



**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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**Gov. Kemp, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning,
YMCA of Metro Atlanta providing Child Care for
Medical Workers during COVID-19**

*YMCA of Metro Atlanta will dedicate facilities as child care centers in Atlanta
beginning March 20, 2020*

ATLANTA, Ga., (March 18, 2020) – Today Governor Brian P. Kemp joined Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs and the YMCA of Metro Atlanta to announce a partnership dedicating several area facilities as child care centers for medical workers fighting the novel coronavirus and COVID-19. Effective Friday, March 20, 2020, the Y will dedicate several area facilities as childcare centers for medical workers at nine metro Atlanta hospitals.

Hospitals include Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, Eastside Medical Center, Emory, Georgia Highlands, Intown Pediatric, Northside, Piedmont, WellStar, and Yerkes-Emory. Organizers said they also expect additional locations to be transformed into childcare centers for medical personnel by March 27.

“Our medical professionals are on the frontlines of combatting COVID-19 and child care is a major concern for them and their families during this time,” said Governor Kemp. “The Y has always responded to the needs of our community. Commissioner Jacobs and I applaud their initiative to pivot and work to provide these critical programs for our state’s youngest learners and their families.”

“As the state agency responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families, DECAL is quickly recognizing the pressing need for child care for essential personnel like healthcare, first responders, and other service industry staff,” said Commissioner Jacobs. “The Y immediately began to plan for this need for staff from many hospitals in the metro area. Their leadership led to a comprehensive plan to serve these children so their parents can continue to support the healthcare needs of the community.”

“Closing our facilities, doesn’t mean we’ve ‘closed shop.’ Just the opposite. In many ways this is our moment to truly deliver on our promise of service to those who turn to us for community and to those who turn to us for survival,” says Lauren Koontz, CEO of the YMCA of Metro Atlanta. “We’re pivoting and repurposing and working to provide programs and services that will be critical in the coming weeks.”

In order to address similar types of child care needs in other parts of our state, Commissioner Jacobs said DECAL is maintaining information on child care programs that remain open, working to relax certain licensing rules, and providing guidance to child care so they can maintain healthy and safe environments for their children, families and teachers. With other 70 locations throughout Georgia, Child Care Network, a national chain of child care learning centers based in Columbus, GA, has offered to provide child care services in other parts of the state for essential staff. Many other licensed child care programs remain open, including Family Child Care Learning Homes, and have capacity to serve the child care needs of the community. If you are looking for child care, please visit www.qualityrated.org and continue to check back for the latest information on child care availability. You can also call 1-877-ALL-GA-KIDS.

For more information on child care for medical professionals provided through the YMCA of Metro Atlanta, please contact Jude Dooley, YMCA of Metro Atlanta Group Vice President, at juded@ymcaatlanta.org. For more information on the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, please contact Reg Griffin, Chief Communications Officer, at 404-309-8131 or visit www.decals.ga.gov.

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.state.ga.us.