








MASSACHUSETTS
**Department of
Early Education and Care**



Data Advisory Commission Meeting #2

July 22, 2025

Today's Agenda

- Reminder of Commission Charge and Focus
- EEC Research Agenda: Family Access Research Questions 
- Leveraging Data to Better Understand Access to Care 
- Publicly Available EEC Family Access Data 
- Family-Focused Data Collection & Reporting: Opportunities for Improving Data Quality and Streamlining  
- Approval of April Minutes & Next Steps

Priority Research and Data Areas



Identifying Key Data and Analyses Needed to Understand the Landscape and Inform Policy Decisions

Build capacity to answer priority questions of interest once data are collected and identify any key data gaps



Expanding Public Access to EEC Data and Analyses

Ensure that EEC data, analyses, and research findings are easily accessible



Improving Data Quality

Ensure that the data collected are as accurate and complete as possible



Streamlining Data Collection

Make sure that necessary data are collected to inform key policy decisions and provide services and supports for families, educators, and programs, while minimizing burden and redundancy.

Charge of Data Advisory Commission

There shall be a data advisory commission to make recommendations to improve the use of state, provider and program-level data related to the cost, quality and utilization of early education and care services.

The Data Advisory Commission shall utilize data received by the department [...] to identify, analyze and make recommendations on high-impact, cost-effective data strategies for assessing the needs of families and children, including, but not limited to:

- Establish a uniform **data collection and reporting system** to track the data that the department is required to collect
- Strengthen the **department's capacity to analyze and report** on staffing, scheduling and financial data to support strategic resource allocation decisions
- Strengthen the department's **capacity to use data to inform strategic resource allocation and implementation decisions**; and
- Streamline data reporting, including, but not limited to, **eliminating duplicative reporting requirements**.

Charge of Data Advisory Commission, cont'd

In making its recommendations, the commission shall consider the needs and capabilities of early education and care providers located in rural areas.

Annually, not later than December 1, the data advisory commission shall submit a report with recommendations and findings to the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education.

The report shall be made publicly available on the department's website.

The Department shall, in consultation with the Data Advisory Commission [...] annually collect data, to the extent feasible, on....

- 1 Licensed Early Education and Care Programs
- 2 Early Education and Care Workforce
- 3 Early Education and Care Enrollment**
- 4 Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) Enrollment**
- 5 Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) Financial Operations**
- 6 Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) Waitlist**

Key EEC Data Sources



PROGRAMS

- **Licensing Education Analytic Database (LEAD)**
Contains **data on EEC licensed and funded programs**, including basic licensing data, visit data, and investigation data.
- **Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3)**
Contains data on application and receipt of C3 funds, as well as **program enrollment, staffing, and compensation data** collected from participating programs.
- **Child Care Management System (CCMS)**
EEC is in the early stages of **designing a pilot** to work with a subset of programs to connect directly to their CCMS, to reduce reporting requirements and increase data quality.



EDUCATORS

- **Professional Qualifications Registry (PQR)**
Contains **data on early education and care educators who have registered with EEC over time**, including demographic data and educational degrees.
- **Background Record Check (BRC)**
Includes data on **background record checks conducted of educators and staff** to ensure the safety of children in early education and care and residential settings.



FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

- **Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA)**
Contains child and family demographic/income data, as well as placement and billing data on all children receiving CCFA.
- **KinderWait**
Contains data on **children and families on the CCFA waitlist**. Note that eligibility is not fully determined until funding is available.
- **Family Access Caseload Tracking System (FACTS)**
Used by family access administrators (CCRRs and Mass211) to track the **child care financial assistance intake process** from the point at which a family becomes eligible for financial assistance through placement with a Provider.
- **Child Universal Success Platform (CUSP)**
Contains **data on early education and care educators who have registered with EEC over time**, including demographic data and educational degrees.



EEC Research Agenda: Family Access Research Questions

EEC Research Agenda: Looking Forward

- October 2025 will mark one year since the rollout of EEC's research agenda.
- To ensure the research agenda is reflective of the evolving policy context, EEC is planning to reconsider and, if needed, refresh the research priorities on an annual basis.
- EEC is developing a standardized process for updating the research agenda which will include:
 - Annual review of research priorities
 - Identification of any new questions and/or questions that should be removed, either because they were answered or are no longer a priority
- Feedback will be gathered from:
 - EEC leaders and program teams via a survey and structured meetings
 - External stakeholders via existing advisory structures and additional mechanisms

EEC Research Agenda: Examples of Current Family Access Focused Research Questions

- **How has the supply and demand of child care changed over time?****
 - How have patterns of program enrollment changed over time? What are families' preferences and how do they vary by family characteristics and geography?
 - Where are the biggest gaps in access to care across Massachusetts by age group and geography? What are the characteristics of communities where there are access gaps?
- **How have patterns of access for preschool children changed over time in Massachusetts?**
 - How has the availability of care for 3- and 4-year-olds changed over time in communities across Massachusetts? How have patterns of access for 3- and 4-year-olds changed in communities receiving CPPI funds?
 - How and to what extent are programs braiding funding to expand preschool access? In what ways are different funding streams supporting children and allowing programs to invest in different aspects of their operations?
- **How do changes to the CCFA system improve family experiences and access?**
 - To what extent do EEC's CCFA reforms (including technology and policy changes) alter and improve family experiences with the system (e.g., time to completion for different steps in the eligibility and placement process, customer satisfaction)?
 - To what extent does the 2024 CCDF rule limiting family co-payments and requiring prospective payments to programs improve family affordability within the child care financial assistance system? What are the characteristics of the families most impacted by the change?**

*****Indicates questions that are a current area of focus of an EEC research partnership***

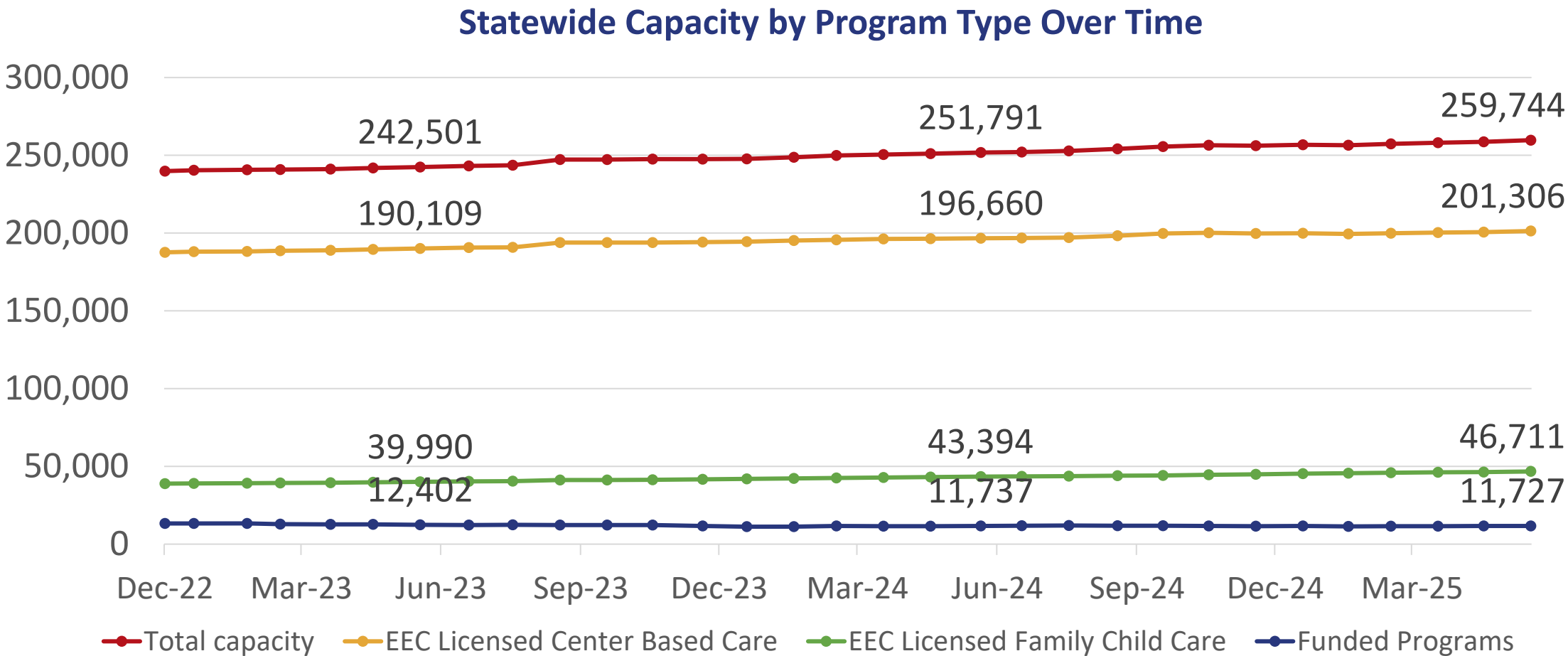
Discussion

- In the family access space, what areas of focus should be prioritized for future research? Are there any topics or questions that you would like to see added?
- How can we best engage external stakeholders (including members of the DAC) in ongoing updates to the research agenda?
- How can EEC make the research agenda accessible and relevant to early education researchers?

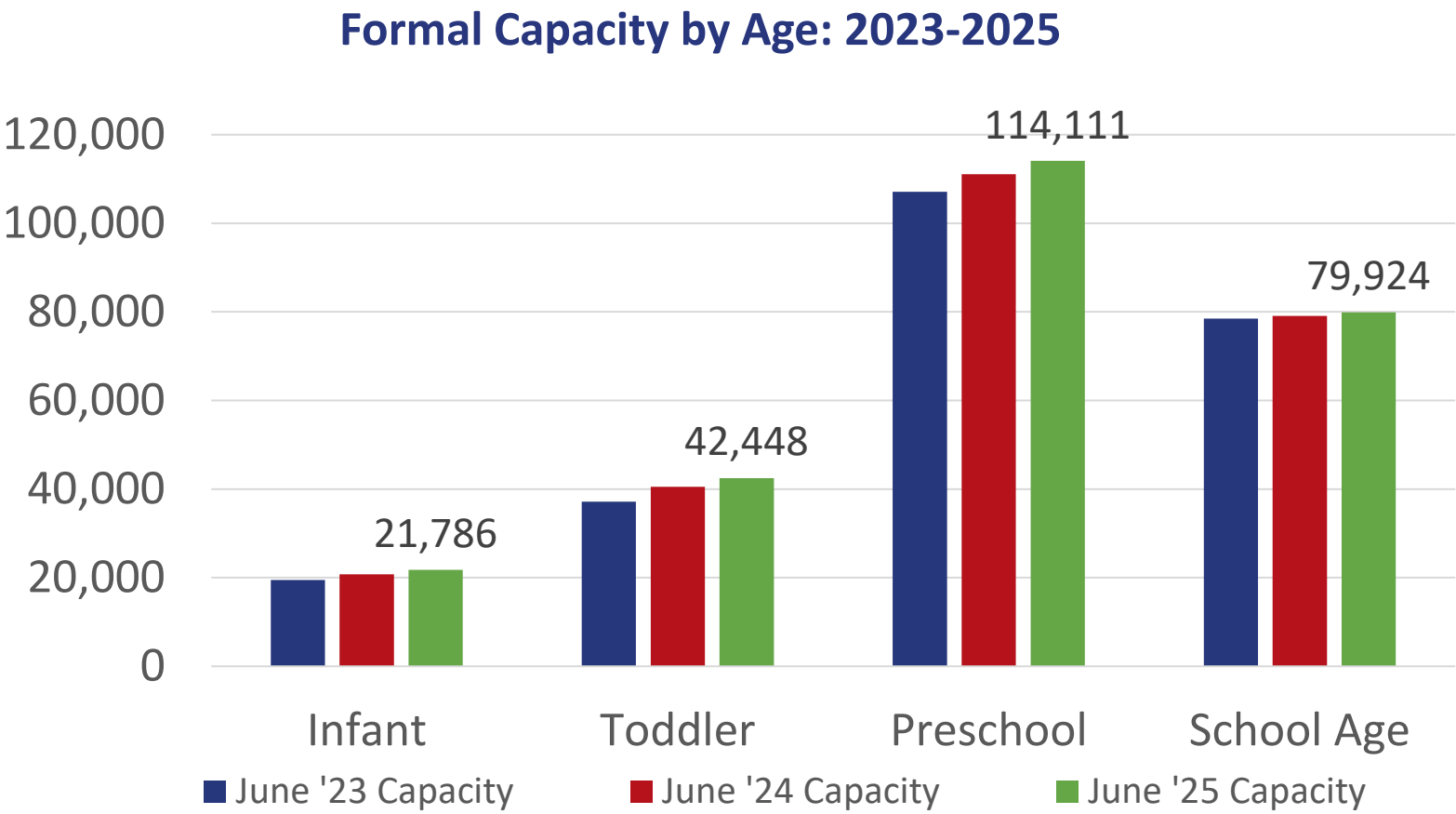


Leveraging Data to Better Understand Access to Care

EEC system capacity has continued to grow, adding roughly 17,000 new seats over the last two years.



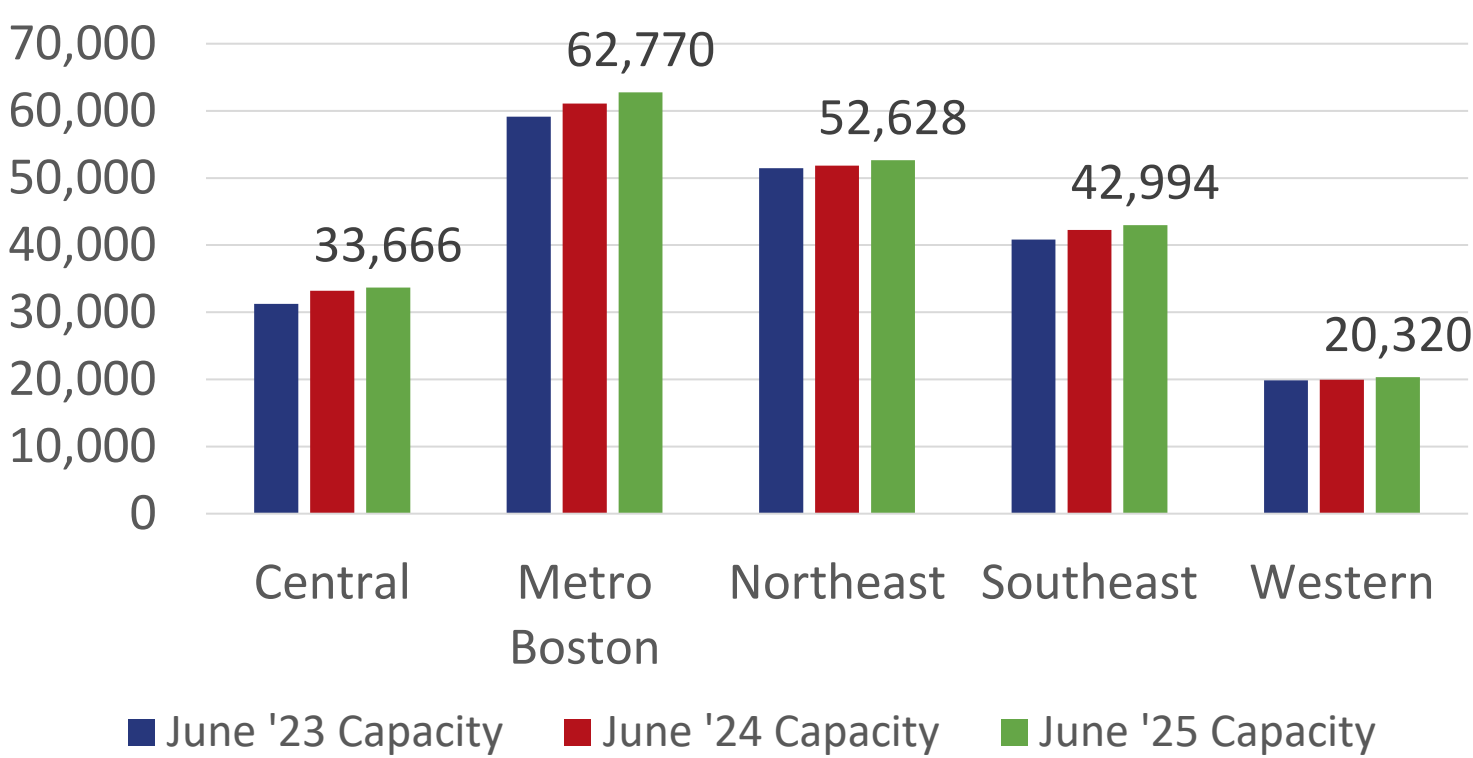
EEC system capacity for infants and toddlers has grown the most over the past year, although these age groups have fewer seats overall.



	Rate of Growth	
	'23-'24	'24-'25
Infant	6%	5%
Toddler	8%	5%
Preschool	4%	3%
School Age	1%	1%

Over the past year, regions continued to experience capacity growth, though with lower rate than the year prior, for the Central and Southeast Regions.

Formal Capacity by Region, 2023-2025



	Rate of Growth	
	'23-'24	'24-'25
Central	6%	1%
Metro Boston	3%	3%
Northeast	1%	2%
Southeast	4%	2%
Western	1%	2%

Child Universal Success Platform (CUSP)

OVERVIEW

- Third Sector Intelligence (3Si)'s CUSP is an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) that brings together state administrative data and population data to create a unified picture of children, families, and programs.
- EEC has partnered with 3Si to maximize the use and application of state data to understand the early childhood landscape in MA.
- To date, this integrated data platform has been used to understand supply and demand across the Commonwealth and supports data-driven decisions.

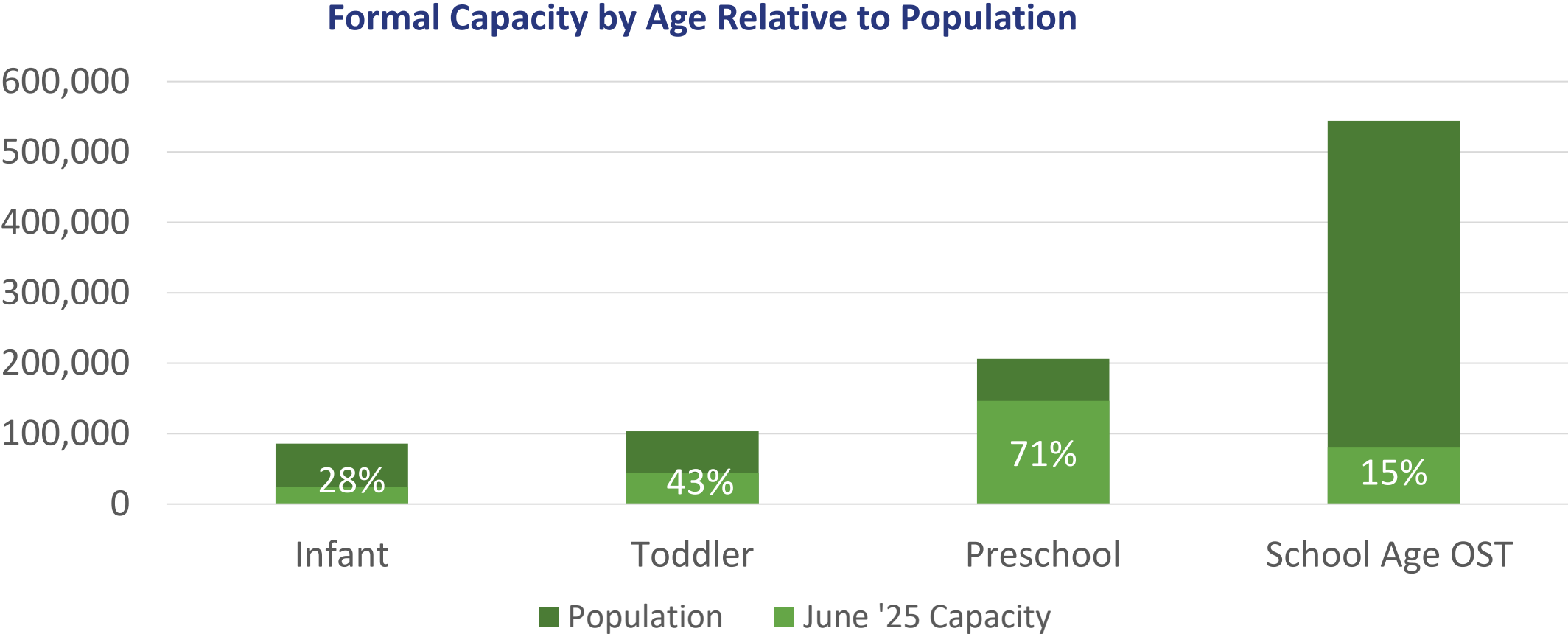


EEC currently uses CUSP data and outputs to inform a range of research, analysis, and reporting activities.

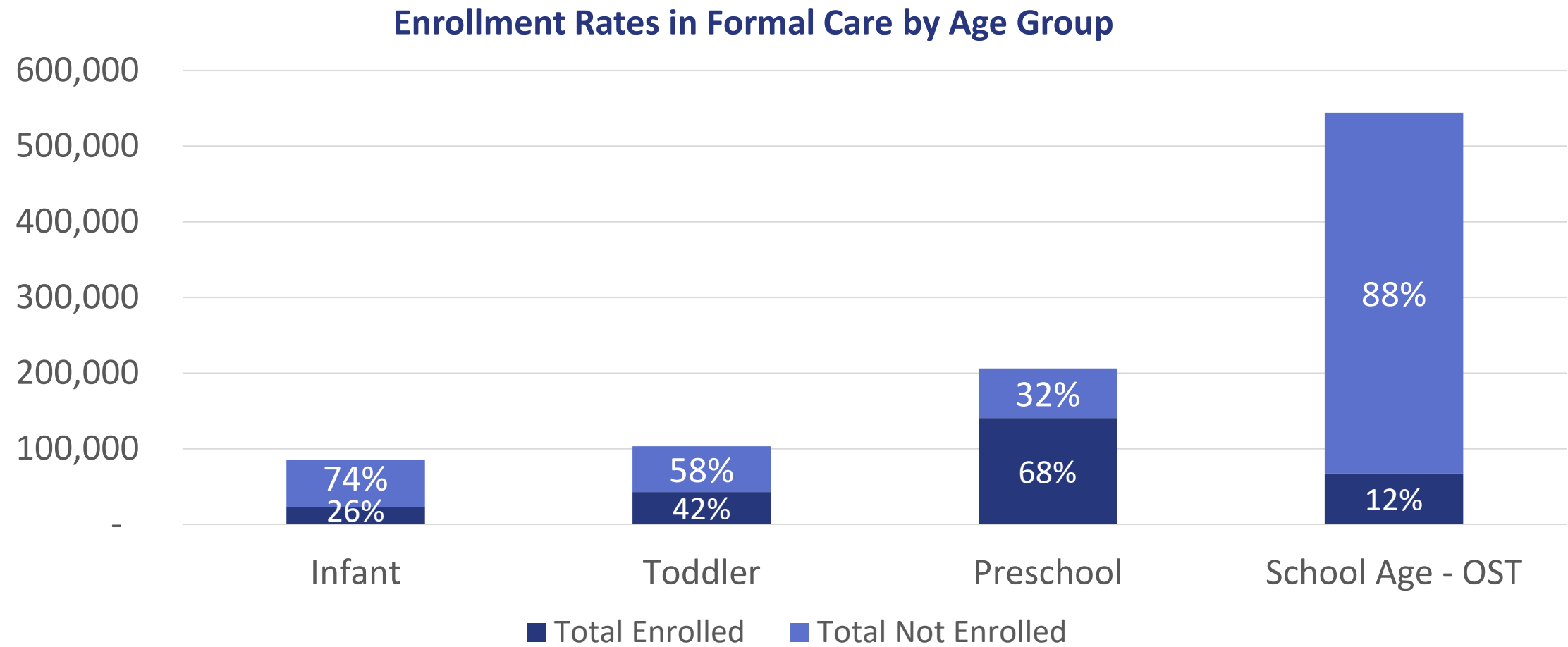
Recent EEC analyses that have leveraged CUSP include:

- Agency KPIs (% of children enrolled in formal care, % of eligible families receiving CCFA)
- C3 reporting to the Legislature
- Data to understand pre-k landscape and help target CPPI expansion
- Analysis to inform re-procurement of contract provider system
- Analysis of data on the child population, enrollment, and supply to inform work of the Early Education and Child Care Inter-Agency Taskforce
- Identification of access deserts and additional qualitative research to understand families' experiences within these communities

Despite the recent increases system capacity, sizeable gaps remain between supply (capacity) and the overall population (total # of children).

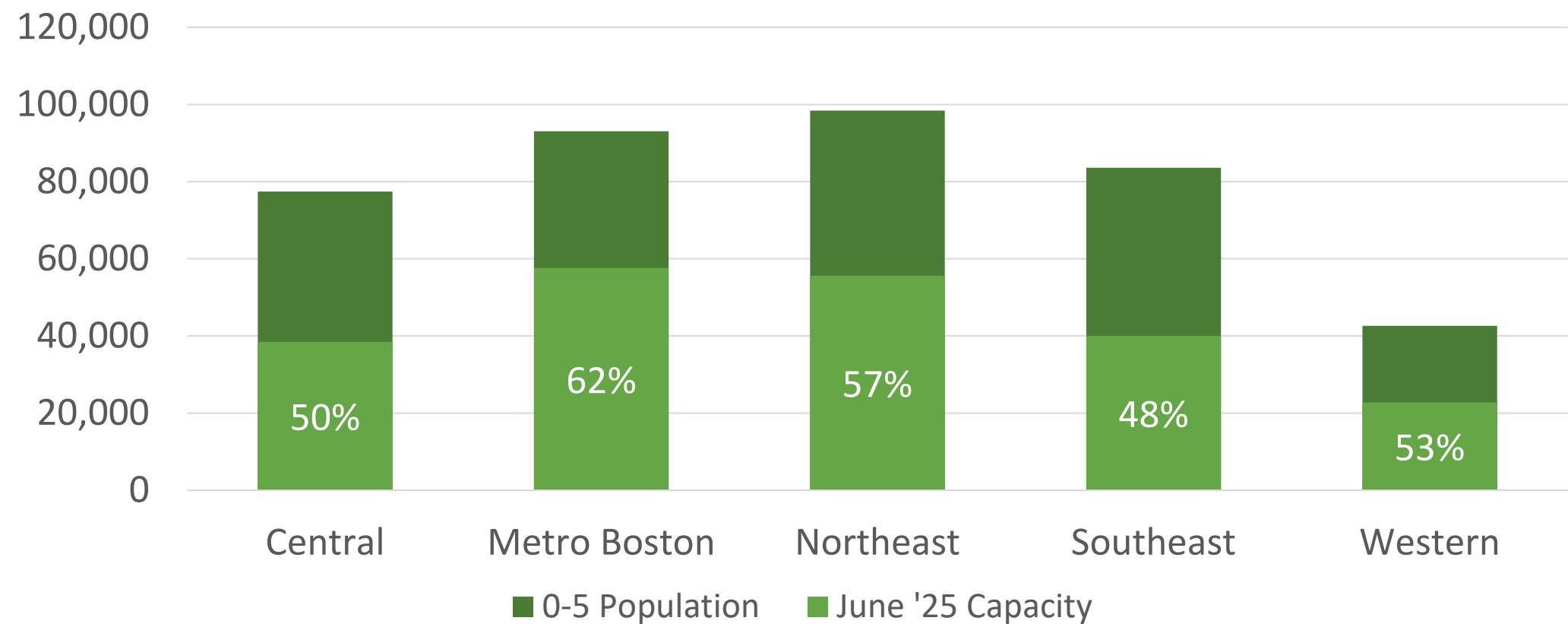


Preschool children are enrolled in formal care at a higher rate than other age groups.

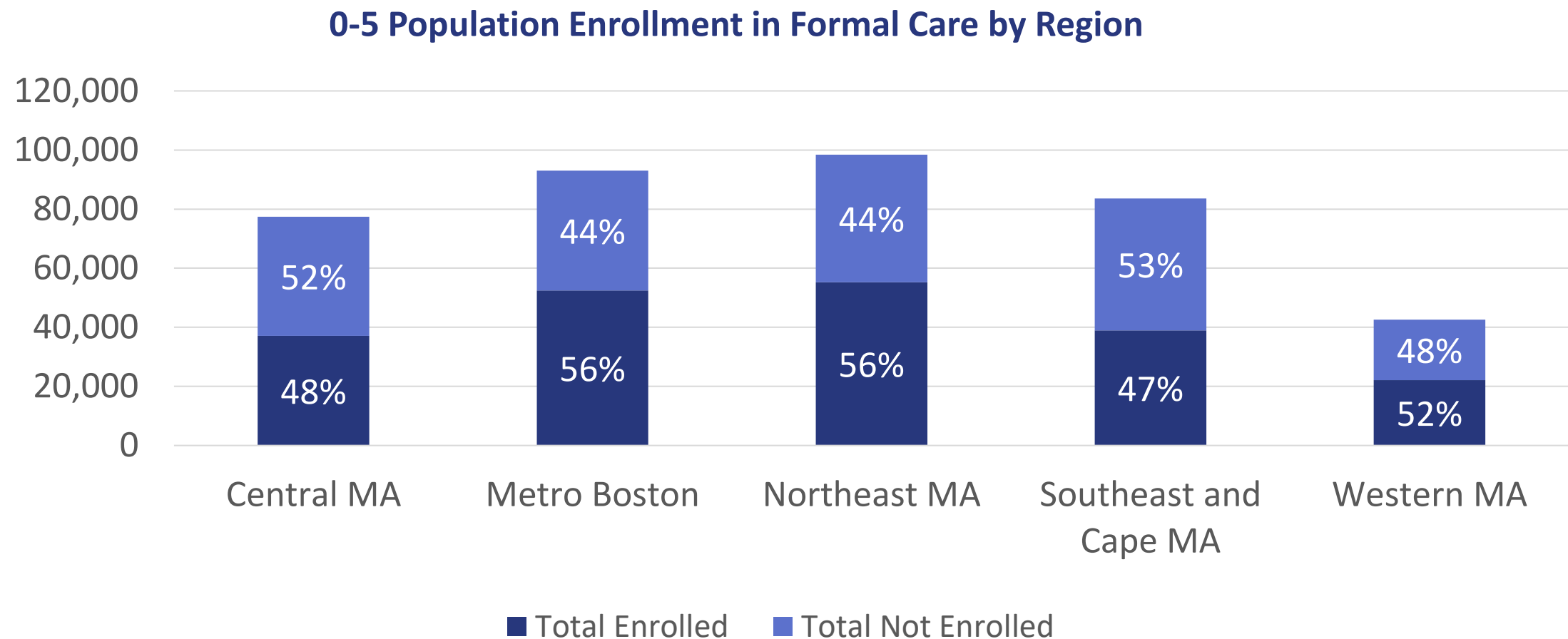


Despite growth, capacity continues to not be sufficient to meet potential demand.

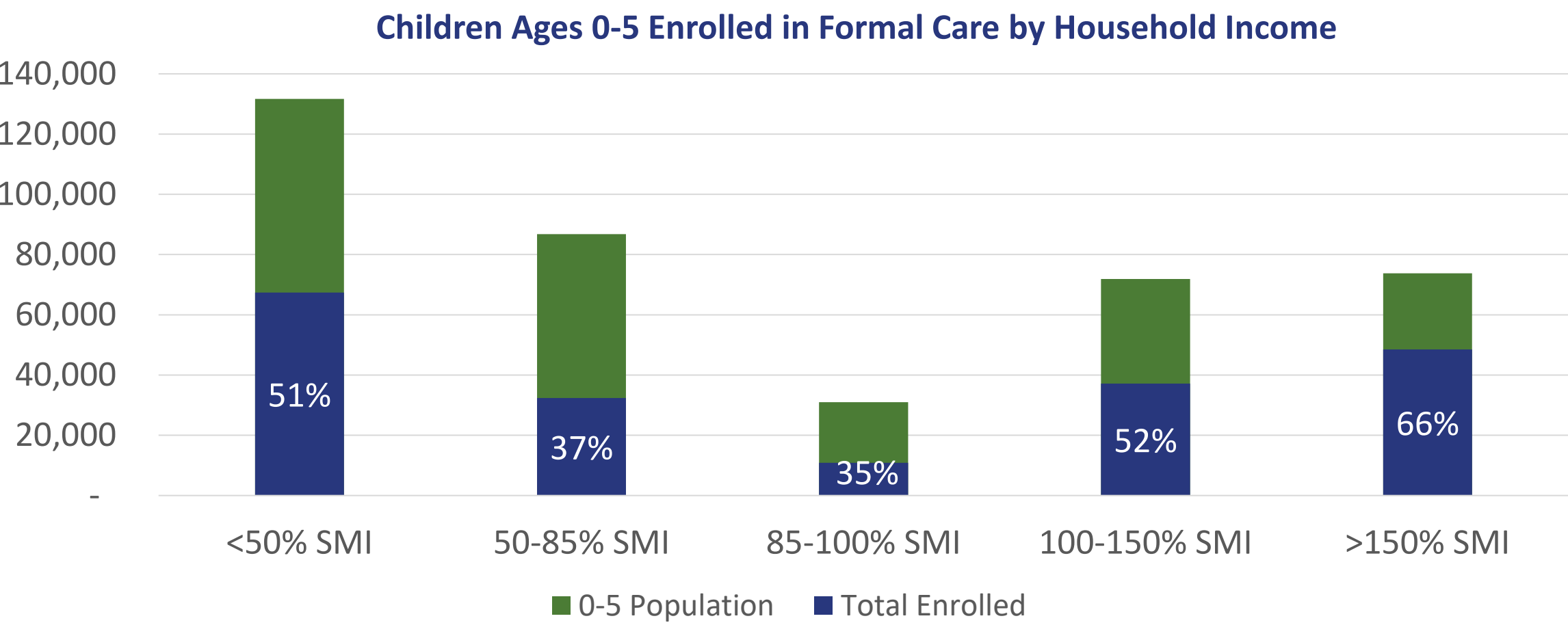
Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Capacity by Region Relative to 0-5 Population



Enrollment varies across regions with the Northeast and Metro Boston serving the largest proportion of children in formal care.



Low- and moderate-income families have children enrolled in formal care at a lower rate than the lowest and highest income households.

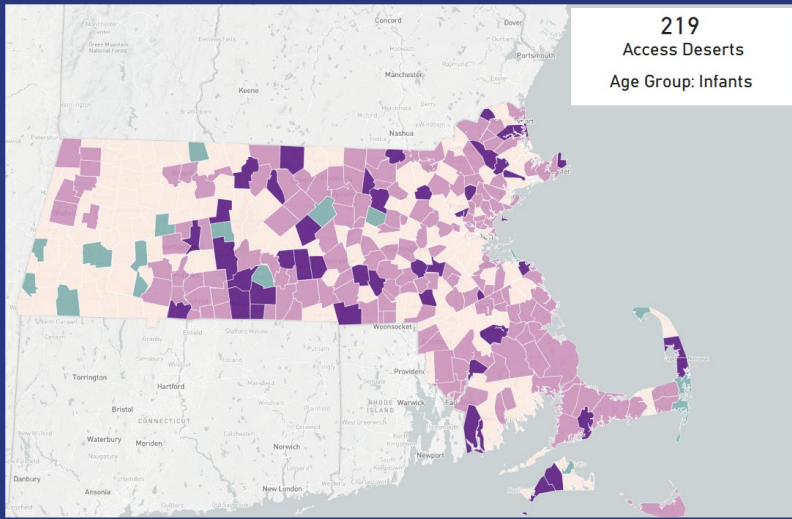


EEC now has access to regularly-updated data about formal child care access deserts across Massachusetts by age group and geographic level.

Severity of Access Deserts

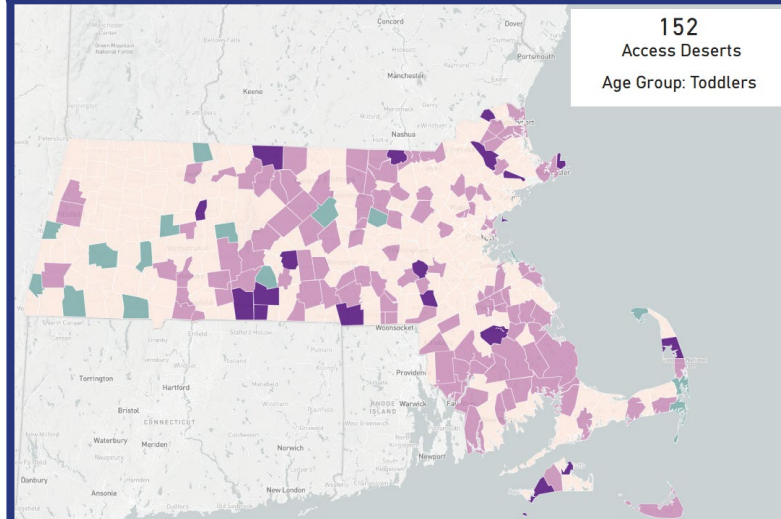
Not an Access Desert	Light Orange
3x - 10x Ratio	Medium Purple
> 10x Ratio	Dark Purple
No Providers	Dark Green

Infant Access Deserts in Massachusetts



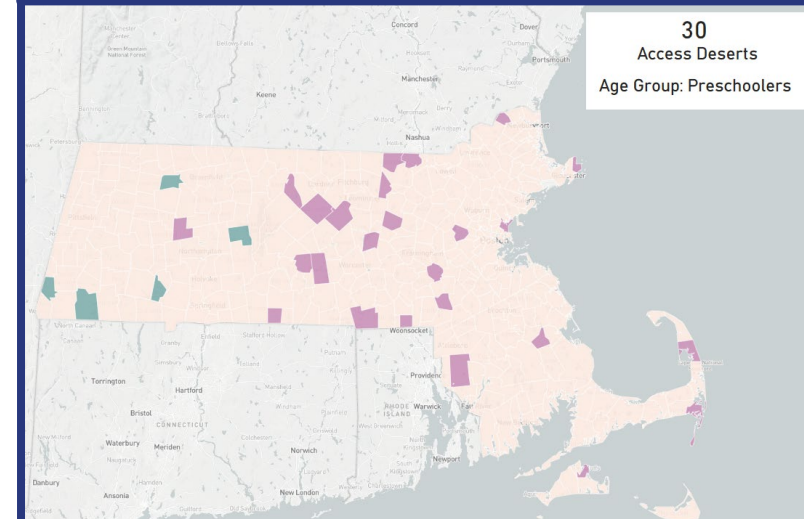
- Around 59,000 (70%) infants in MA live in an access desert.
- The Central, Southeast and Cape, and Western Regions have the highest rate of infants in access deserts.

Toddler Access Deserts in Massachusetts



- Around 43,000 (43%) toddlers in MA live in an access desert.
- The Southeast and Cape, and Western Regions have the highest rate of toddlers in access deserts.

Preschool Access Deserts in Massachusetts



- Around 10,000 (5%) preschoolers in MA live in an access desert.
- The Central Region has the highest rate of preschoolers in access deserts.

Family Preferences: Recent Findings

Recent Massachusetts research provides some insights on family preferences including the following:

1. Findings from the City of Boston Child Care survey (2021) include that two-thirds of parents who were staying home with their children would have preferred to use paid child care.
2. Research from Professor Jeffrey Liebman at the Harvard Kennedy School (2024) suggests that:
 - 80 percent of families surveyed who were not currently using formal care would use it if they could afford it, and 70 percent of those currently using paid child care would use more hours.
 - Adding 5,000 new child care seats a year for four years would increase the percent of children enrolled in formal care from 52 percent to 57 percent.
3. The Early Learning Study at Harvard (2018) indicates that:
 - Massachusetts would need an estimated 20 percent more capacity to enroll middle income families at roughly the same rate as lower and higher income families, which would increase the percent of children in formal care from 52 to 62 percent.

Family Preferences: Recent Findings Cont.

3. A team of researchers from MEF Associates and Tufts Interdisciplinary Evaluation Research (TIER) conducted a state-wide family needs assessment including a survey of caregivers (2024) which finds that:
 - Care arrangements varied by age, with the use of parent only care decreasing with child age and center-based care increasing with child age. Caregivers often relied on multiple arrangements.
 - Overall, most caregivers indicated that if child care were free they would choose center-based care, although a notable number reported that they would choose home-based care with a family or friend or home-based care with a provider.

Current Levers to Support Supply Building

CCFA contracts

CCFA rates

C3

Capital Funds

CPPI

Workforce
Supports

Discussion

1. Are there additional analyses of these data that we should consider?
2. What additional data are needed?
3. What metrics or data points would be helpful to share publicly?
4. How else can EEC use the supply and demand data to inform policy and program decisions?



Publicly Available EEC Family Access Data

Family Access-Focused Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – Public Dashboard

Children on EEC Centralized Waitlist for Child Care Financial Assistance

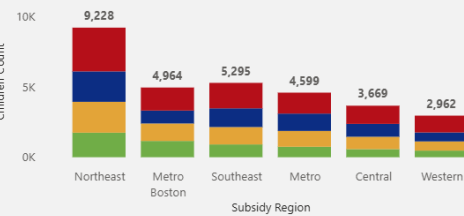
The data below reflect the total number of children on EEC's centralized waitlist for child care financial assistance currently and over the past 6 months, statewide and by region.

Filter Graph Below: Date

April 2025

CCFA Waitlist by Region and Age: April 2025

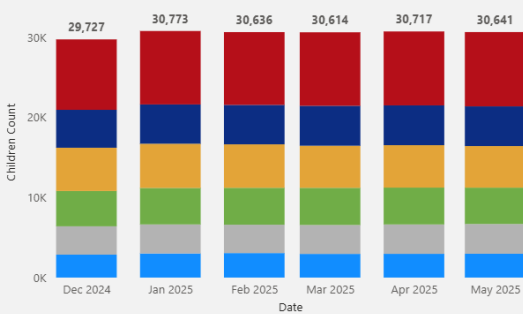
Age Group: ● Infant ● Toddler ● Preschool ● School Age



Source: Kinderwait via ECISDWH. Data updated monthly. Last updated 6/10/2025.

CCFA Waitlist Last 6 Months

● Northeast ● Metro Boston ● Southeast ● Metro ● Central ● Western

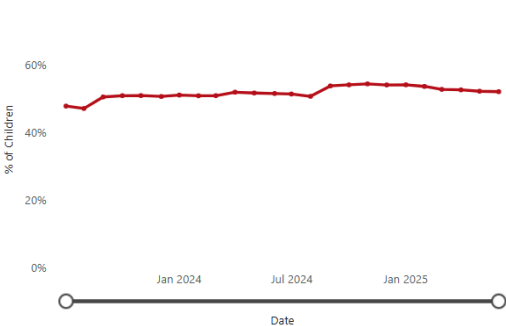


Source: Kinderwait via ECISDWH. Data updated monthly. Last updated 6/10/2025.

Children Enrolled in Formal Early Education and Care Statewide

Currently, about 52% of children age 0-5 statewide are enrolled in a formal early education and care program.

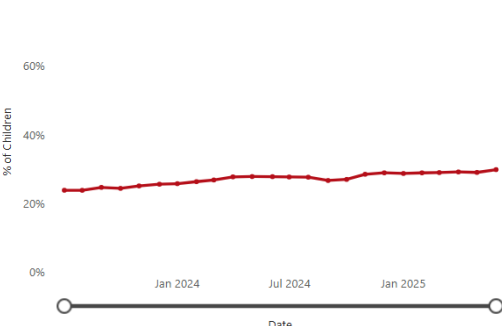
% of Children Participating in Formal Early Education and Care by Date



Eligible Children Receiving EEC Child Care Financial Assistance Statewide

Currently, about 30% of children age 0-5 statewide with incomes at or below 50% of the state median income are receiving EEC child care financial assistance.

% of Children at or Below 50% SMI Receiving CCFA by Date



Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) Caseload

The data below indicate the number of children receiving CCFA by month overall and by age group, funding source, and whether children are receiving a voucher or are enrolled in a contracted seat.

Filter Graph Below: Contract or Voucher

All

Filter Graph Below: Subsidy Region

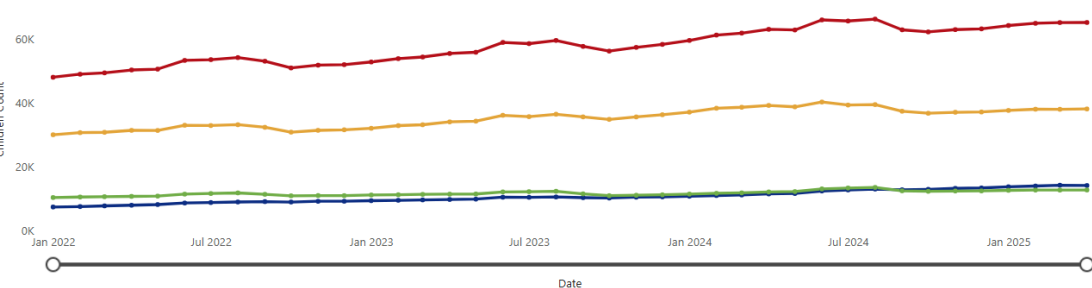
All

Filter Graph Below: Age Group

All

CCFA Caseload Over Time by Program Type/Funding Source

CCFA Funding Source ● Total ● Income Eligible ● DTA ● DCF



EEC Data Briefs

- EEC has started to draft and publish data briefs on various EEC programs and investments.
 - Provides a complementary narrative about data that is already publicly available (e.g., C3 survey data) and shares insights from data used by internal program teams (e.g., CPPI).
 - Builds awareness and transparency around what data EEC collects and what we're learning from it.
 - Can be a resource to policymakers, advocates, and other early education stakeholders.
 - Goal is to draft and share at least four data briefs this calendar year.

Commonwealth Cares for Children

(C3) Program Brief

Published: April 2025

This brief provides an update about Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) and supplements the [C3 Survey Data Fall 2024](#) presentation shared with the EEC Board in February 2025.

[Read the April 2025 C3 Program Brief](#)



Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI)

(CPPI) Program Brief

Published: May 2025

This brief provides an update on the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) by summarizing data collected from CPPI grantees in FY25, including information on participating communities, programs, and children.

[Read the May 2025 CPPI Program Brief](#)



Discussion

EEC KPI Dashboards

1. What additional data would be helpful for EEC to share publicly?
 - Some initial ideas include:
 - Private pay (tuition) data by program type, region, and child age
 - # of early educators receiving Child Care Financial Assistance
 - Community-level child population data and system capacity by child age and household income

EEC Data Briefs

1. What topics should EEC consider covering in future data briefs? What data or EEC programs would you like to learn more about?
2. How can EEC ensure that the data briefs are relevant and helpful to key stakeholders such as policymakers, researchers, and advocates?





Family-Focused Data Collection & Reporting: Opportunities for Streamlining and Improving Data Quality


CCFA Data: Current & Potential Future Collection

Data Source	Data Element	Currently Collected	Data Limitations	Collected via Family Portal
CCFA	Child Age	Yes ☆		Yes
CCFA	Care Type	Yes ☆		Yes
CCFA	Region	Yes ☆		Yes
CCFA	Family Income	Yes		Yes
CCFA	Child Race/Ethnicity	Yes	Yes	Yes
CCFA	Child Country of Origin	Yes		Yes
CCFA	Child Disability Status	Yes	Yes	Yes
CCFA	Child Early Intervention	No		
CCFA	Household Language	Yes		Yes
CCFA	Adults in Household	Yes (parents in the household)		Yes

☆ Reported on KPI Dashboard

Waitlist Data: Current & Potential Future Collection

Data Source	Data Element	Currently Collected	Data Limitations	Collected via Family Portal
KinderWait	Child Age	Yes 		Yes
KinderWait	Preferred Care Type	No		Yes
KinderWait	Region	Yes 		Yes
KinderWait	Family Income	Yes	Yes	Yes
KinderWait	Child Race/Ethnicity	Yes	Yes	Yes
KinderWait	Child Country of Origin	No		Yes
KinderWait	Child Disability Status	Yes	Yes	Yes
KinderWait	Child Early Intervention	No		
KinderWait	Household Language	Yes	Yes	Yes
KinderWait	Adults in Household	Yes (Parents in Household)		Yes

 Reported on KPI Dashboard

Statewide Data: Current & Potential Future Collection

Data Source	Data Element	Currently Collected
C3, CPPI	Child Age	Yes
C3, CPPI	Care Type	Yes
C3, CPPI	Region	Yes
CPPI	Family Income	Minimal (Subset of Programs Statewide)
CPPI	Child Race/Ethnicity	Minimal
CPPI	Child Country of Origin	Minimal
CPPI	Child Disability Status	Minimal
CPPI	Child Early Intervention	Minimal
CPPI	Household Language	Minimal
N/A	Adults in Household	No

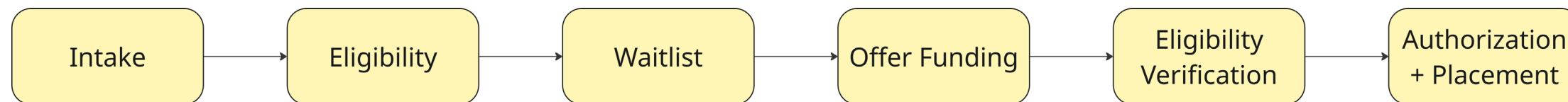
Family Portal Overview

Current State

- Multiple tools segment out parts of the process for applying to child care financial assistance: KinderWait, FACTS, and CCFA-the-software.
- True eligibility isn't determined until information is input into CCFA-the-software.
- Lack of structured data

Future State

- Collect more granular data across the CCFA process to better understand our constituents and partners
- Single source of truth for which families are eligible for assistance
- Expanded types of data, including factors impacting need of families and CCFA, which will inform further analysis and impact on policies and process for EEC



Family Portal Overview

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Unifies the user experience for families

- Positive user feedback through surveys and research

Streamlines case management and reduced administrative burden for FAAs

- Reduce length of time to manage applications
- Reduce number of duplicate applications
- Reduce number of errors and “support tickets”

Enhances operational efficiency for both EEC and FAAs

- Number of families who are ineligible for CCFA
- Number of families who refuse funding offer and why

Support expanding future application functionality

- Reduce number of systems family must interact with when looking for child care and applying for CCFA

Discussion

1. What data elements do you think are most interesting and useful to the agency?
2. What data elements should EEC prioritize collecting as part of the new family portal? What other issues should EEC be attentive to as the family portal is developed?
3. What data elements should EEC prioritize in terms of improving data quality?
4. What other data elements would you like to see EEC collect in the future?



Next Steps

Next Steps

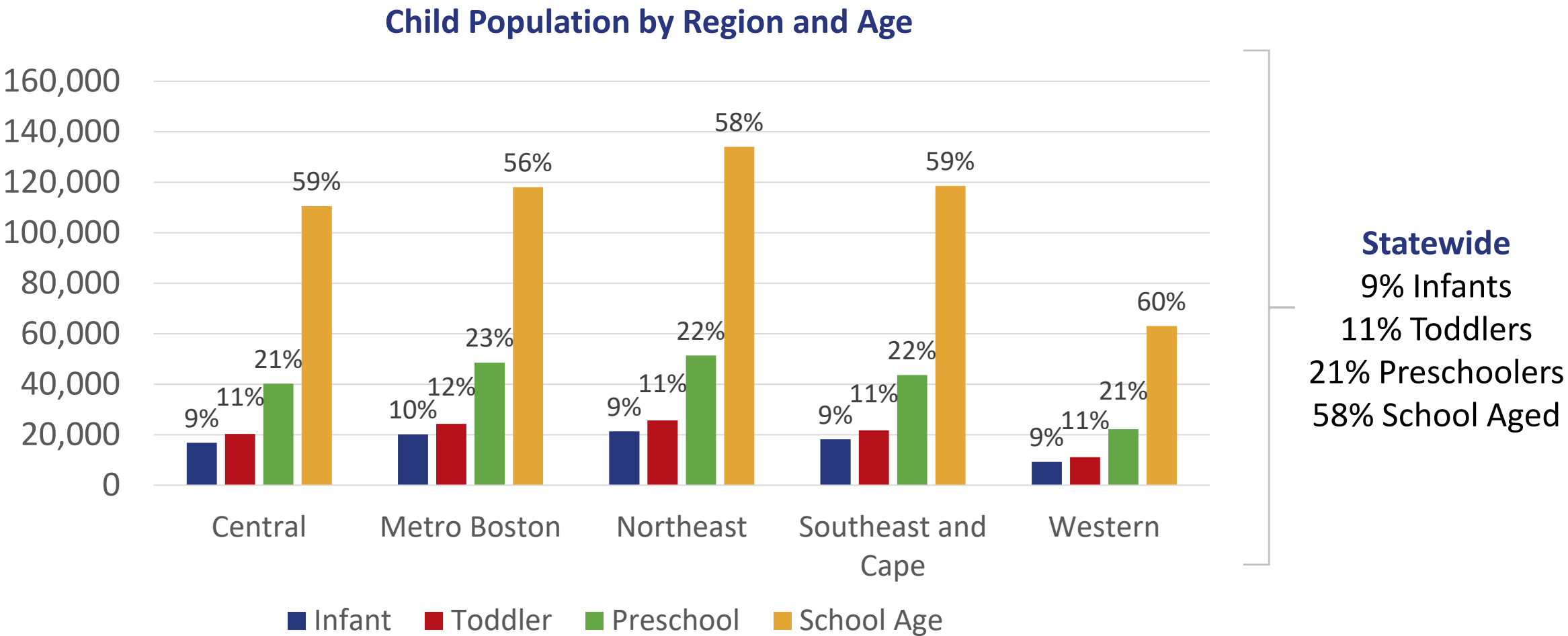
- Approval of April meeting minutes
- Reminder of 2025 meeting schedule

Date	EEC Strategic Objective	Meeting Focus
April 3, 2025	Commission Kickoff; Discuss Initial Legislative Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions and Charge• Key EEC Data Sources• New EEC Reporting Requirements• Commission Goals and Priorities• Commission Logistics
July 22, 2025	Family Access	<p>For each strategy area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share relevant KPIs and ongoing data analyses• Deeper dive into IT/data system modernization underway at EEC• Overview of relevant research projects/partnerships• Discuss additional data collection, analyses, and/or reporting infrastructure needed to inform program and policy development, strategic resource allocation and implementation decisions, and streamline any duplicative reporting requirements
October 21, 2025	Workforce Support and Program Stability & Quality Discuss 12/1/25 Legislative Report	



Appendix

The distribution of young children by age within different regions is consistent with the statewide population.



How many children in Massachusetts live in access deserts?

Number of children in access deserts by age group

CCR&R Region	# Infants in Access Deserts	# Toddlers in Access Deserts	# Preschoolers in Access Deserts	# Children Aged 0-5 in Access Deserts	Total # Children Aged 0-5
Central	12,234	7,733	3,047	11,585	90,157
Metro Boston	12,432	7,624	3,149	11,768	140,953
Northeast	13,821	6,793	539	6,111	135,815
Southeast	13,542	14,369	3,058	21,403	99,073
Western	6,735	6,200	502	5,805	48,172
Total	58,764	42,719	10,295	56,672	514,170

What percentage of children in Massachusetts live in access deserts?

Percentage of children in access deserts by age group relative to population

CCR&R Region	% Infants in Access Deserts	% Toddlers in Access Deserts	% Preschoolers in Access Deserts	% Children Aged 0-5 in Access Deserts
Central	73%	38%	8%	15%
Metro Boston	62%	31%	6%	13%
Northeast	65%	26%	1%	6%
Southeast	75%	66%	7%	26%
Western	73%	56%	2%	14%