#) to participate in the survey.

Update on Nationwide Waivers During COVID-19

In light of the exceptional circumstances of the current public health emergency, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has extended Nationwide Waivers to support access to nutritious meals while minimizing potential exposure to the novel coronavirus.

Waiver request forms that were previously approved for both CACFP and SFSP do not need to be re-submitted. If you were previously approved for a SFSP only waiver, but would like to continue utilizing the waiver in your CACFP operations, please submit a request to utilize the waiver for the CACFP. Similarly, if you were previously approved for a CACFP only waiver but wish to utilize the waiver in your operation of the traditional SFSP, a SFSP waiver request is required.

Waiver requests can be submitted to **Leslie Truman**. For any waiver-related questions, please contact **Sonja Adams**.

NATIONWIDE WAIVERS

DECAL Participation of Nationwide Waivers due to COVID-19

For full details on the CACFP & SFSP waivers below, please click on the links to read the actual waiver memo or [click here](#) for more information on DECAL's website.

CACFP Only

At-Risk Area Eligibility Requirements (New)

Under this waiver, schools and afterschool care centers, regardless of their location, are allowed to serve at-risk afterschool meals and snacks to students after the regular school day.

****Waiver in effect until June 30, 2021****

CACFP & SFSP

Parent Pick-Up:

Under this waiver, Program operators in a State with an approved waiver allowing non-congregate meal distribution during COVID-19 related operations may distribute meals to a parent or guardian to take home to their eligible children. ****Waiver extended to June 30, 2021****

Meal Pattern Flexibilities:

The requirement to serve meals that meet the meal pattern requirements is waived during the public health emergency. ****Waiver extended until June 30, 2021****

Meal Times Waiver:

The requirement that meals must follow meal service time requirements is waived during the public health emergency. ****Waiver extended until June 30, 2021****

Non-Congregate Feeding:

The requirement that meals be served in a congregate setting and must be consumed by participants on site is waived during the public health emergency. ****Waiver extended to June 30, 2021****

Onsite Monitoring Requirements

FNS waives, for all CACFP sponsoring organizations, that CACFP monitoring requirements included at 226.16(d)(4)(iii) be conducted onsite. To ensure Program integrity during this time, sponsoring organizations should, to the maximum extent practicable, continue monitoring activities of Program operations offsite (e.g., through a desk audit). ****Waiver in effect until September 30, 2021****

SFSP Only

Nationwide Waiver to Allow Reimbursement for Meals Served Prior to Notification of Approval and Provide Flexibility for Pre-Approval Visits in the SFSP (New)

FNS waives the requirement that reimbursement shall not be paid for meals served at a site before the sponsor has received written notification of approval for participation in the Program. ****Waiver in effect until June 30, 2021****

Nationwide Waiver to Allow SFSP & SSO Operations through June 2021 (New)

This waiver allows the SFSP & SSO to continue to operate through June 2021.

****Waiver is effective until June 30, 2021****

Closed Enrolled Eligibility (New)

Under this waiver, for all States, Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO) closed enrolled sites during the COVID-19 public health emergency may determine site eligibility through area eligibility without collecting income eligibility applications. ****Waiver extended until June 30, 2021****

First Week Site Visits (New)

FNS waives, for all States, the requirement that Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors are required to visit each of their sites at least once during the first week of

operation. This waiver applies to State agencies administering and local organizations that have operated the SFSP successfully in the previous year, and SFSP sponsors in good standing that have successfully participated in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). ****Waiver extended until June 30, 2021****

Offer Versus Serve Flexibilities (New)

FNS waives, for all States, requirements to limit the use of Offer Versus Serve (OVS) to school food authorities and require sponsors to apply OVS under the rules followed for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). This waiver applies to State agencies administering and local organizations operating the SFSP. ****Waiver extended until June 30, 2021****

Is Your Organization Interested in Participating in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Component of CACFP?

The USDA's, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) **At-Risk Afterschool Meals Component** provides funding to afterschool programs that serve a meal and/or snacks to children and teens in low-income areas.

In order to participate, programs must:

- be organized primarily to provide care for children after school or on the weekends, holidays, or breaks during the regular school year
- provide organized, regularly scheduled activities
- include educational or enrichment activities, like arts and crafts, computer lessons, or homework help
- be located in an eligible area*



The USDA recently issued a nationwide waiver of **Area Eligibility allowing schools and afterschool care centers, regardless of their location, to serve at-risk afterschool meals and snacks to students after the regular school day.*

If your organization is interested in learning more or participating in the program, please contact **Leslie Truman** to register for the next training.

Serving Meals to School-Age Children *Sponsors & Independent Centers Must Complete Certification Statements*

This is a reminder that on August 21, 2020, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided clarification to State agencies and Program operators (institutions) about serving meals to school-age children, **12 years old and under**, who are attending school virtually, and who are also enrolled and attending child care during the day. You can review the USDA memo



here.

Based on this guidance, DECAL has developed a document that outlines the requirements institutions must follow when serving meals to school age children. **This option does not apply to school-age children over 12 years of age.** However, children ages 13-18 may be served through the At Risk Afterschool program. Please review the document that has been updated to emphasize specific age-related

requirements [here](#).

ACTION REQUIRED: As a reminder, to ensure program integrity, DECAL is requiring Sponsors/Institutions to take the following action:

1. Sponsors must complete the School-Age Children Certification Statement-Sponsors confirming that they will follow program guidelines and agree to inform, train and monitor program accountability for their applicable sites.
2. Independent Centers must complete the School-Age Children Certification Statement-Independent Centers agreeing to follow program guidelines.
3. School-Age Children Certification forms must be kept on file at the sponsor's office or center and must be made available upon request by USDA, DECAL or an authorized representative.

Get Ready to Turnip the Volume with Georgia Organics!

We're thrilled to announce that sign-ups for this year's **October Farm to School Month** campaign are open!

When you sign up, you will receive access to an online toolkit filled with turnip-themed activities, standards-based lessons, recipes, and more from the **Georgia Organics Farm to School** team.

Whether at home or in a classroom, these resources are suited to teachers, community educators, and homeschooling parents alike. [Click here](#) to learn more about October Farm to School month and sign up today!



Procurement News

Procurement Updates

As a reminder, Procurement Election Notices for CACFP FY21 have been sent. If you have not completed the notice, please complete the form and return to the Procurement and Procurement Compliance Officer, **LaMonika Jones**, as soon as possible.

Procurement Tips

COVID-19 has brought specific challenges when it comes to food access and meal delivery. If you are contracting with a vendor to provide meals, now is the time to discuss whether they are experiencing food shortages. If your vendor is experiencing food shortages on specific

items, please have them provide you with comparable replacement options.

Likewise, if you are contracting with a Food Service Management Company, do not be afraid to discuss comparable replacement items to include with the vended meal.

As always, make sure the items are CACFP approved and meet meal pattern requirements.

Procurement Document Revision

We have updated the Agreement to Furnish Foods for CACFP. Please visit the DECAL Nutrition Services Procurement Page or [click here](#) for the revised version.

Local Sourcing Spotlight: Turnip the Volume!!



Turnips are known as a cooler month root vegetable, they grow best in climates where the winters are mild and where temperatures range from 60 to 65 degrees. When harvested, turnips can be stored in cold, close to freezing temperatures (without actually freezing). Ideally, they should be kept in a cool place such as the vegetable crisper where, if stored properly can remain for four to five months. For more information on turnips, please visit [Harvest to Table](#).

Pump it Up for Pumpkins!!

Due to the high temperatures here in Georgia, pumpkins are typically grown and available in North Georgia. Seedlings are planted in late May – June just in time for an October Harvest. If you are located in South Georgia, seedlings are planted in July – still in time for fall time harvest.



Where to Buy?

Located in Carrollton, [Cosmos Farms](#) is known for their diverse availability of sustainably grown fresh produce.

Whether you prefer to purchase weekly or subscribe to their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) food box, Cosmos Farms will be able to provide you with locally grown produce – especially turnips and pumpkins.

If you decide to take a trip to North Georgia, visit the pumpkin patch at [Burt's Farm](#) in Dawsonville near Amicalola Falls.

For questions regarding procurement, please contact Procurement Compliance Officer, [LaMonika Jones](#).

Nutrition Ed Nook:

Pumpkin Spice & Everything Nice

The cool crisp weather in the mornings signifies fall is upon us and pumpkins are ripening as the Harvest of the Month ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)) item.

Pumpkins are full of fiber, vitamin C, beta carotene, and potassium. In the past, Native Americans used pumpkins for food and medicine and made them into flour



mats.

Discover the variety of ways various cultures have utilized pumpkins [here](#). Enjoy adding the sweet taste of pumpkin to your menu while educating children on the history behind their use!



Pumpkin Muffin Squares USDA Recipe for CACFP

Pureed pumpkin, raisins and spices give our Pumpkin Muffin Squares their distinctly delicious and decadent flavor.

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION
1 piece provides 1 oz equivalent grains.

Integration:

- [Toasted Pumpkin Seeds](#)
- [Pumpkin Muffin Squares](#)
- [Vegetarian Pumpkin Chili](#)

Education:

- Perform a virtual pumpkin taste test with your meal program participants
- A New Hampshire man grew the largest pumpkin ever recorded in U.S. history weighing in at an astounding 2,528 pounds. Learn more about giant pumpkins by reading [“How Big Could Your Pumpkin Grow?”](#) by [Wendell Minor](#)

Conversation:

- Have your children ever tasted pumpkin before?
- What family traditions do your children have surrounding pumpkins?

Share your fall Harvest of the Month stories and menu integration with Nutrition Health Educator, [Diana Myers, MS, RD, LD!](#)

CDC Considerations for Outdoor Learning Gardens



The CDC has released [Considerations for Outdoor Learning and Community Gardens](#) to help address community food access during the COVID-19 pandemic. These recommendations are intended for managers of outdoor learning gardens (e.g., school gardens) and community gardens. These considerations are meant to supplement—not replace—any state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which organizations must comply.

DECAL's Diana Myers to present at CACFP Sponsors Association Training Academy

DECAL Nutrition Health Educator **Diana Myers, MS, RD, LD**, will be a guest presenter at the CACFP Sponsors Association Virtual Training Academy held October 26-29, 2020.

During her presentation, Diana will discuss how to develop meal planning techniques that can be used to serve healthy and appealing meals and snacks that meet CACFP and preschool meal pattern requirements.

[Click here](#) for more information or to register for the CACFP Sponsors Association Virtual Training Academy.



DECAL's Nutrition Spotlight: *Business Operations Specialist: Kenya Taylor*

Meet **Kenya Taylor**; a veteran Business Operations Specialist in DECAL's Nutrition Services Division. Kenya has been in her position at DECAL for the past five years and has significant experience working with the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

As a Business Operations Specialist, Kenya reviews and determines eligibility of SFSP feeding sites. She also processes updates for participating SFSP Sponsors. She handles sponsor applications that start with the letter H through P and explains that the SFSP is a fast-paced program with a quick turnaround.

Her advice to returning SFSP sponsors is to possibly consider increasing sites or sharing information with other organizations that may be interested in providing meals. Overall, Kenya likes that the SFSP enables sponsors to provide healthy meals to kids in Georgia.



Help Us Spread the Word About CACFP

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is currently seeking applications from eligible child and adult care facilities who are interested in participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Please help us spread the word about the benefits of CACFP to childcare centers, family childcare homes, afterschool programs, Head Start programs, adult care centers and homeless shelters.

Organizations must have a license to operate or an exemption before registering for training. Interested organizations may email [Leslie Truman](#) or call **404.657.1779**.

NEW Episode of DECAL Download

On the next ...

DECAL
Download 
New Episodes Every Wednesday!



Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner of Georgia Department of Early
Care and Learning

This Week's Topic:
Chat with the Commissioner

As we continue through this pandemic, Georgia's Pre-K program is up and running. It may look a little different with virtual and in person classes going on as well as our first ever virtual Pre-K Week. As a program we have a lot going on for example, we are supporting school age children doing virtual learning with childcare scholarships in the SOLVE program. So, it seemed like a good time for a sit-down chat with **Commissioner Amy Jacobs**.

This is how the DECAL Download started back in September of 2018 and we have begun our third season. We can't thank you enough for listening and participating.

Stay tuned for this week's water cooler question and the DECAL Download Quiz for your chance to win a nice prize!

You can find DECAL Download [here](#) or on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Play, Stitcher, TuneIn, Overcast, and more!

Have an idea for a future topic? [E-mail us](#).

Stay safe, everyone!



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

Nutrition Division **Marketing & Outreach Team**

Cindy Kicklighter
Gaby Garza

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