

Name/Organization	Topic/Comment
<p>Laura Frogameni, Northampton Preschool Partnership/CPPI & Northampton/Hadley Family Connection/CFCE Coordinator</p>	<p>CFCE and CPPI Grants: Thank you for your work and dedication to young children's early education and care! Your determination is evident and progress is visible. If I wasn't on a plane to visit my daughter, I'd be there in person to offer my comments and gratitude.</p> <p>I especially want to offer our gratitude for the fiscal and programmatic support provided to our community through the CFCE and CPPI grants. These two together form a strong foundation for the networked support of young children, families, and educators. It is a particular challenge that the CFCE grant has not received any increases over far too many years while we are required to provide step increases and COLAs to staff. As a result, we could not keep educational materials in the FY25 budget nor fund spaces in which to do our work. And yes, at the same time, we are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to expand our work within the CPPI grant. We are excited to add a Priority Strand, to fully live into curriculum alignment as we have improved access and inclusion services in our city.</p> <p>Thank you for visiting Western MA. We are a unique area of the state with unique challenges. One of the biggest challenges we face is great mobility across city/town boundaries for EEC preschool enrollment, but DESE district city limits bind special education services. For example, in Northampton, we have 21 licensed EEC programs yet our neighbor, Williamsburg has only 1. With childcare placements concentrated in Northampton, many children (35% in 2022) attended preschool in Northampton but resided in neighboring towns. Preschool Partnership Priority Strand Three Inclusion Services work extraordinarily well for Northampton residents attending Northampton licensed EEC programs. We need support in securing a way forward for onsite special education services for children from other towns attending preschool in Northampton and for Northampton residents whose children attend childcare closer to their</p>

	<p>work locations in Amherst, Easthampton, and other surrounding communities.</p> <p>We know we will find a way forward together. The recently granted BRC Navigator access to public school districts is just one more success story. Thank you again and again, for problem-solving with us. We are grateful for our local CFCE and CPPI Partnerships and our partnership with you.</p>
Andrew Kessler, Kessler Childcare Holdings	<p>C3: I am writing today in advance of the public comment section for the board meeting as I am unable to attend. I write again this month to share my displeasure regarding c3 grant funding allocation. Like I said last month I have no issues with needing to take a haircut in the amount provided. However, I do have issues with the timing and the fact that the haircut amount is not being spread equally across all grant recipients. I.e., some providers will still receive full funding because others will take a 75% cut. It was brought up at the last meeting where any other calculations thought about including a small cut off the top, so the bottom was not so drastic. That seems to go without any discussion, and I am hopeful that it will be looked at again.</p> <p>A month has passed, and like many other centers I reached out to become a voucher provider, not only to get the small bump in c3 grant monies, but to allow our staff whom we currently give a significant discount on childcare to obtain vouchers to offset the loss in c3 grant funds. But alas the list of staff waiting for vouchers is 500 people deep. So that is not going to be of any sort of assistance.</p> <p>Then the conversation moved to taking regular vouchers only to find out that the voucher pool has run dry. So, centers that currently do not accept vouchers stand very little chance of gaining any supportive slots to see a bump up in C3 funding. Let alone have any chance of getting to 33% supportive slots.</p> <p>So basically, I feel once again that eec is only looking out for the centers that have previously taken supportive slots and could care less about all the other programs that have not only used</p>

	<p>the funds correctly and to not only support staff, but better the programs and keep rates in check.</p> <p>I will not repeat why the C3 funding has been so beneficial and the hardship this change will cause as I did last month. I will merely end by saying that the plan is flawed and gives current providers no choice but to raise rates and reduce benefits for staff. Out of no fault of our own. This drastic change will most likely lead to a childcare cliff which can certainly be averted if the cuts in distribution are done more amicably.</p>
Ronald Viafore, Flamingo Early Learning Team	<p>MA ESCO Initiative: We, The Flamingo Early Learning Team, part of the MA ECSO Initiative, are always proud to share the good progress center directors and leaders are making in improving their instructional leadership skills.</p> <p>We are attaching a very short video clip of some of our program leaders who reflect on their skills that were achieved while working with our team.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to share.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kw7HPH9Yrz8</p>
Linda Najarian, Dove's Nest DayCare	<p>MA ESCO Initiative: I am writing to express my profound gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the Flamingo/ESCO program. This initiative has had a significant impact on myself, my educators, and the families we serve at Dove's Nest DayCare. Access to instructional leadership development through the Flamingo program has been transformative for my role as a preschool program leader. By emphasizing instructional leadership, I have been able to drive positive change and cultivate excellence, fostering a high-quality learning environment where children and educators thrive. The one-to-one coaching and participation in director and teacher courses have equipped me with essential knowledge and support, laying a robust foundation for our program's success. The Flamingo program has specifically empowered us with the skills and support necessary to nurture an effective learning environment. It underscored the importance of fostering a community of</p>

	<p>practice (COP) among educators, promoting professional learning, collaboration, and overall program quality. This community approach has been a game changer, positively impacting our program's success and the learning and development of our children. Furthermore, the ESCO program has played a pivotal role in our success. Its contributions have been instrumental in enhancing our program's quality and effectiveness. I sincerely hope that initiatives like Flamingo and ESCO continue to support the early childhood field in the future. Thank you once again for this invaluable opportunity. I look forward to continuing our journey of improvement and excellence in early childhood education.</p>
Andrea Galvin	<p>MA ESCO Initiative: I am writing to you today with a heart filled with gratitude and admiration for the profound impact that Flamingo Early Learning, through the ECSO Initiative, has had on my life and my role as a leader within the childcare center.</p> <p>From the moment I became part of the Flamingo family, I sensed a profound dedication to nurturing not just the minds, but the hearts and spirits of both children and educators alike. The ECSO Initiative, in particular, stands as a beacon of innovation and dedication to early childhood education, empowering educators to reach new heights and fostering an environment of continual growth and learning.</p> <p>Personally, the ECSO Initiative has been transformative. It has equipped me with invaluable tools, resources, and knowledge that have allowed me to evolve into a more effective and compassionate leader. Through targeted training, mentorship, and ongoing support, I have gained a deeper understanding of child development, pedagogical approaches, and the importance of fostering a nurturing and inclusive environment for all.</p> <p>Moreover, Flamingo Early Learning's commitment to the ECSO Initiative has not only enriched my professional journey but has also deeply impacted the children under our care. Witnessing their growth, curiosity, and joy as they engage with the innovative curriculum and compassionate educators is a testament to the</p>

	<p>profound difference this initiative has made in their lives.</p> <p>As a leader within the childcare center, I am inspired daily by the dedication and passion exhibited by my fellow educators, who wholeheartedly embrace the principles and ethos of the ECSO Initiative. Together, we form a community driven by a shared purpose: to provide the highest quality early childhood education and to nurture the potential within each and every child.</p> <p>To the members of the EEC, I implore you to recognize and understand the immense value of initiatives like the ECSO Initiative. By investing in early childhood education and supporting programs that prioritize professional development and excellence, you are not only shaping the future of our children but also empowering educators to thrive and make a lasting impact.</p> <p>In conclusion, I extend my deepest gratitude to Flamingo Early Learning for their unwavering commitment to excellence and to the EEC for their continued support of initiatives that elevate the field of early childhood education. Together, we can create a brighter future for generations to come.</p>
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