



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

CAPS Policy – Application Process	No.: CAPS/00-4	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 11/02/2020
		Revision Effective: 11/02/2020

LEGAL AUTHORITY: Federal Register: 45 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 98 and 99.

Cross Reference/See Also: CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy (CAPS/00-6), CAPS Priority Groups Policy (CAPS/00-7), CAPS Case Change and Documentation Policy (CAPS/00-13), CAPS Annual Redetermination Policy (CAPS/00-14)

Note: Definitions of words or phrases in bold are located in [Definitions and Acronyms](#). Only the first occurrence of the defined words or phrases are bolded.

4 APPLICATION PROCESS

4.1 Purpose

In order to participate in the **Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)** program, **parents** must complete an on-line or paper **application**. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the application process.

4.2 Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the **Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)**, all parties responsible for the administration of the CAPS program, **parents**, and child care **providers** who receive subsidies administered by DECAL on behalf of parents.

4.3 Filing an Application

4.3.1 Parents have several options to submit an application.

4.3.1.1 **Online:** Parents requesting assistance with child care costs may apply online through Georgia Gateway at www.Gateway.ga.gov.

4.3.1.2 **Paper:** A paper application for child care services ([Appendix J](#)) may be completed and submitted by mail, fax, email, or in person at the DECAL office. The parent can access the paper application online at www.caps.dec.al.ga.gov or request that a paper application be sent to them by contacting CAPS at 1-833-4GACAPS (1-833-442-2277).

4.3.2 The parent with whom the child resides and who is in need of child care services should sign the application. When a **minor parent** applies for services the minor parent should sign the CAPS application.

4.3.3 Applications must include, at a minimum, the parent's full name and address, the date completed and handwritten or **electronic signature**.

4.3.4 For individuals requiring assistance with completing an application, the application can be submitted by the parent's authorized representative.

4.3.4.1 The parent must submit written or electronic confirmation of their authorized representative. The authorized representative can provide assistance to complete the application and submit documentation on behalf of the parent, but the parent and the authorized representative must sign the CAPS application.

4.3.4.2 No information can be shared with the authorized representative without the parent's written consent.

4.3.4.3 All employees of the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), and all parties responsible for the administration of the CAPS program are prohibited from being an authorized representative.

4.3.5 A complete paper application should be submitted to the following address:

CAPS Policy – Application Process	No.: CAPS/00-4	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 11/02/2020
		Revision Effective: 11/02/2020

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
 CAPS Division
 2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE
 Suite 754, East Tower Atlanta, GA 30334

4.3.6 The official application date shall be the date the initial application was received by CAPS.

4.4 Funding Availability

4.4.1 At the discretion of DECAL and/or due to federal regulations, funding may not always be available.

4.4.1.1 Notifications about funding availability will be posted on the CAPS website.

4.4.1.2 When funding is not available, **applicants** will be alerted at the time the application is submitted.

4.4.1.3 If a family’s application is denied for CAPS due to funding availability, the family may reapply when funding becomes available. A denial due to lack of funding is not appealable.

4.5 CAPS Interview

4.5.1 An interview must be conducted to determine eligibility. Interviews can be conducted via phone, email, or in person (if requested by the parent). The purpose of the interview is to ensure that all aspects of the family’s situation have been recorded and that all needed verification documents have been received.

4.5.2 Interviews may occur at any time during business hours during the 30-day application review period.

4.5.3 Failure to participate in the interview may result in the application being denied.

4.6 Verification

4.6.1 An applicant will be required to submit verification documents as prescribed in [CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy \(CAPS/00-6\)](#), [CAPS Priority Groups \(CAPS/00-07\)](#), and [CAPS Income Calculations Policy \(CAPS/00-8\)](#). The applicant will be given a specific time period to submit the supporting documents and information. Verification documents may be submitted in person, by mail, or online through the state’s integrated eligibility system, www.Gateway.ga.gov.

4.7 Application Status and Dispositions

4.7.1 CAPS staff have up to 30 **calendar days** from the date the application is received to provide an applicant with a written disposition of the application.

4.7.1.1 The application processing period may be extended beyond 30 calendar days for good cause, with management approval, when the verification provided demonstrates a good faith effort by the parent to comply with a request for documentation.

4.7.2 An application shall have one of the following statuses or dispositions:

4.7.2.1 **Approved** – An application may be approved if the family meets applicable activity, income, and other requirements during the application process.

A. An application may be approved even when the parent has not selected a child care provider. CAPS staff should work with the parent, share resources, and inform the parent about child care options and quality learning environments that best fit the needs of the family. Families can receive up to an additional 90 calendar days to select a child care provider. The parent must notify CAPS of the selected provider within 90 calendar days after the determination of eligibility. If a provider is not selected and reported to CAPS by the end of the 90-day period, the case may close.

B. The scholarship start date cannot be prior to the receipt of the application, the determination of eligibility, or receipt of provider information to CAPS.

C. If there is not a child care scholarship that authorizes subsidies, the parent is responsible for the full cost of care. CAPS will not pay for services retroactively for any period prior to authorization.

CAPS Policy – Application Process	No.: CAPS/00-4	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 11/02/2020
		Revision Effective: 11/02/2020

4.7.2.2 **Denied** – An application shall be denied if the family applies and is not currently meeting all applicable eligibility requirements during the application process.

4.7.2.3 Pending – Applications are considered pending until they are disposed.

4.7.2.4 **Unable to process** – An application may be disposed as **unable to process** for either of the following reasons:

A. It is a duplicate application.

B. The applicant does not provide all required information and verifications to determine eligibility by the specified due date.

4.7.2.5 **Withdrawn (by the applicant)** – An applicant may voluntarily withdraw their application in person, by mail, or email.

4.8 Grievances and Appeals

4.8.1 Applicants have the right to file a grievance if their application was disposed as unable to process as prescribed in [CAPS Grievances \(CAPS/00-17\)](#).

4.8.2 Applicants have the right to file a grievance as prescribed in [CAPS Grievances \(CAPS/00-17\)](#) or request an appeal as prescribed in [CAPS Administrative Hearings Policy\(CAPS/00-18\)](#) if their application was denied and they do not agree with the decision.

4.9 Consumer Education

4.9.1 After an application has been approved, CAPS staff will provide the parent information on the following topics:

- Goals of the subsidy program
- Parental rights and responsibilities
- Verification documents required for eligibility
- Types of child care providers
- Child care options, assessing quality, and **Quality Rated** providers
- Health and safety information and how to make a complaint concerning a child care provider
- Developmental screenings and child development
- Family engagement
- Healthy eating and physical activity
- State policies regarding social, emotional, and behavioral health of children
- Information about programs for children with disabilities
- Information about preschool special education and early intervention programs
- Other assistance programs for which families may be eligible
- Voter registration
- Family support guide (see [Appendix AA](#))
- How to read a child care scholarship
- Requirements for signing their child in and out each day the child attends care
- Other child care resources

CAPS Policy – Application Process	No.: CAPS/00-4	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 11/02/2020
		Revision Effective: 11/02/2020

POLICY REVISION HISTORY

Date	Description of Change
07/02/2018	Revised section 4.7 to reflect the limited scope of the interview and added section 4.10 regarding the Family Support welcome call.
07/01/2019	Revised language to note that applicants may reapply if their application is denied for failure to submit required documentation timely.
10/01/2019	Removed outdated language related to mailing paper applications and funding by counties and renamed the section previously titled <i>Welcome Call</i> to <i>Consumer Education</i> .
05/15/2020	Revised language to add descriptions of application statuses and to clarify when applicants may file a grievance or an appeal.
11/02/2020	Added language noting that families can receive up to an additional 90 calendar days to select a child care provider.