



EEC Essentials 2.0 Training Requirements

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Effective Date: July 1, 2026

Applicability: All EEC-licensed Child Care and Funded Programs

BACKGROUND

The Federal Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) requires that all staff in Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)-licensed and funded programs who work directly with children and are counted in staff-to-child ratios be trained in specific health and safety topics. To meet this requirement, EEC has developed training packages (“EEC Essentials 2.0” and “EEC Essentials Refresher”) that provide the early-childhood and out-of-school time workforce with foundational knowledge about health, safety, and child development, thereby ensuring all educators share the same understanding of these important topics. Through this policy, EEC outlines the EEC Essentials 2.0 and EEC Essentials Refresher training requirements, the educators to whom those requirements apply, the way in which the training packages may be accessed, and the timeframe for compliance and monitoring.

AUTHORITY

- 606 CMR 7.00 sets forth the standards that support high quality early education and care programs that reflect the diversity of the Commonwealth, strengthen families, and help children learn and grow physically, socially, emotionally, and educationally. These regulations apply to all programs providing non-residential services to children younger than 14 years old outside their own homes, regardless of the care setting or the age of the children served.

- 606 CMR 7.11 authorizes the Department to mandate both the EEC Essentials 2.0 and EEC Essentials Refresher training packages for all programs, including Family Child Care, Small Group and School Age, and Large Group and School Age Child Care.
- The **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)** is the federal law that authorizes the *Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)*, which is the primary source of federal funding for EEC. CCDBG requires educators, program directors, interns, and all program staff who have direct access to children to be trained in specific health and safety topics (e.g., EEC Essentials). As part of these requirements, staff need to take the EEC Essentials 2.0 prior to working in an EEC-licensed or funded program. All staff need to take the EEC Essentials Refresher training thereafter by June 30th each year.

POLICY STATEMENT

All educators and administrators working directly with children and counting in staff-to-child ratios in EEC-licensed or funded programs must complete the EEC Essentials 2.0 training package, regardless of the frequency that they work. This includes volunteers, interns, and substitutes who are counted in ratio. In family child care (FCC) programs, the FCC licensee, certified assistants, and regular assistants must complete the training package. Providers in In-Home Non-Relative homes are required to complete the training package.

In addition, **all applicable staff** will be required to take an annual EEC Essentials Refresher training package, to be completed on or before June 30th each year¹.

The Program Administrator or FCC Licensee must have a personnel record for each program staff member that contains proof of completion of the EEC Essentials 2.0 and EEC Essentials Refresher training packages. Evidence of completion must be available for EEC licensors to review upon request.

¹ New staff who complete the EEC Essentials 2.0 training will need to take the EEC Essentials Refresher training on or before June 30th of the following year. For example, a new staff member who completes the EEC Essentials 2.0 training on 2/15/2027 must take the EEC Essentials Refresher training on or before 6/30/2028.

In programs offering transportation services, **drivers and monitors** are still required to complete the Transporting Children module yearly. This course is available independently from the packages.

Training Requirements

EEC Essentials 2.0 Training Requirements

All applicable staff must complete the appropriate EEC Essentials 2.0 training package prior to working in EEC-licensed or funded programs. There are two packages of EEC Essentials 2.0; staff must enroll and complete the applicable package according to their program type.

- All applicable staff in early childhood programs (**center-based and family child care**) must enroll in and complete the 13-course package labeled “EEC Essentials for Early Childhood 2.0.” This package should take approximately 12 hours to complete.
- All applicable **Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (ASOST)** staff² must enroll in and complete the 11-course package labeled “EEC Essentials for ASOST Programs 2.0.” This package eliminates the two infant-focused trainings and should take approximately 10 hours to complete.

EEC Essentials Refresher Training Requirements

All applicable staff must complete the appropriate EEC Essentials Refresher training package annually thereafter, on or before June 30th. There are two packages of EEC Essentials Refresher trainings; staff will enroll and complete the applicable package according to their program type.

- All applicable staff in early childhood programs (**center-based and family child care**) will enroll in and complete the two-part package labeled “EEC Essentials Refresher for Early Childhood.” This package should take approximately three hours.

² Staff members who complete the EEC Essentials for ASOST course and are later hired at a program serving infants, toddlers, or preschool-aged children must complete the EEC Essentials for Early Childhood 2.0 course before beginning employment.

- All applicable **Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (ASOST)** staff will enroll in and complete the two-part package labeled “EEC Essentials Refresher for ASOST Programs.” It eliminates the two infant-focused areas. This package should take approximately three hours.

Note that the First Aid and CPR overview training is not an approved First Aid or CPR Training Course and **will not result in First Aid or CPR certification**. This training cannot be taken in lieu of a First Aid and CPR certification. All group and school age educators will still need to complete First Aid certification within six months of employment and maintain current certification thereafter, consistent with EEC regulations and policies. Family child care licensees and certified assistants cannot care for children without current First Aid and CPR certification, in accordance with EEC policy.

Training Access

The EEC Essentials 2.0 and EEC Essentials Refresher training packages are available online on EEC’s [StrongStart Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#).

Professional Development Credit

Completion of the EEC Essentials 2.0 training package will count toward the required professional development training hours the first time it is taken.

Completion of the EEC Essentials Refresher training package will count towards the required professional development training hours the first time it is taken.

COMPLIANCE

Starting July 1, 2026, EEC licensing staff will begin monitoring to ensure that the EEC Essentials 2.0 Training requirements and annual EEC Essentials Refresher training have been completed as required by this policy. A program’s failure to ensure that each program staff member/assistant working directly with children and counting in the program’s staff-child ratio has completed the training package may result in citations of non-compliance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information can be found in the EEC Essentials Policy Advisory and the EEC Essentials FAQ at <https://www.mass.gov/guides/eecs-strongstart-online-professional-development-system>.