



**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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DECAL says Child Care available during COVID-19

*Agency and Advocates are Helping Families Locate
Quality Child Care as Pandemic Continues*

ATLANTA, Ga., (March 20, 2020) – Searching for high quality child care can be a daunting experience. Add a pandemic like COVID-19 and the search can be even more of a challenge. The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) says while many child care programs have temporarily closed as a result of the Coronavirus crisis, many are still open and available to serve children and families in all corners of the state.

DECAL encourages families searching for child care to visit www.qualityrated.org or call 1-877-ALL-GA-KIDS for assistance. They are 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 DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “Not everyone has family or friends available to assist with their children. Not everyone has paid time off, or the option of working from home. Child Care Providers play a critical role in serving our communities in times of need, and they have told me personally they want to help.”

Jacobs said child care providers are the 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 morning, with 2,065 child care programs reporting, 1,103 had temporarily closed, but 962 told the agency they will remain open. The remainder continue to report their status this week. DECAL is updating that number daily through social media with plans to update the information on its website.

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.