



THOMAS WEBER  
COMMISSIONER

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

<b>EMB FY 2015-03</b>	<b>EEC Management Bulletin</b>
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- Subject:** Updates to Income Eligible Financial Assistance Access for Summer Only (new children on the waitlist needing care only for summer)
- Date Issued:** April 24, 2015
- Effective Date:** Immediate
- For Use By:** Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) Contracted Providers/Family Child Care Systems and Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs)
- Synopsis:** Opens access to income eligible vouchers for children on the EEC waitlist who are designated as requiring “summer only” early education and care services.
- Further Info:** <http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/departments-of-early-education-and-care/subsidy-management-technical-assistance-form.html>
- Supersedes:** Updates EMB FY 2014-03 for Income Eligible Financial Assistance Access for Summer Only

**Introduction:**

The purpose of this Bulletin is to open access to “new” children that are currently placed on the EEC waitlist and are identified as needing **summer only** early education and care services. Access to this funding opportunity shall be limited to children placed on EEC’s centralized waitlist who: (1) are currently not enrolled in any subsidized EEC program; and (2) were not enrolled in an EEC subsidized summer program in the previous year. Please be advised that those children who are currently enrolled in a subsidized EEC program or were enrolled in an EEC subsidized summer program last year are not eligible for this funding opportunity because those children should be offered summer program opportunities based on existing continuity of care policies and procedures.

**Requirements:**

Children on the waitlist identified as needing “Summer Only Care” early education and care services may be issued an available funding letter from the CCR&R to determine if the family is eligible for a voucher for **summer care only**. Upon verification of eligibility, vouchers may be issued. Please be advised that these vouchers may be issued for the first day following the end of school and will expire on the end date of the summer program or September 15th of the calendar year, whichever comes first.

### **Outreach and Funding Availability Letters:**

CCR&Rs should start sending available funding letters to families on the waitlist that have the waitlist priority code of "Summer Only Care". Access to care will be provided on a first come, first served basis according to the child's waitlist application date.

### **Eligibility Determination by Contracted Providers:**

A Contracted Provider may determine eligibility for a family seeking "Summer Only Care" as follows:

- Family contacts the Contracted Provider for available summer slots.
- Contracted Provider must collect a copy of the summer only available funding letter issued by the CCR&R (from either the CCR&R or the family) to verify the family's eligibility for a summer only funding opportunity.
- If the family is interested in enrolling the child in the Contracted Provider's summer program, the Contracted Provider will process the family's eligibility as follows:
  - If the family does not have a subsidy, complete a full eligibility determination.
  - If the family has a subsidy but the child is not listed as a family member, obtain supporting documentation in order to add the child to the household. Documents must then be submitted to the CCR&R to add the new family member.
  - If the family has an existing subsidy and the child is listed as a family member, no additional documentation is needed.
- Contracted Provider shall ensure that all eligible families sign the EEC Financial Assistance Agreement at the time of the initial assessment.
- Contracted Provider must inform the family that there will be a change in the parent fees when the "Summer Only Care" child begins attending the summer program. At the time of the initial assessment, Contracted Providers must inform the families of the start date and amount of the new parent fee structure.
- For new children added through "Summer Only Care", the Contracted Provider shall scan and forward the required documentation by a return receipt email to the CCR&R program director. At a minimum, the documentation to be forwarded to the CCR&R shall include all supporting documentation to verify eligibility along with a signed copy of the EEC Financial Assistance Agreement.
- Within two (2) business days after receiving an email that contains the required documentation, confirmation of provider form, and a determination of eligibility from the Contracted Provider, the CCR&R will review the documents and issue a voucher to the family. The voucher start date shall reflect the anticipated placement date indicated on the confirmation of provider form.
- Upon issuance of the voucher, the CCR&R will email the Contracted Provider to confirm processing.
- Contracted Provider will print the NEW application and fee agreement and the voucher to obtain signatures from the parent(s).
- A copy of the signed vouchers and fee agreements shall be mailed/scanned to the CCR&R by the Contracted Provider, with a return receipt email. The original signature shall be maintained by the Contracted Provider and kept in the family's child care subsidy eligibility file.

### **Limitations on Eligibility for Summer Only Vouchers -- Job Search**

Otherwise eligible families seeking “Summer Only Care” that do not have a current service need (i.e., are not currently participating in an EEC approved activity) will fall into one of two categories: (1) families that are seasonal employees/students (i.e., summer only work/education schedules); or (2) families that are not participating in an EEC approved activity (i.e., work, education or training) at the time of the initial assessment.

Applicants who are not currently participating in an EEC approved activity must submit documentation to the CCR&R program director, or designee, to confirm a valid service need prior to the start of the summer only authorization. To avoid unintended terminations, families must submit the Employment Verification Form or other documentation reflecting participation in an education/training activity prior to the start of the summer only authorization. In such instances, the family will not be eligible for the summer only funding opportunity. Families that do not submit confirming documentation must be returned to the waitlist with a current wait list application date. Newly employed families (e.g., families that submit an Employment Verification Form to establish eligibility) shall receive additional time to submit paystubs or other documentation to the CCR&R program director, or designee, in order to verify employment, in accordance with existing subsidy regulations and policies.

### **Reassessment of Summer Only Vouchers Prior to the Start of Summer Programs**

Subsidy administrators shall not conduct an additional eligibility assessment prior to the start of the summer program. However, subsidy administrators shall remind families of their obligation to report all substantial changes which may impact eligibility within 14 days (e.g., income increases of 20% or more, changes to employment or school schedules, changes to household composition, etc.). See EEC Financial Assistance Policy Guide at p. 2-7. The EEC Financial Assistance Policy Guide may be found on the Department's website:

<http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/regs-policies/20130117-financial-assistance-policy-guide.pdf>

### **Issuance of Vouchers by CCR&Rs**

The procedure outlined above is a guide to streamline the eligibility process and enroll children in “Summer Only Care” as soon as possible. Recognizing that CCR&Rs and Contracted Providers have varying staffing patterns and procedures as well as different relationships, they may decide cooperatively to modify the procedure provided that the goal of enrolling children who meet the eligibility requirements is obtained as expeditiously as possible.