



**CHILDCARE AND PARENT SERVICES (CAPS)
Georgia's Subsidy Program**

CAPS Policy – Definitions and Acronyms	No.: CAPS/00-2	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 07/01/2021
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2 DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

2.1 Definitions

Administrative Error – an error made by the Agency causing incorrect payment of subsidy and/or eligibility to be determined incorrectly.

Administrative Hearing – a judicial proceeding conducted so as to accord a parent or child care provider their due process rights required by applicable law.

Adult – for the purposes of CAPS, any person who is 18 years of age or older or an emancipated minor. For the purposes of criminal records check processes, an adult can be 17 years of age.

Adverse Action – an unfavorable action taken by DECAL against a child care provider or a parent.

Adverse Action Period – the 14-day notification period CAPS gives parents before an adverse action will go into effect.

Alimony – money paid by a spouse pending or after a legal separation or divorce.

Appeal – the right to request a hearing as a result of an adverse action.

Applicant – the parent, guardian, or person acting in loco parentis (with whom the child resides) who submits the request for CAPS child care assistance.

Application – the form prescribed by CAPS used to apply for child care assistance.

Approval – disposition of an application for a parent who is determined eligible for CAPS services when funding is available. This occurs after an assessment has been made on a complete application.

Arrival and Departure Records – a daily attendance record documenting the child's arrival and departure times signed by the parent or other authorized representative. Formerly referred to as sign-in / sign-out logs.

Authorized Representative – an individual granted written permission by the parent to perform specified duties, including duties related to the application process or daily pickup and drop-off. The authorized representative may not be an employee of the child care provider except in limited circumstances (e.g., the employee is a family member, friend, or neighbor of the child and routinely performs pickup and drop-off duties because of their relationship to the child).

Before and After School Scholarship – the type of scholarship authorized when child care is needed for a school age child before and/or after customary school hours while school is in operation for the child receiving care. Before and after school child care also includes children who are less than school age if receiving education through Georgia's Pre-K Program or Head Start.

Biological – parent who has given birth to (mother) or fathered the child or is related by blood affiliation to the third degree of consanguinity, such as, a parent, aunt, uncle, grandparent, great-grandparent, or older sibling.

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Boarder Income – direct payments for food and related shelter expenses, minus the cost of doing business. A boarder rents space within the applicant’s residence. Please see definition for rental income when income is received from renting space at a location other than the applicant’s own residence.

Calendar Day – time from 12:00 am to 11:59 pm.

Capital Gains – proceeds from the sale of capital goods or equipment. Proceeds are reported as capital gains for tax purposes, including items such as real estate, securities, machinery, etc., which are held as an investment for a set period of time. A capital gain is realized when the item(s) sold has appreciated in value from the original purchase price.

CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status – a licensed child care program that has not achieved a star rating, or is unable to maintain a star rating.

CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status – a licensed child care program that is new to CAPS and in the process of becoming Quality Rated.

Case Record – all documentation collected and retained for a child care provider and parent throughout the course of their participation in the CAPS program.

Child and Parent Services (CAPS) – Georgia’s child care subsidy assistance program.

Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) – the primary source of federal funding for child care subsidies for low-income working families.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) – the funds allocated to states under the provisions of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act, as amended. The fund consists of Discretionary Funds authorized under section 658B of the amended Act, and Mandatory and Matching Funds appropriated under section 418 of the Social Security Act.

Child Care Scholarship – a written authorization of eligibility for the CAPS program. For the purposes of the CAPS program, a child care scholarship provides authorization for eligibility to the parent, not eligibility for the child care provider. Scholarships can be issued (based on the family’s needs) for full time, part time, or before/after school care.

Child Care Learning Center – means any place operated by an individual or any business entity recognized under Georgia law wherein are received for pay for group care, for fewer than 24 hours per day without transfer of legal custody, seven or more children under 18 years of age and which is required to be licensed. Child Care Learning Center also includes any day care center previously licensed by the Department of Human Resources and transferred pursuant to Code Section 20-1A-1 *et seq.*

Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCR&R or R&R) – statewide network of organizations that help parents choose child care by giving them referrals to local child care providers, information on state licensing requirements, etc. CCR&Rs also offer training and technical assistance as well as quality improvements activities to child care programs. For additional information, visit www.allgakids.org.

Child Protective Services – an investigation of child abuse or neglect that yields services to protect the child and strengthen the family.

Children with Disabilities – a child that has a disability or developmental delay that impacts their learning, as measured and documented by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures by a licensed medical specialist. The disability or delay must be in one of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development. Children with disabilities may include: a child who is eligible for early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 *et seq.*); a child who is eligible for services under part B, section 619, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419); a child who is eligible for services under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794); a child with a Medicaid waiver for persons with disabilities (i.e., Katie Beckett, NOW, or COMP); and a child receiving Supplemental Security Income for blindness or a disability.

Child Support – maintenance allowance paid by the noncustodial parent for the support of a child.

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Claim – an overpayment established or identified by DECAL as a result of an error or violation.

Client Error – an unintentional error caused by the parent. These include, but are not limited to, reporting false or inaccurate information, delays in reporting changes in household circumstances or provider arrangements, or excess payments made as the result of a request to continue benefits pending an administrative hearing.

Comprehensive Records Check Determination – a satisfactory or unsatisfactory determination by the department, based upon a Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint check, a search of the National Crime Information Center's National Sex Offender Registry, and a search of the following registries, repositories, or databases in the state where the actual or potential employee or director resides and in each state where such individual resided during the preceding five years: criminal registry or repository, with the use of fingerprints being required in the state where the individual resides and optional in other states; state sex offender registry or repository; and state based child abuse and neglect registry and data base.

Core Standards – health and safety standards identified as having the greatest impact on risk to children in care.

Denial – disposition of an application for a parent determined not eligible for CAPS services or when funding is not available. This occurs after an assessment has been made on a complete application.

Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) – the state entity, or Lead Agency, designated under §§98.10 and 98.16(a) (Code of Federal Regulations) to which a CCDF grant is awarded and that is accountable for the use of the funds provided.

Director – the chief administrative or executive officer of the child care facility. This person is responsible for the daily on-premises supervision, operation, and maintenance of the facility.

Dismissal – the action taken to remove a child care provider from the CAPS program for failure to comply with DECAL policies or federal or state laws and regulations.

Dispose – the act of moving an application from pending status to either approved, denied, or unable to process.

Disqualification – a time-limited or permanent status that disallows a child care provider or parent from participating in CAPS for failure to comply with DECAL policies or federal or state laws and regulations.

Dividends – a share of profits received by a policy holder or shareholder.

Earned Income – income gained from paid work, such as wages, salaries, tips, net earnings from self-employment, etc.

Electronic Signature – occurs when the signatory affixes their signature, unique and private pin, photo, fingerprint recognition, or unique and individualized card scan to an electronic document.

Eligibility Period – the 12-month period for which a parent is authorized to receive CAPS services as long federally mandated requirements are met.

Eligible – disposition of an application for a parent who may receive CAPS services when funding is available.

Employment – work performed by the parent in exchange for pay.

Family Assessed Fee – the amount the family should pay to share in the cost of child care based on their income and their family unit size.

Family Child Care Learning Home – means a private residence operated by any person who receives therein for pay for supervision and care fewer than 24 hours per day, without transfer of legal custody, at least three but not more than six children under 13 years of age who are not related to such persons and whose parents are not residents in the same private residence as the provider and which is required to be licensed; provided, however, that the total number of unrelated children cared for in such home, for pay and not for pay, may not exceed six children under 13 years of age at one time, except that a

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provider may care for two additional children three years of age or older for two designated one hour periods daily upon approval by the Department.

Family Unit – persons who are considered in the family for the purpose of determining CAPS eligibility.

Foster Care – children in the custody of the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) that have been removed from their home and are under the supervision of DFCS.

Fraud – a criminal act in which a child care provider, parent, or authorized representative makes a false statement and/or withholds information willfully, knowingly, and with deceitful intent and, as a result, obtains or attempts to obtain payment or assistance for which he/she is not eligible.

Full Time Scholarship – the type of scholarship authorized when full-time child care is needed for three or more days within a service week.

General Equivalency Diploma (GED) – a program of study leading to a secondary school diploma.

Grievance - any complaint regarding program services, policies, or procedures offered through the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program excluding those that are subject to an administrative hearing. Grievances are handled and reviewed by impartial members of CAPS leadership.

Gross Applicable Income – income that is counted toward the maximum allowable income limit.

Gross Wages/Salary – income earned from work/employment, including base pay and tips, commissions, piece rate payments, and cash bonuses prior to deductions.

Household – all persons residing in the same home.

Improper Payment – any payment received in error. This may include a payment made for an incorrect amount, a payment made on behalf of an ineligible person or a payment made for a service not rendered or improperly authorized. This includes any duplicate payments or payments for services not received.

In loco parentis – person living with the child needing CAPS services who is one of the following: a non-custodial parent; another related person who acts as a caretaker (responsible for the care) of the child; a legal guardian; an unrelated adult who is at least age twenty-one (21) and whose petition for legal guardianship of the child is pending; an unrelated adult with whom DFCS has placed a child subsequent to a court order identifying DFCS as responsible for the child’s care and supervision.

Inactive Child Care Provider – a child care provider that does not currently care for a child served by the CAPS program.

Informal Provider – family, friend, or neighbor who provides care for no more than two unrelated (or no more than six related) children for pay. Informal providers are not required to be licensed but must register with the CAPS program. Informal care can only be authorized in limited situations as detailed in [CAPS Participating Providers Policy \(CAPS/00-11\)](#).

Irregular Income – periodic fluctuations where earnings may not reflect an accurate projected annual income when determining eligibility based upon the previous four weeks of income.

Lead Agency – see definition of DECAL.

License-Exempt Providers – child care providers that can operate legally without a license. DECAL rules and guidelines for all exempt programs can be found at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/CCS/Exemptions.aspx>.

Lump-Sum Repayment – repayment option where the child care program or parent repays the entire amount of a claim in one payment.

Major Parent – adult who is the parent/person responsible for a minor parent. The major parent and the minor parent reside in the same household with the minor parent’s child or children.

Maximum Allowable Income Limit – the highest income threshold for CAPS eligibility.

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Military Allotments – payment received by a family unit member who is a dependent or a spouse of a military staff member.

Minor – for the purposes of CAPS eligibility, an individual who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. For the purposes of criminal records check processes, an individual who has not yet reached their 17th birthday.

Minor Parent – any person 20 years of age or younger who has a child.

Net Income from Self-Employment (Farm) – gross receipts minus operating expenses for one’s own business, professional enterprise, or partnership. Gross receipts include the value of all goods purchased, rent, heat, light, power, depreciation charges, wages, and similar items. Operating expenses include cost of feed, fertilizer, seed, and other farming supplies, cash wages paid to farmhands, depreciation charges, cash, rent, interest on farm mortgages, farm building repairs, farm taxes (not state and federal income taxes), and similar expenses. The value of fuel, food, or other farm products used for family living is not included as part of net income.

Net Income from Self-Employment (Non-Farm) – gross receipts minus expenses from one’s own business, professional enterprise, or partnership. Gross receipts include the value of all goods sold and services rendered. Expenses include cost of goods purchased, rent, heat, light, power, depreciation charges, wages, and salaries paid, business taxes, (not personal income taxes), and similar costs. The value of salable merchandise consumed by the proprietors of retail stores is not included as part of net income.

Non-relative Informal Provider – child care that is provided by a caregiver who is not related to the child by blood or marriage.

Office of State Administrative Hearings (OSAH) – means the executive state agency responsible for the administration of the Georgia Administrative Procedure Act. OSAH is not accountable to the management of the CAPS program or DECAL.

Offsetting – a reduction in a child care provider’s on-going payments to recoup an established overpayment.

Overpayment – an improper payment where the parent or child care provider receives more in services or payment(s) than they are entitled to receive.

Parent – a parent by blood, marriage, or adoption; a legal guardian; or other person standing in loco parentis (acting in the role of a parent or guardian). Parent also include any persons recognized by Georgia law or a competent court of jurisdiction as serving in loco parentis.

Part Time Scholarship – the type of scholarship authorized when part-time child care is needed for one or two days during a service week. This scholarship can be authorized when child care is needed sporadically throughout the eligibility period (e.g., teacher work days, student holidays, etc.)

Premises – a building, group of buildings, and/or contiguous parcels of land under the control of a single owner who may rent out portions of the premises.

Program Violation – an intentional submission of incomplete, incorrect, or falsified documents or information in order to qualify for assistance or receive payments that an individual or child care provider is not authorized to receive.

Provider – the person, facility, or program chosen by the parent(s) to provide child care.

Provider Error – an unintentional error caused by the provider where payments are made based on incorrect and/or inaccurate information.

Public Assistance – payment in or by money, medical care, remedial care, goods, or services to or for the benefit of needy persons.

Quality Rated – Georgia’s system to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early education and school-age care programs. Similar to rating systems for hotels or restaurants, Quality Rated assigns a rating of one, two, or three stars to early education and school-age care programs that go above and beyond minimum licensing standards.

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Quality Rated Cohort Group – the process under which a provider signs up to complete their Quality Rating in a given year. Each year consists of four separate cohorts that have a predefined number of program slots available. Each cohort has its own window when a portfolio must be submitted and the three months window during which the program observation will be conducted. Cohort slots are released in October for the following year and are available for selection in a provider’s Quality Rated account.

Quality Rated Provider – a licensed child care program that is one-, two-, or three-star rated in Quality Rated (Georgia’s Quality Rating and Improvement System).

Registration Fee – the fee charged by a provider for enrollment.

Regular Income – a consistent pattern of pay for six consecutive months of earnings. It can include unearned and earned income.

Regular Lottery Payments – a sum of money received as a result of purchasing a winning ticket in a game of chance paid on a consistent basis.

Reinstatement – a process that allows a child care provider who has been dismissed or disqualified from receiving subsidies through CAPS to become eligible for enrollment once again.

Relative Informal Provider – child care that is provided by a caregiver who is related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption within the third degree of consanguinity, such as an aunt, uncle, grandparent, great-grandparent, or older sibling.

Rental Income – money received on property owned and rented to others at a location other than at the applicant’s own residence. Please see the definition of Boarder Income when space within the applicant’s own residence has been rented to a Boarder(s).

Repayment Statement – form signed by the child care provider or parent when a claim has been established or identified by DECAL as a result of an error or violation. The statement documents the amount of the claim and includes the frequency, method, and time period for repayment.

Sanction – action available under federal, state, or local law, regulation, or policy that may be utilized by DECAL when a child care provider or parent is found to be in noncompliance with CAPS policies and rules.

School Age – children who are at least five years old by the first of September of the current school year and who are eligible to attend public school and who are under 13 years old (or up to age 18 years for children with disabilities). For the purposes of CAPS, children enrolled in Georgia’s Pre-K Programs are considered school age.

Serious Injury – a death or an incident requiring hospitalization or professional medical attention other than first aid of a child while in the care of the provider that was the result of a substantiated intentional or gross negligent act on behalf of the provider or staff that indicates a deficiency in the operation or management of the program. Any case of serious injury that was substantiated by DECAL will be deemed as Extreme Harm and Imminent Danger according to DECAL’s Integrated Enforcement and Compliance System.

Service Week – the time period CAPS uses for providers to identify the type of care provided. Service begins on Monday morning at 6:00 a.m. and ends the following Monday morning at 5:59 a.m.

Single Parent – parent who resides with his/her child and is legally and/or financially responsible for the child when there is no other legally and/or financially responsible person for the child residing with that eligible family.

Social Security – for the purposes of CAPS eligibility determination, these are retirement and survivor’s insurance payments from the social security administration.

Standard of Promptness (SOP) – the time period within which certain actions must be taken.

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State Median Income – income distribution promulgated by the United States Department of Health and Human Services that CAPS uses to determine the program income guidelines.

State Provider Management Agent (SPMA) – the vendor that the subsidy program contracts with to manage financial reimbursements for child care providers which participate in the subsidy program. The SPMA may conduct training, engage in marketing activities and participate in special initiatives related to the subsidy program and the Department of Early Care and Learning.

State Provider Management System (SPMS) – the information technology system that the SPMA uses to manage its work, and the system that the subsidy program uses to manage data related to subsidy services.

State-approved Activity – any activity as defined by CAPS in which the parent must participate as an eligibility requirement.

Suspension – when a CAPS case is active but there are no active scholarships.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – the monthly cash assistance program for low-income families with children under age 18 and children 18 years of age who are attending school full-time.

Temporary Change – any time-limited absence from work for an employed parent due to such reasons as the need to care for a family member or an illness; any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working; any student holiday or break for a parent participating in a training or educational program; any reduction in work, training, or education hours, as long as the parent is still working or attending a training or educational program; any other time-limited cessation of work or attendance at a training or educational program that does not exceed 13 weeks; any change in age, including turning 13 years old during the eligibility period; any change in residency within the state of Georgia.

TANF Diversion – occurs when a parent, after receiving short term assistance, voluntarily closes their TANF case in order to not exceed the 48-month lifetime limit on TANF participation.

Transportation Records – includes transportation agreements and logs maintained in accordance with child care licensing rules for licensed providers or health and safety standards manuals for license-exempt and informal providers.

Underpayment – an improper payment where the parent or child care provider receives fewer services or less payment(s) than she or he is entitled to receive.

Unearned Income – income gained from sources other than employment or work, such as interest and dividends from investments, retirement income, social security, unemployment benefits, alimony, and child support.

Unemployment Compensation – money received from government unemployment insurance agencies or private companies during times of unemployment and strike benefits received from labor unions.

Unable to Process – disposition of an application when the application cannot be processed due to: (1) any duplicate application or (2) missing or incomplete information or verification documents.

Uniform Accounting System (UAS) Code – codes used to direct funds and maintain a tracking system for the various populations served in CAPS. Each UAS code is used to serve a particular population (e.g., TANF, Pre-K, Transitional Child Care (TCC), Summer Transition Program (STP), Foster Care, and low-income working families). A list of the UAS codes is included as part of the appendices.

Veteran’s Benefits – pensions or benefits paid to a retired/disabled veteran or their surviving dependents.

Wages or Salary – earnings received in exchange for work performed as an employee, including armed services pay, consideration of tips, commissions, piece rate payments, wages/salary advances, vacation pay, overtime pay, sick pay, contract employment, and cash bonuses.

Withdrawn – an application status when the parent rescinds their application.

Worker’s Compensation – money received from private or public insurance companies for injuries incurred at work.

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2.2 Acronyms

AE	Administrative Error
APRN	Advanced Practice Registered Nurse
CAPS	Childcare and Parent Services
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CCDBG	Child Care and Development Block Grant
CCDF	Child Care and Development Fund
CCS	Child Care Services (Licensing)
CCR&R	Child Care Resource and Referral Agency
CE	Client Error
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
CPS	Child Protective Services
CRC	Criminal Records Check
DECAL	Department of Early Care and Learning
DFCS	Division of Family and Children Services
DHS	Department of Human Services
EHS	Early Head Start
FPL	Federal Poverty Level
GRG	Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
IE	Inadvertent Error
INA	Immigration and Naturalization Act
IP	Improper Payment
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
LES	Military Leave Earning Statement
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OP	Overpayment
OSAH	Office of State Administrative Hearings
PE	Provider Error
Pre-K	Pre-Kindergarten (generally refers to Georgia's Pre-K Program)
PV	Program Violation
QR	Quality Rated
QRIS	Quality Rated Improvement System
SFSP	Summer Food Service Program
SIDS	Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
SMI	State's Median Income
SPMA	State Provider Management Agent

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SPMS	State Provider Management System
SSCM	Social Services Case Manager
SMI	State Median Income
SSI	Supplemental Security Income (Blind, Aged, Disabled)
SSN	Social Security Number
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TFSP	TANF Family Service Plan
TCC	Transitional Child Care
TIN	Taxpayer Identification Number
UAS	Uniform Accounting System
UP	Underpayment
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

POLICY REVISION HISTORY

Date	Description of Change
03/26/2018	Removed definition for Graduated Phase-out and added definitions for Gross Applicable Income and Maximum Allowable Income.
07/02/2018	Revised definition of Minor Parent to 20 years of age or younger; revised definition for Special Needs; added definition for Temporary Change; and added new definition for an authorized representative. Replaced all instances of the word certificate with scholarship in this section and throughout the Policy Manual. Replaced most instances of the word program with provider in this section and throughout the Policy Manual.
10/01/2018	Revised the title of the “Special Needs” definition to “Children with Disabilities,” in accordance with a corresponding revision to the title of that priority group and added to the definition a requirement that the disability affect the child’s learning. Added new definition for serious injury.
10/19/2018	Revised definition of temporary change to include any change in age and any change in residency within the state of Georgia.
02/01/2019	Renamed sign in/sign out logs to arrival and departure records to align with child care licensing rules; renamed informal caregiver to informal provider; added definitions for adverse action period, comprehensive records check determination, core standards, and transportation records; and revised definitions of dismissal and disqualification.
10/01/2019	Added definitions for electronic signature and grievance. Revised definition of adverse action period to note CAPS will provide 14 days’ notice instead of 10 days’ notice.
05/15/2020	Added definitions for approval, dispose, unable to process, and withdrawn.
11/02/2020	Renamed “parental authority” to “parent;” “Georgia Lottery funded Pre-k” to “Georgia’s Pre-K Program;” and “case manager” to “CAPS staff” in this section and where applicable throughout the policy manual. Renamed before and after school care, full time care, and part time care to before and after scholarship, full time scholarship, and part time scholarship, respectively; removed occasional care from terms and merged definition with part time scholarship.

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Date	Description of Change
07/01/2021	Added definition for, CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status, CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status, Quality Rated Cohort Group, and Quality Rated Provider.