



# Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning

BRIGHT FROM THE START

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**Brian P. Kemp**  
Governor

**Amy M. Jacobs**  
Commissioner

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## Memorandum

To: CAPS Child Care Providers, Families, and Stakeholders  
From: Elisabetta Kasfir, Deputy Commissioner for Federal Programs  
Re: Update: Emergency CAPS Policy Waivers

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In March and April 2020, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) waived certain Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) policies to support families and child care providers impacted by COVID-19.

As communicated in the memorandum dated August 27, 2020, with the reopening of Georgia's Pre-K Program and schools across the state, CAPS will continue to allow billing for children with active scholarships, whether the child is present or absent, as long as the child attended at least once since March 1, 2020. However, for DECAL to pay for school aged children who must attend child care full-time while participating in distance learning for school, the following changes will be implemented:

- **Effective Monday, September 14, 2020**, CAPS will resume paying the appropriate rate based on the school calendar or the type of care provided to the child, **and** child care providers will no longer be allowed to bill CAPS and another federal or state program during the same service period.
- **Effective Monday, October 26, 2020**, with the exception of brief temporary closure, child care programs will be required to be open for care to bill for CAPS scholarships.

The policy waivers detailed below have been extended as noted. (Families or child care providers are not required to submit individual requests.) The date in **bold** is the official end date of the corresponding waiver. We may extend the end dates on the remaining policy waivers or create additional waivers depending on information from the CDC and the Georgia Department of Public Health.

Policy Waiver	Begin Date	End Date	Impacted Policies
Emergency CAPS payment policies waiver <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providers can bill whether open or closed, if the child attended at least once since March 1, 2020.</li> <li>Active scholarships can be billed if the child is absent and attended at least once since March 1, 2020.</li> </ul>	3/16/2020	<b>10/23/2020</b>	<u>12.4.6.5,</u> <u>12.4.6.6</u>
	3/16/2020	To be determined	
Emergency CAPS state-approved activity policies waiver	3/16/2020	9/25/2020	<u>6.8.1, 13.4.3</u>
Essential Services Workforce Priority Group	4/1/2020	To be determined	<u>7.3.1</u>
Temporary suspension of family signatures on CAPS arrival and departure records	4/8/2020	9/25/2020	<u>12.4.5.1,</u> <u>12.4.5.2,</u> <u>12.4.5.9,</u> <u>12.4.5.10,</u> <u>15.3.3</u>

### Emergency CAPS payment policies waiver

A provider may continue to bill for any child with an active scholarship who received care at least once since March 1, 2020 through service period ending September 13, 2020. This applies to open and closed providers. When billing for absent children, or billing for a service week when the center is closed, providers should only bill on one scholarship per child using the scholarship with the highest payment rate (e.g., full-time opposed to before/after). **Effective September 14, 2020**, billing at the highest payment rate is no longer permitted, and providers will bill according to the school calendar or the type of care provided to the child.

Although CAPS will pay providers for all children with active scholarships who were in care at least once since March 1, 2020, providers must continue to maintain accurate attendance records (see *temporary suspension of family signatures on CAPS arrival and departure records* below).

The payment policy waiver is intended to enable providers to continue to operate or to pay teachers in the event of a closure. DECAL asks that providers pass along some of that benefit to families by reducing or eliminating rate differentials and family fees being applied to families during periods of closure or absence.

**Effective October 26, 2020**, with the exception of brief temporary closure, child care programs will be required to be open for care to bill for CAPS scholarships.

### Emergency CAPS state-approved activity policies waiver

Families who experience a permanent loss of employment or cannot attend an education/training program due to matters related to COVID-19 can continue child care services at the current level

through the end of their current certification period. The family does not need to report this permanent loss in activity.

Families must complete the CAPS annual redetermination requirements before their current eligibility period expires. If state-approved activity requirements are not met at annual redetermination, as a result of circumstances related to COVID-19, the lack of an activity will not impact eligibility if the family provides documentation of COVID-19 related job loss or reduced hours.

### **Essential Services Workforce Priority Group**

DECAL has created a priority group for CAPS to address Georgians' needs during the current public health emergency by helping the essential services workforce pay for child care. For more information go to [the Essential Services Workforce priority group document here](#) or view the document on the CAPS website update page at <https://caps.dec.state.ga.us/en/Updates>.

### **Temporary suspension of family signatures on CAPS arrival and departure records**

To help slow the spread of COVID-19, parents or other authorized representatives are not required to physically or electronically sign arrival and departure records while this waiver is in effect. However, providers are required to maintain attendance records that record each child's arrival and departure times and the name of the parent or authorized representative who dropped off or picked up the child each day. Alternate methods that protect the health of families and staff, such as one staff person signing all children in and out, would be acceptable during this temporary policy suspension.

### **Expired Policy Waivers**

The policy waivers detailed below have expired. CAPS has resumed regular practices as prescribed in the noted policy.

<b>Expired Policy Waivers</b>		
<b>Policy Waiver</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Impacted Policies</b>
Temporary suspension of provider rate changes	3/16/2020 – 7/3/2020	<a href="#">12.4.11.1</a>
Emergency CAPS payment policies waiver <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active scholarships can be billed at the CAPS highest rate if the child attended at least once since March 1, 2020</li> </ul>	3/16/2020 – 9/11/2020	<a href="#">12.4.6.5</a>
Temporary suspension of disallowing billing for CAPS and another federal or state program during the same service period	4/8/2020 – 9/11/2020	<a href="#">12.4.9.2</a>

We will communicate additional information and updates as we adapt our policies to ensure the health and safety of all children, their families, and the child care workforce. Contact our office at

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1-833-4GA-CAPS (1-833-442-2277) if you have questions or need additional information. To learn more about CAPS Policies and Procedures, visit <https://caps.dec.state.ga.us/en/>.