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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

EMB FY 2015-05

EEC Management Bulletin

- Subject:** Update to Child Care Financial Assistance Attendance Policy
- Date Issued:** July 1, 2015
- Effective Date:** Effective immediately
- 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:** Revises the methodology for determining excessive absences for children receiving subsidized child care
- Further Info:** If you have any questions or need any technical assistance related to this EMB, please complete a technical assistance form, which is located on EEC's website:
<http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/department-of-early-education-and-care/subsidy-management-technical-assistance-form.html>
- Amends:** All references to tracking excessive absences within defined periods of time (i.e., January to June; July to December) contained within EEC Financial Assistance Policy Guide, Chapter 2.7 Attendance and EMB FY 2014-02 "Clarification and Guidance Related to the Requirements for Attendance Monitoring" are superseded by this EMB. All other aspects of the Attendance Policy remain in effect.

Introduction:

The purpose of this EMB is to provide subsidy administrators and early education and care programs with clarification and guidance related to determining excessive absences for children receiving subsidized child care.

Amended Policy:

Effective July 1, 2015, EEC's attendance policy for children receiving subsidized child care has changed. EEC has made this change to align with the release of its Child Care Financial Assistance application ("CCFA"). Through CCFA, the methodology for calculating excessive absences will be determined over a

rolling six month period for all children currently enrolled or enrolled in the future.¹ Be advised that CCFA has the ability to assist subsidy administrators in tracking absences through detailed attendance reports and real-time attendance data entry, including absences attributed to prior placements within the past six months (e.g., if Child A transitions from Program X to Program Y, the attendance records from Program X will follow Child A to Program Y).

How this will work:

All children enrolled in subsidized child care on July 1, 2015 (or later) will have zero absences attributed to them. On the first day of the seventh month, the absences accrued in the first month will be dropped. For example, a child who is enrolled on July 10, 2015 has the following attendance record for the first six months of his/her placement:

- July 2015: 10 absences (10 total absences accrued so far)
- August 2015: 4 absences (14 total absences accrued so far)
- September 2015: 5 absences (19 total absences accrued so far)
- October 2015: 5 absences (24 total absences accrued so far)
- November 2015: 3 absences (27 total absences accrued so far)
- December 2015: 3 absences (30 total absences accrued in six month period)

In this scenario, the child has accrued the maximum of 30 absences, and the provider will receive payment for all absences. On January 1, 2016, the absences accrued in July 2015 will be dropped. Please understand that the child will now have 20 absences going into January 2016 because the 10 absences in the above example will no longer be included in the excessive absence calculation. In this case, if the child accrued 11 more absences in January 2016, the provider would have two options:

- Issue a two-week notice of termination for the child upon the 31st absence, OR;
- Allow the child to remain in care, but provider will not be paid for any additional absences past the 30th absence for January 2016.

If the provider chooses not to terminate the child, the child will have 27 absences accrued going into February 2016, as the August 2015 absences will be dropped at this point.

To align with this policy change, EEC will amend the Child Care Financial Assistance Policy Guide. EEC has also updated the Attendance Notification Form. The new form will be posted on EEC's website and e-mailed to all subsidy administrators.

Impact on Excessive Absence Policy Related to Unexplained Absences:

The above policy change does not affect the existing attendance policy regarding consecutive "unexplained" absences. Please refer to 606 CMR 10.02 (defining excessive absence) and Section 2.7 of the Financial Assistance Policy Guide for guidance on unexplained absences.

¹ In the previous subsidy management systems, CCIMS and eCCIMS, subsidy managers used a stagnant time period of July 1 - December 31 and January 1 - June 30 to count the number of accrued absences.