

SUMMER TRANSITION PROGRAM

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) offers two intensive five-week academic programs to support children and prepare them for kindergarten and pre-k.

RISING KINDERGARTEN SUMMER TRANSITION PROGRAM

2026
Participation¹



4,104 students

334 classes

Operating in **62** counties in **244** locations

20% were located in public school systems

80% were located in private centers

Who is eligible? ^{2, 3}

To participate, a child must be age-eligible for kindergarten in the upcoming school year and meet one of the following:

1. Did not attend Georgia Pre-K or Head Start in 2025-2026, **OR**
2. Attended, but not for the full school year, **OR**
3. Attended the full year and belongs to one of the following priority groups:
 - Needs additional academic support
 - Experiencing homelessness (per McKinney-Vento Act)
 - Dual language learner (home language is not English)
 - Has an Individualized Education Program (IEP)
 - In foster care

How is the program structured? ⁴



Maximum of 14 students per classroom



6.5 hours a day



Two adults (lead, assistant, and/or substitute teacher) and one transition coach per classroom



Assists in coordinating care before and after school as needed through the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program

What is a transition coach? ⁵

Each class has a half-time transition coach who:

- Identifies eligible students
- Assists families with health screenings and paperwork
- Leads weekly parent workshops or engagement activities
- Connects families to community resources, upon request
- Supports families in preparing for kindergarten registration
- Provides individualized transition materials for each enrolled student

SCAN BELOW TO SEE
FACTSHEET CITATIONS



ISING PRE-KINDERGARTEN SUMMER TRANSITION PROGRAM

2026
Participation⁶



993 students

91 classes

Operating in **23** counties in **69** locations

20% were located in public school systems

80% were located in private centers

Who is eligible? ⁷

1. A child who is registered to attend a Georgia Pre-K program or Head Start program in the 2026-2027 school year, **AND**
2. Child's home language is Spanish

How is the program structured? ⁸



Maximum of 12 students per classroom



Instruction is provided in both English and Spanish Teacher trained to work with Dual Language Learners



Two adults (lead, assistant, and/or substitute teacher) and one transition coach per classroom



At least one teacher **AND** the transition coach must be bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish

Why are bilingual and biliterate teachers and transition coaches important?

An estimated 24% of Georgia's children ages 0 to 5 are Dual Language Learners (DLLs), most of whom speak Spanish. Research from the Frank Porter Child Development Institute shows: ⁹

1. Spanish-speaking DLLs are **less likely** to enroll in early care, impacting school readiness.
2. Participating children **improved** both their English and Spanish-language skills.
3. The program **boosted** comfort with school routines and **increased** independence.
4. Despite progress, **a meaningful gap** remained between DLLs and their peers.

In 2026, the Rising Kindergarten and Pre-K Summer Transition Programs combined hosted:

5,097 children in **425** classes

The total budget for both Summer Transition Programs is **\$11 million**.

That's approximately **\$2,158** being spent per child. ¹⁰



REFERENCES FOR SUMMER TRANSITION PROGRAM

- 1 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. Data request. Received July 9, 2026.
- 2 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "Summer Transition Program Frequently Asked Questions." Retrieved July 14, 2026 from https://www.dec.state.ga.us/documents/attachments/STP_FAQ.pdf.
- 3 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "Summer Transition Program 2026 Operating Guidelines." Retrieved July 14, 2026 from <https://www.dec.state.ga.us/documents/attachments/STPGuidelines.pdf>.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, professional communication, July 2026.
- 7 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "Summer Transition Program Frequently Asked Questions." Retrieved July 14, 2026 from https://www.dec.state.ga.us/documents/attachments/STP_FAQ.pdf.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Migration Policy Institute. "A Data Profile of Young Dual Language Learners in Georgia and Implications for Early Childhood Programs." Retrieved July 14, 2026 from https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-nciip-dll-fact-sheet-ga-2025_final.pdf.
- 10 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, professional communication, July 2026.