



Commonwealth of Massachusetts



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Early Education and Care

Department of Early Education and Care Annual Report 2022

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Submission of Annual Report

This report satisfies the Board of Early Education and Care's reporting mandates, as codified in M.G.L. c. 15D, §§ 3(g), 4, 5, 10, and 13(d) to submit an annual report describing its progress in achieving the goals and implementing the programs authorized under Chapter 15D of the General Laws of the Commonwealth. The accomplishments and activities described in this report are for calendar year 2022.

Mission & Vision of Department

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) was established in 2005 with a mission to support the healthy growth and development of all children by providing high-quality programs and resources for families and communities in Massachusetts.

The Department's vision is that children, youth, and families reach their full potential now and in the future. Its role within that vision is to create the conditions for children, youth, and families to thrive socially, academically, and economically by:

- Working across organizations and sectors to build an equitable system of safe, affordable, high quality early education and care
- Supporting residential, placement, out of school and after school, and early education and care programs and educators in their essential work with children and youth
- Increasing opportunities for families to support their children and attain economic mobility

Established in 2020, EEC's five-year strategic plan established goals across three core constituencies:

1. Children are on track for success in school and to reach their full potential. Their families are empowered to work, build their skills, and attain economic mobility while supporting their children's education and development.
 2. The early childhood and out-of-school time workforce is professionally prepared, well supported, adequately compensated, and culturally and linguistically representative of the population it serves.
 3. Programs increase their sustainability, engage in continuous quality improvement, and promote high-quality education and healthy development among children and youth.
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EEC Governance

EEC is governed by an eleven-member Board of Early Education and Care that sets policies and regulations related to early education and care programs and services in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Health and Human Services serve as ex-officio members of the Board of Early Education and Care; the other nine members are appointed by the Governor. The Commissioner of EEC serves as the Secretary to the Board.

For the purposes of this reporting period, the members of the Board of Early Education and Care were:



Nonie Lesaux, Ph.D., Chair
Roy E. Larsen Professor of Human Development and Education, Harvard University

James A. Peyser – Secretary, Executive Office of Education

Marylou Sudders – Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services (Carolyn Kain, designee)

Paul Belsito – Board Vice Chair – Executive Director of the Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation
At-large Representative

Nicki Ruiz de Luzuriaga – Vice President of Institutional Advancement at Economic Mobility Pathways
Appointed as a parent of a child receiving early education and care services

Alison Schonwald, MD - Pediatrician; Department of Pediatrics at the Cambridge Health Alliance, and Associate Professor in Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School
Appointed as pediatrician with a focus on child development

Maria Gonzalez Moeller – Chief Executive Officer at The Community Group (TCG) in Lawrence, MA
Appointed as a provider of early education and care services with practical experience in the management and administration of early education and care programs

Jamella Lee – Chief People Officer at Jumpstart
At-large Representative

Mora Segal – Entrepreneur-In-Residence at A-Street Ventures
At-large Representative

The Board of Early Education and Care (BEEC) meets monthly from September to June each year. The meetings are open to the public and include 30 minutes for public testimony. All Board meetings during this reporting period were made available through a live stream on the Department's YouTube channel, and the Board resumed meeting in person starting in May of 2022.

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) is part of the Executive Office of Education (EOE). During this reporting period, the Education Secretary was James A. Peyser, who oversaw the Executive Office of Education. At the start of the reporting period, the Commissioner of Early Education and Care was Samantha Aigner-Treworgy until March 2022. Commissioner Amy Kershaw was appointed to serve as Acting Commissioner effective March 28, 2022.

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 15D, § 3A, EEC maintains an Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (EEC Advisory Council). The EEC Advisory Council is comprised of representatives from the early childhood, K-12, and higher education sectors; civic, labor, and business communities; social service agencies; health care providers; and parent organizations. All members and appointees have a special expertise or interest in high-quality early childhood education and care. The Advisory Council may review and offer comments on any rules or regulations before promulgation by the Board of Early Education and Care, and may, from time to time, make recommendations to the Board that it considers appropriate for changes and improvements in early education and care programs and services. EEC's Advisory Council held three virtual meetings in 2022.



Chapter 154 of the Acts of 2018 also established the Early Education and Care (EEC) Workforce Council, charged with making recommendations on professional development, higher education opportunities, and workforce strategic initiatives. The EEC Workforce Council met three times in calendar year 2022 and discussed the educator qualifications and credentialing, Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) stabilization grants, educator recruitment and retention, and received updates from the EEC Board's Workforce Working Group.

Statutory Responsibilities

EEC is the lead agency for all early education and care services and funding in the Commonwealth. EEC is the state education agency for the purposes of early education and care services under federal law and is responsible for compliance with early education and care services under the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996¹. EEC's statutory obligations² include:

- Licensing or approval of early education and care programs, group care facilities, adoption and placement agencies, school-aged child care programs, and temporary shelter facilities.
- Administering the Child Care Financial Assistance program, which supports access to quality care for families with no or low income.
- Providing accessible family supports, including educational materials and resources
- Supporting the development of the state's early education and care workforce, facilitating training and professional development opportunities.
- Building educator pathways and maintaining a comprehensive registry of certified educators.
- Providing technical assistance to providers and potential providers.
- Establishing provider rates and participant fees for EEC-licensed programs.
- Providing ongoing program monitoring to ensure quality as well as adherence to regulations and standards.
- Implementing programs and administering any related grant awards.
- Stewarding federal funds for early education and care services.

2022 ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FOCUS AREA: AGENCY CAPACITY

In 2022, EEC prioritized investments into the agency's capacity in an effort to deliver on core functions and key new initiatives. As well as aligned the agency's operations to promote a more modern and dignified user experience for the families, educators, and programs the agency serves. This work was initiated through the development of a new

¹ Pub. L. 104-193 <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/policy-guidance/personal-responsibility-and-work-opportunity-reconciliation-act-1996>

² MGL Chapter 15D <https://malegislature.gov/laws/generallaws/parti/titleii/chapter15d>



organizational structure, which included the creation of two new divisions in EEC – Family Access and Engagement and Research and Policy. The Family Access and Engagement Division is focused on the administration of the state’s child care financial assistance programs, including the development and implementation of policies related to easing the burden of families trying to navigate the child care system. The Research & Policy Division serves as EEC’s research hub – providing cross-divisional support for the agency, promoting data-informed decision making across EEC, and working collaboratively with other education agencies to ensure data collection is consistent and can be used across agencies in longitudinal analysis. The new organizational structure also included a consolidation of key units within the agency into an Operations Division, which includes the agency’s Finance & Budget; Internal Operations; Information Technology; and Strategy and Project Management Units.

To support this restructuring, the agency has been strategically recruiting and hiring staff to meet the emerging needs of the early education and care sector and the agency. Throughout 2022, the agency hired 43 new employees to strengthen the administration of existing programs and support the creation and growth of the newly created Divisions within the agency.

Additionally, in December 2022, Massachusetts received federal approval of a three-year, \$36 million federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through 5 (PDG B-5). This federal grant funding will provide support for new support and ongoing work across multiple state agencies to better promote educational, health and economic outcomes for young children and their families. Within EEC, the resources available through this grant will help accelerate work on child care financial assistance and critical workforce development initiatives. Importantly, the federal funding supports additional capacity within the agency, enabling EEC to hire 7 priority positions in 2023.

FOCUS AREA: COMMONWEALTH CARES FOR CHILDREN (C3) OPERATIONAL GRANTS

In 2022, EEC continued to administer the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Stabilization Grant program, leveraging the remainder of federal funding available from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and a critical investment of state funding to maintain the program. Created in the summer of 2021, C3 has proven to be a vitally important source of financial stability for early education and care programs as the state’s child care field continued to recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic in 2022. C3 grants are used to support a variety of operational costs, including labor expenses and investments in compensation and other quality supports.

The C3 formula relies on three main data points to determine grant amount:

Licensed Capacity: To account for program size.

Number of Educators Working with Children: To account for program investments in staffing structures that enable them to respond to family needs via longer or non-traditional hours, enrollment for younger children, and provision of high-quality, responsive services.

Equity: Using the CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), a comprehensive metric that integrates 15 census data points associated with community vulnerability, EEC offers an equity adjustment that adds additional funding to those serving under resourced communities. EEC also uses a percentage of subsidized enrollment (or other documented need, such as Head Start eligibility) as an alternative metric to show that programs are serving vulnerable children if they are not in a community with a high SVI. The equity adjustment accounts for the increased cost of providing more comprehensive care to populations meeting these criteria.



Through C3, EEC distributed \$446 million in 2022, providing critical stability to ensure availability of care and support in rebuilding the child care infrastructure across the Commonwealth. Since the inception of C3, EEC has provided \$611 million to more than 7,200 providers, with 89% of all currently licensed eligible providers participating in the program over time. While the Commonwealth did not receive another infusion of cash from the federal government, EEC, in partnership with the Legislature and the Governor, used the funds provided in federal fiscal year 2021 to maintain the C3 program through calendar year 2022.

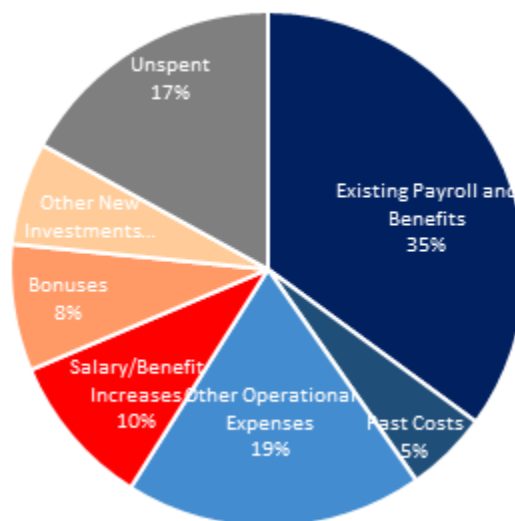
C3 Fall 2022 Survey

In September 2022, EEC launched its third semi-annual survey of programs receiving C3 funding in order to gather additional information about programs' use of C3 grants funds, investments in educators, and services provided to families.

As evident in **Figure 4**, providers had spent almost 60% of all C3 grant funds on operational expenses—from paying existing staff salaries and benefits, to covering past costs incurred during the pandemic, to other operational expenses, including rent, mortgage, utilities, insurance, and PPE. While the proportion of funds that providers spent on operational expenses had decreased to approximately 60% in fall 2022, relative to 66% in the prior fall, it continued to make up the bulk of C3 spending.

As of fall 2022, providers dedicated almost one quarter of all grant funds to new investments, including investments in salary and benefit increases, bonuses, or other forms of one-time pay to educators, and other new investments such as new supplies or materials, curricula, supports for educators, and mental health supports for staff and children. The proportion of funds allocated to new investments has increased during the grant period—up from 20% of all funds at the same time the prior year—indicating that while providers continue to spend the majority of funds on operational expenses, they are increasingly investing funds in staffing and program quality.

Figure 4: Grant Spending by Category, July 2021 to October 2022





Additional key takeaways from the fall 2022 C3 survey included:

- Almost all center-based programs reported providing their staff with salary increases with C3 funds and/or other funding sources over the prior year. Hourly wages across different roles continues to increase over time, although average compensation remains low compared to most other sectors.
- Programs continued to rely on C3 funds to maintain (but not necessarily expand) capacity for working families. One-third of center-based programs reported that they are not able to serve their full licensed capacity as of fall 2022, a higher percentage than spring 2022. The most frequent reason reported for not being able to serve licensed capacity continued to be unfilled staff openings: 29% of all programs reported this as a barrier.
- Programs reported that they would be able to serve 10,000-15,000 more children if they were operating at full capacity, and almost half of programs reported that they had a waitlist. Center-based programs with a waitlist reported on average 43 children and family child care providers reported 9 children on their waitlists.
- Relatedly, programs continued to report hiring challenges and staffing shortages. More than half of center programs reported at least one open educator position, and of these programs, the average number of openings was between 3-4 positions. Educator turnover was slightly higher in programs serving children who received EEC child care financial assistance and slightly lower in the Western region of the Commonwealth.
- Overall, center-based programs reported that almost one-third of educator positions have turned over the course of the past year. Turnover was consistent across regions and there was higher reported turnover in programs serving a greater proportion of children who received EEC child care financial assistance.
- Center-based programs reported that the most common reasons for staff turnover include staff leaving for positions outside of the licensed early care and education and public school sectors, with the second most common reason that staff left for positions in the public schools. About 20% of programs reported that staff decided to stay at home or not work at all for the time being.
- The fall 2022 survey, as well as focus groups conducted by Third Sector indicated many programs were reluctant to make systemic investments such as increasing salaries with funds that may not be recurring.

FOCUS AREA: FAMILY ACCESS

Child Care Financial Assistance

EEC provides financial assistance for children from eligible families to attend high-quality early education and care programs. In 2022, EEC provided subsidized care for more than 50,000 children from birth to age 14 (up to age 16 for children with a special need) in settings across the state's mixed delivery system of child care, which includes center-based programs, family child care providers, public preschool programs, and Head Start/Early Head Start classrooms. In 2022, approximately 54% of the state's early education programs served families receiving child care financial assistance from EEC. See **Appendix A** for subsidized child care enrollment data in 2022.

The three child care financial assistance programs administered by EEC are Income Eligible Child Care, Supportive/DCF-Related Child Care, and Transitional/DTA-Related Child Care.

The Income Eligible Child Care program provides child care financial assistance for low-income families with a service need, on a first come/first served basis. The Income Eligible Child Care Program also funds two specific types of care: (1) Teen Parent Child Care and (2) Homeless Child Care for families residing in homeless shelters affiliated with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD); or in domestic violence shelters and substance abuse shelters affiliated with DCF.

The Supportive/DCF-Related Child Care Program provides child care placements for families referred by the Department of Children and Families. EEC primarily enrolls children in Supportive/DCF-Related Child Care through contracts with providers but also through an increasing number of vouchers to meet the demand for child care in geographic areas with limited or



no access to contracted programs. EEC uses this mixed delivery system to ensure compliance with the mandate to provide subsidized child care for every child referred by DCF.

The Transitional/DTA-Related Child Care Program provides child care vouchers for families receiving Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) cash assistance and participating in the Employment Services Program. Transitional/DTA-Related Child Care also provides continued Transitional and Post-Transitional care for families in the first 24 months after closure of their TAFDC benefits.

Child Care Financial Assistance Regulation Reforms

In 2022, EEC promulgated amendments to 606 CMR 10.00 to increase the availability of continued subsidized care during the review and hearing process following the termination or denial of care at reauthorization or termination. Specifically, the amendments:

- Amended 606 C.M.R. § 10.10(3) to enhance notice requirements so that families are better notified of their right to appeal and that, if they do appeal, care will be extended during the appeal process.
- Struck the language of 606 C.M.R. § 10.10(4) (Continuation of Care) and 606 C.M.R. § 10.10(5) (Continuation of Subsidized Child Care Services) and replaced these regulations with consolidated language that permits continuation of child care subsidies pending appeal when a Parent is denied care at reauthorization, or when care is terminated, and outlines the Parent's responsibilities in order to maintain care pending the outcome of the department appeals process.
- Amended 606 C.M.R. § 10.11(7) and (8) to establish clearer timeframes to adjudicate appeals during the request for review and Informal Hearing process to allow families to obtain decisions in a more efficient and timely manner and to require prioritization of decisions for appeals of cases where care was denied at initial authorization.
- Amended 606 C.M.R. § 10.11(8) to allow Informal Hearings to take place via a virtual platform to increase accessibility and reduce the need for travel for those who do not wish to do so.

Beyond these initial regulatory reforms, EEC has been conducting a comprehensive review and assessment of the current pain points and opportunities for broader reforms since April 2022. The agency embarked on a full review of policy, procedure, and process changes and has several efforts underway to improve, modernize and create a more family-focused system

As a foundation for other needed system changes, EEC revised the regulations governing child care financial assistance programs. Following an extended public comment period, the Board of Early Education and Care voted to promulgate the new regulations at the Board's April 2023 meeting with the revised regulations and corresponding policies taking effect on October 1, 2023. For more information on the scope and intent of the reforms, please see relevant materials from the Board's November 2022 meeting and March 2023 meeting.^{3 4}

These reforms are consistent with the recommendations that can be found most recently: In 2022, the Legislature's Child Care Economic Review Commission submitted its [final legislative report](#).

Market Rate Survey & Narrow Cost Analysis.

Every three years, the agency is required by federal regulations to conduct a Market Rate Study (MRS) or use an alternative methodology to inform reimbursement rates that can provide equitable market access for subsidized families. To strengthen the data, the 2022 research included a preliminary cost analysis to better understand program costs, understand

³ November 2022 EEC Board Meeting Materials & Resources, <https://www.mass.gov/event/board-of-early-education-and-care-meeting-tuesday-november-8-2022-2022-11-08t130000-0500-2022-11-08t160000-0500>

⁴ March 2023 EEC Board Meeting Materials & Resources: <https://www.mass.gov/event/board-of-early-education-and-care-meeting-tuesday-march-21-2023-2023-03-21t130000-0400-2023-03-21t160000-0400>



the extent to which child care financial assistance rates are sufficient to support program costs, and identify effective funding mechanisms to strengthen the early education and care system in the Commonwealth.

At its October 2022 meeting, the Board of Early Education and Care approved the 2022 Market Rate Survey and Narrow Cost Analysis.⁵ The report found that current child care financial assistance rates mostly fall below the 50th percentile of the current market rate. In many cases, rates were below the 25th percentile. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration of Children and Family (ACF), which sets the policies and regulations for the federal Child Care Development Block Grant, has for years set a benchmark that states are supposed to aim for that subsidy rates are greater than or equal to the private rate charged by 75% of providers.

The agency has continued research into this topic into 2023 and has produced a more comprehensive report relating to the cost of care for child care providers. The preliminary cost analysis found that child care financial assistance rates in Massachusetts are, in most cases, significantly lower than the estimated current cost of providing care that meets the Commonwealth's licensing standards.

2022 Child Care Financial Assistance Rate Increases

The Commonwealth's Fiscal Year 2023 budget included an historic investment of \$80 million for the purpose of increasing daily reimbursement rates for early education and child care providers who participate in the state's Child Care Financial Assistance Program. Using findings from the 2022 Market Rate Survey and in accordance with guidance from the federal government and the FY23 budget, EEC proposed a revised rate structure that effectively resulted in at least a 10% rate increase for all program types and age groups. This ensured all rates met or exceed the 30th percentile and increased the daily supportive add-on rate for certain providers from \$22 to \$23 per day.⁶ The Board of Early Education and Care voted unanimously to approve the Department's proposal at its November 2022 meeting.

The Department utilized data from the federally-required 2022 Market Rate Survey to ensure the rate increases reached all providers as well as targeted increases to specific regions and age groups so that all the Commonwealth's subsidized providers will be at or above the 30th percentile of market rate. EEC continues to work with the Center for Early Learning Funding Equity on a cost of care study in order to better understand the drivers of the costs for providers and eventually adjust how rates are set.

Supports for Children and Families

In 2022, EEC maintained supports for children and families that were designed to enable families to continue or return to work and to ensure the state's youngest learners had access to high-quality care and education.

In 2022, EEC partnered with United Way to administer the Summer Step Up Program as a part of the Administration's statewide Summer Learning initiative. The program, funded at \$6.5 million, supported programming in 31 communities that was facilitated by partnerships between public schools and community-based partners. Through the initiative, organizations offered summer programming that engaged the state's young learners and accelerated learning, while smoothing the transition to in-person learning and promoting academic success as children entered the 2022-2023 school year.

Through the FY23 budget, which was signed into law in July 2022, EEC continued funding for several grant programs that provide families additional supports or expanded access to child care. This included \$11.9 million for locally based Coordinated Community and Family Engagement (CFCE) programs that provide child development services and resources to families with young children who are not enrolled in the formal early education and care system. Additionally, the

⁵ 2022 Market Rate Survey and Narrow Cost Analysis, <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-2022-market-rate-survey-and-narrow-cost-analysis-final-report/download>

⁶ FY23 Child Care Financial Assistance Rate Increase Report <https://www.mass.gov/doc/eec-fy23-child-care-financial-assistance-rate-increase-report/download>



Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) grants received \$15 million, a \$5 million increase from the year before. This initiative, which is reported in further depth below, supports community-level collaborations between public school districts and EEC-licensed early education programs to expand access for three and four-year-old children to high quality care that meets the diverse needs of families in their communities, with a focus on children with disabilities.

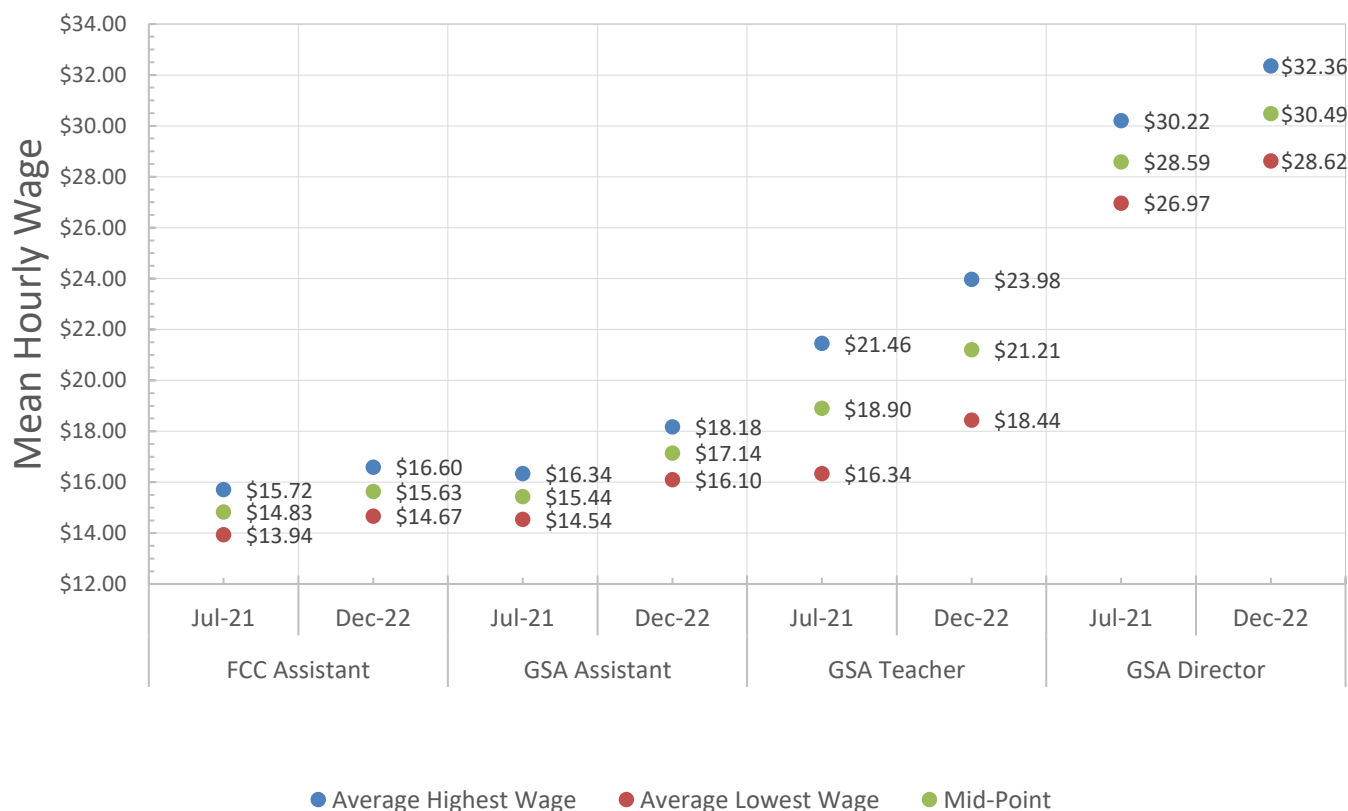
FOCUS AREA: **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

The Commonwealth's early education and care workforce is a key area of attention for EEC, our partners, and the state's broader economy. In 2022, EEC prioritized work to support both short- and long-term strategies to address key challenges facing the sector, including recruitment and retention; compensation; and the development of a supported professional pathway for early educators.

Compensation and the C3 Workforce Bonus

During the C3 grant period, there has been a noticeable improvement in compensation for educators working in early education and care programs. Providers reported that more than 50% of the C3 grant funds were being spent on workforce compensation and supports. More specifically these investments include salary increases, better benefits packages (such as health insurance or retirement plans), training and professional development opportunities, and other initiatives aimed at improving the overall working conditions for educators working in early education and care programs. With an uptake of over 90% (7,770 providers), the grant had demonstrated a wide reach and influence within the industry.

Average Educator Highest and Lowest Hourly Pay Over Time





Career Pathways

Created in 2020, the Career Pathways program continued to support the Department's partnerships with community colleges in an effort to provide greater access to higher education opportunities for early educators and recruit diverse early educators into programs by offering new, enhanced, and comprehensive instructional methods. Through dedicated funding in the state budget, each of the state's fifteen community colleges offer a Career Pathways program in Early Childhood Education that leads to professional certification or degree attainment and aligns with EEC's revised core competencies. In 2022, the Career Pathways grant provided 4,422 students with tuition assistance or wraparound supports. Between Fall 2019 - Fall 2022 approximately 9,207 unique students received support through the Career Pathways Grant. Based on qualitative interview data, enrollment was impacted by COVID -19.

Early Childhood Educator Scholarships

The state's Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Scholarship Program was funded as a pilot initiative by the Legislature in 2005 for the purpose of increasing early educators' access to higher education and to support them in attaining college degrees. The ECE Scholarship Program provides financial assistance to early education and care and out-of-school time providers working in EEC-licensed or licensed-exempt programs who are pursuing an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree in early childhood education at 50 colleges and universities in Massachusetts. The ECE Scholarship is jointly administered by EEC and the Department of Higher Education's Office of Student Financial Assistance. The application period for the 2022-2023 ECE Scholarship Program opened in April 2022. In total, 421 educators were approved for a scholarship that funds the cost of up to nine credits in the fall 2022 term and up to nine credits in the spring 2023 term. In the past several years, this program has been consistently underutilized and the agency, along with the Department of Higher Education, has identified this program as a priority opportunity for assessment, review, and reform in 2023.

Professional Pathways Initiative

In November 2021, EEC launched a new workforce initiative, in partnership with Neighborhood Villages, called Professional Pathways. The Professional Pathways program serves as navigation hub for educators to access preparatory and career advancement coursework, as well as for MassHire Boards to direct prospective job candidates and programs to enroll cohorts of prospective staff. It is a cost-free resource that supports early educators with attaining teacher credentials and launching careers in early education and care. Since the program's inception it has served approximately 758 educators.

Board of Early Education and Care Workforce Working Group

In September 2022, the Board of Early Education and Care formed a working group focused on identifying the most urgent areas of attention for the agency and to inform short-term strategies for the agency to pursue. This work continued through the end of the calendar and will continue into 2023.

Background Record Check Modernization

The front door of the state's early education and care workforce is the state's Background Record Check (BRC) process, which EEC administers for all staff working with children in EEC-licensed and funded programs. In September 2022, EEC successfully implemented a large-scale modernization of the BRC system aimed and implemented two new processes to maintain compliance with federal requirements. Additional critical upgrades and improvements were also implemented through the course of the calendar year. An interagency working group among the Department, the Executive Office of Education, the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) and DCJIS (Department of Criminal Justice Information Services) has been established to better coordinate and troubleshoot concerns related to fingerprinting.



FOCUS AREA: COVID-19 RESPONSE

The COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges for all industries in the Commonwealth, and early education and care sector was no exception. EEC invested significant time and resources in 2022 to support child care programs serving children and families during these extraordinary times.

Throughout 2022, EEC continued providing important health and safety supports for programs across the state as they reopened and continued to operate through the pandemic. EEC provided free rapid antigen tests to child care providers starting in January 2022. The Department also offered the Healthline with Primary Health –a free resource for child care programs to call/email with any clinical/public health questions they have about how to mitigate COVID spread in their programs. Both programs concluded at the end of FY23.

FOCUS AREA: CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

Regulatory Amendments

In 2022, EEC amended the Early Education and Out-of-School Time (EEOST) Capital Fund regulations at 606 CMR 15.00⁷ to provide greater flexibility for the EEOST grant during the ongoing COVID-19 emergency. These amendments made regulatory changes that:

- Allowed EEC to change the length of the grant period
- Allowed EEC to change the timetable for grant recapture in case of default to reflect shorter grant periods
- Allowed EEC to waive the requirement for a recorded Land Use Restriction against the property receiving the EEOST grant
- Allowed EEC to waive the requirement for a recorded Mortgage Lien against the property receiving the EEOST grant

FOCUS AREA: EXPANDED PRESCHOOL AND COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORTS

Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative

In FY2022, through the CPPI Grant program, the state-funded implementation activities in local communities to expand pre-kindergarten or preschool opportunities to children who would be eligible for kindergarten by September 2021. These funds provided the opportunity for high-needs communities that had engaged in prior planning efforts to enter a competitive bid to implement preschool expansion and local preschool quality improvement and alignment efforts, utilizing the Massachusetts Preschool Expansion Grant public-private partnership model. Nine communities in Massachusetts with significant populations of high-needs children -- Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Northampton, North Adams, New Bedford, Somerville, and Springfield – were funded to expand access to high-quality full-day, full-year preschool for three- and four-year-old's through public-private partnerships between the local public school district and local EEC-licensed early learning providers. See Appendix C for information related to CPPI, including implementation data and CPPI grantees in FY2022

FY2022 Planning Grant

In FY2022, Public School Districts, in collaboration with EEC-Licensed early education programs, had an opportunity to apply for a planning grant to support communities in conducting a needs assessment to better understand the local early

⁷ 606 CMR 15.00, <https://www.mass.gov/doc/606-cmr-15-early-education-and-out-of-school-time-capital-fund-program/download>



education system, including programs serving infants and toddlers, and identify key issues regarding building quality, and improving access for families and children. A set of Priority Strands were identified to support districts in focusing their planning efforts:

- Expansion and access to quality preschool
- Building locally aligned quality
- Equitable access to special education and inclusion

After planning is complete, grantees are expected to create strategic implementation plans that will support applications for an FY 2023 grant. There were nine communities that applied for the FY 2022 CPPI Planning Grant. All applications were approved for grant funding.

FY 2022 CPPI Implementation Grant

This grant targeted public school districts that are currently contracting with and funding local EEC-licensed early education programs to provide free public preschool opportunities for local children. The purpose of this grant was to pilot a process by which CPPI funds might incentivize and support the accessibility and quality of district investments in preschool expansion through collaboration with EEC-licensed programs. The grant funds are being used to supplement district funds and fund affordable full-day and full-year programming for all enrolled children. Communities are also expected to evaluate local needs and adjust services being offered to meet the needs of families and ensure that the birth to three early education system is not negatively affected. EEC will learn from the districts piloting this funding about the successes and challenges of a braiding funding approach to ensure working families have access to a preschool program that meets their needs.

There were three communities that applied for the FY 2022 CPPI Implementation Grant. All applications were approved for grant funding.

Early Childhood Mental Health

The Commonwealth, through EEC, has provided funding for early childhood mental health consultation services since 2008. The Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMH) program promotes school success and healthy social-emotional development and aims to reduce the suspension and expulsion rate in early education and care settings. In FY2022, EEC awarded \$3.5 million to six agencies through the ECMH Consultation Grant program. The grantees provide mental health strategies and services that address the developmental, emotional, and behavioral challenges of young children; help promote children's success in school; and help to reduce the rate of suspensions and expulsions in early education and care settings.

Consultation services offered through ECMH grantees include general classroom/program and on-site child focused observations which may include the use of evidenced based observation tools used to identify strategies for improving the learning environment and to assess children's social-emotional and behavioral skills. Consultants meet with educators and families to discuss the strengths and needs of the classroom and/or the child and work together to develop classroom management plans and/or individualized behavior plans to support the needs of specific children. Consultants also provide on-site modeling/coaching to educators to provide guidance on how to provide appropriate responses to address behaviors that challenge. If a child presents with behaviors that may require more intensive services, beyond the scope of consultation, the consultants will assist programs and families in locating and accessing appropriate additional services, which may include Early Intervention, special education services and/or behavioral health services through a community-based mental health service provider

EEC continued to use a tiered model approach to triaging supports offered to early care and education programs through the ECMH network in order to better ensure that appropriate interventions are provided to programs. The tiered model



allows intake coordinators to triage referrals to provide the best promotion, prevention, and resources to early education and care programs. The tiered model of supports includes the following elements at each tier:

- a. Tier I: Trained staff conduct phone interviews developed by the ECMHC grantee to gather information about the issue and provide strategies and resources based on the need.
- b. Tier II: Trained staff provide short term technical assistance in developmentally appropriate and/or social-emotional supports for behaviors described by the program as more serious and/or where teacher frustration is high.
- c. Tier III: Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants provide support to the program in situations where the behavior identified is frequent and extreme and/or identified trauma history or multi-system involvement is required.

Positive Behavior Supports for Improving Social-Emotional Health

In further support of EEC's effort to reduce expulsion rates, EEC continues to implement and expand the use of a Preschool Positive Behavior Supports using the Pyramid Model Framework. The Pyramid Model is a framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development and provides guidance for early childhood educators, professionals and families on behavioral health, trauma, equity, and social emotional development.

The Pyramid Model framework of evidence-based practices includes:

- Strategies for building relationships with families to engage and include them in decisions around inclusion and supporting positive social emotional and behavioral skills for their child(ren).
- Strategies, resources, and tools for developing appropriate practices for promoting inclusive settings and developing curriculum to meet the diverse needs of young children.
- Ways to build community connections to support children and families who attend multiple settings and sectors to ensure continuity of care.

In 2022 EEC and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) continued to bring the Pyramid Model strategies in programs across the Commonwealth, creating linkages across community-based programs and school districts. In FY2022, there were 72 Pyramid Model implementation sites, including 34 school districts and 38 early childhood programs. Through this initiative, EEC and DESE offer professional development opportunities in the following areas: equity in supporting children of color, use of language in fostering social-emotional development, and tools that support fidelity to the Pyramid Model. DESE and EEC sponsored ongoing external evaluations of the Pyramid Model initiatives to assess the quality and effectiveness of the professional development, fidelity of program-wide and classroom implementation, and outcomes for children.



APPENDICES

Appendix A: Subsidized Child Care Enrollment Data

Number of Children Receiving EEC-Subsidized Child Care by Age and Funding Type in 2022

Age Group	22-Jan	22-Feb	22-Mar	22-Apr	22-May	22-Jun	22-Jul	22-Aug	22-Sep	22-Oct	22-Nov	22-Dec
Infant	2,464	2,515	2,614	2,655	2,628	2,594	2,537	2,561	2,774	2,808	2,775	2,635
Toddler	8,138	8,253	8,368	8,271	8,351	8,298	8,347	8,477	8,839	9,084	9,243	9,214
Preschool	15,993	16,039	16,227	16,319	16,521	16,637	16,673	16,720	17,309	16,968	17,061	16,894
School Age	21,537	22,230	22,262	23,140	23,142	25,853	26,055	26,519	24,188	22,182	22,811	23,302
Total	48,132	49,037	49,471	50,385	50,642	53,382	53,612	54,277	53,110	51,042	51,890	52,045

Child Care Account	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
DCF-Related Care	10,469	10,621	10,726	10,829	10,903	11,527	11,711	11,909	11,467	11,002	11,085	11,051
DTA-Related Care	7,511	7,642	7,859	8,062	8,274	8,756	8,905	9,080	9,201	9,069	9,295	9,313
Income Eligible	30,152	30,774	30,886	31,494	31,465	33,099	32,996	33,288	32,442	30,971	31,510	31,681
Total Children	48,132	49,037	49,471	50,385	50,642	53,382	53,612	54,277	53,110	51,042	51,890	52,045

Appendix B: Preschool Age Children in Massachusetts and Universal Pre-Kindergarten Implementation

Selected Data on Preschool Age (birth through 5) Children in Massachusetts

Massachusetts Children aged birth through 5, 2021: **372,053**⁸

Massachusetts Children aged birth through 5 with all parents working, 2021: 273,915⁹

Massachusetts Children aged birth through 5 living in poverty (with household income <100% FPL), 2021: 53,129¹⁰

Massachusetts Children 3 through 5 years old enrolled in special education, 2018-19: **9,177**¹¹

Massachusetts Children birth through 3 with an Early Intervention IFSP, 2021: **21,783**¹²

TAFDC Active Cases with Children aged 3 through 5 (2021 average): **9,994**¹³

5 Does not include 5-year-old children already in kindergarten. Source: 3Si (Third Sector intelligence) via U.S. Census 2021

6 Does not include 5-year-old children already in kindergarten. Source: 3Si (Third Sector intelligence) via U.S. Census 2021

7 Does not include 5-year-old children already in kindergarten. Source: 3Si (Third Sector intelligence) via U.S. Census 2021

11 Source: Data as of Oct 1, 2021 from <https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/enroll/default.html?yr=sped2022>

12 Source: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/MA-C-SPP-FFY20.docx>

13 Source: Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance



Appendix C: FY 2021 CPPI Grantees and Award Amounts

Grantee Name	Number of Classrooms Funded	FY2021 Award	Grant Partners
<i>Cohort 1</i>			
Boston Public Schools ¹⁴	5	\$500,000	• ABCD, Inc. • Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester • Ellis Memorial
Lowell Public Schools	10	\$625,000	• Lowell Public Schools • Little Sprouts • Community Teamwork • Greater Lowell Family YMCA
New Bedford Public Schools	10	\$625,000	• New Bedford Public Schools • Little People's College • North Star Early Learning • P.A.C.E Head Start • YMCA South Coast
North Adams Public Schools	2	\$335,000	• North Adams Public School • Child Care of the Berkshires
Somerville Public Schools	13	\$625,000	• Elizabeth Peabody House • Somerville YMCA • Dandelion Montessori • Community Action Agency of Somerville Head Start • Open Center for Children • Bigelow Cooperative Daycare • Pooh and Friends Child Care • Tree House Academy
Springfield Public Schools	4	\$625,000	• New Beginnings • Square One • YMCA of Greater Springfield
<i>Cohort 2</i>			
Holyoke Public Schools	3	\$625,000	• Valley Opportunity Council
Lawrence Public Schools	10	\$625,000	• Greater Lawrence Community Action • The Community Group
Northampton Public Schools	7	\$625,000	• Northampton Public Schools • Community Action Head Start and Early Learning Center • Smith Child care Center • Meadowlark Child care Center
Total	64	\$5,210,000	

¹⁴ These numbers do not include 23 classrooms using a similar model funded solely by the Boston Mayor's Office.



FY 2022 CPPI Planning Grantees, Award Amounts, and Children Served

Grantee Name	Number of Classrooms Funded	Number of Slots	FY 2022 Award	Grant Partners
Brockton Public Schools	N/A	N/A	\$40,000.00	N/A
Fall River Public Schools	N/A	N/A	\$40,000.00	N/A
Falmouth Public Schools	N/A	N/A	\$31,384.00	N/A
Hoosac Valley Regional School District	N/A	N/A	\$40,000.00	N/A
Lynn Public Schools	N/A	N/A	\$50,000.00	N/A
Malden Public Schools	N/A	N/A	\$50,000.00	N/A
Milton Public Schools	N/A	N/A	\$50,000.00	N/A
Sandwich Public Schools	N/A	N/A	\$50,000.00	N/A
Worcester Public Schools	N/A	N/A	\$30,000.00	N/A
TOTAL	N/A	N/A	\$381,384.00	
Grantee Name	Number of Classrooms Funded	Number of Slots	FY 2022 Award	Grant Partners
Boston Public Schools	3	28	\$34,703.00	• Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center • South Boston Neighborhood House
Framingham Public Schools	4	76	\$520,000.00	• MetroWest YMCA • Framingham State University – Centers for Early Childhood Education
Salem Public Schools	3	50	\$345,000.00	• Salem YMCA • Salem Community Child Care Center • Ashley Preschool and Day Care
TOTAL	10	154	\$899,703.00	



Appendix D: Mental Health Consultation Grant Information

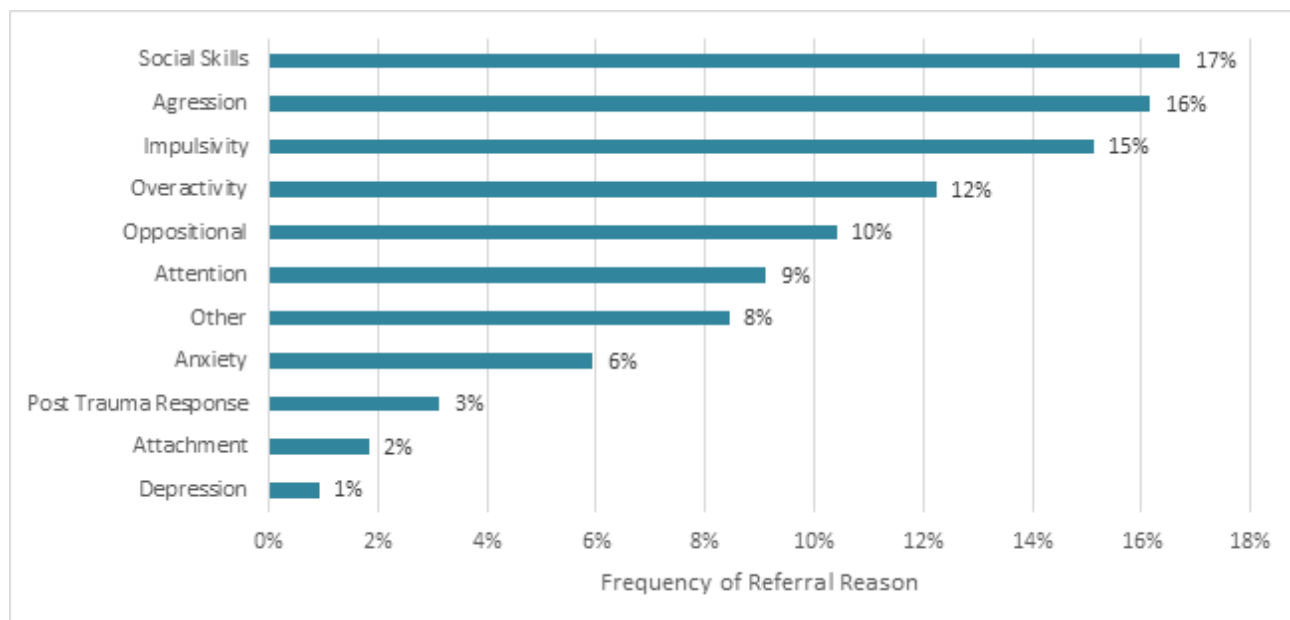
In FY2022, EEC awarded the Early Childhood Mental Health grants to six agencies:

Grantees	Award	Region	Cities/Towns
Behavioral Health Network	\$495,621	Western	102
Community Healthlink	\$364,572	Central	65
Enable, Inc.	\$283,347	Northeast, Metrowest, Southeast	47
Justice Resource Institute	\$473,129	Southeast, Cape and Islands	69
MSPCC	\$630,239	Northeast	63
The Home for Little Wanderers	\$253,092	Metro Boston	5
Total	\$2,500,000		351

Below are data on the Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Grant program that reflect services provided during the of calendar year 2022:

Most children who received child/family-focused referrals were identified with more than one behavioral challenge, the “reason for referral”. The top 5 identified reasons for referrals include social skills, aggression, impulsivity, overactivity, and oppositional behavior. See the table below for the distribution of reasons for child/family focused referrals.

Figure 1. Frequency of Behavioral issues identified as the reason(s) for referral

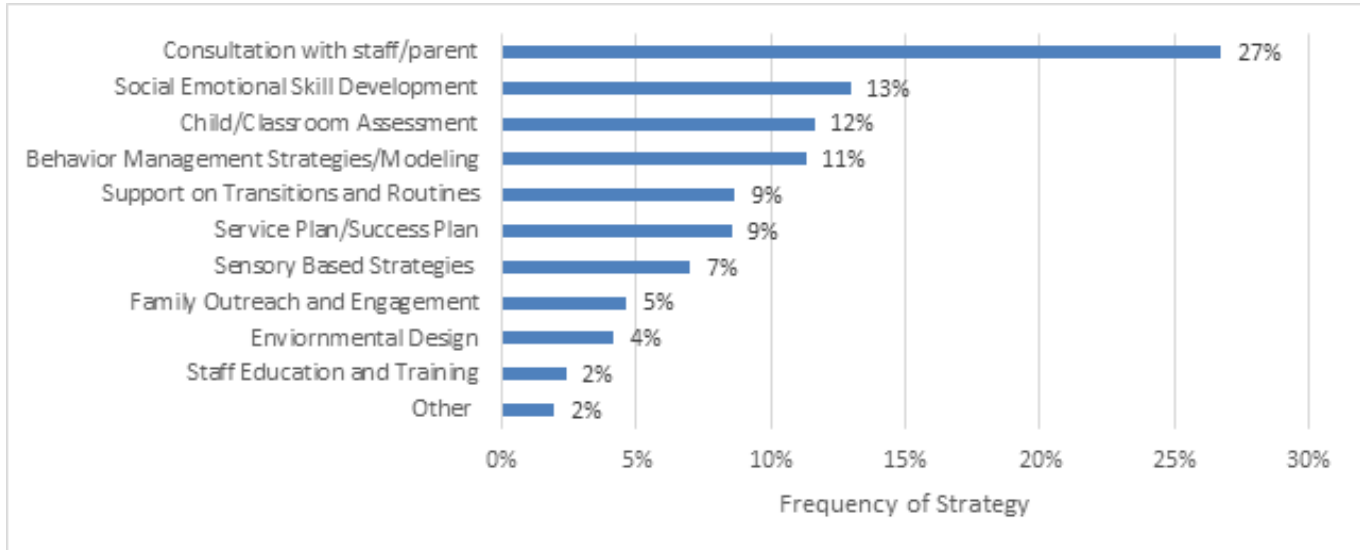


ECMH clinicians focus intervention strategies in individualized supports to meet the social-emotional and developmental needs of the children identified through the referral process. Intervention strategies are relational, individualized, strengths-based, developmentally grounded, and culturally informed. Below are the intervention strategies used by the



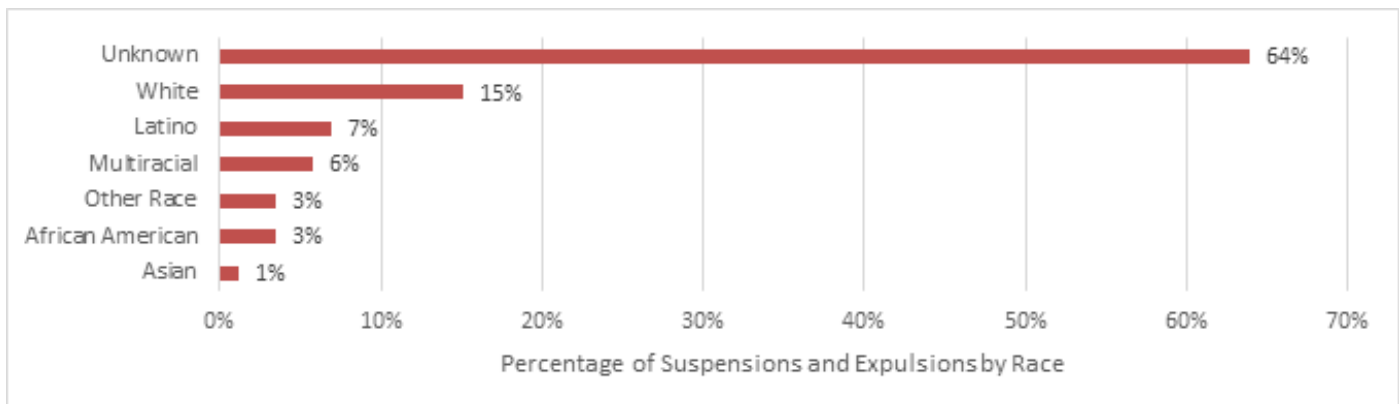
ECMH consultation providers in 2022. These strategies are provided monthly, and often multiple strategies used with each consultation session.

Figure 2. Frequency of Intervention Strategies



Of the 86 referrals resulting in suspensions/expulsions, the following figure depicts the racial/ethnic breakdown¹⁵ of children who received at least one suspension and/or expulsion during 2022:

Figure 3. Percentage of Child Referrals Resulting in Suspension or Expulsion by Race



¹⁵ Note: Because children can identify in multiple racial/ethnic groups, these categories are not mutually exclusive. Additionally, the high rate of unknown data is an important consideration when interpreting this data.



Appendix E: Early Education and Care Workforce Council Members (as of September 2022)

Statutory Representatives	Organization	EEC Workforce Council Member
Members Appointed by Speaker of the House	Massachusetts House of Representatives	Hon. Christine Barber, State Representative
		Hon. Alice Peisch, Education Committee Co-Chair
		Michele Lisio, Senior Advisor, Speaker Mariano
Member Appointed by House Minority Leader	Massachusetts House of Representatives	Lauren Mullins
Members Appointed by Senate President	Massachusetts Senate	Hon. Michael Moore, State Senator
		Jill Dixon, President, Taly Foundation
		Lesley Kinney, Suburban Athletic & Child
Member Appointed by Senate Minority Leader	Massachusetts Senate	MJ Byrnes
Commissioner of Higher Education	Department of Higher Education	Winnie Hagan, Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success
Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development	Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development	Jennifer James, Undersecretary, Workforce Development
Massachusetts Association of Early Education and Care (MADCA)	MADCA	Stephen Huntley, President of the Board of Directors, MADCA
Executive Office of Community Colleges	Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges	Lisa Huyghe, Director of Workforce Development
President of Community College	Mass Bay Community College	David Podell, President, MassBay Community College
Massachusetts Head Start Association	Massachusetts Head Start Association	Michelle Haimowitz, Executive Director
Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children	Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children	Sarah Sian, President, MAAEYC (Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children)
Massachusetts Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators	Massachusetts Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators	Sandra McElroy, President
Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education	Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education	James Mikolowsky, Director of Policy
Strategies for Children/Early Education for All	Strategies for Children/Early Education for All	Amy O'Leary, EEA Campaign Director Marisa Fear
YMCA Alliance of Massachusetts	YMCA Alliance of Massachusetts	Kate-Marie Roycroft
United Way of Massachusetts Bay	United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley	Karley Ausiello, Senior Vice President for Community Impact
Massachusetts Business Roundtable	Massachusetts Business Roundtable	J.D. Chesloff, Executive Director
Alliance for Business Leadership, Inc.	Alliance for Business Leadership, Inc.	Saskia Epstein
SEIU FCC Representative		TBD
FCC Provider Selected by Commissioner		TBD



Appendix F: Regulations on Civil Fines and Sanctions

606 CMR 10.12: Sanctions - A Parent determined by the EEC to have committed Substantiated Fraud or an Intentional Program Violation shall have a period of disqualification from eligibility for each child the Parent is authorized for pursuant to the following:

- (1) Non-payment of Fees. If a Parent is determined to be in violation of the fee obligation pursuant to 606 CMR 10.03(2), the Child Care Subsidy shall be terminated until the unpaid balance is paid in full. After that time, the Parent is eligible to return to care if allowable under 606 CMR 10.10 (4) or (5) or is eligible to return to the waitlist in accordance with 606 CMR 10.04, or pursuant to the applicable Referral in accordance with 606 CMR 10.05 and 10.06.
- (2) First Offense of IPV or Third Offense of Non-payment of Fees. If a Parent is determined to have committed an IPV (other than non-payment of fees) or a third offense of non-payment of fees, then the Parent shall receive a warning notification putting the Parent on notice that subsequent offenses will result in disqualification.
- (3) Second Offense of IPV or Fourth Offense of Non-payment of Fees. If a Parent is determined to have committed a second IPV (other than non-payment of fees) or a fourth offense of non-payment of fees, then the Parent shall be disqualified from eligibility until the debt is repaid or for a period of 12 months from the date of termination, whichever is greater. After that time, the Parent is eligible to return to the waitlist in accordance with 606 CMR 10.04 or, pursuant to the applicable Referral, in accordance with 606 CMR 10.05 and 10.06.
- (4) Third Offense of IPV or Fifth Offense of Non-payment of Fees. If a Parent is determined to have committed a third IPV (other than non-payment of fees) or a fifth offense of non-payment of fees, then the Parent shall be disqualified from eligibility until the debt is repaid or for a period of 24 months from the date of termination, whichever is greater. After that time, the Parent is eligible to return to the waitlist in accordance with 606 CMR 10.04 or, pursuant to the applicable Referral, in accordance with 606 CMR 10.05 and 10.06.
- (5) Fourth or More Offense of IPV, Substantiated Fraud, or Sixth or More Offense of Non-payment of Fees. If a Parent is determined to have committed a fourth or more IPV (other than non-payment of fees), or a sixth or greater offense of non-payment of fees, or Substantiated Fraud, the Parent shall be disqualified from eligibility until the debt is repaid or for a period of 36 months from the date of termination, whichever is greater. After that time, the Parent is eligible to return to the waitlist in accordance with 606 CMR 10.04 or, pursuant to the applicable Referral, in accordance with 606 CMR 10.05.
- (6) A Parent with an active TAFDC case in accordance with 606 CMR 10.05(4)(a) shall be exempt from the termination or disqualification sanctions during the period his or her TAFDC case remains open or through the end of their eligibility period under 606 CMR 10.05(4)(a), whichever is later.
- (7) A Parent with an active DCF Referrals pursuant to 606 CMR 10.06 will be exempt from the termination or disqualification sanctions during the period the Parent receives DCF-related child care pursuant to 606 CMR 10.06(4).