

CHILDCARE AND PARENT SERVICES (CAPS)

The Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program assists families with low-incomes with the cost of child care while they work, go to school, receive 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 received **\$309 million** in federal child care subsidy funds in state fiscal year (SFY) 2025.

State Funding

In SFY25, Georgia appropriated and made available approximately **\$76 million** for CAPS.

PRIORITY FOR CAPS SCHOLARSHIPS

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

- 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 Need Families (TANF)
- Experienced a natural disaster
- Lack fixed, regular, and adequate housing
- Very Low Income, as defined by CAPS⁵
- Grandparents raising grandchildren
- Minor parents
- Need to protect (e.g., family with substantiated Child Protective Services case closed with the last 12 months, caregiver other than biological or adoptive parents has taken over full-time care of child)
- Student parent

Currently, CAPS serve 17.2% of Georgia's potentially eligible children.⁶ Continued investments in CAPS are crucial to reaching eligible families who apply for Child Care Subsidy Scholarships.



INCOME ELIGIBILITY



Families must earn less than 40% 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 **\$44,295** a year.

To qualify for the Very Low Income priority group, a **family of four** cannot make more than **\$9,645** a year.⁸

PARENT APPROVED ACTIVITIES

Parents who received 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

***To be eligible for CAPS services, the parent(s) must participate in one, or a combination of, the activities listed in this section. Most parents must participate in the stated activity for an average of at least 24 hours per week, except as noted in CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy, section 6. For parents participating in one, or a combination of state-approved activities listed in this section, staff must verify the activity hours for the stated activity.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. Families resumed paying the family fee in October 2023. However, to ensure child care is affordable, family fees are limited to no more than **7%** of the family's income.¹³



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

SCAN BELOW TO SEE
FACTSHEET CITATIONS



REFERENCES FOR CHILDCARE AND PARENT SERVICES (CAPS)

- 1 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "About CAPS." Retrieved June 23, 2025 from <https://caps.dec.state.ga.us/en/About>.
- 2 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "CAPS Policy – Eligibility." Retrieved June 23, 2025 from https://caps.dec.state.ga.us/assets/downloads/CAPS/06-CAPS_Policy-Eligibility%20Requirements.pdf.
- 3 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "About CAPS." Retrieved June 23, 2025 from <https://caps.dec.state.ga.us/en/About>.
- 4 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, professional communication, January 17, 2024.
- 5 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "CAPS Policy – Priority Groups." Retrieved June 23, 2025 from https://caps.dec.state.ga.us/assets/downloads/CAPS/07-CAPS_Policy-Priority%20Groups.pdf.
- 6 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "CAPS Fact Sheet - July 2025." Retrieved September 4, 2025.
- 7 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "CAPS Maximum Income Limits." Retrieved September 4, 2025 from <https://caps.dec.state.ga.us/assets/downloads/CAPS/AppendixA-CAPS%20Maximum%20Income%20Limits%20by%20Family%20Size.pdf>.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "CAPS Policy – Eligibility." Retrieved October 7, 2025 from https://caps.dec.state.ga.us/assets/downloads/CAPS/06-CAPS_Policy-Eligibility%20Requirements.pdf.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 The Center for Law and Social Policy. "Budget Deal Includes Unprecedented Investment in Child Care." Retrieved June 23, 2025 from <https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2018/02/Budget%20Deal%20Includes%20Child%20Care%20Investment%20.pdf>.
- 14 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, professional communication, November 29, 2023.