



DRINKING WATER IN CHILD CARE CENTERS & SCHOOLS

GEORGIA

State Policy Profile

Access to safe and appealing drinking water in child care and schools is a key strategy to build healthy habits that children will use for life to maintain a healthy body weight and to support overall health.

RESEARCH METHODS: This issue brief summarizes state-level policies that govern drinking water access and quality in licensed child care centers and public school buildings. Findings reflect laws and regulations in effect as of June 2017. The following state-level policies were reviewed for relevant provisions:

- Child care licensing regulations
- School building standards
- School nutrition standards
- School sanitation standards
- School facilities inventory requirements
- School joint purchasing provisions
- Food safety codes
- Plumbing codes
- Childhood lead poisoning prevention program regulations

CHILD CARE CENTERS

Access to Drinking Water

Does state policy for licensed child care centers address drinking water access?

Yes. Georgia's child care center licensing regulations contain various requirements for drinking water access. Child care centers generally must make drinking water "available to all children."¹ In order to establish healthy routines for children, child care providers are required to allow children to get a drink of

water as “they feel the need.”² Children under three years of age are to be offered drinking water “at least once between meals and snacks.”³

Water can be provided via drinking fountains⁴ and when “appropriate drinking fountains are not available “[s]ingle-service drinking cups shall be provided.”⁵ In order to maintain proper hygiene, single-service cups “shall be discarded after each use unless the cups are sanitized in a dishwasher between each use.”⁶

How many drinking fountains are required?

As a condition of licensing, child care centers are not required to have drinking fountains.⁷

Are there requirements for drinking fountain maintenance and cleanliness?

Yes. Licensing standards for child care center hygiene require that when available, drinking fountains “shall be safe and kept clean, have regulated pressure, not be mounted on sinks used for diaper changing activities and have an angle jet with an orifice guard above the rim.”⁸ Where drinking fountains are provided, child care centers must disclose the make and model number of all fountains in use in their initial licensing application.⁹

Water Quality

Is routine water quality testing of taps and fountains used to supply drinking water required?

No.

How is the child care center water supply addressed?

As a condition of licensing, “[a]ll water sources, if other than an approved city or county system, shall be approved by the proper authority having jurisdiction.”¹⁰

How is water quality addressed in food safety provisions applicable to child care centers?

Licensed child care centers that prepare and serve food on-site are not required to obtain a retail food license. Food safety provisions contained in child care licensing standards do not currently address water quality.

How does the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program address potential exposure to lead in drinking water?

Georgia's childhood lead poisoning prevention efforts currently focus on homes. The Georgia Department of Public Health's current childhood lead poisoning prevention program focuses on homes.¹¹ The Georgia Childhood Lead Exposure Control Act authorizes the Department of Public Health to investigate lead hazards in child-occupied facilities, like child care facilities, but does not address drinking water and the Department has not promulgated implementing regulations.¹²

SCHOOLS

Access to Drinking Water

Does state school nutrition policy address access to drinking water at no cost to students?

No

Are cups for drinking water required in food service areas?

No

Can school food service purchase drinking water supplies like cups through a purchasing collaborative?

Yes. Under Georgia law, schools can conduct joint purchasing of goods and services.¹³

What are the requirements for drinking fountains in schools?

The Georgia State Minimum Standard Plumbing Code applies to school buildings¹⁴ and requires 1 drinking fountain per 100 occupants for educational

occupancies.¹⁵ Water coolers or bottled water dispensers can substitute for up to 50 percent of required fountains.¹⁶

Water Quality

Is routine water quality testing of taps and fountains that convey drinking water required?

No

How is the school water supply addressed?

Georgia's rules for food service apply to schools and address water supplies used for food service. In general, the water supply used for food service must "be provided from an approved source that is a public water system; or a nonpublic water system that is constructed, maintained and operated according to applicable state or local codes as amended."¹⁷ Water from a public water system shall meet...National Primary Drinking Water Regulations and state drinking water quality standards."¹⁸

How is water quality from a private water supply, e.g. a well, monitored?

Georgia rules for food service require that non-public water supplies meet applicable water quality standards and maintain records of water sampling results. Water from a "non-public water system shall be sampled and tested in accordance with requirements as established by the Department [of Public Health]" and "[t]he most recent sample report for the non-public water system shall be retained on file in the food service establishment or the report shall be maintained as specified by the Department."¹⁹

Are there any provisions relevant to water filters?

Yes, water filters used for food service are regulated under Georgia's food service rules. Georgia food service rules require that water filters used for food service shall be replaceable, made of safe materials, and located to facilitate disassembly for periodic servicing and cleaning.²⁰

How does the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program address potential exposure to lead in drinking water at schools?

Georgia's childhood lead poisoning prevention efforts currently focus on private homes. The Georgia Department of Public Health's current childhood lead poisoning prevention program focuses on homes.²¹ Georgia's Childhood Lead Exposure Control Act authorizes the Department of Public Health to investigate lead hazards in child-occupied facilities, like schools, but does not address drinking water and the Department has not promulgated implementing regulations.²²

Information Gathering Systems

Does Georgia conduct a statewide school facilities inventory?

No. Georgia does not conduct a mandatory statewide school facilities inventory. In order to be eligible for state school construction funds, individual schools districts are required to make a capital plan and update it every five years.²³

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For additional information please visit www.phaionline.org for the summary report: **Developing State Policy Recommendations for Safe Drinking Water Procurement in Child Care Centers and Schools**

¹ Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 591-1-1-.15(6)(g) (2017).

² Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 591-1-1-.03(3)(f)(1) (2017).

³ Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 591-1-1-.15(6)(a) (2017).

⁴ Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 591-1-1-.17(5) (2017).

⁵ Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 591-1-1-.17(5) (2017).

⁶ Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 591-1-1-.17(5) (2017).

⁷ Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Applicant's Guide to Licensing for Child Care Learning Centers 165 (rev. Mar. 2017).

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- ⁸ Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 591-1-1.17(5) (2017).
- ⁹ Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Applicant’s Guide to Licensing for Child Care Learning Centers 43 (rev. Mar. 2017).
- ¹⁰ Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 591-1-1-.25(20) (2017).
- ¹¹ Georgia Dept. of Public Health, Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, <https://dph.georgia.gov/healthy-homes-and-lead-poisoning-prevention>.
- ¹² Ga. Code Ann. § 31-41-10 (2017).
- ¹³ Georgia Department of Education, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR GEORGIA LOCAL UNITS OF ADMINISTRATION (rev. Oct. 2015).
- ¹⁴ Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-261 (2017); Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 160-5-4-.16 (2017).
- ¹⁵ Ga. Code Ann. § 8-2-20 (2017) (adopting the 2012 International Plumbing Code with state amendments); Int’l Plumbing Code Table 403.1 (2012).
- ¹⁶ Int’l Plumbing Code § 410.1 (2012).
- ¹⁷ Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 511-6-1-.06 (1)(a) (2017).
- ¹⁸ Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 511-6-1-.06 (1)(d) (2017).
- ¹⁹ Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 511-6-1-.06 (1)(f) (2017).
- ²⁰ Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 511-6-1-.06 (2)(f) (2017).
- ²¹ Georgia Dept. of Public Health, Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, <https://dph.georgia.gov/healthy-homes-and-lead-poisoning-prevention>.
- ²² Ga. Code Ann. § 31-41-10 (2017).
- ²³ Georgia Department of Education, Facilities Management, <http://www.gadoe.org/Finance-and-Business-Operations/Facilities-Services/Pages/default.aspx>.