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Child Care Financial Assistance Program: Income Eligible Policies

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Applicability: All Family Access Administrators (FAAs), Mass211, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) agencies, Contracted Providers, and Families.

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BACKGROUND

The Massachusetts Child Care Financial Assistance System

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) provides financial assistance to help low-income families in Massachusetts afford high-quality early education and care. This policy consolidates various 2023–2026 interim policies and advisories into a single regulatory framework to ensure flexibility, transparency, and equitable access for all residents of the Commonwealth.

There are three Child Care Financial Assistance Programs to address the different needs of families across the Commonwealth:

- Income Eligible Child Care Program
- Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) Related Child Care Program
- Department of Children and Families (DCF) Related Child Care Program

The Income Eligible Child Care Program

The Income Eligible Child Care Program serves families who reside in Massachusetts, meet certain income guidelines, and have a "service need" (such as working, attending school, or completing job training). An eligible family shall receive only one type of support (contract or voucher) for each eligible child.

AUTHORITY

- M.G.L. c. 15D, § 1: General authority to assure children and families full opportunity to reach their potential.
- M.G.L. c. 15D, § 13A: Codification of CCFA program into statute.
- 606 CMR 10.00: Child Care Financial Assistance Regulations.
- 45 CFR Part 98: Federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION [OPTIONAL]

- Child Care Financial Assistance Massachusetts child care financial assistance programs (CCFA) can help you pay for child care and out-of-school time programs.
- Resources for families receiving Child Care Financial Assistance: learn more about the CCFA programs, how much you may pay for child care, what you need to do to keep your assistance, and how to tell us about changes to your household.
- Child Care Financial Assistance apply page: for families looking to get financial assistance.
- Please visit EEC's online Hub for Child Care Financial Assistance Program for most recent regulations, policies, policy advisories, procedures, FAQs and training resources on child care financial assistance.
- Common Forms for Child Care Financial Assistance
- For assistance with the implementation or interpretation of these interim Child Care Financial Assistance policies, contact EEC at eecsubsidymanagement@mass.gov.

OBSOLETE

- Interim Income Eligible Child Care Financial Assistance Program Policies – October 1, 2023
- EEC Policy Advisory – Field Operations 2023 - 4 - Child Care Financial Assistance
- EEC Policy Advisory – Field Operations 2024 - 7 - Child Care Financial Assistance

Updated Policy Guidance

- EEC Policy Advisory – CCFA 2025 – 03 - Interim Income Eligible and Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) Child Care Financial Assistance Policies
- EEC_CCFA-26-01_Interim Income Eligible CCFA Policy Advisory

CHAPTER 1: WAITLIST

Massachusetts is committed to helping families find and afford high-quality early education and care. Because Child Care Financial Assistance funding may be limited, EEC uses a centralized waitlist to manage requests for financial assistance.

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) maintains one Child Care Financial Assistance waitlist for the entire state. Families on this list may receive child care benefits when funding is available. Funding is offered based on availability of funding and a number of factors, including the date when a family first applies.

These policies explain the rules for the Child Care Financial Assistance waitlist and are designed to help families understand:

- How to apply and what documents families need to provide.
- Who may receive priority to receive funding sooner.
- Family responsibilities while waiting for benefits.
- How funding decisions are made when funding becomes available.

To access child care financial assistance, families partner with a Family Access Administrator (FAA). Families can receive help with the waitlist application from an FAA at any of the following:

- Mass211 Call 2-1-1 or 877-211-6277
- A Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) Agency
- A Contracted Child Care Provider

Families apply online through the MyChildCareMA Family Portal, EEC's online system for applying for and managing Child Care Financial Assistance. The portal is available in many languages, including English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian-Creole, Russian, Arabic, and Chinese.

The MyChildCareMA Portal

Security and MyMassGov Credentials

To access the MyChildCareMA portal and start an application, families must have a personal MyMassGov profile. This secure system keeps families' private information safe. The first time a user logs into MyChildCareMA, the system will "link" their personal MyMassGov account if one exists.

If a user does not already have a MyMassGov profile, one can be created through the MyMassGov secure system. If a user already has a personal Mass.Gov account, they will use those same credentials to log in.

- **Use One Email:** Families must use the same email address for both their MyMassGov account and your child care application.
- **If Your Email Changes:** Families must report any email changes to their Family Access Administrator (FAA) to keep your child care case current.
- **Important:** Families must also change the email address for their MyMassGov account at My.Mass.Gov under Account Settings.

Communication and Notifications

The MyChildCareMA portal is the most important tool for managing a family's status on the waitlist. All notices—including Approval, Removal, and Denial notices and any offer of child care funding—are available in the portal. The Family Access Administrator sends an email notification to the family when a new message is available or when a specific action is needed. The family is responsible for logging into the portal to review these communications and complete necessary tasks to maintain eligibility.

Families Without Technology Access

Families without a computer, an email address, or internet access, must reach out to a Family Access Administrator (FAA) for assistance.

- **Special Arrangements:** The FAA works with the family to identify the best way to communicate, such as phone calls or U.S. Mail.
- **Family Responsibility:** Families not using the portal, must stay in close contact with the FAA and check paper mail often to ensure all deadlines are met.

Family Application

Families are permitted only one application on the statewide waitlist at a time.

Information the Application Collects

The application asks for details about the household to determine eligibility for child care financial assistance and placement on the waitlist. The family must provide information about the following:

- **Identity and Residency:** Proof of who the applicant(s) is/are and that they live in Massachusetts.
- **Household Composition:** How many people live in the home (*see* Household Composition and Size in the Eligibility section below).
- **Children and Eligibility:** The ages of the children who need care (under age 13, or under age 16 with a disability).
- **Child's Citizenship or Immigration Status:** Information about the citizenship or immigration status of the child(ren) who need care. Child Care Financial Assistance is a benefit for children; parents and caregivers do not have to provide their own immigration status to apply for their children.
- **Income and Assets:** Proof that the household's gross monthly income is at or below 85% of the State Median Income (SMI) and a certification that household assets do not exceed $1,000,000.
- **Service Need:** Why the family needs child care (such as for work or school).
- **Priority Status:** Information that may help the family receive funding sooner (*see* Priority Status section below).
- **Child Care Preferences and Interest**. What the family wants and needs in a child care program.

The application also asks other questions about the type of care the family wants to help match the family with the right funding:

- **Provider Type:** Interest in a Family Child Care home, Center-based program, or an informal child caregiver.
- **Forms of Assistance:** Interest in a Contracted seat (offers for a specific child care program) or a Voucher (to use at any child care provider that accepts child care financial assistance).
- **Other:** Interest in HeadStart, Out of School time programs, and/or seasonal child care.

Required Documents

Families must provide proof for the following items within 30 calendar days of submitting their application:

- **Identity**: Proof of who the parent(s) or caregiver(s) are.
- **Massachusetts residency:** Proof the Household resides in Massachusetts
- **Income and benefits:** Proof of all countable gross household income and benefits. Families who are self-employed "self-attest" their income for the waitlist.

Note: The family can state (self-attest) that they meet other requirements to join the waitlist. These include service need, the child's citizenship/immigration status or certain priorities. The FAA verifies these later when a child care benefit offer is made and accepted.

Family Application Statuses

The MyChildCareMA portal uses specific statuses to show where a family stands in the process:

- **"Complete Application:"** The family has not submitted the application
- **"Verify Eligibility for Waitlist:"** The application is submitted, but the process is not finished. The family must still complete an outreach **call** with a Family Access Administrator (FAA) and provide the required documents.
- **"Wait for Funding:"** The family meets all requirements and is officially active on the waitlist.
- **"Closed:"** The family's case has been closed. This usually happens because the family misses a deadline or is not eligible under EEC policy.

Important Notice on Eligibility:

Being placed in an active, "**Wait for Funding"** status on the statewide waitlist does not guarantee that the family will receive funding. The family must prove they meet all rules at the time a benefit offer is made.

Priority Status

Some families may get child care funding sooner if they have a "Priority Status." The waitlist application collects information needed to determine if a family meets one or more of the priority statuses below.

Verification of Priority Status

For some priority statuses EEC allows the family to self-report (self-attest) their status to join the waitlist. However, the assignment of this priority status is provisional. If the

family cannot provide official proof (like a shelter letter) when funding is offered, the offer is withdrawn. In this case, the family moves back to the waitlist without priority status but still using the original application date.

General Access

Families who do not meet any priority status still join the waitlist without an assigned priority status.

Priority Status Categories

A family may be eligible for a Priority Status if the household meets one of the following criteria:

- **Families earning 50% or less of the State Median Income (SMI)**. This status applies when the total gross household income is at or below 50% of the Massachusetts State Median Income. The FAA uses your income documents to confirm this status.
- **Parents or caregivers who work in the early education and care field.** This status applies when a parent/caregiver works for a licensed or state-funded early education and care program. To qualify, the person must receive a wage or salary directly from the program.
    - **Who is included:** Educators (assistants, family child care providers, etc.) office/administrative staff, curriculum staff, support staff (kitchen, maintenance, transportation), staff working for a CCRR, and Family Child Care System staff when accessing a contracted seat.
    - **Verification:** The family's application answers are used to assign this priority status. The family will provide the employer's "P" number (Provider Number).
- **Families with children who have a documented disability.** This status applies when the child(ren) who needs care has a documented physical, mental, or emotional disability (usually has an IEP or 504 plan). A child with a documented disability may stay eligible for care until they turn 16 years old. We use the family's application responses are used to determine priority status and to assess whether an older child (ages 13 to 16) can receive care. The family provides official proof only after an FAA offers funding.
- **Families experiencing homelessness.** This status applies when families do not have a steady or permanent place to live. This includes any family considered homeless under the federal McKinney-Vento Law. Examples include families

living in shelters, motels, campgrounds, or sharing a home with others due to loss of housing. A family self-attests to experiencing homelessness on the application and is not required to provide documentation to join the waitlist. Official verification is only required after an FAA extends a Child Care Benefit Offer.
Families with a parent under 24 years old. This status applies when a biological parent is under age 24 and lives with their child. The FAA uses identity or other documentation to confirm this status for the waitlist.

- **Families with a parent experiencing domestic violence.** This status applies when a parent or caregiver is experiencing domestic violence. This information is kept private and is used only to assign waitlist priority. A family may receive priority by answering “yes” to the domestic violence question on the application and no documentation is needed to join the waitlist. Official verification is only required after an FAA extends a Child Care Benefit Offer.

Waitlist Application Review and Eligibility

The Family Access Administrator (FAA) reviews the application and documents to make sure they follow the state's rules. Families can be placed on the waitlist if they need child care now or if they will need it in the future (this includes families who are currently pregnant).

Review Timeline

When the family submits an online application, the status shows as "Verify Eligibility for Waitlist." To move to "Waiting for Benefits" status, the family must finish their part of the process within 30 calendar days:

- **Outreach Call:** The FAA attempts to call the family within 5 business days of the application submission. During this call, the FAA reviews the application responses and answers the family’s questions.
- **Documentation:** The family must upload or send all required documents within 30 calendar days of the application submission. The FAA explains during the outreach call what documents are needed and how to provide them using the Document Upload Function.
- **Decision:** The FAA determines if the family is eligible for the waitlist within 10 calendar days after completing the outreach call and receiving all required documents.

Missing the Deadline

If the family does not finish the process on time, the application is closed.

- **Waitlist Removal Notice:** The FAA posts a notice in the MyChildCareMA portal. The notice explains why the case has been closed.
- **30-Day Grace Period:** The family has 30 calendar days from the date of that notice to provide any missing documents. If the family completes the process during this time and meets all requirements, they keep their original application submission/waitlist date.
- **Restarting:** After the 30-day grace period ends, the family must start a new application. This results in a new waitlist date.

Waitlist Approval

If the application shows the family likely qualifies for funding, the FAA performs the following actions:

- **Approve the Case:** The FAA approves the application for the waitlist. The waitlist date remains as the original date the family submitted the application.
    - Note on Eligibility: This approval is not a final determination of eligibility for funding. The FAA makes a final decision on child care benefit eligibility only after the family accepts a funding offer and provides updated documents.
- **Post a Waitlist Approval Notice:** The FAA posts an approval notice in the MyChildCareMA portal. The Family receives an email letting them know the notice is ready to view.

Waitlist Denial

If a family does not meet the state rules for child care financial assistance, the FAA posts a *Waitlist Denial Notice* in the MyChildCareMA portal. Common reasons for denial include:

- The family does not live in Massachusetts.
- There are no children in the home who qualify for care. (Children must be under age 13, or under 16 with a disability).
- The household's gross income is too high (above 85% of the State Median Income).
- The household assets (valuables like houses or bank accounts) are more than $1,000,000.

The Right to a Review

All Denial and Removal notices will explain how a family can submit a Request for Review. The family uses this process if they believe a policy was not followed correctly.

Please see: Denial and Termination – Request for Review of a Decision to Deny or Terminate Financial Assistance.

Waiting for Benefits (Renewals and Changes)

Once the application reaches the "Waiting for Benefits" status, the family is responsible for keeping their information current so they can be reached when funding is available.

Reporting Changes

The family must contact the Family access Administrator (FAA) to make changes in household information. The FAA gives the family access to edit the information in the MyChildCareMA portal. The FAA can also update information on the family's behalf.

Changes the family must report include:

- **Contact Information:** A new phone number, mailing address, or email address.
- **Household Changes:** The birth of a child or a change in the number of people living in the home.
- **New Priority Status:** Meeting a new priority status (for example, starting a new job in the early education field).

Annual Renewal

To stay on the statewide waitlist, the family must confirm their continued interest and update their household information every 12 months.

- **Renewal Notice:** A *Waitlist Renewal Notice* is posted in the MyChildCareMA portal every 12 months if the family is still waiting for benefits.
- **How to Respond:** The family has 30 calendar days to complete the renewal. This is done online through the portal or by calling an FAA at Mass 211. The family must also provide any updated documents requested by the FAA.
- **Review Process:** When the family renews, an FAA reviews the updated information to ensure the family still meets the eligibility rules to stay on the waitlist.
- **Approval:** If the family likely still qualifies, they will stay on the waitlist. The FAA posts a *Waitlist Approval Notice* in the MyChildCareMA portal.
- **Denial:** If the family no longer qualifies, the FAA posts a Waitlist Denial Notice in the MyChildCareMA portal. This notice explains how to ask for a "Request for Review" if the family believes policy was not followed correctly. Please see: Denial and Termination – Request for Review of a Decision to Deny or Terminate

Financial Assistance.

Missed Renewal Deadline

If the family does not respond to the renewal notice within 30 calendar days, their case is closed, and the family is removed from the waitlist.

Reasons for removal include:

- The family does not answer calls or messages from the FAA.
- The family does not update or confirm household information within 30 calendar days.
- The family does not provide required documents within 30 calendar days.

If a family is removed, the FAA posts a *Waitlist Removal Notice* in the MyChildCareMA portal. This notice explains what the family can do if they believe a policy was not followed correctly.

- **30-Day Grace Period:** If a family is removed for missing a renewal deadline, the family has 30 calendar days from the date of the removal notice to contact an FAA at Mass211. If the family provides the updated information during this window, the FAA reviews the case for continued placement on the waitlist.
- **Starting Over:** If the family misses this 30-day grace period, they must submit a New Application. This results in a new waitlist date.

Child Care Benefit Offers

When child care funding becomes available, a Family Access Administrator (FAA) selects families from the waitlist to receive a Child Care Benefit Offer. Offers are made based on several factors, including the date the family first applied.

Receiving an Offer

If funding becomes available for a family, the FAA posts a *Child Care Benefit Offer* in the MyChildCareMA portal. The family also receives an email and/or text message letting them know that a message is available. The Child Care Benefit Offer includes the name of the organization offering funding and their contact information if more details are needed. The family receives one of two types of help:

- **A Voucher:** This can be used at any child care provider that accepts state financial assistance.
- **A Contracted Seat:** This is a spot at a specific child care program.

Responding to an Offer

The family must respond to the offer within 15 calendar days. Because funding is limited, offers are often made to multiple families at once for the same funding. The family can choose to accept or decline the offer.

- **First-Come, First-Served:** The first family to respond/accept the offer and successfully verify CCFA eligibility secures the funding.
- **Accepting the Offer:** If the family accepts, the portal status changes to "Verify Eligibility for Benefits." The family works with the FAA to verify current eligibility for funding. The family then has 30 calendar days to provide all final documents to prove they meet the rules for funding.
- **Verify Current Eligibility**: Household circumstances may change since the family first joined the waitlist or since the most recent waitlist renewal. To receive funding, the family must provide updated documents showing they meet all eligibility rules at the time of the benefit offer. This includes having a gross household income at or below 85% State Median Income (SMI).
- If the updated documents show the family no longer meets the eligibility rules, the funding offer is voided, and the case may be closed.
- **Declining the Offer:** The family has the right to turn down an offer if it does not meet their needs. If the family declines an offer but wants to keep waiting for a different opportunity, they stay on the waitlist with their original waitlist date.
- **If the Family Does Not Respond:** If the family does not answer within 15 calendar days, the offer expires and the family is removed from the waitlist. The FAA posts a *Waitlist Removal Notice* in the MyChildCareMA portal. The notice explains what the family can do if they think a policy was not followed correctly.
- **Restoring the Waitlist Spot:** The family has a 30-day grace period from the removal date to contact the FAA to restore their spot on the waitlist.
- **Offer Expiration**: The original waitlist date can be restored during this grace period, but the original funding offer is no longer active. The family returns to the waitlist until funding becomes available again.

Starting the Process Over

If a family's case is closed and the family no longer has an active spot on the waitlist the family may start the process over.

When A Family Can Re-Apply:

- **Following Removal:** If a family is removed from the waitlist (for example, for

missing a renewal deadline) and the 30-day grace period ends, the family must start the process over by contacting Mass211.

- **Following a Denial:** If a family was previously denied because the family did not meet the eligibility rules, the family has the right to re-apply in the future if the household situation changes (for example, if the family's income decreases).
- **New Waitlist Date:** In both cases, this means the family receives a new waitlist date based on the day the new application is submitted. The previous waitlist date is not restored once the grace period passes.
- **Exceptions for Sanctions**: If the family's child care financial assistance ends due to a "Sanction" (a penalty for not following program rules), the family is not eligible to re-apply during the sanction period. The termination letter lists the date when the sanction ends and when the family is allowed to apply again.

Families with Immediate Access (Skipping the Waitlist):

Most families must join the waitlist to receive child care benefits. However, certain families are not required to join the statewide waitlist and may be eligible for Immediate Access to child care financial assistance. If a family qualifies, the Family Access Administrator (FAA) assists the family to secure immediate access.

A family may be eligible for immediate access to funding if they meet at least one of the criteria categories below:

- **Families with a Referral:** The Department of Children and Families (DCF) or the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) refers the family for child care financial assistance.
- **Sibling Rule:** If one child in the home is already receiving child care financial assistance, other eligible children in the household who need care may qualify for immediate access to funding.
- **Continuity of Care:** A family that already receives child care benefits and their situation changes (see below list), and they qualify for the income eligible child care program.
    - **Post DTA-Related Child Care:** Following year two of DTA-Transitional child care.
    - **Post DCF-Related Child Care:** Following year two of DCF-Transitional child care.
    - **Loss of a Specific Contracted Seat:** Eligibility for a program-specific contracted seat ends. For example, a parent turns 24 or a family is no longer considered homeless at the time of their yearly reauthorization.

CHAPTER 2: ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for Income Eligible Child Care Financial Assistance:

- The child must be a citizen or qualified non-citizen of the United States;
- The child must be under the age of 13 years or be under the age of 16 years if the child has a disability;
- The family with whom the child lives must reside in Massachusetts;
- The family's gross annual income must be at or below 85% of the State Median Income (SMI);
- The family must have assets under $1 million; and
- The parent(s) residing in the household must meet a part-time or full-time service need (as defined below).

Eligibility will be determined prior to initial authorization for child care financial assistance and prior to every reauthorization.

Documentation

Families must provide documentation that supports their eligibility for child care financial assistance. Supporting documentation will be collected and reviewed by Family Access Administrators (FAAs) to verify:

- Identity of the parent(s) or caregiver(s); *
- Household composition and size (the individuals who live together and are counted when determining family size). This includes the parent(s) or caregiver(s), children in their care and any dependent relative(s);
- Massachusetts residency;
- Citizenship or immigration status of each child for whom child care financial assistance is being requested; *
- Age of each child for whom child care financial assistance is being requested; *
- Total gross household income at or below 85% of the State Median Income and family assets do not exceed $1 million in value; and
- Service need for each parent or caregiver residing in the household.
- Whenever possible, a single piece of documentation may be used to verify multiple requirements (i.e., one document may confirm more than one eligibility factor), placing the least burden on families to produce documentation.

  *Refers to foundational documentation that does not change and does not need to be updated once submitted.

Once a family has responded to a Child Care Benefit Offer (formerly Funding Availability Notice), the family will have up to 30 calendar days to submit documentation necessary to verify eligibility to an FAA. Families may submit their documentation electronically or in person. To secure necessary documentation, FAAs will offer families flexible options that meet families' needs. These options will include, but not be limited to: email, fax, text, and no-contact drop-off. FAAs must process eligibility verification documentation immediately upon receipt.

Families may submit their documentation in any language. No family shall be required to provide translated documents or incur costs related to required translation. Translation services are available through EEC to support FAAs for the purpose of translating families' eligibility documentation.

If families are unable to provide all necessary eligibility verification documents within 30 days, they may qualify for a 12-week Seeking Approved Activity provisional authorization for Child Care Financial Assistance. Families must be allowed 30 calendar days to provide documentation before a 12-week Seeking Approved Activity provisional authorization is issued.

Once a family's eligibility verification documentation has been reviewed as a part of their application the applicant will complete the following forms:

- Child Care Financial Assistance Agreement
- Application and Fee Agreement (available when a child has their placement at a program completed)
- Household Composition Form
- Household Income Statement
- Voucher Agreement (only for voucher placements)

Families may be asked to sign each of these forms again, at each reauthorization and any time there is a change in household income that results in an adjustment to the family's parent fee.

Identity of Parent(s) or Caregiver(s)

At initial authorization only, the applicant parent(s) who resides in the home must provide documentation to verify their identity.

To verify identity, families must provide one (1) form of photo ID:

- US or foreign passport

- US or foreign driver's license
- Employment Authorization card
- Work ID
- School ID
- Any other ID with a photo

If no photo ID is available, families can verify identity using two (2) other forms of ID without a photo or any other document that can determine or verify identity. These include:

- US or foreign birth certificate
- Public benefits award letter
- School ID or school records
- Medical records

Expired IDs are acceptable forms of identification verification if the document is otherwise sufficient to establish a parent's identity regardless of when the document expired. If no photo ID is available, families can use two other forms of ID without a photo or any other document that can determine or verify identity.

Household Composition and Size

Household composition refers to the group of individuals living in the residence whose combined income determines the family's income eligibility and parent fee amounts, including:

- All parents or caregivers;
- All dependent children (including both applicant and non-applicant children); and
- All dependent relatives who reside in the same household.

Household composition and size will be verified through the completed application for child care financial assistance.

In addition to attesting to their household composition, families must provide documentation to verify the relationship of the parent(s) applying for child care financial assistance to each child under the age of 18, or under the age of 24 if the child(ren) is a full-time student and is financially dependent on the parent(s). A Parent under the age of 24 must also provide documentation to verify their age.

Massachusetts Residency

Child care financial assistance is only available to residents of Massachusetts. The applicant parent(s) must provide documentation to verify that they have a current Massachusetts address, such as:

- Utility bills dated within last 45 calendar days
- Mortgage statements or current lease
- Tax documents
- Housing Authority documentation (such as Section 8 Voucher)
- Car registration
- Documentation verifying homelessness (such as a shelter letter)
- Health Insurance documents

Note: Post Office Box addresses are not accepted as proof of residency.

Families must report any changes in residency. A move out of Massachusetts makes a family no longer eligible for child care financial assistance in Massachusetts.

Age of Child

For a family to be eligible for Income Eligible Child Care Financial Assistance, they must be seeking care for a child under the age of 13 years, or under the age of 16 years if the child has a disability. When a child reaches the maximum age for eligibility (turns 13 years old or a child with a disability turns 16 years old) during the school year, the child remains eligible for child care services until the end of the school year in which they reach maximum age or until the end of the current authorization, whichever comes later.

Families must provide documentation to verify the age of the child(ren) for whom child care financial assistance is requested, such as:

- Birth certificate
- Record of birth
- Passport
- Guardianship documentation
- Court documents
- Tax forms
- School records

For children between 13 to 16 years old: To be eligible for Child Care Financial

Assistance, families must submit the following documentation which is completed by an approved professional (as listed on the *Disability of Child Form*):

- *Disability of Child Form* completed by an approved professional (as listed on the Disability of Child Form)
- Letter from Care Professional: A written statement on official letterhead of the professional completing the *Disability of Child Form* providing specific information about the child's disability/special need.

Citizenship and Immigration Status of the Child

To qualify for child care financial assistance, each child for whom care is requested must be a U.S. citizen or a qualified non-citizen. Families must provide documentation to verify that the child(ren) for whom care is requested is a U.S. citizen or a qualified non-citizen, such as a birth certificate, passport, certificate of naturalization, green card or any other document that in some way indicates U.S. citizenship or qualified non-citizen status.

EEC will complete a final review before any family is denied child care financial assistance based solely on their inability to demonstrate the child's citizenship or immigration status. Parents are not required to provide proof of citizenship or immigration status for themselves.

Income

Families must have a total gross household income at or below 85% of the State Median Income (SMI) and may remain eligible for child care financial assistance if their total gross household income does not exceed 85% of the SMI.

When evaluating income eligibility, the FAA will verify the income of parents residing with the child to include the following income sources:

- Wages
- Self-employment income
- Alimony
- Lottery earnings
- Retirement income
- Unemployment benefits
- Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) / Family Medical Leave (FML)
- Workers' Compensation

- Net rental income
- Dividends or income from trusts or estates

The following income sources are not considered when calculating a family's income eligibility:

- Child support
- Income from legal guardians, foster parents, caregivers, dependent children
- Income of siblings who are not receiving child care financial assistance
- Earned income of any minor child
- Income of individuals not included in the household composition
- Income from relatives or unmarried partners that do not share a common child
- Government assistance income, including rental allowance and other rental assistance or housing stabilization funds
- Income from scholarships, grants, and loans
- Federal and state tax credits
- Restitution payment earnings
- Social Security Income, including but not limited to, survivor's benefits or SSDI
- Veterans Disability Benefits
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC)

Note: If a parent living with a child pays child support or alimony, those payments may be deducted from their income when determining eligibility.

Families must provide documentation to verify their monthly gross household income. Families may submit proof of employment income (such as paystubs, benefit checks, personal checks, or proof of tips) received within the last 26 weeks. Documents submitted do not need to be consecutive:

- 4 out of 26 weeks if weekly
- 2 out of 26 weeks if biweekly/bimonthly
- 1 out of 26 weeks if monthly

Families must provide the following applicable documentation to verify their income sources:

- Paystubs
- Benefit checks

- Benefit or award letter
- Other record of payment
- Families paid in cash or personal check shall provide proof of income
- At initial authorization by completing the Employment Verification Form (EVF form)
- At reauthorization by providing copies of submitted tax returns
- Self-employed families only need to report one month of income by completing the Self-Employment Reporting Earnings Form or submitting 1 months' worth of:
    - Pay Stubs
    - Tax Documentation
    - Service Contract
    - *Proof of receipts and expenses are not required

To reduce the number of documents a family must provide, documentation provided for the verification of a family's income should also be used to verify a family's service need of employment to the greatest extent possible.

ASSETS

Families with assets that exceed $1 million will not be eligible for financial assistance. Assets are items of value that may be converted into cash.

- **Liquid assets** include, but are not limited to, cash on hand, bank deposits, securities, lump sum payments, IRAs, and certain Keogh plans. The countable value of a liquid asset shall be its accessible cash value.
- **Nonliquid assets** are those that are not readily convertible to cash. These include land, buildings, and any real property. The countable value of a nonliquid asset shall be its equity value which is determined by fair market value less any encumbrances.

A family will attest to having assets valued at or below $1 million by signing the completed application for child care financial assistance. This does not apply to families experiencing homelessness or working with DTA and DCF.

Service Need

A family's eligibility for child care financial assistance is based in part on each parent in the household participating in a service need activity or having another qualifying need for child care services for their child(ren). Parents may meet the service need requirement by participating in one or more of the following:

- Employment:
    - Paid Employment
    - Self-Employment
    - Retirement
    - Active Deployment in Military
- Education:
    - Full-time high school program
    - Approved high school equivalency program
    - College or University Associate's or Bachelor's Program
    - College or University post-graduate Program (at reauthorization only)
- Training:
    - Approved vocational training
    - Approved ESOL program
    - Work study hours
    - Approved post-graduate professional training (at reauthorization only)
- Parental leave (Maternity/Paternity leave)
- Seeking Approved Activity
- Additional Family or Child Circumstances: The following family or child circumstances will also meet the service need requirement:
    - Parent or caregiver with a qualifying disability
        - Child with a qualifying disability; when the parent is also participating in another service need
    - A family experiencing homelessness
    - A family experiencing domestic violence
    - A parent participating in substance abuse treatment or rehabilitation

Service Need – Employment

PAID EMPLOYMENT

Families must provide documentation that reasonably establishes the parents' hours and wages of employment. To be an eligible service need activity, employment must pay at least the established minimum wage in the state in which the person works.

Families shall submit one of the following documents to confirm this service need:

- 4 weeks of wages (does not have to be consecutive) within the last 26 weeks (6 months) that are most reflective of their typical number of hours worked and income.

- An employment letter: A letter from an employer on company letterhead that includes information about the parent's paid employment, income, and hours worked.
- Employment Verification Form (EVF):
    - Used when a parent that has new employment and is unable to provide sufficient paystubs
    - Used at initial authorization when a parent is paid in cash
    - Used at initial authorization when a parent is working part-time, but will increase to full-time if they have child care
    - Note: Families that provide an employment letter or an EVF must be issued a 12-month authorization and must provide paystubs (or tax returns for cash payments) at reauthorization.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Self-employment is the earning of income directly from one's own business, trade, or profession, minus allowable expenses. To be an eligible service need activity, self-employment must pay at least the established minimum wage in the state in which they work. Families must provide documentation that includes a parent's hours and wages to verify a full-time or part-time service need of self-employment if the parent is engaged in a non-traditional work arrangement (for example, gig work like Uber or Door-Dash).

Families shall submit one of the following documents to confirm this service need:

- **Self-Employment Earnings Form:** Provided to prove self-employment as a service need, families may self-certify by providing a signed and dated Self-Employment Earnings Form that includes a description of their work and number of hours worked.
- **Paystubs:** Digital or paper copies of pay stubs that reflect number of hours worked.
- **Tax Documentation:** Current tax return, current profit and loss statement or any other documentation that reasonably establishes that the parent participates in full-time or part-time self-employment, independent contracts, gig work, or other non-traditional work arrangements.

RETIREMENT

Families with a parent(s) who is/are aged 65 or older and retired may qualify for full-time care with a service need of retirement. Families will be required to submit income information, and a parent fee may be assessed.

Families shall submit one document from each list to confirm this service need:

- Retired:
    - Retirement or pension award letter or paystubs
    - Any other document that reasonably establishes that the parent is retired
- Age 65 or older:
    - Photo ID
    - Passport
    - Birth Certificate
    - Any other document that reasonably establishes that the parent's age is 65 years or older

ACTIVE DEPLOYMENT IN MILITARY

Families with a parent or parents serving in the U.S. military, including the National Guard, who are deployed or activated for hazardous duty or in preparation for deployment will qualify for a service need of Active Deployment in Military. Families must provide a copy of military orders. Families with Active Deployment Military service need will qualify for a 12-month authorization for full-time care.

> In a two-parent household where one parent meets the criteria for active deployment military service need, the second parent does not need to have their own service need to establish eligibility. If the second parent does have another service need, it must be entered and a parent fee may be assessed if applicable.

Service Need – Education or Training

The following education or training programs may be used to establish a service need of education or training. Families will submit income information, and a parent fee may be assessed.

FULL-TIME HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

Participation in a full-time high school program will qualify as a full-time service need, regardless of the program schedule.

Families shall submit one of the following documents to verify this service need:

- Written statement from the school verifying enrollment; or
- Copy of transcript showing anticipated date of high school graduation.

APPROVED HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY PROGRAM

Eligibility for this service need is based on enrollment in a qualified high school equivalency or vocational program and the specific number of hours spent in class. Families receive 2.5 hours of service need for every 1 hour spent in the program each week. For example, if a parent attends classes for 10 hours a week, their total service need is calculated as 25 hours (10 hours x 2.5 = 25), which qualifies the family for full-time care.

Families shall submit the following documentation to verify this service need:

- A written statement from the school or program verifying enrollment and the number of hours per week.

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATE'S OR BACHELOR'S PROGRAM

An accredited college or university program leading to an associate or a bachelor's degree to continue a previously authorized education or training service need:

- Participation in at least 10 credit hours of college coursework will qualify as a full-time service need (10 credits x 2.5 hours = 25 hours). This includes participation in accelerated semester coursework that requires longer classroom hours but for a shorter length of time.
- For participation in less than 10 credit hours of college coursework, service need hours will be determined by multiplying the credit hours by 2.5.
- Participation in accelerated semester coursework for at least 8 hours but less than 10 hours per week will qualify as a part-time service need.

Families shall submit one of the following documents to verify this service need:

- Written statement from the college/university program, specifically noting the number of credits for which the student is enrolled.
- Copy of official college transcript
- Copy of e-transcript with the authentication page attached

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY POST-GRADUATE PROGRAM (AT REAUTHORIZATION ONLY)

At reauthorization only, a graduate program or advanced professional training to continue a previously authorized education or training service need:

- Participation in at least 10 credit hours of college coursework will qualify as a full-time service need (10 credits x 2.5 hours = 25 hours). This includes participation

in accelerated semester coursework that requires longer classroom hours but for a shorter length of time.
- For participation in less than 10 credit hours of college coursework, service need hours will be determined by multiplying the credit hours by 2.5.
- Participation in accelerated semester coursework for at least 8 hours but less than 10 hours per week will qualify as a part-time service need.

Families shall submit one of the following documents to confirm this service need:

- Written statement from the administration of the college/university program, specifically noting the number of credits for which the student is enrolled.
- Copy of official college transcript
- Copy of e-transcript with the authentication page attached

APPROVED TRAINING PROGRAMS

Service need hours from participation in any of the following will be calculated by multiplying the number of hours spent in the program per week by 2.5:

- Vocational Training Program
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program
- Work Study Hours
- Required Practical Internships
- Clinical Experiences (including student teaching, YouthBuild, AmeriCorps, and CommonwealthCorps)

Families shall submit the following document to confirm this service need:

- Written statement from the training program verifying enrollment and the number of hours spent in the program per week.

Service Need – Parental Leave

A family will qualify for a service need of parental leave if the parent is on temporary leave from employment, education, or training for reasons connected to the birth of a child, the placement of a child in the family, or the care of a child. Parents on parental leave at authorization/reauthorization shall be eligible for a 12-month authorization for full-time care.

This service need can be used at initial authorization or reauthorization for one parent in a household. All countable income is included in the income calculation (including Paid

Family Medical Leave benefits), and a parent fee is assessed, if applicable. If the parent reports the parental leave during a period of active authorization, this service need may remain until their reauthorization, unless they report a change (return to work or school). They may continue to be eligible for this reason at reauthorization based on their documentation.

Families shall submit the following document to confirm this service need:

- Letter from employer/educational or training program
- Letter from doctor/adoption agency
- Document showing paid medical leave
- Signed self-attestation that the parent is on parental leave

Service Need - Seeking Approved Activity

Families that are looking for work, starting a school program, or need more time to provide documentation of a service need activity may qualify for the Seeking Approved Activity service need. This is a temporary 12-week provisional authorization that provides the time for families to find and/or verify they meet service need requirements for a full 12-month authorization. Families are always given 30 calendar days to provide all documentation to qualify for a full 12-month authorization first. A provisional authorization cannot be issued, and a child care seat may not be offered to another family until this 30-day period has passed. Families may not be approved for a provisional authorization without a placement.

Family Access Administrators (FAAs) shall issue provisional authorizations to:

- Families who are Seeking an Approved Activity, or are certifying an existing activity or employment;
- Parents who have a loss of service need during a 12-month authorization period
- Families who lost, changed, or reduced the hours of their service need activity during the last 30 calendar days before reauthorization; and
- Families who need additional time to obtain documents from a health care or other professional, as may be needed by parents seeking to qualify with a service need of Parent with a Disability.

To help families start receiving child care when they may need additional time to meet service need rules, EEC uses "Presumptive Eligibility." This is a temporary status given if a family meets the following minimum requirements during the initial screening:

- Identity of the parent(s).
- Massachusetts Residency.
- Household Composition and family size.

Seeking Approved Activity cannot be used for the following reasons:

- To combine with employment of 15 hours or more.
- To expedite approval for Early Education and Care staff.
- For Parental Leave.
- For an activity or work verified to start within 30 calendar days.
- Newly self-employed

COMBINING ACTIVITIES WITH SEEKING APPROVED ACTIVITY

Seeking Approved Activity may only be combined with other service need activities when the other activities account for an average of less than 15 hours per week. Additionally, combining Seeking Approved Activity with other service need activities may only be used to grant a family a 12-week provisional authorization.

The only **exception** is parents with a service need of employment only, or a combination of employment and education and/or training equal to at least 15 hours but less than 25 hours weekly. Parents meeting this exception are eligible for a new service activity called Pathway to Full-Time Employment which will be included as part of their service need. See Service Needs Updates below.

Families will be required to submit income information, and a parent fee may be assessed. Once a parent fee is established for the authorization, it cannot increase above the established amount until the next reauthorization.

If a family provides all necessary supporting documentation during the provisional period, the CCFA authorization will continue uninterrupted.

Families who are unable to provide documentation confirming eligibility for CCFA before the end of their 12-week Seeking Approved Activity provisional authorization may qualify for one additional 12-week provisional authorization **only** if the family is able to verify a service need (such as a job or training program or school semester) will begin before the end of the second provisional period. Families may not be issued more than two 12-week Seeking Approved Activity provisional authorization periods per household, per 12-month authorization if meeting these rules.

If the family is unable to fully verify their eligibility for Child Care Financial Assistance by

the end of their provisional period, the placement will end.

If a family's placement ends due to the inability to provide all eligibility verification documentation, they may reopen their CCFA if they are able to provide all missing eligibility documentation within 30 days of the placement ending. If the family does not provide the necessary documentation within 30 calendar days from the placement end date, their Child Care Financial Assistance will end. A family requesting CCFA after a placement termination due to the failure to provide eligibility documentation would need to return to the waitlist.

Service Need - Receiving or At Risk of Receiving Protective Services

A family may meet this service need requirement if they receive or are at risk of receiving protective services. For purposes of Child Care Financial Assistance, being at risk of receiving protective services includes situations in which a parent is unable to provide child care for any portion of a 24-hour day due to domestic violence or homelessness; a physical, mental, emotional, or medical condition; or participation in a substance abuse treatment or rehabilitation program.

PARENT OR CAREGIVER WITH A QUALIFYING DISABILITY

A family with a parent(s) who is unable to participate, or whose participation in any service need is limited due to a physical, mental, emotional, or medical disability may qualify for full or part time care with a service need of Parent with a Disability. Parent with a Disability can be combined with another service need to determine amount of care. The affected parent must complete and submit to EEC a copy of EEC's Parent with a Disability application. If approved by EEC, the Parent with a Disability service need may be valid for up to three years. After three years, a parent seeking to reauthorize care with a service need of Parent with a Disability must provide new documentation establishing that the disability persists.

To confirm this service need, families shall submit the following documentation which is completed by an approved professional as listed on the Disability of Parent Form:

- Disability of Parent Form: completed by an approved professional (as listed on the Disability of Parent Form)
- Letter from Professional: A written statement on official letterhead of the professional completing the Disability of Parent Form providing specific information about the parent's disability.

All documentation received for verification of Parent with Disability must be reviewed

and approved in writing by EEC prior to qualifying as a service need.

CHILD WITH A DISABILITY

Families with a child with a documented physical or mental disability, including a physical, mental, emotional, or medical condition, may qualify for full-time care with a service need of Child with a Disability, provided:

- The parent(s) has also qualified for a part-time service need of employment, training, or education; and
- The documentation provided indicates at least a part-time need for child care services; or
- Consideration may also be made for a parent who is providing full-time care for a child with a disability, thereby necessitating care for his/her other child(ren); in such circumstances, the parent shall request a variance, in accordance with EEC policy.

To confirm this service need families must submit the following documentation which is completed by an approved professional as listed on the Disability of Child Form.

- Disability of Child Form completed by an approved professional (as listed on the Disability of Child Form)
- Letter from Professional: A written statement on official letterhead of the professional completing the Disability of Child Form providing specific information about the child's disability.

FAMILY EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Families experiencing homelessness, including families considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento definition homelessness (as defined under Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney- Vento Homeless Assistance Act (*See* 42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)), will qualify for a full-time service need in lieu of employment, education, or training. Families will not be assessed a parent fee.

The following documentation will be sufficient to verify a service need of homelessness:

- A referral from Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), an emergency shelter or other legal, medical or social service agency;
- A written referral from a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youth;
- A written referral or other supporting documentation from a Head Start Program;

- A written referral from a transitional shelter; or
- If no other documentation is available, a signed self-attestation that the family is homeless.

Verifications listed above will be valid for 90 calendar days from the date of issue.

All families experiencing homelessness will be eligible for full-time care. Family Access Administrators will communicate with a shelter or EOHLC as needed to support a family with access to child care financial assistance. Contracted early education and care providers will work directly with Shelter or EOHLC referred families to complete the eligibility process and complete the child's enrollment.

Homeless families are allowed up to 6 months to comply with the child's immunization and physical paperwork requirements. A child's Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) is required at enrollment in a program.

A family who is no longer experiencing homeless and is in the middle of an authorization can continue accessing child care financial assistance until the end of the authorization period. Families who continue to experience homelessness at the end of their authorization may be reauthorized with homelessness as a service need and must continue to meet the applicable Income Eligible Child Care Program eligibility requirements. A child's placement will not be disrupted while a new referral or voucher is being issued unless a change is requested by the family. Family Access Administrators should actively work with the family and shelter staff and/or other EOHLC staff to coordinate a smooth transition while keeping the child in care.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior used to maintain power and control over an intimate partner or family member. Families who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence may qualify for a full-time service need and full-time care, regardless of whether the parent(s) is working or attending an education or training program.

To confirm this service need families shall submit a signed self-declaration attesting to the situation of domestic violence involving the parent and/or child and one of the following documents: Court, medical, psychological, criminal, Department of Children and Families or other social service agency, school or police records;

- Documents that show that the applicant parent has obtained a restraining /abuse prevention order or has taken other legal steps related to the domestic violence;
- Documentation of seeking alternative housing, shelter or other refuge; or

- Verification of the parent's participation with domestic violence services and/or counseling services, including support groups.

Families will also be required to submit income information, and a parent fee may be assessed.

- For additional information about domestic violence, abuse prevention orders (restraining orders), and safety planning for families experiencing domestic violence, visit Domestic Violence | Mass.gov.
- For more information about services for families experiencing domestic violence, visit Domestic Violence Services | Mass.gov.

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT OR REHABILITATION

This service need is for a parent who is participating in substance use disorder treatment or rehabilitation. This service need may be used to qualify a family for a 12-month authorization for full-time care, even if the parent is not working or attending an education or training program. Families will still be required to submit income information, and a parent fee may be assessed.

Families shall submit the following document to confirm this service need:

- Self-attestation of the parent's treatment plan; and
- Written statement on professional letterhead from a certified medical authority or treatment program staff which includes the name and type of program, start and expected end date, and hours per week.

Service Need – Amount of Care

Unless otherwise stated in EEC regulations or policy, whether a family will receive full-time or part-time care is determined by the average hours per week the parent participates in the service need activities.

- Parents participating in an average of at least 20 but less than 25 hours per week in a service need activity will qualify for **part-time care**.
- Parents participating in an average of 25 hours or more per week in a service need activity will qualify for **full-time care**.

Parents participating in their service need activity for an average of at least 20 hours per week are eligible to have travel time of one hour per day added to their service need hours to account for travel to and from the location where child care services are

provided and the location of their service need activity (e.g., their workplace or school). If applicable, families participating in their service need activities for a minimum of 20 hours per week will qualify for full-time care when accounting for travel-time.

Pathway to Full-Time Employment Add-On

Pathway to Full-Time Employment allows for parents to work towards increasing their hours or finding more stable employment.

When parents are working or working in combination with education and/or training, for at least 15 hours, but less than 25 hours per week, with no other allowable service need activity, Family Access Administrators (FAAs) may add on to this service need to provide a 12-month authorization for full-time child care. If the current authorization includes *Pathway to Full-Time Employment* as a service need, this service need may not be used as a service need at the next reauthorization.

Prior to adding *Pathways to Full-time Employment*, Travel time should be offered and included if applicable.

Combining Service Need Activities

A family can combine service need activities to demonstrate a full-time or part-time service need. For example, if a parent is taking classes part-time and has a qualifying disability, the two service needs may be combined to result in a full-time service need and a 12-month authorization.

CHAPTER 3: AUTHORIZATION PERIODS

An authorization period is the length of time that a family is authorized for child care financial assistance. The standard authorization period is 12 months, and a family will generally remain eligible for the entire 12 months unless:

- The family's gross income exceeds 85% of State Median Income;
- The family experiences a cessation of their service need activity that lasts longer than 12 weeks;
- The family moves out of state;
- The family requests the closure of their case; or
- The family is found to have committed substantiated fraud or intentional program violations that invalidate prior determinations of eligibility.

Reauthorization

Reauthorization Notices are required to be provided to families 60 calendar days before the end date of the family's current authorization period to notify them that their authorization period is nearing its end. If the family has not reauthorized their child care financial assistance at least 2 weeks prior to expiration, the Family Access Administrator (FAA) must send a 2-week *Notice of Denial*. FAAs are required to send all notifications to families through at least two forms of communication, including phone, text, email, and/or postal mail. At least one of these notifications will be provided in writing.

A family may apply in-person or virtually to reauthorize their financial assistance for an additional 12-month authorization period. A family can reauthorize even if there is not a current placement, as long as the family is within the time frame to reauthorize. At every reauthorization, a family must submit documentation that verifies their income and service need.

If the family has moved since their last reauthorization, documentation verifying their Massachusetts residency will be required. If a family has not moved, verification of their address or Massachusetts residency will not be required. The family must submit documentation to add or remove a household member.

If a family needs more time to submit relevant service need eligibility documentation before the end of their current authorization period, the family may be issued a 12-week Seeking Approved Activity provisional authorization to allow care to continue while they complete the reauthorization process. Please see Seeking Approved Activity Service Need Section for more information.

Before a family's child care financial assistance can be terminated, the FAA must make two separate attempts to reach the family using different modes of communication (e.g., phone call one day, email the next day).

CHAPTER 4: CHANGE REPORTING

A family may experience changes to their living, employment, or educational situation during their authorization period. Family Access Administrators (FAAs) must inform families about their responsibility to report certain changes within 30 calendar days, including:

- Household income exceeding 85% State Median Income (SMI);
- Family contact information (including change of address or change in child custody arrangements for more than 30 total days);
- Family no longer living in Massachusetts; or

- A change or discontinuation of a parent's work, training, or education participation that is expected to last for more than 12 weeks.

If a family does not report one of these changes to the FAA within 30 calendar days, their financial assistance may be terminated.

Changes only required to be reported at reauthorization include:

- Income changes that do not exceed 85% SMI;
- Service need change or ending that is not expected to last for more than 12 weeks;
- Any time-limited absence from a parent's approved activity due to an illness or need to care for a family member;
- Any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working between regular industry work seasons;
- Any reduction in work, training, or education hours, as long as the parent is still working or attending training or education; or
- Any other end of a parent's approved activity that does not exceed 12 weeks.

While families must report all changes at reauthorization, they may choose to report a change sooner if the change benefits the family (e.g., change in family size or income).

If a parent who is authorized for part-time child care reports a change in service need that would allow full-time child care, AND wishes to change to full time care:

- A 12-month authorization shall not be shortened for anything less than the issuance of a new 12-month authorization.
- The parent must present full documentation showing their full-time service need
- Once all required documentation has been received, a new full 12-month authorization of the household will be issued.

Change reporting requirements do not apply to families who have been issued a 12-week *Seeking Approved Activity* provisional authorization. Any changes that happen during a provisional authorization must be entered if FAA approves the parent for the remainder of their 12-month authorization.

CHAPTER 5: PLACEMENT

Once a family is determined to be eligible for child care financial assistance, a placement must be determined for their child(ren). There are two types of child care financial assistance:

- **A Contracted Seat:** This is a spot at a specific child care program in your area.
- **A Voucher:** This can be used at any child care provider that accepts state child care financial assistance.

If a family is offered a seat with a specific contracted provider, they must be authorized and placed by that Family Access Administrator (FAA) within that program or at a provider affiliated with that program.

If a family is offered a voucher, the child(ren) will be placed with a provider of the family's choice. FAAs will help a family find local early education and care providers that meet the family's needs.

Families offered a voucher are not required to accept a placement or enroll with a particular early education and care provider. FAAs must ensure that families are able to choose from the full range of eligible child care settings, including:

- Licensed Family Child Care Program Providers
- Licensed Center-Based Program Providers
- Licensed School-Age Child Care Program Providers
- Licensed Head Start Program Providers
- Funded Programs, including:
    - Center-Based Funded Program Providers
    - Summer Camps Licensed by the Department of Public Health
- Informal Child Care Providers; including:
    - Informal Relative Care is provided by a relative in either the relative's or the child's home
    - Informal Non-Relative Care is provided by a non-relative to children from one family in the family's home

Early Education Staff Caring for Their Own Children

A family with a parent who is currently working at or for a licensed or funded early education and care program (center-based and FCC educators) may be able to access financial assistance for their own child(ren) or foster child(ren) to receive subsidized education and care services at the program in which they are employed, or another program that accepts child care financial assistance. This applies to households who already have child care benefits or are offered and become eligible for funding (either a contract or voucher).

EEC requires the Organization who oversees the FCC educator (i.e. CCRR or FCC System)

to be responsible for determining the following prior to submitting a request to EEC. This applies to family child care providers and their assistants in their Family Child Care home or the home in which they are employed provided that:

- The family child care provider is willing and agrees to accept Child Care Financial Assistance (contract or voucher)
- The family child care provider is willing to accept enrollment of at least two unrelated children to the provider or their household
    - This does not include informal care among relatives or neighbors or occasional babysitting
- There is enough licensing capacity to add the provider's own child(ren) without displacing another child(ren); and
- The provider follows EEC **licensing capacity and ratio rules** (606 CMR 7.03(5)(c)), including counting all children in care, **including the requested child(ren)**

Requests for Family Child Care providers to care for their own child(ren) must be sent to the EEC Subsidy Mailbox (EECSubsidyManagement@mass.gov) to determine eligibility.

CHAPTER 6: ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE

Once authorized for a 12-month authorization, the family may access care anytime during that 12-month period. For example, a family seeking summer only care may be approved and authorized in March with a placement for June. This allows for more flexibility around parent choice and continuity of care for families who transition in and out of child care based on their needs. Families will work directly with their selected provider to enroll their child(ren) and establish a schedule that meets their needs and aligns with their authorization (i.e., full- or part-time care). This requirement does not apply to the initial authorization when funding is offered for a contracted seat, which requires the child to begin the placement immediately.

Providers will be reimbursed based on the child's enrollment, which is based on authorization and placement, whether it is full or part-time. Prior to seeking reimbursement, providers must ensure families have a valid authorization, have received a child care placement, and that the authorized child is attending care.

A family may be authorized for financial assistance and enroll their child(ren) in care up to two weeks before the beginning of a new service need activity, such as a job, school, or training program, or between different service need activities (e.g., while going from school to employment). The two-week early enrollment period is included with, not in addition to, any authorization that was previously granted. For example, if a parent is

authorized for a 12-week provisional to provide documentation of new employment and wants to start child care two weeks prior to the start of their employment, the parent will have ten weeks remaining after the start of their employment to provide that documentation.

Children are expected to attend their early education and care program in accordance with the selected program's attendance policies. Providers must create policies that include how to counsel families when absences occur. Providers are required to implement methods of tracking a child's attendance, communicating with families, and maintaining these records at their program. Attendance must be recorded in accordance with the child's enrollment schedule.

Changing Providers

A family may choose to withdraw their child(ren) from their current early education and care provider at any time and enroll with a different provider. Family Access Administrators (FAAs) shall communicate with the family to understand the reasons for seeking a change and use that information to help find a program that better meets the family's needs. The family is responsible for paying all parent fees owed to the previous provider and must provide **two weeks' notice** of the withdrawal to the provider.

A family may withdraw their child(ren) from care immediately if the provider agrees to waive the two weeks' notice requirement or if the family has concerns about the health and safety of their child(ren) and files a complaint with EEC's Regional Licensing Office.

If a provider becomes aware of a parent's wish to seek child care elsewhere, the provider should inform the appropriate FAA of the parent's request to ensure the family receives assistance in locating a new placement. If the child(ren) is enrolled with a contracted provider and there are no other contracted slot placements available, the family should be referred to a Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) Agency to transition to a voucher and find a provider. FAAs will continue to assist the family until the child(ren) is enrolled with a new provider.

Care outside of Massachusetts

EEC child care financial assistance may only be used to enroll children in care with providers located within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, except in the following circumstances:

- The provider was in operation prior to March 1, 2019, and received prior approval from EEC to provide early education and care services supported by EEC

child care financial assistance outside of the Commonwealth, and maintains compliance with all EEC requirements; or

- The provider has received written approval from EEC to serve families receiving financial assistance because of:
    - A standing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Massachusetts and the state where the care will take place; and
    - The program complies with Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Reauthorization at 45 U.S.C. 9858 *et seq.* requirements including, but not limited to, background record checks; annual unannounced monitoring visits; annual health and safety trainings, emergency preparedness plans, and professional development.

Transportation Funding

Families may receive transportation services to transport their child(ren) between their early education and care provider and the family's home when both of the following are met:

- Transportation services are offered directly by the early education and care provider or coordinated by the provider through a private company or public school; and
- The family would otherwise be unable to transport their child due to geography, disability, service need schedule or lack of other transportation options.

Transportation funding may not be authorized if:

- The time required to travel from the family's home to the child's child care program or public school is more than one hour; and/or
- The family lives less than one half mile from the child's early education and care provider. Exceptions include:
    - The family has no car, there is no public transportation available, and the family's work schedule would not allow time to walk the child to care and then get to work on time;
- The child(ren) or parent has a disability that prevents them from walking or being transported by stroller, carriage, or other similar means; and
    - The child(ren) or parent has a disability that prevents transportation via personal or public transportation.

Parents must complete the *Parent Transportation Request Form* (required for Income Eligible, Parents Under 24 & Families Experiencing Homelessness).

EEC's financial assistance transportation policies are aligned with the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV), which oversees vehicle, equipment, and training regulations and requirements for the school pupil transport (7D) industry to ensure the safety of students and passengers. Providers offering their own transportation services to children with financial assistance and transportation subcontractors must meet these RMV requirements, as well as: (a) the transportation-related requirements listed in 606 CMR 7.00 and (b) the requirements listed in the "Providers with Transportation Services Receiving EEC Subsidy" on the EEC Transportation of Children in Early Childhood Programs webpage.

Absences from Care

Children receiving CCFA are expected to attend their early education and care program in accordance with the selected program's attendance policies.

- An absence is defined as any day that a child(ren) is authorized to attend an early education and care program but is not in attendance.
- **All absences must be recorded in the provider's attendance records.**

Excessive Absences

Family Access Administrators (FAAs) should contact families right away if a child has been absent from care and has not communicated with the provider. If a child has been absent for more than 30 days in a row or 45 total days during a 12-month authorization, and the family has not requested and received an *Approved Break in Care*, the absences will be considered a *Non-Approved Break in Care*. This may lead to the termination of the child's placement.

Before terminating a child's placement, the FAA must make two separate attempts to reach the family using different methods (e.g., phone call one day, email the next day). The FAA should contact the parent(s) to assess the family's situation and discuss available options. If needed, an *Approved Break in Care* may be offered before the end of the 30 consecutive days of absence.

Families must be informed that they may choose to stop using child care services (ending their placement) but still keep their CCFA benefit, as long as they continue to complete the annual reauthorization process.

Termination of a child's placement (NOT the Authorization) may occur in the following circumstances:

- **30 consecutive unexplained absences:** a two-week termination notice may be issued on the 31st day
- **45 non-attended days including unexplained absences:** a two-week termination notice may be issued on the 46th day

Approved Break in Care

Families may request an *Approved Break in Care* to pause child care services during their active financial assistance authorization for up to 90 calendar days.

Family Access Administrators (FAAs) must offer a family an *Approved Break in Care* if their child(ren) will not attend care due to an event of more than two weeks in length, including but not limited to:

- An extended illness or medical procedure;
- A break in care for the summer;
- A visit to a non-custodial parent; or
- An extended vacation.

Parent(s) have the right to opt out of an *Approved Break in Care*. An *Approved Break in Care* is available to families authorized for 12 months of Child Care Financial Assistance. Families authorized for a 12-week *Seeking Approved Activity* provisional authorization are not eligible for an *Approved Break in Care*.

The family does not continue paying their parent fee and EEC will not continue to pay for children on an *Approved Break in Care*.

Providers are not required to hold a child's seat at the program during an *Approved Break in Care*. If the seat is no longer available when the family is ready to return, the family may transfer their financial assistance to another provider of their choice. This allows the child to resume care without being placed back on EEC's income-eligible waitlist.

Families returning from an *Approved Break in Care* during their current 12-month authorization do not need to reauthorize prior to returning to care and will not need to place their name back on EEC's waitlist, unless the 12-month authorization expired during the *Approved Break in Care*.

When a Family Returns to Care

Children returning to a program after an *Approved Break in Care* will resume care with

the same CCFA authorization as utilized before the *Approved Break in Care including the same service need and income information*.

If the family reports a change, it will be entered in CCFA on the family's current authorization. These changes may or may not affect the family's authorization (*see* change reporting section).

If the family returns within 30 calendar days of the end of their authorization, they will be eligible for reauthorization and should not be placed on EEC's waitlist.

To remain eligible for CCFA, Families must ensure that they complete timely the reauthorization. Reauthorization must be completed timely even if reauthorization is required during an Approved Break in Care or while not using child care services.

CHAPTER 7: PARENT FEES

A parent fee is the amount of money paid by a family to contribute to the cost of CCFA child care services. Parent fees are based on the family's income and household size and are calculated using EEC's *Parent Fee Table*, which is updated yearly and available on EEC's website.

Parent fees are determined at authorization, reauthorization, and whenever certain changes are reported.

Once a parent fee amount is determined at authorization, the parent fee amount cannot be increased before reauthorization unless there was an error in the prior calculation. Parent fees may not be increased during a family's 12-month authorization period.

The parent fee may be decreased between authorization and reauthorization if the family's gross income decreases, if there was an error in the prior calculation, or if a family reports a change that affects the parent fee.

The Parent Fee Calculator is available to families and to Family Access Administrators (FAAs) to estimate a parent fee.

The following families shall not be assessed a parent fee:

- Families where a non-parent caregiver (e.g., a temporary or permanent legal guardian or designated caretaker) is caring for the child;
- Families referred by DCF or DTA; and
- Families experiencing homelessness.

Outside of their parent fees, families may only be charged for:

- Services that the family uses that are not offered to every child as part of the regular program day, such as transportation and optional meals;
- Optional services made available through the child care program by agreement with the family. Examples of optional services include, but are not limited to, photography, class pictures, field trips, etc.;
- Care of children who remain beyond program hours due to late pick-up by parents; and
- Bank fees resulting from checks deposited against overdrawn accounts (i.e., bounced checks).

Providers are not permitted to require an initial deposit from families

Payment of Parent Fees

Families pay their parent fees directly to their early education and care provider, in accordance with the provider's fee collection policies. Child care programs must institute their own policies on the collection of parent fees.

Families must pay their parent fee for every day that the provider is open, available for care and their child is scheduled to attend, including:

- A day when the child is absent for any reason, unless otherwise stated in EEC policy; and
- A day when the child is in attendance and the program uses a substitute child care educator who is paid for by EEC.

Parent fees will not be applied for any day the provider has an approved full or partial closure day and their child is scheduled to attend, including:

- Professional development days, in accordance with the schedule approved by EEC on an annual basis;
- Holidays, in accordance with the schedule approved by EEC on an annual basis;
- Emergency closures;
- Full or partial closure days that are not eligible for payment by EEC; and
- Days when transportation services funded by EEC are unavailable and the child is unable to get to the provider.

Educators/providers who allow parents to accrue balances in excess of the value of three weeks of parent fees may be responsible for the balance.

Parent Fee Discounts

Families authorized for part-time early education and care services will pay half of the full-day parent fee amount.

Families who receive child care financial assistance for more than one child will receive a discount as follows:

- **Youngest Child Receiving Financial Assistance:** full fee.
- **Second Youngest Child Receiving Financial Assistance:** one half of full fee.
- **Each Additional Child Receiving Financial Assistance:** one quarter of full fee.

A child whose family is receiving child care financial assistance to enroll in care on an occasional basis (i.e., summer only or school closures only) will be considered as an older sibling when determining the family's parent fee.

Parent Fee Refunds

A family may receive a parent fee refund if a grievance determination by EEC results in a re-computation of the assessed parent fee and it is determined that the family has been overcharged. In cases where a balance owed by parent is the result of a calculation error, the provider must issue a refund within 5 calendar days of notice of EEC's decision. Issued refunds shall be issued by account credit or check at the family's discretion.

CHAPTER 8: POLICY VARIANCES

A variance may be requested by a family or by a Family Access Administrator (FAA) on the family's behalf to request to be excused from a policy requirement that would otherwise be prohibitive to the family accessing or maintaining child care financial assistance. Requests for variances may be submitted in writing to the EEC General Counsel or designee. EEC shall issue final decision regarding the variance request within 14 calendar days of receiving the request. Denials of variance requests are not subject to EEC's appeals process.

The types of variances include:

- **Extraordinary circumstances** include but are not limited to death, severe illness of an immediate family member, or other family crisis that impacts the family's ability to comply with EEC financial assistance policy;
- **Extenuating circumstances** where loss of Child Care Financial Assistance would

jeopardize a child's kinship care arrangement who otherwise would be in the care and custody of the Department of Children and Families; or

- **Unforeseen catastrophic event or natural disaster**, such as flood or fire, that results in a family's immediate need for temporary assistance to stabilize the family or comply with EEC financial assistance policy.

CHAPTER 9: TERMINATION OF PLACEMENT

A termination of placement occurs when a child's enrollment with a specific early education and care provider ends. This is an operational change and is distinct from the termination of a family's 12-month Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) authorization.

Notification Requirements

In all instances of placement termination, a two-week notice is required before the final date of service to ensure a transition period for the family and the provider.

- Families must provide a minimum of two weeks' notice to both the provider and their Family Access Administrator (FAA) when choosing to terminate a placement.
- Providers must provide a two-week notice to the family and the FAA if they can no longer serve a child due to program policies, excessive absences, or violations of the provider's parent agreement.
- If EEC or the FAA terminates a placement due to a family's violation of EEC policy, the FAA will issue the required notice to both the family and the provider.

The family's 12-month CCFA authorization remains in effect for the remainder of the authorization period even if a placement ends, unless specific grounds for CCFA termination are met as outlined in the following section.

EEC will end payments to the specific provider at the end of the two-week notice period. Payments may only resume once the child has an authorized placement with a new provider.

CHAPTER 10: DENIAL AND TERMINATION OF CCFA AUTHORIZATION

As with all areas of administration of the EEC Child Care Financial Assistance Program, Family Access Administrators (FAAs) must comply with all rules and regulations when determining a family's eligibility status. FAAs must be objective and consistent when evaluating the eligibility of a family who applies for financial assistance or seeks to maintain their assistance and care services. All families must be given the opportunity to

explain their circumstances, provide additional information, and receive an explanation of the reasoning for any decision made related to the denial or termination of their application, reauthorization, or participation in the program.

All decisions must be made in accordance with EEC regulation and policy, and must ensure:

- Stability of child care arrangements;
- Family-centered processes and supportive interactions; and
- Integrity of program administration
- Fair and non-discriminatory decision making

The Child Care Financial Assistance Denial and Termination policy outlines the circumstances and procedure which may lead families to be terminated or denied CCFA. A child's suspension or expulsion from a child care program does not implicate this policy and would not result in a termination or denial of CCFA.

A family may be issued a *Notice of Denial* when they are initially applying for Child Care Financial Assistance or at reauthorization. A family may be issued a *Notice of Termination* within an authorization period. Before a family's child care financial assistance or authorization can be terminated, the FAA must make two separate attempts using different modes of communication to make contact with the family (e.g., phone call one day, email the next day).

Any time child care is denied or terminated, a notice must be provided immediately to the family.

FAA must provide notice of termination or denial at reauthorization at least 14 calendar days prior to the effective date of the CCFA termination. This notice requirement is in place to allow a family enough time to file a timely appeal, and timely request to continue CCFA care.

Denial of CCFA Authorization

EEC financial assistance may be denied based on a family not meeting the eligibility requirements:

- Exceeding income or asset limits;
- Lack of service need;
- Not a Massachusetts resident; and/or
- Insufficient documentation of eligibility.

Financial assistance may also be denied based on action or inaction by a parent that affects their eligibility:

- **Substantiated Fraud**; and/or
- Disqualification due to previous **Intentional Program Violations**.

Termination of CCFA Authorization

EEC financial assistance may be terminated based on a family no longer meeting the eligibility requirements:

- Lack of service need;
- Income exceeding 85% State Median Income (SMI); and/or
- Family no longer resides in Massachusetts.

Financial assistance may also be terminated based on action or inaction by a parent that affects their eligibility:

- Intentional Program Violation; and/or
- Substantiated Fraud.

Notice of Denial or Termination of Financial Assistance

EEC or a Family Access Administrator (FAA) will provide written notice of any action to be taken that would impact a family's application for or receipt of financial assistance.

Written notice must be provided to a family:

- Immediately following any action to a family's case that would change their eligibility status;
- Immediately if the denial is at authorization;
- At least 14 calendar days before the effective date of the denial when at reauthorization, in order for the family to be able to request continuation of their financial assistance.; or
- At least 14 calendar days before the effective date of the termination.

The written notice must include:

- A clear and plain statement of the action to be taken;
- The effective date of the action;
- An explanation of the reason(s) for the action;
- The regulation or other legal authority on which the action is based;

- Contact information to obtain further information related to the action;
- An explanation of the right to request a review;
- An explanation of the continuation of child care financial assistance pending the outcome of the review and, if necessary, Informal Hearing;
- An explanation of the request for review process and a copy of the Request for Review Form;
- The circumstances under which child care financial assistance may continue pending the outcome of a review, if applicable;
- A notice of the right to be represented by a person of their choosing, including legal counsel, during the request for review and, if needed, informal hearing process; and
- Contact information for the EEC unit that receives appeal requests.

EEC considers a notice delivered if it has been sent to the family, within the time frame outlined in EEC regulation or policy, at their last known address and via their preferred communication method, based on the contact information the family maintains with their FAA.

Request for Review of a Decision to Deny or Terminate Financial Assistance

It is the right of every family who receives a denial, termination, or disqualification notice from EEC or a Family Access Administrator (FAA) to request a review by EEC.

A family may be represented by a person of their choosing at any stage of the EEC review process, including legal counsel.

Families who wish to request a review of the termination of DCF-Related Child Care services may do so through the DCF Fair Hearing Process, in accordance with DCF regulations and policies.

Families who wish to request a review of the denial or termination of their DTA-Related Child Care referral may do so through the DTA Fair Hearing Process, in accordance with DTA regulations and policies.

Families who wish to request a review of the denial or termination of their Income Eligible child care financial assistance, including families experiencing homelessness and Parents under 24, may do so when EEC or the FAA:

- Denies the family's child care financial assistance;
- Terminates the family's child care financial assistance;

- Assesses a fee that the family believes is not in accordance with EEC regulation or policy;
- Acts or fails to act in a way that the family believes violates EEC child care financial assistance regulations or policy;
- Removes a family from the waitlist; or
- Imposes a sanction pursuant to 606 CMR 10.12.

A request for review will focus on determining whether the decision is correct based on the applicable regulations, policy and facts. The review process must also address factual disputes, new evidence and:

- Avoid personalizing whether the FAA was correct or not at that moment in time; and
- Make clear that even if correct at the moment the decision was made, further development of the facts could require changing the decision.

A family cannot request an EEC review to:

- Contest the legality of state or federal law; or
- Contest a variance request that was denied, except a denial of a variance request due to the disability of a parent/guardian.

A family may request a review for a determination of initial ineligibility at the waitlist application and/or for removal from the waitlist through the process outlined herein.

A Request for Review Form can be submitted to EEC within 30 calendar days of:

- Notice that the family's child care financial assistance is being denied or terminated; or
- An action or determination by the FAA that is adverse to the family; or
- An action or determination by the FAA that the family has violated EEC regulations or policy.

Continuation of Care Pending Review

Families who submit a *Request for Review* prior to the effective date of the termination or denial at reauthorization of financial assistance will continue to receive financial assistance until their request for review is completed, provided they:

- Take appropriate action to resolve any unpaid fee balance;
- Keep all undisputed fee payments current; and

- Ensure that the child continues to attend care in accordance with the family's authorization and the program's attendance policies.

Once the review is completed, a decision notice is issued to the family.

If the denial or termination decision is overturned, financial assistance for child care will be continued until the date stated in the decision letter, unless a new notice of termination is issued before then.

For child care financial assistance to continue beyond this date, families must seek reauthorization.

If care has already ended, the Family Access Administrator (FAA) will contact the family within two weeks from the date of the decision letter to check eligibility for the family for financial assistance.

If the denial or termination decision is upheld, care will end two weeks from the date listed in the decision letter and the parent will be given information to request a hearing.

Requests for review of a denial of financial assistance at initial authorization are not eligible to receive care pending review.

Child care financial assistance that is continued pending the outcome of a request for review or an Informal Hearing, and any unpaid fee balance, are subject to possible recoupment by EEC in cases where fraud is substantiated.

Filing a Request for an Informal Hearing

A family may appeal the outcome of the EEC Review by submitting a written request to the EEC General Counsel for an informal hearing within 14 calendar days of the date of the written decision from the EEC review. Family Access Administrators (FAAs) must inform the family of the hearing process and offer assistance in completing the request. Requests for Hearing that are not received by EEC within the 14 calendar days may result in the denial of a hearing. A Request for Hearing is available for cases of denial of a variance request due to the disability of a parent/guardian that has been upheld during the EEC Review.

Families will be notified in writing of the date, time, and place of the hearing. The notice will also describe the hearing procedure and provide the EEC contact information to obtain further information. The informal hearing will be held within 60 calendar days of EEC's receipt of the Request for Hearing. The family will be given the option of choosing

whether the hearing will be in person (either at the EEC Central Office in Boston or at an EEC Regional Office), virtual, or telephonic.

Continuation of Care Pending Informal Hearing

If the Request for Hearing form is submitted within the 14 calendar days, the family's child care financial assistance will continue pending the outcome of the appeal, provided it had been continued before the review process.

Financial assistance continued pending review or hearing will be terminated at any time during the review process or any subsequent appeals if:

- A determination is made that the sole issue is a challenge to the validity of a particular law or EEC regulation;
- A change affecting the family's eligibility for child care financial assistance occurs following the filing of the request for a review which makes the previously filed request for review moot, and the parent fails to appeal the subsequent matter within the applicable time; and/or
- The parent does not comply with the EEC requirements for continuing financial assistance pending review.

Substantiated Fraud

EEC will consider a family to have committed Substantiated Fraud if the family:

- Intentionally provides false or misleading information or documentation where EEC has substantial evidence to show it is false or misleading for the purpose of establishing or maintaining eligibility for financial assistance
- Intentionally provides false or misleading information or documentation where EEC has substantial evidence to show it is false or misleading for the purpose of increasing the level of financial assistance provided to the family;
- Intentionally conceals or withholds information for the purpose of establishing or maintaining eligibility for financial assistance, as determined by EEC; and/or
- Intentionally conceals or withholds information for the purpose of increasing the level of financial assistance, as determined by EEC.

EEC may, in its discretion, refer instances of suspected substantiated fraud to the Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI) in the Office of the State Auditor for further investigation particularly in cases where internal resources, data matches, or other verification tools are not sufficient to make a determination. Cases that have been

referred to BSI will remain open at EEC pending the outcome of the BSI investigation.

A family who is determined to have committed substantiated fraud will be disqualified from eligibility for financial assistance until any debt resulting from the substantiated fraud is repaid or for a period of 36 months from the date of termination, whichever is greater. After that time, the family is able to return to the waitlist in accordance with the income eligible program rules or obtain a referral in accordance with DCF and DTA rules.

Intentional Program Violations

EEC will find a family has committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) if EEC has reason to believe the family knowingly and intentionally:

- Made a false or misleading statement orally or in writing to obtain financial assistance to which the household was not entitled (e.g., inaccurately reporting income at eligibility, authorization or reauthorization);
- Concealed information or withheld facts to obtain services; or
- Failed to report non-temporary changes:
    - Change to income exceeding 85% state median income (SMI); or
    - Out of state change of address.
    - Family contact information
    - Changes in the Household (custody, work/training/education greater than 12 weeks)

EEC's Response to Intentional Program Violations

- **First Offense of IPV:** After determining that a family has committed an IPV, EEC will send the parent a written warning notification that subsequent offenses will result in disqualification.
- **Second Offense of IPV:** After determining that a family has committed a second IPV, EEC will notify the family that they are disqualified from eligibility for financial assistance for a period of 12 months from the date of termination.
- **Third Offense of IPV:** After determining that a family has committed a third IPV, EEC will notify the family that they are disqualified from eligibility for a period of 24 months from the date of termination.
- **Fourth or More Offense of IPV:** After determining that a family has committed a fourth or more IPV, EEC will notify the family that they are disqualified from eligibility for a period of 36 months from the date of termination.

Following the duration of the disqualification period, the family is eligible to return to the waitlist in accordance with Income Eligible Child Care Program policies or, pursuant to the applicable referral, in accordance with DTA-Related Child Care policies or DCF-Related Child Care policies.

Exemptions from Disqualification and Termination for DTA and/or DCF Referrals

The following families are exempt from termination and disqualification:

- Families with an active Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) case while the TAFDC's case remains open or through the end of their current authorization for DTA-Related child care services, whichever is later;
- Families participating in the SNAP Pathways to Work Program through the end of their current authorization; or
- A family with an active DCF referral.

If a family was subject to a disqualification period during a DTA referral period, the family is not eligible for DTA transitional care until the remaining disqualification period has ended.

If a family was subject to a disqualification period during a DCF referral, the family may receive DCF transitional care before the remaining disqualification ends. However, the remaining disqualification balance must be satisfied before a post-transitional authorization can begin.