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

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Fall 2026

Quarterly Bulletin and Training Calendar for Early Childhood Educators

Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

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

October 2026



Dear Child Care Professionals of Georgia:

I always learn a lot when I have the opportunity to talk with child care providers directly, so I'm getting excited about DECAL's upcoming road shows. I know you have received an invitation to the events in Tifton, Cartersville, Morrow, and Statesboro. If you haven't already, you can register on the DECAL website.

We're hosting these road shows to bolster our connections with child care owners and directors. We have some updated information to present, and we also want to hear from you. Following an opening plenary session, we will offer breakout sessions and an exhibit hall with all of DECAL's programs represented. You may discover programs and supports you didn't know about, and there will be experts on hand to answer your toughest questions.

I also want to give you a heads-up about an early care and learning needs assessment, part of which coincides with the road shows. Child Trends, one of our research partners, is conducting the needs assessment on our behalf. This project will inform planning for our 2028-2030 Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) state plan. These are the key elements of the needs assessment:

- **A survey of licensed child care providers.** If you are a licensed provider, you should have already received a link to the survey from **Georgia Needs Assessment** via email and text. **Please check your inbox.** Respond as soon as you can but no later than October 30. It's important for researchers to hear from as many of you as possible. More data gives us a better picture of your needs. If you haven't received your survey link, please reach out to GANeedsAssess@childtrends.org.
- **An interactive feedback session at the road shows**. Child Trends will facilitate a breakout session called "Help Shape the Road Ahead: Share Your Challenges and Ideas." This is an opportunity for you to share your insights about challenges facing child care and your ideas for addressing these challenges.
- **Evening focus groups for early learning teachers and families.** We're still discussing the best way to reach teachers and families, and we will likely ask for your help with outreach. Please stay tuned for more on this.

Understanding your needs, the needs of your teachers, and the needs of families who entrust their children to your care is central to the CCDF planning process. I encourage you to complete the survey, come to a road show, and participate in Child Trends' feedback session. Anything you share with Child Trends will be held in confidence by Child Trends. DECAL leadership will receive only aggregated data and analysis. We'll have a draft of our 2028-2030 CCDF state plan ready for public comment early next year.

I look forward to meeting you at the road shows!

Sincerely,

Bentley Ponder
Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations & Partnerships

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The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Expansion Project is supported by the Office of Postsecondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education as part of an award totaling $2,615,754

SCAN OR VISIT
cgtc.io/ECCE
FOR MORE INFO!



Child Care Resource & Referral of SWGA is pleased to present:

A Director's Institute

with dynamic business entrepreneur and inspirational leader,



Sheila R. Thomas, Ed. D.

Thomas Educational Consulting and Training/Great Day Publishing Company

Dr. Sheila R. Thomas is the founder of Thomas Educational Consulting and Training, Great Day Publishing, and the Raising Brilliant Black Boys Mentoring Program, a community-centered initiative focused on affirming identity, building confidence, and supporting academic and social development. Through her work, she equips parents, educators, and communities with practical, research-based tools that turn intention into action. Dr. Thomas holds a bachelor's and master's degree in early childhood education from Albany State University, a specialist degree in curriculum instruction, management, and administration, and a doctorate in educational leadership from Nova Southeastern University. With more than thirty years of experience in early childhood education, she has served as a classroom teacher, college professor, Georgia Bright from the Start Trainer, and Child Development Associate specialist.

Have you ever hired someone who didn't meet your expectations at first, but later became one of your best employees? What made the difference?

We're going to explore a challenge that nearly every leader or manager faces at some point: hiring someone who doesn't initially seem like the right fit. A "wrong hire" doesn't always mean a bad employee. Sometimes it's a mismatch in expectations, communication, training, or role alignment. The good news is that many hiring mistakes can be turned into success stories with the right leadership, coaching, and development.

In this session, we'll discuss how to identify whether an employee has the potential to grow, uncover the root causes of performance issues, and apply practical strategies to help them succeed. We'll also learn when it's appropriate to continue investing in an employee, and when it's time to make a different decision.

By the end of this training, you'll have tools to transform challenges into opportunities, improve employee performance, strengthen retention, and build a more resilient team.

Friday, October 2, 2026

9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. /4 hrs. DECAL Credit

Albany State University- West

2400 Gillionville Road, Albany, GA 31707

Event Center

$50.00 registration fee, lunch included

Space is limited; register now!

For questions or assistance, please call or email Margo Sanders, Professional Development & Social Media Coordinator: (229) 500-2897 /margo.sanders/@asurams.edu

Training Calendar – October, November and December 2026

You can always find our scheduled training and events on our website at CCR&R

Friday 10/2/2026 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. **$50** **Albany State University West – Event Center** **2400 Gillionville Rd** **Albany, GA 31707** ***Join us in celebration of our 10th anniversary with a great training and even better food!***	**A Director's Institute** **Making the Wrong Hire the Right Hire!** *Have you ever hired someone who didn't meet your expectations at first, but later became one of your best employees? What made the difference? We're going to explore a challenge that nearly every leader or manager faces at some point: hiring someone who doesn't initially seem like the right fit. A "wrong hire" doesn't always mean a bad employee. Sometimes it's a mismatch in expectations, communication, training, or role alignment. The good news is that many hiring mistakes can be turned into success stories with the right leadership, coaching, and development. In this session, we'll discuss how to identify whether an employee has the potential to grow, uncover the root causes of performance issues, and apply practical strategies to help them succeed. We'll also learn when it's appropriate to continue investing in an employee, and when it's time to make a different decision. By the end of this training, you'll have tools to transform challenges into opportunities, improve employee performance, strengthen retention, and build a more resilient team.*	**Sheila Thomas** BFTS Approved Trainer
Saturday, 10/3/2026 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. **Free** **Bright Futures of Columbus** **1342 17th Street** **Columbus, GA 31901**	**GELDS Super Saturday!** **GELDS: Foundation** *This training introduces early learning workforce professionals to the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS)by explaining what the standards are, why we use them, and their relationship to developmentally appropriate practice. It provides an overview of the organizational structure and language of GELDS.* **GELDS: Approaches to Play and Learning** *This class will introduce you to the Approaches to Play and Learning of the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). This part provides an overview of the organizational structure and standards and strands in the domains, along with an opportunity for collaborative discussion about what standards in these domains look like in relation to developmentally appropriate practice.* **GELDS: Communication, Language and Literacy** *This training introduces early learning workforce professionals to the Communication, Language and Literacy Domain of the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). It provides an overview of the organizational structure and standards in the domain, along with an opportunity for collaborative discussion about what standards in this domain look like in relation to developmentally appropriate practice.*	**Jennifer Taylor & Crystal Heard** BFTS Approved Trainers

Tuesday, 10/6/2026 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. **$10** **Webinar**	**Conversations in the Classroom** *Need more conversations in your classroom? Join us to learn ways in which to develop more meaningful & extended conversations to foster learning.*	**Polly Raike** BFTS Approved Trainer
Thursday, 10/8/2026 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. **$10** **Webinar**	**Lesson Plans Made Simple Using GELDS** *Come learn a fun and exciting way of incorporating GELDS into your lesson plans and how to transform their learning environment into a more inclusive and welcoming classroom that is responsive to the needs of each child. Enhancing their ability to grow and learn!*	**Sandra Jackson** BFTS Approved Trainer
Saturday, 10/10/2026 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **$25** **Webinar**	**Fire Safety** *This course meets the requirements mandated by the Georgia Insurance and Fire Safety Commissioner's office.*	**Sandra Jackson** Certified Instructor
Saturday, 10/17/2026 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **$30** **Super Saturday!!!** **Chili's Restaurant Crossing** **5080 Riverside Drive** **Suite 1600** **Macon, GA 31210**	**Sip and Paint-Developing Social, Emotional, and Creative Skills** *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.*	**Sandra Jackson** BFTS Approved Trainer
Thursday, 10/29/2026 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. **$10** **Webinar** **Directors and Administrators only**	**Building Your Dream Team Staffing Strategies for ECE Programs** *This training will assist Early Childhood Program Management with defining strategies and practices that will assist them in hiring and retaining quality staff.*	**Caroline Wood** BFTS Approved Trainer
Tuesday, 11/3/2026 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. **$10** **Webinar**	**Ready, Set, Let's Read: Developing Strategies for Early Readers** *Join us to explore how brain development effects early literacy and strategies to use in the classroom to develop early readers.*	**Polly Raike** BFTS Approved Trainer
Saturday, 11/7/2026 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **$30** **Super Saturday!!!** **Grace Learning Center** **1569 Edna Place** **Macon, GA 31204**	**Supervision Made Easy** *Are you sure you have adequate supervision? Learn how to create a safe and secure environment for children and staff by following the rules and regulations.* **Developmental Stages and Domains- Child Growth and Development Preschool** *This training will enhance your knowledge in the Developmental Stages and Domains of Preschool Children. You will have the opportunity to become more innovative in your approach to implementing age and developmentally appropriate all- inclusive activities. using GELDS. Come and Grow with Us!*	**Sandra Jackson** BFTS Approved Trainer

Saturday, 11/7/2026 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **$30** **Houston Road Daycare & Learning Center** **6045 Houston Road** **Macon, GA 31216**	**F.L.I.P. IT!** *Tired of power struggles, meltdowns, and challenging moments that leave everyone frustrated? Don't FLIP OUT! It's time to FLIP It! and discover a positive, relationship-based strategy to help you guide children toward positive solutions and self-regulation.*	**Dianne Fitchlee** BFTS Approved Trainer
Thursday, 11/12/2026 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. **$10** **Webinar**	**Stop Shaken Baby Syndrome - Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma)** *Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS), also known as Abusive Head Trauma AHT), is a serious and preventable injury that occurs when an infant or young child is violently shaken. This action can cause severe brain damage, permanent disability, or even death. This training is focused on preventing SBS. Prevention starts with education: caregivers/providers will be given information on how even the gentlest shaking can be dangerous, and we should never shake a baby for any reason, including frustration or attempts to stop crying. Safe coping strategies for supporting a crying child will be addressed, along with the dissemination of information regarding associated risks and consequences to other caregivers or providers, thereby enhancing measures to safeguard children from harm.*	**Sandra Jackson** BFTS Approved Trainer
Thursday, 12/3/2026 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. **$10** **Webinar**	**Communicating with Families** *Let's talk about how having available resources and getting families involved maps an effective way toward establishing productive family communications/relationships and ensuring the safety of the children in our care.*	**Sandra Jackson** BFTS Approved Trainer
Saturday, 12/5/2026 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **$30** **Super Saturday!!!** **Kuntry Kiddle Daycare** **6981 Thomaston Road** **Macon, GA 31220**	**Managing Stress Effectively, Love Thy Self** *This training assists the participant in identifying/classifying various stressors as well as, strategies for relieving stress. By using appropriate stress relieving strategies, one can maintain a healthier and happier life; that leads to positive avenues in their professional and personal life.* **What?! Healthy Behavior Management Strategies** *This course defines behavior management and helps the caregiver differentiate between challenging behaviors. It offers positive strategies that result from inappropriate classroom behavior.*	**Sandra Jackson** BFTS Approved Trainer

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, 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









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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



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