



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Early Education and Care

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE REOPEN APPROACH

Reopening Information Package

July 2, 2020





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The purpose of this document is to outline the changes to policies and guidance for reopening Early Education and Care programs as part of the Baker-Polito Administration's [Reopening Massachusetts](#) plan. Since Governor Baker declared a State of Emergency in March and non-emergency child care programs closed, the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) has worked to amend policies, guidelines, and practices to ensure programs are supported through an accelerated pathway to reopening safely.

This guidance may be revised as policies are developed or amended through the reopening period.

OPERATIONS

Providers may access full instructions for reopening through their provider portal in the LEAD system. There are also a series of important reference documents on EEC's [reopening website](#). Finally, the *Guidance for Reopening Child Care Training* is available in the StrongStart [Learning Management System](#).

EEC has made accommodations to streamline or expedite key processes, support providers, reduce financial burden, and make the reopening process as easy as possible to follow. Highlights include:

- Deferral of licensing and renewal fees
- Expedited provisional reopening approval of programs in good standing, which are those with no open investigations, legal orders, or pending legal referrals*
- Amended subsidy policies to support families as they return to child care
- Expedited process for background record checks and amended teacher qualifications so programs have flexibility for staffing under the new requirements
- Health resources: a dedicated epidemiology line to answer health questions; regionally distributed gloves, masks, and supplies for programs

A process for new licensees is under development and will be shared soon.

Restart grants for providers to defray fixed operating costs through July and August 2020 are anticipated through the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funding, allocated to Massachusetts through the CARES Act. The legislature has designated this funding for those providers who work with subsidized children and for those who served as Exempt Emergency Child Care Providers through the closure period. More information regarding how to access restart grants will be released soon.

* Programs with questions regarding their standing may refer to their regional office for more information



Health Resources and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Programs should first contact their Local Board of Health to report or ask questions related to COVID-19 positive test results, staff and family quarantine, and program closure.

For additional questions related to stemming the spread of COVID-19 in child care settings, please contact the state's dedicated epidemiologist for child care, Dr. Katherine Hsu, at Katherine.hsu@massmail.state.ma.us or 617-983-6948.

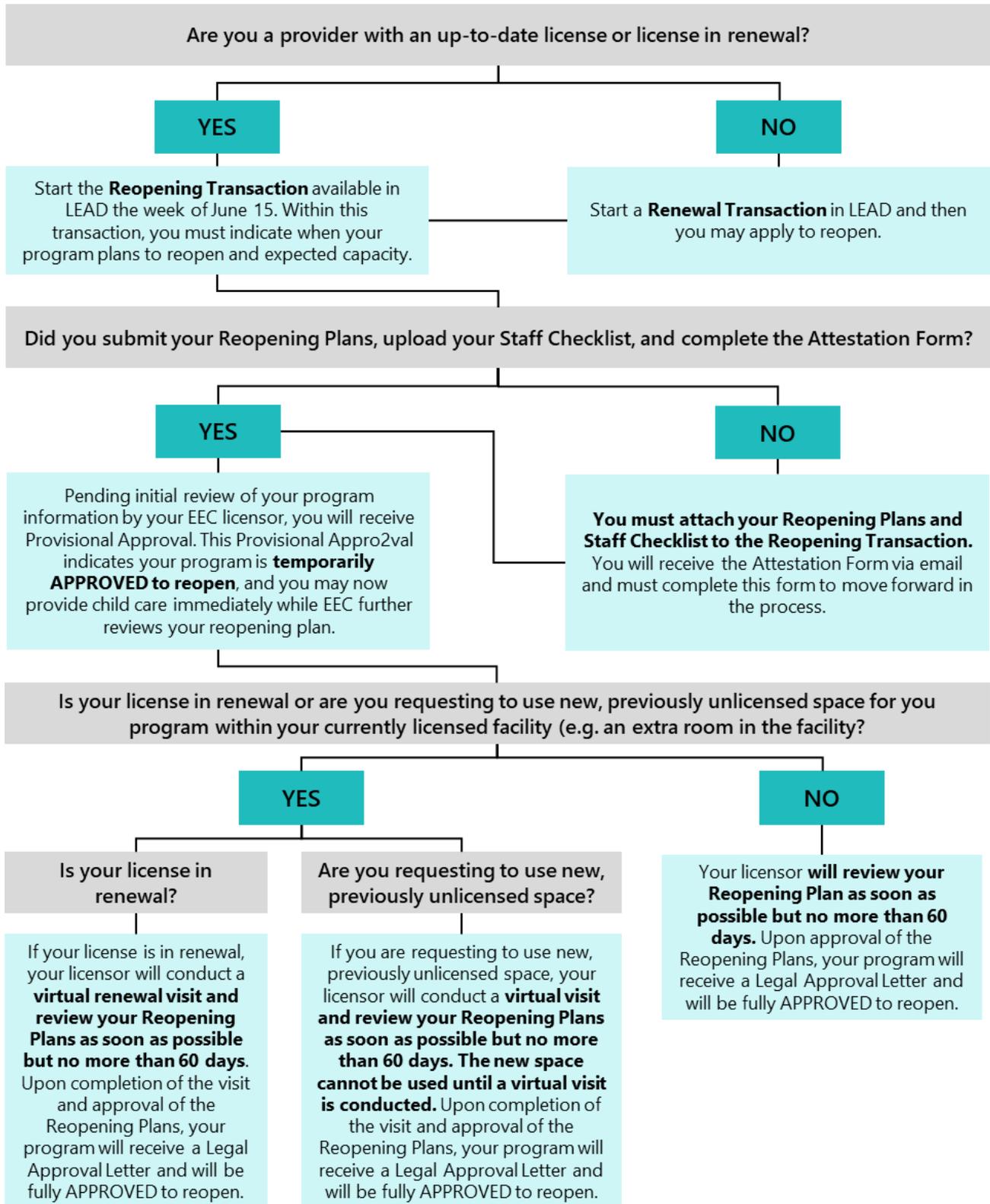
EEC will supply gloves, masks, and hand sanitizer through reopening for all licensed programs to ease the burden and cost of meeting the new requirements so programs can safely serve children and families.

Instructions will be issued to programs through their regional offices, offering designated supply pick-up times. Pick-up will be staggered to ensure physical distancing, and scheduled based on intended reopening dates.

PPE is available to all licensed programs reopening in July and August 2020. For questions related to picking up PPE, please contact your Regional Director or licensor for more details.



GUIDANCE FOR REOPENING





Subsidy Reimbursements

Subsidies will continue for those providers that reopen in July 2020. As part of the subsidy payment, EEC will also cover parent fees for July and August 2020 to assist families and providers through the reopening transition.

Provider instructions for July 2020 reimbursement

1. Apply to reopen in July.
2. Within the month of July, contact every family with an enrolled child to document the family's continued interest in returning a child to a program, even if they are not ready to immediately return a child to care:
 - Documentation may be offered via a non-binding [Parent Enrollment Confirmation Form](#), available through CCFA
 - If the family is unable to sign the Form, other written notice from the parent (e.g., email or text.) may be attached to the Form.
 - Keep this Form on file.
3. Providers work with their Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) agency or Family Child Care System to record the status of all children in their care that are enrolled* in Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA).
 - Providers who hold a direct subsidy contract with EEC will record the status on their own.
 - Providers are required to ensure all subsidized families that need their child to attend in person are accommodated (see prioritization requirements on p.15). Any provider who does not have enough space for all subsidized families wanting in person attendance should work with the CCR&R to review prioritization policies and, if necessary, find new placements for families who cannot be accommodated.
4. Providers may accept newly-enrolled subsidized families in addition to those currently subsidized. EEC will issue further guidance on a streamlined authorization process.

**Enrollment* is defined as a child having a contract or voucher placement in CCFA for a specific location of care as of July 1, 2020. EEC will not reimburse programs for children that have left subsidized care.

Please note that providers that serve school-age children during the academic year will only be reimbursed for those school-age children through the end of June 2020. Programs may have a new placement entered into CCFA for these children at a different location under their umbrella or the children could enroll at a completely different provider for care during the summer.



Provider instructions for August 2020 reimbursement

1. August reimbursement will be based on confirmed enrollment, regardless of the children’s attendance.
2. To continue to track each family’s plan, providers will be asked to follow up with all families whose children did not confirm they will return to the program.
3. Providers will also follow up with their CCR&R or Family Child Care System to record any changes and to place families that cannot be accommodated by the current provider.
4. Subsidies can continue in August for families whose enrollment interest is confirmed, even if they are not yet ready to attend the program.
5. Options will be available so that families can access their subsidies if they are not ready to return to care in September.

Next Steps: EEC will provide detailed guidelines in the coming weeks through an updated Financial Assistance Policy Guide and Financial Assistance Procedures Manual, both of which will indicate how attendance should be entered into CCFA for all scenarios.

Changes to Subsidy Policies

EEC is modifying policies to accommodate families and the providers who serve them through the initial recovery period. Highlights are below and a full list of changes are in the appendix.

- Allow for unlimited absences during an authorization to ensure parents and children can stay home when a family member is sick
- Flexibility and options for parents who do not wish to return to care immediately.
- Guidance on restarting the reauthorization of families through streamlined processes
- Extended job search periods up to 26 weeks for all families to maintain subsidy eligibility during uncertain employment
- Continued waiving of parent fees for July and August 2020 during the phased reopening process
- Waiver of the Operational Services Division Pricing Limitation Regulation; the waiver period is from March 2020 through June 30, 2021; effect is to waive the requirement that providers charge private pay families a rate equal to or higher than the state subsidized rate
- Revised closure policy for providers who need to close due to exposure



Exempt Emergency Child Care Program Transition Planning

This transition process is designed to ensure transition time for essential workers and planning time for Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs (EECCPs), which have been a critical part of the state's infrastructure through the pandemic-related closures.

Throughout the reopening process, EEC encourages EECCPs to continue serving children and their families who have no other options for safe child care. However, EECCPs that intend to reopen as full child care programs may close their emergency child care program when they choose. These EECCPs must:

- Notify families who may be using emergency child care services in advance of the anticipated date of closure;
- Notify their licensor at least one week in advance of the anticipated date of closure; and
- Submit a Reopening Transaction in LEAD.

EECCPs will continue to be paid through the last day of operations. Additionally, to support the transition to regular enrollment, EECCPs will be supported for a 'bonus' week of cleaning and preparation time between emergency services and regular care:

- Programs that operate through June 29 or June 30, 2020 will be paid through July 3, 2020 as approved closure days
- Programs that continue through July 3, 2020 will be paid through July 10, 2020.
- Programs that continue through July 10, 2020 will be paid through July 17, 2020

EECCPs seeking to close prior to July 10, 2020 but not intending to reopen regular operations during Phase 2 are asked to notify their licensor at least one week prior to the anticipated closure date. Please note that if a program chooses to remain closed and their license will expire during the time they are closed, the program will be required to restart the renewal process when they reopen.

Program Supports

EEC invests annually in support services to ensure that communities have the resources they need to fully support parents. These have been expanded and adjusted to support programs through the recovery period. Services will be provided virtually through the COVID-19 recovery process, including:

- Coordinated Family and Community Engagement
- Family Child Care Systems
- StrongStart Professional Development Centers



- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
- Child Care Resource & Referral

Please contact your local provider or grantee for more information about available services.

WORKFORCE

Unemployment Insurance

Staff members and providers who are not planning to return to work may continue receiving unemployment insurance if they have a qualifying reason:

1. They are quarantined due to an order by a civil authority or medical professional, or have left employment due to reasonable risk of exposure or infection, or to care for a family member.*
2. They have school-age children requiring care for whom services are not available due to COVID-19 service limitations or school closures.

Modifications to Background Record Checks

Group and School-Age Background Record Checks

Group and School-Age programs, including all licensees, Background Record Checks (BRC) program administrators, and employees, are required to undergo an EEC BRC and to be found suitable. Employees include Group and School Age staff, volunteers, interns, and transportation personnel.

To support reopening, EEC has made the following modifications to its approach to BRCs for Group and School Age Programs:

- EEC will not be requesting Mental Health Assessments or Criminal Justice Letters from candidates with presumptive records, i.e. those whose previous criminal history indicates that their record may disqualify them from having unsupervised access to children due to the presumed unacceptable risk posed to children.
- The full BRC is still required, but will be prioritized to ensure expedited review and processing.

* The worker does not need to provide medical documentation and need only be available for work when and as able.



Individuals who were submitted and approved through the *Urgent BRC Process* during the pandemic are required to complete the full BRC process, as the Urgent BRC does not meet federal compliance requirements.

Family Child Care Background Record Checks (BRC)

The following are required to undergo an EEC BRC and be found suitable: All Family Child Care (FCC) educators as well as their household members aged 15 years old or above; persons regularly on the premises aged 15 years old or above; all FCC assistants; and anyone who provides services on behalf of, who affiliates with, or are present in such programs.

To support reopening, EEC has made the following modifications to its BRC approach for FCCs:

- Programs may open with provisional approval, even if a BRC is not complete, though BRCs must be complete for programs to receive final approval.
- The full BRC is still required, but new educators, household members, and persons regularly on premises will be prioritized to ensure expedited review and processing.

Individuals who were submitted and approved through the *Urgent BRC Process* during the pandemic are required to complete the full BRC process, as the Urgent BRC does not meet federal compliance requirements.

Please see the appendix for more detail.

Modifications to Educator Qualifications

Group and School-Age Educator Qualifications

Changes for Group and School Age programs are as follows:

- Work Experience Requirements Towards EEC Certification: 50 hours of consistent work at one program will be equivalent to one month of work experience.
- Educational Requirements Towards EEC Certification: expanded teacher qualification requirements to include educators with higher education degrees and work experience for accelerated approval.
- EEC Course Requirement Modifications: expanded what is accepted towards Child Growth and Development to include 3 Continuing Education Units (CEU) and Life Span courses.
- Required Qualification: modified required qualifications and administrative time for Group and School Age programs.



- Large Group Child Care Licensing - Administrator: guidance for temporary approval as administrator to enable more Director I and Director II approvals through reopening to address immediate administrator needs.

Please see the appendix for more detail.

Family Child Care Educator Qualifications

Changes for FCC programs are as follows:

- FCC providers and assistants now have the ability to update their Education Profile to reflect the completion of degrees and certifications, if applicable, in LEAD
- Educators with EEC Teacher Certification in Infant/Toddler and/or Preschool are permitted to operate as a Certified Family Child Care Assistant
- Individuals employed at Group and School Age programs prior to closure with Teacher Certification may become Certified FCC Assistants with only a BRC

Please see the appendix for more detail.



APPENDIX

Operations

Changes to Subsidy Policies

In addition to those outlined in this document, the changes below will be included in the forthcoming revised Financial Assistance Policy Guide.

Attendance Policies

- EEC will eliminate limits on the total number of absences a child can have (45 days in a 12 month authorization or 15 days in a Provisional Authorization). Please note that EEC will not eliminate policies around unexplained absences (no show/no call).
- EEC will provide flexibility for parents who do not wish to return to care immediately but who wish to remain with their current providers. Providers should support families in understanding that they do not need to physically return to care to maintain their subsidy at this point in time. The parent will need to indicate their desire to stay enrolled on the Parent Enrollment Confirmation Form.
- EEC will release detailed guidance on how attendance for all children should be marked in CCFA that will allow for payment during this transition period, but that will also allow EEC to track which children are actively receiving care. Providers must pay close attention to ensure that all billing is submitted accurately.

Authorization/Eligibility Policies

- All authorizations that end between March 16 and July 31, 2020 have already been automatically extended. EEC will not automatically extend any additional authorizations. The reauthorization process will resume for all families who expire after July 31, 2020.
- EEC will release comprehensive policies to streamline the reauthorization process and to ensure that families are given options to maintain their subsidy, even with uncertain employment or service need.
- EEC will extend the amount of time allowed, through provisional authorizations, for job search from 12 to 26 weeks and will allow access to provisional authorizations for all families who are reauthorizing with limited documentation.
- EEC will eliminate the in-person reauthorization requirement and allow for virtual appointment options.
- EEC will provide guidelines for authorizing and enrolling new subsidy families with limited documentation.



- EEC will not eliminate the need for parents to report changes in service needs, but all COVID-19 related changes will be categorized as Temporary Changes to give parents the maximum amount of time possible to find or return to a qualified service need to maintain subsidy.
- EEC will exclude the additional Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (\$600 per week) from being counted as a part of a parent's income. Normal unemployment income will remain as included income.

Parent Fee Policies

- EEC will continue to cover the value of parent fees as part of the EEC subsidy reimbursement for the months of July and August 2020 to assist in the reopening transition for families and providers.
- Parents may continue to report changes in income to reduce the parent fee listed on their authorization, including those parents who have provisional authorizations. EEC will offer streamlined documentation requirements and will allow for the changing of parent fees during provisional authorizations.

Closure Day Policies

- EEC will continue to implement planned changes to closure policies in fiscal year 2021, including the elimination of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) specific requirement for certain professional development days and the addition of one additional professional development day. This will allow all providers, both FCC and Center-Based Programs (CBP), to have the option of taking a total of five professional development days, no matter the provider's QRIS level.
- EEC will create a new policy for emergency closures, including those related to COVID-19, that coordinates communication with the Regional Offices to approve closures. All closures approved by the Regional Office will be paid.

Pricing Limitation Law Waiver

The Operational Services Division's (OSD) Price Limitation Regulation states that EEC cannot pay a Child Care Educator/Provider a rate that is higher than the lowest fee charged to any of its private paying clients for the same type of care, unless an exception can be sufficiently documented in accordance with the provisions of 808 CMR 1.03(4)(a) or (b), if applicable.

EEC has received a waiver from OSD to the Pricing Limitation Regulation starting in March 2020 and extending through State Fiscal Year 2021 (ending June 30, 2021). During the time period, EEC will not enforce the requirement that Child Care Educators/Providers charge private Families a rate equal to or higher than the state subsidized rate. This waiver will allow Child Care Educators/Providers flexibility in the charging of private pay Families during reopening and allows the offering of discounts (including employee discounts), tuition waivers, etc. - without requiring



restricted revenue to cover the differential pricing.

OSD recognizes this waiver will help EEC address the impact of the COVID crisis on the availability and affordability of child care and to mitigate against the economic and enrollment uncertainty the child care industry will combat in FY21.

Instructions For EEC Direct Contract Providers:

- The Subsidy Administrator is asked to continue to keep published private rates on file, which includes any discounts, tuition waivers, and/or discounts for staff.
- Ensure the rates in CCFA are equal above the EEC Daily Reimbursement Rate

Instructions For Voucher Only Providers:

- Subsidy Administrator is asked to continue to keep their published private rates on file, which includes any discount and/or benefits for staff.
- CCRRs have already made updates to voucher only provider rates.

Family Prioritization and Communication

Providers that work with families receiving subsidized care are asked to speak with **all** returning families to determine the balance between provider capacity and the timeline for families choosing to return.

For those providers who have more families than space to care for them, EEC asks providers to ensure that subsidized families who need their child to be in physical attendance are prioritized. If there are more subsidized families requesting attendance than the program can physically accommodate, the following prioritization criteria should be followed:

1. Families who are expected to physically return to work and have no alternative care for their child during work hours, or cannot safely care for their child at home for other reasons, should receive the highest priority.
2. Programs should prioritize DTA families similarly, with those who need to physically return to work being prioritized. If a child holds a voucher from DTA but the family does not currently need in person attendance, the program is not expected to require attendance.
3. Families that are currently working or attending school at home, on temporary furlough, on job search, or on another type of leave are not required to be prioritized at this time.
4. If a family is referred from DCF, the provider should coordinate prioritization and attendance expectations with the DCF Area Office.



- If a provider is unable to serve all subsidized families requesting a return to in person attendance, the provider should work with the family and the CCR&R to find the family an alternative placement.
- EEC will provide guidance for parents who wish to change providers in July 2020. The guidance will maintain some payment for the original provider for a period of time to account for transition while allowing the parent to place a child in the new program immediately.

For those reopening programs who must make decisions to prioritize families prior to the release of the Guide, no program will be asked to reverse decisions they make about family enrollment.

Please use the following tools, available in CCFA, when confirming attendance plans with families supported by subsidies:

- Parent Enrollment Confirmation Form: this is the Form programs can use to confirm that families intend to re-enroll in their program when they return to child care, even if they are not ready to return right away.
- Subsidy Parent Letter: this is a letter issued by providers outlining subsidy options to families. It can be downloaded and customized as needed to help explain the process for confirming subsidies.

Professional Development Centers and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Contacts

EEC invests in important services to support programs with professional development and build their capacity to address family needs, especially during the recovery period.

We know that families and staff who return to care will have experienced trauma and may continue to do so. EEC encourages you to use the resources listed below as critical supports during the recovery.

Please see the below contact information listing for these services across each region.



Region	StrongStart Professional Development Centers (PDC)	The Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMH)
1- Western MA	Kimm Quinlan StrongStart Western Mass PDC Coordinator 413-552-2593 WesternMaPDC@EECStrongStart.org	Behavior Health Network, Inc. Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program 110 Maple St., Springfield, MA 01105 Carolina Clark Maria Carolina.Clark@bhninc.org Phone: 413-304-2859 Website: http://www.bhninc.org Carolyn Mazel earlychildhood@collaborative.org Phone: 413-586-4998, x 102
2- Central MA	Mary Watson Avery StrongStart Central Mass PDC Coordinator 508-657-1249 CentralMaPDC@EECStrongStart.org	Community Healthlink- Together For Kids (TFK) Program 335 Chandler Street, Worcester, MA 01602 Beth Ciavattone eciavattone@communityhealthlink.org Phone: 508-791-3261 Ask for "TFK Consultation Services" www.communityhealthlink.org
3- Northeast MA	Barbara Gallagher StrongStart Northeast PDC Coordinator 978-682-6628 NortheastMaPDC@EECStrongStart.org	Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) Mental Health Consultation Program 439 South Union St., Lawrence, MA 01843 Jayna Doherty Email: jdoherly@eliotchs.org 508-688-5408 www.mspcc.org
4- Metro Boston	Debra Johnston-Malden Metro-Boston PDC Coordinator 617-287-4620 MetroBostonPDC@EECStrongStart.org	Preschool Outreach Program 780 American Legion Highway, Roslindale, MA 02131 Rachele Joyner-Jones rjoyner@thehome.org 617-469-8594 Website: http://www.thehome.org



<p>5- Southeast</p>	<p>Nicole Miles StrongStart Southeast PDC Coordinator 781-870-7009 SoutheastMaPDC@EECStrongStart.org</p>	<p>Enable, Inc. Consultation Services for Children 605 Neponset St., Canton, MA 02021</p> <p>Gail Brown Email: ghbrown@enableinc.org 781-821-4422, ext. 300</p> <p>www.enableinc.org</p> <p>Justice Resource Institute, Inc. Early Childhood Training and Consultation 35 Summer St., Taunton, MA 02780</p> <p>Stacey Gay sgay@JRI.org (508) 828-1308 ext. 2630 http://www.jri.org/ecs</p>
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Talking with Families

EEC licenses all child care providers, but does not oversee the relationship between providers and families who pay out of pocket. Therefore, EEC does not have any oversight regarding how programs prioritize family return. However, many programs have asked for advice regarding how they communicate with families approaching their reopening date.

We suggest that programs begin by speaking with families in the following ways:

1. **Share information:** Communicate with families about the reopening plans you have developed, including protocols, staffing plans, and ways you will balance child development and health and safety concerns. Share screening protocols, drop-off and pick-up procedures, hours of operation, and other important pieces of information for their planning purposes.
2. **Understand the need:** Families may experience circumstances that impact their decision of whether and when to return, including level of health risk, comfort with the protocols programs will adopt, and changes to their employment status. Talk through their options to better understand their timeline for returning. Families who opt to return later may benefit from larger group sizes that are adjusted based on changing public health data in the fall.

Next, think about the program’s ability to meet families’ needs. If more families plan to return than the program can accommodate, are there options to divide or expand usable space and staffing?

If not, then consider prioritizing families. Some prioritization options include:

- Essential workers in critical sectors



- Vulnerable families, especially those with income challenges or limited options for non-group care
- Families who must physically report to work

Please use your best judgement and consult your Regional Office for help when needed.

WORKFORCE

Family Child Care Background Record Check and Qualification Guidance

For FCC programs, EEC has modified BRC processes and qualification guidance in order to streamline and reduce barriers to reopening.

Background Record Check for Family Child Care

Family Child Care Educators, Household Members, Regularly on Premises, and Third Party Affiliates

Introduction

All family child care educators as well as their household members aged 15 years old or above; persons regularly on the premises aged 15 years old or above; all FCC assistants; and anyone who provides services on behalf of, or who affiliates with, or are present in such programs are required to undergo an EEC BRC and be found suitable.

An example of an Affiliated individual includes FCC system staff and transportation personnel.

Volunteers in FCC homes must be run under the role of a person regularly on the premises, meaning that such individuals must have an EEC BRC.

The individuals listed above will be referred to as candidates throughout this section.

EEC's BRC requirements include Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI), DCF, Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI), and state and national finger-print based checks.

Returning Providers

All child care program educators, assistants, household members or persons regularly on the premises of a family child care home, and third parties with unsupervised access to children shall have a current BRC with a status of suitable, and shall have completed a fingerprint-based check within the past three years. Therefore, a new EEC BRC is not required for the reopening process.



Providers in Renewal

The FCC educator will submit an application and then receive consent forms for themselves, household members, and those identified as regularly on premises. The FCC should contact their EEC Licensor if the consent forms are not received. The consent forms will start the BRC process. Individuals will receive Fingerprint Notification Letters through the mail with instructions on how to schedule a fingerprint appointment with Identogo. EEC will run the other three checks (SORI, CORI, and DCF) simultaneously.

All FCC educators must notify their licensor in the event that their household composition has changed, in order to obtain a consent form for that individual. Checks of all third party affiliates with unsupervised access to children must be run, even if the individuals are only present on a temporary basis.

Changes

A BRC will affect a reopen transaction if an FCC provider lists a new Household Member or Regular on premises. This includes FCC providers who do not have all their Household Members and/or Regular on Premises listed in LEAD, and anyone who has not processed a transaction in LEAD since it went live in 2018. In the event an FCC provider lists all their Household Members in the reopen transaction, even though they might not technically be "new," LEAD sees them as new and will send out BRC forms.

Such FCC providers must notify their EEC Licensor that the Household Member and/or Regular on Premises are not new, so that the BRC requirement can be removed from the LEAD transaction.

If a new BRC is run as part of the reopen, the provisional legal letter will go out before the BRC is back, but the final legal letter will not go out until the BRC is complete.

Note: Individuals submitted and approved through the Urgent BRC process during the pandemic are required to complete the full BRC process; the Urgent BRC does not meet federal compliance requirements.

In Home Non-Relative Caregiver or Informal Care

If an individual is caring for an unrelated child in the child's own home and receiving funding through EEC to provide subsidized child care, that individual must also complete the EEC BRC and be found suitable prior to receiving EEC funding.

A family member (grandparent, aunt, uncle, or sibling by blood, marriage, or adoption of a child) that receives subsidy funding through EEC must complete a SORI prior to receiving funding from EEC. In the event a family member's SORI returns a crime that is on the mandatory disqualification



listing, they will be subject to the mandatory disqualification, preventing them from being paid by EEC for this care.

Family Child Care Educator Qualifications

New Education Profile Function in LEAD

FCC providers and assistants now have the ability to update their Education Profile in LEAD as it relates to the completion of the following qualifications, if applicable:

- EEC Teacher Certification
- Child Development Associate (CDA)
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Licensure
- Department of Public Health (DPH) Early Intervention certificate
- Associate, Bachelor, or Advanced Degree Diploma (only if diploma shows major i.e. Associates of Arts in Early Childhood Education)
- Official or Unofficial Transcripts showing completed degree, major, and graduation year
- College Early Childhood Certificate

Although this update is not required, FCC educators and assistants are encouraged to submit their education for the purposes of documenting the educational background of all educators for future EEC credentialing processes.

For more information and instructions on how to upload these documents, please log into your LEAD account and click on the 'Education Profile' tab.

Family Child Care Certified Assistants

Educators who hold an EEC Teacher Certification in Infant/Toddler (I/T) and/or Preschool (PS) will be allowed to operate as a Certified FCC Assistant. A Certified FCC Assistant is someone who can assist a licensed FCC provider and provide substitute care for a longer period of time. In addition to holding an EEC I/T and PS Certification, [Certified Family Child Care Assistants](#) must also meet the criteria noted on the EEC website.

EEC understands that individuals employed at Group and School Age child care programs prior to the state of emergency may be interested in working at an FCC program. If a Group and School Age staff person who has a Teacher Certification wants to become a Certified FCC Assistant, they must complete a BRC survey. If the staff person answers "yes" to any questions on the BRC survey, they must complete a partial BRC, consisting of CORI, SORI, and DCF checks.



Family Child Care Required Qualifications

EEC has modified required qualifications and administration time for FCC programs. Please refer to the charts below for staff guidance.

Administrator Levels			
Capacity	Hours of Operation	Required Admin time	Administrator Qualifications
Please see guidance	Any	0	FCC Provider

Staff Needs and Certification Tables	
Age	Staff Needs and Certification Levels
<u>Multi-Age</u> All Age Groups	FCC Provider and FCC Assistant or Teacher I/T and/or PS

Group and School-Age Background Records Check and Qualification Guidance

Background Records Check (BRC) for Group and School Age Programs

Group and School-Age programs, including all licensees, BRC program administrators, and employees, are required to undergo an EEC BRC and to be found suitable. Employees include Group and School Age staff, volunteers, interns, and transportation personnel. The individuals listed above will be referred to as “candidates.”

EEC’s BRC requirements include Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI), Department of Children and Families (DCF), Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI), and state and national fingerprint-based checks.

All current licensees, BRC program administrators, and employees shall have a current BRC with a status of Suitable or Provisional and shall have completed a fingerprint-based check within the past three years. Provided all licensees and employees have suitable status, a new EEC BRC is not required for the reopening process.

Group and School Age programs must update the staff checklist with the BRC status of all staff and the last date the BRC was run.



Note: Individuals submitted and approved through the Urgent BRC process during the pandemic are required to complete the full BRC process because the Urgent BRC does not meet federal compliance requirements.

Modifications to BRC Process

For new employees, the BRC process must be completed in its entirety, including fingerprinting. During this reopening phase EEC will not be requesting Mental Health Assessments or Criminal Justice Letters from the candidates with presumptive records as allowed by current regulation.

Note for all candidates: the name entered on the Consent Form **must** exactly match the official identification submitted to Identogo to be fingerprinted - otherwise Identogo may not be able to process the fingerprint.

Department of Criminal Justice Information Services SAFIS Response Unit

Acceptable Forms of Identification-Temporary Operational Change

In response to COVID-19, many states have implemented extensions on expired driver licenses and state identification cards as of June 8, 2020. EOPSS has approved IDEMIA to accept from an applicant an expired driver license or state identification card from Massachusetts in accordance with Massachusetts' published guidelines:

- September 2020 expiration for license/ID expired between March 1, 2020 – May 30, 2020.
- October 2020 expiration for license/ID expiring in June 2020.
- November 2020 expiration for license/ID expiring in July 2020.
- December 2020 expiration for license/ID expiring in August 2020.

Should you have any comments or concerns, please reach out to the SAFIS Response Unit at 617-660-4790 or via email at safis@mass.gov.

Group and School-Age Educator Qualifications

EEC is modifying the Educator Qualification requirements specifically for the reopening of Group and School Age child care programs. To qualify for one or more of these positions, educators must meet the specified work experience and education requirements detailed in the Modifications to Work Experience Requirement Towards EEC Certification and Modifications to Educational requirements towards EEC Certification section below.

Modifications to Work Experience Requirements Towards EEC Certification



Experience in providing direct care and teaching during all types of program activities to a group of children, under seven years of age and not yet enrolled in first grade, or special needs children up to age 16, at least 12 hours per week, on a regular basis, in periods of at least four weeks in one program.

- EEC is accelerating work hours gained during the COVID-19 program closures beginning March 23, 2020 through the end of the Executive Order
 - 50 hours of consistent work at one program will be equivalent to one month of work experience.

Modifications to Educational Requirements Towards EEC Certification

EEC is expanding the teacher qualifications requirements to accommodate educators with higher education degrees and work experience (see below).

Degree-based Qualifications Towards Certification

<i>Revised Educational Requirements</i>	<i>Work Experience Requirements</i>
TEACHER INFANT TODDLER AND/OR PRESCHOOL CERTIFICATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Associates, Bachelors, or Advanced Degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or Related Field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Three (3) months in related age groups
LEAD TEACHER INFANT TODDLER AND/OR PRESCHOOL CERTIFICATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Associates, Bachelors, or Advanced Degree in Early Childhood Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nine (9) months in related age groups ● For Lead Teacher Infant/Toddler, a course in Infant Toddler Care is required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Associates, Bachelors, or Advanced Degree in Related Field, plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 12 ECE Credits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nine (9) months in related age groups ● For Lead Teacher Infant/Toddler, a course in Infant Toddler Care is required
DIRECTOR I CERTIFICATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meets Lead Teacher requirements, plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4 CEUs or ○ 3 credits in Child Care Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fifteen (15) months in related age groups ● An Educator does not need to work as an EEC Certified Lead Teacher prior to obtaining a Director I certification.
DIRECTOR II CERTIFICATION	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meets Director I requirements, plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4 CEUS or 3 Credits in a Child Care Leadership Course ○ (Category of Study 8, 9,10, 11, 12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No additional work experience required
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Modification to course requirement

Child Growth and Development Course

For Educators with an unrelated degree or no degree, a Child Growth and Development course is still a requirement. EEC has modified what will be accepted towards Child Growth and Development:

Three Continuing Education Units (CEU) will be accepted towards Child Growth and Development. CEUs can be obtained from any International Association for Continued Education and Training ([IACET](#)) accreditation.

EEC is also accepting Life Span courses such as Human Development and Developmental Psychology through Life Span to fulfill the Child Growth and Development Requirement.

Teacher Qualification Certification process modifications

For Educator Certification Priority processing and Upgrades:

- EEC will accept electronically scanned applications for certification priority processing and upgrades.
- For first time applicants, utilize the [General Application packet](#) on EEC’s website.
- For Upgrades, utilize the Professional Qualifications Upgrade Application
- Submit all the required documentation in PDF form
- No .jpegs or pictures taken by phone; PDF scanner apps are available for mobile phones
- Please also note that EEC will not be accepting e-transcripts sent directly from a college/university. Transcripts must be included in the application packet in PDF form.
- The subject line includes: Submission of EEC Application for Certification Priority or Upgrade (Reopening)
- Email complete application packet to eecprofdev@mass.gov



Group Sizes, Ratios, and Required Qualification

EEC has modified the required qualifications and administration time for Group and School Age programs. Please refer to the charts below for staff guidance.

Group and School-Age Administrator Levels			
<i>Capacity</i>	<i>Hours of Operation</i>	<i>Required Administrator Time</i>	<i>Administrator Qualifications</i>
No more than 10	Any	0	Teacher or Site Coordinator
11 through 13 infant - preschool	Any	0	LT
14 through 26 infant - preschool	Less than 4	0	LT
14 through 26 Infant - preschool	Four or More	0	DI
27 through 39 infant - preschool	Any	50% FTE	DI
40 through 79 infant - preschool	Any	50% FTE	DI
80+ infant - preschool	Any	50% FTE	DII
11 through 52 school age children	Any	20% FTE	School Age Administrator
53+ school age children	Any	50% FTE	School Age Administrator

Group and School-Age Staff Needs and Certification Levels



Age	Staff Needs and Certification Levels
<u>Infant</u>	At least two Teacher Infant/Toddler Or One Teacher Infant/Toddler and One Assistant
<u>Toddler</u>	At least two Teacher Infant/Toddler Or One Teacher Infant/Toddler and One Assistant
<u>Preschool</u>	At least one Teacher Preschool Or One Teacher Preschool and One Assistant
<u>School Age</u>	At least one Group Leader
<u>Multi-Age</u> All Age Groups	At least one Infant/Toddler and Preschool Teacher Or at least two Preschool Teachers *Assistants can be used with qualified teacher *Programs must assign at least one qualified staff person to meet the youngest age group.

Large Group Child Care Licensing/Temporary Approval as Administrator: To address the immediate need for an Administrator within a Large Group Child Care program, EEC is revising the Temporary Approval as Administrator. Lead Teachers and Director I certified staff that are lacking a single college course or the total work experience of 15 months may be approved to serve as Director I or Director II, respectively, for a maximum of 3 consecutive semesters while completing the education or experience required for permanent certification. Lead Teachers and Directors seeking to serve as Director I or Director II must submit to the Department a written request for temporary approval and a plan for completion of education and work experience requirements.