



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

2429 Gillionville Rd.
Albany, GA 31707
Phone: 229-500-2895
Toll-Free: 866-833-3552

<https://www.asurams.edu/ccrr>

Fall 2025

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 2025

Dear Child Care Professionals of Georgia:

I am writing today to share news that I am excited about. Over the summer we convened two new CAPS advisory councils to listen to the experiences and needs of our two most important stakeholder groups, providers and families.

CAPS is a large system. More than 50,000 children from about 35,000 families have active scholarships. More than 250 DECAL employees keep the system running, administering regular payments to almost 3,000 providers and processing more than 66,000 scholarship applications in a year.

For as long as CAPS has been housed at DECAL, we have created opportunities to collect input from stakeholders, and it has been important to me to establish an ongoing feedback loop so that we can keep our stakeholders in the forefront as we make continuous updates to the system.

I was surprised by the number of child care providers who applied to be on the provider council, and we are grateful that so many of you expressed the willingness to take time from your busy days to collaborate with us.

Both advisory councils have 12 members, two people from each of the six geographic regions around the state. The provider council includes members from large corporate centers, smaller independent centers, and family providers, from both rural and urban areas.

In our first meeting with the provider council, we learned that you are very interested in the details of CAPS policies and processes, and we began a dialogue that will lead to specific policy recommendations from providers. We also committed to simplifying the language we use in our forms and letters to make these more accessible for providers and families.

Thank you for your commitment to high-quality early education for all children. It is a privilege to serve you.

Sincerely,

Elisabetta Kasfir
Deputy Commissioner for Federal Programs



From the Director's Chair: Ideas, Information & Resources

Important Child Care Director Resources

No matter what stage you find yourself in in your career, it's important to have access to resources to support your professional growth. This is especially true for the field of early learning because it's all too easy to get stuck in our own little bubbles. Your bubble might be a small in-home family child care program, or it might be a large center with several classrooms, but it's still a bubble. Here are our recommendations for essential child care director resources.

Your State Licensing Office

You might not immediately think of licensing as a resource for you, but you should. Their role is to help ensure safe environments for young children. Their job is to stay up-to-date on the most recent rules and regulations that child care programs must follow and communicate those out to you. These rules can sometimes feel confusing or overwhelming, which is why your licensing office should be considered a resource. You should be able to ask them for help about how to put certain things into practice.

Professional Early Learning Organizations & Their Conferences

NAEYC (the National Association for the Education of Young Children) and [NAFCC](#) (the National Association of Family Child Care) are two of the largest professional organizations in the field of early learning. They both put on annual conferences, accredit high quality early learning programs, and publish helpful resources on best practices and new research. You can become a member of one or both (depending on the type of program you run), and gain access to some valuable information to help you grow as a professional. It might be out of your budget to attend their annual conferences every year, but if it's possible, prioritize attending at least once. Both conferences are jam-packed with high quality sessions on every topic you can imagine. It's an amazing way to re-energize and reinvigorate your love for all things early learning. NAEYC also has state chapters, which put on their own smaller-scale conferences. If flying to the national conference isn't in your budget, driving to your state's own conference might be. In terms of impactful child care director resources, these are at the top of the list.

Finding Your Community

Learning from your peers is a powerful experience in any profession and is why conferences happen in the first place. This kind of community learning shouldn't be limited to once a year, or who can afford to attend a conference. Whether it's to have a group to ask advice from, gripe with, or community is important for everyone. With so many forms of social media, you can find online communities in so many different places-- Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, just to name a few. You can also look to more local early learning organizations. Your local resource and referral agency, for example, might provide opportunities for the community to come together.

Connect With Your Local Resource & Referral Agency

Resource and referral agencies function differently depending on where you're located, but they are typically great child care director resources, offering training, subsidy support, and licensing support. If your state has a quality rated program for child care, it is usually through your resource and referral agency that you'll be able to enroll. Quality rated programs are ways to showcase the hard work of child care providers, creating a path to showcase growth and development as an early educator and care provider.

Find Business Idols, Too!

As a director it's not just about the ECE stuff, it's also about the business stuff, which, depending on your personality, might not be the fun stuff. At the end of the day though it doesn't matter how high quality your program is if the business side of things isn't sustainable. For many people we would rather bury our heads in the sand than think about the nitty gritty business decisions, but you'll only be hurting yourself. Finding child care business professionals who can answer your questions, advise you, and help you set goals can help you resist the urge to ignore it. You might accomplish this by developing a good relationship with your tax prep person and going to them with any questions you have.



Congratulations

to these new Quality Rated providers!



Melissa Carter - Family Child Care Learning Home

Childcare Network #9



Kids World Academy 3

DreamPlay Learning Center

Once Upon a Time Academy, LLC

Carver Heights Child Development Center

Temeke McClendon - Family Child Care Learning Home

Alexus R. Little - Family Child Care Learning Home

First Beginning Daycare

Childcare Network #215

Lifesprings Childcare Center

Sunshine Learning Academy, LLC

Miss Daisy's Darlings Daycare Center

Baby Love Daycare & Learning Center Academy, Inc.

Primary Kids Academy 2

Tooty Tots

Preschool Scholars LLC

Candy Cane's Learning Center

Woods Academy

Amazing Minds Learning Academy



Peachy Kids Academy 2

Truly Blessed Early Learning Academy

Riverside Children's Center

Ratings through 9/2025



Coming in 2026!

The Early Learning Conference

Mark your calendars for a high-quality, affordable educational event for early learning professionals in South Georgia. Hosted on the campus of Albany State University/West in Albany, the conference is open to child care providers, parents, foster parents, and others impacting the lives of children.

The conference will offer vendor/exhibitors and sponsors onsite, sharing valuable early learning information, resources, and gifts throughout the day.

More information to come!

Quality Rated Provider Highlight

Child Care Network, Columbus, GA, 3-Stars!!!

My name is Kelleigh Netherland, and I have been at Child Care Network #9 for going on 3 years. I have been in child care for close to 18 years, moving from teacher to director. Ms. Briana has been in child care for a few years and has recently joined our team. She is a fantastic teacher and a wonderful teammate to work with.

This was our second time going through the Quality Rated process, and at first, it seemed very overwhelming. After working with the Child Care Resource & Referral Technical Assistants, Jennifer Taylor and Alicia Mills, and the CNI QR team, we now seem to have a better understanding and were able to achieve a 3-STAR rating!!

~ Kelleigh Netherland, Director



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) Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., except state holidays. Families can also contact the Call Center team by sending an email to findqrcare@decals.ga.gov, or by using the online child care search service at www.qualityrated.org to enter their preferences and request personalized follow-up help.

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

A Director's Institute

with dynamic business entrepreneur and inspirational leader,



Demmentrice Jefferson, M.S., M.B.A

*Early Childhood Educational Consultant/Certified Trainer, PLC
Professional Learning Community Coordinator, Brain Pickers Inc.*

Impacting children and families through education has been an exciting and purposeful journey for me. In 2017, I created Brain Pickers Consulting and Training, after working in the child care industry for over 16 years as an educator, trainer, consultant, technical assistant coordinator, and mentor. Brain Pickers is a unique child care consulting firm, in that it inspires children, educators, and professionals to explore current challenges of what's possible in the world of education. Educators are on the frontline of change and impact the lives of children. I am a certified trainer in South Carolina and Georgia and Professional Learning Coordinator (PLC) in Early Childhood Education. Education is not just my profession; it's my passion that I live daily.

Exceptional or Explosive! What is Your Impact? What does it take to create and maintain a dynamic early childhood education program? A DYNAMIC DIRECTOR! Come join us to learn some tricks of the trade on how to be just that! We will discuss how to measure your impact on your program through ideas such as defining your level of involvement in your program and creating opportunities to collaborate and build relationships with children, staff, family, and community partners.

Join us for a fun-filled day of learning with other early childhood program owners, directors, and administrators. We look forward to seeing you there!

Friday, October 3, 2025

9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

4 hours DECAL training credit

Albany State University- West

2400 Gillionville Road

Albany, GA 31707

Event Center

\$60.00 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

The Family Gathering: Ideas, Information, & Resources for FCCLHs

Supporting School-Age Children as a Family Child Care Learning Home

There are a variety of creative strategies and techniques that can be used to provide a supportive environment for the school-age children in your program. When thinking about how to keep this group of children engaged, consider the following:

- **Establish a Routine:** Create a consistent transition to help things go smoothly when children leave for and arrive from school. This is not only helpful for the school-aged children but also allows the other children in your care to understand what will happen during these times, thus making transitions uneventful and easy for all.
- **Encourage Independence:** Have materials accessible to help with completing homework, doing crafts, and other fun activities. If these are not age-appropriate for other children in your care, create a space that allows your school-agers access without the worry of safety hazards for younger children. Invite the school-age children to help create a daily schedule that will keep them motivated to complete homework but also allow them to relax after a day at school or play to run off pent-up energy.
- **Offer both independent and group activities/materials:** Make sure that children can choose to participate in a way that meets their own needs daily. Have some areas for independent reading, activities, etc, while also providing for fun group games and play for those who would enjoy it.
- **Utilize the abilities of the children:** Encouraging the school-age children to interact positively with the younger children will not only benefit the group but could also benefit you. Having them read books to the younger children or facilitate a game or activity can take this off your hands and allows you to see to other children or tasks like getting a snack or talking with a parent. The children can enjoy each other's company and develop positive relationships, which also makes daily interactions easier and more enjoyable.
- **Stay informed:** Keep up with educational resources and support systems for each child. Create partnerships with other support adults for the children. In addition, do not skip out on taking professional development to help you learn more strategies and techniques that will help you support school-age children.

Adapted from www.govinfo.gov

Sign up for a Summer Session!

FREE ONLINE BUSINESS TRAINING

For Child Care Owners & Administrators




Small Study Groups on 11 Business & Financial Topics

Individual Coaching for Your Unique Business Challenges

[Learn More & Register Now!](#)

CHILD CARE OWNERS & ADMINISTRATORS



It's Easy to Thrive!!

Use Our

GETTING STARTED GUIDE

to figure out
where to start your
Thriving Child Care Business Academy
journey based on your needs and
interests

<https://bit.ly/STARTTHRIVINGHERE>


Email gacoaching@clvstrat.com For Help

GETTING STARTED GUIDE

- 1. Sign up for a Summer Session
- 2. Sign up for a Small Study Group
- 3. Sign up for a Small Study Group
- 4. Sign up for a Small Study Group
- 5. Sign up for a Small Study Group
- 6. Sign up for a Small Study Group
- 7. Sign up for a Small Study Group
- 8. Sign up for a Small Study Group
- 9. Sign up for a Small Study Group
- 10. Sign up for a Small Study Group
- 11. Sign up for a Small Study Group

Training Calendar – October, November & December 2025

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

Friday, 10/3//2025 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. \$60 Albany State University- West 2400 Gillionville Road Albany, GA 31707 Event Center	A Director's Institute Exceptional or Explosive! What is Your Impact? <i>What does it take to create and maintain a dynamic early childhood education program? A DYNAMIC DIRECTOR! Come join us to learn some tricks of the trade on how to be just that! We will discuss how to measure your impact on your program through ideas such as defining your level of involvement in your program and creating opportunities to collaborate and build relationships with children, staff, family, and community partners.</i>	Demmentrice "DJ" Jefferson BFTS Approved Trainer
Thursday, 10/9/2025 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. \$10 Webinar	Health and Safety Awareness <i>We will be focusing on the following areas of Health and Safety Awareness in an Early Childhood Learning Environment, Children's Health, Hygiene, Physical Plant, and Playground Safety. By attending, participants will be able to provide a healthy, Safe, and nurturing environment for the children to grow, develop, and learn.</i>	Sandra Jackson BFTS Approved Trainer
Tuesday, 10/14/2025 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. \$10 Webinar	Developing an Age-Appropriate Lesson Plan for Your EC Classroom <i>This interactive training will prepare participants to develop lesson plans and connect them to the learning centers and daily activities and routines of the children.</i>	Polly Raike BFTS Approved Trainer
Saturday, 10/18//2025 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. \$30 Super Saturday!!! Chili's Restaurant Crossing 5080 Riverside Drive Suite 1600 Macon, GA 31210	I've Got a New Attitude! Professionalism Starts With ME!!! <i>By reviewing the NAEYC Ethical Code of Conduct, their Statement of Commitment, and research, you will have the opportunity to develop and/or amend your program's policies and procedures to include a section on Ethics and Professionalism that is "Center Specific" for your learning environments.</i> Indoor and Outdoor Hazards <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>	Sandra Jackson BFTS Approved Trainer
Saturday, 10/25/2025 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. \$25 Webinar	Fire Safety <i>This course meets the requirements mandated by the Georgia Insurance and Fire Safety Commissioner's office.</i>	Sandra Jackson Certified Instructor
Tuesday, 11/4/2025 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. \$10 Webinar	Our Mission is the Whole Child! <i>Recognizing and applying the important mission of the YMCA to guide by their core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility to help children reach their full potential with dignity.</i> 	Polly Raike BFTS Approved Trainer

Saturday, 11/8/2025 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. \$30 Monroe County Clubhouse 64 West Chamber Street Forsyth, GA 31029	Accept the Challenge- The Ultimate Experience and a Glimpse into the Future <i>We all know teaching and learning have evolved over time. Come experience those changes, showcasing diverse teaching skills from past to present. You will use traditional methods to navigate new challenges, honoring educators before you while also demonstrating your own unique approaches—especially through modern technology in today's classroom. This training encourages exploration and skill demonstration as part of its challenge. Join us by accepting the challenge—an ultimate experience designed for educators and for the future of our children.</i>	Sandra Jackson BFTS Approved Trainer
Thursday, 11/13/2025 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. \$10 Webinar	Safe Sleep Practices <i>This is an interactive training that provides opportunities for the participants as they go through this training to engage in practicing and demonstrating skills of safe sleep practices. This training follows the BFTS Safe Sleeping and Resting Requirements Rule 591-1-1-.30</i>	Sandra Jackson BFTS Approved Trainer
Saturday, 12/6/2025 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. \$30 Super Saturday!!! Kuntry Kiddle Daycare 6981 Thomaston Road Macon, GA 31220	Joy to the World <i>During this time of year, poor morale and depression were found in numerous families, thus affecting young children. This program is designed to add a little joy to the hearts of the providers, the children, and the families.</i> Unlocking Your Potential: Manifesting Your Goals/Dreams <i>Come join us for an exciting and engaging day of self-assessment and goal-setting for professional growth. We will provide all the fun materials you will need to create an inspiring vision board that will capture all your desired goals and can be used for daily motivation.</i>	Sandra Jackson BFTS Approved Trainer
Tuesday, 12/9/2025 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. \$10 Webinar	What?! Healthy Behavior Management Strategies <i>This course defines behavior management and helps the caregiver differentiate between challenging behaviors. It offers positive strategies that result from inappropriate classroom behavior.</i>	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



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

Like us on Facebook [@ccrrofswwga](https://www.facebook.com/ccrrofswwga) & on  [@ccrrofswwga](https://www.instagram.com/ccrrofswwga)
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

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

"Prove them wrong"

This project is funded by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, with funding from the federal Child Care and Development Fund. Albany State University * An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institute