



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: 10/2/2025 **VisitType:** Monitoring Visit

Arrival: 9:15 AM **Departure:** 2:00 PM

CCLC-16643

Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center

2421 Mike Padgett Highway, Suite A Augusta, GA 30906
 Richmond County
 (706) 798-1072

Process & QI Unit Consultant

Melyn Smith

Phone: (706) 855-3455

Fax: (706) 434-7640

melyn.smith@decal.ga.gov

Mailing Address
 Same

Quality Rated: ★ ★

Compliance Zone Designation			Compliance Zone Designation - 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.
10/02/2025	Monitoring Visit	Good Standing	
04/23/2025	Complaint Closure	Good Standing	
04/21/2025	Complaint Investigation Follow Up	Good Standing	
			Good Standing - Program is demonstrating an acceptable level of performance in meeting the rules. Support - Program performance is demonstrating a need for improvement in meeting rules. Deficient - Program is not demonstrating an acceptable level of performance in meeting the rules.

Ratios/License Capacity

Building	Room	Age Group	Staff	Children	NC/C	Max 35 SF.	35 SF. Comp.	Max 25 SF.	25 SF. Comp.	Notes
Main	1L	GA PreK	2	15	C	20	C	28	C	Centers,Transitioning,Outside
Main	1R	Three Year Olds	1	9	C	15	C	21	C	Transitioning,Art ,Centers
Main	2 R	One Year Olds	1	8	C	10	C	NA	NA	Centers,Free Play
Main	2L	Two Year Olds	1	6	C	9	C	NA	NA	Outside,Transitioning
Main	3L	Two Year Olds	1	9	C	14	C	NA	NA	Outside,Transitioning
Main	3R		0	0	C	16	C	23	C	Not In Use
Main	4L	Two Year Olds	1	6	C	9	C	NA	NA	Transitioning,Lunch,Outside
Main	4R		0	0	C	8	C	12	C	Not In Use
Main	5R	Infants and One Year Olds	1	4	C	8	C	NA	NA	Floor Play,Feeding,Nap
Total Capacity @35 sq. ft.: 109					Total Capacity @25 sq. ft.: 134					
Total # Children this Date: 57					Total Capacity @25 sq. ft.: 134					

Building	Playground	Playground Occupancy	Playground Compliance
Main	Left	31	C
Main	Right Back	61	C
Main	Right Front Yard	41	C

Enrolled Children						
Under 1 years	1 years	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years (Prekonly)	5 years and older
4	8	16	10	19	0	27

Comments

The Consultant discussed the changes to the Rules and Regulations which went into effect on July 1, 2025, including the program's policies and procedures content, employee initial orientation content, and changes to the required annual training for staff.

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.dec.al.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.

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 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.

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@dec.al.ga.gov for more information. Free technical assistance is available!



Summary Report

Date: 10/2/2025 **VisitType:** Monitoring Visit

Arrival: 9:15 AM **Departure:** 2:00 PM

CCLC-16643

Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center

2421 Mike Padgett Highway, Suite A Augusta, GA 30906
Richmond County
(706) 798-1072

Process & QI Unit Consultant

Melyn Smith

Phone: (706) 855-3455

Fax: (706) 434-7640

melyn.smith@dec.al.ga.gov

Mailing Address

Same

The following information is associated with a Monitoring Visit:

Activities and Equipment

591-1-1-.12 Equipment & Toys(CR)

Met

Comment

A variety of equipment and toys were observed throughout the center on this date.

Comment

Equipment and furniture observed to be properly secured, as applicable.

591-1-1-.35 Swimming Pools & Water-related Activities(CR)

N/A

Comment

Center does not provide swimming activities.

Evening Care

591-1-1-.32 Staffing/Supervision(CR)

N/A

Comment

No evening care hours provided

Facility

591-1-1-.19 License Capacity(CR)

Met

Comment

Licensed capacity observed to be routinely met by center on this date.

591-1-1-.25 Physical Plant - Safe Environment(CR)

Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance

591-1-1-.25(13) - The Consultant discussed with the Director to ensure no hazards are accessible to children, such as the fraying tennis balls on the table feet in Room 1L and the toilet bolts protruding more than two threads in Room 4L and the Red Hallway Bathroom on this date.

Correction Deadline: 10/2/2025

591-1-1-.26 Playgrounds(CR)

Technical Assistance

Comment

Please fluff and redistribute the resilient surface to maintain resiliency.

Technical Assistance

591-1-1-.26(9) - The Consultant discussed with the Director to ensure that the sticks on the Right Back Playground are removed before children accessed the playground for outdoor play on this date.

Health and Hygiene

591-1-1-.10 Diapering Areas & Practices(CR)

Technical Assistance

Comment

Proper diapering procedures observed.

Technical Assistance

591-1-1-.10(4) - The Consultant discussed with the Director to ensure the entire diapering surface is cleaned, removing all dirt and debris on this date.

Correction Deadline: 10/2/2025

591-1-1-.17 Hygiene(CR)

Met

Comment

Proper hand washing observed throughout the center on this date.

591-1-1-.20 Medications(CR)

Met

Comment

Documentation for emergency medication dispensing observed completed on this date.

Policies and Procedures

591-1-1-.21 Operational Policies & Procedures

Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance

591-1-1-.21(2)(r) - New - The Consultant discussed with the Director updating the Center'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 Center. Also discussed to ensure a description of the practices followed by the Center 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 CCLC Indicator Manual found on DECAL's website at: <https://www.dec.ga.gov/CCS/RulesAndRegulations.aspx> or through the Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome found at: <https://dontshake.org/>.

Correction Deadline: 10/7/2025

Safety

591-1-1-.11 Discipline(CR)

Met

Comment

Age-appropriate discussion and/or redirection observed.

Comment

Please be mindful of voice tone and verbiage used when redirecting children.

591-1-1-.13 Field Trips(CR)

Met

Comment

Field trip documentation observed to be complete on this date for field trips taken on July 10, 2025, to Evans Cinemas and on July 24, 2025, to Pelican's Snowballs.

591-1-1-.36 Transportation(CR)

Met

Comment

A current/completed inspection was observed for all vehicles used in transporting children this date.

Comment

Complete documentation of transportation observed on this date.

Comment

The vehicle had an approved fire extinguisher and first aid kit on this date.

Sleeping & Resting Equipment

591-1-1-.30 Safe Sleeping and Resting Requirements(CR)**Met****Comment**

Pleasant naptime environment observed.

Comment

Please ensure that cribs/cots are labeled for individual use.

Staff Records

591-1-1-.09 Criminal Records and Comprehensive Background Checks(CR)**Met****Comment**

Criminal record checks were observed to be complete.

Comment

Director provided three files for employees hired since the last visit.

591-1-1-.14 First Aid & CPR(CR)**Not Met****Technical Assistance**

591-1-1-.14(1)(a) - The Consultant discussed with the Director to ensure Staff #2 completes pediatric first aid and pediatric CPR training by October 23, 2025, and Staff #7 by October 3, 2025, which is 45 days from the date of hire.

Correction Deadline: 11/1/2025

Finding

591-1-1-.14(2)(b) requires that there must always be one staff person present in each classroom where children are present that has current and valid pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and pediatric first aid training. It was determined based on a review of records and observation that Room 3L did not have a staff person present with current and valid pediatric CPR and pediatric first aid training on this date, when a trained staff person was required to be present on this date.

POI (Plan of Improvement)

The Director will schedule and/or position caregiver Staff throughout the Center to ensure at least one currently pediatric CPR and First Aid trained Staff person is present in each classroom where children are present. The Staff person will obtain valid and current pediatric CPR and current first aid training within 45 days of hire, as required.

Correction Deadline: 10/3/2025

591-1-1-.33 Staff Training**Technical Assistance****Technical Assistance**

591-1-1-.33(2)(a)-(n) - The Consultant discussed with the Director to ensure that all Employees, including volunteers, independent contractors, students-in-training, etc. should have a completed initial program orientation form on file which indicates the employee has completed initial program orientation which should include the following subjects: a) the Center's policies and procedures; b) the portions of these rules dealing with the care, health and safety of children; c) the Staff person's assigned duties and responsibilities; d) reporting requirements for suspected cases of child abuse, neglect or deprivation; e) communicable diseases and serious injuries; f) emergency weather plans; g) the program's emergency preparedness plan; h) childhood injury control; i) the administration of medicine; j) reducing the risk of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), which includes Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS); k) hand washing; l) fire safety; m) water safety; and n) prevention of HIV/AIDS and blood borne pathogens.

Correction Deadline: 10/3/2025

Technical Assistance

591-1-1-.33(5)(b)1. - New - The Consultant discussed with the Director that effective July 1, 2025, all staff are required to obtain at least two hours in evidence based, developmentally appropriate language and literacy practices and 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: 11/1/2025

591-1-1-.31 Staff(CR)**Met****Comment**

Staff observed to be compliant with applicable laws and regulations.

Staffing and Supervision

591-1-1-.32 Staff:Child Ratios and Group Size(CR)**Met****Comment**

Center observed to maintain appropriate staff:child ratios.

591-1-1-.32 Supervision(CR)**Met****Comment**

Adequate supervision observed on this date.