



The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)
51 Sleeper St., 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02210

Dear Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy, Chairwoman Lesaux, and fellow Members of the Board,

The Early Care & Education Consortium (ECEC) is a nonprofit organization representing leaders in the child care industry, including high-quality multi-site child care providers, education service providers, and state child care associations. In Massachusetts, ECEC members operate 162 licensed centers employing nearly 6,300 educators and staff. Together, our programs have the capacity to care for over 11,000 children in the Commonwealth. We also represent a diverse network of for-profit child care centers, ranging from nearly all subsidy to private-pay.

For months, child care providers across the Commonwealth have been depending on a federal economic relief package with substantial child care relief – a proposal supported by both political parties. Unfortunately, stalled negotiations at the federal level leaves our providers at risk of permanent closure, and relief will likely not come until 2021. **For this reason, we write to request state action to ensure all licensed providers – not just nonprofits or those with subsidy contracts – can survive the remainder of the pandemic.**

Unfortunately, the federal support offered thus far has not enough to ensure the child care industry can survive the pandemic. Just one-quarter of family child care providers were able to apply for Small Business Administration's Payment Protection Program (PPP) loans provided by the CARES Act; of those, 55% were denied.¹ Support for multi-site providers —most of which were excluded from SBA loans— has still not been contemplated in Congress's recovery efforts to date. And while Massachusetts has provided support for subsidy or emergency care providers, a large portion of the industry has been excluded from receiving support, leaving many licensed programs vulnerable to closure.

Due to CARES Act funding limitations, EEC had to make the difficult decision to limit financial support only to providers with subsidy contracts, in addition to other subsidy supports. This has left private-pay providers grappling with financial uncertainty due to the substantial increase of the cost of care alongside declined enrollment. Moreover, the field is facing massive staffing shortages in the wake of the pandemic, and has yet to receive the same support as K – 12 schools such as access to rapid testing. **All of this is forming a perfect storm for private-pay providers, potentially resulting in even more closures over the next several months.**

To ensure licensed, safe child care programs can remain financially viable throughout the fall season and until a federal relief package comes through, we recommend the following:

¹ Child Care & the Payment Protection Program (PPP). National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). May 12, 2020. https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/publicpolicy-advocacy/child_care_and_the_paycheck_protection_program.pdf



- 1. Provide financial support for all licensed providers – particularly those that have been excluded from financial support offerings to date – until a federal relief package comes through.**
- 2. Expand free access to Covid-19 rapid testing for the early education workforce.**

Keeping support strictly within the subsidy system only reinforces a divide within our industry. However, we know the industry is nuanced and interdependent; often, private-pay programs may help bolster a heavily subsidize one, and families even well-above subsidy eligibility struggle to pay for child care as well. The strength of this field rests in the diversity of its programming, and we look forward to working with you to ensure the entire field is supported.

Sincerely,

The Early Care & Education Consortium