



July 1, 2020

Essential Services Workforce Priority Group

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) established a new priority group effective April 1, 2020, for Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS): The Essential Services Workforce, to help “front line” workers pay for child care during this current crisis.

To “roll out” CAPS scholarships for this new priority group, DECAL identified the essential services workforce (other entities may define *essential workforce* differently) and assigned essential jobs to different tiers. DECAL began processing applications for CAPS scholarships for workers identified in **Tier 1 effective April 1, 2020** and for families in **Tier 2 effective May 1, 2020**.

Tiers of the Essential Services Workforce Priority Group

The following chart details the tiers in which the Essential Services Workforce are included.

	Critical Job Category	Effective Date
Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law enforcement, public safety, and first responder personnel (including police officers, fire fighters, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, 9-1-1 call center staff, dispatchers, and National Guard) • Medical personnel who provide direct care to patients and the personnel who support direct care to patients (including sanitation staff, lab technicians, and reception staff) • Pharmacy personnel (including pharmacists, technicians, and pharmacy assistants) • Child care personnel 	April 1, 2020
Tier 2	<p>Food and grocery personnel and those who work in this supply chain to maintain operational capacity to meet the needs of Georgians.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and grocery store personnel 	May 1, 2020

	Critical Job Category	Effective Date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenience store personnel • Pharmacy personnel not included in Tier 1 • Food and grocery manufacturing • Food processing • Farming and food production • Food and grocery storage, distribution, or transit • Food and grocery delivery • Restaurant food preparation, service, or delivery 	

Additional tiers may be added depending on need and availability of funding.

To be eligible for CAPS under the Essential Services Workforce Priority Group – Tiers 1 and 2, families must:

- Complete the [Essential Services Workforce Application](#).
- Provide verification of current employment. Acceptable verification of employment includes pay stubs, a letter from the employer on business letterhead, [CAPS income verification form](#). Additional verification may be required from the current employer verifying applicant’s occupation, job title, and description of duties. The verification should also include the employer’s name and contact information.
- Meet and verify the following eligibility requirements:
 - Family’s income cannot exceed 50% of the state median income (SMI). [See Appendix A – Maximum Income Limits](#).
 - At least one parent in the family must be employed an average of 24 hours per week in an *essential service profession* listed above. The other parent must participate in state-approved activities (including employment, education, or combination of employment and education) for an average of 24 hours per week.
 - Parents must provide proof of their identity.
 - Families must be Georgia residents.
 - Children must be 12 years of age or younger, or 17 years of age or younger with qualifying disabilities.
 - Children must be a U.S. citizen or lawfully admitted qualified alien and meet immunization requirements.
 - Families may receive a **grace period** of up to 90 days from the date of their application to provide verification for child’s citizenship and immunization. The grace period for providing verification will not postpone the eligibility determination. However, if the verification documents are not received by the end of the 90-day grace period, the case will be determined ineligible for ongoing child care services.

Payment Authorizations

CAPS will pay up to the state maximum reimbursement rate for each eligible child, less the family fee (refer to [Appendix C – CAPS Reimbursement Rates](#) and [Appendix D – CAPS Family Fee](#) for details) for three months.

For more information, families should call 1-833-4GACAPS (1-833-442-2277).

Policy Revision History

Date	Description of Change
4/14/2020	Clarified that at least one parent in the family must be employed an average of 24 hours per week in <i>an essential service profession</i> to be eligible for this priority group and that the other parent must participate in state-approved activities for an average of 24 hours per week.
5/1/2020	Updated content to announce Tier 2 eligibility and identify <i>Tier 2</i> occupations.
7/1/2020	Clarified acceptable verification for current employment.