



**CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND PLAN**  
**FOR**  
**FFY 2006-2007**

This Plan describes the CCDF program to be conducted by the State for the period 10/1/05 – 9/30/07. As provided for in the applicable statutes and regulations, the Lead Agency has the flexibility to modify this program at any time, including changing the options selected or described herein.

The official text of the applicable laws and regulations govern, and the Lead Agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to them regardless of the fact that, for purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text.

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(Form ACF 118 Approved OMB Number: 0970-0114 expires 06-30-2008)

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**PART 1**  
**ADMINISTRATION**

The agency shown below has been designated by the Chief Executive Officer of the State (or Territory), to represent the State (or Territory) as the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency agrees to administer the program in accordance with applicable Federal laws and regulations and the provisions of this Plan, including the assurances and certifications appended hereto. (658D, 658E)

**1.1 Lead Agency Information** (as designated by State chief executive officer)

Name of Lead Agency: [Department of Early Education and Care \(EEC\)](#)  
Address of Lead Agency: [51 Sleeper Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02210](#)  
Name and Title of the Lead Agency's Chief Executive Officer: [Ann Reale, Commissioner](#)  
Phone Number: [\(617\) 988-6600](#)  
Fax Number: [\(617\) 988-2451](#)  
E-Mail Address: [Ann.Reale@massmail.state.ma.us](mailto:Ann.Reale@massmail.state.ma.us)  
Web Address for Lead Agency (if any): [www.eec.state.ma.us](http://www.eec.state.ma.us)

**1.2 State Child Care (CCDF) Contact Information** (day-to-day contact)

Name of the State Child Care Contact (CCDF): [Constantia T. Papanikolaou](#)  
Title of State Child Care Contact: [General Counsel](#)  
Address: [51 Sleeper Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02110](#)  
Phone Number: [\(617\) 988-6600](#)  
Fax Number: [\(617\) 988-2451](#)  
E-Mail Address: [Constantia.Papanikolaou@massmail.state.ma.us](mailto:Constantia.Papanikolaou@massmail.state.ma.us)  
Phone Number for child care subsidy program information (for the public) (if any): [see above](#)  
Web Address for child care subsidy program information (for the public) (if any): [see above](#)

**1.3 Estimated Funding**

The Lead Agency estimates that the following amounts will be available for child care services and related activities during the 1-year period: October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006. (§98.13(a))

CCDF: [\\$103,806,839](#)  
Federal TANF Transfer to CCDF: [\\$91,874,224](#)  
Direct Federal TANF Spending on Child Care: [\\$92,000,000](#)  
State CCDF Maintenance of Effort Funds: [\\$44,973,373](#)  
State Matching Funds: [\\$29,336,502](#)  
Total Funds Available: [\\$361,990,938](#)

#### **1.4 Estimated Administration Cost**

The Lead Agency estimates that the following amount (and percentage) of Federal CCDF and State Matching Funds will be used to administer the program (not to exceed 5 percent): \$4,260,338.96 ( 1.9%). (658E(c)(3), §§98.13(a), 98.52)

#### **1.5 Administration of the Program**

Does the Lead Agency directly administer and implement all services, programs and activities funded under the CCDF Act, including those described in Part 5.1 – Activities & Services to Improve the Quality and Availability of Child Care, Quality Earmarks and Set-Aside?

- Yes. Skip questions 1.6 and 1.7. Go to Section 1.8.
- No, and the following describes how the Lead Agency maintains overall control when services or activities are provided through other agencies: (658D(b)(1)(A), §98.11)

#### **[The Department of Early Education and Care: A New Approach to Delivering, Coordinating, and Funding Early Education and Child Care Services](#)**

Through Chapter 205 of the Acts of 2004, the Massachusetts General Court established the new Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) in Chapter 15D of the General Laws in order to consolidate all early education and care<sup>1</sup> programs and services under a single agency. On July 1, 2005, EEC officially became operational. EEC combines the functions of the former Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) with those of the former Early Learning Services Division (ELS) at the Department of Education. The agency is supervised and guided by a new independent Board of Early Education and Care, which in April 2005 appointed Ann Reale as the first Commissioner of EEC. EEC is responsible for all licensing of early education and care programs, providing financial assistance for child care services to low-income families (through the CCDF and other funding sources), providing information and referral services, providing parenting support for all families, and providing professional development opportunities for staff in the early education and care field.

EEC's mission, which is distinct from and broader than either of those of its predecessor agencies, states that:

EEC will lead the way in helping Massachusetts children and families reach their full potential. By providing and coordinating a range of services and assistance, EEC will continuously improve the quality, affordability, and accessibility of early education and care in the Commonwealth.

In addition to its mission, EEC's guiding principles, which govern and provide direction for

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this plan, and in all of EEC's efforts, the term "early education and care" includes all EEC-licensed and authorized programs serving children from birth through 14 years of age.

all aspects of the agency's work, are as follows:

- Put children and families first;
- Be flexible and accountable;
- Balance access, affordability, quality and coordination/continuity of care;
- Prioritize the needs of low-income families;
- Build on strengths of current system; minimize weakness; maximize resources;
- Seek input from staff and stakeholders;
- Keep interested parties informed of progress; and
- Provide timely and comprehensive information to Board for decision-making.

During its first fiscal year (July 1, 2005-June 30, 2006), EEC has focused, both internally and externally, on the transition to the new agency. Although funding, program requirements, and policies for the Commonwealth's early education and care programs, including CCDF-funded services, remained the same during the transition year as in prior years, EEC's Commissioner launched three comprehensive policy and planning projects in September 2005 to develop recommendations for short term changes and long term objectives designed to improve affordability, access, and quality. These policy projects are organized into the following three areas:

1. Rates and Payment: examining and developing more consistent rate structures, and procurement and payment policies;
2. Access and Coordination: developing a coordinated, integrated, and streamlined process for accessing information and financial assistance from EEC; and
3. Quality and Workforce Development: streamlining program standards and requirements, drafting a workforce development plan, and developing a school readiness assessment system.

The work of each project team is informed by EEC's mission and guiding principles as well as by EEC's new "Transition Team" of more than 40 external stakeholder groups from the early education and care field and EEC's new Parent Advisory Committee of more than 40 parents who are current consumers of early education and care services in the Commonwealth.

Some of the key accomplishments and initiatives launched during EEC's first fiscal year include:

- the addition of 3,600 new vouchers for families on the waiting list for EEC financial assistance;
- the consolidation of more than 400 waiting lists for financial assistance into one, centralized, real-time system that provides more equitable and efficient access to parents waiting for help paying for child care;
- a \$12.5 million increase in the reimbursement rates paid to providers of subsidized child care;
- the launch of a new market rate survey and groundbreaking provider cost study to better understand rate structure;

- the development of a plan for a statewide system to support the education and training of the early education workforce; and
- the awarding, with the Board of Higher Education, of \$1 million in scholarships through the Early Childhood Educators Scholarship Program.

In the fall of 2006, the Board of Early Education and Care is scheduled to: review revised licensing and Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check regulations, update EEC's workforce development plan, and announce the findings from the market rate and provider cost surveys. In addition, in the coming year, EEC will continue the development of a single system for early education and care financial assistance for all of EEC's programs, which builds on the development of the centralized waiting list for financial assistance created during EEC's first year and will eventually include intake, placement, and billing functions.

#### Current Funding Model and Development of New Approach

EEC currently uses a variety of funding mechanisms including vouchers, contracts, and grants to deliver services to children and families. In light of the consolidation of early education and care services into the new agency, EEC is exploring the development of a coordinated funding model that would improve access to financial assistance and continuity of care for children, provide for greater parent choice, ensure more stable funding for providers, especially those in low-income neighborhoods, support comprehensive services, and increase public/private partnerships.

The creation of EEC has unified the early education and care funding streams that were formerly administered by its two predecessor agencies, OCCS and ELS. As a result, EEC is now responsible for administering Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) funds, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) transfer funds, and state funding and administrative responsibility for Head Start, which were formerly administered by OCCS, as well as state funds for services for families with preschool aged children and federal special education funds, which were formerly administered by ELS. EEC's responsibility for all of these different funding streams allows for greater coordination with and more efficient use of CCDF funding, and represents another significant benefit of the creation of EEC.

#### Administration and Oversight of CCDF-Funded Services

EEC manages the subsidy and financial assistance services that it does not directly provide through contracts with the child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&RS) and providers and grants to Community Partnerships for Children local councils and lead agencies. Over the coming year, the separate financial assistance systems currently managed by each of these entities will come together as part of EEC's single financial assistance system. In the meantime, EEC oversees and manages funds provided through these entities through several mechanisms.

The Child Care Information Management System (CCIMS) is in use by the CCR&Rs for voucher management and simplifies the intake process for families who receive child care vouchers and allows for centralized monitoring of the voucher caseload by EEC. CCIMS also streamlines the process of gathering and sharing information by allowing CCR&Rs to

electronically transmit all billing and payment information through EEC's fiscal department into the state's bill processing system for more accurate and faster payment. In addition, the system transmits information about child care placements and vacancies on a daily basis from the CCR&Rs to EEC. CCIMS is in use at the 14 CCR&Rs in Massachusetts.

The Electronic Child Care Information Management System (eCCIMS) is a web-based application that collects intake, eligibility, waitlist, and billing information from the agency's 260 contracted child care providers. eCCIMS allows EEC administrators to view vendor activity in real time, thereby increasing efficiency and improving the utilization of child care funding. The application is based upon an open framework and connects to CCIMS, allowing providers and CCR&Rs the ability to view each other's data. Implemented in fiscal year 2004, eCCIMS is regularly enhanced. For example, on-line CORI checks and a centralized wait list management component were introduced in fiscal year 2005. In the near future, eCCIMS will be enhanced to interface with MMARS, the state's accounting system in order to minimize the time between provider billing submission and their reimbursement. Connections with other state agencies participating in the child care process are forthcoming.

The Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) Program, which does not include direct funding from CCDF but is used to meet 20% of the Commonwealth's CCDF Matching Fund requirement, is a annual state-funded program that provides grants to local communities to provide financial assistant to low-income families with preschool aged children and quality services to providers at the local level. The program is locally managed with direction and oversight provided by EEC staff who serve as "Community Liaisons." CPCs submit monthly data reports on spending and activities and are all required to place and enroll families seeking early education and care financial assistance from EEC's new centralized waiting list.

In addition to its contracts with CCR&Rs and providers and grants to CPCs, EEC has developed and continues to expand its public website, [www.eec.state.ma.us](http://www.eec.state.ma.us), to maximize family access to child care and empower providers with information. EEC's website allows users to search for a child care providers, view EEC's regulations and policies, and access a wealth of other information for parents, providers, and the general public.

#### Accountability and Flexibility Through EEC's Contracting System

EEC contracts with center-based child care programs, family child care systems, and CCR&Rs to provide direct services, training, information and referral, and voucher issuance and payment. EEC's contracting system simplifies the contract amendment process for providers to be able to quickly meet the changing needs of families with children in care. This flexible contracting system reduces the administrative burden placed on contracted providers and at the same time provides accountability. EEC's low-income child care and supportive child care contracts also include detailed performance objectives and measures that each provider must meet in order to retain a contract. EEC requires contractors to report on these performance measures twice a year.

Before contractors can receive any funding from the Commonwealth, they must provide evidence of their financial viability. As part of this "pre-qualification" process, providers submit to EEC or a sister agency providing the majority of their contract funds, documentation of their

organization's structure and finances. Each year, contractors must submit re-qualification information, demonstrating their continued financial health and ability to serve clients funded by the Commonwealth. This process helps ensure that providers can maintain their programs on a sound financial footing, that families will not unexpectedly lose their child care slots, and that resources are being maximized to serve children.

EEC contract and monitoring coordinators work out of EEC's five regional offices to maintain a close community connection. These contract and monitoring coordinators collaborate with staff in EEC's policy and licensing units, who are also based in the five regional offices, to ensure that monitoring and technical assistance and training efforts are coordinated and consistent.

Once a provider formally contracts with EEC, the contract and monitoring coordinators ensure that they are complying with the terms of the contract and providing high quality services to the families and children enrolled in their programs. EEC has instituted a formal monitoring process for CCR&Rs and contracted providers. As part of this process, the contract and monitoring coordinators review contract billing, monthly slot utilization, licensing information, and administrative and fiscal information, and conduct on-site visits to providers.

The contract and monitoring coordinators also perform desk reviews of providers, including an assessment of billing, service utilization data, licensing information, the provider's annual audit information, and feedback from collateral sources. These reviews are conducted annually, and the information collected is used to conduct a risk assessment analysis. Among other variables, the risk assessment analysis considers the amount of funding a provider receives from EEC and is used to prioritize EEC's on-site monitoring visits by focusing on those providers that pose the greatest risk to the Commonwealth.

EEC provides technical assistance to providers on an ongoing basis to help them meet their contracting requirements and ensure that the best care is provided to children. If necessary, EEC contract and training coordinators work with contractors to develop a corrective action plan that outlines the required corrective measures and timelines for improvement. In the event that contract and monitoring coordinators determine that a contractor has enrolled an ineligible family, the contractor is required to reimburse EEC for payments made on behalf of the ineligible family. In addition, the contract unit annually reviews a contractor's financial and administrative information through the re-qualification process discussed above. For those providers receiving \$300,000 or more in federal funding, a review of the provider's "A-133 Audit" also occurs.

Staff from EEC's policy unit support providers and CCR&Rs in delivering high quality services by developing new policies and providing statewide training and technical assistance on them. EEC policy unit staff also coordinate resource development within EEC and among early education and care professionals, respond to families' inquiries about eligibility for early education and care financial assistance, and examine and resolve issues that may arise between a provider and a family receiving subsidized early education and care through EEC's formal review process. Regardless of the outcome of any specific review, EEC uses the information it receives from families to further monitor the quality of the services being delivered through EEC contracts.

### A New Approach to Safety and Healthy Physical, Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Development

EEC's licensing standards provide a comprehensive system for ensuring that children receive educational and developmentally appropriate care. Long recognized as a national leader, EEC sets and enforces regulations and standards for providing children with quality child care. Massachusetts requires that all child care programs have a license from EEC, with the only exceptions being for care provided by public schools, an in-home/relative caregiver, and babysitting or informal, cooperative arrangements.

Currently, EEC enforces separate sets of licensing regulations for family child care, center-based group child care, and school age child care programs, as well as a set of program standards for center-based preschool programs receiving CPC grant funding. While these regulations and standards are nationally recognized for providing high quality care for children, EEC is building on this strong foundation by streamlining duplicative requirements, allowing greater program flexibility and adding more detailed guidance for providers to support on-going program improvement. Through its internal Regulation Reform workgroup efforts, EEC is currently developing a new set of regulations that will align its current regulatory requirements and program standards and be linked to a Quality Rating Scale that promotes continuous quality improvement. EEC's new regulatory framework will consist of a set of common core regulations that will apply to family child care, group child care, and school age child care programs, with separate, but complementary, sets of more detailed regulations based on the developmental stages of the children in care and the size of the setting.

The new regulations will outline specific requirements in areas such as health and safety, administration, programming, child guidance, environment, staffing and qualifications, and financial management. The new regulations will include specific requirements outlining how providers will:

- ensure children's physical safety;
- promote children's emotional well being;
- provide opportunities for children to develop stable and supportive relationships with their caregivers that promote healthy attachment;
- develop partnerships with parents that reflect respectful appreciation of parents' culture, values, expectations, and goals for their children;
- offer stimulating and developmentally appropriate learning activities that strengthen children's language skills and global development; and,
- monitor and document children's developmental milestones, share information with parents, and help identify children who may have a special need.

In addition, EEC's new regulatory framework will support critical aspects of EEC's Workforce Development plan. For example, the new regulations will incorporate requirements regarding core knowledge training on child growth and development, developmentally appropriate practices, observing and recording children's behavior and working with families—all of which are critical foundations for building a provider workforce that is well equipped to address the developmental needs of all children.

The development of EEC's new regulatory framework will be informed by its guiding principles for quality initiatives. The Quality Guiding Principles provide that EEC should:

- Include family child care, public schools, group child care, Head Start, faith-based care, other non-profit programs;
- Build on strengths of current system regulations and standards;
- Include children of all abilities, from birth through school age;
- Be based on knowledge of child growth, development and outcomes;
- Develop and implement with thorough input from all stakeholders;
- Support all providers to continuously improve programs;
- Ensure that parents have a variety of program choices;
- Balance improvements with affordability for parents;
- Embrace diversity and cultural competency;
- Draw on other stakeholders' quality improvement projects; and
- Continue to be a national model in early education and care.

EEC expects to solicit public comments on its new regulations in the fall 2006, with implementation scheduled for 2007. Any changes in requirements will only be made after a thorough and thoughtful process involving all stakeholders. Until the new set of regulations is promulgated, all current regulations remain in effect.

With regard to implementation, monitoring, and technical assistance of existing regulations, EEC licensors provide technical assistance and consultation to programs regarding compliance with EEC regulations. Licensors also conduct new and renewal provider orientations, host provider discussion groups, and offer training to providers. In addition, EEC has a Professional Qualifications Registry that issues certificates of qualification to staff working in group child care centers. Over 5,000 applications are reviewed annually to determine the appropriate level of certification. Early education and care staff, employers, and licensors rely on the EEC certificates to establish an individual's qualifications for employment and licensing purposes.

All licensed providers are monitored by EEC licensors through announced and unannounced compliance visits. As part of its licensing procedures, EEC requires that all people who may have unsupervised contact with children in licensed center-based programs and family child care homes have cleared a CORI background check. If a complaint is filed against a provider, the EEC investigation or licensing unit conducts a comprehensive investigation. If the complaint warrants that legal action be taken against the provider, the EEC legal unit works closely with the licensing, contracting, and policy units, as well as the CCR&Rs and other state agencies, to resolve the matter. This multi-lateral approach both ensures that children are protected and that federal and state monies being expended for care by that provider are properly accounted for while any legal issues are pending.

Although in-home/relative care providers need not be licensed, EEC promotes quality care in these environments through training and required background checks. EEC contracts with the local CCR&Rs to provide an orientation for both in-home and relative care givers, who

must attend the training prior to being paid. At this orientation session, in-home/relative care providers learn important information concerning health, safety, and child growth and development, and are given resources to help them care for young children appropriately. In-home/relative care providers may not care for more than six children at one time, and must be at least 18 years old. In addition, all non-relative in-home providers must pass a CORI background check. Through its Regulation Reform and Workforce Development workgroups, EEC is looking to improve and increase the orientation and training requirements for all providers, including in-home and relative caregivers and licensed family child care providers.

### **1.6 Determining Eligibility**

For child care services funded under §98.50 (e.g., certificates, vouchers, grants/contracts for slots based on individual eligibility), does the Lead Agency itself: (§98.11)

- Determine individual eligibility of non-TANF families?  
 Yes.  
 No. If no, identify the name and type of agency that determines eligibility of non-TANF families for child care:

To ensure that the early education and care financial assistance system is flexible and responsive to the needs of low-income families, income eligibility determinations are made available to families at multiple entry points. For some families, the first point of contact with the system is at their local CCR&Rs. For other families, their first contact is with a contracted early education and care provider or a CPC program. All CCR&Rs, contracted providers, and CPCs assist families in determining their eligibility for early education and care financial assistance. To maintain uniformity in these determinations, EEC established during fiscal year 2006 statewide eligibility criteria for subsidized early education and care for low-income (non-TANF) families that the CCR&Rs, contracted providers, and CPCs are required to follow in making individual determinations.

- Determine individual eligibility of TANF families?  
 Yes.  
 No. If no, identify the name and type of agency that determines eligibility of TANF families for child care:

For most families on or transitioning from public assistance (TANF), their first point of entry into the child care system is through their local area office of the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). At this area office, a TANF family receives the initial authorization for subsidized early education and care. DTA then refers each TANF family to a local CCR&R. The CCR&R assists the family in locating an early education and care program that meets the family's needs and actually issues the family a child care voucher. In order to assist families in a most efficient and effective way, many CCR&Rs are stationed at or located near DTA offices.

In the fall of 2005, as part of its work to improve access to services for all low-income families, EEC and DTA formed an interagency working group dedicated to streamlining the

process for TANF families to receive child care services. This working group identified several key barriers faced by TANF families in accessing and receiving child care services including:

- inconsistent policies, practices and communications between EEC and DTA;
- the issuance of very short term vouchers, even when a family's eligibility has not changed, that lead to disruptions in services for children, inconveniences for families attempting to stabilize their lives, and upheaval for providers; and
- agency policies and practices that do not always take into consideration the needs of the child when determining the family's eligibility for services.

Both agencies are in the process of implementing policy changes to address these barriers. EEC is also in the process of making a number of regulatory changes, which are scheduled to take effect in the fall of 2006, designed to improve the stability of care for children and streamline administrative requirements for families. These include:

- lengthening the eligibility period for families receiving financial assistance (all non-TANF and some TANF families) from up to six months to up to one year;
  - allowing 12 college credits and some study time to be considered "full-time;"
  - allowing mothers whose employers have granted them maternity leave to take up to 12 weeks for such leave; and
  - lengthening the time a family has to transition their child into an early education and care program before starting an approved activity from one to two weeks.
- Assist parents in locating child care?  
 Yes.  
 No. If no, identify the name and type of agency that assists parents:

Through its website, its contracts with CCR&Rs, and its grants to CPCs, EEC assists families by helping them locate and enroll their children in early education and care programs that meet their needs. EEC's website, [www.eec.state.ma.us](http://www.eec.state.ma.us), has a search engine that allows a parent to quickly search for providers by entering the name of their city/town or their zip code. This information is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. On the website, families can also search for a list of all the licensed child care providers in their area by the type of care provided (for example, family child care or center-based school age or group child care programs). In addition, families can email questions to EEC and to the Commissioner through the website.

EEC also provides families with information about different types of child care programming, suggests questions that families might want to ask of prospective child care providers, and offers other helpful information to assist families in choosing the program that best meets their needs. EEC is currently in the process of updating its website to include this information and other family support resources.

For many families, their local CCR&R is the primary place they receive information on types of early education and care and applying for EEC financial assistance. EEC directly contracts with the local CCR&Rs to provide families with customized information and referral services to help each family locate an available early education and care program that meets the

family's needs. CCR&Rs work with families over the telephone and in person to help them find accessible, quality early education and care programs. Most CPC programs also either provide these services directly to families or assist in connecting families with their local CCR&R.

- Make payments to providers and/or parents?  
 Yes.  
 No. If no, identify the name and type of agency that makes payments:

EEC pays all of its contracted early education and care providers directly. CCR&Rs administer EEC's voucher financial assistance program and make payments to providers for their early education and care voucher slots. CPC programs, which receive grant funding from EEC, enter into contracts with providers at the local level, provide local access to vouchers for families, or sub-contract with a CCR&R to manage funding for directs services.

### **1.7 Non-Governmental Entities**

Is any entity named in response to section 1.6 a non-governmental entity? (658D(b), §§98.10(a), 98.11(a))

- Yes, and the following entities named in 1.6 are non-governmental:

EEC has contracts (including subcontracts) with 14 CCR&Rs and provides state-funded grants to 164 CPCs. Both the CCR&Rs and CPCs are non-governmental entities. In addition, EEC has 238 contracts with non-governmental center-based school age and group child care programs and family child care systems, to provide some of the services described in Section 1.6. Please refer to Attachment 1 for list of current CCR&R contracts and Attachment 2 for the list of current contracted providers, and Attachment 3 for the list of CPCs.

- No.

### **1.8 Use of Private Donated Funds**

Will the Lead Agency use private donated funds to meet a part of the matching requirement of the CCDF pursuant to §98.53(e)(2) and (f)?

- Yes, The name and type of entity designated to receive private donated funds is:

Name: **Child Care Quality Trust**  
Address: **c/o Department of Early Education and Care**  
**51 Sleeper Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02110**  
Contact: **Janet McKeon**  
Type: **non-TANF state agency**

- No.

**1.9 Use of State Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Expenditures for CCDF-Eligible Children**

1.9.1 During this plan period, will State expenditures for Pre-K programs be used to meet any of the CCDF maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement?

Yes, and:

( ) The State assures that its level of effort in full day/full year child care services has not been reduced, pursuant to §98.53(h)(1).

(\_\_ %) Estimated percentage of the MOE requirement that will be met with pre-K expenditures. (It may not exceed 20%.)

If the State uses Pre-K expenditures to meet more than 10% of the MOE requirement, the following describes how the State will coordinate its Pre-K and child care services to expand the availability of child care (§98.53(h)(4)):

No.

1.9.2 During this plan period, will State expenditures for Pre-K programs be used to meet any of the CCDF Matching Fund requirement? (§98.53(h))

Yes, and

(20%) Estimated percentage of the Matching Fund requirement that will be met with pre-K expenditures. (It may not exceed 20%.)

If the State uses Pre-K expenditures to meet more than 10% of the Matching Fund requirement, the following describes how the State will coordinate its Pre-K and child care services to expand the availability of child care (§98.53(h)(4)):

No.

1.9.3 If the State answered yes to 1.9.1 or 1.9.2, the following describes State efforts to ensure that pre-K programs meet the needs of working parents: (§98.53(h)(2))

EEC is committed to providing the highest quality pre-Kindergarten services that provide children with tools necessary for school success and to meet family needs. With the consolidation of all the Commonwealth's early education and care services into the new agency, EEC administers federal and state funding for child care services for low-income families through TANF and CCDF, state funding for early education and care services for three- and four-year olds through the CPC Program, and federal and state funding for pre-Kindergarten

special education. EEC's administration and coordination of all these programs and services ensures that working families have access to care that meets their needs. By administering a mixed system of contracts, vouchers, and grants, working families have access to an array of pre-Kindergarten programs, including both public and private programs. For example, families who choose to enroll their children in a half-day public preschool program through a CPC program have access to "wrap-around" care for the remainder of the day through a voucher or contracted slot.

One of EEC's guiding principles is to prioritize the needs of low-income, working families. During the past year, EEC has embarked upon a number of initiatives designed to ensure that all of its programs meet the needs of working families. One of the most important initiatives in this regard has been the development of the EEC centralized waiting list, which consolidated 400 waiting lists for financial assistance into one, real-time system that provides parents seeking EEC financial assistance with more equitable and efficient access. Families can access the waiting list from any CCR&R, contracted provider, or CPC program because waiting list information is stored in a single system, accessible on-line from any CCR&R or provider. When EEC financial assistance becomes available, families receive letters from CCR&Rs, contracted providers, and CPC programs, thereby providing them with access to a variety of programs. To ensure that the centralized waiting list is managed in a consistent manner, EEC issued guidance to the CCR&Rs, contracted providers, CPCs outlining the intake, updating, and placement process using the waiting list. This guidance clarifies which families can be on the waitlist, how and when to communicate with families to update the waitlist, how to maintain records on waitlist tracking, and when to report waitlist information.

In addition to the centralized waiting list, EEC has established statewide eligibility priorities and criteria for receipt of early education and care financial assistance that CCR&Rs, contracted providers, and CPC programs are required to follow. EEC's eligibility priorities and criteria require CCR&Rs, contracted providers, and CPC programs to enroll priority families and then non-priority families on a first come, first served basis from the top of the centralized waiting list. The implementation of uniform, statewide eligibility priorities and criteria across all EEC programs combined with the establishment of the EEC centralized waiting list ensure that parents in greatest need receive priority access to services and have a variety of different program types and settings (including family child care, center-based group child care, and public school programs) that meet their needs from which to choose.

## **1.10 Improper Payments**

### 1.10.1 How does the Lead Agency define improper payments?

Any payment for child care related services that is incorrect and/or is not authorized under applicable laws, contract terms, policies and/or procedures. This includes any payments to providers for families who are ineligible for subsidized services, payments for care that was not provided, or payments made in error by the purchasing agency to a child care provider, child care resource and referral agency, and/or grantee of child care funds.

1.10.2 Has your State developed strategies to prevent, measure, identify, reduce and/or collect improper payments? (§98.60(i), §98.65, §98.67)

Yes, and these strategies are:

Prevention, Measurement, and Reduction of Improper Payments

- EEC’s policy unit, which includes regional policy and training advisors, provides training and ongoing technical support to providers regarding the State’s subsidy policies and procedures.
- All recipients of subsidized child care must sign a Financial Assistance Agreement certifying that the information they are providing is accurate. The Agreement notifies families that in the event they provide false or misleading information, their subsidy may be terminated, they may have to repay the funds, they may be ineligible for subsidized care for up to three years and may face civil fines and possible criminal prosecution.
- All families receiving subsidized child care are reassessed every six months<sup>2</sup> or sooner if there are changes to their residence, income, service need or anything which may affect their eligibility. Families must report any changes which may affect their eligibility to their provider (if they are in a contracted slot) or their local CCR&R (if they have a child care voucher) within ten days of such change occurring. The reassessment process gives providers and/or CCR&R staff an additional opportunity to review a family’s information for accuracy.
- Regional Contract Monitoring staff conduct regular monitoring visits to contracted child care providers. Staff review the provider’s attendance and billing records in addition to a randomly selected group of approximately 25 family files to verify eligibility.
- CCR&R staff conduct desk reviews and site visits to non-contracted, “voucher-only” providers.
- EEC contract monitoring staff and CCR&R staff conduct risk assessments to determine the order in which providers will be visited. As part of the risk assessment, monitors consider each provider’s licensing history and the amount of state and/or federal funding received by each provider.
- EEC licensing, policy and contract staff work closely together to share information regarding providers. If a program has fiscal management issues, licensing will monitor the provider to determine whether the quality of care is being affected by such mismanagement.
- EEC has “community liaisons” that provide technical assistance and ongoing monitoring of Community Partnership Councils and other grantees of child care funds to ensure that the grant monies are being spent appropriately.

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<sup>2</sup> EEC is currently in the process of amending its regulations to lengthen the eligibility period from six months to up to one year.

- EEC conducts on-site monitoring reviews of the CCR&Rs annually. This includes a review of families' eligibility files.
- Providers (both contract and voucher) who are cited for non-compliances (including lack of internal controls, billing errors, authorizing care to ineligible clients) must submit a Corrective Action Plan to one of EEC's Contract Monitors or the local CCR&R outlining the measures they will implement to correct all problems identified.

#### Recoupment of Funds

- Through EEC's automated eligibility and billing system, eCCIMS, EEC can recoup from a provider's ongoing payments any sums that must be repaid related to services provided within the current fiscal year, including payments that were improperly paid for families who were ineligible for child care subsidies. EEC can also recoup any improper payments made to CCR&Rs through its automated billing system, CCIMS by reducing ongoing payments for services provided within the current fiscal year.
- EEC works closely with the Massachusetts Operational Services Division and the Attorney General's Office's Division of Public Charities in reviewing and following up with providers whose annual financial reports and/or filings indicate that improper payments may be occurring. EEC conducts an annual prequalification process for its contracted child care providers which includes a review of their current fiscal year filings.
- In situations where a contracted provider, voucher provider or client is suspected of committing fraud, the case is referred to the State Auditor's Office who may initiate an in-depth investigation through its Bureau of Special Investigations. The Auditor's Office may also refer the matter to the Attorney General's Office for further legal action, including the attachment and liquidation of assets.

No. If no, are there plans underway to determine and implement such strategies?

Yes.

No.

1.10.3 Has your State developed strategies to identify errors in the determination of client eligibility?

Yes, and these strategies are:

EEC's contract and monitoring coordinators utilize a monitoring tool (checklist) while reviewing providers' family files. The contract and monitoring coordinators review each family's income, service need, and relationship to child(ren) documentation to ensure that each family is eligible for subsidized care in accordance with EEC's policies and procedures.

- No. If no, are there plans underway to determine and implement such strategies?
- Yes.
- No.

**PART 2**  
**DEVELOPING THE CHILD CARE PROGRAM**

**2.1 Consultation and Coordination**

2.1.1 Lead Agencies are required to *consult* with appropriate agencies and *coordinate* with other Federal, State, local, tribal (if applicable) and private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services (§98.12, §98.14(a),(b), §98.16(d)). Indicate the entities with which the Lead Agency has consulted or coordinated (as defined below), by checking the appropriate box(es) in the following table.

*Consultation* involves the participation of an appropriate agency in the development of the State Plan. At a minimum, Lead Agencies must consult with representatives of general purpose local governments (noted by the asterisk in the chart below).

*Coordination* involves the coordination of child care and early childhood development services, including efforts to coordinate across multiple entities, both public and private (for instance, in connection with a State Early Childhood Comprehensive System (SECCS) grant or infant-toddler initiative). At a minimum, Lead Agencies must coordinate with (1) other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and/or private agencies responsible for providing child care and early childhood development services, (2) public health (including the agency responsible for immunizations and programs that promote children’s emotional and mental health), (3) employment services / workforce development, (4) public education, and (5) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and (6) any Indian Tribes in the State receiving CCDF funds (noted by the asterisks in the chart below).

	<b>Consultation</b>	<b>Coordination</b>
• Representatives of local government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Indian Tribes/Tribal Organizations, when such entities exist within the boundaries of the State	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
• State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for		
○ Public health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
○ Employment services / workforce development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
○ Public education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
○ TANF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
○ State pre-kindergarten programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
○ Head Start programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
○ Programs that promote inclusion for children with special needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Other (See guidance):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

\* Required.

For each box checked above, (a) identify the agency providing the service and (b) describe the consultation and coordination efforts, if any. Descriptions must be provided for any consultation or coordination required by statute or regulation.

In developing its CCDF-funded quality child care activities, EEC partners and collaborates with other entities, including the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF), state agencies, providers, CCR&Rs, CPCs, advisory and advocacy groups, and academic institutions. The collaborative process allows EEC to develop policies and initiatives that are based on input from many different viewpoints and constituencies. This approach allows EEC to view the needs of children and families from different perspectives and to meet those needs with a multifaceted approach. EEC's guiding principles specifically provide that the development and integration of the early education and care system will be a cooperative process with collaboration from EEC's partners in the field. For example, the guiding principles state that EEC will:

- Build on strengths of current system, maximizing resources and minimizing weaknesses;
- Seek input from staff and stakeholders;
- Keep interested parties informed of progress; and
- Provide timely and comprehensive information to Board for decision-making.

EEC has a communication and outreach plan that provides the early childhood community and all other key stakeholders, every opportunity to learn about and provide input into EEC's work. In addition to a monthly newsletter and monthly Board meetings that are open to the public, programs and individuals are able to receive regular updates on EEC's work by joining the EEC distribution list at: [www.eec.state.ma.us/usernews.aspx](http://www.eec.state.ma.us/usernews.aspx).

EEC has also developed more formal processes for consulting with others, which include the following:

Transition Team: EEC has established a Transition Team comprised of a diverse set of stakeholders broadly representing early education and after school care, K-12 education, and higher education in order to obtain input on its on-going work to establish a unified early education and care system. Members of the Transition Team also serve on one of the three advisory committees that provide feedback and expertise to EEC's internal working groups organized around EEC's key priorities and policy work-access, affordability, and quality. This process provides EEC and its stakeholders with the opportunity for important dialogue on how best to serve children and families, while also generating specific and concrete ideas for improving specific aspects of the early education and care system such as prioritization of children and families in need and waitlist management.

Parent Advisory Committee: EEC has convened a Parent Advisory Committee to provide input and expertise on its on-going work to build a new high-quality system of early education and care in Massachusetts. The Parent Advisory Committee is comprised of a diverse group of parents with children currently enrolled in a wide range of early education and care programs and services, including: family child care, Head Start, child care centers, integrated

public preschools, special education, school age programs and family support programs. The Parent Advisory Committee works closely with the Transition Team.

Statewide Regional Meetings: In November and December of 2005, Commissioner Reale hosted a series of six regional meetings across the Commonwealth to share information about EEC's new structure, mission, and goals, as well as the planning underway to build a high-quality system of early education and care. The nearly 1,000 participants who attended the meetings reflected a diversity of stakeholders including parents, students, providers, and program administrators from public schools, family child care homes, and other community-based programs. At all of the meetings, attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Many common themes were raised across the state, including building on the existing partnerships and successes in the field, increasing the rates paid to providers of subsidized early education and care, expanding access to financial assistance to more families with young and school age children, and ensuring that any changes to program licensure and teacher credentialing are inclusive of the current mixed system of care settings. EEC is using all the information gathered during the regional meetings to inform the policy work underway.

Contracting for child care services: Before contracting to purchase child care, resource and referral services, training or other child care related services, EEC issues a Request for Response (RFR) and completes a competitive bid process. In developing each RFR, EEC convenes a Procurement Management Team that consists of EEC staff and a team of experts from the child care community, including representatives from the Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Division of Medical Assistance (DMA), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR), the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the federal ACF Region 1 office, Head Start, and individual cities or towns. When membership on the team would not violate the Commonwealth's conflict of interest law, representatives from the Board of Early Education and Care, Transition Team, or other child care organizations are also included.

In order to maintain a child care system that is flexible and responsive to the needs of families and child care providers, EEC also seeks public comment, feedback and questions from families, child care providers, and/or advocacy groups on each major RFR, and incorporates that information into the current or proposed child care model. Consequently, with almost every program and service described in the State Plan for which EEC contracts with a provider or agency, EEC has consulted with other federal, state, and local officials, as well as members of the early childhood community.

In early 2007, EEC plans to commence a Procurement Management Team to plan the procurement of services that will support the agency's new mission and goals. If EEC were to conduct a procurement before the completion of the agency's transition, the Commonwealth risks bidding for the same services with rates and provider requirements that may be or may soon become inapplicable. Delaying the procurement until completion of the agency's restructuring will minimize the burden on administrative resources, promote efficiencies in a new contracting system, and ensure performance-based outcomes. EEC's new procurement will generate best quality and economic value by servicing families in a streamlined manner and promoting economies of scale in a new contracted system.

Encouraging Coordination Among Others: When EEC issues Requests for Responses (RFRs) before contracting for any child care or related services, EEC requires that bidders consider and report on how they will reach out to child care providers and related agencies to establish linkages that will benefit the children and families they serve. The result is better coordination of service between and among the child care providers, family child care systems, and CCR&Rs, and higher quality care for children and families in Massachusetts.

Afterschool Programs: EEC is an Executive Board Partner and founding member of the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership (MAP), a privately funded group of diverse stakeholders in the Massachusetts afterschool community. EEC is a member of the newly created Commission on After School and Out of School Time and coordinates with private organizations such as the United Way of Massachusetts Bay through the Youth Impact Council and Boston Afterschool and Beyond through the Achieve Partners Group. Each of these partnerships focuses on expanding the availability of quality, accessible out of school time programming for children and youth.

Consultations with Building Inspectors: EEC staff meets with the state Board of Building Regulatory Standards, the Department of Fire Safety, and local building and fire inspectors on a regular basis. Possession of updated building and fire certificates is a requirement for licensure of group, school age, and residential programs. Staff from EEC regional offices meet with local building inspectors to discuss state building code standards that impact family child care homes. EEC will continue to consult with these officials as it reviews and revises its regulations for all program types.

## **Public Health**

Coordination with the Department of Public Health: The EEC Commissioner has held a series of meetings with the Director of the Massachusetts Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Project (MECCS), which focuses on coordination of services for children from birth through age five, and the Associate DPH Commissioner who oversees DPH's Bureau of Family and Community Health, in which MECCS is located. The result of these meetings has been a major reorganization of MECCS designed to elevate its work to a higher level within state government. As part of this reorganization, MECCS will be jointly managed by EEC and DPH. Viewing MECCS as a key mechanism for collaboration across state agencies, the EEC Commissioner is planning to work with the heads of other state agencies to create a comprehensive state plan on early childhood health, mental health/social emotional health, family support and parent education.

Over the next few months, MECCS will concentrate on finalizing and compiling the results of its work over the past three years to share its recommendations, key challenges, and lessons learned with a the new Commissioner-level interagency workgroup comprised of EEC, DPH, DSS, DDTA, DMH, DOE, DMR, EOHHS' Children and Youth and Family Cluster, MassHealth, and the Children's Trust Fund. The Interagency Workgroup's goals, which have also been incorporated into the MECCS strategic plan, are to develop the following: 1) a statewide plan for health screening and developmental screening for young children, including vision, hearing, oral health, and mental health; 2) a comprehensive plan for a children's mental

health system; and 3) a “roadmap” for a system of family support and parent education across state agencies.

Emergency Preparedness: After hearing from child care providers at a number of training sessions, staff from EEC’s predecessor agency, the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS), and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) worked together to develop an emergency preparedness manual, which addressed both natural and man-made disaster, for use by all providers. This manual was well received by the child care community and has been updated several times to address new challenges and current concerns. The manual is available both on the EEC website, [www.eec.state.ma.us](http://www.eec.state.ma.us), as well as on the Administration for Children and Families’ National Child Care website, [www.nccic.org](http://www.nccic.org). Currently, EEC is working with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and child care providers across the state to develop “continuity of operations” plans in the event of a pandemic influenza.

Comprehensive Mental Health for Child Care: EEC and DMH through the Mass Health-Behavioral Health Programs are co-administering the Comprehensive Mental Health for Child Care Project (CMHCC) to ensure that EEC contracted supportive child care providers have comprehensive mental health services available for children and their families on-site at their child care program. Currently, EEC funds 16 supportive child care programs across the state as CMHCC pilots. Each of these programs has partnered with a mental health clinic contracted with the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP). Through this partnership, the child care program and mental health clinic jointly hire a clinician, who is stationed at the program and considered to be part of their child care staff. The mental health clinic generates one-third of the clinician’s salary by billing the families’ insurance directly for clinical services. EEC funds the remaining two-thirds of the clinician’s salary to enable the clinician to provide a broad range of training and support to children, their families, and the child care staff beyond the billable therapeutic and assessment services that the clinician normally provides. The clinician also helps families access a full range of mental health services at the partnering clinic.

### **Public Education**

Coordination with the Department of Education (DOE): EEC and DOE jointly chair a school age working group comprised of DOE-funded 21<sup>st</sup> Century providers and EEC-funded providers aimed at aligning the two agencies’ afterschool policies. EEC is also working with DOE on the development and implementation of the new Massachusetts Extended Learning Time Initiative to identify and reduce barriers to closing the achievement gap. In addition, a new DOE – EEC working group has been created to study connections between funding and policy across DOE, EEC, and other state agencies. This group will also gather better data on public school and local efforts and ensure that statewide policy is coordinated and working in partnership with private and philanthropic organizations.

In addition, as part of a DOE grant initiative, EEC is participating in the development of a statewide Pre-Kindergarten – Adolescent Literacy Plan. The plan will include a listing of services for children ages 0– 5 and outline EEC policies and practices regarding the school readiness needs of all young children. The plan will also provide information on: 1) EEC’s promotion of the state’s Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences as the basis for assessment, curriculum, and instruction in pre-Kindergarten classrooms; 2) the use of a screening

assessment to identify children at risk for not learning how to read; 3) support for language acquisition and emergent literacy activities statewide; and 4) training and on-going professional development activities for teachers and child care providers in order to enhance their skills and improve child outcomes. Development of the plan began in the spring of 2006 and is expected to be complete by the fall of 2006.

## TANF

Department of Transitional Assistance: To serve families on or transitioning from public assistance (TANF), EEC coordinates with DTA and the CCR&Rs. By working closely with DTA, EEC has been able to increase the quality and timeliness of services delivered to TANF families. Both agencies also work with the CCR&Rs to ensure that TANF families to receive the child care services they need in a timely manner. In order to make their services readily available and accessible to the TANF families, CCR&R representatives are periodically stationed at DTA offices. To improve coordination between the two agencies and provide easier access for families, EEC and DTA are working together with the CCR&Rs to streamline the issuance and renewal of vouchers to TANF families through increased electronic data sharing via an automated system. This system will allow the two agencies to share family eligibility information, thereby reducing paperwork and the number of visits that TANF families make between DTA offices, which authorize the child care, and the CCR&Rs, which issue and manage the child care vouchers.

In the fall of 2005, as part of its work to improve access to services for all low-income families, EEC and DTA formed an interagency working group dedicated to streamlining the process for TANF families to receive child care services. This working group identified several key barriers faced by TANF families in accessing and receiving child care services including:

- inconsistent policies, practices, and communications between EEC and DTA;
- the issuance of very short term vouchers, even when a family's eligibility has not changed, that lead to disruptions in services for children, inconveniences for families attempting to stabilize their lives, and upheaval for providers; and
- agency policies and practices that do not always take into consideration the needs of the child when determining the family's eligibility for services.

Both agencies are in the process of implementing policy changes to address these barriers. EEC is also in the process of making a number of regulatory changes, which are scheduled to take effect next fall, designed to improve the stability of care for children and streamline administrative requirements for families. These include:

- lengthening the eligibility period for families receiving financial assistance (all non-TANF and some TANF families) from up to six months to up to one year;
- allowing 12 college credits and some study time to be considered "full-time;"
- allowing mothers whose employers have granted them maternity leave to take up to 12 weeks for such leave; and
- lengthening the time a family has to transition their child into an early education and care program before starting an approved activity from one to two weeks.

## **Social Services**

The Department of Social Services: EEC contracts with programs that provide “supportive child care” to families who have active protective services cases with DSS. EEC’s supportive child care program is designed in a flexible way that allows providers to readily meet the needs of individual children and families referred by DSS, while at the same time assures accountability. Through 156 supportive child care contracts, EEC purchases child care supportive services such as transportation, case management, and social services for these children and their families. The services provided to each family are customized to meet that family’s needs and are intended to assist in alleviating family stress and monitoring the health and safety of the child(ren). EEC reimburses providers at a base rate for child care, the provider then delivers the additional supports that the family needs, and then the provider bills EEC for those support services. EEC’s Regional Policy and Training Advisors have provided DSS social work supervisors and DSS coordinators in each area DSS office with supportive child care policy training and work with them on a daily basis to support coordination of services between the DSS area offices and the contracted providers.

EEC is working closely with DSS to improve and enhance supportive child care services. During the past year, EEC and DSS gathered information about the current number of children waiting to receive supportive child care services and presented recommendations to the Legislature about ways to address current challenges presented by the current supportive child care system. As a result, the recently released fiscal year 2007 state budget includes additional funding for supportive child care and requires EEC and DSS to develop a more system-wide and streamlined approach to helping DSS families meet their child care needs.

In addition, EEC and DSS staff are currently meeting monthly with the goal of improving data collection efforts, information exchange, and communication on a state, regional, and local level between the agencies. As part of this effort, EEC and DSS are working together to develop an electronic system to facilitate the sharing of information between the two agencies about families with supportive child care needs in order to ensure that such families receive the necessary priority for receipt of supportive child care services. In the fall of 2006, EEC and DSS will jointly convene a working group comprised of state agency staff and external stakeholders to develop a longer term plan for improving services at the program level for families with supportive child care needs.

## **State Pre-Kindergarten Programs**

School Readiness Indicators and Child Assessment: EEC is chairing a group of public and private agencies that is working to develop a system of child screening and assessment in Massachusetts. The basis for this work, which began two years ago, is the Massachusetts School Readiness Indicators Project, which developed a set of statewide indicators related to children’s success in school. The Child Assessment Workgroup includes representatives from the Boston Public Schools, the early education and care provider community, the United Way of

Massachusetts Bay, the DPH, the DOE, and other stakeholders. This group's work is reflected in EEC's enabling statute, which requires the establishment of a kindergarten readiness assessment system. The Child Assessment Workgroup has conducted research on the current status of assessment in Massachusetts, studied early education and care programs that are already using formal assessment, and reviewed similar initiatives in other states. Currently, the group is the process of developing a set of research-based recommendations for the design and implementation of a systemic approach to measuring how well children are prepared for success in school for consideration by the EEC Board.

Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) Program: EEC administers state grant funds to local communities to expand access, improve quality, and support the affordability of preschool programming. In addition to subsidizing early education and care services, CPC funds support professional development activities, parent education and involvement, and comprehensive services for at-risk preschoolers. Currently, CPC funds are provided to 164 local councils, serving 336 communities and approximately 11,000 children in a variety of settings, including public schools, Head Start, center-based programs, and family child care. In fiscal year 2007, EEC expects to award a total of \$46.6 million in grants for direct services.

### **Head Start Programs**

Head Start Funding: EEC currently supports the provision of Head Start services to low-income children and families through early education and care financial assistance (vouchers, contracts, or CPC grants) for child care during the hours before and after Head Start and Early Head Start programs are open and on full days when such programs are closed (e.g., school vacations and summer). The coordination between EEC and Head Start/Early Head Start programs provides them with flexibility to enroll children whose families require additional hours of child care in order to be able to attend Head Start or Early Head Start. In addition, EEC provides supplemental grants, which are funded by a specific line item in the state budget, to enable Head Start programs to enroll additional children and fulfill the federal requirement that they receive at least 20% of their funding from non-federal sources.

Massachusetts Head Start-State Collaboration Project (HSSCP): The primary federal goals of HSSCP, which is located within EEC, are to: 1) build support for early childhood support systems and increase access to comprehensive services for all low-income children; 2) create partnership agreements and initiatives between Head Start and appropriate state agencies/programs to augment Head Start's capacity to be a partner in State initiatives on behalf of children and their families; and 3) facilitate the involvement of Head Start in state policies, plans, processes, and decisions affecting the Head Start target population and other low-income families.

As EEC develops unified and streamlined regulations and standards, comprehensive training and career paths for the early education and care workforce, and eligibility priorities for early education and care financial assistance, HSSCP is working to ensure that Head Start children, families, and grantees are incorporated into EEC's initiatives and that federal policies are seamlessly integrated into state policies as they are established. HSSCP will use its unique role within EEC to incorporate lessons learned from Head Start into EEC's work and provide feedback from those in the field. HSSCP will work with state and federal partners to provide

additional data to inform the state's decisions regarding the purchase of Head Start services in order to improve continuity of care for children and families in greatest need.

The expected outcomes of HSSCP's work include the following:

- Increased partnerships and formal relationships between Head Start, EEC, and other state agencies and services;
- Identification and consideration of the needs of Head Start children and their families in development of state policies;
- Consideration of federal Head Start policies in the development of state policies that impact Head Start;
- Collection of data, including the cost of care, the number of additional child care children served by Head Start, and the number of additional children receiving Head Start comprehensive services;
- Increased funding of full-day/full-year services to meet children's and families' needs and minimize interruptions in care, especially for very low-income families, homeless families, TANF recipients, and children with disabilities;
- Decreased expulsion rates and increased mental health, disability, and other identified screenings and services provided to those most in need;
- Increased access to Head Start comprehensive service programs; and
- Increased awareness of and access to state and federally funded services for children by families and providers.

### **Programs for Inclusion**

The Early Intervention/Behavioral Health Early Child Care Inclusion Project (Inclusion Project): EEC has a successful history of supporting inclusion of special needs children in a variety of early education and care settings. EEC licensing regulations have long required that programs accept children with special needs and develop individual plans to meet their needs. Similarly, EEC's preschool program standards and curriculum guidelines require and encourage programs to meet the individual needs of all children. To ease the challenges for families with children with disabilities or special needs, EEC has partnered with DPH's Early Intervention Services, Early Intervention Services' Regional Consultation Programs, MassHealth-Behavioral Health, MBHP, DOE, and CCR&Rs to ensure that children and their families receive individualized services from specialists when necessary.

The goal of providing these services is to give children with special needs a successful experience as they transition from home into an early education and care program and then as they move into a school setting. EEC and its partner agencies share a common vision and work closely together to develop inclusion initiatives, like Regional Consultation Programs.

Regional Consultation Programs (RCPs): EEC and DPH's Early Intervention Services collaborated to establish Regional Consultation Programs (RCPs) across Massachusetts in order to support the individual care required by infants and toddlers with disabilities and to provide on-site expertise at early education and care programs that will make children's experiences in early education and care successful. RCPs also conduct trainings at CCR&Rs. RCPs are staffed by knowledgeable early intervention specialists who use their expertise to ensure that children are

referred to appropriate early education and care settings and help them succeed once they are enrolled.

Early Childhood Special Education Allocation Grant: EEC now administers supplemental federal funds from Section 619, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which provides funding to local school districts to promote the inclusion of preschool age children in regular education programming, including community-based child care facilities. The funding supports staff salaries, supplies, equipment, training , etc. that are critical to successfully integrating a child with a disability into a typical preschool setting. In fiscal year 2007, EEC expects to award a total of \$7.5 million, with allocations ranging from \$506 to \$500,000.

### Other Collaborations

The Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium (the Consortium): EEC is part of the Consortium's efforts to address child and family literacy. The Consortium is chaired by DOE and includes members from private organizations, state and federal agencies such as DTA, Head Start, the Children's Trust Fund, DSS, DMH, and the Department of Youth Services (DYS), among others. The Consortium works to create linkages to develop and support family literacy programs. EEC's current focus is on building an early education and care system that supports providers in creating literacy-rich environments for the children in their programs and preparing them for success in school. In the year ahead, EEC will be addressing workforce and curriculum development issues related to literacy and seeking to increase coordination between the family literacy and family support service delivery systems.

Department of Revenue (DOR): EEC is the process of entering into an agreement with DOR to participate in DOR's wage reporting and financial institution match system in order to improve the verification process to determine a family's financial eligibility for subsidized early education and care services.

- 2.1.2 State Plan for Early Childhood Program Coordination. *Good Start, Grow Smart* encourages States to develop a plan for coordination across early childhood programs. Indicate which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts in this area.

- Planning.** Indicate whether steps are under way to develop a plan. If so, describe the time frames for completion and/or implementation, the steps anticipated, and how the plan is expected to support early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.
- Developing.** A plan is being drafted. The draft is included as **Attachment** \_\_\_\_.
- Developed.** A plan has been written but has not yet been implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment** \_\_\_\_.
- Implementing.** A plan has been written and is now in the process of being implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment** \_\_\_\_.
- Other (describe):**

As described earlier in Section 1.5, the Massachusetts General Court established EEC in Chapter 15D of the General Laws in order to consolidate all early education and care programs and services under a single agency. Pursuant to G.L. c. 15D, § 2, EEC is under the supervision and control of the Board of Early Education and Care and serves as the lead agency for the administration of early education and care funds provided under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, specifically the Child Care and Development Fund and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families transfer funds. In April 2005, the Board appointed Ann Reale as the first Commissioner of Early Education and Care. The Commissioner serves as the secretary to the Board and its chief executive officer.

Effective July 1, 2005, all of the functions of OCCS and ELS were transferred to EEC. EEC is, therefore, responsible for the management and administration of programs, services, and funding for the Community Partnerships for Children Pre-Kindergarten Program which was formerly administered by ELS, as well as the low-income child care subsidy program and child care licensing functions, and the Massachusetts Head Start Collaboration Project, which were formerly administered by OCCS.

EEC has maintained strong linkages with the Commonwealth's Executive Office Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to assure the continuation of vital social services and access to child care for low-income families receiving Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) benefits who are subject to the TAFDC work requirements, those families involved with the Department of Social Services who need to receive supportive child care in order to preserve and strengthen their families, and those families whose children are receiving clinical services in child care programs, which are provided in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health. For example, the Secretary of EOHHS, *ex-officio*, is a member of the Board of Early Education and Care. EEC will also work closely with the Department of Public Health programs that relate to early education and care, including early intervention services and the Women, Infants, and Children Program.

EEC also has maintained strong linkages with DOE on issues related to the provision of special education programs and services across the two agencies and within public schools. To this end, the DOE Commissioner serves on the Board of Early Education and Care and the EEC Commissioner serves on the Board of Education. Other important program links with DOE include DOE's nutrition, English language learners, adult education and parenting, Title I, and curriculum units. In addition, since both EEC and DOE are the Commonwealth's education agencies for federal purposes, clear coordination and information sharing mechanisms are currently being established and implemented. For example, as part of a DOE grant initiative, EEC is participating in the development of a statewide Pre-Kindergarten – Adolescent Literacy Plan. The plan will include a listing of services for children ages 0– 5 and outline EEC policies and practices regarding the school readiness needs of all young children. The plan will also provide information on: 1) EEC's promotion of the state's Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences as the basis for assessment, curriculum, and instruction in pre-Kindergarten classrooms; 2) the use of a screening assessment to identify children at risk for not learning how to read; 3) support for language acquisition and emergent literacy activities statewide; and 4) training and on-going professional development activities for teachers and child care providers in order to enhance their skills and improve child outcomes. Development of the plan began in the

spring of 2006 and is expected to be complete by the fall of 2006. Prior to submission of the plan to the Board of Education for approval, DOE will solicit public comment on the plan, which includes a five year action plan.

Describe the progress made by the State planning for coordination across early childhood programs since the date of submission of the 2004-2005 State Plan.

The need for coordination across early education and care programs, funding streams, and standards and requirements was the chief impetus for the creation of EEC. Each of EEC's policy projects initiated during the past year have been focused on identifying existing strengths and challenges within the current system and developing recommendations and strategies for creating a single, highly coordinated system of early education and care. While much work remains to be done, EEC has made tremendous progress over the past year towards the creation of a single, coordinated system. The staff and functions of the two predecessor agencies have now been integrated, and all central office staff will move into a single location on August 11, 2006. EEC is the process of developing a single financial assistance system which will include one, statewide set of policies and procedures applicable to the various sources of funding that EEC administers to provide financial assistance. EEC is also enhancing its technological capacity across all of its administrative systems, both internal and external, to improve data collection, policy development, and planning.

Another of EEC's key goals is to coordinate and enhance efforts to address children's readiness for and success in school by improving the quality of early education and care programs across the state. Multiple quality initiatives are currently underway, including revised licensing regulations, implementation of EEC's workforce development plan that was issued in January 2006, an early educator database and professional registry, and a quality rating system. Each of these initiatives are designed to be part of a statewide set of consistent expectations for programs and providers and incorporate the resources necessary to help programs and providers achieve the established goals. The ultimate goal of EEC's quality initiative is to ensure that children are enrolled in programs which measurably support their development across all domains including language, literacy, mathematics, and social-emotional skills.

Indicate whether there is an entity that is responsible for ensuring that such coordination occurs. Indicate the four or more early childhood programs and/or funding streams that are coordinated and describe the nature of the coordination.

Pursuant to G.L. c. 15D, § 3, the Board of Early Education and Care, which supervises and controls EEC, is responsible for consolidating and coordinating "resources and public funding streams for early education and care in order to assure the sound and coordinated development of all early education and care services to children."

As a result of the consolidation of the Commonwealth's early education and care programs and services into a single agency, EEC is responsible for the management and administration of programs, services, and funding for the Community Partnerships for Children Pre-Kindergarten Program, the low-income child care subsidy program (CCDF), and the Massachusetts Head Start Collaboration Project. In addition, EEC now administers supplemental federal funds from Section 619, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which provides funding to local school districts to promote the inclusion of

preschool age children in regular education programming, including community-based child care facilities. EEC also oversees the administration of state funding for the Massachusetts Family Network (MFN) and the Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP), which provide family education and support and literacy and parenting guidance to families with young children, and for Reach Out and Read, a program that promotes early literacy by providing new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud through pediatric offices across the state.

One of EEC's major policy projects is focused on the development of a coordinated, integrated, streamlined system for accessing information and financial assistance from EEC. As part of its access and coordination initiatives, EEC has consolidated more than 400 waiting lists for financial assistance into one, centralized, real-time waiting list system that provides parents with access to EEC financial assistance across all programs, including CCDF-funded care, CPC programs, and Head Start. Parents can access the EEC centralized waiting list, which is the only waitlist used for EEC financial assistance, from any CCR&R, contracted provider, or CPC program. When funding for EEC financial assistance becomes available, families receive letters from CCR&Rs, contracted providers, and CPC programs, thereby ensuring that families have a variety of programs, including family child care, private, center-based care, public preschool programs, Head Start, and school age programs, from which to choose.

The development of the centralized waiting list is an integral part of EEC's effort to build a single financial assistance system for early education and care, which will eventually include intake, placement, and billing functions for all early education and care programs. Another important requirement for building a single financial assistance system is the development of uniform, statewide eligibility priorities and requirements. As of July 1, 2006, both CCDF-funded programs and CPC-funded programs are using EEC's statewide eligibility priorities and requirements (see Section 3.4 for more information) to manage early education and care financial assistance.

The location of the Head Start-State Collaboration Project (HSSCP) within EEC ensures that the unique needs of children and families served by Head Start and of Head Start grantees are considered and addressed by EEC's various policy projects and initiatives. HSSCP serves as an important mechanism for coordination between EEC and Head Start programs by working to incorporate lessons learned from Head Start into EEC's work and providing feedback from the field on EEC's policies, practices, and initiatives. HSSCP has also played an important role in helping to collect data on the cost of Head Start care, the number of children receiving child care services that are served by Head Start, and the number of children receiving Head Start comprehensive services, which has informed state decision's regarding the purchase of Head Start services in order to improve continuity of care for children and families in greatest need.

With respect to increasing coordination between early education and care and family support programs, EEC is planning to evaluate the state of family education and support across the Commonwealth through the MECCS project in the upcoming year. This effort will provide EEC with an opportunity to look externally at the scope of state-supported family education and support services as well as internally at the roles of MFN and PCHP programs as they relate to the early education and care programs and services licensed or supported by EEC. Given the immensity of the issues that EEC needed to address in its first year, it was decided that a

comprehensive analysis of its family education and support programs and their relationship to EEC's other programs and services should be postponed until EEC's second year.

Describe the **results** or expected results of this coordination. Discuss how these results relate to the development and implementation of the State's early learning guidelines, plans for professional development, and outcomes for children.

EEC's establishment of a single, coordinated system of early education and care will:

- Simplify access to information and assistance for eligible families and children, provide families with more choices, and offer a one stop shopping approach to early education and care programming;
- Ensure equitable access to the early education and care services through a single set of eligibility rules and priorities;
- Ensure that resources are targeted to the most vulnerable families and the children most at-risk of school failure;
- Maximize resources for early education and care by providing consistent and adequate reimbursement rates for all types of providers through established statewide rates based on the type of care and the geographic region;
- Increase the quality of early education and care programs by providing more opportunities and greater access to professional development activities to improve the skills of the early education and care workforce;
- Ensure consistent program quality across the state and across program types by developing and implementing an integrated approach to licensing regulations and program standards, which focuses on children's health and safety needs as well as their developmental needs at all stages; and
- Help the Commonwealth evaluate and plan for better early education and care programming with accurate up-to-date data on child care supply and demand.

Describe how the State's plan supports or will support continued coordination among the programs. Are changes anticipated in the plan?

EEC will continue the work begun during its first year to develop a highly coordinated system of early education and care and to balance the "tri-lemma" of access, affordability, and quality. In the upcoming year, current policy projects and efforts will move into implementation phases, while new work will be initiated to develop recommendations for addressing issues and challenges that have not yet been addressed.

## **2.2 Public Hearing Process**

Describe the Statewide public hearing process held to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under this Plan. (658D(b)(1)(C), §98.14(c)) At a minimum, the description must provide:

Date(s) of statewide notice of public hearing: **August 10 and 11, 2006**

Manner of notifying the public about the statewide hearing: A notice concerning the hearings was posted on EEC's website and in the reception areas of all its offices from August 10 to September 1, 2006. In addition, a notice was published in *The Boston Globe* on August 11, 2006.

Date(s) of public hearing(s): August 31 and September 1, 2006

Hearing site(s): August 31, 2006: Saxe Room at the Worcester Public Library, 3 Salem Square, Worcester, Massachusetts from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
September 1, 2006: Conference Rooms 1 and 2, One Ashburton Place, Boston, Massachusetts from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

In addition to providing the public with an opportunity to provide comments at the hearings, EEC accepted written comments on the draft plan from August 10 - September 1, 2006. Parties could submit written comments via e-mail to [CCDFplancomments@massmail.state.ma.us](mailto:CCDFplancomments@massmail.state.ma.us) or by regular mail to EEC's central office in Boston.

How the content of the plan was made available to the public in advance of the public hearing(s): A copy of the draft plan was posted on EEC's website and copies were available at EEC's central office and five regional offices.

A brief summary of the public comments from this process is included as **Attachment 9**.

### **2.3 Public-Private Partnerships**

Describe (1) the activities, including planned activities, to encourage public-private partnerships that promote private-sector involvement in meeting child care needs, and (2) the results or expected results of these activities. (658D(b)(1), §98.16(d))

Child Care Quality Fund Grants: The Commonwealth has established a Child Care Quality Fund to hold the revenues received from sales of "Invest in Children" automobile license plates. The money from this fund has historically been awarded as grants on an ongoing, quarterly basis by EEC to non-profit organizations to improve the delivery of child care services within the Commonwealth and to assist children to progress effectively in learning environments. The first grants were awarded in fiscal year 1999, and EEC has since awarded over \$1,000,000 in grant money for professional development training, accreditation supports, educational materials, and educational equipment. In awarding the grants, EEC has had a special focus on initiatives that support staff recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce. EEC is currently evaluating the grant program to better align it with the new agency's mission and priorities.

Child Assessment: EEC has partnered with the United Way of Massachusetts Bay (UWMB) to co-sponsor research on the use of formal child assessment in Massachusetts. As

agencies that fund early education and care programs, EEC and UWMB share an interest in measuring outcomes for children. The collaboration has resulted in parallel research projects designed to study the current state of child assessment, the tools most frequently used, and the necessary efforts to implement formal child assessment. By developing similar research projects, both agencies are able to benefit from the results of each other's work. The UWMB has also been a key partner in EEC's efforts to study, design, and implement the kindergarten readiness assessment system mandated by EEC's enabling statute. For additional details about the kindergarten readiness assessment system, please see Section 5.2.4.

LearningGames Study: EEC is collaborating with Abt Associates, MindNurture, and family child care systems to conduct a national study of the LearningGames approach in family child care programs. LearningGames is a developmental curriculum that grew out of the Abecedarian Project and is built on evidence from 30 years of research that children learn best in individual interactions with responsive caregivers who provide rich language stimulation. The curriculum consists of about 200 simple everyday activities to help parents and caregivers enhance the development of children birth to 60 months. The study will test this curriculum and assess its effectiveness in helping family child care providers improve children's development.

Governor's Summit on Afterschool and Extended Learning Opportunities: In partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Education, the Governor's Office, and the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership, EEC organized the Governor's Summit on Afterschool and Extended Learning. This event was funded by a grant from the National Governors Association and was held on May 30, 2006 in Boston. Among the goals of the Summit were to increase awareness of the value of after school and extended learning programs among public and local officials and to develop strong public-private partnerships to support additional extended learning opportunities. The event addressed the important role that quality afterschool and extended learning opportunities can play in the lives of children and youth and how public/private partnerships can be developed or better supported to promote afterschool and extended learning opportunities. Over 150 people participated in the Summit, including afterschool practitioners, public officials, school personnel, researchers, and business and philanthropic leaders from all over the state.

## **PART 3**

### **CHILD CARE SERVICES OFFERED**

#### **3.1 Description of Child Care Services**

##### 3.1.1 Certificate Payment System

Describe the overall child care certificate process, including, at a minimum:

- (1) a description of the form of the certificate (98.16(k));
- (2) a description of how the certificate program permits parents to choose from a variety of child care settings by explaining how a parent moves from receipt of the certificate to choice of the provider; (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii), 658P(2), 98.2, 98.30(c)(4) & (e)(1) & (2)) and
- (3) if the Lead Agency is also providing child care services through grants and contracts, estimate the mix of §98.50 services available through certificates versus grants/contracts, and explain how it ensures that parents offered child care services are given the option of receiving a child care certificate. (98.30(a) & (b)) This may be expressed in terms of dollars, number of slots, or percentages of services.

#### **Certificate Payment System**

EEC contracts with the CCR&Rs to administer the Voucher Management Program (certificates). Vouchers permit increased flexibility and choice for families, because families who receive vouchers to pay for early education and care services may use the voucher at any participating program they choose.

A voucher is a certificate issued to families who provide proof (according to EEC eligibility policies) of their family income and family activity. After the family has established eligibility, the family visits prospective programs and decides themselves what type of early education and care program (family child care, center-based, or informal in-home/relative) they would prefer for their child. Once the family has decided on a program that has an opening for their child, the voucher (certificate) is issued for the family at program. The program must hold an agreement with the CCR&R to accept EEC financial assistance through vouchers. If the family chooses a program that does not currently hold a voucher agreement, the CCR&R will visit the program and complete an agreement with them. (In the case of informal care, both the provider and the parent visit the CCR&R to sign the agreement, and the informal provider attends an orientation before they can receive payment from the State for their services.)

Families who are on or transitioning from public assistance (TANF families) receive priority for a voucher, while other low-income families may access a voucher if sufficient funding is available. TANF families who are either employed or participating in qualified education and training programs will receive an authorization from DTA for a voucher. The family is then referred to the local CCR&R, which issues the voucher and helps the family locate an early education and care program that meets the family's needs.

For other low-income families who are not receiving TANF, the CCR&Rs determine whether the family is eligible to receive a voucher based on the requirements established by EEC as discussed in Section 3.3.2. In addition, if funding permits, families can also receive vouchers if a member of the family has a documented disability or the parent is seeking employment.

Both in-home/relative caregivers and licensed child care providers, including family child care providers, group child care, and school age providers, are eligible to accept vouchers once they have completed a current voucher agreement with their local CCR&R.

### **Selecting a Provider**

Once the local CCR&R has approved a voucher for an eligible family, the CCR&R helps family to locate the type of early education and care program that best suits the family's needs. Parents are provided with information about all early education and care settings, such as family or large family child care homes, school age and group child care center-based programs, and in-home/relative care, and are informed about the characteristics specific to each type of program. Parents are given the option of visiting programs prior to making any selection about the type of care for their children. If a parent has already decided to use a licensed child care provider or a registered in-home/relative provider, the CCR&R can immediately issue a voucher. Otherwise, the CCR&R issues the voucher when a parent selects a provider.

For a voucher to be issued for use at a licensed child care provider, the licensed provider must hold a provider agreement with the CCR&R specifying the rate that the CCR&R will pay to the provider. Non-licensed in-home/relative care providers must also register with the local CCR&R and attend an orientation prior to being authorized to accept voucher payments. During the registration process, providers must complete a check list certifying that they have received and reviewed information on building and physical premises safety. In-home/relative providers must have a plan for evacuating the children from the home including escape routes from each floor level and a method of contacting the fire department or other authorities after the home has been evacuated. In-home/relative providers must also have smoke detectors throughout the home and a working telephone at the home at all times. In addition to attending the orientation, in-home, non-relative providers must have a cleared CORI background check before they can receive payment for providing care.

### **Parent Choice**

EEC provides early education and care services through vouchers, contracts, and state-funded pre-Kindergarten (CPC) grants. EEC is establishing a unified system that is designed to deliver high quality early education and care programming and meet the needs of all children and their families regardless of a family's income level. Families have fair and equal access to the system through EEC's electronic statewide centralized waiting list from any CCR&R, contracted provider, or CPC. Families are taken off the centralized waiting list based on EEC's priorities and eligibility criteria, regardless of their access point. Letters are sent to families at the top of the waiting list from any program with voucher, contract, or CPC grant openings inviting the family to enroll their children into the program, thereby providing families with multiple early education and care choices for their child's placement.

3.1.2 In addition to offering certificates, does the Lead Agency also have grants or contracts for child care slots?

Yes, and the following describes the types of child care services, the process for accessing grants or contracts, and the range of providers that will be available through grants or contracts: (658A(b)(1), 658P(4), §§98.16(g)(1), 98.30(a)(1) & (b))

No.

EEC offers early education and care services through vouchers, contracts, and state-funded pre-Kindergarten (CPC) grants. EEC determines the eligibility requirements that CCR&Rs, contracted providers, and CPCs must follow to enroll children into their programs. All early education and care programs who receive EEC funding to provide financial assistance to families are required to use EEC's centralized waiting list to enroll families into their programs and must enroll families into programs according to the statewide priorities established by EEC. CPC grants are managed by local community councils, and contracts are managed locally by the contracted provider.

### **The Contracting System**

EEC has developed a comprehensive system of contracts designed to deliver high quality child care that meets the needs of all children and their families regardless of a family's income level. All contracted child care providers may perform the initial intake for a family into the child care subsidy system and make an eligibility determination for subsidized child care. Contracted providers use a single, statewide wait list for eligible families, coordinate continuity of care for children whose "status" is about to change (e.g., from an infant slot to a toddler slot as the child ages, etc.), and refer families to other services they may need. In addition, contracted providers refer families to other sources of information about early education and care programs and services, such as CCR&Rs and the EEC website, [www.eec.state.ma.us](http://www.eec.state.ma.us).

Child Care for Low-Income Families: EEC has 238 contracts with child care providers throughout the Commonwealth for child care slots for the children of low-income families. EEC contracts with center-based child care programs, including school age programs, and with family child care systems for family child care. These contracts include the following program types: family child care; infant; toddler; preschool; school age; and care before and after Head Start/Early Head Start hours.

Supportive Child Care: EEC contracts with programs that provide "supportive child care" to families who have active protective cases with the Department of Social Services (DSS). EEC's supportive child care program is designed in a flexible way that allows providers to readily meet the needs of individual children and their families referred by DSS and at the same time assures accountability. Through 156 supportive child care contracts, EEC purchases child care supportive services such as transportation, case management, and social services for these children and their families. The services provided to each family are customized to meet that family's needs and are intended to assist in alleviating family stress and monitoring the health and safety of the child(ren). EEC reimburses providers at a base rate for child care, the provider

delivers the additional supports to the family based on the family's needs, and then the provider bills EEC for those services. EEC works closely with DSS to coordinate supportive child care services. This coordination of care is vital to ensuring that families who are involved with DSS get the high quality child care and additional services that they need.

Non-Traditional Hours Child Care: Working families may have difficulty in locating affordable quality child care during non-traditional work hours and, as a result, have difficulty in locating or retaining employment. Many of the jobs available to people transitioning from receiving Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) require non-traditional hours. In response to the need for this type of child care in Massachusetts, EEC contracts with providers who can offer care before 8:00 a.m. and after 6:00 p.m., as well as on the weekends. Currently, EEC purchases 73 non-traditional hours slots and has a total of six contracts for pilot programs throughout the state. By expanding the availability of licensed, quality care during non-traditional hours, EEC is helping families increase their employment opportunities.

Teen Parent Child Care Services: EEC purchases approximately 582 child care slots through 43 contracts for the children of teen parents. Teen parents need child care services that provide education and developmental activities for children and allow teens to develop their parenting skills while attending school or developing career skills. Teen parents also need social supports designed to encourage them to stay in school, decrease the likelihood of repeat teen pregnancies, and lower the risk that they or their children will be abused or neglected. In addition to child care, teen parent child care services include transportation for the teen and her child, mentoring, parenting skills classes, counseling, and support to help teens finish high school or get their GED. Because teen parents often receive services from numerous community agencies, teen parent program contractors are required to fully assess a teen's needs prior to delivering services. Thus, contractors can only provide and bill for those services that are not being provided to the teen by other community programs. This flexible contracting method helps to maximize resources and minimize duplication of services to teens and their children.

Child Care for children affected by HIV/AIDS: EEC purchases specialized child care support services for children and their families who are infected with and/or affected by HIV/AIDS and who reside in Boston and the greater Boston area. The provider with whom EEC contracts to provide these services has the distinction of being the only medically-specialized child care program in New England that serves this particular population. The children enrolled in this specialized program are offered medical, mental health, and educational services, which they can access through the program's close affiliation with a large medical center based in Boston. In many cases, children and families who are dealing with HIV/AIDS feel isolated and overwhelmed emotionally by the demands of this disease. The purpose of specialized child care services is to provide a stable, safe, and nurturing resource for children and their families experiencing the daily disruption and stress of living with this illness.

Homeless Child Care: Through ten contracted programs located throughout the state, EEC purchases 85 specialized child care slots from center-based programs for the children of homeless families. The goal of this program is to provide homeless children with a stable, nurturing, and stimulating environment that meets their individual developmental, behavioral, and emotional needs, while at the same time offering the children's parents counseling services to

inform them about community support services and public assistance benefits they may access while seeking housing and employment.

3.1.3 The Lead Agency must allow for in-home care but may limit its use. Does the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?

Yes, and the limits and the reasons for those limits are: (§§98.16(g)(2), 98.30(e)(1)(iv))

No.

To further ensure that children are in safe and secure child care environments, EEC requires that CORI checks be completed for all non-relative, in-home care providers. Only those non-relative, in-home care providers who have received approval through the CORI check process will be eligible to receive state subsidy payments. EEC also requires providers to be at least 18 years old, and limits the number of children a provider can care for to six or less. To further increase the quality of care provided by in-home/relative care providers, EEC also requires all in-home/relative care providers to attend an orientation and training session conducted by the CCR&Rs prior to receiving any state reimbursements for providing care. These trainings cover topics such as health and safety issues, age appropriate activities, and appropriate child guidance techniques. As part of the orientations, the CCR&Rs provide in-home/relative care providers with a resource packet with information on educational resources available to them in their community along with information on how to become a licensed child care provider.

3.1.4 Are all of the child care services described in 3.1.1 above (including certificates) offered throughout the State? (658E(a), §98.16(g)(3))

Yes.

No, and the following are the localities (political subdivisions) and the services that are not offered:

### **3.2 Payment Rates for the Provision of Child Care**

The statute at 658E(c)(4) and the regulations at §98.43(b)(1) require the Lead Agency to establish payment rates for child care services that ensure eligible children equal access to comparable care.

These rates are provided as **Attachment 3**.

The attached payment rates were or will be effective as of July 1, 2005.

The following is a summary of the facts relied on by the State to determine that the attached rates are sufficient to ensure equal access to comparable child care services provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive child care assistance under the CCDF and other governmental programs. Include, at a minimum:

- The month and year when the local market rate survey(s) was completed: [July 2006](#). (§98.43(b)(2))
- A copy of the Market Rate Survey instrument and a summary of the results of the survey are provided as **Attachments [10 and 11](#)**.
- How the payment rates are adequate to ensure equal access based on the results of the above noted local market rate survey (i.e., the relationship between the attached payment rates and the market rates observed in the survey): (§98.43(b))
- Additional facts that the Lead Agency relies on to determine that its payment rates ensure equal access include: (§98.43(d))

Although EEC's current reimbursement rates for all types of care are lower than the median market rates (see Attachment 4), more than 60% of all private, licensed center-based child care providers accept children who receive a subsidy. In addition, low-income families with preschool-aged children have access to early education and care programs in nearly every town in the Commonwealth through the CPC program.

As discussed in Section 1.5, during its first year EEC launched three comprehensive policy and planning projects to develop recommendations for short term changes and long term objectives designed to improve rates, access, and quality. These policy projects are organized into the following three areas:

1. Rates and Payment: examining and developing more consistent rate structures, and procurement and payment policies;
2. Access and Coordination: developing a coordinated, integrated, and streamlined process for accessing information and financial assistance from EEC; and
3. Quality and Workforce Development: streamlining program standards and requirements, drafting a workforce development plan, and developing a school readiness assessment system.

A key goal of the Rates and Payment working group is the development of a new rate structure that promotes continuous quality improvement, while also ensuring equal access for children and families. To accomplish these goals, the working group has focused its efforts during the past year on:

- Analyzing and conducting a comprehensive review of EEC's current rate structure, including better understanding differences in rates among the various early education and care funding streams that EEC administers;
- Developing and overseeing the implementation of the market rate survey (see Section 5.1.4);
- Developing and overseeing the implementation of a first-of-its-kind provider cost survey (see Section 5.1.4); and
- Implementing a \$12.5 million rate increase provided through the fiscal year 2006 state budget to providers of subsidized care (see Section 5.1.4).

Over the coming year, the Rates and Payment working group will focus on:

- Distributing a \$12.5 million rate increase provided through the fiscal year 2007 state budget to providers of subsidized care, \$10 million of which will be used for an across-the-board increase and \$2.5 million of which will be used to reduce rate disparities among types of care. EEC will use the results of the market rate survey and the provider cost survey to inform its implementation of the \$2.5 million set aside to address rate disparities.
- Using the results of the market rate survey and the provider cost survey to develop a long term plan to reduce rate disparity among EEC's current reimbursement rates and the 75th percentile of the market rate. This work will include analyzing and projecting the impact of any rate increases on access to early education and care services for families.
- Working closely with the Quality Working Group to develop EEC's rate structure in a way that reflects quality at the program level. This will likely be done in the context of the development of a Quality Rating System (see Section 5).

If the payment rates do not reflect individual rates for the full range of providers -- center-based, group home, family and in-home care -- explain how the choice of the full range of providers is made available to parents.

- At what percentile of the current Market Rate Survey is the State rate ceiling set? If it varies across categories of care, please describe.

Massachusetts does not have a state rate ceiling. Please see Attachment 4 for more information about EEC's current reimbursement rates.

- Does the State have a tiered reimbursement system (higher rates for child care centers and family child care homes that achieve one or more levels of quality beyond basic licensing requirements)?

Yes. If yes, describe:

No.

EEC is presently developing a provider quality rating system, which may form the basis for a future tiered reimbursement system. Currently, however, EEC reimburses child care providers at rates based on four rate tiers, each of which is linked to the achievement of a certain quality standard. A provider must meet the standards required by *Literacy for School Readiness* to be reimbursed at Tier 1. A provider may choose to meet additional quality standards in order to be reimbursed at one higher tier for each standard that they agree to meet. For example, a provider meeting the standards for *Literacy for School Readiness* and *Salary Incentive for Professional Development* is reimbursed at Tier 2.

The four tiers are: Literacy for School Readiness (mandatory); Initiative for Program Assessment (optional); Salary Incentive for Professional Development (optional); and Longitudinal Study (optional). The standards for each of the four tiers are outlined below.

### 1. Literacy for School Readiness

The child care provider shall:

- Provide language development to build literacy skills;
- Provide an educational literacy curriculum to ensure appropriateness of program planning; and
- Ensure school readiness through the child care literacy environment.

### 2. Initiative for Program Assessment

The child care provider shall assess their program annually using one or more of the assessment tools appropriate for the type of child care programming they provide:

- Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS);
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Revised (ECERS-R);
- School Age Care Rating Scale (SACERS); and
- Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS).

### 3. Salary Incentive for Professional Development

The child care provider shall develop and initiate a salary incentive program for professional development that will improve the staffing quality in their program.

### 4. Longitudinal Study

The child care provider shall participate in and partner with a university to conduct a longitudinal literacy study to assess the effectiveness of the school readiness curriculum.

**3.3 Eligibility Criteria for Child Care**

3.3.1 Complete column (a) and (b) in the matrix below. Complete Column (c) ONLY IF the Lead Agency is using income eligibility limits lower than 85% of the SMI).

Family Size	(a) 100% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month)	(b) 85% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month) [Multiply (a) by 0.85]	IF APPLICABLE	
			(c) Income Level, lower than 85% SMI, if used to limit eligibility	
			(d) \$/month	(e) % of SMI [Divide (d) by (a), multiply by 100]
1				At initial application, 50% SMI
2	\$4,679	\$3,978	\$2,338	50%
3	\$5,780	\$4,913	\$2,890	50%
4	\$6,881	\$5,849	\$3,441	50%
5	\$7,982	\$6,785	\$3,991	50%

If the Lead Agency does not use the SMI from the most current year, indicate the year used:

If applicable, the date on which the eligibility limits detailed in column (c) became or will become effective: July 1, 2006.

3.3.2 How does the Lead Agency define “income” for the purposes of eligibility? Is any income deducted or excluded from total family income, for instance, work or medical expenses; child support paid to, or received from, other households; Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments? Is the income of all family members included, or is the income of certain family members living in the household excluded? Please describe and/or include information as **Attachment 5**. (§§98.16(g)(5), 98.20(b))

**Income**

For purposes of eligibility for subsidized early education and care, income includes the following: wages/salary; self-employment income; social security benefits; interest from dividends; income from estates or trusts; rental income; royalties; pensions and annuities; unemployment compensation; alimony or child support; and public assistance payments.

Child support or alimony paid to another household is deducted from a household’s gross monthly income.

The following sources are not included in determining a family's income: money received from the sale of property; tax refunds; gifts; the value of the coupon allotment under the Food Stamp Act of 1964; loans and grants that cannot be used for living expenses; and income earned by children under the age of 18.

- 3.3.3 Has the Lead Agency established additional eligibility conditions or priority rules, for example, income limits that vary in different parts of the State, special eligibility for families receiving TANF, or eligibility that differs for families that include a child with special needs? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.16(g)(5), §98.20(b))

Yes, and the additional eligibility criteria are: (Terms must be defined in Appendix 2)

No.

TANF families currently receive immediate access to child care services with a referral from the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). Upon closure of a family's DTA case, DTA issues a twelve month authorization for transitional child care services.

When a non-TANF family first enters the EEC early education and care financial assistance system (i.e., a family who is not enrolled in a program through a contracted slot, voucher, or CPC grant), the family's income must be at or below 50% of the SMI in order to receive EEC financial assistance. Once the family receives financial assistance, whether through a contracted slot, voucher, or a CPC grant, the family will remain eligible until their income exceeds 85% of the SMI. Families with a child with a documented disability is eligible for EEC financial assistance if their income is at or below 85% of the SMI. In addition, any family receiving EEC financial assistance for a child with a documented disability is eligible to receive financial assistance for any other children if their income is at or below 85% of the SMI. Children with disabilities and their siblings may continue to receive a subsidy until their family's income exceeds 100% of the SMI.

Currently, EEC provides immediate access to financial assistance through vouchers to the following families:

- All families who relocated to Massachusetts as a result of Hurricane Katrina/Rita
- All military families deployed to an active "war zone"
- Teen parents who are 18 years of age or under in a GED program and teen parents who are 19 years of age or under and in high school
- Siblings of children in voucher and contracted care
- Foster families
- Families currently receiving a voucher, but who have had a change in status:
  - Families changing their geographic location within the state
  - Families changing from one approved service need/family activity to another
  - Children who left care and are returning within three months

- Families who previously received a voucher during or after the summer of 2004 and now need “summer only care”

EEC currently provides immediate access to financial assistance through vacant contract slots and contracted flexible funding to the following families:

- Siblings of children enrolled in CPC or contracted programs
- Continuity of care:
  - Children who left a contracted program and are returning to one within three months
  - Children who are aging out of a contracted or CPC program (e.g. children needing after school care)
  - Families in Supportive, Teen Parent, Non-Traditional Hours Care and Homeless Contracts whose cases are closing and who meet EEC financial assistance income and family activity requirements
  - school age children who were previously enrolled in a contracted program and who need care only during summer months, school holidays, or other school closings
  - Families changing their geographic location with the state between contracted programs

Over the coming months as EEC continues to develop uniform policies and create a single financial assistance system, a new set of priority categories for families waiting to receive EEC financial assistance will be implemented. These priorities will continue to be based on a combination of low family income and other research-based risk factors. The new list of priorities will include:

- Extraordinary Circumstances;
- Domestic Violence;
- Homeless Family;
- Teen Parent;
- Special Need of Child;
- Special Need of Primary Parent/Guardian;
- Low Parental Education;
- Federal Poverty Level;
- Temporary or Permanent Guardian (including grandparent);
- DSS Adoptive Family; and
- Foster Child.

TANF families will continue to have immediate access to financial assistance through vouchers and families with an open case protective services case with the Department of Social Services will also continue to have access to child care services through EEC’s supportive child care contracts.

- 3.3.4 Has the Lead Agency elected to waive, on a case-by-case basis, the fee and income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to

receive, protective services, as defined in Appendix 2? (658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3)(C)(ii), §98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A))

- Yes, and the additional eligibility criteria are: (Terms must be defined in Appendix 2)
- No.
- Not applicable. CCDF-funded child care is not provided in cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services.

3.3.5 Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children above age 13 but below age 19 who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care? (Physical and mental incapacity must then be defined in Appendix 2.) (658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

- Yes, and the upper age is 16.
- No.

3.3.6 Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children above age 13 but below age 19 who are under court supervision? (658P(3), 658E(c)(3)(B), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

- Yes, and the upper age is \_\_\_\_.
- No.

3.3.7 Does the State choose to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care whose foster care parents are not working, or who are not in education/training activities? (§§98.20(a)(3)(ii), 98.16(f)(7))

- Yes. (**NOTE:** This means that for CCDF purposes the State considers these children to be in protective services.)

Foster children with open protective cases through DSS are eligible for CCDF-funded early education and care regardless of whether their foster parents are working or participating in education and training activities. For foster children without open protective services cases through DSS, their foster parents must be seeking employment, employed, participating in a training or education program, or be age 65 or over and retired in order to be eligible for CCDF-funded early education and care.

- No.

3.3.8 Does the State choose to provide child care to children in protective services? (§§98.16(f)(7), 98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A) & (B))

- Yes.

No.

### **3.4 Priorities for Serving Children and Families**

3.4.1 Describe how the State prioritizes service for the following CCDF-eligible children: (a) children with special needs, (b) children in families with very low incomes, and (c) other. Terms must be defined in Appendix 2. (658E(c)(3)(B))

#### **Children with Special Needs**

EEC prioritizes services for families with a child who has a documented special need and for families with a parent whose documented special need prevents him/her from caring for the child during the time for which early education and care financial assistance is being requested. These families are prioritized in three ways. First, these families are eligible for financial assistance at higher incomes (e.g., gross income at or below 85% of the SMI at entry and 100% of the SMI at exit). Second, they are deemed to meet EEC's service need requirements irrespective of whether they are working, seeking employment, or participating in an education/training program. Third, they are prioritized for services on EEC's centralized waiting list.

#### **Children in Families with Very Low Incomes**

TANF families currently receive immediate access to child care services with a referral from the Department of Transitional Assistance. When non-TANF families first access EEC financial assistance, their gross income must be at or below 50% of the SMI. Once they are already receiving financial assistance, families remain financially eligible until their income exceeds 85% of the state median income. Currently, these families are served on a first come, first served basis from EEC's centralized waiting list.

Please see Section 3.4.3 below for a description of EEC's current work to create more clearly defined priority categories and ensure that the most vulnerable families and children at-risk of school failure, including those with special needs and very low incomes, are prioritized for service.

#### **Other Children and Families Who Receive Priority for Services**

Currently, EEC provides immediate access to financial assistance through vouchers to the following families:

- All families who relocated to Massachusetts as a result of Hurricane Katrina/Rita
- All military families deployed to an active "war zone"
- Teen parents who are 18 years of age or under in a GED program and teen parents who are 19 years of age or under and in high school
- Siblings of children in voucher and contracted care
- Foster families
- Families currently receiving a voucher, but who have had a change in status:

- Families changing their geographic location within the state
- Families changing from one approved service need/family activity to another
- Children who left care and are returning within three months
- Families who previously received a voucher during or after the summer of 2004 and now need “summer only care”

EEC currently provides immediate access to financial assistance through vacant contract slots and contracted flexible funding to the following families:

- Siblings of children enrolled in CPC or contracted programs
- Continuity of care:
  - Children who left a contracted program and are returning to one within three months
  - Children who are aging out of a contracted or CPC program (e.g. children needing after school care)
  - Families in Supportive, Teen Parent, Non-Traditional Hours Care and Homeless Contracts whose cases are closing and who meet EEC financial assistance income and family activity requirements
  - school age children who were previously enrolled in a contracted program and who need care only during summer months, school holidays, or other school closings
  - Families changing their geographic location with the state between contracted programs

In order to promote continuity of care for enrolling children into contracted programs, EEC uses an innovative tool that is flexible enough to meet the ever changing needs of families and their children. If a provider does not have a contract slot available for a child enrolled in their program who meets the criteria outlined in EEC’s continuity of care policy, the provider may request access to funding that EEC has set aside (called the “flexible pool”) to allow the child to remain in their early education and care program. In this way, families who are already in the early education and care system through EEC financial assistance do not need to experience a break in services.

The flexible pool gives contracted providers temporary use of additional early education and care slots to meet the continuity of care needs of families until permanent slots become available. EEC requires contracted providers to move children in flexible funding into a contracted slot as soon as one is identified. Children in supportive child care are prioritized first.

3.4.3 Does the Lead Agency maintain a waiting list?

- Yes. If yes, for what populations? Is the waiting list maintained at the State level? Are certain populations given priority for services, and if so, which populations? What methods are employed to keep the list current?
- No. If no, does the Lead Agency serve all eligible families that apply?
- Yes.
- No.

Are there other ways that the Lead Agency addresses situations in which funding is not sufficient to serve all families that are technically eligible under State policies? If so, describe.

EEC provides CCDF-funded financial assistance to families who have children between the ages of 0 to 12 and whose gross income is below 50% SMI (or below 85% SMI for a family with a child or parent with a special needs) at initial application. These families may apply for financial assistance at their local CCR&R or directly at their local Head Start, CPC program, or contracted child care program. Current funding is not sufficient to serve all low-income families who apply for EEC financial assistance in Massachusetts, and approximately 14,000 families are currently waiting to receive financial assistance.

In order to ensure that families have fair and equal access to the early education and care financial assistance system, EEC developed and now maintains a web-based, real-time statewide centralized waiting list to track information regarding low-income families waiting for EEC financial assistance. The centralized waiting list is the only waiting list to be used for families applying for, eligible for, or receiving EEC financial assistance, and it is the first step in the process for families seeking to access EEC financial assistance. Families can access the waiting list from any CCR&R, contracted provider, or CPC program because waiting list information is stored in a single system, accessible on-line from any CCR&R, contracted provider, or CPC. EEC is also currently working to ensure that all Head Start programs have access to the centralized waiting list.

When funding is available, the following priorities are currently in place for the enrollment of CCDF-eligible children into early education and care programs from the centralized waiting list:

- Continuity of Care:
  - Child Left Care Within 3 Months (Child re-enrolled after temporary termination)
  - Geographic Relocation (Family moves within the state)
  - Aging-Out (Child exceeds age limit for current program)
  - Supportive, Teen Parent, Non Traditional Hours Care, Homeless Contract (Contracted Providers Only)
  - Voucher (Child in contract waiting for a voucher)
- Sibling:
  - Sibling: Contract (Sister/brother enrolled in contract program)
  - Sibling: Voucher (Sister/brother enrolled in voucher program)
  - Sibling: CPC (Sister/brother enrolled in CPC program)
- Grandparent/Guardian Family (Temporary or legal guardians, including grandparents)
- Child in Foster Care (Foster families referred by DSS)
- Child of Homeless Family (Family is living in a shelter)
- Child of Military Personnel (Military personnel in active “war zone”)
- Child of Teen Parent (Teen is 19 years of age or under in high school or under 18 years of age in GED program)
- Parent with Special Needs (Disability or circumstance renders parent unable to care for child)

- Child with Special Needs (Disability or special need necessitates child care)
- Summer Only Care (Child requires care only for summer, school holidays, vacations, or other school closings)

Once a family's waiting list record has been created, CCR&Rs are responsible for sending waiting list confirmation letters to all of the families on the list and tracking their continued interest in receiving financial assistance through waiting list renewal letters, which are sent to families every six months. CCR&Rs, contracted providers, or CPC programs send families letters whenever funding becomes available at their program. This system provides families with access to many different types of early education and care programs in Massachusetts. CCR&Rs, contracted providers, and CPC programs are all required to enroll priority families and then non-priority families on a first come, first served basis from the top of the EEC centralized waiting list.

Over the coming months as EEC continues to develop uniform policies and create a single financial assistance system, a new set of priority categories for families waiting to receive EEC financial assistance will be implemented. These priorities will continue to be based on a combination of low family income and other research-based risk factors. The new list of priorities will include:

- Extraordinary Circumstances;
- Domestic Violence;
- Homeless Family;
- Teen Parent;
- Special Need of Child;
- Special Need of Primary Parent/Guardian;
- Low Parental Education;
- Federal Poverty Level;
- Temporary or Permanent Guardian (including grandparent);
- DSS Adoptive Family; and
- Foster Child.

TANF families will continue to have immediate access to financial assistance through vouchers and families with an open case protective services case with the Department of Social Services will also continue to have access to child care services through EEC's supportive child care contracts.

EEC is working closely with its Transition Team, Parent Advisory Committee, and other external experts and stakeholders on the development of the new priorities. EEC's new system of priorities will feature common definitions and verification procedures as well as a calibration system to help ensure that the higher priority families (i.e., families in greatest need) receive services soonest. EEC anticipates that the new prioritization system will be implemented by July 1, 2007.

### **3.5 Sliding Fee Scale for Child Care Services**

- 3.5.1 A sliding fee scale, which is used to determine each family's contribution to the cost of child care, must vary based on income and the size of the family. A copy of this sliding fee scale for child care services and an explanation of how it works is provided as **Attachment 6**.

The attached fee scale was or will be effective as of July 1, 2006.

Will the Lead Agency use additional factors to determine each family's contribution to the cost of child care? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.42(b))

- Yes, and the following describes any additional factors that will be used:

The amount of a family's contribution toward the cost of child care services depends on the number of children in subsidized care within one family. Families with more than one child receiving subsidized child care pay a discounted fee for each additional child beyond the first in need of subsidized child care. EEC has revised its sliding fee scale to reflect the change in the State Median Income (SMI) used to determine income eligibility from 2001 to 2006. A more comprehensive revision of the sliding fee scale is planned for the upcoming year with a projected implementation date of July 2007.

- No.

- 3.5.2 Is the sliding fee scale provided in the attachment in response to question 3.5.1 used in all parts of the State? (658E(c)(3)(B))

Yes.

No, and other scale(s) and their effective date(s) are provided as **Attachment \_\_\_\_**.

- 3.5.3 The Lead Agency may waive contributions from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size, (§98.42(c)), and the poverty level used by the Lead Agency for a family of 3 is: \$1180.

The Lead Agency must elect ONE of these options:

ALL families with income at or below the 2002 poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee.

ALL families, including those with incomes at or below the poverty level for families of the same size, ARE required to pay a fee.

SOME families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee. The following describes these families:

3.5.4 Does the Lead Agency have a policy that prohibits a child care provider from charging families any unsubsidized portion of the provider's normal fees (in addition to the contributions discussed in 3.5.1)? (§98.43(b)(3))

Yes. Please describe:

The state pricing regulations that apply to all child care providers who contract with EEC require that contractors accept the payments made by EEC as full payment. Contractors are prohibited from supplementing their payments by charging families any additional fee for those services paid for by EEC.

No.

3.5.5 The following is an explanation of how the copayments required by the Lead Agency's sliding fee scale(s) are affordable: (§98.43(b)(3))

Access to federally subsidized child care is prioritized for families who earn below 50% of the 2006 SMI. (Families with a parent or child with a special need may access care if their income is below 85% of the 2006 SMI.) EEC estimates that 85% of families receiving federally subsidized child care services earn below 50% of the SMI. For these families, the fees are based on a gradually increasing sliding fee scale ranging from 1% to 15% of their gross income. Since July 2001, there has been no co-payment for families with incomes below the federal poverty line as established in fiscal year 2002.

Families whose income increases above 50% SMI, but does not exceed 85% of the SMI may continue to receive federally subsidized child care services. (Families with a parent or child with a special need may continue to receive care so long as their income does not exceed 100% of the SMI.) EEC estimates that 14% of the families receiving federally subsidized child care services earn between 50% and 85% of the SMI. The fee scale for these families ranges between 10.5% and 16% of their gross median income. Families with an income under 50% of the 2001 SMI pay no more than 10% of their income. Families whose income is below the 2002 federal poverty level pay no fee.

## **PART 4 PROCESSES WITH PARENTS**

### **4.1 Application Process / Parental Choice**

4.1.1 The following describes the process for a family to apply for and receive child care services (658D(b)(1)(A), 658E(c)(2)(D) & (3)(B), §§98.16(k), 98.30(a) through (e)). If the process varies for families based on eligibility category, for instance, TANF versus non-TANF, please describe. The description should include:

- How parents are informed of the availability of child care services and about child care options
- Where/how applications are made
- Who makes the eligibility determination
- How parents who receive TANF benefits are informed about the exception to individual penalties as described in 4.4
- Length of eligibility period including variations that relate to the services provided, e.g., through collaborations with Head Start or pre-kindergarten programs
- Any steps the State has taken to reduce barriers to initial and continuing eligibility for child care subsidies

### **Access to Care**

Families may enter the early education and care system at multiple points. Families first can enter through their local CCR&R or CPC, a contracted early education and care provider, or a local DTA or DSS area office. Each point of entry works slightly differently, in order to accommodate the needs and questions of the families seeking early education and care services.

Families entering the system through a CCR&R, CPC, or contracted early education and care provider can apply for early education and care financial assistance at each point of entry. Eligibility for financial assistance is determined by the CCR&Rs, CPCs, or contracted early education and care providers based on statewide criteria and policies established by EEC. In addition to processing applications and making eligibility determinations, CCR&Rs (and CPCs with respect to services for families with preschool aged children) provide families with information about their early education and care options and referrals to programs with available slots. Families with children who have special needs also receive specialized information and referral services as well as on-going support to ensure that their child(ren)'s placement meets their child(ren)'s needs.

To meet the needs of families on or transitioning from TANF, including teen parents, EEC makes applications for early education and care financial assistance available at local DTA area offices. The local DTA area offices process the applications and make eligibility determinations for all TANF families. If a family is eligible, DTA will issue the family an authorization for subsidized early education and care services and refer the family to the local

CCR&R for assistance in finding a program that meets the family's needs. The length of the authorization varies depending on the activity in which the parent is participating, and may be renewed (subject to eligibility verification) at the local DTA office. (Upon closure of the family's DTA case, DTA issues a twelve month authorization for transitional child care services.) Once DTA has issued the authorization, the CCR&Rs assist families by providing information about early education and care and helping them find a program that meets their needs. In some cases, the CCR&Rs have staff stationed in or near local DTA offices so that families can more easily obtain assistance.

DTA workers explain to families seeking early education and care services how DTA and EEC can assist them and clarify any exceptions to the penalties associated with failure to comply with the work requirement. To make the application process as clear as possible, EEC worked with DTA to produce a brochure specifically geared towards TANF families, entitled "Important Information Concerning Child Care." The brochure provides TANF families with a step-by-step explanation of how to obtain subsidized early education and care services and of their available options for services. The brochure also describes a family's eligibility to receive services after TANF assistance ends.

As previously described in Section 2.1.1, EEC and DTA have formed an interagency working group dedicated to streamlining the process for TANF families to receive child care services. This working group has identified several key barriers faced by TANF families in accessing and receiving child care. Currently, both agencies are in the process of implementing policy changes to address these barriers.

For a family with an active abuse or neglect case, DSS can include supportive early education and care as one component of the family's service plan. For these families, DSS makes the eligibility determination and provides the family with information about their early education and care options. Specifically, DSS clinical staff will refer a child to the DSS area office where a DSS Coordinator makes the eligibility determination. EEC staff have trained the DSS Coordinators on how to make appropriate referrals, how to determine family eligibility, what to expect from supportive early education and care, and how to locate an early education and care program in their community. EEC contracts for supportive early education and care services in a variety of different settings, including family child care homes and centers that serve infants, toddlers, preschool children, and school age children. This variety ensures that families have multiple early education care options.

### **Length of Reassessment**

Currently, families receiving early education and care financial assistance through vouchers or contracts have their eligibility reassessed every six months, while families receiving financial assistance for pre-Kindergarten services through the CPC program are reassessed on an annual basis. EEC is the process of amending its regulations to extend the reassessment period from six months to up to twelve months for EEC financial assistance provided through vouchers and contracts. EEC held public hearings in August 2006 on extending the reassessment period and other changes to the regulations governing financial assistance provided through vouchers and contracts (102 CMR 10.00) to improve the stability of care for children and streamline administrative requirements for families. The Board approved the final draft of the revised

regulations at its meeting on September 12, 2006. The revised regulations were filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth on September 22, 2006 and will become effective upon publication in the *Massachusetts Register* on October 6, 2006.

For TANF families, the reassessment period varies and is based upon the length of the early education and care authorization issued by DTA. Families receiving supportive early education and care services are reassessed every six months.

- 4.1.2 The following is a detailed description of how the State ensures that parents are informed about their ability to choose from among family and group home care, center-based care and in-home care including faith-based providers in each of these categories.

Through its centralized waiting list and the development of a single, unified financial assistance system, EEC is working towards ensuring that all families, regardless of their point of entry, are provided with the same information about their eligibility and the variety of options available to them, including family child care homes, center-based group and school age care, and in-home relative care. Through EEC's website, families can search for a list of all the licensed early education and care providers in their area by the type of care. In addition, EEC provides families with information about different types of child care programming, suggests questions that families might want to ask of prospective child care providers, and offers other helpful information to assist families in choosing the program that best meets their needs. EEC is currently in the process of updating its website to include this information and other family support resources.

## **4.2 Records of Parental Complaints**

The following is a detailed description of how the State maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and how it makes the information regarding such parental complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C), §98.32))

As the state agency mandated to set and enforce the rules and regulations for all child care providers, EEC has over a quarter of a century of experience protecting children who are placed in child care. EEC investigates each complaint to ensure that children are free from harm and that child care providers are in compliance with EEC's rules and regulations.

EEC has a statewide computerized complaint tracking system to log and track all complaints. This system allows appropriate EEC staff access to all open and completed complaints and investigations. When an EEC staff member receives a complaint, the staff member enters the complaint information into the system, including the name of the provider and the nature of the complaint.

When taking a complaint, EEC requests the name of the complainant and her/his relationship to the provider (e.g. parent, neighbor, etc.), but this information is not required to complete the intake. Once the complaint is logged into the tracking system, it is assigned to staff

for investigation. When the complaint investigation is completed, a visit or investigation report is completed and entered into the tracking system. A printed copy of the report is sent to the child care provider, and the complainant, if requested, and is made a part of the provider's licensing file. This system allows licensors and investigators to have access to a complete complaint history on any of EEC's licensed child care providers, including a provider's history of regulatory violations, identified by regulation number and date of violation. As discussed below, parents and other members of the public can receive all public information, such as substantiated regulatory violations. Because the complaint tracking system contains some information that is not public, such as anonymous complaints about providers, EEC does not release this information directly.

In addition to the statewide complaint tracking system, EEC's regional offices maintain licensing files for each licensed facility within that region. Each licensing file contains all documents about the licensed provider, including the initial and any subsequent applications, monitoring visits, investigation activities, compliance history, and legal actions taken by EEC against the licensee. All records documenting complaint intakes, complaint investigation activities, and investigation findings are maintained in each licensing file.

In order for parents to make informed child care choices, they need access to information about their current or potential child care providers. Massachusetts law mandates that each person has an absolute right to access any public information held by EEC, including any substantiated complaint or investigatory materials. Public information would generally include all information regarding a child care provider that is not confidential. Examples of confidential information include social security numbers, medical history, or information regarding the complainant or children. Requests may be either verbal or in writing. For verbal requests, EEC will release information about regulatory violations that were found during a visit or an investigation. It is EEC's policy to release information as completely as possible while maintaining appropriate confidentiality. Therefore, EEC does not verbally release information describing any allegations or unfounded complaints. If additional information is requested, EEC staff will recommend that a written request for copies of public documents be submitted.

All written requests for public information are forwarded to the appropriate EEC regional office prior to release to the public. The requested documents are reviewed and any information that may violate the provider's personal privacy or other confidentiality laws is removed. Investigatory activities, regulatory violations, and the facts supporting the findings are subject to public release and would be included in the response to the request.

### **4.3 Unlimited Access to Children in Child Care Settings**

The following is a detailed description of the procedures in effect in the State for affording parents unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds. (658E(c)(2)(B), §98.31))

EEC's regulations require that all licensed child care programs provide parents with access to their children whenever children are in care. (*See* 102 CMR 7.04(4) for group and school age child care centers and 102 CMR 8.15(7) for family child care providers.)

Specifically, the programs must permit and encourage unannounced visits by parents to the program and to their child's room while their child is present. To ensure that parents are aware of this requirement, EEC requires that providers have a written policy regarding parents' unlimited access to their children and that providers include that policy in the parent handbook that they give to parents when children are enrolled in the program.

#### **4.4 Criteria or Definitions Applied by TANF Agency to Determine Inability to Obtain Child Care**

The regulations at §98.33(b) require the Lead Agency to inform parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the work requirement for any single custodial parent who has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care for a child under 6 years of age.

In fulfilling this requirement, the following criteria or definitions are applied by the TANF agency to determine whether the parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care:

NOTE: The TANF agency, not the Child Care Lead Agency, is responsible for establishing the following criteria or definitions. These criteria or definitions are offered in this Plan as a matter of public record. The TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions is: [the Department of Transitional Assistance](#).

- "appropriate child care":
- "reasonable distance":
- "unsuitability of informal child care":
- "affordable child care arrangements":

DTA does not have specific definitions for these terms. However, DTA Field Operations Memo 2005-1A states the following:

Each child-care provider, licensed by OCCS [now EEC], is **generally** considered an appropriate resource for recipients who need child care. The CCR&R counselors assist recipients in making informed decisions regarding the child-care search by assessing the families' needs and reviewing available child-care options. The CCR&R makes referrals only to appropriate, licensed child-care providers and discusses licensed-exempt options, such as in-home and relative care. If the recipient refuses **all** referrals made by the **CCR&R**, the recipient shall be deemed to have been offered appropriate and available

child care, **unless the recipient can provide a reasonable explanation to OCCS why the child care should be considered unavailable to or inappropriate for the particular family.**

**PART 5**  
**ACTIVITIES & SERVICES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND AVAILABILITY OF**  
**CHILD CARE**

**5.1 Quality Earmarks and Set-Asides**

- 5.1.1 The Child Care and Development Fund provides earmarks for infant and toddler care and school-age care and resource and referral services as well as the special earmark for quality activities. The following describes the activities; identifies the entities providing the activities; and describes the expected results of the activities. **For the infant and toddler earmark, the State must note in its description of the activities what is the maximum age of a child who may be served with such earmarked funds.**

EEC is committed to significantly and systemically improving the quality of services provided to children and families across all types of care. Through its three comprehensive policy and planning projects (e.g., Rates and Payment, Quality and Workforce Development, and Access and Coordination previously discussed in Section 1.5), EEC is developing a new quality system which will balance quality improvements with their impact on affordability (rates) and access.

EEC's Quality and Workforce Development policy and planning project is being carried out by three internal working groups which are concentrating on the following areas: Regulation Reform, Workforce Development, and Child Assessment. All of these working groups' efforts will be informed by EEC's guiding principles for quality initiatives, which provide that EEC should:

- Include family child care, public schools, group child care, Head Start, faith-based care, other non-profit programs;
- Build on strengths of current system regulations and standards;
- Include children of all abilities, from birth through school age;
- Be based on knowledge of child growth, development and outcomes;
- Develop and implement with thorough input from all stakeholders;
- Support all providers to continuously improve programs;
- Ensure that parents have a variety of program choices;
- Balance improvements with affordability for parents;
- Embrace diversity and cultural competency;
- Draw on other stakeholders' quality improvement projects; and
- Continue to be a national model in early education and care.

Any changes in requirements or quality improvements will be thoughtful and supportive of the rich variety of child care options the Commonwealth currently has, and will be mindful of the fact that quality improvements are part of a "continuum," in which one set of decisions or outcomes informs the next. For example, any proposed outcomes regarding children's developmental needs and assessments will inform EEC's workforce development plan, which will in turn inform EEC's proposed new structure for licensing regulations.

While the goals of all of EEC's comprehensive policy and planning projects will be to engender systemic improvements across all types of care and children's developmental stages, the outcomes of these projects will have demonstrable impacts on infant and toddler care, school age care, and resource and referral services.

For example, the general goal of the Regulation Reform working group is to improve quality by developing new licensing regulations that are more user-friendly and consistent across program settings. To that end, the proposed regulations will result in a single set of common core regulations that will apply to all types of care (including family child care, group child care, and school age child care). However, there will be separate, but complementary, sets of more detailed regulations that are based on children's developmental stages (e.g., infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school age children) and the size of the program setting. For instance, the proposed regulations will give guidance on how providers will do the following, with specific references to children's developmental stages:

- ensure children's physical safety (e.g., infant and toddler safety);
- promote children's emotional well being throughout each developmental stage;
- provide opportunities for young children to develop stable and supportive relationships with their caregivers that promote healthy attachment;
- develop partnerships with parents that reflect respectful appreciation of parents' culture, values, expectations, and goals for their children;
- offer stimulating and developmentally appropriate learning activities that strengthen young children's language skills and global development; and
- monitor and document children's developmental milestones, share information with parents and help in identifying children who may have special needs.

All administrative requirements that result from EEC's Quality and Workforce Development policy and planning projects will be aligned with EEC's Access and Rates projects to support continuous quality improvements, including quality improvements to infant and toddler care, school age care, and resource and referral services. Other current quality initiatives that directly impact infant and toddler and school age care, as well as resource and referral services, are described below.

#### Infants and toddlers:

Through the Massachusetts Family Network (MFN) Program, EEC provides grant funding to local communities to provide a variety of services and supports for parents with children from birth to age three in order to promote their children's healthy growth and development. The 42 MFN programs in the Commonwealth provide parent education and provider training regarding infant/toddler issues, offer resource and referral services including information about different child care options, and facilitate play groups and parent support groups.

Through the Parent Child Home Program (PCHP), a home-based parenting, early literacy, and school readiness program, EEC provides grant funding to 26 communities to provide biweekly family literacy activities and coaching to at-risk families with toddlers. In

2005, PCHP extended its services to families with toddlers living in homeless shelters and to family child care providers. PCHP home visitors demonstrate the use of curriculum materials and defined learning objectives for young children who were enrolled in family child care settings. Both the family child care provider and parent receive coaching and information on how to support the child's development through intentional instruction.

EEC also collaborates with DPH to expand the opportunities for infants and toddlers with disabilities to access early education and care and receive early intervention services in their early education and care programs. EEC and DPH's Early Intervention Services jointly funded the creation of Regional Consultation Programs (RCPs) across Massachusetts to support the individual care that infants and toddlers with disabilities require and provide on-site expertise at early education and care programs to ensure that children's experiences in early education and care are successful. RCPs are staffed by knowledgeable early intervention specialists who use their expertise to refer children to suitable early education and care programs and help them succeed once they are enrolled. Although EEC no longer funds RCPs, EEC continues to collaborate with them. EEC staff and CCR&Rs work closely with RCP staff to ensure that children with disabilities have easy access to early education and care programs. Specifically, EEC staff and CCR&Rs facilitate access to vouchers for infants and toddlers identified by RCPs as qualifying for access to EEC financial assistance for child care.

EEC purchases approximately 583 child care slots through 43 contracts for the children of teen parents. The Teen Parent Child Care Services Program emphasizes quality child care for infants and toddlers. Through this program, teen parents access educational and developmentally appropriate child care services for their children (e.g., their infants and toddlers), while the teen parents are allowed to attend school and develop their career and parenting skills. The program also provides teen parents with vital social supports designed to encourage them to stay in school, decrease the likelihood of repeat teen pregnancies, and lower the risk that they or their children will be abused or neglected. In addition to child care, the teen parents receive other services include transportation, mentoring, parenting skills classes, counseling, and support to help teens finish high school or get their GED.

In 2002, the Legislature created the Mental Health Commission for Children, which was led by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and composed of representatives from a number of state agencies, including one of EEC's predecessor agencies, OCCS, as well as mental health providers and advocacy groups. The Commission was charged with examining access and utilization of children's mental health services, including those funded through private insurance as well as public funding. Commission members expanded the scope of their original mandate to more broadly define the key principles of a comprehensive mental health system and to identify priorities for state action. The Commission filed its report with the Legislature in the summer of 2005, and, since then, the group has continued to meet as an Advisory Committee to the Commissioner of Mental Health with the specific task of monitoring implementation of the report's recommendations. The Advisory Committee has worked to implement the Commission's recommendations in a variety of venues. To follow through on the Commission's recommendations for universal, voluntary screening for infants, toddlers and preschool children to minimize the impact of mental health issues through early identification and intervention, Advisory Committee members have continued their collaboration with the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to clarify insurance

reimbursement for screenings provided by pediatricians. Committee members also helped garner legislative support for the fiscal year 2007 EEC budget appropriation related to mental health services which seek to address behavioral health issues and preschool expulsion in early education and care settings.

EEC's current rate structure provided a rate increase to all contracted early education and care providers who participate in a quality enhancement program that links additional funding to the achievement of specific quality standards, with an emphasis on literacy. Specifically for infants and toddlers, programs were allowed to access the quality enhancement rate level if they could demonstrate they had age-appropriate books, toys, and planned activities. Programs were required to compare their daily curriculum with literacy standards provided by EEC and had to submit to EEC a curriculum plan that included daily literacy activities for school readiness. As part of their curriculum plan, programs were expected to: have sufficient educational materials so that infants and toddlers had a variety of choices available to them at all times; read or repeat nursery rhymes with individual infants and toddlers daily; provide a variety of activities that promote literacy and school readiness; and encourage participation by all children. Infant and Toddler programs that accept the tiered reimbursement rate associated with participation in the self-assessment initiative must have assessed their program using the Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS), a quality assessment tool for programs serving children from birth through age two and half, and must implement a plan for improvement in their program based on their findings.

#### Resource and referral services:

EEC contracts with 14 local CCR&Rs to serve the needs of families and children seeking early education and care. To ensure coordinated services between and among the CCR&Rs, the agencies created an affiliated network, the Massachusetts Child Care Resource and Referral Network. The CCR&R Network has developed a strategic plan to provide coordinated, comprehensive regional CCR&R services. To provide opportunities for more efficient and effective delivery of direct services to families, EEC requires that each CCR&R maintain a strong local presence through linkages with existing organizations. In addition, most CCR&Rs have staff located at local DTA offices in order to facilitate access to early education and care services for families who are eligible for or are seeking TAFDC.

CCR&Rs provide information, data management, and linkages to local resources for four major groups: families seeking early education and care, individuals and organizations that provide early education and care services, EEC, and local communities. The CCR&Rs' primary responsibilities include providing resource and referral services to families, managing and issuing vouchers through an intake and eligibility determination process, and providing technical assistance and training to early education and care providers and organizations.

Resource and referral services provided by CCR&Rs include providing families with information on early education and care options, informing them how to select an appropriate provider, and providing referrals to licensed programs. CCR&Rs also inform parents about EEC financial assistance and provide voucher management services on behalf of EEC. (The voucher management process is described in greater detail in Section 3.1.1.) Working directly with families, CCR&Rs are responsible for managing and issuing vouchers through an intake and

eligibility determination process. CCR&Rs accept and process applications for EEC financial assistance and help families find an available program that meets their needs. Families of children with disabilities also receive specialized education information and referral services and on-going support to ensure a successful placement. CCR&Rs provide information through phone consultation, face to face meetings, and parenting seminars.

CCR&Rs train providers in all types of programs. They are required to continually assess their local early education and care community's needs and remain current on research in the field. In 2005, CCR&Rs provided training and professional development opportunities to approximately 28,000 people. For example, CCR&Rs provide statewide training on domestic violence awareness specifically designed for the early education and care community and facilitated by domestic violence experts. To ensure that trainings are accessible to the providers in their community, many of the CCR&Rs provide trainings in languages other than English, including Spanish, Portuguese, and Khmer. In 2005, approximately 4,980 people took advantage of trainings that were given in languages other than English.

For early education and care staff without a degree, CCR&Rs offer career counseling, Child Development Associate credential trainings, and Continuing Education Units, financial assistance for college courses, such as child growth and development and infant/toddler care. During 2005, 587 early education and care staff from a variety of programs, including family child care, center-based group child care, and school age child care, completed college courses through a CCR&R.

In addition to credentialing and college courses, CCR&Rs offer specialized, on-going trainings to assist early education and care professionals in remaining abreast of new developments in the field and address challenges in their programs. For example, 4,129 people attended trainings to assist them in understanding and meeting the needs of children with special needs, while 3,792 people attended trainings designed to help them begin or expand their programs during 2005.

To support their training function, CCR&Rs have established lending libraries with text books, training videos, children's books, and child care equipment for providers to use. In addition, the CCR&Rs provide pamphlets and brochures with information about child care to the public.

Collaborating with EEC and the child care and business communities is also a large part of a CCR&R's responsibilities. CCR&Rs work with EEC on both a central and regional level to improve communication between EEC and the CCR&Rs, to support efforts to expand collaboration and linkages in the early education and care community, and to identify early education and care issues that are unique to the needs of children and families. CCR&Rs also establish and enhance local provider networks, as well as develop linkages with local businesses, state agencies and early education and care providers. In addition, CCR&Rs assist EEC and other state agencies that provide services to children and families with regional planning efforts.

CCR&Rs also serve as a resource for in-home/relative providers. While in-home/relative care is not a licensed form of care, EEC and the CCR&Rs have collaborated to increase the quality of informal care by training the caregivers. All caregivers must participate in an

orientation program at their local CCR&R where the topics include health and safety issues, age appropriate activities, and appropriate behavior management. In addition, CCR&Rs give in-home/relative care providers a resource packet including information about educational resources in their local communities. The CCR&Rs are also available for additional training or support for in-home/relative providers, and informal providers can take advantage of the lending libraries at CCR&Rs.

Through their outreach and data collection responsibilities, CCR&Rs also help assess and increase the availability of early education and care. CCR&Rs collect information on local supply and demand for early education and care, thereby providing the necessary data to inform and support early education and care initiatives and policies. CCR&Rs also educate and make information available to the business community, thereby increasing the awareness of providing child care benefits to employees.

Please refer to Attachment 1 for a list of the CCR&Rs.

#### School-age child care:

EEC has established a workforce development working group to design a comprehensive professional development plan for both early childhood and school age providers. This working group has sought input from several school age advocacy groups, including Achieve Boston and the Massachusetts School-Age Coalition (MSAC) as well as the Higher Education Round Table at Harvard University. The Higher Education Round Table, a collaboration of non-profits, community colleges and public and private four year institutions, has met regularly over the past three years to discuss the professional development needs of school age providers. Wellesley College, in collaboration with the United Way of Massachusetts Bay, issued a report that outlined the professional development needs and concerns of the school age provider population. This report has been an important resource in helping EEC to assess the training needs of the school age provider work force. Currently, EEC is working with the MSAC to incorporate MSAC core competencies into professional development trainings for school age programs that are conducted by the CCR&Rs.

EEC is also working closely with DOE and providers who have received 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding to assure that EEC licensing and financial assistance policies support academic success for children and families engaged in these programs. In 2004 and 2005, DOE offered planning grants to twelve communities to design extended day programming for one or more public schools in their districts. EEC participated in the planning phase of this initiative and will continue to work collaboratively with DOE and the communities that implement extended day programming by using school age providers to supplement the services provided by the public schools.

In the summer of 2004, EEC increased the funding available to school age providers to pay for additional summer activities. EEC is continuing this “summer fun and learning funds” initiative through fiscal year 2007. School age programs are paid the same rate for child care and activities throughout the year. To help support programs’ increased activities with school age children during the summer, EEC is making funding available for such activities as field trips, transportation to off-site activities, and beach or park memberships.

In addition, EEC permits school age providers to apply for funds through EEC's flexible funding pool to transport school age children from school to their after-school program if other transportation is unavailable and to provide for the additional supports required by special needs children in their program in order to ensure a successful child care experience. This flexible funding can be used for hiring an additional staff person, training, consultation, and special equipment supports. Some of the comprehensive mental health services provided on-site at supportive school age programs are specifically designated for supporting school age children.

EEC's current rate structure provided a rate increase to school age programs that achieved specific quality standards, with an emphasis on literacy. Specifically, school age programs were required to demonstrate that they had an appropriate curriculum to meet the developmental needs of school age children. Programs had to submit to their curriculum plan to EEC and were expected to have sufficient educational materials, books, and games to provide the children with a variety of enriching choices when spending time alone or in small and large groups. School age programs that accept the tiered reimbursement rate associated with the self-assessment initiative must have assessed their program at using the School-Age Environmental Rating Scale (SACERS), a quality assessment tool for programs serving children ages five through twelve, and must implement a plan for improvement in their program based on their findings.

While its current licensing regulations outline comprehensive standards for the provision of high quality care for children in school age programs, EEC, through its Regulation Reform working group (which is discussed above) is developing a new set of regulations that will include specific guidance on school care that is based on the developmental needs of the children in care.

5.1.2 The law requires that not less than 4% of the CCDF be set aside for quality activities. (658E(c)(3)(B), 658G, §§98.13(a), 98.16(h), 98.51) The Lead Agency estimates that the following amount and percentage will be used for the quality activities (not including earmarked funds): \$20,032,040 (9 %)

5.1.3 Check either "Yes" or "No" for each activity listed to indicate the activities the Lead Agency will undertake to improve the availability and quality of child care (include activities funded through the 4% quality set-aside as well as the special earmark for quality activities). (658D(b)(1)(D), 658E(c)(3)(B), §§98.13(a), 98.16(h))

- |   | Yes                                 | No                       |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Comprehensive consumer education  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting State and local standards | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- Monitoring compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements
- Professional development, including training, education, and technical assistance
- Improving salaries and other compensation for child care providers
- Activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development
- Activities to promote inclusive child care
- Healthy Child Care America and other health activities including those designed to promote the social and emotional development of children
- Other quality activities that increase parental choice, and improve the quality and availability of child care. (§98.51(a)(1) and (2))

5.1.4 Describe each activity that is checked "Yes" above, identify the entity(ies) providing the activity, and describe the expected results of the activity.

### **Comprehensive Consumer Education**

EEC's Website – [www.eec.state.ma.us](http://www.eec.state.ma.us): EEC's website went on-line in July 2005. The site currently informs families about early education and care options and offers parents the opportunity to search for providers online, by either city/town or program type. The website also includes EEC's licensing regulations, policies for both licensing and financial assistance, information about EEC's special programs, technical assistance and training documents, and links to other early education and care and family-related sites.

Regional and Local Resource and Referral Services: CCR&Rs and CPCs inform parents about the range of early education and care options. CCR&Rs and CPCs provide consumer education and direct referrals to parents to ensure that they find the program that best suits their needs. Families of children with disabilities also receive specialized information and referral services and on-going support to ensure a successful placement. CCR&Rs and CPCs provide information through phone consultation, face to face meetings, and parenting seminars.

Early Childhood Resource Centers: EEC provides grants to establish and sustain six Early Childhood Resource Centers in different areas of the state. The Resource Centers house reference materials, educational and training videos, curriculum kits and guides. In addition to making resources available to providers and public school teachers, the centers offer training on a variety of topics that relate to promoting young children's healthy development. Two of the

centers have computer labs that are also used as sites for hands on computer training for providers.

Parent Information Brochures: EEC distributes informational child care brochures to parents and other interested parties. One brochure, entitled “What to Look For in Child Care” was revised and distributed by the CCR&Rs to parents and others who request information on child care. A second brochure was produced for families who receive TANF assistance and also need child care. DTA workers and area office staff distribute the “Important Information Concerning Child Care” brochure to all eligible families at DTA area offices. The brochure provides TANF families with a step-by-step explanation of how to obtain subsidized early education and care services and of their available options for services. The brochure also describes a family's eligibility to receive services after TANF assistance ends.

Translated Materials: An integral part of creating a high quality system of early education and care is the ability to communicate with parents and providers in their primary language(s). Therefore, EEC will continue to translate materials such as licensing regulations, EEC forms, orientation packets, and policies as well as educational brochures into providers' and parents' first languages. EEC has translated materials into Spanish, Portuguese, and Cambodian (Khmer).

Toll-Free Referral Services: EEC contracts with a local CCR&R to operate a statewide toll-free telephone number (1-800-345-0131) for families seeking information and referral services. Families who call the toll-free number need only to know their zip code, and will be directed to one of the local CCR&Rs that provides service to families in their particular city or town. Acting on a recommendation by the Governor's Commission on School Readiness, EEC expanded the information available through this toll-free number so parents can also access a resource directory for parenting, basic needs like food and housing, health and development, safety, and related issues.

The EEC Newsletter: EEC publishes a monthly email newsletter that is distributed to more than 6000 licensed providers, members of the early education and care community, legislators, and the public on a monthly basis. The newsletter is also posted on EEC's website. The newsletter provides updates on EEC's work, relevant information about early education and care issues, and notices of events that are of interest to the early education and care community.

Back to Sleep Campaign: In coordination with other state agencies, EEC disseminated a brochure printed in English and Spanish entitled “Back to Sleep.” The brochure offers technical assistance to family and center-based child care programs and parents about reducing the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The CCR&Rs have also been facilitating trainings conducted by the SIDS campaign that includes the latest information about risk reduction activities.

Regional Consultation Programs (Early Intervention Support): To help providers better serve children with disabilities and to educate families whose children may need special services on how to work with their early education and care providers, EEC and DPH have jointly funded the creation of Regional Consultation Programs (RCPs). The RCPs, working in collaboration with the CCR&Rs, help the CCR&Rs provide information and referral services to families with

children with special needs, respond to general questions regarding integrating children with special needs into the classroom, work one-on-one to assist with specific integration needs of programs and children, and provide trainings on Early Intervention Services to providers.

### **Grants or Loans to Providers**

**Provider Information Technology Readiness Project:** Through the Provider Information Technology Readiness Project (PITR Project), EEC provided special in-kind grants of personal computers, business software, printers, Internet access, and basic computer training to early education and care providers who serve children receiving EEC financial assistance. The computers are intended to be used by providers for: 1) online education and training; 2) researching current child care topics; 3) communicating efficiently with parents, other providers, CCR&Rs, and EEC; 4) record-keeping, billing, purchasing, and other business tasks; and 5) performing any other functions that will help them better serve the children in their programs and their communities.

**CDA Scholarship Fund:** EEC provides scholarship funding to qualified applicants who are pursuing their Child Development Associates (CDA) credentials to enhance their skills and professionalism in the child care field. Through this scholarship, EEC pays the costs of the assessment fee required for any early education and care provider who seeks CDA credentials. This scholarship is available to both center-based and family child care providers.

**Child Care Quality Fund Grants:** The Commonwealth has established a Child Care Quality Fund to hold the revenues received from sales of “Invest in Children” automobile license plates. Pursuant to the legislation that created this fund, EEC is authorized to award monies from the fund to non-profit organizations for the purpose of improving the delivery of child care services within the Commonwealth and assisting children in progressing effectively in learning environments. EEC is particularly interested in initiatives that support staff recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce. Currently, EEC is in the process of identifying additional priority funding areas that align with its mission.

### **Improving the Monitoring of Compliance with Licensing and Regulatory Requirements**

EEC staff routinely make announced and unannounced monitoring visits to all licensed early education and care programs. During these visits, EEC staff observe the program and review the program’s compliance with current licensing standards. A review of EEC’s regulatory requirements is completed during license renewal visits every three years for family child care homes and every two years for group child care and school age programs. EEC’s regulations, which go beyond health and safety to address each child’s growth and development, currently set some of the highest standards in the country.

EEC is currently in the process of reviewing and revising its regulations for family child care, group child care, and school age child care. The new regulations will be aligned with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation standards, the Massachusetts Early Childhood Program Standards, the Head Start standards, and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) Accreditation standards. The regulations will also be aligned with the standards in EEC’s new statewide workforce development plan. Areas to be

enhanced include curriculum instruction and assessment of children, health and safety, parent involvement, and program administration. In addition, EEC is developing a Quality Rating System to supplement its licensing standards in order to encourage continuous program improvement and acknowledge quality elements in child care settings.

Complaint and Licensing Tracking System: EEC has a computerized system to log and track all complaints. The system is used to monitor the progress of the complaint investigation and provides a record of all complaints and incidents. When an EEC staff member receives a complaint, the staff member enters the complaint information into the system, including the name of the provider and the nature of the complaint. Once the complaint is logged into the tracking system, it is assigned to staff for investigation. When the complaint investigation is completed, a visit or investigation report is completed and entered into the tracking system. A printed copy of the report is sent to the provider and also placed in the provider's licensing file. This system allows licensors and investigators to have access to a complete complaint history on any of EEC's 16,000 licensed providers. The tracking system is also used to monitor injury reports made by licensees and maintain other licensing information.

### **Professional Development, Training, Education, and Technical Assistance**

EEC drafted a statewide Workforce Development Plan in January 2006 and immediately convened a twenty member working group to develop a statewide strategic plan to design a career lattice for the early education and care workforce, a new credentialing system, core competencies for all positions, and an evaluation system for staff working in early education and care programs. In addition, the strategic plan will include recommendations for aligning the proposals with policies and standards of other relevant state agencies, like DOE and the Board of Higher Education, and institutions of higher education. EEC's Workforce Development Plan is included as Attachment 9.

In fiscal year 2006, EEC provided funding for two scholarship programs for early education and care providers, the Early Childhood Educators Scholarship Program and Building Careers, and provided trainings on NAEYC accreditation.

Early Childhood Educators Scholarship Program: During fiscal year 2006, EEC, in collaboration with the Board of Higher Education, provided one million dollars in scholarships to early childhood educators who were employed in the field for at least a year and are enrolled in either an associate's or bachelor's degree program in early childhood education or a related field. The scholarship program is open to individuals working with children from birth through school age, in EEC licensed or authorized programs. Scholarship funds can pay for up to three courses per semester. Applicants must also be willing to sign an agreement to continue employment as an early educator in Massachusetts upon graduation. The 390 educators who received scholarships in fiscal year 2006 represented 223 programs across the state, 76% of which serve children receiving EEC financial assistance. Approximately 46% of the scholarship recipients are pursuing an Associates degree, while the remaining 54% are pursuing a bachelor's degree. For fiscal year 2007, the Legislature has increased funding for the scholarship program to three million dollars, all of which will be awarded according to the same criteria used in fiscal year 2006.

Building Careers: Funded primarily through federal special education dollars which EEC now administers, EEC awarded grants to 26 two and four year colleges to provide four courses annually to a cohort of 20 early education and care providers who were enrolled in an early childhood degree program. The coursework places a special emphasis on understanding, assessing, and instructing children with disabilities, but who were enrolled in a typical early education and care setting. This program funds not only tuition, but also counseling and on-site supervisory visits.

NAEYC Accreditation Training: EEC offered eight regional trainings on the new NAEYC Accreditation Standards. Providers who participate in their Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) Program local council are required to pursue NAEYC accreditation in order to receive CPC funding (state-only funds) to provide pre-Kindergarten services for three and four year olds. CPC local councils provided a range of support to CPC providers to enhance quality enhancement and meet accreditation standards.

EEC provides on-going training for the child care community on a statewide basis through both the regionally-based CCR&Rs and the community-based CPCs. These trainings include the following: staff presentations at orientation sessions conducted for new and renewal applicants; trainings for members of child care support groups; English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Adult Basic Skills (ABE), and college courses; and, community outreach presentations.

Beginning in fiscal year 2004, all CCR&R trainings fell under one of three major topic areas: fundamental program quality requirements, trainings based on recent research developments, and professional development. Below is a listing of current researched-based and professional development trainings offered by the CCR&Rs for the early education and care community. Trainings offered by the CCR&Rs in 2005 include the following:

- Growing a Child Care Business was developed in collaboration with the Small Business Association and Senator John Kerry's office and provides training for center-based and family child care providers on: financial literacy; identification of and introduction to local and regional business resources; integration of sound business development and management with licensing requirements; development of a viable business plan; record keeping; and administration. A comprehensive resource guide that helps providers navigate the regulatory and business requirements for starting and expanding a child care business accompanies the training.
- H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids Move was developed in collaboration with the Harvard School of Public Health and the USDA Nutrition Education Program at DOE and addresses concerns about the national increase in childhood obesity and related diseases.
- Understanding Domestic Violence and the Restraining Order Process in the Massachusetts Court System was developed in collaboration with the Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence and uses domestic violence experts and child-witness-to-violence experts to conduct trainings for the child care community. This is the first domestic violence training in the nation specifically designed for the early education and care community and it is provided in both English and Spanish.

- A Caring Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers is a distance learning course developed to assist early education and care programs in understanding infant/toddler development and appropriate infant/toddler curricula.
- Building Relationships in the School-Age Environment is a distance learning course that is separated into five individual distance learning modules. The modules include information relevant to school age programming such as middle childhood development, promoting and maintaining relationships between children, their caregivers and peers, and core competency requirements in a school age program.
- Inclusion in Child Care is a distance learning course that helps providers identify and understand children's specific disability issues and gives providers a guide for individualizing a child care program to meet a particular child's needs.
- Understanding, Identifying, and Referring Families with Substance Abuse Issues is provided by Massachusetts health and recovery experts and assists the early education and care community in understanding, identifying, and referring families with substance abuse to community social service programs.
- Understanding Lead Poisoning Prevention is provided by DPH's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program and assists the early education and care community in understanding lead poisoning prevention.
- In-Home/Relative Care Orientations: While in-home/relative care is not a licensed form of care, EEC has taken steps to increase the quality of informal care by funding training for caregivers. All caregivers must participate in an orientation program at their local CCR&R on topics including health and safety issues, age appropriate activities, and appropriate behavior management.

Other important trainings for the early education and care community include:

- Early Intervention Regional Consultation Programs provide training to the early education and care community regarding identifying and referring children with special needs and the availability of on-site early intervention services.
- Outreach to Potential Providers: EEC staff conducts trainings in vocational high schools throughout Massachusetts that have early education and care programs. EEC uses these presentations to inform students about the credentials necessary to become early education and care providers and how they can access ongoing educational opportunities, such as DOE's recently adopted Certificate of Occupational Proficiency in Early Childhood Education.
- The Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium (the Consortium): EEC is part of the Consortium's efforts to address child and family literacy. The Consortium is chaired by DOE and includes members from private organizations, state and federal agencies such as DTA, Head Start, the Children's Trust Fund, DSS, DMH, and the Department of

Youth Services (DYS), among others. The Consortium works to create linkages to develop and support family literacy programs. EEC's current focus is on building an early education and care system that supports providers in creating literacy-rich environments for the children in their programs and preparing them for success in school. In the year ahead, EEC will be addressing workforce and curriculum development issues related to literacy and seeking to increase coordination between the family literacy and family support service delivery systems.

### **Improving Salaries and Other Compensation for Child Care Providers**

One of the greatest challenges facing child care providers is the ability to recruit and retain high quality teachers and staff. Providers who care for children of families who receive EEC financial assistance find it increasingly difficult to offer competitive wages and benefits.

Rate Increases: For the last several years, the Legislature has included a rate reserve line item in the state budget in order to increase reimbursement rates paid to subsidized early education and care providers. The chart below summarizes the level of funding provided for rate increases for fiscal years 1997 through 2007. In addition to the increases provided through the rate reserve, OCCS, one of EEC's predecessor agencies, used surplus funds totaling approximately \$7 million to implement a targeted rate increase in fiscal year 2004 in order to reduce rate disparity.

**Subsidized Provider Rate Increases  
FY 1997-2007**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1997	\$25 million
1998	\$2.685 million
2000	\$5.2 million
2001	\$25 million
2005	\$5 million
2006	\$12.5 million
2007	\$12.5 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$87.885 million</b>

The most recent rate increase was implemented in fiscal year 2006. At its December 6, 2005 meeting, the Board of Early Education and Care approved a 3.75% across-the-board increase to EEC's standard contract and voucher rates. The rate increase became effective on December 19, 2005, but was retroactive to July 1, 2005.

EEC will soon begin implementing the \$12.5 million rate increase appropriated for fiscal year 2007. EEC will use \$10 million to provide an across-the-board rate increase, while the remaining \$2.5 million will be used to address rate disparities by age and type of care.

Market Rate and Provider Cost Surveys: As described more fully in Section 3.2, to enable families who receive early education and care financial assistance to have greater access

to child care, EEC completed a new market rate survey in July 2006, with the final results due to EEC in September 2006. EEC's current reimbursement rates are based on the market rate survey completed by its predecessor agency, the Office of Child Care Services, in December 2002 as adjusted by the rate increases that were implemented in fiscal years 2004-2006 and described in detail above.

The market rate survey will provide EEC with an up-to-date and accurate picture of the of the prices that families pay for early education and care services in the Commonwealth and how these prices vary depending on the location of care, the age of the children in care, and the type of provider. With better and more current information about the private market price of care, EEC will be able to establish more adequate reimbursement rates for providers. In addition, information about "private payer" market prices will guide the development of policies affecting all providers of early education and care services, not just those who care for children receiving EEC financial assistance.

In addition to the market rate survey, EEC is in the process of conducting a provider cost survey, the first survey of its kind to collect data on how much it actually costs to deliver care for different types of providers across the state. The survey will collect information on, among other things, provider time, staffing costs, expenditures for space and materials, and revenues collected. The first phase of the survey is focused on family child care providers, while the second and third phases are focused on center-based group care and school age care, respectively. All of the survey phases are currently underway, with the final results due to EEC by the end of November 2006. All *individual* provider information will be kept confidential and will not be revealed to anyone, including EEC.

The results of the provider cost survey will support quality improvement efforts and will help inform EEC's rate setting policies so that providers serving children receiving early education and care financial assistance are paid an adequate and appropriate rate. The results will also give providers valuable information to use in comparing their business to others and assist EEC in planning for expansion of early education and care services in the future.

Transportation Rate Increase: In February 2006, the Board of Early Education and Care approved a \$2.6 million increase, funded through fiscal year 2006 surplus funds, to reimbursement rates paid to subsidized providers for providing transportation services to children in their programs. This increase was the first raise in rates for transportation since 2000. Although implemented in April and May 2006, the transportation rate increase was made retroactive to July 1, 2005. For fiscal year 2007, the Legislature provided EEC with funding to maintain the transportation rate increase.

### **Activities In Support of Early Language, Literacy, Pre-reading, and Numeracy Development**

EEC continues to support and offer training statewide on the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences, the Commonwealth's learning standards for children three to five years old. Training is offered regionally through the CCR&Rs and supported locally through the Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) Program local councils. CPCs provide funding for local communities to enhance the quality of curriculum and assessment practices in child care,

family child care, private, non profit and public preschools. In addition to supporting training for staff and parents on research-based “best practices” that promote children’s school readiness, EEC provides funding for Early Childhood Resource Centers that incorporate literacy, numeracy, and language activities as well as curricular materials, equipment, and family literacy activities to support the development of these skills in young children. The Resource Centers house reference materials, educational and training videos, curriculum kits, and guides. In addition to making resources available to providers and public school teachers, the centers offer training on a variety of topics that relate to promoting young children’s healthy development.

Through the Early Childhood Educators Scholarship and Building Careers Programs, EEC provides financial assistance to enable providers to enroll in college courses that enhance their skills and increase their ability to provide a high quality curriculum that supports the development of children’s language, literacy, pre-reading and numeracy skills. In an effort to standardize the multiple provider certification and training requirements that currently exist and connect such requirements to a well-defined career path, EEC is in the process of developing core competencies for specific job categories, including both teaching and administrative positions, within the early education and care field. The common themes among all of the core competencies include:

- Understanding of child development, behavior, and learning domains;
- Interaction with family, child, and community;
- Program planning, instruction, and curriculum development;
- Ongoing child and program assessment; and
- Ongoing professional growth and development.

The core competencies for teaching staff will reflect the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to work effectively with children and families and will include the following skills which are essential to promoting the development of language, literacy, pre-reading, and numeracy skills: designing, implementing, and assessing curriculum; promoting the language, literacy, and cognitive development of children; and assessing children for school readiness and differentiate instruction for at risk learners.

Massachusetts Family Networks (MFN) provides a variety of supports and services, such as trainings and play groups, to help parents foster their children’s overall growth and development, including cognitive and language/literacy skills. MFN also sponsors training for providers on strategies to promote school readiness skills in young children. Similarly, the Parent Child Home Program (PCHP) provides biweekly literacy activities and coaching to parents and family child care providers to help them support children’s development of language and pre-reading skills. In 2005, EEC focused on bringing PCHP to family child care homes to expand the program’s reach and serve additional children.

EEC is promoting the use of the LearningGames curriculum, a comprehensive package of developmentally appropriate activities that encourage concept and language development in young children from birth through age five, in family child care settings. Through one-on-one coaching and periodic monitoring visits, family child care providers are trained on how to

implement the curriculum and the children in their care are assessed to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum in improving the children's development.

While EEC develops its Quality Rating System, it will continue to encourage providers to increase children's school readiness through a tiered reimbursement system implemented in its contracts for subsidized early education and care. The tiered reimbursement rate is available to center-based and family child care providers who contract with EEC or hold a voucher agreement with the CCR&Rs to provide families with early education and care financial assistance. There are four reimbursement tiers available to providers, each of which is based on their participation in quality initiatives. One of the quality initiatives is for literacy development, another is for enhancing program quality, the third is for professional development, and the last one is for participation in a longitudinal study to assess which preschool program attributes are associated with favorable child outcomes. EEC links provider rate increases to the achievement of specific quality standards, with an emphasis on literacy and professional development.

The Head Start State Collaboration Project (HSSCP) Director serves as an in-house EEC resource to ensure that training modules and materials that address school readiness are made available to EEC-licensed providers. The HSSCP Director works closely with EEC staff to share information about Head Start training opportunities that are available to providers which focus on strengthening children's language, literacy, numeracy, and pre-reading skills. The HSSCP Director also participates in an EEC working group that is developing proposals for a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment system, which will include assessment of language, literacy, and numeracy skills.

### **Activities to Promote Inclusive Child Care**

The Early Intervention/Behavioral Health Early Child Care Inclusion Project (Inclusion Project): EEC has a successful history of supporting inclusion of special needs children in a variety of early education and care settings. EEC licensing regulations have long required that programs accept children with special needs and develop individual plans to meet their needs. Similarly, EEC's preschool program standards and curriculum guidelines require and encourage programs to meet the individual needs of all children. To ease the challenges for families with children with disabilities or special needs, EEC has partnered with DPH's Early Intervention Services, Early Intervention Services' Regional Consultation Programs, MassHealth-Behavioral Health, MBHP, DOE, and CCR&Rs to ensure that children and their families receive individualized services from specialists when necessary.

The goal of providing these services is to give children with special needs a successful experience as they transition from home into an early education and care program and then as they move into a school setting. EEC and its partner agencies share a common vision and work closely together to develop inclusion initiatives, like Regional Consultation Programs.

Regional Consultation Programs (RCPs): EEC and DPH's Early Intervention Services collaborated to establish Regional Consultation Programs (RCPs) across Massachusetts in order to support the individual care required by infants and toddlers with disabilities and to provide on-site expertise at early education and care programs that will make children's experiences in early education and care successful. RCPs also conduct trainings at CCR&Rs. RCPs are staffed by knowledgeable early intervention specialists who use their expertise to ensure that children are

referred to appropriate early education and care settings and help them succeed once they are enrolled.

Early Childhood Special Education Allocation Grant: EEC now administers supplemental federal funds from Section 619, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which provides funding to local school districts to promote the inclusion of preschool age children in regular education programming, including community-based child care facilities, allowing for greater coordination with CCDF-funded services. The funding supports staff salaries, supplies, equipment, training, etc. that are critical to successfully integrating a child with a disability into a typical preschool setting. In fiscal year 2007, EEC expects to award a total of \$7.5 million, with allocations ranging from \$506 to \$500,000.

Community Partnerships for Children Program Comprehensive Services: CPCs provide a range of comprehensive services to children with special needs to promote their continuity of care in early education and care settings. These services include the hiring of additional staff, training and consultation for providers, and the purchase of supplies, furniture, and equipment. EEC's administration of CPC state funding for comprehensive services ensures better coordination with CCDF-funded services.

Comprehensive Mental Health for Child Care: EEC and Mass Health-Behavioral Health are co-administering the Comprehensive Mental Health for Child Care Project (CMHCC) to ensure that EEC contracted supportive child care providers have comprehensive mental health services available for children and their families on-site at their child care program. Currently, EEC funds 16 supportive child care programs across the state as CMHCC pilots. Each of these programs has partnered with a mental health clinic identified by the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP). Through this partnership, the child care program and mental health clinic jointly hire a clinician, who is stationed at the program and considered to be part of their child care staff. The mental health clinic generates one-third of the clinician's salary by billing the families' insurance directly for clinical services. EEC funds the remaining two-thirds of the clinician's salary to enable the clinician to provide a broad range of training and support to children, their families, and the child care staff beyond the billable therapeutic and assessment services that the clinician normally provides. The clinician also helps families access a full range of mental health services at the partnering clinic.

### **Healthy Child Care America and Other Health Activities Including Those Designed to Promote the Social and Emotional Development of Children**

Healthy Child Care America: The EEC Commissioner has held a series of meetings with the Director of the Massachusetts Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Project (MECCS), which focuses on coordination of services for children from birth through age five, and the Associate DPH Commissioner who oversees DPH's Bureau of Family and Community Health, in which MECCS is located. The result of these meetings has been a major reorganization of MECCS designed to elevate its work to a higher level within state government. As part of this reorganization, MECCS will be jointly managed by EEC and DPH. Viewing MECCS as a key mechanism for collaboration across state agencies, the EEC Commissioner is planning to work with the heads of other state agencies to create a comprehensive state plan on early childhood health, mental health/social emotional health, family support and parent education.

Over the next few months, MECCS will concentrate on finalizing and compiling the results of its work over the past three years to share its recommendations, key challenges, and lessons learned with a the new Commissioner-level interagency workgroup comprised of EEC, DPH, DSS, DDTA, DMH, DOE, DMR, EOHHS' Children and Youth and Family Cluster, MassHealth, and the Children's Trust Fund. The Interagency Workgroup's goals, which have also been incorporated into the MECCS strategic plan, are to develop the following: 1) a statewide plan for health screening and developmental screening for young children, including vision, hearing, oral health, and mental health; 2) a comprehensive plan for a children's mental health system; and 3) a "roadmap" for a system of family support and parent education across state agencies.

Licensing: The EEC licensing process promotes the safety and healthy development of children enrolled in early education and care programs and encourages school readiness. EEC is in the process of drafting a set of new licensing regulations that will align its current regulatory requirements and program standards and be linked to a Quality Rating Scale that promotes continuous quality improvement. The new regulatory framework will consist of a set of common core regulations that will apply to family child care, group child care, and school age child care programs, with additional more detailed regulations based on the size of the setting and development stages of the children in care that would differ according to the program's characteristics.

The new regulations will be based upon research that demonstrates that children's cognitive and language skills thrive in early education and care settings where educators and caregivers are well trained and responsive, and will outline requirements in a variety of areas, including health and safety, administration, programming, child guidance, environment, staffing and qualifications, and financial management. The regulations will include specific guidance outlining how providers will:

- ensure children's physical safety;
- promote children's emotional well being;
- provide opportunities for children to develop stable and supportive relationships with their caregivers that promote healthy attachment;
- develop partnerships with parents that reflect respectful appreciation of parents' culture, values, expectations, and goals for their children;
- offer stimulating and developmentally appropriate learning activities that strengthen children's language skills and global development; and
- monitor and document children's developmental milestones, share information with parents, and help identify children who may have a special need.

EEC Technical Assistance and Training: In addition to the trainings listed in the professional development section, EEC provides technical assistance and training through licensing, contracting, and policy visits to programs. An array of technical assistance papers and other materials regarding children's social, emotional, and educational development are available on EEC's website. Available documents include the following: *Child Guidance for Group Child Care Frequently Asked Questions*, *Child Guidance for School Age Parts I-III and Frequently*

*Asked Questions, Family Child Care Curriculum Guide, Early Childhood Program Standards, and Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences.*

### **Other Quality Activities That Increase Parental Choice, and Improve the Quality and Availability of Child Care**

EEC Centralized Waiting List: During the past year, EEC has embarked upon a number of initiatives designed to ensure that all of its programs meet the needs of working families. One of the most important initiatives in this regard has been the development of the EEC centralized waiting list, which consolidated 400 waiting lists for financial assistance into one, real-time system that provides parents seeking EEC financial assistance with more equitable and efficient access. For the first time ever, families in Massachusetts have access to early education and care financial assistance through one centralized system that can be accessed from multiple points of entry. Families can access the waiting list from any CCR&R, contracted provider, or CPC program because waiting list information is stored in a single system, accessible on-line from any CCR&R or provider. When EEC financial assistance becomes available, families receive letters from CCR&Rs, contracted providers, and CPC programs, thereby providing them with access to a variety of programs. To ensure that the centralized waiting list is managed in a consistent manner, EEC issued guidance to the CCR&Rs, contracted providers, and CPCs outlining the intake, updating, and placement process using the waiting list. This guidance clarifies which families can be on the waitlist, how and when to communicate with families to update the waitlist, how to maintain records on waitlist tracking, and when to report waitlist information.

Statewide Priorities and Eligibility Criteria for EEC Financial Assistance: In addition to the centralized waiting list, EEC has established statewide eligibility priorities and criteria for receipt of early education and care financial assistance that CCR&Rs, contracted providers, and CPC programs are required to follow. EEC's eligibility priorities and criteria require CCR&Rs, contracted providers, and CPC programs to enroll priority families and then non-priority families on a first come, first served basis from the top of the centralized waiting list. The implementation of uniform, statewide eligibility priorities and criteria across all EEC programs combined with the establishment of the EEC centralized waiting list ensure that parents in greatest need receive priority access to services and have a variety of program types and settings (including family child care, center-based group child care, public school programs) that meet their needs from which to choose.

In addition to TANF families, who receive immediate access to services, EEC currently prioritizes, subject to the availability of funding, the following families for enrollment into early education and care programs from the centralized waiting list:

- Continuity of Care:
  - Child Left Care Within 3 Months (Child re-enrolled after temporary termination)
  - Geographic Relocation (Family moves within the state)
  - Aging-Out (Child exceeds age limit for current program)
  - Supportive, Teen Parent, Non Traditional Hours Care, Homeless Contract (Contracted Providers Only)

- Voucher (Child in contract waiting for a voucher)
- Sibling:
  - Sibling: Contract (Sister/brother enrolled in contract program)
  - Sibling: Voucher (Sister/brother enrolled in voucher program)
  - Sibling: CPC (Sister/brother enrolled in CPC program)
- Grandparent/Guardian Family (Temporary or legal guardians, including grandparents)
- Child in Foster Care (Foster families referred by DSS)
- Child of Homeless Family (Family is living in a shelter)
- Child of Military Personnel (Military personnel in active “war zone”)
- Child of Teen Parent (Teen is 19 years of age or under in high school or under 18 years of age in GED program)
- Parent with Special Needs (Disability or circumstance renders parent unable to care for child)
- Child with Special Needs (Disability or special need necessitates child care)
- Summer Only Care (Child requires care only for summer, school holidays, vacations, or other school closings)

CCR&Rs, contracted providers, and CPC programs are required to enroll priority families first, and then non-priority families on a first come, first served basis from the top of the centralized waiting list.

EEC is in the process of establishing more clearly defined priority categories to ensure that the most vulnerable families and children at-risk of school failure, including those with special needs and very low incomes, are prioritized for service. Over the coming months as it continues its development of uniform policies and a single financial assistance system, EEC will implement a new set of priority categories for families waiting to receive EEC financial assistance. These priorities will continue to be based on a combination of low family income and other research-based risk factors. The new list of priorities will include:

- Extraordinary Circumstances;
- Domestic Violence;
- Homeless Family;
- Teen Parent;
- Special Need of Child;
- Special Need of Primary Parent/Guardian;
- Low Parental Education;
- Federal Poverty Level;
- Temporary or Permanent Guardian (including grandparent);
- DSS Adoptive Family; and
- Foster Child.

In addition to these new priorities, TANF families will, as always, have immediate access to financial assistance through vouchers and families with an open protective services case with the Department of Social Services will continue to have access to early education and care services through EEC’s supportive child care contracts.

EEC is working closely with its Transition Team, Parent Advisory Committee, and other external experts and stakeholders on the development of the new priorities. EEC's new system of priorities will feature common definitions and verification procedures as well as a calibration system to help ensure that the higher priority families (i.e., families in greatest need) receive services soonest. EEC anticipates that the new prioritization system will be implemented by July 1, 2007.

Flexible Funding for Transportation: EEC strives to ensure that children who are eligible for subsidized child care can receive the care they need. Providers who contract with EEC to provide supportive and teen parent child care services receive funding to transport children to and from their programs. Other early education and care providers can apply for transportation funding through the flexible pool for children who are unable to attend due to a lack of transportation. Flexible pool funds can be used to provide transportation in cases where parents are physically incapacitated and unable to transport the child, the parents do not have access to a car or to public transportation, or where there is a conflict between the parents' work schedule and the program's hours that prevents the parents from transporting the child. While the flexible pool offers providers additional support to enable children in great need of services to attend their programs, EEC will be considering, in the years ahead, other more efficient and even more flexible ways to address access barriers, such as the lack of transportation.

Massachusetts Head Start-State Collaboration Project: The Massachusetts Head Start-State Collaboration Project (HSSCP), which is located at EEC, helps to improve the lives of low-income children and their families by improving the way services and support for young children are designed, delivered, coordinated, and organized. A key part of the project is to encourage widespread collaboration between Head Start and other appropriate programs, services, and initiatives, as well as to increase Head Start partnerships in the Commonwealth's child care community.

EEC currently supports the provision of Head Start services to low-income children and families through early education and care financial assistance (vouchers, contracts, or CPC grants) for child care during the hours before and after Head Start and Early Head Start programs are open and on full days when such programs are closed (e.g., school vacations and summer). The coordination between EEC and Head Start/Early Head Start programs provides them with flexibility to enroll children whose families require additional hours of child care in order to be able to attend Head Start or Early Head Start. In addition, EEC provides supplemental grants, which are funded by a specific line item in the state budget, to enable Head Start programs to enroll additional children and fulfill the federal requirement that they receive at least 20% of their funding from non-federal sources.

Provider Quality Rating System: EEC is in the process of creating a Quality Rating System to promote ongoing quality improvement efforts by early education and care providers and programs. The Quality Rating System will have multiple, research-based levels and will be designed in a way that allows all providers to participate, regardless of funding stream, and encourages them to continuously improve the quality of their program. Once developed, the Quality Rating System will serve several purposes. It will help EEC assess the level of quality provided by an early education and care program and will provide a measure of a program's

improvement over time. It will also assist parents in selecting an early education and care program that better meets their child's needs by offering them enhanced guidance about the quality levels of different programs.

Tiered Reimbursement Rate System: While EEC develops its Quality Rating System, it will continue to encourage providers to increase children's school readiness through a tiered reimbursement system implemented in its contracts for subsidized early education and care. The tiered reimbursement rate is available to center-based and family child care providers who contract with EEC or hold a voucher agreement with the CCR&Rs to provide families with early education and care financial assistance. There are four reimbursement tiers available to providers, each of which is based on their participation in quality initiatives. One of the quality initiatives is for literacy development, another is for enhancing program quality, the third is for professional development, and the last one is for participation in a longitudinal study to assess which preschool program attributes are associated with favorable child outcomes. EEC links provider rate increases to the achievement of specific quality standards, with an emphasis on literacy and professional development.

The first tier, *Literacy Development for School Readiness*, is mandatory. Child care providers must participate in this initiative to be eligible for participation in any of the others. To meet the requirements of this tier, providers must develop and implement a curriculum plan for literacy that is approved by EEC. EEC also requires the statewide network of CCR&Rs to offer emergent literacy training developed by EEC to help providers participating in this initiative develop an appropriate literacy curriculum. EEC has posted a technical assistance document on its website that explains emergent literacy and provides examples of best practice ideas for a literary curriculum.

The remaining three tiers, *Program Assessment*, *Salary Incentive Program for Professional Development*, and *Longitudinal Study*, are optional. The *Program Assessment* tier requires that providers participate in a training course about administering the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) quality assessment tool for their type of early education and care program and using it to assess their own program. Providers are required to develop a plan to improve their program's environment based on the ERS assessment findings. The *Salary Incentive Program for Professional Development Initiative* tier requires center-based providers to develop and initiate a salary incentive program for professional development that will improve the staffing quality in their programs. Family child care providers participating in this initiative must develop a professional development plan to improve their own skills. The *Longitudinal Study* tier requires providers to participate in and partner with a university to conduct a longitudinal literacy study to assess the effectiveness of the school readiness curriculum.

Research and Evaluation: EEC's research and evaluation unit has supported the new agency's goals of increasing access, affordability, and quality through research on user populations and costs in the Commonwealth's current system of early education and care. By consolidating data from different sources such as its own internal licensing and subsidy information systems, US Census records, and survey data, EEC has been able to present a clear picture of the status of early care and education in Massachusetts. EEC is continuing to develop and improve its data warehouse to make data from the different systems available to agency staff and to generate reports for the Legislature, early education and care stakeholders, and the public.

EEC is collaborating with Abt Associates, MindNurture, and family child care systems to conduct a national study of the LearningGames approach in family child care systems. LearningGames is a developmental curriculum that grew out of the Abecedarian Project and is built on evidence from 30 years of research that children learn best in individual interactions with responsive caregivers who provide rich language stimulation. The curriculum consists of about 200 simple everyday activities to help parents and caregivers enhance the development of children birth to 60 months. The study will test this curriculum and assess its effectiveness in helping family child care providers improve children's development. The study will also assess the difficulties of implementing a new mentoring system and identify the difficulties encountered when training and monitoring a new curriculum approach. The study is funded through a grant from ACF to determine the effectiveness of implementing LearningGames in a family child care network environment.

In the spring of 2006, EEC hired a consultant to perform the Market Rate Survey, and, for the first time, to perform a Provider Cost Survey (PCS). The PCS will gather information about the actual cost of providing care in Massachusetts and help EEC analyze the cost of program components in different parts of the state. The combined data will help EEC not only understand the early education and care market, but also determine places where the market price for care may be insufficient to support quality programs. The initial results of the Market Rate Survey were delivered to EEC in June 2006, with the final report to be made available by September 2006.

In fiscal year 2006, the Legislature charged EEC with planning the development of a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment system. EEC has contracted with Glenwood Associates to survey licensed providers serving children from birth through age five to determine if they are using child assessment tools to perform ongoing evaluations of the children's progress. This study is the first step in developing a kindergarten readiness child assessment system in Massachusetts. The purpose of the assessment system is to improve all children's readiness for school, assist providers in improving their teaching skills and curricula, and strengthen communication between providers and parents through periodic reports that outline the progress and development of each child. The assessment system will also be used to improve the dissemination of strength-based information between programs.

Complaints and Incidents Committee: EEC has been conducting an internal evaluation of its process for receiving, responding to, and investigating complaints about providers in order to further improve the quality of its licensing practices. The Complaints and Incidents Committee, which is comprised of staff from EEC's licensing, investigation, legal, and systems units, was asked to identify aspects of EEC's complaint review and investigation process requiring change and to propose improvements. The Committee has drafted a proposed new policy to enhance EEC's ability to quickly and efficiently respond to all information received about providers, whether alleging a regulatory violation or not, and has proposed improvements to EEC's electronic complaint tracking system necessary to implement the suggested policy changes.

New Provider Orientations: EEC licensing staff provides orientations for people who are interested in applying for EEC licensure and for newly licensed providers. These orientations

give new providers an opportunity to meet the licensing staff and ask specific questions about how to run a high quality early education and care program.

New Director's Forums: EEC licensors regularly schedule meetings in each of its six regions for new program directors. The meetings give new directors an opportunity to ask questions of EEC staff and other directors and to begin building connections within the early education and care community.

Large Family Child Care Group: To encourage professional development and collaboration, the EEC Regional Offices arrange for large family child care providers to take part in informal meetings sponsored by EEC during which they share their experiences and challenges with one another.

Transition Team: EEC has established a Transition Team comprised of a diverse set of stakeholders broadly representing early education and after school care, K-12 education, and higher education in order to obtain input on its on-going work to establish a unified early education and care system. Members of the Transition Team also serve on one of the three advisory committees that provide feedback and expertise to EEC's internal working groups organized around EEC's key priorities and policy work-access, affordability, and quality. This process provides EEC and its stakeholders with the opportunity for important dialogue on how best to serve children and families, while also generating specific and concrete ideas for improving specific aspects of the early education and care system such as prioritization of children and families in need and waitlist management.

In-home/Relative Care (Informal Care): Although in-home/relative care is not a licensed form of care, EEC has taken steps to increase the quality of informal care by funding training for caregivers. All in-home/relative care providers are required to attend an orientation and training session conducted by the CCR&Rs. These trainings cover topics such as health and safety issues, age appropriate activities, and appropriate child guidance techniques. As part of the orientations, the CCR&Rs provide in-home/relative care providers with a resource packet with information on educational resources available to them in their community along with information on how to become a licensed child care provider.

5.1.5 Is any entity identified in sections 5.1.1 or 5.1.4 a non-governmental entity?

Yes, the following entities named in this part are non-governmental:  
Name:  
Type:

No.

- CCR&RS and CPCs are private non-profit agencies.
- MFN and PCHP programs are private non-profit programs.
- The Regional Consultation Programs that are contracted to DPH to provide Early Intervention services are private non-profit programs.

- The United Way of Massachusetts Bay is a private not for profit organization.
- The Massachusetts School Age Coalition is a private not for profit association.
- Massachusetts Health and Recovery Program (contracted to DPH and DMH) is a private not for profit program.
- Mass Behavioral Health Partnership Programs (MBHP) (contracted to DMA) are private not for profit programs.
- Abt Associates and MindNurture are private, non-governmental organizations.

## **5.2 Good Start, Grow Smart Planning and Development**

This section of the Plan relates to the President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative which is envisioned as a Federal-State partnership that creates linkages between CCDF, including funds set-aside for quality, and State public and private efforts to promote early learning. In this section, each Lead Agency is asked to assess its State's progress toward developing voluntary guidelines on language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts and a plan for the education and training of child care providers. The third component of the President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative, planning for coordination across at least four early childhood programs and funding streams, was addressed in Section 2.1.2.

5.2.1 **Status of Voluntary Guidelines for Early Learning.** Indicate which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts to develop research-based early learning guidelines (content standards) regarding language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts for three to five year-olds.

- Planning.** The State is planning for the development of early learning guidelines. Expected date of plan completion: \_\_\_\_\_
- Developing.** The State is in the process of developing early learning guidelines. Expected date of completion: \_\_\_\_\_
- Developed.** The State has approved the early learning guidelines, but has not yet developed or initiated an implementation plan. The early learning guidelines are included as **Attachment** \_\_\_\_.
- Implementing.** In addition to having developed early learning guidelines, the State has embarked on implementation efforts which may include dissemination, training or embedding guidelines in the professional development system. The guidelines are included as **Attachment 7**.
- Revising.** The State has previously developed early learning guidelines and is now revising those guidelines. The guidelines are included as **Attachment** \_\_\_\_.
- Other (describe):**

Describe the progress made by the State in developing voluntary guidelines for early learning since the date of submission of the 2004-2005 State Plan.

The Commonwealth's Board of Education approved the Early Childhood Program Standards and Learning Guidelines for Three and Four Year Olds (Standards and Guidelines) and the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences in April of 2003. The Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences, which are based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, are currently used to guide ongoing curriculum development, instruction, and assessment in center-based preschool programs that receive CPC funding. EEC is reviewing the Standards and Guidelines and working to establish requirements for other age groups. Through the efforts of its internal Regulation Reform working group (previously described in Sections 1.5 and 5.1), EEC is working to align its current regulatory requirements with the Standards and Guidelines and developing a Quality Rating Scale that promotes continuous quality improvement.

If developed, are the guidelines aligned with K-12 content standards?

- Yes. If yes, describe.  
 No.

The Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences, are based on the standards for Pre-Kindergarten through Kindergarten (or Pre-Kindergarten through Grades 1-4) in the approved revisions of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

Please attach a copy of the guidelines. If the guidelines are available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address:

[www.eec.state.ma.us/docs/WorkforceDevelopmentPlan.pdf](http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs/WorkforceDevelopmentPlan.pdf)

5.2.2 **Domains of Voluntary Guidelines for Early Learning.** Do the guidelines address language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts?

- Yes.  
 No.

Do the guidelines address domains not specifically included in *Good Start, Grow Smart*, such as social/emotional, cognitive, physical, health, creative arts, or other domains?

- Yes. If yes, describe.  
 No.

The Standards and Guidelines address best practices for programs in the following areas:

- Interactions Between Staff and Children and Among Children;
- Curriculum and Assessment;
- Physical Environment;
- Family Involvement;
- Staff Qualifications and Staff Development;
- Group Ratio and Size;
- Health and Safety;

- Nutrition and Food Service;
- Transportation;
- Administration; and
- Accreditation and Evaluation.

In addition, the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences, which are based on the standards for Pre-Kindergarten through Kindergarten (or Pre-Kindergarten through Grades 1-4) in the approved revisions of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, provide ideas for learning experiences that preschool staff can use to design a curriculum that is aligned with that of the public schools to ensure that there is continuity from preschool into kindergarten. The Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences focus on the skills and knowledge that staff should help young children develop, rather than on what preschool aged children are expected to know or do at specific ages.

Have guidelines been developed for children in age groups not specifically included in *Good Start, Grow Smart* (children other than those aged three to five)?

- Yes. If yes, describe.
- No.

- 5.2.3 **Implementation of Voluntary Guidelines for Early Learning.** Describe the process the State used or expects to use in **implementing** its early learning guidelines. How are (or will) community, cultural, linguistic and individual variations, as well as the diversity of child care settings (be) acknowledged in implementation? Materials developed to support implementation of the guidelines are included as **Attachment** \_\_\_\_.

The Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences have been disseminated to providers statewide through CPCs and local trainings. EEC has staff available to CPCs to provide technical assistance to communities that need training on the Standards and Guidelines. A series of regional trainings were held in 2003 and 2004 to train all providers serving preschool age children through CPC funding. Trainings were also offered by the CCR&Rs and the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

- 5.2.4 **Assessment of Voluntary Guidelines for Early Learning.** As applicable, describe the State's plan for **assessing** the effectiveness and/or implementation of the guidelines. Written reports of these efforts are included as **Attachment** \_\_\_\_.

The Standards and Guidelines incorporate all of EEC's licensing regulations. EEC assesses compliance with its regulations through regular monitoring visits by licensing and contract staff. In addition, EEC is currently in the process of developing a kindergarten readiness assessment system that will be implemented statewide. The proposed system will be aligned with the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences to ensure that all children who

are enrolled in an early education and care program, regardless of whether it is a family child care, center-based group child care, Head Start, or public preschool program, receive ongoing progress reports to monitor their global development and have access to early childhood screening to identify potential special needs. The system will also evaluate preschoolers on critical readiness skills. The results of the kindergarten readiness assessment will be one of the factors considered in determining how effectively an early education and care provider is implementing the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences.

5.2.5 **State Plans for Professional Development.** Indicate which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts to develop a professional development plan for early childhood providers that includes all the primary sectors: child care, Head Start, and public education.

- Planning.** Indicate whether steps are under way to develop a plan. If so, describe the time frames for completion and/or implementation, the steps anticipated, and how the plan is expected to support early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.
- Developing.** A plan is being drafted. The draft is included as **Attachment \_\_\_\_**.
- Developed.** A plan has been written but has not yet been implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment \_\_\_\_**.
- Implementing.** A plan has been written and is now in the process of being implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment 8**.
- Other (describe):**

Describe the progress made by the State in a plan for professional development since the date of submission of the 2004-2005 State Plan.

As part of its consolidation of the Commonwealth's early education and care programs and services, EEC is working toward building one system of evaluation, technical assistance, and support for the early education and care workforce. M. G.L. c. 15D, § 5 requires the Board of Early Education and Care to develop and annually update an implementation plan for a workforce development system. In January 2006, the Board approved EEC's first workforce development plan, which outlines a thorough, comprehensive, and thoughtful framework for building a system that:

- strengthens and improves the existing workforce development system, providing a smooth transition of support and encouragement for staff to continue pursuing degrees and credentials;
- includes those currently working in the field, while providing a stronger foundation to encourage more individuals to enter the profession;
- provides a clear path for staff to continuously improve their skills while recognizing the good and important work that they do;
- supports the diverse professional development needs of all those working in the field, including public school staff, center-based staff, and family child care;

- builds a seamless system to improve quality across all types of care, acknowledging the necessary connection among qualifications, effectiveness and compensation, regardless of where care is provided; and
- recognizes the need for additional resources across the system to balance quality improvements with the need to maintain access to a variety of care settings, and with the need to make quality care affordable to all parents.

EEC's workforce development system is comprised of five interlocking components:

1. Uniform, consistent and ongoing data collection on the workforce;
2. Clear articulation of core competencies and skills needed across multiple areas;
3. A comprehensive evaluation system to assess mastery of core competencies;
4. A credential and career path system linked to core competency mastery and evaluation; and
5. Alignment of all partners to support and implement all parts of the system.

For each component, EEC has developed a set of recommendations to be implemented, each of which requires careful consideration of many important issues, including maintaining access to and affordability of early education and child care for all families. These recommendations (which are outlined in greater detail below) include the development of core competencies for all EEC credentialed positions, a career lattice, mandatory professional registry, and an annual staff evaluation linked to core competencies. As it implements each of these recommendations, EEC will adhere to its Quality Guiding Principles, which provide that each of EEC's quality initiatives should:

- Be inclusive of family child care, public schools, group child care, Head Start, faith-based care, other non-profit programs;
- Build on the strengths of current system regulations and standards;
- Be inclusive of children of all abilities, from birth through school age;
- Be based on knowledge of child growth, development, and outcomes;
- Be developed and implemented with thorough input from all stakeholders;
- Be supportive of all providers to continuously improve programs;
- Ensure that parents have a variety of program choices;
- Balance improvements with affordability for parents; and
- Embrace diversity and cultural competency.

One of EEC's most important considerations in developing and implementing all aspects of its workforce development plan is to ensure that any increases in expectations for workforce qualifications are accompanied by resources to support both individuals and programs in meeting those expectations. As the recommendations are developed over time, EEC will seek additional funding to help individuals improve their skills, and help all types of providers recruit, retain, and compensate a qualified workforce. Any additional requirements must be accompanied by

additional funding to ensure continuous quality improvement and maintain affordability for families.

To support its new professional development system, EEC is working to align the recommendations in its workforce development plan with policies and standards of other relevant state agencies, like DOE and the Board of Higher Education, and institutions of higher education, and to strengthen partnerships between the CCR&Rs and CPCs to facilitate training opportunities, while minimizing duplication.

If your State has developed a plan for professional development, does the plan include:	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
A link to Early Learning Guidelines (EEC Workforce Development Plan, pages 15-19)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuum of training and education to form a career path (EEC Workforce Development Plan, pages 23-25)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulation from one type of training to the next (EEC Workforce Development Plan, pages 23-25)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance through approval of trainers (EEC Workforce Development Plan, pages 26-28)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance through approval of training content (EEC Workforce Development Plan, pages 26-28)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A system to track practitioners' training (EEC Workforce Development Plan, pages 26-28)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment or evaluation of training effectiveness (EEC Workforce Development Plan, pages 20-22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State Credentials – Please state for which roles (e.g. infant and toddler credential, directors' credential, etc.) (EEC Workforce Development Plan, pages 23-25)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialized strategies to reach family, friend and neighbor caregivers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

For each Yes response, reference the page(s) in the plan and briefly describe the Lead Agency's efforts.

## **Core Competencies and Skills**

The critical first step in developing a workforce development system is defining core competencies, i.e., the knowledge and skills that are necessary to be effective in working with children. In its research on core competencies for the early education and care workforce, EEC has identified common themes, including:

- understanding of child development, behavior, and learning domains;
- interaction with family, child, and community;
- program planning, instruction, and curriculum development;
- ongoing child and program assessment; and
- ongoing professional growth and development.

In addition to the core competencies, there are certain supportive skills that everyone in the workforce should be able to demonstrate. These skills include self-assessment and self-advocacy, mastery and application of foundational concepts from general education, written and verbal communication, the ability to make connections between prior knowledge and experiences and new learning, and the ability to identify and use professional resources.

Over the next two years, EEC is planning to:

1. Develop indicators that reflect common core competencies for specific job categories reflecting the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to work effectively with children and families.
2. Develop indicators that reflect common core competencies reflective of effective administration and leadership practices for working with staff, children, and families.
3. Improve access to adult basic education, including literacy, math, and fluency in English.

## **Credentials and Career Path**

One of the major success factors in any program that involves children is the retention of highly-qualified staff. The first step toward this is establishing consistent job titles and categories. The next step is linking this credentialing to a system by which staff can grow professionally.

There are two different aspects that need to be considered in establishing a career path for the early education and care workforce. One is a “career ladder,” which relates to the individual practitioner’s progress through the field from entry level through attainment of additional degrees, training, and on-the-job experience. In the career ladder, the accomplishment of goals is generally focused and sequential. This can be viewed as the “depth” of training and professional development. The other is a “career lattice,” which guides the individual through the system. The career lattice reflects the accomplishment of various skills/competencies required for various positions, and includes multiple points of entry allowing the practitioner to gain knowledge and skills in a variety of areas. This may be viewed as one’s “breadth” of training and professional development.

The current workforce certification process administered by EEC does not provide any clear path for individuals outside of center-based programs. It is set up as more of a short career ladder than a career lattice. In addition, the career path to separate qualifications articulated through DOE's teacher licensure process, while connected to some EEC certification, is not automatic or streamlined. EEC plans to create a system that connects all types of training from a 2-hour first aid course to a 3-credit college course so that entrants into the early education and care field have an established path to guide them, both in terms of breadth and depth, in their professional development. To that end, EEC is planning to:

1. Create job categories that are aligned with specific competencies and reflective of mastery as demonstrated through effective evaluation. The categories should be general enough to be flexible across provider types, but specific enough to articulate the necessary skills to perform the job. They should also include all types of positions, from entry level assistants to administration and leadership roles.
2. Develop a "career lattice" to provide multiple points of entry and opportunities for lateral movement (across settings, age groups, programs) as well as to allow for progression from entry levels to advanced professional levels.
3. Establish criteria for recognizing job experience and prior education and training in order to retain existing staff and to identify the career lattice for the current workforce.
4. Maintain and expand scholarships and other financial support for all levels of the workforce to improve their skills.

### **Professional Registry and Quality Assurance**

EEC is planning to create an information technology infrastructure that links all of the components of its workforce development system. This information technology infrastructure will include a statewide registry of early education and care professionals that will contain provider information, teacher qualification information, and Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) and other background check information. The registry will also include information on ongoing training and education and will allow individuals to apply for certification and renewals on-line, track their participation in training and workforce development opportunities, and monitor their progress toward a credential. The registry will collect information on those individuals working in administrative, managerial, teaching, and assistant roles with children from birth to age 14, in all types of EEC licensed and authorized program settings, including family child care, group child care, school age care, and programs operated by or within public schools.

In addition to creating a registry of the early education and care workforce, EEC will establish a clearinghouse for information on all approved training and education opportunities, grants, scholarships, incentives, and awards relating to professional development, and job opportunities at EEC-licensed and authorized programs across the state. By creating a data clearinghouse that provides easily accessible information, EEC can ensure that professional

development opportunities for the workforce are cost-effective, time-effective, results-oriented, and connected to improving the quality of the Commonwealth’s early education and care system

A comprehensive information technology system that not only tracks professional development opportunities and certifications based on core competencies, but also publicizes grants, awards, job postings, and information on the importance of early education and care, will create a unique opportunity to unify the field around workforce development. Such a system would bring together state agencies, institutions of higher education, professional development agencies, the early education and care workforce, as well as parents, to support and build the quality of the workforce.

**Assessment**

Assessment is a central component to any type of workforce development, as it is critical for skill building and quality improvement. Assessment is also a critical part of the quality improvement because it connects core competencies with credentialing and informs appropriate choices for ongoing professional development. Without assessment, it is impossible for EEC, employers, providers, and individual staff to understand an individual’s ability to work with children and families.

EEC is planning to develop a comprehensive, objective assessment system that connects core competencies to credentialing. This system would provide standards, technical assistance, training, and support for providers to evaluate staff effectively on a regular basis, facilitating continuous quality improvement and professional development. This multi-leveled approach to assessment would not only create valuable and lasting connections to the skills and knowledge are needed to enter and move on a career path throughout the field, but would also serve as ongoing “in-service” professional and career development for those currently working in the field. The assessment system will be carefully developed to balance accountability for those working in the field with flexibility around implementation and input.

For each No response, indicate whether the Lead Agency intends to incorporate these components.

**Specialized Strategies to Reach Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregivers**

One of EEC’s priorities in implementing its workforce development plan is expansion of training and technical assistance opportunities for providers who enter the field with limited training and experience, including family, friend, and neighbor caregivers. Local and regional training on core knowledge topics, including child growth and development, developmentally appropriate activities for all age groups, effective guidance practices and basic management skills will be accessible to both licensed and licensed-exempt providers. In the future, EEC anticipates developing a more formal plan to address the needs of family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Are the opportunities available:	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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Statewide	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Center-based Child Care Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Group Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Family Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To In-Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Describe how the plan addresses early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development.

The core competencies that are developed for specific job categories will reflect the knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with children. Early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development are an integral part of the knowledge and skills necessary to provide quality early education and care services and are reflected in the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences. EEC will ensure that the core competencies are aligned with the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences and incorporate the knowledge and skills to help children develop language, literacy, and numeracy skills necessary for school success.

Are program or provider-level incentives offered to encourage provider training and education?

- Yes. Describe, including any connections between the incentives and training relating to early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.
- No. If no, is there any plan to offer incentives to encourage provider training and education?

Through the Early Childhood Educators Scholarship and Building Careers Programs, EEC provides financial assistance to enable providers to enroll in college courses that enhance their skills and increase their ability to provide a high quality curriculum that supports the development of children’s language, literacy, pre-reading and numeracy skills.

Early Childhood Educators Scholarship Program: During fiscal year 2006, EEC, in collaboration with the Board of Higher Education, provided one million dollars in scholarships to early childhood educators who were employed in the field for at least a year and are enrolled in either an associate's or bachelor's degree program in early childhood education or a related field. The scholarship program is open to individuals working with children from birth through school age, in EEC licensed or authorized programs. Scholarship funds can pay for up to three courses per semester. Applicants must also be willing to sign an agreement to continue employment as an early educator in Massachusetts upon graduation. The 390 educators who received scholarships in fiscal year 2006 represented 223 programs across the state, 76% of which serve children receiving EEC financial assistance. Approximately 46% of the scholarship recipients are pursuing an Associates degree, while the remaining 54% are pursuing a bachelor’s degree.

For fiscal year 2007, the Legislature has increased funding for the scholarship program to three million dollars, all of which will be awarded according to the same criteria used in fiscal year 2006.

Building Careers: Funded primarily through federal special education dollars which EEC now administers, EEC awarded grants to 26 two and four year colleges to provide four courses annually to a cohort of 20 early education and care providers who were enrolled in an early childhood degree program. The coursework places a special emphasis on understanding, assessing, and instructing children with disabilities, but who were enrolled in a typical early education and care setting. This program funds not only tuition, but also counseling and on-site supervisory visits.

What are the expected **outcomes** of the State's professional development plan and efforts to improve the skills of child care providers? As applicable, how does (or will) the State assess the effectiveness of its plan and efforts?

EEC has developed a workforce development plan that when implemented will result in quality, systemic improvement in the services provided to children by early education and care providers. Fundamentally, the plan will ensure that that all providers receive core knowledge training on child growth and development, developmentally appropriate practices, observing and recording children's behavior, and working with families. The plan will also provide opportunities for all providers to participate in a new credentialing system and career lattice that will clearly identify their level of mastery with regard to the core competencies. The new credentialing system will promote high standards, ensure that providers demonstrate the requisite knowledge and skills for their roles and responsibilities, include multiple pathways to document competency that credits prior training and experience, and award a portable credential that facilitates employment in multiple early care and education settings. In addition, the workforce development plan will assess providers' competencies through evaluation, require enrollment in a statewide professional registry, and administer scholarship, subsidy, training, and support services to current providers in order to ensure that they participate in ongoing professional development activities.

EEC will assess the effectiveness of its workforce development plan through evaluation of child outcomes and provider assessment. EEC is in the process of developing a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment system that will be a component of ongoing assessment for all children from birth through age five. One of the benefits of this assessment system is that it will enable EEC to monitor children's progress over time and to correlate the provision of professional development with child outcomes, particularly school readiness indicators. Currently, EEC requires completion of the ITERS and/or the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) by programs as part of the criteria for accessing quality enhancement funding. Measures of program quality, including the ITERS, ECERS, Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO), and NAEYC accreditation, will be reviewed to assess the impact of professional development on the quality of services provided to children.

If so, how does (or will) the State use assessment to help shape its professional development plan and training/education for child care providers?

Please see the response above.

**PART 6**  
**HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS**

*(Only the 50 States and the District of Columbia complete Part 6.)*

The National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care (NRCHSCC) of DHHS's Maternal and Child Health Bureau supports a comprehensive, current, on-line listing of the licensing and regulatory requirements for child care in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. In lieu of requiring a State Lead Agency to provide information that is already publicly available, ACF accepts this compilation as accurately reflecting the States' licensing requirements. The listing, which is maintained by the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center School of Nursing, is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/>.

**6.1 Health and Safety Requirements for Center-Based Providers** (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, §98.16(j))

6.1.1 Are all center-based providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation?

- Yes. Answer 6.1.2, skip 6.1.3, and go to 6.2.  
 No. Describe which center-based providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.1.2 and 6.1.3.

6.1.2 Have center licensing requirements as relates to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since approval of the last State Plan?  
(§98.41(a)(2)&(3))

- Yes, and the changes are as follows:  
 No.

6.1.3 For center-based care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

**6.2 Health and Safety Requirements for Group Home Providers** (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.2.1 Are all group home providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation? If:

- Yes. Answer 6.2.2, skip 6.2.3, and go to 6.3.  
 No. Describe which group home providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.2.2 and 6.2.3.

6.2.2 Have group home licensing requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

- Yes, and the changes are as follows:  
 No.

6.2.3 For group home care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

**6.3 Health and Safety Requirements for Family Providers** (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.3.1 Are all family child care providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation? If:

- Yes. Answer 6.3.2, skip 6.3.3, and go to 6.4.  
 No. Describe which family child care providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.3.2 and 6.3.3.

6.3.2 Have family child care provider requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

- Yes, and the changes are as follows:  
 No.

6.3.3 For family care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

**6.4 Health and Safety Requirements for In-Home Providers** (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.4.1 Are all in-home child care providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under the State law reflected in the NRCHSCC's compilation referenced above?

- Yes. Answer 6.4.2, skip 6.4.3, and go to 6.5.  
 No. Describe which in-home child care providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.4.2 and 6.4.3.

All in-home child care providers are exempt from licensure, but they are subject to certain requirements, as outlined in section 6.4.3. below.

6.4.2 Have in-home health and safety requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

- Yes, and the changes are as follows:  
 No.

6.4.3 For in-home care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)

Before in-home providers can receive payment for their services, EEC requires that they attend an orientation and training session conducted by the CCR&Rs. The topics at the orientation include health and safety issues, age appropriate activities, and appropriate behavior management. At the orientation, in-home providers are given training in preventing and controlling disease. This includes DPH immunization guidelines and information about universal precautions and sanitizing procedures. During the registration process, an in-home provider must complete a check list certifying that they have received and reviewed information on prevention and control of infectious diseases including immunizations. Additionally, the in-home provider is required to immediately notify a parent if a communicable disease is introduced to the child care home.

- Building and physical premises safety

Providers are trained in home safety, injury prevention, poison prevention, and fire safety. The CCR&R also gives all providers a resource packet.

In-home providers must have a plan for evacuating the children from the child care site, including escape routes from each floor level and a method of contacting the Fire Department or other authorities after the child care site is evacuated. In-home providers are required to have smoke detectors in operative condition located throughout the home, including each floor level and basement, and must have a working telephone at the child care site at all times and have emergency telephone numbers posted near the telephone. After the orientation, providers must complete a checklist certifying that they have received and reviewed information on building and physical premises safety.

- Health and safety training

Providers are given training on EEC's Back to Sleep Campaign, a SIDS informational brochure, safety training, first aid training and information on how to find CPR classes. During the registration process, an in-home provider must complete a check list certifying that they have received and reviewed information on health and safety training, including first aid and CPR. In-home providers must also have a plan for dealing with medical emergencies that includes a method to notify parents immediately of any injuring requiring emergency treatment. Also, these providers are required to obtain written parental authorization to administer medication to a child and parental authorization for treating a child in a hospital.

EEC distinguishes between in-home care that is provided by a relative of the child and care that is provided by a non-relative for one aspect of its health and safety requirements. For those in-home child care providers who are not related to the children for whom they care, EEC requires that a criminal background check (CORI) be completed. Only those providers who are

approved in the criminal background process will be eligible to receive payment for child care services. Criminal background checks, however, are not completed for in-home providers who care for children to whom they are related. *See* Section 6.5.

### **6.5 Exemptions to Health and Safety Requirements**

At Lead Agency option, the following relatives: grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, or siblings (who live in a separate residence from the child in care) may be exempted from health and safety requirements. (658P(4)(B), §98.41(a)(1)(ii)(A))

Indicate the Lead Agency's policy regarding these relative providers:

- All relative providers are subject to the same requirements as described in sections 6.1 - 6.4 above, as appropriate; there are **no exemptions** for relatives or different requirements for them.
- All relative providers are **exempt** from all health and safety requirements.
- Some or all** relative providers are subject to different health and safety requirements from those described in sections 6.1 - 6.4. The following describes those requirements and identifies the relatives they apply to:

EEC does not conduct criminal background checks on in-home relative providers. Otherwise, relative providers are subject to the same requirements as in-home, non-relative providers, as described in Section 6.4.

### **6.6 Enforcement of Health and Safety Requirements**

Each Lead Agency is required to certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided comply with all applicable health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(E), §§98.40(a)(2), 98.41(d)) The following is a description of how health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

- Are child care providers subject to routine unannounced visits (i.e., not specifically for the purpose of complaint investigation or issuance/renewal of a license)?
  - No.
  - Yes, and the following indicates the providers subject to routine unannounced visits and the frequency of those visits:

EEC licensors make an announced visit to all licensees before a license is issued, and again within the first six months to one year after licensing. All licensees are subject to unannounced visits at any time. The licensing unit's goal is to make at least one unannounced visit per licensing cycle. Licensors also make more frequent unannounced visits if the licensee has difficulty maintaining compliance with EEC's health and safety regulations. In those instances, the licensor makes unannounced visits on a regular basis. The most common unannounced follow-up visit schedule is once per quarter, but depending on the seriousness of the licensee's health and safety problems, the licensor may visit the provider monthly or on

another schedule, as appropriate. Supervisors and managers review the licensor's monitoring schedules on a monthly basis.

In addition to routine unannounced visits, staff from EEC's investigation unit, the licensor, or a supervisor make at least one unannounced visit when EEC receives a complaint about a program.

- Are child care providers subject to background checks?  
 No.  
 Yes, and the following types of providers are subject to background checks (indicate when such checks are conducted):

EEC requires criminal background checks for any person who provides child care in a residential program, a family child care home or center-based child care program, any in-home, non-relative provider, and, in family child care homes, any household member or person regularly on the premises who is 17 years of age or older. These people must receive criminal offender record information (CORI) approval before they have the potential for unsupervised contact with children.

EEC is currently in the process of amending its background check regulations, 102 CMR 14.00, to improve the screening of applicants for EEC licensure and applicants for employment or volunteer positions in EEC-licensed programs. The proposed amendments would: 1) broaden the scope of the regulations to require background screenings for supported findings of child abuse and neglect by the Department of Social Services (DSS); 2) require that background checks, both CORI and DSS, be conducted at least every three years; and 3) lower the minimum age at which certain relevant persons are required to submit to a background check to 15.

EEC held public hearings on these proposed amendments in August 2006, and the Board is scheduled to vote on the final draft of the revised regulations at its meeting on October 10, 2006. Once approved by the Board, the revised regulations will be filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office for publication in the *Massachusetts Register*, with implementation of the revised regulations scheduled to take place during the late fall of 2006 and winter of 2007.

- Does the State require that child care providers report serious injuries that occur while a child is in care? (Serious injuries are defined as injuries requiring medical treatment by a doctor, nurse, dentist, or other medical professional.)  
 No.  
 Yes, and the following describes the State's reporting requirements and how such injuries are tracked (if applicable):

EEC regulations require that child care providers must immediately report to EEC the occurrence of any serious injury or illness that occurs to a child while the child is in care. EEC tracks injury reports on the its statewide computerized tracking system. This system gives all EEC staff access to all open and completed injury reports and investigations. When an EEC staff member receives an injury report, the staff member enters the information into the tracking system, including the name of the provider and the nature of the injury. Once the report is logged into the tracking system, it is assigned to staff for follow up or investigation. When the

injury review or investigation is completed, a visit or investigation report is completed and entered into the tracking system. A printed copy of the report is sent to the child care provider, and also placed in the provider's licensing file. This system allows licensors and investigators to have ready access to a complete injury report history on any of EEC's 16,000 licensed child care providers. Depending on the seriousness of the report and EEC's review, EEC may decide to make more frequent monitoring visits to the provider after receiving an injury report.

- Other methods used to ensure that health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

EEC licensing staff works closely with providers to ensure that EEC's health and safety requirements are met in all child care settings. EEC provides regular training and technical assistance to licensees to reinforce their knowledge and familiarity with the regulatory requirements. Among the training opportunities offered by EEC are the following:

- New provider meetings;
- License renewal meetings for group child care directors;
- Director group forums;
- Regional Advisory meetings;
- Training on specific health or safety requirements;
- "Working Together" meetings including providers, staff from EEC, and staff from Child care resource and referral agencies;
- EEC staff presentations at workshops and conferences sponsored by provider organizations; and
- Individual technical assistance with a program.

In addition to these proactive steps to ensure that programs remain safe for children, the licensing unit has many options for enforcement if a licensee fails to comply with EEC's health and safety. These include:

- Regular unannounced visits and monitoring;
- Enforcement letters sent to programs by a supervisor or director;
- Regional enforcement meetings with an EEC supervisor or director;
- Freeze on a program's enrollment;
- Sanctions on a program, such as requiring an outside consultant, or formal training for staff and administrators; and
- Legal action against a provider's license, including suspension or revocation of the license, if warranted.

## **6.7 Exemptions from Immunization Requirements**

The State assures that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendations for childhood immunizations of the State public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))

The State exempts the following children from immunization (check all that apply):

- Children who are cared for by relatives (defined as grandparents, great grandparents, siblings (if living in a separate residence), aunts and uncles).
- Children who receive care in their own homes.
- Children whose parents object to immunization on religious grounds.
- Children whose medical condition contraindicates immunization.

**PART 7**  
**HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS IN THE TERRITORIES**

*(Only the Territories complete Part 7.)*

**7.1 Health and Safety Requirements for Center-Based Providers in the Territories**

(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all center-based care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

**7.2 Health and Safety Requirements for Group Home Providers in the Territories**

(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all group home care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

### **7.3 Health and Safety Requirements for Family Providers in the Territories**

(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all family child care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

### **7.4 Health and Safety Requirements for In-Home Providers in the Territories**

(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all in-home care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

### **7.5 Exemptions to Territorial Health and Safety Requirements**

At Lead Agency option, the following relatives may be exempted from health and safety requirements: grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, or siblings (who live in a separate residence from the child in care). (658P(4)(B), §98.41(a)(1)(ii)(A)). Indicate the Lead Agency's policy regarding these relative providers:

- All** relative providers are subject to the same requirements as described in sections 7.1 - 7.4 above, as appropriate; there are **no exemptions** for relatives or different requirements for them.
- All** relative providers are **exempt** from all health and safety requirements.
- Some or all** relative providers are subject to **different** health and safety requirements from those described in sections 7.1 - 7.4 and the following describes those different requirements and the relatives they apply to:

## **7.6 Enforcement of Territorial Health and Safety Requirements**

Each Lead Agency is required to certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided comply with all applicable health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(E), §§98.40(a)(2), 98.41(d)) The following is a description of how Territorial health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

Are child care providers subject to routine unannounced visits (i.e., not specifically for the purpose of complaint investigation or issuance/renewal of a license)?

- Yes, and the following indicates the providers subject to routine unannounced visits and the frequency of those visits:
- No.

Are child care providers subject to background checks?

- Yes, and the following types of providers are subject to background checks (indicate when such checks are conducted):
- No.

Does the Territory require that child care providers report serious injuries that occur while a child is in care? ( Serious injuries are defined as injuries requiring medical treatment by a doctor, nurse, dentist, or other medical professional.)

- Yes, and the following describes the Territory's reporting requirements and how such injuries are tracked (if applicable):
- No.

Other methods used to ensure that health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

**7.7 Exemptions from Territorial Immunization Requirements**

The Territory assures that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendations for childhood immunizations of the Territorial public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))

The Territory exempts the following children from immunization (check all that apply):

- Children who are cared for by relatives (defined as grandparents, great grandparents, siblings (if living in a separate residence), aunts and uncles).
- Children who receive care in their own homes.
- Children whose parents object to immunization on religious grounds.
- Children whose medical condition contraindicates immunization.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**PROGRAM ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS**

The Lead Agency, named in Part 1 of this Plan, assures that:

- (1) upon approval, it will have in effect a program that complies with the provisions of the Plan printed herein, and is administered in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 as amended, Section 418 of the Social Security Act, and all other applicable Federal laws and regulations. (658D(b), 658E(a))
- (2) the parent(s) of each eligible child within the State who receives or is offered child care services for which financial assistance is provided is given the option either to enroll such child with a child care provider that has a grant or contract for the provision of the service; or to receive a child care certificate. (658E(c)(2)(A)(i))
- (3) in cases in which the parent(s) elects to enroll the child with a provider that has a grant or contract with the Lead Agency, the child will be enrolled with the eligible provider selected by the parent to the maximum extent practicable. (658E(c)(2)(A)(ii))
- (4) the child care certificate offered to parents shall be of a value commensurate with the subsidy value of child care services provided under a grant or contract. (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii))
- (5) with respect to State and local regulatory requirements, health and safety requirements, payment rates, and registration requirements, State or local rules, procedures or other requirements promulgated for the purpose of the Child Care and Development Fund will not significantly restrict parental choice among categories of care or types of providers. (658E(c)(2)(A), §98.15(p), §98.30(g), §98.40(b)(2), §98.41(b), §98.43(c), §98.45(d))
- (6) that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendation for childhood immunizations of the State public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))
- (7) that CCDF Discretionary funds are used to supplement, not supplant, State general revenue funds for child care assistance for low-income families. (P.L. 106-554)

The Lead Agency also certifies that:

- (1) it has procedures in place to ensure that providers of child care services for which assistance is provided under the Child Care and Development Fund afford parents unlimited access to their children and to the providers caring for their children during the normal hours of operations and whenever such children are in the care of such providers. (658E(c)(2)(B))
- (2) it maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and makes information regarding such complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C))
- (3) it will collect and disseminate to parents of eligible children and the general public, consumer education information that will promote informed child care choices. (658E(c)(2)(D))
- (4) it has in effect licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided in the State. (658E(c)(2)(E))
- (5) there are in effect within the State (or other area served by the Lead Agency), under State or local law, requirements designed to protect the health and safety of children; these requirements are applicable to child care providers that provide services for which assistance is made available under the Child Care and Development Fund. (658E(c)(2)(E))
- (6) procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided under the Child Care and Development Fund comply with all applicable State or local health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(G))
- (7) payment rates under the Child Care and Development Fund for the provision of child care services are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible children to comparable child care services in the State or sub-State area that are provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive assistance under this program or under any other Federal or State child care assistance programs. (658E(c)(4)(A))

## APPENDIX 2 ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY TERMINOLOGY

For purposes of determining eligibility and priority for CCDF-funded child care services, lead agencies must define the following *italicized* terms. (658P, 658E(c)(3)(B))

- *attending* (a job training or educational program; include minimum hours if applicable) - Parents participating in a full-time high school program are considered to have a full-time service need, regardless of the program's schedule. Parents participating in 12 credit hours of college courses are considered to have a 20 hour service need, (which can be supplemented by a maximum of 5 hours for travel between school and child care center, if applicable, and additional work hours to meet the 30 hour minimum for full-time care). Any credit hours in addition to the 12 required to meet the part-time (20 hour) service need are counted as follows: one credit hour equals one hour of service need. The service need for part-time college programs (less than 12 credit hours) and other education or training programs is based upon the number of hours spent in the education or training activity each week. (One credit hour or one hour of training equals one hour of service need). Work and education or training hours may be combined to show a full-time service need. *Please note that EEC is in the process of amending its regulations to increase the amount of care for which parents participating in 12 credit hours of college courses are eligible from part-time to full-time. This change is scheduled to take effect in October 2006.*
- *in loco parentis* - Massachusetts, for the purpose of CCDF-funded services, allows those caring for a child on a full-time basis and acting as a foster parent, legal guardian, or temporary legal guardian to be deemed a parent.
- *job training and educational program* - Full-time high school program; high school equivalency program (GED); a combination of work and GED preparation; vocational training program (not including graduate, medical, or law schools); ESL program plus training or work; or an accredited college or university leading to an Associate's or Bachelor's degree.
- *physical or mental incapacity*<sup>1</sup> (if the Lead Agency provides such services to children age 13 and older) - Physical, emotional, or mental disability of a child: a completed "Verification of Special Need of the Child" form must be submitted. The form must be signed by a physician for a physical disability; a psychiatrist, doctoral level psychologist, or independent licensed clinical social worker for an emotional or mental disability; or an early intervention program director, primary service coordinator, or special education staff member stating that the child is eligible for their special education services. The responses must state the nature and the expected duration of the disability as well as include an explanation of why the disability necessitates child care.
- *protective services* - Families are eligible for supportive child care services when they have active protective needs documented in a supported report of abuse or neglect within the

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that EEC uses the term *child with a special need* instead of physical or mental incapacity.

previous 12 months or when there is a determination of need to begin or continue supportive child care at a Department of Social Services Progress Supervisory Review.

- *residing with* - For purposes of determining eligibility for subsidized child care, a family is defined as one of the following: A parent and his/her dependent child(ren) and any dependent grandparents who reside in the same household; or a teen parent and his or her children who reside in the same household.
- *special needs child* - A child age zero through sixteen who has documented physical, mental, or behavioral disabilities.
- *very low income* - Income below 50% of the State Median Income.
- *working* (include minimum hours if applicable) - Thirty hours or more of paid employment qualifies as working full-time. Between twenty to twenty-nine hours of paid employment qualifies as working part-time.
- Additional terminology related to conditions of eligibility or priority established by the Lead Agency:

**ATTACHMENT 1 - Contracted Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies**

Child Care of the Berkshires, Inc.

Franklin Community Action Corporation, Inc.

New England Farm Workers Council

Children's Aid & Family Service, Inc.

Family Service Org. of Worcester, Inc.

Community Day Care Center of Lawrence

Community Teamwork, Inc.

Child Care Resource Center. Inc.

Quincy Community Action Programs, Inc.

Home Health & Child Care Services, Inc.

Community Action Committee of Cape & Islands, Inc.

People Acting in Community Endeavors

Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.

**ATTACHMENT 2 – Current Contracts**

A KANGAROOS POUCH INC.  
ACRE FAMILY DAY CARE  
ACTION FOR BOSTON COMM DEVT  
ADVANTICS, INC.  
ALLSTON/BRIGHTON APAC  
AMERICAN CHINESE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SRVCS  
ASSOCIATED EARLY CARE & EDUCATION, INC.  
ATHOL AREA YMCA  
ATTLEBORO VOC-TECH H. S. TEEN PARENT PRO  
BEAR CARE CENTERS LTD  
BELCHERTOWN DAY SCHOOL  
BERKSHIRE COUNTY HEAD START CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROG, INC.  
BERKSHIRE CTR. FOR FAMILIES + CHILDREN  
BETHEL CHILD CARE SERVICES INC.  
BEVERLY CHILDRENS LEARNING CENTERS, INC  
BOSTON CENTERS FOR YOUTH & FAMILIES  
BOSTON CHINATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER  
BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER  
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF BOSTON, INC.  
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF BROCKTON, INC.  
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF TAUNTON  
BROCKTON DAY NURSERY INC  
CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTER  
CAMBRIDGE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE  
CAMBRIDGEPORT CHILDRENS CENTER  
CAPE COD CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM INC  
CAPE COD YMCA, INC  
CATHOLIC CHARITABLE BUREAU OF BOSTON  
CENTER FOR CHILD CARE & DEVEL INC  
CHICOPEE CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
CHILD CARE OF THE BERKSHIRES  
CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION, INC.  
CHILDCARE PROJECT INC.  
CHILDRENS AID & FAMILY SERVICE  
CHILDRENS FRIEND, INC.  
CHILDRENS SERVICES OF ROXBURY INC  
CHILDRENS WORLD EDUCATIONAL CENTER, INC  
CITIZENS FOR CITIZENS INC  
CITY OF BROCKTON  
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE/DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS  
CITY OF FALL RIVER  
CITY OF QUINCY - TEEN MOTHERS PROGRAM  
CITY OF SOMERVILLE/COMM. SCHOOLS  
CITY OF TAUNTON  
CLARENDON FAMILY DAY CARE

COLONEL DANIEL MARR BOYS CLUB OF DOR  
COMM DAY CARE CTR OF LAWRENCE  
COMMONWEALTH FAMILY CHILD CARE  
COMMUNITIES UNITED,INC.  
COMMUNITY ACTION INC.  
COMMUNITY ACTION OF THE FRANKLIN, HAMPSHIRE AND NO. QUABBIN  
COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS INTERCITY, INC  
COMMUNITY ADOLESENT RESOURCE/CARE  
COMMUNITY ART CENTER  
COMMUNITY FAMILY DAY CARE  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY TEAMWORK INCORPORATED  
CRISPUS ATTUCKS CHILDRENS CENTER  
CRITERION CHILD ENRICHMENT, INC.  
CRITTENTON, INC.  
CURWIN CHILD CARE CTR.  
DENNISON MEMORIAL COMMUNITY CENTER  
DEVALLES MEMORIAL FAMILY SERVICE CENTER, INC.  
DIMOCK COMMUNITY SERVICES CORP.  
DISCOVERY DAY CARE CENTER, INC.  
DOVES NEST DAY CARE CENTER  
DOVES NEST FAMILY DAY CARE SYSTEM, INC.  
EARLY CHILDHOOD CTR OF SPRINGFIELD  
EARLY LEARNING CHILD CARE INC  
EAST BOSTON SOCIAL CENTERS,INC.  
EDUCARE FOR KIDS INC.  
ELIZABETH PEABODY HOUSE  
ELLIS MEMORIAL AND ELDREDGE HOUSE, INC.  
ELM PARK CTR. FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUC.  
ENABLE INC  
EXPANDING HORIZONS CHILDRENS CENTER  
FAMILY DAY CARE PROGRAM, INC.  
FAMILY SVC ASSOC OF GR FALL RIVER  
FEDERATED DORCHESTER NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSES  
FOR KIDS ONLY AFTER SCHOOL  
FRANKLIN SQUARE HOUSE DAY CARE CENTR INC  
GIRLS CLUB OF GREENFIELD  
GIRLS INC. OF GREATER HAVERHILL  
GIRLS INCORPORATED OF HOLYOKE  
GIRLS INCORPORATED OF LYNN  
GLADYS ALLEN BRIGHAM COMMUNITY CENTER  
GREGG NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE ASSOC.,INC.  
GTR LAWRENCE COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL  
GUILD OF ST. AGNES  
HAMPSHIRE REGIONAL YMCA  
HAMPSHIRE/FRANKLIN DAY CARE  
HAPPY DAY CHILD CARE CENTER

HARBOR HEALTH SERVICES (NEPONSET)  
HATTIE B COOPER COMMUNITY CENTER INC  
HENRY BUCKNER SCHOOL  
HOLYOKE DAY NURSERY  
HOLYOKE YMCA  
HOLYOKE/CHICOPEE/SPRINGFIELD HEADSTART  
HOME FOR LITTLE WANDERERS, INC.  
HORIZONS FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN  
HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES SETTLEMENT ASSN  
INDEPENDENCE ROUTE DAY CARE/KIDS STOP  
INFANTS AND OTHER PEOPLE, INC.  
INQUILINOS BORICUAS EN ACCION  
INTRNATL INST OF GR LAWRENCE  
J C H CHILD CARE CORP.  
JOB OPTIONS INC  
JOHN F. KENNEDY FAMILY SERVICE CTR., INC  
JOLLY FARMS DAY CARE  
KENNEDY-DONOVAN CENTER INC.  
KID-START, INC  
KIDDIE KAMPUS,INC.  
KIDS PLACE  
KIDS UNLIMITED, INC.  
L.P. COLLEGE,INC.  
LEE ACADEMY PILOT SCHOOL  
LEMBERG CHILDRENS CENTER  
LENA PARK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COPR.  
LINCOLN-SEWALL DAYCARE, INC.  
LITTLE FOLKS COMMUNITY DAY CARE CENTER  
LITTLE PEOPLES COLLEGE  
LITTLE SISTERS OF ASSUMPTION  
LITTLE TOTS DAY CARE  
LOWELL DAY NURSERY ASSOCIATION  
LYNN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY,INC.  
MARGARET FULLER NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE, INC.  
MARKMAN CHILDRENS PROGRAM  
MARKS MEADOW AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM  
MARTHAS VYD COMM SERVS  
MARTIN L. KING COMM. CTR.  
MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
CHILD  
MEADOWLARK, INC.  
MERRIMACK RIVER COMM CHILD CARE INC  
MERRIMACK VALLEY YMCA  
METROWEST YMCA  
MIDDLESEX HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY, INC.  
MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL DEPT.  
MONT MARIE CHILD CARE CENTER

MONTACHUSETT OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL  
MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL YMCA  
MOTHER HUBBARD PRESCHOOL CENTER  
MYSTIC LEARNING CENTER  
N.I.C.E. DAY CARE  
NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CORP OF JAMAICA PLAIN  
NEW NORTH CITIZENS COUNCIL  
NEWTON COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER, INC.  
NORTH SHORE FAMILY DAY CARE, INC.  
NORTH SUFFOLK MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION  
NORTHERN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES  
NORTHSTAR LEARNING CENTERS, INC.  
OLD COLONY Y  
OPEN CENTER FOR CHILDREN  
PAIGE COMPANY INC.  
PAKACHOAG ACRES  
PARTNERS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES INC.  
PATHWAYS FOR CHILDREN, INC.  
PEOPLE, INC.  
PILGRIM CHURCH DAY CARE CENTER  
PLOWSHARES CHILD CARE PROGRAMS  
PREVENTION NOW, INC.  
QUINCY COM. ACTION ORGANIZATION, INC.  
RAINBOW CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER  
RAINBOW DAY CARE CTR.  
ROCKWOOD DAY CARE CENTER, INC.  
ROSA PARKS DAY CARE CENTER  
SALEMS COMMUNITY CHILD CARE, INC.  
SALVATION ARMY - BERKELEY  
SALVATION ARMY - MASS  
SELF HELP, INC.  
SGT CARNEY ACADEMY AFTER SCHOOL D.C. INC  
SMALL FRIENDS ON NANTUCKET, INC.  
SMILE/SPECIAL MOMENTS IN LEARNING EXPERIENCE  
SMOC  
SO. SHORE DAY CARE SERVICES  
SOMERVILLE YMCA  
SOUTH BOSTON NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE, INC.  
SOUTH COVE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER  
SOUTH SHORE COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL INC  
SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY DAY CARE  
SPRINGFIELD DAY NURSERY  
SPRINGFIELD GIRLS CLUB FAMILY CENTER  
SPRINGFIELD PARTNERS FOR COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.  
STONYBROOK CHILDRENS CENTER, INC.  
THE CARSON CENTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES  
TRAINING RESOURCES OF AMERICA

TRI COMMUNITY YMCA  
TRI-CITY COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM, INC  
TRIUMPH INC  
TUFTS EDUCATIONAL DAY CARE CENTER  
UNITED SOUTH END SETTLEMENTS  
UNIV OF MASS/BOSTON  
UNIV.OF MASS. AMHERST/UNIV. CHILD CARE  
UPHAMS CORNER COMMUNITY CTR.  
VALLEY OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL  
VIETNAMESE AMERICAN INITIATIVE FOR DEVELOPMENT, INC.  
VILLAGE PRESCHOOL  
VIP CHILDCARE INC.  
WALTHAM BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB  
WALTHAM DAY CARE CENTER  
WEBSTER SQUARE DAY CARE CENTER  
WECED WAREHAM EARLY CHILDHOOD ED. & DEVELOPMENT  
WESLEY CHILD CARE CENTER, INC.  
WEST END DAY NURS OF NEW BEDFORD INC  
WESTFIELD AREA HEAD START/WESTFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
WILLIAMSTOWN COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL, INC.  
WOBURN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL CONCERN  
WOMENS OCCUP. RESOURCES DEVELOP.  
WORCESTER COMPREHENSIVE CHILD CARE  
YMCA NEW BEDFORD/YMCA SOUTHCOAST  
YMCA GREATER LYNN  
YMCA OF GREATER SPRINGFIELD, INC.  
YMCA OF GREATER WESTFIELD  
YMCA OF GREATER WORCESTER  
YMCA OF THE NORTH SHORE, INC.  
YMCA PITTSFIELD  
YMCA/GREATER BOSTON YMCA  
YMCA/MALDEN YOUNG MENS CHRISTIAN ASSOC, INC.  
YOUNG WOMENS CHRISTIAN HAVERHILL  
YWCA BOSTON  
YWCA MALDEN YOUNG WOMENS CHRISTIAN ASSOC.  
YWCA OF CENTRAL MASS  
YWCA OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS  
YWCA\_OF GREATER LAWRENCE  
YWCA\_SOUTHEASTERN MA

**ATTACHMENT 3- Community Partnership Councils Receiving Pre-Kindergarten Grants**

<b>Community Partnerships for Children Lead Agency</b>	<b>Communities Served in Fiscal Year 2006</b>
ACCEPT Education Collab.	Natick
ABCD, Head Start Inc.	Boston
Agawam Public Schools	Agawam
Amherst Public Schools	Amherst, Pelham
Ashburnham-Westminster RSD	Ashburnham, Westminster
Ashland Public Schools	Ashland, Hopkinton
Attleboro Public Schools	Attleboro
Ayer Public Schools	Ayer
Barnstable Public Schools	Barnstable
Bellingham Public Schools	Bellingham
Berkshire Hills RSD	Great Barrington, Stockbridge, West Stockbridge
Boston Public Schools	Boston
Bourne Public Schools	Bourne
Brimfield Public Schools	Brimfield, Brookfield, Holland, Sturbridge, Wales
Brockton Public Schools	Brockton
Brookline Public Schools	Brookline
Cambridge Public Schools	Cambridge
Cape Cod Children's Place	Brewster, Chatham, Eastham, Orleans, Provincetown, Truro, Wellfleet
Central Berkshire RSD	Becket, Cummington, Dalton, Hinsdale, Peru, Washington, Windsor
Chelsea Public Schools	Chelsea
Chicopee Public Schools	Chicopee
Child Works Child Care Center, Inc.	Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling
Citizens for Citizens, Inc.	Berkley, Freetown, Lakeville
Citizens for Citizens, Inc.	Dighton, Rehoboth, Seekonk, Swansea
Clinton Public Schools	Clinton
Communities United, Inc.	Arlington, Belmont, Burlington, Lexington
Communities United, Inc. (Needham)	Needham
Communities United, Inc. (Waltham)	Waltham
Communities United, Inc. (Wellesley)	Wellesley
Communities United, Inc. (Woburn)	Woburn
Community Action, Inc.(Amesbury)	Amesbury
Community Action, Inc.(Newburyport)	Newburyport
Community Day Care Center, Inc.	Lynnfield, Reading, North Reading
Community Teamwork, Inc. (Bedford)	Bedford
Community Teamwork, Inc.	Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Tewksbury, Wilmington
Concord Children's Center	Concord, Carlisle

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<b>Community Partnerships for Children Lead Agency</b>	<b>Communities Served in Fiscal Year 2006</b>
Dennis-Yarmouth RSD	Dennis, Yarmouth
Discovery Schoolhouse, Inc.	Milton
Dudley-Charlton RSD	Charlton, Dudley
Duxbury Public Schools	Duxbury
East Longmeadow Public Schools	East Longmeadow, Hampden, Wilbraham
Erving Elementary Schools	Erving
Everett Public Schools	Everett
Fairhaven Public Schools	Fairhaven
Fall River Public Schools	Fall River
Falmouth Public Schools	Falmouth
Farmington River RSD	Otis, Sandisfield
Fitchburg Public Schools	Fitchburg
Framingham Public Schools	Framingham
Frontier RSD	Conway, Deerfield, Sunderland, Whately
Gateway RSD	Blandford, Chester, Russell, Worthington, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery
Georgetown Public Schools	Georgetown
Gill-Montague RSD	Gill, Montague
Greater Lawrence CAC	Andover, North Andover
Greater Lawrence CAC (Lawrence)	Lawrence
Greater Lawrence CAC (Methuen)	Methuen
Greenfield Public Schools	Greenfield
Hadley Public Schools	Hadley
Hamilton-Wenham RSD	Hamilton-Wenham
Hampshire Educational Collaborative	Belchertown, Palmer, Ware, Monson
Hampshire Educational Collaborative (Esthampton)	Easthampton
Hampshire Educational Collaborative (Hatfield)	Hatfield
Hampshire Educational Collaborative (South Hadley)	South Hadley
Hampshire Educational Collaborative(Quabog)	Warren, West Brookfield
Hampshire RSD	Chesterfield, Goshen, Southampton, Westhampton, Williamsburg
Harwich Public Schools	Harwich
Haverhill Public Schools	Haverhill
Health and Education Services	Beverly, Danvers
Health and Education Services	Boxford, Middleton, Topsfield
Holliston Public Schools	Holliston
Holyoke-Chicopee-Springfield Head Start, Inc. (Grandy)	Granby
Holyoke-Chicopee-Springfield Head Start, Inc. (Holyoke)	Holyoke
Hudson Public Schools	Hudson
Hull Public Schools	Hull
Infant Toddler Children's Center	Acton, Boxborough, Littleton
Ipswich Public Schools	Ipswich

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<b>Community Partnerships for Children Lead Agency</b>	<b>Communities Served in Fiscal Year 2006</b>
Lee Public Schools	Lee, Lenox, Tyringham
Leominster Public Schools	Leominster
Leverett Public Schools	Leverett
Lowell Public Schools	Lowell
Ludlow Public Schools	Ludlow
Lynn Public Schools	Lynn
Malden Public Schools	Malden
Manchester Essex RSD	Essex, Manchester
Marblehead Public Schools	Marblehead
Marshfield Public Schools	Marshfield
Martha's Vineyard RSD	Aquinnah, Chilmark, Edgartown, Gay Head, Oak Bluffs, Tisbury, West Tisbury
Mashpee Public Schools	Mashpee
Maynard Public Schools	Maynard
Medfield Public Schools	Dover, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Sherborn
Medford Public Schools	Medford
Milford Public Schools	Milford
Mohawk Trail RSD	Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Hawley, Heath, Plainfield, Rowe, Shelburne
Montachusett Opportunity Council (Athol, Royalston)	Athol, Royalston
Montachusett Opportunity Council	Barre, Hubbardston, Hardwick, Oakham, New Braintree, Petersham
Montachusett Opportunity Council (Gardner)	Gardner
Nantucket Public Schools	Nantucket
Narragansett RSD	Phillipston, Templeton
Nashoba RSD	Bolton, Lancaster*, Stow
New Salem-Wendell RSD	New Salem, Wendell
Newton Public Schools	Newton
North Adams Public Schools	Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, Hancock, Lanesborough, Monroe, New Ashford, North Adams, Savoy, Williamstown
North Brookfield Public Schools	North Brookfield
Northampton Public Schools	Northampton
Norwood Public Schools	Norwood
Old Rochester RSD	Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester
Orange Public Schools	Orange
Oxford Public Schools	Oxford
PACE (Acushnet)	Acushnet
PACE (Dartmouth)	Dartmouth
PACE (New Bedford)	New Bedford
Pathways for Children	Gloucester, Rockport
Peabody Public Schools	Peabody
Pentucket RSD	Groveland, Merrimac, West Newbury

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<b>Community Partnerships for Children Lead Agency</b>	<b>Communities Served in Fiscal Year 2006</b>
Pioneer Valley RSD	Bernardson, Leyden, Northfield, Warwick
Pittsfield Public Schools	Pittsfield
Plymouth Public Schools	Plymouth
QCAP Head Start, Inc. (Braintree)	Braintree
QCAP Head Start, Inc. (Quincy)	Quincy
Revere Public Schools	Revere
Roudenbush Community Center	Westford
Salem Public Schools	Salem
Sandwich Public Schools	Sandwich
Shining Star Learning Center	Saugus
Self Help, Inc. (Sachem)	Abington, East Bridgewater, Middleboro, Rockland, West Bridgewater
Self Help, Inc. (Share)	Avon, Easton, Holbrook, Randolph, Stoughton
Self Help, Inc. (CDS)	Canton, Dedham, Sharon
Self Help, Inc. (Hockomock)	Foxboro, Frankin, Mansfield, Norfolk, North Attleboro, Norton, Plainville, Wrentham
Shirley Public Schools	Shirley
Shrewsbury Children's Center, Inc.	Shrewsbury
Shutesbury Public Schools	Shutesbury
SMOC Head Start	Northbridge
Somerville Public Schools	Somerville
South Shore CAC (Carver)	Carver
South Shore CAC	Halifax, Kingston, Pembroke, Plympton
South Shore CAC	Hingham, Cohasset, Hanover, Scituate, Norwell
Southbridge Public Schools	Southbridge
Southern Berkshire RSD	Alford, Egremont, Monterey, Mt. Washington, New Marlborough, Sheffield
Spencer Child Care Center	Spencer, East Brookfield
Springfield Public Schools	Springfield
Sudbury Public Schools	Sudbury
Swampscott Public Schools	Swampscott
Triton RSD	Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury
Triumph, Inc.	Bridgewater, Raynham, Taunton
Uxbridge Public Schools	Uxbridge
Wakefield Public Schools	Melrose, Stoneham, Wakefield
Walpole Public Schools	Walpole
Wareham Public Schools	Wareham
Watertown Public Schools	Watertown
Wayland Public Schools	Wayland
West Boylston Public Schools	West Boylston
West Springfield Public School	West Springfield

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<b>Community Partnerships for Children Lead Agency</b>	<b>Communities Served in Fiscal Year 2006</b>
Westfield Head Start	Southwick, Tolland, Granville
Westfield Public Schools	Westfield
Westwood Public Schools	Westwood
Weymouth Public Schools	Weymouth
Whitman-Hanson RSD	Whitman, Hanson
Winchendon Public Schools	Winchendon
Winchester Public Schools	Winchester
Winthrop Public Schools	Winthrop
Worcester CAC, Inc.	Webster
Worcester Public Schools	Worcester
YMCA of Greater Worcester (Circle of Friends)	Auburn, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Mendon, Millbury, Millville, Sutton, Upton
YMCA of Greater Worcester (Together We Can)	Berlin, Boylston, Marlborough, Leicester, Northborough, Southborough, Westborough

**ATTACHMENT 4**

EEC Provider Rates

(See the next three pages)

### **ATTACHMENT 5- Income Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible for subsidized child care, the family<sup>1</sup>, in addition to meeting the service need requirements, must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- At the time the family first enrolls in a subsidized child care slot, the family's gross monthly income must be at or below 50% of the State Median Income (SMI). The family will remain eligible for subsidized child care as long as the family's gross monthly income is at or below 85% of the SMI.
- At the time the family first enrolls in a subsidized child care slot, the family's gross monthly income must be at or below 85% of the SMI, if the family has a qualifying child with a disability or special need. Such families will remain eligible for subsidized child care as long as the family's gross monthly income is at or below 100% of the SMI. To qualify, parents must submit a completed "Verification of Special Need of the Child" form.
- At the time the family first enrolls in a subsidized child care slot, the family's gross monthly income must be at or below 85% of the SMI, if either parent is incapacitated.<sup>2</sup> Such families will remain eligible for subsidized child care as long as the family's gross monthly income is at or below 100% of the SMI. To qualify, parents must complete the "Verification of Parental Incapacity" form.

In addition, parents whose service need is work must document that their income is, at a minimum, equal to the minimum wage for the number of hours worked in order to qualify for a subsidy.

Income eligibility is based on the income of family members and the size of the family. Therefore, the definition of family is of critical importance. See EEC policy P-EEC-Subsidy-06: Definition of Family for the definition of family.

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<sup>1</sup> Families headed by foster parents, temporary or permanent guardians, or caretakers are exempt from income maximums, but must earn at least minimum wage for hours worked when the service need is work.

<sup>2</sup> EEC uses the term *parent with a special need* instead of *parental incapacity* and is in the process of revising its regulations, policies, and forms to reflect this change.

**Effective 7/1/06**

Family Size	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
50% of State Median Income (Gross Monthly Income)	\$3,338	\$2,890	\$3,441	\$3,991	\$4,542	\$4,645	\$4,748	\$4,851
85% of State Median Income (Gross Monthly Income)	\$3,978	\$4,913	\$5,849	\$6,785	\$7,720	\$7,896	\$8,071	\$8,246
100% of State Median Income (Gross Monthly Income)	\$4,679	\$5,780	\$6,881	\$7,982	\$9,084	\$9,289	\$9,495	\$9,701

To determine the family's income, the CCR&R or provider must obtain from the parent documentation verifying the income of each member of the family. Relevant sources of income includes, but is not limited to, wages/salary (including overtime), social security, alimony or child support, public assistance, rental income, pensions, and annuities. Policy *EEC-Income Eligible-05: Documentation* lists the type of documentation that must be obtained for each type of income included in determining eligibility.

If including overtime in family income makes the family ineligible for the subsidy and the parent reports that overtime is a rare occurrence, the parent may reapply at a later date and request that eligibility be reassessed. At the reassessment, the parent may demonstrate that overtime is a rare occurrence by presenting pay stubs for four consecutive weeks.

If a parent signs a statement denying the receipt of child support from his/her child's other parent, the child support should not be included in the parent's income. However, parents with a court order for child support who deny receiving the full amount must present a child support payment history from the Department of Revenue. See Policy *EEC-IncomeEligible-05: Documentation* for documentation requirements. If the parent reports a lump sum child support payment for payment in arrears, only an amount equal to the monthly amount ordered should be included in calculating the parent's monthly income.

**NOTE:** Alimony payments or child support payments made to persons outside the household may be deducted from the gross monthly income of the family applying for the subsidy for purposes of determining eligibility. Cancelled checks or pay stubs documenting the deduction must be submitted for verification. See Policy *EEC-IncomeEligible-05: Documentation*.

Income from some sources is not included when calculating a family's gross monthly income to determine eligibility for subsidized child care. Below is a list of the types of income that are not included.

### **Income Not Included When Determining Eligibility**

- Per capita payments to or funds held in trust for any individual in satisfaction of a judgment of the Indian Claims Commission or the Court of Claims
- Payments made pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to the extent such payments are exempt from taxation under Section 21(a) of the Act
- Money received from the sale of property, such as stocks, bonds, a house, or a car (unless the person was engaged in the business of selling such property, in which case the net proceeds would be counted as income from self-employment)
- Withdrawals from bank accounts
- Money borrowed
- Tax refunds
- Gifts
- Capital gains
- The value of the coupon allotment under the Food Stamp Act of 1964, as amended, in excess of the amount paid for coupons
- The value of USDA donated foods
- The value of supplemental food assistance under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 and the special food service program for children under the National School Lunch Act, as amended
- Any payment received under the uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970
- Loans and grants, such as scholarships, obtained and used under conditions that preclude their use for current living costs
- Lump sum inheritance or lump sum insurance payments
- Any grant or loan to an undergraduate student for education purposes made or insured under any program administered by the U.S. Commission of Education
- Home produce utilized for household consumption
- Any stipend received under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 - VISTA stipend
- Subsidized adoption payments from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Agent Orange Settlement Fund payments made to Vietnam Veterans or their survivors in accordance with public law 101-201, January 1, 1989
- Rental allowance made to any welfare recipients (TAFDC); Emergency Aid to the Elderly, the Disabled and to Children (EAEDC); or funds from the Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP)
- Military Housing Allowance
- Employer's Benefit Dollars, unless the employee elects not to spend the dollars on benefits
- Travel Reimbursement
- Income earned by children under the age of 18

**ATTACHMENT 6**

EEC Income Eligibility Levels and Parent Co-Payment Schedule

(See the next three pages)

**ATTACHMENT 7**

Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences

(See the next 42 pages)

**ATTACHMENT 8**

EEC Workforce Development Plan

(See the next 43 pages)

## ATTACHMENT 9- Summary of Public Comments

### Comments Relevant to the State Plan

- One person noted that some of the programs mentioned in the state plan are not supported by CCDF funding and that the source of funding for each program is not always clear.
- One person indicated that the plan should provide a clearer sense of whether the Commonwealth can provide the same level of services as provided five years ago with the same level of CCDF funding. This person suggested that the plan should be clear that additional funding is necessary to enable programs and providers to meet their expense requirements.
- One person praised EEC's efforts to support parents and children through the provision of additional vouchers and the increase in transportation rates. Another person indicated that the increase in eligibility levels has had a dramatic impact on families with infants, toddlers, and school age children. This person also noted that EEC's approach to eligibility priorities is thoughtful.
- One person applauded the inclusion of homeless children and families in EEC's policies and priorities, particularly the prioritization of children living in homeless shelters for receipt of EEC financial assistance and the provision of continuity of care for homeless children. This person also urged EEC to expand its prioritization to include homeless children as defined under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 and to significantly expand the number of contracted slots for homeless children.
- With respect to EEC's efforts to develop a coordinated funding model that increases parent choice and supports continuity of care, one person voiced support for vouchers as the preferred model because it provides maximum flexibility. Two people suggested that EEC should explore the use of vouchers to address the needs of supportive children and families, especially in areas where there is no contracted capacity. One person suggested that EEC create a pilot supportive voucher program to evaluate the feasibility of using vouchers for supportive care.
- One person commented that providers are still struggling with implementation of the centralized waiting list and have on-going training and support needs. For example, this person indicated that providers need assistance to better target their funding availability letters to families who are likely to want their services.
- One person mentioned that EEC should provide greater access to complaint information and noted that Massachusetts is behind other states in terms of providing on-line, web-based access to information about providers. This person suggested that EEC may wish to look at the State Medical Board, which makes information about a doctor's malpractice history available online, as an example.

- One person mentioned that CCR&Rs should provide parents with information about family child care systems and benefits of the additional supports offered to the family child care providers affiliated with a family child care system.
- With respect to the revision of EEC's licensing regulations and EEC's efforts to support quality, one person commented that licensing should remain a strong base for all programs and any additional quality initiatives should encourage them to attain higher levels of quality. This person indicated that although the current tiered system was a good start, it does not provide enough of an incentive for providers to implement its requirements and lacks an active monitoring system that evaluates the extent to which providers are implementing the tiers. This person voiced support for the creation of a quality rating system and mentioned that such a system had been beneficial for a number of states that have implemented it.
- One person suggested that the two CCR&Rs that are providing technical support to the family child care system involved in the LearningGames study should be mentioned in the state plan as partners. This person indicated that the support provided by CCR&RS is helpful to the home visitors and individual providers using the LearningGames curriculum and will be vital in replicating the curriculum throughout other parts of the state and throughout other family child care systems.
- In the section of the state plan regarding provider compensation, one person noted that information focuses on rates and monetary reimbursement. This person stated that the tuition assistance program and the Building Careers program should be mentioned in this section as an important benefit to both programs and staff.

#### Comments Not Directly Relevant to the State Plan

- Several people commented that EEC should consider a family's expenses when determining whether they are eligible for EEC financial assistance.
- Several people indicated that the waiting list is too long and that additional funding should be provided for EEC financial assistance so that more families receive assistance sooner.
- Several people indicated that CCR&Rs should have staff present at all times at local DTA offices to enable parents to apply for DTA benefits and EEC financial assistance at the same time. These people also commented that CCR&Rs should have translators available who speak all of the major languages represented in their region.
- Several people mentioned that parents should be provided with training on how to access EEC financial assistance, find a child care provider, and file a complaint against a provider.

## ATTACHMENT 10- Market Rate Survey

### **2006 Child Care Market Rate Study Summary of Rates**

#### **Introduction**

In February 2006, EEC contracted with Ann D. Witte Consulting to conduct a survey of the current market rates being charged by licensed child care providers across the Commonwealth. EEC also contracted for a Provider Cost Survey to determine the actual costs of providing child care services in Massachusetts. The market rate survey has been completed, and the initial results have been tabulated. However, the final report and the results of the cost survey will not be available until the fall of 2006.

This summary presents initial findings from the study in each of six local market areas in the state by type of care and age group. EEC defines daily published rates as the rates for private paying parents or parents who pay for child care without any state subsidies. The six local market areas are the six EEC Administrative Regions in the state:

1. Western;
2. Central;
3. Northeast;
4. Greater Boston;
5. Southeast; and
6. Boston.

The three major types of care and their age/time of year subsets include:

1. Family child care (from 1 month through 12 years of age, and up to 16 if the child has special needs)
  - a. Children under the age of two years
  - b. Children over the age of two years
2. Center-based care
  - a. infants (0-15 months)
  - b. toddlers (16 months to 33 months)
  - c. preschooler children (34 months to the age the child is eligible to enter first grade)
3. School age care (a child who is either enrolled in kindergarten or is eligible to enroll in the first grade the next school year, through the age of 12, or under the age of 16 if the child has special needs)
  - a. before school
  - b. after school
  - c. vacation/holiday care
  - d. summer care

## **Sample**

The sample for the study included a total of 3,600 providers (approximately 30% of the providers in the sampling frame) allocated by type of care as follows:

- 2,026 family providers (approximately 30% of the providers in the sampling frame);
- 916 group providers (approximately 53% of the providers in the sampling frame); and
- 620 school age providers (approximately 65% of providers in the sampling frame).

## **Data Collection and Response Rate**

Data were collected through telephone interviews with the sample of providers. The research team used three interview protocols – one each for family, group, and school age providers.

Interviews were conducted by the Massachusetts CCR&R Network between March and the end of May 2006 using a web-based hosting service. Efforts to achieve an acceptable response rate included an advance letter and worksheet from the EEC Commissioner to alert providers to the specific information requested in the interviews, at least five calls to each provider, and the flexibility to conduct interviews in the evening. In creating the survey, EEC solicited input from providers of all types of care, and their feedback assisted in the development of questions and strategies to increase provider response. In addition, larger than needed samples of family child care and school age providers were drawn, and providers who could not be contacted or interviewed were randomly replaced. The overall response rate was 81% (72% for family child care, 88% for child care centers, and 84% for school age). This is an exceptional response rate for a child care market rate survey.

## **General Findings**

- Prices for center-based care are highest for infants, then toddlers, then preschoolers.
- Prices for family child care do not vary markedly with the age of the child in care.
- Prices for center-based care are higher than prices for family child care.
- Prices for center-based and family child care are highest in the suburbs of Boston (Region 4) and lowest in the Western Massachusetts (Region 1).
- Prices for after-school care are highest in Northeastern Massachusetts (Region 3) and Boston (Region 6) and lowest in Western Massachusetts (Region 1).

**Table 1**  
**Massachusetts—2006 Market Rate Survey**

**GROUP CHILD CARE CENTERS**  
**Full Time Group Centers - Current Rates, Median and 75%ile of Prices**

Region	Type	Current Rate	Median	75%ile
Western (Region 1)	INF	\$45.30	\$45.00	\$52.50
	TOD	\$40.85	\$42.03	\$47.50
	PS	\$31.60	\$33.00	\$38.60
Central (Region 2)	INF	\$45.30	\$49.00	\$55.00
	TOD	\$40.85	\$44.80	\$50.00
	PS	\$31.60	\$37.00	\$40.88
Northeast (Region 3)	INF	\$47.95	\$60.80	\$66.83
	TOD	\$43.20	\$52.80	\$60.10
	PS	\$33.70	\$42.20	\$48.80
Greater Boston (Region 4)	INF	\$51.60	\$66.60	\$75.25
	TOD	\$45.80	\$60.06	\$68.40
	PS	\$34.75	\$49.70	\$57.14
Southeast (Region 5)	INF	\$45.30	\$49.00	\$54.50
	TOD	\$40.85	\$44.00	\$48.81
	PS	\$31.60	\$37.00	\$41.85
Boston (Region 6)	INF	\$51.60	\$60.00	\$78.28
	TOD	\$45.80	\$50.25	\$63.03
	PS	\$34.75	\$36.00	\$46.70

**Table 2**  
**Massachusetts—2006 Market Rate Survey**

**School Age Centers**

**After School Care - Current Rates, Median and 75%ile of Prices**

Region	Current Rate	Median	75%ile
Western (Region1)	\$14.45	\$13.00	\$15.00
Central (Region 2)	\$14.45	\$16.00	\$17.00
Northeast (Region 3)	\$16.10	\$20.00	\$21.20
Greater Boston (Region 4)	\$16.50	\$17.51	\$22.00
Southeast (Region 5)	\$14.45	\$15.00	\$18.75
Boston (Region 6)	\$16.50	\$19.50	\$20.65

**Table 3**  
**Massachusetts—2006 Market Rate Survey**

**FAMILY CHILD CARE**

**Full Time Family Child Care (< 2 Years)**  
**Current Rates, Median and 75%ile of Prices**

Region	Current Rate	Median	75%ile
Western (Region 1)	\$28.45	\$30.00	\$33.00
Central (Region 2)	\$28.45	\$34.50	\$38.56
Northeast (Region 3)	\$29.80	\$35.00	\$45.00
Greater Boston (Region 4)	\$29.80	\$45.00	\$50.00
Southeast (Region 5)	\$28.45	\$35.00	\$40.00
Boston (Region 6)	\$29.80	\$30.00	\$37.00

**Full Time Family Child Care (≥ 2 Years)**  
**Current Rates, Median and 75%ile of Prices**

Region	Current Rate	Median	75%ile
Western (Region 1)	\$25.00	\$29.00	\$32.00
Central (Region 2)	\$25.00	\$32.00	\$38.00
Northeast (Region 3)	\$26.35	\$35.00	\$40.00
Greater Boston (Region 4)	\$29.80	\$45.00	\$50.00
Southeast (Region 5)	\$25.00	\$35.00	\$40.00
Boston (Region 6)	\$29.80	\$30.00	\$36.00

**ATTACHMENT 11- Market Rate Survey Instrument**

(See the next 108 pages)