



Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education & Care

Board of Early Education and Care Strategic Retreat

August 28, 2024



Agenda

01. Welcome, Introductions & Meeting Overview
02. Team Building & Play
03. Agency Updates: Since We Last Met
 - FY25 Budget
 - Early Education and Child Care Interagency Task Force, Listening Sessions
04. Look Back, Look Forward
 - FY24 in Review
 - FY25 Proposed Strategic Initiatives, Projects and Priorities
 - Board Meeting Agenda Preview
05. 2026-2030 Strategic Action Planning
06. Reflections, Wrap-up & Next Steps

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Agency Updates: Since We Last Met

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FY25 Budget

EEC FY25 Budget: Overview

The FY25 General Appropriations act (GAA) funds EEC at \$1.542 billion, a \$20 million increase over FY24 GAA.

- **\$475M** for **Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3)** and makes this program permanent
- **\$872M** for child care financial assistance, which provides **\$20 million** for new **child care financial assistance** rate increases in FY25 to continue better covering the true cost of providing care, and annualizes \$65 million from FY24 rate increases
- **\$22.5M** for the **Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI)** to maintain FY24 expanded universal access to high-quality preschool with a focus on gateway cities and rural communities
- **\$20M** for **child care resource and referral** services
- **\$18.5M** for supplemental grants to **Head Start** programs
- **\$11.8M** for the **coordinated family and community engagement (CFCE)** grant program
- **\$5M** for early childhood **mental health supports** and services for children and early education professionals
- **\$5M** for professional development and the **Career Pathways Initiatives**
- **\$4M** for the **ParentChild+** program
- **\$5M** for the **Summer Step Up** program to support children entering kindergarten and early elementary school with high-quality summer learning experiences

New Investments

- **\$7.5M** for a new higher education early educator scholarship program
- **\$7.5M** for a new loan forgiveness program
- **\$2.5M** for a new employer sponsored child care pilot

To see the **full list of line items** and proposed funding levels, see the enacted budget [here](#).

EEC Budget by Line-Item (in millions)

Child Care Financial Assistance & Family Access and Engagement

Line Item	Appropriation Name	FY24 GAA	FY25 GAA	FY 25 Notes
3000-1049	Employer-sponsored Child Care	\$0.0	\$2.5	
3000-2000	Access Management	\$20.0	\$20.0	
3000-3060	DCF/DTA Related Child Care	\$346.6	\$356.6	\$10M to annualize FY24 rate increase
3000-4060	Income-Eligible Child Care	\$407.2	\$417.2	\$10M to annualize FY24 rate increase
1596-2411	Income Eligible Access (Waitlist Remediation)	\$25.0	\$15.0	\$15M dedicated for FY25 contracted provider procurement
1596-2434	Rate Increase for Early Education and Care	\$65.0	\$65.0	\$45M to annualize FY24 rate increase \$20M for FY25 rate increase
1596-2435	EEC Affordability	\$0.0	\$18.0	\$8M earmarked for CCFA access for early educators and staff
3000-5000	Grants to Head Start Programs	\$17.5	\$18.5	
3000-7050	Coordinate Family and Community Engagement	\$11.9	\$11.9	
3000-7052	Parent-Child Plus Program	\$4.3	\$4.3	
3000-7070	Reach Out and Read	\$1.0	\$1.0	
TOTAL		\$898.5	\$930.0	

EEC Budget by Line-Item (in millions)

Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3)

Line Item	Appropriation Name	FY24 GAA	FY25 GAA	FY25 Notes
3000-1045	C3 Stabilization Grants	\$475.0	\$300.0	FY25 Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High-Quality EEC Affordability Trust Fund• Early Education and Care Operational Grant Fund (iLottery)
1596-2410	Child Care Grants to Providers	\$0.0	\$175.0	FY25 Funding Source: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fair Share
TOTAL		\$475.0	\$475.0	

EEC Budget by Line-Item (in millions)

Other Workforce and Program Supports

Line Item	Appropriation Name	FY24 GAA	FY25 GAA	
3000-1020	Quality Improvement	\$46.7	\$52.6	Funds licensing & other quality support staff
3000-1000	Workforce Related Earmarks	\$0	\$15.0	\$7.5M for Student Loan Forgiveness \$7.5M for Higher Ed Scholarship for Educators
1596-2429	Early Education & Care Provider Capital	\$15.0	\$0	EEOST Capital Grants will continue in FY25. Application for FCC Capital Grants currently open. 2 nd round of capital grant funding for for-profit centers will take place in FY25.
3000-6025	CPPI Pre-K Initiative	\$15.0	\$17.5	
1596-2412	CPPI Pre-K Initiative	\$5.5	\$5.0	
3000-6075	Mental Health	\$5.0	\$5.0	
3000-7066	Career Pathways	\$10.0	\$5.0	
3000-7055	Neighborhood Villages	\$1.0	\$1.0	
TOTAL		\$98.2	\$101.1	

Outside Sections: Overview

In addition to the fiscal investments in FY25, the final budget included statutory “outside sections” that impact and direct the agency’s work in the year(s) ahead.

- Makes **C3 permanent**, codifying the program into law, with guidance for FY25 and beyond.
- Codifies **CCFA eligibility** in state law and extends eligibility up to 85% of the state median income.
- Creates a new **loan forgiveness program** which includes early education and care staff.
- Codifies the existing higher education **scholarship** for early education and care staff.
- Requires EEC to establish a **schedule for revising the CCFA rate structure and parent fee schedule**.
- Requires the agency to establish an early education and care **career ladder**.
- Removes the statutory cap (currently 10) for Family Child Care programs, allowing for new regulation to look at **FCC group size and ratios**.
- Requires EOLWD, in consultation with the EEC and EOED, to prepare a **report on** supporting early education and care and promoting **employer best practices**.
- Creates a **Data Advisory Commission** with new data collection requirements and an annual report.

Find the full language for all outside sections [here](#).



Early Education and Child Care Task Force Listening Sessions

About the Inter-Agency Task Force



The Task Force was established by Executive Order 625 to ensure that Massachusetts leads the nation in early education and child care access, affordability, equity, and quality.



The Task Force is comprised of the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Secretary of Economic Development, who shall serve as co-chairs. Additional members of the Task Force are the Secretaries of Administration and Finance, Energy and Environmental Affairs, Health and Human Services, Housing and Livable Communities, Public Safety and Security, Technology Services and Security, Transportation, and Veterans Services, or their designees.



In developing its recommendations, the Task Force will engage with industry and business leaders, organized labor, health services stakeholders, housing and planning experts, working parents and caregivers, and child care providers and experts.



In developing and refining its recommendations, the Task Force may coordinate cross-secretariat pilot programs.

Values that Guide the Task Force



Innovative

Are we welcoming out-of-the-box ideas to capitalize on fresh perspectives from all executive offices and stakeholders?

Child-Centered

Do the solutions advance academic and social-emotional development for our learners?

Equitable

Do the solutions address or exacerbate inequities?

Results-Oriented

Are the solutions practical and able to be piloted and implemented as early as next fiscal year?

Priorities of the Inter-Agency Task Force

- ① **Surveying practices of other states & nations**
- ② **Assessing how better coordination among state agencies could support families in accessing child care**
- ③ **Identifying resources for building capacity and increasing affordability in the child care system**
- ④ **Identifying strategies to recruit, train, upskill, and retain members of the child care workforce**
- ⑤ **Reviewing existing assets to identify potential locations to establish center-based care**

Overview of Listening Sessions

The Early Education and Child Care Task Force hosted a series of listening sessions across Massachusetts to inform **recommendations and broader strategy** towards accessible, affordable, high-quality child care for all families

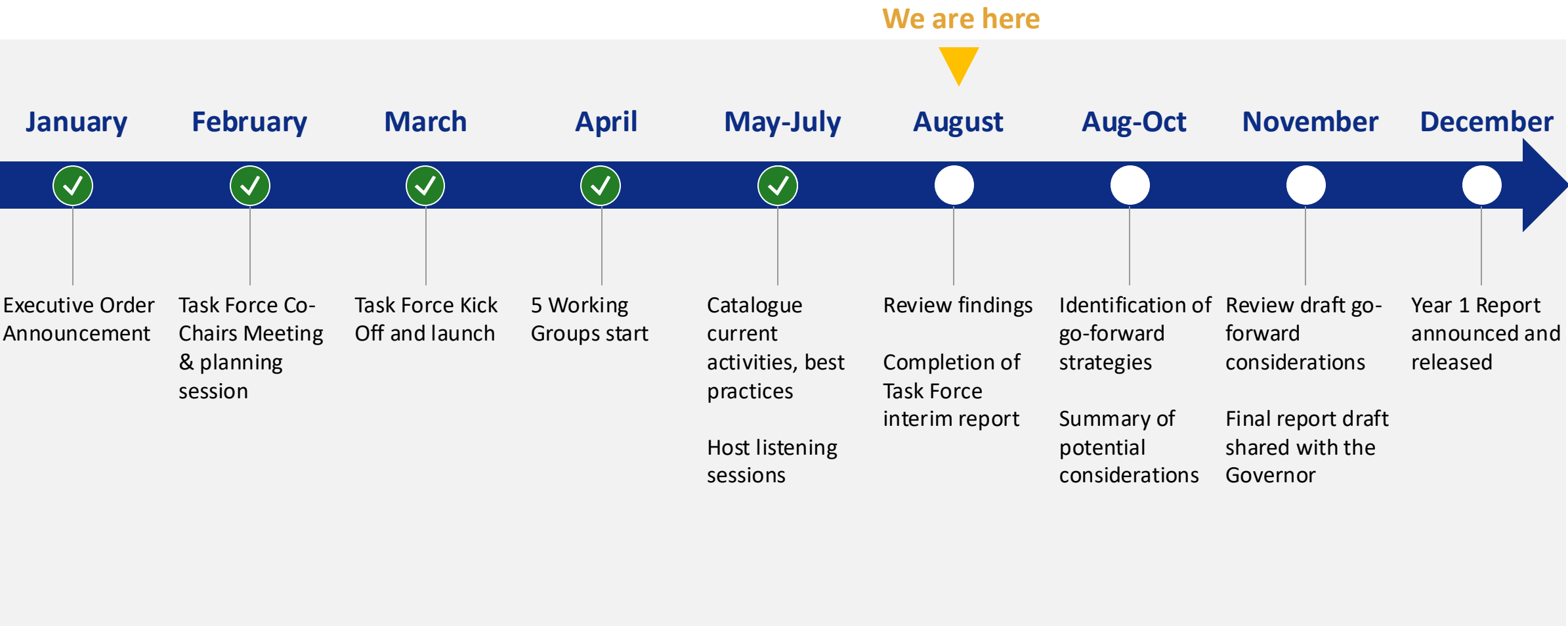
A total of **14 listening sessions** took place throughout July and early August, including seven in-person sessions and five virtual sessions (one which was led in Spanish)

The Task Force is eager to hear from working parents and caregivers, education and business leaders, child care providers, and all others in the community on ideas to make child care more accessible, affordable, and high quality across the state

Listening Session Dates

Session	Date	Time	Region	Location
1	Tues, 7/16	1-3	Northeast	North Shore Community College - Lynn Campus
2	Wed, 7/17	6-8	Virtual (PM)	
3	Thurs, 7/18	1-3	Cape and Islands	Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical High School
4	Sat, 7/20	10-12	Virtual (Weekend)	
5	Mon, 7/22	7-9	Virtual (PM)	
6	Tues, 7/23	12:30-2:30	Southeast	Massasoit Community College - Brockton Campus
7	Wed, 7/24	12:30-2:30	Metro West	MassBay Community College - Framingham Campus
8	Thu, 7/25	7-9	Virtual (PM), Spanish Led	
9	Mon, 7/29	6-8	Virtual (PM)	
10	Tues, 7/30	1-3	Central	Worcester State University
11	Wed, 7/31	12:30-2:30	Berkshires	Berkshire Community College
12	Mon, 8/5	10-12	Pioneer Valley	Springfield Technical Community College
13	Tues, 8/6	10-12	Boston	Bunker Hill Community College - Charlestown Campus
14	Wed, 8/7	1-3	South Coast	Bristol Community College

Task Force Milestones and Deliverables



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Look Back, Look Forward

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FY24 In Review

EEC Strategic Objectives

In partnership with families, educators, programs and other stakeholders, EEC will use data driven decision-making to inform work around the following objectives:



FAMILY ACCESS

Families have equitable access to quality and affordable early education and care in the communities in which they live, learn, and work.



PROGRAM QUALITY

Programs licensed or funded by EEC support children's health and safety and provide high quality environments that are culturally responsive, inclusive, and support children's learning and development in partnership with families.



PROGRAM STABILITY

Programs licensed or funded by EEC are operationally stable and financially sustainable.



WORKFORCE SUPPORTS

A diverse field of educators, leaders, and program staff is competitively compensated and supported by clear professional pathways that promote quality, retention, and advancement.



AGENCY INFRASTRUCTURE

EEC has sufficient internal capacity, organizational structures, and diverse perspectives and expertise to carry out its mission and strategic objectives.

FY24 Accomplishments: Policy & Program Highlights

Child Care Financial Assistance Reforms ([link](#))

Child Care Financial Assistance Reform

Why are we changing?

- Increased labor market participation and economic mobility for families.
- Greater equity in access to high quality early education and extended learning opportunities to support children's school and life success.

What is changing?

- CCFA regulations, policies, and procedures
- Contract structure for CCFA and providers
- Modernization of the digital experience
- Improving and expanding ways families can interact with EEC

How are we going to achieve this?

- Engaging internal and external stakeholders throughout the change process
- Increased flexibility, dignity and stability for children and families
- Reduced complexity and administrative burden for providers serving or interested in serving families with child care financial assistance

When will this change be happening?

- End-to-end review of the child care financial assistance system launched in April of 2023 to identify opportunities to update, improve and modernize
- New regulations, contracts, various reform initiatives, and their associated rollout efforts are going into effect on an ongoing basis for the next 6-12 months.
- This is a long-term mindset, process, and culture shift - it will take time to fully implement the changes

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Cost-Informed CCFA Rate Increases ([link](#))

Recommended Three Rate Option – Variables & Considerations

Variables

- Apply a 5.5% across-the-board COLA
- Consolidate Metro & Metro Boston
- Consolidate Western, Central, and Southeast
- Northeast remains separate
- Increase consolidated rates for center-based care to 81% of the highest cost of care in the group (no further targeted increase for FCCs due to \$20M cap)

Considerations

- 89% of rates are at or above the 50th percentile of market rate (rates below 50th: 2 preschool and 2 FCC over 2 rates)
- 44% of rates are at or above full cost of care. The lowest % of cost of care moves from 56% to 72%
- \$65M is the estimated cost

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Child Care Capital Investment Grants ([link](#))

FY24 Child Care Facility Investment Planning

EEC will use both EECST funds (provided through the state's Capital Investment Plan) and FY24 budget funds (provided through "Fair Share") to:

- Support broadly accessible smaller scale grants for center-based programs;
- Return to making larger scale grants available for non-profit center-based projects; and
- Develop a strategy and partnership(s) to support facility investment for family child care programs.

Center-based Small Grant
EEOST (Non-Profit) & EECPCG (For-Profit)
To support security upgrades and other smaller facility improvement projects ranging from \$200,000 to \$500,000

- November 9, 2023 Posted to COMMUNITY
- November 28 & 30, 2023 Information Sessions
- January 23, 2024 Applications Due

Center-based Large Grant
EEOST (Non-Profit)
Bringing back funding to support larger projects ranging from \$500,000 - \$1,000,000

- December 30, 2023 Posted to COMMUNITY
- January 9 & 11, 2024 Information Sessions
- February 1, 2024 Pre-applications due

Organizations invited to submit a full application by 11:59PM EST on May 2, 2024.

Family Child Care Capital Grants

Reviewing responses to the Request for Information (RFI) from organizations with experience supporting FCCs who could partner with EEC to support an FCC capital grant program.

Coming Soon

Eligible organizations will be required to maintain 50% of slots in the facility to serve low-income families who are eligible for public subsidy.

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Workforce Development Initiatives ([link](#))

EEC Workforce Development Efforts

Skills of the workforce drive the quality of interactions and the teaching and learning in the classroom/home

Objective: Build robust professional opportunities and career pathways

Strategic Initiatives

- EEC Learning Management System (LMS) - EEC funded and delivered foundational and ongoing training through StrongStart (LMS, PDC, etc. Includes registration, tracking and verification of professional learning).
- Supportive Pathways** - Coordinating state investments to build a system of workforce training programs, including apprenticeships to help new educators start careers in the field and more experienced educators to advance.
- Higher Education Opportunities** - Reimagination and improving access to existing opportunities and scholarships for early educators.
- Certifications & Credentialing** - Professionalization of the field with state-endorsed qualifications and a clear career ladder for educators.

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Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Program Updates ([link](#))

Proposed C3 Formula for FY25

License Capacity (adjusted by % enrolled) × **Base Rate** × **Equity Adjustment**

Base Rate
Differential Rates Based on Youngest Age Served (Center-based) or Staffing (Family Child Care) and Hours of Operation

Equity Adjustment
Based on Program Tier

Based on cost models, this part of the formula recognizes differential gains between revenue and costs faced by programs serving children of different ages and operating full or part time.

This part of the formula recognizes programs serving children with CCFA, other financial scholarships provided to families, and those in a very low opportunity area.

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Re-Procurement of CCFA Contracted Seats ([link](#))

Key RFI Topics

Gathering Input from Contract Providers and Family Child Care Systems

- Maximizing Utilization
- Increasing Flexibility
- Eligibility Determination and Waitlist
- Quality Standards & Continuous Improvement
- Incentivizing Infant/Toddler Care
- Family Engagement and Support
- Support Services for Priority Populations
- Providing Transportation
- Role of FCC Systems
- Training and Technical Assistance

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FY24 Accomplishments: Agency Capacity & Infrastructure

- Submitted **2025-27 Child Care Development Fund State Plan**, defining how EEC will administer federal CCDF funds
- Secured **\$3.3M in capital funding for CCFA technology modernization** for FY25, as part of the FutureTech Act
- Opened **new Metro Boston regional office** in Quincy, and completed office renovations in Springfield and Lawrence
- **Defined key performance indicators** for each of EEC's five strategic objectives and completed backend development to enable the creation of live KPI dashboards
- Launched EEC's first ever **DEIB Council**
- **Filled more than 40 positions** across the department, including the following newly created, "first ever" EEC positions:

New First-Ever EEC Positions Created and Hired in FY24

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Jesenia Burke)• Director of Research (Ashley White)• Research Analyst (Caroline Connolly)• 3 Experience Product Owners (Augie Llona, Daniel Wong, Kristyn Berry) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family Engagement Manager (Ayesha Rodriguez)• Priority Access Manager (Elyse Tibbetts)• 5 Regional Family Access Specialists (Kelly Castor, Ashley Theodat, Cynthia Smith, Onika Jenkins, Mary Dennehy-Colorusso) |
|---|--|



FY25 Proposed Strategic Initiatives, Projects & Priorities

FY25 Proposed Strategic Initiatives, Projects and Priorities



FAMILY ACCESS

- Operationalize CCFA policies
- Launch CCFA eligibility system design
- Strategy to better support Family, Friend & Neighbor Care
- CFCE alignment & rebranding



PROGRAM STABILITY

- Develop and implement FY25 rate increase
- Alternative methodology approval
- C3 program updates & analysis
- Further capital investment strategy



PROGRAM QUALITY

- Residential licensing regulations
- Child care licensing regulations
- CCFA contract monitoring
- CQI pilot



WORKFORCE SUPPORT

- Ongoing BRC process improvement
- Launch educator credential
- New apprenticeship and “pipeline” programs
- Further improvements to higher education scholarships and support
- Student loan forgiveness

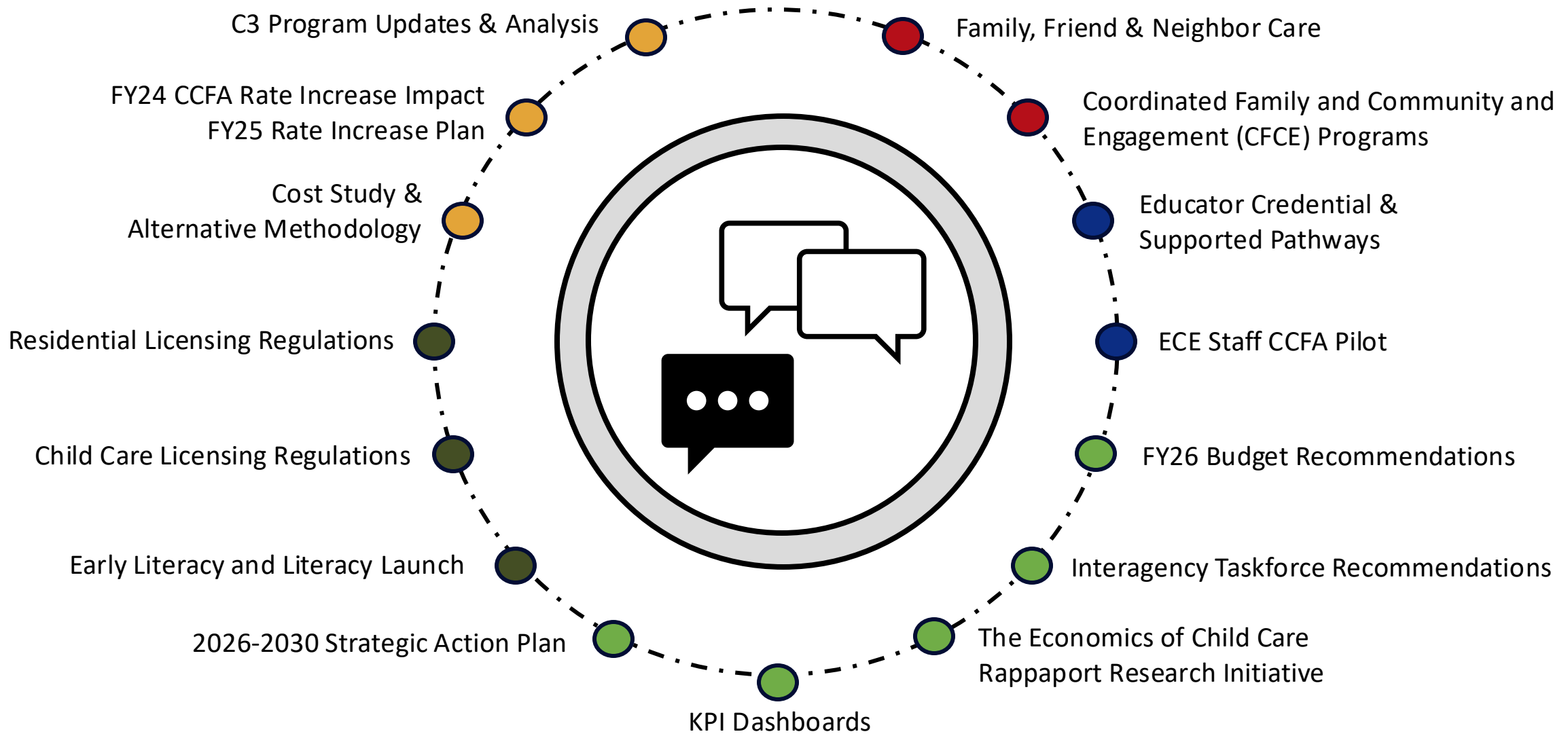


- 2026-2030 Strategic Action Plan
- Continue key capacity building (e.g., Internal Controls, Program Integrity)

- Establish Family Advisory Committee
- Establish Data Advisory Commission
- Launch KPI Dashboards

AGENCY INFRASTRUCTURE

Major Topics for Board Input and Action in FY25





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2026-2030 Strategic Action Planning



Strategic Action Plan Requirements

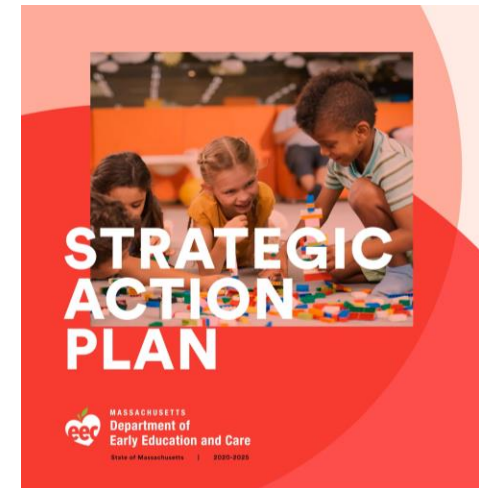
The agency's 5-year strategic action is required by [MGL 15D, Chapter 4](#).

The commissioner shall analyze the present and future goals, needs and requirements of early childhood education and care in the commonwealth and recommend to the board comprehensive means to achieve a well-coordinated system that promotes positive social and emotional development, high educational achievement, and quality care in the commonwealth. Following consultation with the board, the commissioner shall prepare and submit to the secretary, for the secretary's review and approval, a 5-year master plan for achieving such a coordinated system. The master plan along with an annual progress report shall reflect the goals and standards established by the board and the secretary.

The master plan shall include:

- Enrollment projections
- Identification of measures for age-appropriate child development and school readiness
- Expulsion rate projections
- Utilization of existing facilities
- Promotion of research; programmatic excellence
- Recommendations for construction or acquisition of new facilities
- Program distribution
- The addition of new programs
- The elimination of existing programs; and the need for program revisions.

Find the 2020-2025 Strategic Action Plan [here](#)





6 Reflections, Wrap-up & Next Steps