

The Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program assists families with low-income with the cost of child care while they work, go to school or training, or participate in other work-related activities.¹ Subsidies can be used to pay for quality child care, afterschool, and summer programs for children up to age 12 and for children up to age 17 with special needs.²

What is the purpose of the CAPS program?³

1. Provide access to high-quality and affordable early learning, afterschool, and summer environments for families with low-incomes
2. Increase positive school readiness outcomes
3. Assist families in achieving and maintaining self-sufficiency by providing financial supports for child care costs

CAPS Funding: Federal and State⁴

Federal Funding

Federal funding is provided from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and is administered by the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). Georgia typically receives approximately **\$245 million** in federal child care subsidy funds.

Pandemic-related federal stimulus funding, which allowed DECAL to increase funding for CAPS by **\$140 million** for a limited time, expires in 2024. DECAL used these funds to support an expansion of CAPS priority and eligibility populations, increase provider payment amounts and eliminate family fees to temporarily reduce the financial burden on families, as well as increase the tiered reimbursement that quality rated providers received.

State Funding

In state fiscal year 2022, Georgia appropriated and made available approximately **\$60 million** for CAPS.

Who is given priority in receiving CAPS scholarships?

Because CAPS scholarships are limited, children in the following situations are given priority:⁵

- Child Protective Services
- Custody of the Division of Family and Children Services
- Domestic violence situations
- Disability status
- Enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program
- Participating in, or transitioning from, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Experienced a natural disaster
- Lack fixed, regular and adequate housing
- Very Low Income, as defined by CAPS
- Grandparents raising grandchildren
- Minor parents
- Need to protect
(e.g., family with substantiated Child Protective Services case closed within the last 12 months, caregiver other than biological or adoptive parents has taken over full-time care of child)
- Student parent

Federal and state funding temporarily allowed DECAL to expand priority groups and serve 14.8% of children living in households with low-incomes for 2023.⁶ Continued investments in CAPS are crucial to reaching eligible families who apply for Child Care Subsidiary Scholarships.

Income Eligibility



Families must earn less than 50% of the state median income (SMI) at the initial eligibility determination and can remain enrolled in CAPS as long as their income remains at or below 85% SMI, and they can meet other CAPS eligibility requirements.⁷

For example, a **family of four** cannot make more than **\$47,619** a year.

To qualify for the Very Low Income priority group, a **family of four** cannot make more than **\$15,000** a year.⁸

Parent Approved Activities

Parents who receive CAPS must complete an average of **24 hours per week** of approved activities to stay eligible for the CAPS scholarship.⁹

Approved activities can include:¹⁰



Employment

Paid employment or volunteering at Head Start or Early Head Start facilities



Education

Participation in middle or high school, GED programs, vocational training programs, technical college, technical credits, associate's degree and bachelor's degree programs**



Job Search

Parents who lose their job or stop attending state-approved training or education programs may be authorized for up to 13 weeks of job search.***

**For parents enrolled with the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), as well as parents participating in any education or vocational training program: every credit hour equals two hours towards the required 24 hours per week of approved activities. For example, if a parent is enrolled in a class that counts as 3 credit hours with TCSG, they earn 6 credit hours per week towards the required 24.¹¹

***Parents who meet eligibility requirements for certain priority groups may be authorized with job search as their state-approved activity for the entire 12-month eligibility period.¹²

Changes to the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)



Federal stimulus funds were used to pay the family fee on behalf of CAPS since May 2021. Recently in October 2023, families resumed paying the family fee, however to ensure child care is affordable, family fees are limited to no more than **7%** of the families income.¹³



All providers serving children receiving CAPS subsidies are required to participate in Quality Rated.¹⁴



References for Childcare and Parent Services

Suggested citation: Voices for Georgia's Children. (2023). Fact Sheet: Childcare and Parent Services. Voices for Georgia's Children. <https://adobe.ly/40X9D6G>.

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- 2 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "CAPS Policy – Eligibility." Accessed October 9, 2023. https://caps.dec.ga.gov/assets/downloads/CAPS/06-CAPS_Policy-Eligibility%20Requirements.pdf.
- 3 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "About CAPS." Accessed October 9, 2023. <https://caps.dec.ga.gov/en/About>.
- 4 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, professional communication, November 29, 2023.
- 5 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "CAPS Policy – Priority Groups." Accessed October 9, 2023. https://caps.dec.ga.gov/assets/downloads/CAPS/07-CAPS_Policy-Priority%20Groups.pdf.
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