



Brian P. Kemp
Governor

Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Reg Griffin
404-656-0239
reg.griffin@dec.al.ga.gov



Georgia's Pre-K Program Closed Through April 24

DECAL and Advocates are Helping Families Locate Quality Child Care as COVID-19 Pandemic Continues

ATLANTA, Ga., (March 26, 2020) – Following today's Executive Order by Governor Brian P. Kemp closing public elementary and secondary schools for in-person instruction, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) has announced that Georgia's Pre-K Program classes in both public schools and private programs will remain closed through April 24, 2020. Students may return to Pre-K classes on Monday, April 27, 2020.

“DECAL will continue to make Georgia's Pre-K payments as scheduled. If a child care program has enrolled Georgia's Pre-K children who need care, then Pre-K funds can be utilized to pay for their care during the 6 ½ hour instructional day,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “Georgia's Pre-K lead and assistant teachers should continue to receive salary and should not be required to report to work. However, programs are not required to pay salary for spring break if this is conflicting with their salary policy.”

Jacobs said while Pre-K classes in private centers will remain closed through April 24, many of these child care programs are open and available to serve children and families. Jacobs encourages families searching for child care to visit www.qualityrated.org or call 1-877-ALL-GA-KIDS for assistance. DECAL is also working with child care advocates to assist families in their search.

“When public schools close, it sends many working families scrambling for child care, including individuals responding to COVID-19 such as medical workers, police, fire, and other first responders,” said Commissioner Jacobs. “We are working very closely with the Governor’s Office, Georgia Department of Public Health, and the CDC through this process. While the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented, we are quickly learning how Child Care Providers play a critical role in serving our communities in times of need.”

Jacobs applauded child care providers as experts in both practicing and teaching health and hygiene, following Georgia Department of Public Health and CDC guidelines, such as washing hands as often as possible, keeping sanitary supplies in stock, and limiting group sizes. Those efforts have been doubled in the age of Coronavirus to protect both children and the teachers and staff in these facilities.

Georgia has over 4,400 licensed child care programs. This afternoon, with 3,263 child care programs reporting, 1,381 are open with 1,882 temporarily closed.

About DECAL

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program; licenses child care centers and home-based child care; administers Georgia’s Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) Program and federal nutrition programs; and manages Quality Rated, Georgia’s community-powered child care rating system.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.dec.al.ga.gov.