



*Quarterly Bulletin and Training Calendar for Early Childhood Educators*



2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE, Suite 754, East Tower, Atlanta, GA 30334  
(404) 656-5957

**Brian P. Kemp**  
Governor

**Amy M. Jacobs**  
Commissioner

January 2026

Dear Child Care Professionals of Georgia:

May I be among the first to wish you a happy and prosperous new year! DECAL regularly uses some of our federal funding to make community impact grants directly to community organizations to address local issues and improve the lives of children and families in their communities. I am writing today because I think you may be interested in reading about the projects we funded in 2025. I am pleased to report that we awarded at least one grant in every region of the state.

Last year we introduced a new grant category, 2Gen Community Literacy grants (Literacy) to support the state-wide emphasis on improving literacy rates in Georgia. We continued to make Community Transformation grants and 2Gen Innovation Grants for Student Parent Success (2Gen Innovation).



We made four grants in the greater Atlanta area, **Region 1 North West**. The APEC Learning Center, which serves many South Fulton communities, received a 2Gen Innovation grant to create a resource hub to connect families to high-quality child care and career skills training. Black Child Development Institute-Atlanta received a Community Transformation grant to support and advance the careers of adults working in early care and learning in 13 counties. Georgia State University received a Community Transformation grant for a project to improve access to behavioral health services for families with children from birth to age 5 in Athens-Clarke County in **Region 6 North East**. Quality Care for Children received a Community Transformation grant to pilot a farm-to-ECE program to improve nutrition security.

In **Region 2, Central West**, we made a 2Gen Innovation Grant for Student Parent Success to Kennesaw State to expand its Student Parent Ambassador program by increasing outreach and recruitment.

In **Region 3, Central East**, we awarded two Literacy grants, to Scottdale Early Learning to create a 2Gen literacy program that includes take-home home kits and family literacy nights, and to the International Rescue Committee for a project in Scottdale to teach English to refugee families.

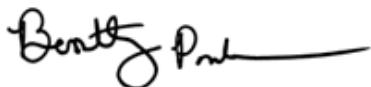
In **Region 4, South West** we made a 2Gen Innovation grant Columbus to Technical College to expand a program for student parents in the field of early care and learning. We also awarded Community Transformation grants to both Brooks County Family Connection and Cook County Family Connection for projects to strengthen community support systems.

In **Region, 5 South East**, we awarded the Coastal Plain Area Economic Opportunity Authority (EOA) a Literacy grant for a program designed to break the cycle of low literacy and help parents get the education and training they need to become more employable. We awarded the Valdosta Commission for Children & Youth a 2Gen Innovation grant to establish on-campus resource hubs for student parents at local technical colleges. And we awarded the Bulloch County Board of Education a Community Transformation grant for a collaborative project to improve literacy by means of a Book Bus, storytelling events, and professional development for teachers of children from birth to 5; and to strengthen families by providing resources on stress management, financial literacy, and healthy living.

In **Region 6, North East**, we made two grants to the Dalton Public Schools, a Literacy grant to furnish a mobile library and a 2Gen Innovation grant to establish a Parent Resource Center.

We received a lot of outstanding applications for these grant opportunities, and we had to make difficult choices. As always we used an objective scoring system, and each application was scored by multiple reviewers. I am very excited about all these projects, and I look forward to seeing the results.

Sincerely,



Bentley Ponder  
Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations & Partnerships



***THE NEW SMALL STUDY GROUP HOSTED BY CIVITAS STRATEGIES***

## **Maximizing Tax Credits for Georgia Child Care Providers**

***CAN HELP YOU:***

- **Identify which GA & US tax credits apply to your business**
- **Find opportunities to save money through credits**
- **Create simple systems to track and claim your credits**

**Small Study Groups are Free & Virtual**

**To Learn More & Enroll**

go to [\*\*https://bit.ly/THRIVESTUDYGROUPREGISTRATION\*\*](https://bit.ly/THRIVESTUDYGROUPREGISTRATION)  
email **GACOACHING@CIVSTRAT.COM**

**Earn State Training Hours + \$125 Stipend Upon Completion**



### QR Workforce Bonus

- Annual \$500 bonus paid directly to staff in all Star Rated child care programs
- Eligibility requirements apply
- Staff applies annually during their program's designated Payment Application Month

- ★ Provide Quality Care
- ★ Make a Difference
- ★ Be recognized for Your Impact

### Commitment to Quality (C2Q)

- Quarterly payments to 2- and 3-Star Rated child care programs
- Programs must participate in CAPS
- 2-Star Programs receive 5% of billed CAPS payments.
- 3-Star Programs receive 10% of billed CAPS payments.

For more information, contact Care Solutions:



**Visit** <https://decalqrpayments.com>



**Email** [support@decalQRpayments.com](mailto:support@decalQRpayments.com)



**Call** 800-227-3410, ext. 613





## 1-Star!

Holloway Academy

The Children's Courtyard

## 3-Star!!!

Kribs 2 Kollege

Childcare Network #9

Men About Change

**Congratulations**  
to these new Quality Rated providers!

## 2-Star!!

Fletcher Learning Center

Cedars Preschool at Macon

Small World Education Center

A Bundle of Joy Learning Center

JLIT Collective CO DBA Spence Early Learning Center

Dianne Blue

Family Child Care Learning Home

Kimberly Moore

Family Child Care Learning Home

Tracy Addison

Family Child Care Learning Home

Ratings through 12/2025



## UGA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER 2025–26 WEBINARS HOSTED BY ALYSSA FOSKEY

**Thriving Financial Foundations**

**December 18, 2025**

(TG-BFTS-145543)

**Thriving as a Servant Leader:**

**Inspiring Success in Others**

**February 26, 2026**

(TG-BFTS-145544)

**Thrive & Grow: The Secrets to**

**Recruiting and Retaining Staff**

**March 26, 2026**

(TG-BFTS-145541)

**A Thriving Brand Identity**

**April 30, 2026**

(TG-BFTS-145542)

*All Sessions Are Noon–2:00 p.m.*

[Go To GaPDS to Search and Register: https://gapds.decal.ga.gov/Trainings/Scheduled](https://gapds.decal.ga.gov/Trainings/Scheduled)

*All Webinars Are FREE!! Training Hours Are Available!!*



## **877-ALL-GA-KIDS Now Operated by DECAL's New Quality Rated Family Support Call Center New Call Center Gives Families Enhanced Services**

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) announced that in order to deliver more integrated customer service to Georgia families, the 1-877-ALL-GA-KIDS toll-free child care search and referral help line is now operated by the agency's new Quality Rated (QR) Family Support Call Center.

The DECAL referral specialists in the QR Family Support Call Center, who began answering calls on July 1, 2025, deliver the services families have always received when calling 877-ALL-GA-KIDS (1-877-255-4254), including information on the benefits of high-quality child care, referrals to Quality Rated providers matching their preferences, and help with the enrollment process at the programs they choose. Now, the Call Center team can also personally connect families to colleagues across the agency who will help them access other beneficial early care and education information and supports from DECAL.

These enhanced services from the QR Family Call Center are available in English, Spanish, and other languages.

“We created the QR Family Support Call Center to give families who call the 1-877-ALL-GA-KIDS phone line more comprehensive and streamlined assistance with their questions and requests regarding child care,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy Jacobs. “In addition to referrals to Quality Rated providers and enrollment help, families literally have access to all of DECAL’s programs and supports at their fingertips, just by contacting our Family Support Call Center specialists at 877-ALL-GA-KIDS.”

Families can reach the new QR Family Support Call Center by calling 1-877-ALL-GA-KIDS (1-877-255-4254)

**Make sure to connect with us to catch CCR&R updates on trainings and events as well as those from DECAL and Quality Rated, just click QR codes below!**



Child Care Resource & Referral of SWGA is pleased to announce the:

# 2026 Early Learning Conference

**Saturday, March 7, 2026**

**8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**Albany State University-West Campus**

Registration opens 1/1/2026 with a \$40 Earlybird Special (\$50 after 2/13/26) lunch provided.

**Participants will be awarded 5.5 hours based on attendance.**

**Ian Humphrey, Be Ian-Spired, LLC presenting**  
**A New Day, New Vision:**  
**Reclaiming Our “Why” as Professionals**



This inspiring conference invites participants to see themselves not just as childcare providers but as true professionals with the power to shape the future. Attendees will be reminded of their “why”, the children, and rediscover the passion that fuels their work.

Participants will be challenged to embrace a new vision for their profession: one rooted in purpose, pride, and the belief that they can make a lasting difference.

The Child Care Resource & Referral of SWGA is pleased to announce the South Georgia 2026 spring educational event for early learning professionals. The conference features a vast assortment of cutting-edge sessions to support workforce development, including classroom behavior management, unique activities to enhance curriculums, staff management, and multiple sessions using hands-on activities and an administrative track for leadership and management.

**Load up the van and join us for a day that will change the way you think about your business and educate young children for their best start in life!**

***Door Prizes-Early Childhood Education Vendors and MORE***

**Scan here to REGISTER TODAY!**



**CHILD CARE  
RESOURCE  
& REFERRAL**  
OF SOUTHWEST GEORGIA AT ALBANY  
ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY



# Ideas, Information, & Resources

## Create a Bad Weather Busters Box or File

The first step in planning for inclement weather indoor activities is ... well.... having somewhere to find those activities! This box will either be a physical box, such as a recipe box or file folder, or a decorative can that has index cards with ideas in it!

You will need: a recipe box, index cards, and a pen (or a file folder, paper, and a pen OR a decorative can –such as a tin candy can, index cards, and a pen).

### How To Use the Bad Weather Busters Ideas

On days (or weeks!) where you need to plan inclement weather indoor activities because bad weather is keeping you in, go to these cards! You can flip through them and choose what you want to do each day. The key in planning will be to change up your ideas every day. The surprise of a new indoor activity each day will keep the children excited! You might have an obstacle course one day. The kids will LOVE it. They may love it so much that they ask to do it the next day as well!

Here are a few inclement-weather indoor activities to start you off!

### Bean Bag Games

- **Bean Bag Color Toss**

Needed: Variety of colors of Bean Bags and matching colored bowls

The children toss each bean bag into its matching bowl.

VARIATION: Tape colored pieces of construction paper on the floor that match the bean bags.

- **Bean Bag Shape Toss (taped on floor)**

Needed: Variety of colors of Bean Bags, painters' tape, or construction paper shapes

Tape shapes onto your floor or carpet (or tape precut paper shapes onto the floor)

The children practice tossing the bean bags into the shapes from a distance.

### Bowling Ideas....

- **Cup Bowling**

Needed: Plastic cups (those red solo cups work great!), plastic balls

Let the children build the cups into tall towers.

Use the balls to bowl with.

Variation: If you have a flat scooter on wheels, have them lie on their belly on the scooter and use their arms to bowl themselves into the cup tower!

- **Bowl with soda bottles**

Needed: One or two-liter soda bottles with caps (at least 6 of them), balls

The children set up the bottles and bowl.

### Bubble Wrap Fun...

- **Bubble Wrap Dance Floor**

Needed: bubble wrap, CD player, music CDs

Tape the bubble wrap to the floor and let the kids dance on it!

- **Bubble wrap shapes -- Twister**

Needed: bubble wrap, tape, circles cut out of different colors of construction paper, Twister Game spinner (or make your own spinner!)

Place the colored circles on the floor.

Tape bubble wrap over the circles.

Use the spinner to call out the instructions (right foot on red)

The children find that color and pop bubbles with their foot, or hand, whatever the spinner shows! Use your imagination!

# Training Calendar – January, February, and March 2026

You can always find our scheduled training and events on our website at [CCR&R](http://CCR&R)

<p><b>Saturday, 1/10/2026</b> 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. <b>\$25</b></p> <p><b>Webinar</b></p>	<p><b>Fire Safety</b> <i>This course meets the requirements mandated by the Georgia Insurance and Fire Safety Commissioner's office.</i></p>	<p><b>Sandra Jackson</b> Certified Instructor</p>
<p><b>Thursday, 1/22/2026</b> 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. <b>\$10</b></p> <p><b>Webinar</b></p> <p>***This training meets the Language &amp; Literacy requirement per BFTS</p>	<p><b>Creating A Literacy-Rich Environment for Preschool/Pre-K</b> <i>A Literacy-Rich Environment in early childhood education lays a foundation that supports language development, emergent literacy, writing skills, and reading. This training helps providers and educators create an inclusive Literacy-Rich Environment for Preschool and Pre-K, including special needs and dual language learners. Participants will design and execute translanguaging activities to integrate into their Literacy-Rich environment.</i></p>	<p><b>Sandra Jackson</b> BFTS Approved Trainer</p>
<p><b>Saturday, 1/24/2026</b> 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. <b>\$30</b></p> <p><b>Super Saturday!!!</b></p> <p><b>Brantley's Busy Bee Learning Center</b> 4628 Bloomfield Road Macon, GA 31206</p>	<p><b>Creative Carnival</b> <i>This training is designed to guide the children toward unlocking their creative and explorative nature. Opening the doors to the developmental domains. Thus, creating opportunities that stimulate creativity, through activities in areas such as music, drawing, fine arts, drama, and language, etc., including children with Special Needs.</i></p> <p><b>Health and Nutrition</b> <i>This training is designed to meet the 4 hours of training in the area of Health and Nutrition required by Bright from the Start. Providers will explore ways to promote nutritious meals in a healthy environment.</i></p>	<p><b>Sandra Jackson</b> BFTS Approved Trainer</p>
<p><b>Saturday, 1/31/2026</b> 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. <b>\$60</b></p> <p><b>Albany State University-West</b> 2400 Gillionville Road Albany, GA 31707</p>	<p><b>CPR/First Aid</b> <i>American Heart Association</i></p> <p><i>Learn how to recognize and alleviate airway obstructions, and the signs, symptoms, and corrective action for a stroke or heart attack. Also, learn to recognize and treat minor medical emergencies.</i></p>	<p><b>Judy Gaines</b> Certified Instructor</p>
<p><b>Tuesday, 2/10/2026</b> 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. <b>\$10</b></p> <p><b>Webinar</b></p>	<p><b>Positive Discipline</b> <i>Help, my class is out of control! Surely it is not my fault! Learn the difference between punishment and discipline and how to help children behave in appropriate ways.</i></p>	<p><b>Polly Raike</b> BFTS Approved Trainer</p>
<p><b>Thursday, 2/26/2026</b> 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. <b>\$10</b></p> <p><b>Webinar</b></p>	<p><b>Get Ready to Read</b> <i>Ensure that the four-year-olds in your care are ready to read with this short, easy screening tool.</i></p>	<p><b>Sandra Jackson</b> BFTS Approved Trainer</p>

<p><b>Saturday, 2/28/2026</b> 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. <b>\$30</b></p> <p><b>Super Saturday!!!</b> <b>New Vision Ministries</b> <b>494 Unadilla Highway</b> <b>Hawkinsville, GA 31036</b></p>	<p><b>Sip and Paint-Developing Social, Emotional, and Creative Skills</b> <i>As Philip Pullman once said, "Children need art and stories and poems and music as much as they need love and food and fresh air and play." This training will give them just that!!! Come be introduced to "Intentional ART", giving children the opportunity to inspire creative thinking! Thus, being able to freely express their feelings/emotions through Art (painting), while enhancing their socialization skills in a more relaxed classroom environment, stimulates social interaction with their peers and adults.</i></p>	<p><b>Sandra Jackson</b> BFTS Approved Trainer</p>
<p><b>Thursday, 3/19/2026</b> 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. <b>\$10</b></p> <p><b>Webinar</b></p>	<p><b>Down Syndrome-Chromosome 21</b> <i>Join us for a unique opportunity to get a glimpse of what parents go through before birth and how Down Syndrome affects the developmental domains of children. Questions will be answered on how you can provide inclusive activities using GELDS and appropriately support parents and children while learning more about Down Syndrome.</i></p>	<p><b>Sandra Jackson</b> BFTS Approved Trainer</p>
<p><b>Saturday, 3/28/2026</b> 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. <b>\$30</b></p> <p><b>Super Saturday!!!</b> <b>Chili's Restaurant Crossing</b> <b>5080 Riverside Drive</b> <b>Suite 1600</b> <b>Macon, GA 31210</b></p>	<p><b>Playground Safety</b> <i>Playground safety is important to the health and safety of the children in your care, yet accidents continue. Learn what you can do to help prevent and lower accidents on your playgrounds. Join us to learn more information on playground safety.</i></p> <p><b>Indoor and Outdoor Hazards</b> <i>Come learn proper procedures to follow for a safe environment, both indoors and outdoors, which includes information from BFTS Rules and Regulations, Physical Plant, Playground Safety, and Building and Grounds.</i></p>	<p><b>Sandra Jackson</b> BFTS Approved Trainer</p>

### **TRAINING REGISTRATION GUIDELINES**

1. To locate the training calendar and register for the training of your choice, go to [www.asurams.edu/ccrr/training.php](http://www.asurams.edu/ccrr/training.php), where you can register and submit payment through Eventbrite.
2. Email blasts are sent twice a week as a reminder of upcoming sessions. Please check your email often.
3. Webinars- You must participate in all activities, polls, chats, and breakout sessions during the training to receive a certificate.
4. You will receive an email with an invitation to join the session along with handouts as attachments on the day of the weekday training or the day before for a weekend training.
5. When it is time to join the session, you will need to click the link in the email. You may need to download an application to your computer or phone to join, so please be sure to log in early. Once the application is downloaded, you will be able to join the session.
6. Upon entering the session, please type your name and the county you work in the chat box.
7. No one is admitted to any training without prior registration and payment if required.
8. Registrations must be received at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled training date.
9. Credit and refunds for cancellations are not allowed. **Canceling your registration requires at least a 24-hour notice.**
10. If you register for free training and do not attend, your registration for future free training in the future may not be accepted.
11. Be sure to complete the Survey Monkey after each training to let us know your thoughts so we can better serve your needs.
12. Enjoy, and thanks for attending our training!

For training information and questions, contact Professional Development & Social Media Coordinator, Margo Sanders at **229.500.2897/866.833.3552** or [margo.sanders@asurams.edu](mailto:margo.sanders@asurams.edu)



**Like** us on Facebook [@ccrofswga](https://www.facebook.com/CCRofSWGA) & on  [@ccrofswga](https://www.instagram.com/CCRofSWGA) then follow us for the latest highlights, fun activities, updates and scheduled trainings! And visit: <https://www.asurams.edu/ccrr/index.php>



## Child Care Resource & Referral of Southwest Georgia at Albany Albany State University

*Serving Early Care Professionals Toward Excellence in Quality Child Care*

### **Marsharika Newbill**

Office & Accounting Coordinator  
229.500.2893

### **Meribeth Bice**

Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.854.0978

### **Dee Hylick**

Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.809.4067

### **Alicia Mills**

Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.854.0064

### **Beth Fenimore**

Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.319.4274

### **Crystal Heard**

Lead Technical Assistance & Professional Learning Community Coordinator  
229.894.0081

### **Angie Morey**

Lead Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.854.9515

### **Cindy Fick**

Operations Director  
229.854.0930

### **Margo Sanders**

Professional Development &  
Social Media Coordinator  
229.500.2897

### **Kerri Chalon**

Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.854.1225

### **Shandry Johnson**

Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.319.3227

### **Caroline Wood**

Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.319.3533

### **Jennifer Taylor**

Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.449.3314

### **Zoe Thwaites**

Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.603.2995

### **Erin Brazel**

Technical Assistance Coordinator

### **Sabrina Dawkins**

Systems & Data Management Coordinator  
229.500.2894

### **Maggie Girdler**

Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.854.1650

### **Kathi Roberts**

Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.449.7947

### **Erica White**

Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.894.0070

### **Cassie Thompson**

Lead Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.854.9515

### **Estelle Rothwell**

Lead Technical Assistance Coordinator  
229.854.1049

### **Dianne Fitchlee**

Training Director  
229.854.1250

### **Cindy Spann**

Executive Director  
229.854.9767

*"Never dull your shine for somebody else."*