Due to the COVID-19 impact, we are constantly reviewing and amending our policies and procedures to ensure care is provided in a safe and healthy space with respect to family choices and provider needs. This information will continue to be updated.

**REIMBURSEMENT AND CLAIMS**

**Will I receive my February reimbursement?**

February 2020 claims have been submitted to BFTS for processing. Expect release of payments during the week of March 23rd. If your claim was not submitted, you have already been notified.

**If a statewide mandate was issued requiring child care centers and homes to close, would the USDA provide financial relief or advancement to relieve the impact to sponsors?**

At this time, Bright from the Start is not aware of any plans for the USDA to provide funding during times in which child care centers or homes are closed and not serving meals to children. If we receive any additional information from USDA, we will provide this information to all of our sponsored sites.

**Will QCC help reimburse me for food I bought and spoiled later since my enrollment has dropped?**

No.

**What will happen to my March claim?**

March claims are due in the QCC office according to the regular claim submission schedule for ON TIME claims. There will be no second claim due to the relocation of the QCC office at the end of April. (You will receive more information about our new location at the end of April after we receive and process all March claims.)
Can I still drop off my March claim at the Atlanta office? Will someone be there to accept my claim?

MAIL: Follow the procedures for mailing complete and accurate claim packets to the office.

DROP-OFF: Our claims staff works remotely from the office now. If you are dropping off a claim packet, make arrangements with your Program Coordinator to ensure a member of our team will be there when you arrive. Do not leave claim packets at the front desk.

CLOSURES, CAPACITY AND PARENT ENTRY

Should I remain open?

The decision to close or remain open during this uncertain time is one that must be made by each site in light of local circumstances and with the guidance of DECAL. At the time of the writing of the FAQ, Governor Kemp did not announce an enforceable closing of child care programs. Please read the latest information on the Bright from the Start website: www.decal.ga.gov daily for the latest information.

The health and safety of your employees and the children in your care is a top priority for QCC and DECAL. While it is ultimately your decision to make, the Department of Public Health (DPH) is not recommending widespread school closures. If necessary, DPH may advise communities on mitigation measures including the closure of schools and childcare programs. DECAL is in regular contact with DPH and will inform centers/day care homes if their recommendations change. Programs are also advised to follow any direction from their local board of health.

Since schools are out and we follow the school schedule, do I need to let you know that we are closed?

Yes. A deviation of schedule is (1) closing your site for any amount of days, (2) discontinuing a meal or snack on any day, (3) changing your meal times (permanent or temporary) or (4) taking meals offsite for a field trip. A deviation of schedule is susceptible to a noncompliance or serious deficiency finding and a loss of meal reimbursement. According to official policy, QCC must be notified of schedule deviation in advance.

New information is available daily that may affect your business decisions. You must keep QCC informed of closures or other adjustments to your schedule or procedures. Contact your program coordinator in the QCC office. Since most staff are working from home be sure to leave a message if you do not reach anyone by phone, or you may send an email.
We are not allowing parents into the center. Is it okay for staff to sign children in and out?

Please contact your Child Care Services consultant for answers relating to licensing rules and regulations. We recommend that you make inquiries via email and share the response with us at QCC to keep us informed of any allowances/flexibilities granted by them.

May I claim more children and exceed my licensed capacity for any meal or snack service?

No, you may not exceed your licensed capacity. Exceeding your licensed capacity and not following ratio guidelines is putting the health and safety of children at risk. Contact your Child Care Service Licensing Consultant for more information about ratios.

FOOD AND PURCHASING

We are having difficulty finding milk. Will we lose reimbursement for these meals without the right type of milk?

Yes, but there is a way to avoid losing reimbursement. You may encounter shortages of food or supplies in your area. You may be able to make substitutions for milk and food components with permission from DECAL and/or the USDA. It requires a waiver we must request on your behalf.

Does this waiver include modifications/substitutions because I am unable to find certain types of food such as whole grain-rich components?

Yes, but you still have to request a waiver after you have made an honest effort to find allowable substitutions first.

How do I request this waiver?

To request a waiver, complete this form:
https://qualitycareforchildren.wufoo.com/forms/q1fa98rb0fmir6m/

After completion of the form with the type of substitution you will make, you will receive conditional approval for the substitution while we seek official written approval from DECAL or the USDA. If the substitution is not approved, you may not be reimbursed for those meals. We will do everything to advocate on your behalf.

Whom do I call about meal pattern substitutions and purchasing issues?

Contact Compliance Manager Caitlin Vadini for more information on this waiver at caitlin.vadini@QCCGA.org or call 404-479-4253,

What should I do to avoid a future milk shortage?

We recommend that you purchase shelf-stable milk to keep on hand for emergency use should there be a shortage of fresh milk in your local area. If you are unable to locate
adequate milk or milk types, you may be able to claim meals without milk with proper documentation and approval by QCC and DECAL.

Is there a food service management company (FSMC) that could help me with vended meals temporarily during this COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes. A FSMC can help a center that is struggling to find food components and keeping a full-time experienced cook. Choosing a FSMC requires informal procurement by most facilities (total projected annual cost under $250,000 or less) and formal procurement for some (total projected annual cost over $250,000). If you desire to find a FSMC to serve your community, you may get quotes from 2-3 vendors of your choice. DECAL has a Vendor List on their website (http://decal.ga.gov/CACFP/Procurement.aspx).

To follow proper procurement procedures, review and use our Procurement Guidelines and Form for Kitchen Equipment, Food Service Management Companies and Food Distributors on our website (www.qualitycareforchildren.org/forms).

If you are in metro Atlanta, The School Gourmet is a Farm to Early Care and Education partner with QCC. The School Gourmet has a goal to serve child care centers and afterschool programs with high quality Scratch Made meals using harvested produce from and close to Georgia. For quotes and a taste test, call 404-371-4566 or email info@eatgourmetexpress.com.

MONITORING BY QCC

Will I still receive monitoring visits?

For now, no USDA flexibility guidance has been issued regarding the monitoring of CACFP programs. Monitoring visits will continue. Monitors are taking necessary precautions to protect themselves and your sites including frequent sanitizing/washing of hands and limiting the amount of time in your home or center. Please do not be offended that visits are “all business” and may not include the usual conversation and/or technical assistance. Necessary technical assistance can be conducted later by email or phone call.

AT-RISK AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Are at-risk afterschool centers allowed to continue serving meals and snacks during unanticipated school closures?

Yes. At-risk afterschool centers may continue serving meals and snacks as part of the At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of CACFP. When operating during unanticipated school closures, afterschool centers must continue to meet At-Risk Afterschool requirements, including the requirement that programs must offer education or enrichment activities. On days when schools are closed, at-risk afterschool centers that normally offer a snack and supper after school may instead choose to offer either lunch
and a snack, or a breakfast and a snack. These meals and snacks would be reimbursed through CACFP at the free rate.

Additionally, CACFP sponsors may serve a snack and/or a meal at a site that has been served meals earlier in the day by SFSP sponsors.

Can I claim reimbursement for meals served to children who did not typically attend my At-Risk afterschool program (e.g., siblings of enrolled children whose schools are closed due to coronavirus concerns)?

Yes, as long as the child is eligible to receive meals and all required records are maintained, which include but are not limited to, meal count records, attendance records, and menus. See CACFP Policy 18 for recordkeeping requirements. [http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/CACFPolicy18.pdf](http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/CACFPolicy18.pdf). Additionally, institutions should ensure the ATLAS application reflects current operations including the current average daily attendance and the types of meals served.

COMMUNICATION BY QCC

How do I stay informed on all of the CACFP changes?

We will send emails as often as possible. Also, go to our COVID-19 website for the latest updates as we expect additional guidance from federal, state and local authorities: <<< QCC WEBSITE FOR COVID-19 COMING SOON >>>

Where can I find the latest information?

Be sure to sign up for our texting program if you haven’t already for the most current information. Text HOME or CENTER to 8772554254 depending on your program type.
CACFP ORIENTATION AND NUTRITION TRAINING

Centers/ARAS/Shelters only: What do I do if I have new staff that must attend orientation training?

We will still conduct our 2-day CACFP orientation training for April 9-10 at our Atlanta office as scheduled. However, we ask that active sites only send one person for each site in order for you to maintain compliance. We will seat one participant at each table separated by at least 6 feet. However, if your site is performing adequately, we may allow you to attend the May 14-15 training.

Centers/ARAS/Shelters only: Do I still attend orientation training in April?

For new applicants who wish to start CACFP on May 1, 2020, one person from your site must attend training on April 9-10 at our Atlanta office. This person should be the person who has ultimate responsibility over CACFP at your site. We will seat one participant at each table separated by at least 6 feet.

Have nutrition trainings been canceled? How do I know if a scheduled one is canceled?

All scheduled trainings for March and April are postponed at this time. You will receive a refund and cancelation email from Eventbrite and Nutrition ECE Specialist Gina Cook.

FARM TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION (ECE)

Will I receive technical assistance?

Yes, however, in-person technical assistance is suspended until further notice. All technical assistance will be done via phone or email.

How does this situation impact my Farm to ECE goals and action plans?

The health, safety, and well-being of the staff, families, and children are priority. We understand that implementing Farm to ECE may need to be put on hold to insure a healthy environment. Please contact us to let us know if you will be closed.

Can I still make Farm to ECE mini-grant purchases?

Yes, you can still make purchases during this time. You can either purchase yourself or send order requests to Gina. If you purchase items, please send invoices to Gina Cook to reimburse you as quickly as possible.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

No Kid Hungry

No Kid Hungry is offering real time funding and assistance for schools, early child care centers and community organizations that are making sure kids have access to the meals they need as schools close due to coronavirus. No Kid Hungry is providing emergency grants to support these
local efforts like home delivered meals, grab and go meals programs, school and community pantries, backpack programs, and other steps to help reach children and families who lose access to meals. We’re providing $1 million in emergency grants on a rolling basis.

If your organization needs funding to support these efforts, please submit your interest in receiving emergency grant funds: [https://www.nokidhungry.org/coronavirus-grant-request](https://www.nokidhungry.org/coronavirus-grant-request)

**Waldron Charitable Fund**

The application deadline is this [Friday, March 20 at 5:00 p.m.](https://www.nokidhungry.org/coronavirus-grant-request). Grant awards can range from $10,000 to $50,000.

The intent of the funding is to “support local nonprofit organizations serving the health, nutrition, and special education needs of underserved children impacted by school closures nationwide.” Local community organizations throughout the US that serve children ages 12 and under are welcome to apply. Applicants must represent 501(c)(3) organizations, and faith-based organizations are eligible.

The Waldron Charitable Fund today announced that it will make $1 million in grant funding available for community organizations serving the critical needs of the nation's underserved children. As more and more schools close in response to the spread of COVID-10, this initiative will directly fund those who serve critical health needs (both physical and mental), provide nutritional assistance, and support special education for underserved school children. The application window for grant funding will be open until Friday, March 20, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

To apply, please email a document no longer than two pages in PDF form to [WaldronFund@gmail.com](mailto:WaldronFund@gmail.com) that addresses the following:

- Briefly describe the 501(c)(3) organization.
- What problem are you working to solve?
- How many underserved children will be positively impacted by your efforts?
- How will you distribute your solution while keeping children safe during the COVID-19 crisis?
- How quickly can your service be provided?
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In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by mail:

mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
fax: (202) 690-7442; or
email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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