



**Bright from the Start Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning**  
**2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE, 670 East Tower**  
**Atlanta, GA 30334**  
Phone: (404) 657-5562 WWW.DECAL.GA.GOV

**Date:** 10/1/2025 **VisitType:** Licensing Study

**Arrival:** 8:50 AM **Departure:** 10:30 AM

**FR-53067**

**Mathis, Ruthie M**

228 S. Hampton Street Americus, GA 31709 Sumter County  
(229) 942-4954

Regional Consultant

Charlene Story

Phone: (770) 405-7942

Fax: (770) 408-0759

charlene.story@decal.ga.gov

**Mailing Address**

Same

**Quality Rated:** ★ ★ ★

| Compliance Zone Designation |                  |               | <b>Compliance Zone Designation</b> - A summary measure of a program's 12 month monitoring history, as it pertains to child care health and safety rules. The three compliance zones are good standing, support, and deficient.<br><br><b>Good Standing</b> - Program is demonstrating an acceptable level of performance in meeting the rules.<br><b>Support</b> - Program performance is demonstrating a need for improvement in meeting rules.<br><b>Deficient</b> - Program is not demonstrating an acceptable level of performance in meeting the rules. |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10/01/2025                  | Licensing Study  | Good Standing |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 01/08/2025                  | Monitoring Visit | Good Standing |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 07/09/2024                  | Licensing Study  | Good Standing |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

| Ratio Capacity                                            |                  |               |      |             |                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|------|-------------|-------------------|
| Age Ranges                                                | Children Present | Child For Pay | CAPS | Not for Pay | Provider Children |
| Infant (0-11 mos)                                         | 0                | 0             | 0    | 0           | 0                 |
| 1 & 2 Years                                               | 1                | 3             | 0    | 0           | 0                 |
| 3 & 4 Years                                               | 1                | 1             | 0    | 0           | 0                 |
| School Age(5+) Years                                      | 0                | 0             | 0    | 0           | 0                 |
| Total Under 13 Years                                      | 2                | 4             | 0    | 0           | 0                 |
| Total Under 18 Years                                      | 2                |               |      |             |                   |
| Children Present: 2 Total Children: 4                     |                  |               |      |             |                   |
| Caregivers/Helpers Present: 1 Total Caregivers/Helpers: 1 |                  |               |      |             |                   |

**Comments**

Children's files and staff records, emergency drills, emergency procedures, first aid kit and other required request were available for the consultant to view.

An exit conference discussing the Licensing study report was conducted with the Provider on this date. An email with the Licensing study report attached was sent to the Provider for signature on this date.

The CCS Consultant discussed and left a copy of the updated Child Care Weather Watch Chart with the program today. Weather does not permit outdoor play when there is active precipitation or when weather advisories are in effect. Consult the Child Care Weather Watch Chart resource for further guidance, considering specific weather conditions. --

Plan of Improvement: Developed This Date

Any rule violation which subjects a child to injury or life-threatening situation or any rule violations previously cited but not corrected, may result in the imposition of an adverse enforcement action. Serious or continued noncompliance may also jeopardize participation in one or more DECAL program(s).

Please refer to the website, <http://www.decal.ga.gov/CCS/RulesAndRegulations.aspx> , for information regarding October 1, 2018 rule changes about Criminal Records Checks that may affect your facility. In summary,

- New records checks will be required to be completed if a staff member experiences a six month break in service from the child care industry
- New clearance is required at least once every five years
- Any staff member solely responsible for supervising children will be required to have completed a comprehensive background clearance
- All staff members are required to have completed at least a national fingerprint based clearance check
- Any staff member with only the national fingerprint based clearance, must be under constant and direct supervision of a staff member with a satisfactory comprehensive records check clearance
- Facilities are required to use DECAL KOALA for Criminal Records Checks, including to verify portability of an employee

O.C.G.A. Section 42.1.12(i)(2) requires Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning to notify licensed child care programs on accessing and retrieving from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation's (GBI) website a list of the names and addresses of all registered sexual offenders. Please see GBI's website located at <http://gbi.georgia.gov> to access the Georgia Sex Offender Registry.

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#### Refutation Process:

You have the right to refute any of the citations noted in this report with which you disagree. To refute a citation(s), do the following:

- 1) Log into DECAL KOALA [www.decalkoala.com](http://www.decalkoala.com) with the userid for your program
- 2) On the home page scroll down to the Inspection Reports and select 'Refute Citation' for the visit report in dispute
- 3) Select the specific rule number(s) that you are refuting, add the reason for disagreement regarding the rule citation, and upload supporting documentation
- 4) Submit the refutation in DECAL KOALA to Child Care Services (CCS) within 10 business days of the completion date.

Your refutation will be forwarded to the appropriate CCS manager, who will follow up with you about your concerns. If you have any questions about this process, contact our office at 404-657-5562.

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Bright from the Start recommends that all licensed child care providers carry liability insurance coverage sufficient to protect its clients. If you do not have this liability insurance, you are required to post a notice with ½ inch letters in a conspicuous location in the program, notify the parent or guardian of each child in care in writing, obtain their signature to acknowledge receipt and maintain this written acknowledgment on file at the program at all times while the child attends the program and for 12 months after the child's last date of attendance. (O.C.G.A. Section 20-1A-4)

#### Important Quality Rated/CAPS Update:

As January 1, 2022, child care providers must be Quality Rated to receive Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS). Newly licensed, or new to CAPS providers may be eligible for the new CAPS/QR Provisional Status, allowing for scholarships while working toward a star rating.

**Contact the Quality Rated help desk at 855-800-7747 or [qualityrated@decal.ga.gov](mailto:qualityrated@decal.ga.gov) for more information. Free technical assistance is available!**



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**Summary Report**

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The following information is associated with a Licensing Study:

**Activities and Equipment**

**290-2-3-.12 Equipment and Supplies(CR)**

**Met**

**Comment**

Equipment and furniture observed to be properly secured on this date.

**290-2-3-.19 Infant-Sleeping Safety Requirements(CR)**

**Met**

**Comment**

Discussed SIDS and infant sleeping position.

**290-2-3-.07 Swimming Pools & Water-related Activities(CR)**

**Met**

**Comment**

Home does not provide swimming activities.

**Children's Records**

**290-2-3-.08 Children's Records**

**Technical Assistance**

**Comment**

Records were observed to be complete and well organized.

**Technical Assistance**

290-2-3-.08(8)(b) - Discussed updating the Home's policies and procedures to include the program's practices regarding the expulsion and suspension of children enrolled for care within the description of behavior management and discipline actions used by the Home.

Also discussed to ensure a description of the practices followed by the Home to prevent shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma in children up to five years of age that includes the following information: how to recognize, respond to, and report the signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma; strategies to assist staff members in understanding how to care for infants and how to cope with a crying, fussing, or distraught child; strategies to ensure staff members understand the brain development of children up to five years of age; and a list of prohibited behaviors when dealing with children.

Additional information can be found in the FCCLH Indicator Manual found on DECAL's website at: <https://www.dec.al.ga.gov/CCS/RulesAndRegulations.aspx> or through the Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome found at: <https://dontshake.org/>.

**Correction Deadline: 10/1/2025**

**290-2-3-.11 Physical Plant - Safe Environment(CR)**

Met

**Comment**

Please be mindful to keep items that pose a hazard inaccessible to children.

**Comment**

Operable smoke detector and fire extinguisher were observed as required in the home this date.

**290-2-3-.13 Physical Plant-Structural/Mechanical(CR)**

Met

**Comment**

The Home appeared clean and free from hazards.

**290-2-3-.13 Playgrounds(CR)**

Technical Assistance

**Comment**

The outside area appeared clean and well maintained.

**Technical Assistance**

290-2-3-.13(2)(d) - Consultant discussed with the Provider to ensure bolts are no longer than two thread lengths around the gates.

**Correction Deadline: 10/1/2025**

**Food Service****290-2-3-.10 Food Service & Nutrition**

Technical Assistance

**Comment**

CACFP Meal Pattern Requirements: 3 Components for breakfast: Grains, Vegetables, Fruits or both, Milk 5 Components for lunch – Grains, Meat/Meat alternates, Fruits, Vegetable, and Milk OR Grains, Meat/Meat alternates, 2 different types of vegetables, and Milk 2 of 5 Components for snack Provided Updated CACFP Infant Meal pattern and Child/Adult Meal pattern flyers. The Crediting Handbook for the CACFP can be located on DECAL and USDA's website: DECAL <http://dec.al.ga.gov/CACFP/Handbook.aspx> USDA <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/cacfp-handbooks>

**Technical Assistance**

290-2-3-.10(3)(f) - Consultant discussed with the Provider to ensure that food for infants or children less than one (1) year of age be cut into pieces one-quarter inch or smaller and food for toddlers shall be cut into pieces one-half inch or smaller to prevent choking.

**Correction Deadline: 10/1/2025**

**Technical Assistance**

290-2-3-.10(3)(g) - Consultant discussed with the Provider to ensure children shall always be seated when eating and shall not be allowed to lie down or be put to sleep while food is present in their mouths.

**Correction Deadline: 10/1/2025**

**Technical Assistance**

290-2-3-.10(8) - The Consultant discussed with the Director that food shall be served according to manufacturer's instructions and recommendations. Foods that are associated with young children's choking incidents, such as, but not limited to, peanuts, hot dogs, raw carrots, popcorn, fish with bones, cheese cubes, grapes, and any other food that is of similar shape and size of the trachea/windpipe shall not be served to the children less than four (4) years of age. Children older than four (4) years of age may be served these foods provided that the foods are cut in such a way as to minimize choking. Food shall not be accessible or served to children until it has been chopped, diced, cut or mashed and is appropriate for each child's age and individual eating, chewing and swallowing ability.

**Correction Deadline: 10/1/2025**

**Health and Hygiene****290-2-3-.11 Children's Health and Hygiene(CR)**

Met

**Comment**

Staff were observed to remind children to wash hands.

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|--------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.11 Diapering Areas &amp; Practices(CR)</b> | <b>Met</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

The provider stated appropriate diapering procedures.

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|                                    |            |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.11 Medications(CR)</b> | <b>N/A</b> |
|------------------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

Per the provider no medication is currently dispensed

|                  |
|------------------|
| <b>Licensure</b> |
|------------------|

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|                                                 |            |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.04 Application Requirements(CR)</b> | <b>Met</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

Appropriate number of children observed in Family Child Care Learning Home this date.

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|------------------------------|
| <b>Safety and Discipline</b> |
|------------------------------|

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|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.11 Animals</b> | <b>Met</b> |
|----------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

The Family Child Care Learning Home does not keep animals on premises.

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|-----------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.11 Discipline(CR)</b> | <b>Met</b> |
|-----------------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

Pleasant interactions observed between the provider and children in care.

**Comment**

The provider and/or the home's employee were observed to maintain a positive learning environment on this date.

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|----------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.11 First Aid Kit</b> | <b>Met</b> |
|----------------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

Please add missing items in first aid kit.

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|                                       |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.11 Transportation(CR)</b> | <b>N/A</b> |
|---------------------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

The provider does not provide routine transportation.

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|----------------------|
| <b>Staff Records</b> |
|----------------------|

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|                                                                             |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.21 Criminal Records and Comprehensive Background Checks(CR)</b> | <b>Met</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

Criminal records checks were observed to be complete.

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|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.07 First Aid &amp; CPR</b> | <b>Technical Assistance</b> |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|

**Comment**

Evidence observed that the Provider was certified in pediatric First Aid and CPR on this date.

**Technical Assistance**

290-2-3-.07(8)(b) - Discussed that effective July 1, 2025, new staff are required to obtain pediatric First Aid and pediatric CPR training within 45 days of employment. It was further discussed that Homes must have at least one person with current pediatric First Aid and pediatric CPR training present during field trips, transportation of children, and on the Home's premises whenever any Child is present.

**Correction Deadline: 10/1/2025**

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|------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.07 Independent Contractors(CR)</b> | <b>Met</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

The facility does not currently have any independent contractors employed.

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.07 Other Staff Direct Contact with Children(CR)</b> | <b>Met</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

Additional staff meet the required rules.

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|------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.07 Provisional Employees</b> | <b>Met</b> |
|------------------------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

Observed compliance with the local zoning authorities, fire safety agencies and local building authorities on this date.

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|---------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.07 Staff Qualifications(CR)</b> | <b>Met</b> |
|---------------------------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

Staff observed to be compliant with applicable laws and regulations.

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|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.07 Staff Training</b> | <b>Technical Assistance</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|

**Technical Assistance**

290-2-3-.07(10) - Discussed that all Employees, including volunteers, independent contractors, students-in-training, etc. should have a completed initial program orientation form on file.

**Correction Deadline: 10/6/2025**

**Comment**

Consultant observed the ten hours of required annual training for the year 2024.

**Technical Assistance**

290-2-3-.07(9)(b)1 - Consultant discussed with the Provider that effective July 1, 2025, all staff are required to obtain at least two hours in evidence based, developmentally appropriate language and literacy practices.

**Correction Deadline: 10/31/2025**

**Technical Assistance**

290-2-3-.07(9)(b)2.(i) - (iv) - Consultant discussed that effective July 1, 2025, all staff are required to obtain at least two hours in on-going child development and health and safety related topics as part of their 10 hours of annual training.

**Correction Deadline: 10/31/2025**

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|---------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.07 Students-in-Training(CR)</b> | <b>Met</b> |
|---------------------------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

The facility does not currently have any students-in-training employed.

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|-----------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.07 Volunteers(CR)</b> | <b>Met</b> |
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**Comment**

The facility does not currently have any volunteers employed.

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|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Staff:Child Ratios and Supervision</b> |
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|-------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.07 Staff:Child Ratios(CR)</b> | <b>Met</b> |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|

**Comment**

Appropriate ratios were observed on this date.

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|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>290-2-3-.07 Supervision(CR)</b> | <b>Technical Assistance</b> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|

**Technical Assistance**

290-2-3-.07(18) - New Consultant discussed with the Provider to ensure that the Provider and staff are attentive and participating with all children during mealtimes and shall be seated within an arm's length away from children thirty-six (36) months of age and younger. Plans shall be made to obtain additional Staff help in cases of emergencies.

**Correction Deadline: 10/1/2025**