MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Early Education and Care

February EEC Board Meeting

February 11, 2026

Agenda

Routine Business:

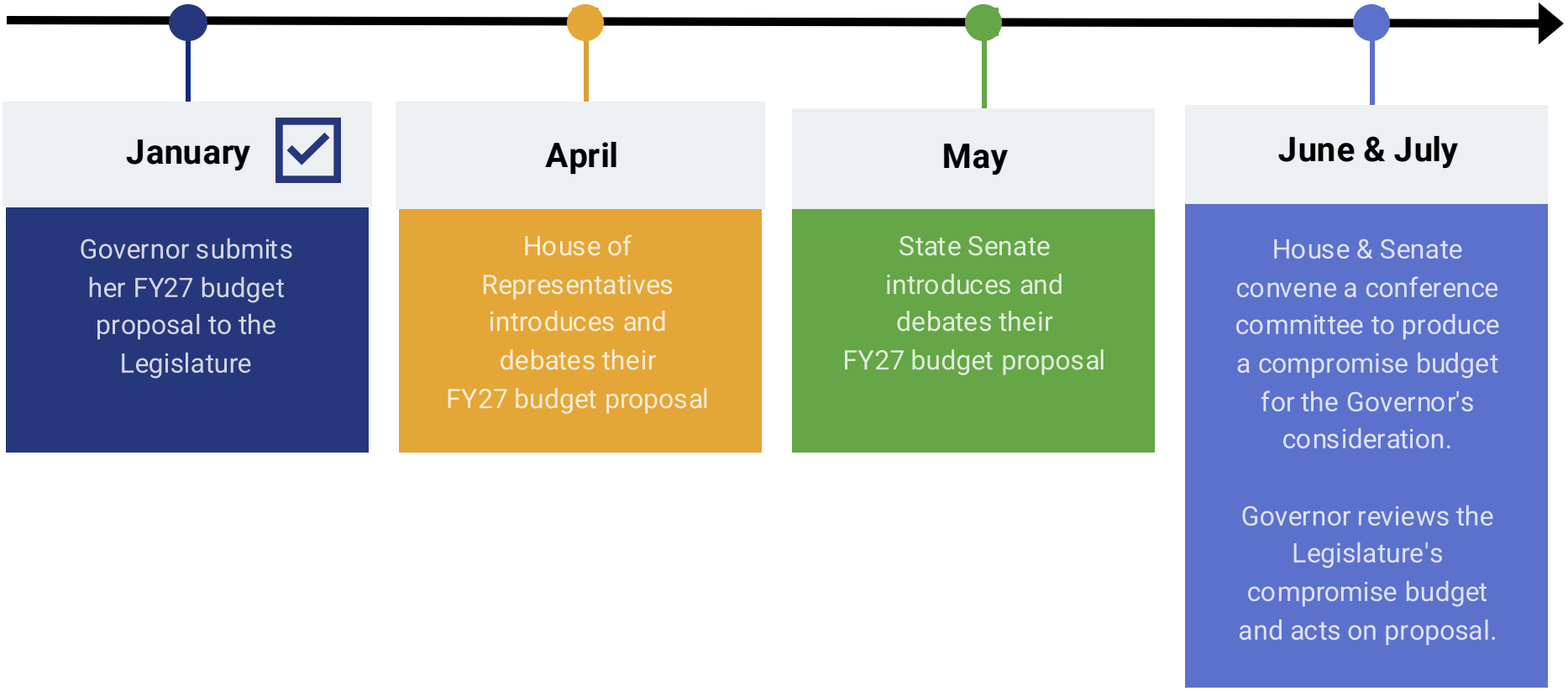
- Approval of minutes from January 14, 2026 Meeting – VOTE

Items for Discussion and Action:

- FY27 Budget Updates
- Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) FY26 Reimbursement Rate Increase – VOTE
- Education-to-Career (E2C) Research and Data Hub Overview
- EEC Research Agenda and Data Update

FY27 Budget Updates

State Budget Process



EEC FY27 H.2 Budget Proposal Highlights, Part 1

Overall, H.2 funds EEC at $1.861 billion, a $136.6 M (8%) increase from FY26.

The Governor's proposed budget significantly invests in continued progress towards the goals of the Gateway to Pre-K agenda:

Program Area	Details	Investment	Compared to FY26
Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA)	For Income Eligible and DTA/DCF related CCFA	$1.22 billion	Increase of $133 million
Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3)	Includes funding from general appropriations and Fair Share Revenue	$475 million	Level funded
Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI)	Includes money in general appropriations and Fair Share revenue; includes $5 million to maintain Summer Step Up program and $11.5 million for CPPI expansion	$36.95 million	Increase of $11.5 million for CPPI expansion

EEC FY27 H.2 Budget Proposal Highlights, Part 2

The Governor's proposed investments in EEC also include:

Program Area	Details	Investment	Compared to FY26
Quality Improvement	Licensing staff, initiatives, and supports	$48 million	Increase of $2.7 million (restores FY25 funding level)
Child Care Resource and Referral services		$20 million	Level funded
Supplemental Grants for Head Start and Early Head Start		$20 million	Level funded
Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant program		$11.7 million	Level funded
ParentChild+ program		$4.25 million	Level funded
Early Childhood Mental Health grants		$4.95 million	Decrease of $50,000
Career Pathways		$2.97 million	Decrease of $30,000

EEC FY27 H.2 Budget Proposal Overview

$1.861 billion in FY27 Governor's Proposal		
Line Item & Fair Share	**Description of Purpose and Investment**	**FY27 H.2**
Administration	Funds staff positions and six offices across the Commonwealth	13,170,519
Quality Supports	Funds monitoring and licensing activities, quality supports, coaching and technical assistance for programs and educators in the child care system, inclusive of Summer Step Up Program	48,165,758
Access Management	Funds child care resource and referral activities, as well as a statewide parent hotline	20,000,000
Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA)	Supports financial assistance for eligible children enrolled in child care, including a rate reserve and child care financial assistance waitlist remediation effort, and Early Education and Care Staff Program	1,220,827,822
Grants to Head Start	Supports grants to all Head Start programs in MA to help meet their non-federal match	20,000,000
Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI)	Funds CPPI communities across the state in an innovative funding partnership between the LEA and local child care providers, as well as funding for Summer Step Up program	36,950,000
Mental Health Consultation	Funds access to mental and behavioral health consultants for coaching and technical assistance to child care providers	4,950,000
Community and Family Engagement	Supports a network of 81 community collaboratives designed to provide parenting resources and supports to all families in every community, inclusive of Parent Child Plus programs	15,990,598
Neighborhood Villages	Funds a pilot program to provide high-quality economically-integrated infant and toddler classrooms	990,000
Higher Education- Career Pathways	Supports a targeted initiative across all the network of state community colleges to develop credit-bearing CDA course work to increase the supply of qualified educators	2,970,000
Reach Out and Read	Supports Reach Out and Read, a pediatric literacy intervention program which trains doctors, nurse practitioners, and other medical professional to incorporate evidence-based model into regular pediatric checkups	1,750,000
Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3)	Ongoing monthly payments to support operating costs for all EEC-licensed child care providers	475,000,000

EEC Budget: FY26 GAA vs. FY27 H.2 (in millions $)

GENERAL FUND LINE ITEMS

Line Item	Appropriation Name	FY26 GAA	FY27 H.2	Variance	Notes
3000-1000	Administration	11.50	13.20	1.70	Does not include $5M for scholarship and other noted earmarks from FY26; returns operational funding to FY25 levels
3000-1020	Quality Improvement	45.50	48.20	2.70	Funds licensing & other quality support staff and initiatives; returns operational funding to FY25 levels
3000-1045	C3 Grants	115.00	115.00	---	Level funded
3000-2000	Access Management	20.00	20.00	---	Level funded
3000-3060	DCF/DTA Related Child Care	448.20	597.20	149.00	Increase to sustain caseload and anticipated growth; folds in Fair Share caseload funding from FY26
3000-4060	Income-Eligible Child Care	517.60	623.60	106.00	Increase to sustain caseload; folds in Fair Share caseload funding from FY26
3000-5000	Grants to Head Start Programs	20.00	20.00	---	Level funded
3000-6025	CPPI Pre-K Initiative	5.00	4.95	(0.05)	1% Reduction
3000-6075	Mental Health Grants	5.00	4.95	(0.05)	1% Reduction
3000-7040	Title IV-E	0.52	0.52	---	Level funded
3000-7050	CFCE	11.74	11.74	---	Level funded
3000-7052	Parent-Child Plus Program	4.25	4.25	---	Level funded
3000-7055	Neighborhood Villages	1.00	0.99	(0.01)	1% Reduction
3000-7066	Career Pathways	3.00	2.97	(0.03)	1% Reduction
3000-7070	Reach Out and Read	1.75	1.75	---	Level funded
1596-2410	C3 Expansion	360.00	360.00	---	Level funded
1596-2411	Income Eligible Waitlist Remediation	10.70	---	(10.70)	Included in 3000-4060
1596-2412	CPPI Pre-K Initiative	15.50	32.00	16.50	Includes Summer Step Up program and funding for CPPI expansion
1596-2452	Child Care Supports	83.00	---	(83.00)	Included in 3000-3060 and 3000-4060
1596-2511	EEC Capacity Building	45.50	---	(45.50)	One-time FY25 Fair Share Supplemental Budget; rates and caseload support included in FY27 3000-3060 and 3000-4060
	TOTAL	**1,724.76**	**1,861.32**	**136.56**	

Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) FY26 Reimbursement Rate Increase

Child Care Financial Assistance Rates

EEC reimburses early education and out-of-school time programs that serve families receiving EEC child care financial assistance with a daily per child reimbursement rate.

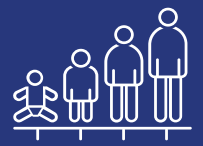
These rates subsidize costs and provide purchasing power for families receiving child care financial assistance.

EEC's daily reimbursement rate for child care financial assistance is based on multiple factors including:

- **Program Type**



- **Child's Age**



- **Location of Care**



- **Type of Care**



Enabling Language for FY26 Rate Increase: FY25 Fair Share Supplemental Budget (H4227)

For this fiscal year, $20 million was appropriated through a "Fair Share" Supplemental Budget to be used to increase CCFA reimbursement rates for both centers and family child care. The line-item included the following language to direct expenditures:

1596-2511: “ … provided further, that not less than **$20,000,000 shall be expended for a reimbursement rate increase for subsidized early education center-based and family child care providers** in the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2026 … ”



FY26 CCFA Rate Increase: Components

Across-the-Board (ATB) Increase

ATB adjustments apply a standard percent increase across all rate types for all CCFA providers.

Benefits:

- All rates get an increase, recognizing the increase in costs facing all programs.

Constraints:

- Resources are spread out evenly and do not target rates for cost of care or tuition prices.
- The nominal degree of increase is greater for rates that are already higher.

Cost-of-Care Focused Increases

Focused adjustments apply increases based on the cost of care with consideration to tuition prices.

Benefits:

- Data-driven strategy that focuses resources on rates furthest from the cost of care.

Constraints:

- Limited funding requires prioritizing certain rates to get an additional adjustment above the ATB.

FY26 Center-based Rates (Proposed)

ACROSS-THE-BOARD INCREASE + FOCUSED COST-OF-CARE ADJUSTMENTS

- All rates receive an 0.5% (on average $0.40 per day) ATB increase.
- Additional cost-of-care adjustments are focused on preschool rates that have fallen below the cost of care and the Northeast toddler rate to bring it closer to median tuition prices.
- Adjustments recognize recent investments in infant and toddler rates and important market dynamics such as “smoothing” tuition prices across ages to offset the cost to provide infant and toddler care for programs and families.

	Center-Based Rates			
Region	**Infant**	**Toddler**	**Preschool**	**School Age**
Western, Central, and Southeast	$105.53 (+$0.53)	$82.91 (+$0.41)	**$58.78 (+$0.69)**	$49.94 (+$0.25)
Northeast	$110.80 (+$0.55)	**$86.96 (+$0.99)**	**$62.38 (+$3.29)**	$51.64 (+$0.26)
Metro and Metro Boston	$121.92 (+$0.61)	$110.64 (+$0.55)	$81.74 (+$0.41)	$53.07 (+$0.26)

Note: Rates highlighted in gold receive cost of care adjustments. All figures in the table include the ATB increase.

FY26 FCC Rates (Proposed)

ACROSS-THE-BOARD INCREASE + FOCUSED COST-OF-CARE ADJUSTMENTS

- All rates receive an 0.5% ($0.40 average) ATB increase.
- Additional cost-of-care adjustments are focused on FCC Over Age 2 rates that are furthest from the cost of care and the Northeast Under Age 2 rate to bring it more in line with similar cost regions.
- Finite resources limit the extent to which the gap between Over and Under Age 2 rates can be closed.

	Family Child Care Rates	
Region	**Under Age 2**	**Over Age 2**
Western, Central, and Southeast	$59.33 (+$0.30)	$49.64 (+$0.25)
Northeast	**$59.94 (+$0.91)**	**$50.01 (+$0.86)**
Metro and Metro Boston	$88.98 (+$0.44)	**$57.43 (+$1.27)**

Note: Rates highlighted in orange receive cost of care adjustments. All figures in the table include the ATB increase.
Pursuant to G.L. c. 15D, § 17(g) and the CBA between Local 509 SEIU and EEC, the rate structure for family child care providers is subject to negotiation.

Proposed FY26 CCFA Rate Increases

Center-based Infant

Region	FY25 Rate	FY26 Proposed Rate	YOY Change FY25-FY26
Western	$105.00	$105.53	0.5%
Central	$105.00	$105.53	0.5%
Northeast	$110.25	$110.80	0.5%
Metro	$121.31	$121.92	0.5%
Southeast	$105.00	$105.53	0.5%
Metro Boston	$121.31	$121.92	0.5%

Center-based Toddler

FY25 Rate	FY26 Proposed Rate	YOY Change FY25-FY26
$82.50	$82.91	0.5%
$82.50	$82.91	0.5%
$85.97	$86.96	1.2%
$110.09	$110.64	0.5%
$82.50	$82.91	0.5%
$110.09	$110.64	0.5%

Center-based Preschool

FY25 Rate	FY26 Proposed Rate	YOY Change FY25-FY26
$58.09	$58.78	1.2%
$58.09	$58.78	1.2%
$59.09	$62.38	5.6%
$81.33	$81.74	0.5%
$58.09	$58.78	1.2%
$81.33	$81.74	0.5%

Center-based School-Age

Region	FY25 Rate	FY26 Proposed Rate	YOY Change FY25-FY26
Western	$49.69	$49.94	0.5%
Central	$49.69	$49.94	0.5%
Northeast	$51.38	$51.64	0.5%
Metro	$52.81	$53.07	0.5%
Southeast	$49.69	$49.94	0.5%
Metro Boston	$52.81	$53.07	0.5%

FCC Under Age 2

FY25 Rate	FY26 Proposed Rate	YOY Change FY25-FY26
$59.03	$59.33	0.5%
$59.03	$59.33	0.5%
$59.03	$59.94	1.5%
$88.54	$88.98	0.5%
$59.03	$59.33	0.5%
$88.54	$88.98	0.5%

FCC Over Age 2

FY25 Rate	FY26 Proposed Rate	YOY Change FY25-FY26
$49.39	$49.64	0.5%
$49.39	$49.64	0.5%
$49.15	$50.01	1.7%
$56.16	$57.43	2.3%
$49.39	$49.64	0.5%
$56.16	$57.43	2.3%

*Above are the daily rates, they do not include administrative payments for contracted providers and FCC Systems.

Child Care Financial Assistance (Subsidy) Rate Increase Proposal - VOTE

To comply with FY26 line-item language and federal rate reimbursement, and to continue much needed support and financial stability to early education and care providers across the state, the Board of Early Education and Care hereby directs the Department to implement the FY26 rate increase for providers of subsidized early education and care as follows:

- Implementing an "across the board" Cost of Living Adjustment ("COLA") of 0.5% for all Center-Based programs.
- Implementing a targeted increase to Center-Based rates to the preschool rates in the Northeast and Western Central and Southeast regions, where rates are farthest from the cost of care.
- Implementing a targeted increase to Center-Based rates to the toddler rates in the Northeast region to bring rates closer to average tuition prices.
- Implementing an "across the board" COLA of 0.5% for all Family Child Care providers.*
- Implementing a targeted increase to Family Child Care rates to the Over Age 2 rate in the Metro and Metro Boston regions, where rates are farthest from the cost of care.*
- Implementing a targeted increase to Family Child Care rates to the Under Age 2 rate in the Northeast region to recognize the cost of care relative to other regions.*

All rate increases will be retroactive to July 1, 2025.

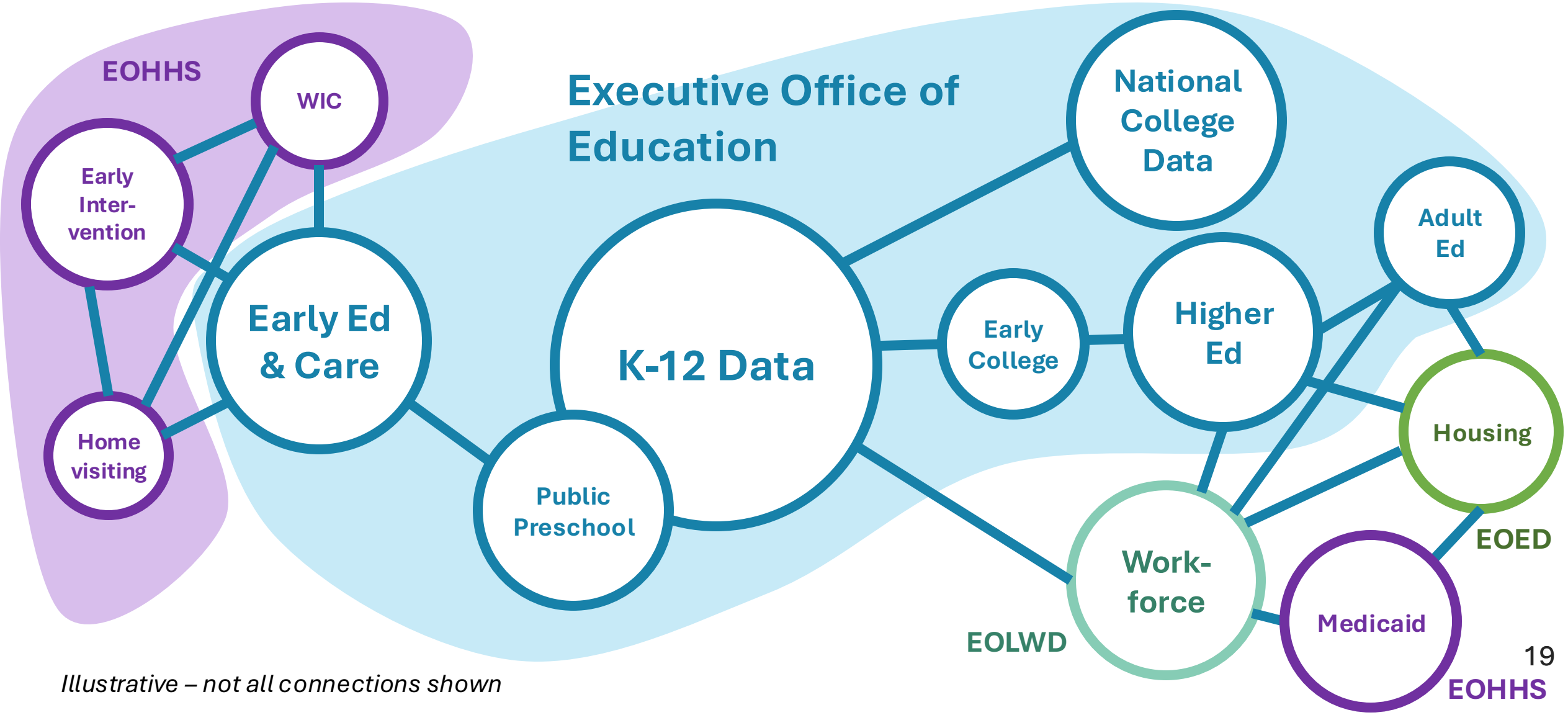
Vote: The Board of Early Education and Care hereby approves the Department's recommendations for implementing FY26 child care financial assistance rate increases.

*Pursuant to G.L. c. 15D, § 17(g) and the CBA between Local 509 SEIU and EEC, the rate structure for family child care providers is subject to negotiation.

Education-to-Career (E2C) Research and Data Hub Overview

Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub Overview

Massachusetts is recognized for longitudinal data

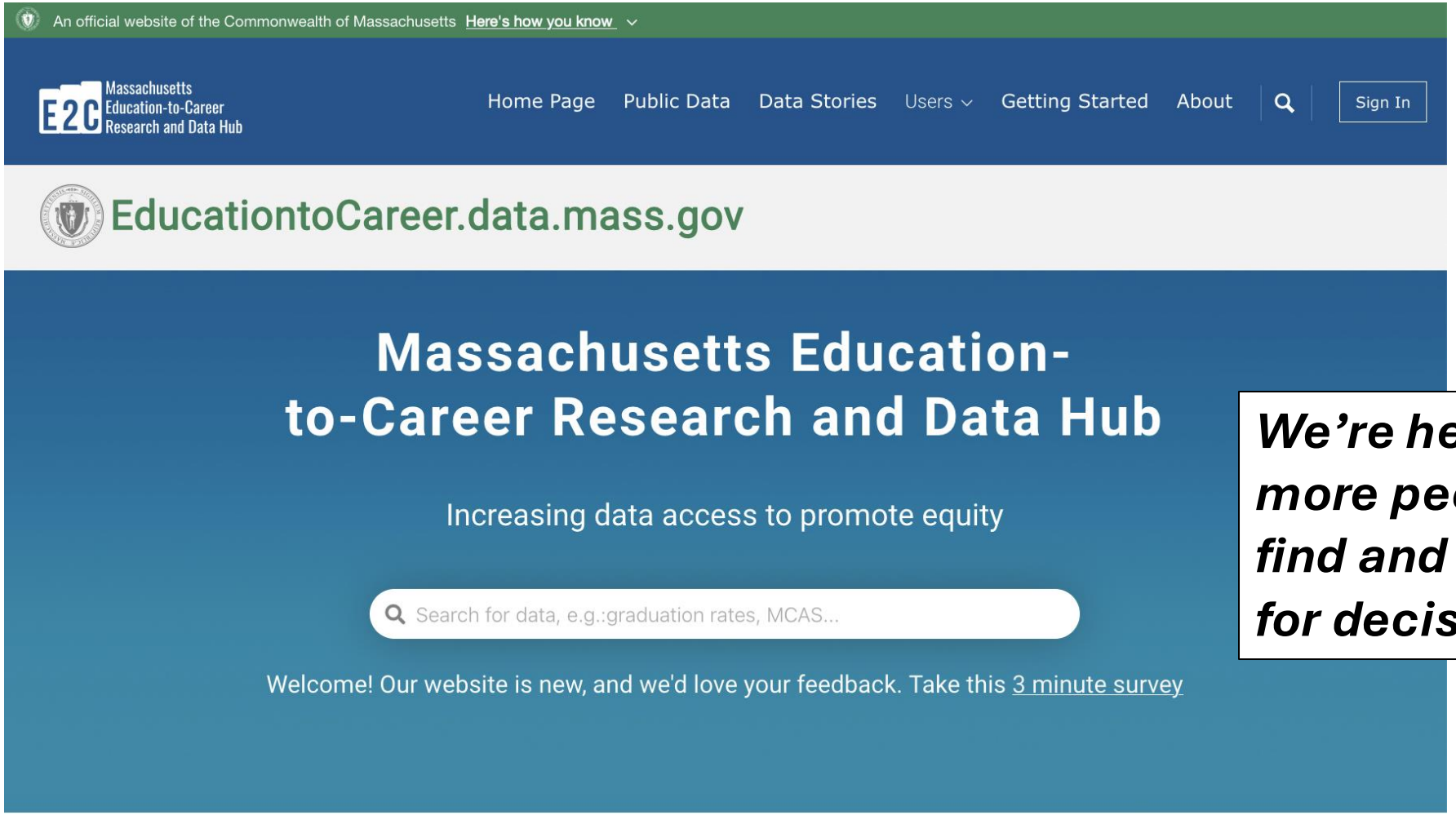


Illustrative – not all connections shown

The Education-to-Career (E2C) Hub connects data across agencies



The E2C Hub can be your front door for data



We're helping more people to find and use data for decision-making

E2C vision and strategic priorities

Vision

Data and research from early education through career are **easy to access, well understood**, and **used to inform equitable policy, practice, and individual education choices.**

Promote **shared ownership of cross-agency data** and research to inform policy

Grow the number of **high-quality research projects** using longitudinal data related to policy questions

Put data and research **in the hands of students, families, educators** and local leaders

Build on data modernization to **redesign processes and build staff capacity** with new tools

Datasets in the E2C Hub

Over **70** multi-year datasets available for download including:

PK-12
- Enrollment
- Attendance
- Course completion
- Class size
- Pathways and programs
- Special education programs
- Student discipline
- MCAS achievement
- Graduation rates
- Plans of high school graduates
- College and career outcomes
- School and district finances
- Chapter 70

Early Childhood
- Funded and licensed child care programs
- C3 grant awards
- Educator workforce and wages

Higher Education
- Public higher ed enrollment
- Retention
- Awards conferred
- Tuition and Fees

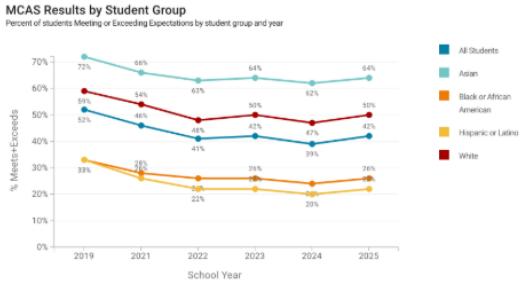
Educators
- Education preparation programs
- Retention and new hires
- Licensure
- Experience

Data Stories and Trends

MCAS Data Trends

UPDATED SEPT. 29, 2025 — This interactive chart helps you explore trends in MCAS achievement by school and district since 2017. View results by student group, or use companion charts to compare results across schools, subjects, and test grades.

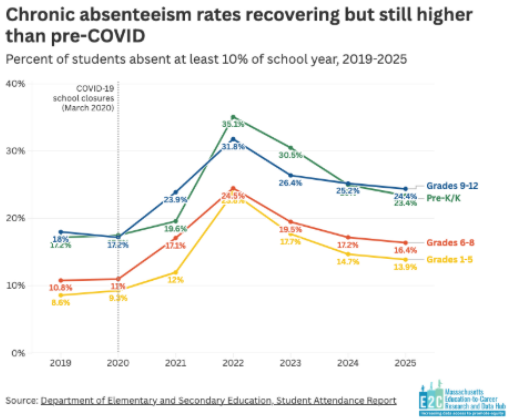
Explore MCAS Data Trends →



Reducing chronic absenteeism in our schools

UPDATED SEPT. 19, 2025 — This data story examines the scope of chronic absenteeism in Massachusetts, how it affects student success, and evidence-based strategies to improve student attendance. Interactive charts break down chronic absenteeism by grade span, student group, and trends by district and school. The story also highlights an example of interventions that are working to reduce chronic absenteeism in the Lowell Public Schools.

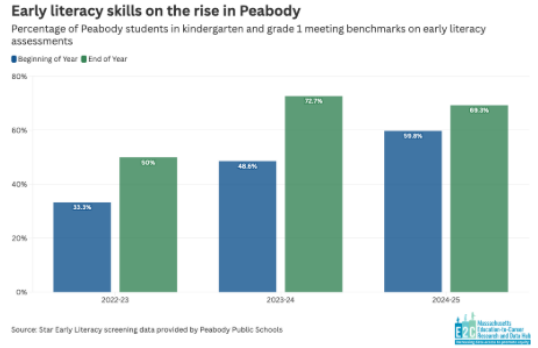
Read the data story on chronic absenteeism →



Screening for success in early literacy

AUG. 5, 2025 — Nearly half (45%) of students struggle with reading at least once in grades K-3, but with help they can catch up. This data story spotlights the importance of early literacy and what Massachusetts is doing to support it, highlighting preliminary insights from early literacy screening data shared by districts with the state.

Explore early literacy education in Massachusetts →



Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)

OCT. 18, 2023 — This report describes the first-ever initiative in Massachusetts to link participation across state programs serving children birth-to-five and demonstrates its power in producing significant insights, especially related to equity. Charts explore the demographics of children served by WIC, Early Intervention, public preschool, and other programs, showing where they overlap and potential gaps.

Read about ECIDS →





Partnering with EEC

Downloadable EEC Data Sets

- Regularly updated data on access, capacity, program stability, EEC workforce
- E2C Hub hosts full datasets for export, analysis

EEC Data Systems and Governance

- Creating more standardized, ready-to-use datasets

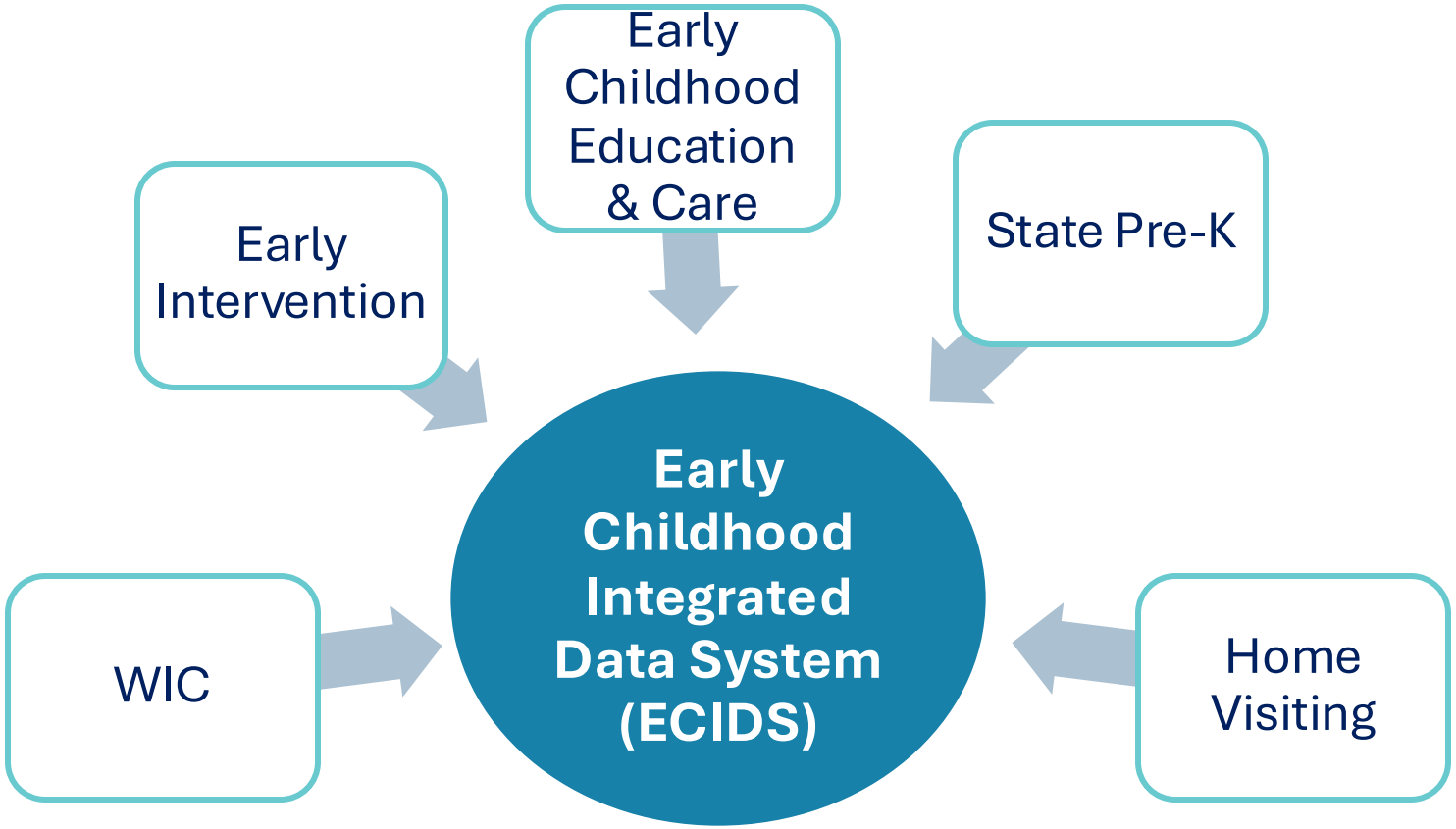
Agency Research Agendas

- Identifying opportunities for and supporting key cross-agency analyses, including linking EEC and DESE data (where possible) to look at outcomes over time

Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)

- Links participation across state programs serving children birth-to-five

Data Integration – Promise and Challenges



Promise

*"Provide valuable **insights to inform and improve the administration** and **impact** of programs serving young children and their families, through **[integrated] data** about **program participation and academic outcomes"***

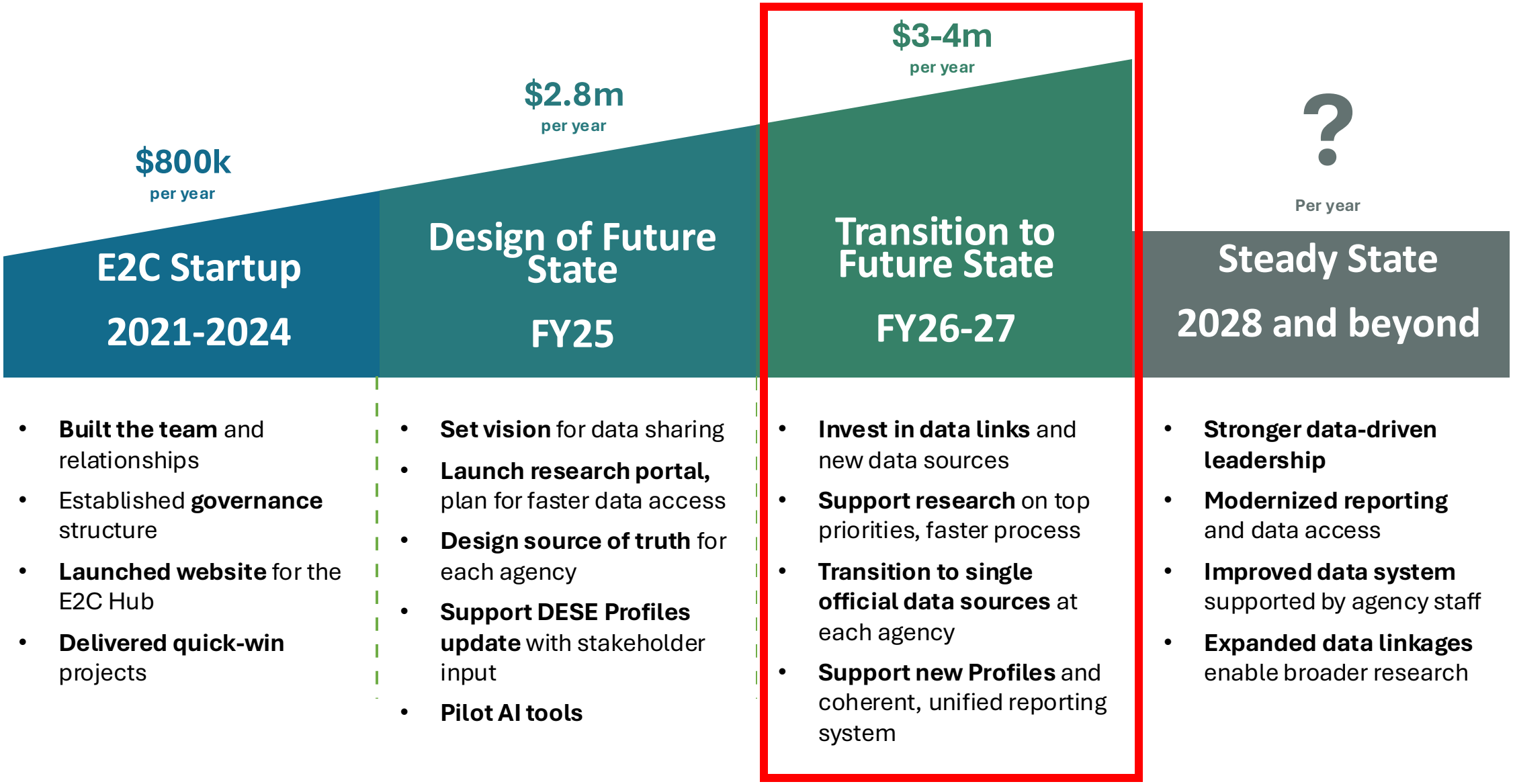
Reality

- Difficult to access integrated data
- Cross-agency collaboration is time consuming
- Hard to evaluate impact

Future

- **Easier, self-service** integrated data for agencies
- **New integrations** such as EEC workforce to earnings data

Capital funding supports transition to future operating state



- **Built the team** and relationships
- Established **governance** structure
- **Launched website** for the E2C Hub
- **Delivered quick-win** projects

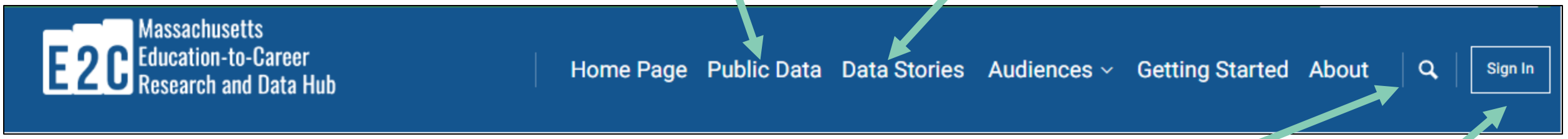
- **Set vision** for data sharing
- **Launch research portal,** plan for faster data access
- **Design source of truth** for each agency
- **Support DESE Profiles update** with stakeholder input
- **Pilot AI tools**

- **Invest in data links** and new data sources
- **Support research** on top priorities, faster process
- **Transition to single official data sources** at each agency
- **Support new Profiles** and coherent, unified reporting system

- **Stronger data-driven leadership**
- **Modernized reporting** and data access
- **Improved data system** supported by agency staff
- **Expanded data linkages** enable broader research

Curious about more data?

The E2C Hub website has more **Public Data** and **Data Stories**



Have specific data in mind? Use a keyword in the **search bar**

Sign in with a free account to create and save customized data visuals

Research Agenda and Data Update

EEC's Research Agenda

To support a culture of data driven decision making, EEC has been building, enhancing, and refining an agency research agenda and infrastructure and building data analytic capacity.

Evidence-led

Designed to compliment our KPIs and to support additional research and evidence that is needed to inform decision-making and program design.

Collaborative

Research questions are developed in partnership with EEC staff and external stakeholders and are aligned with EEC's strategic action plan.



Responsive

The research agenda is a living document that is responsive to the agency's priorities and the evolving needs of the field and policy context.

Quality Improvement

Promote continuous learning and research and data informed policy decisions.

Read the research agenda here.

Research and Data Strategy



Identifying Key Questions and Data Needed to Understand the Landscape and Inform Policy Decisions
Articulate key research priorities and build capacity to answer questions of interest through external research partnerships and additional data collection.



Expanding Public Access to EEC Research, Data, and Analyses
Ensure that EEC data, analyses, and research findings are easily accessible by supporting the development of public-facing research reports, data briefs, and dashboards.



Improving Data Quality
Ensure that the data collected are as accurate and complete as possible by partnering with internal teams on data collection processes and IT system advancements.

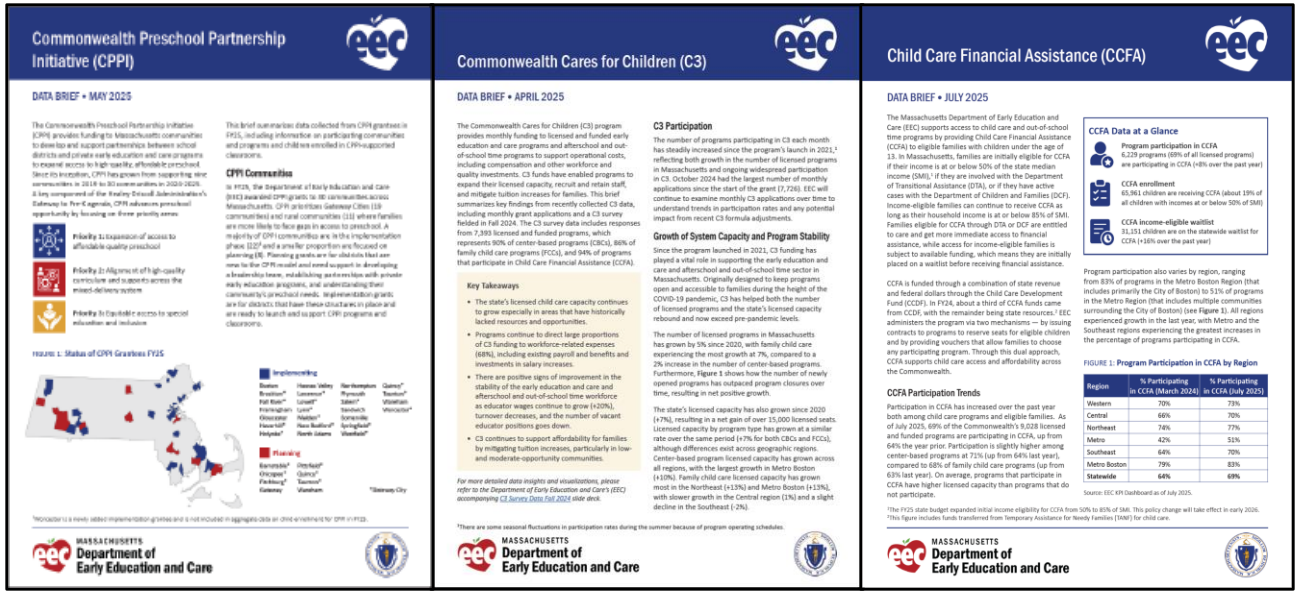


Streamlining Data Collection
Make sure that necessary data are collected to inform key policy decisions and provide services and supports for families, educators, and programs, while minimizing burden and redundancy.

EEC Research Accomplishments

Accomplishments in 2025

- Published three data briefs on CCFA, C3, and CPPI
- Streamlined and standardized C3 survey and application questions
- Supported internal projects including cost research to inform FY26 CCFA rate increase proposal, streamlining and automating CFCE grantee data collection, and Career Pathways student survey
- Engaged in 10 external research projects focused on topics including family needs and preferences, child care financial assistance, apprenticeships, higher education supports, and the cost of care



Published data briefs available here.

Research Project Highlights

Abt Global

- Conducted a survey of student experiences in EEC's Career Pathways program, which provides funding to Massachusetts' 15 community colleges to help early educators earn college degrees and other professional credentials.
- Evaluated the implementation and impact of the ECSO initiative, a public-private partnership between EEC and New Profit, to support early childhood program leaders to ensure high-quality services for children.

Boston University School of Social Work

- Evaluating how CCFA contract expectations affect the availability and quality of care through surveys, administrative data, and provider interviews over the next 4 years.
- Analyzed EEC administrative data to study the extent to which increases to CCFA reimbursement rates affect provider participation and family access.
- Collected qualitative data that is informing a change to the CCFA orientation process and to examine the extent to which it influences provider participation in CCFA.

Child Trends

- Analyzed EEC administrative data and conducted interviews with key stakeholders including families, family access administrators, and other states to understand experiences and opportunities to improve and simplify the CCFA family fee scale.
- Developed resources and analytic tools to inform future adjustments to the CCFA family fee scale.

MEF Associates & Tufts Interdisciplinary Evaluation Research (TIER)

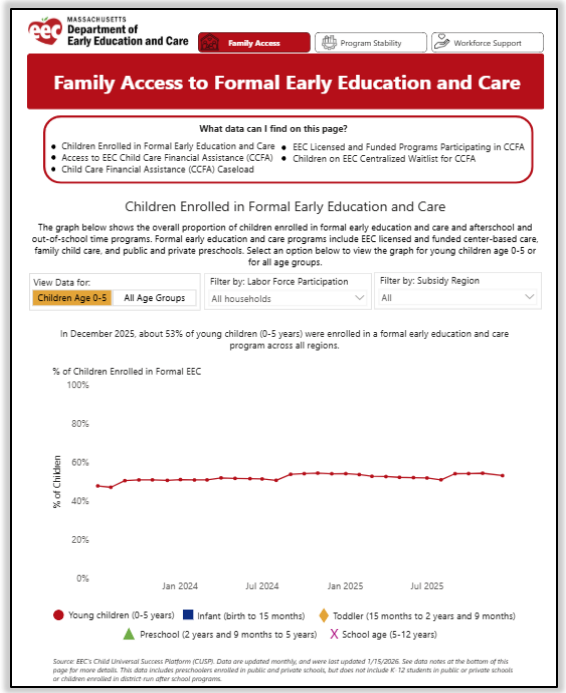
- Through statewide survey and interviews, examined experiences of educators and staff who received priority access to CCFA through the Early Education and Care Staff Pilot.

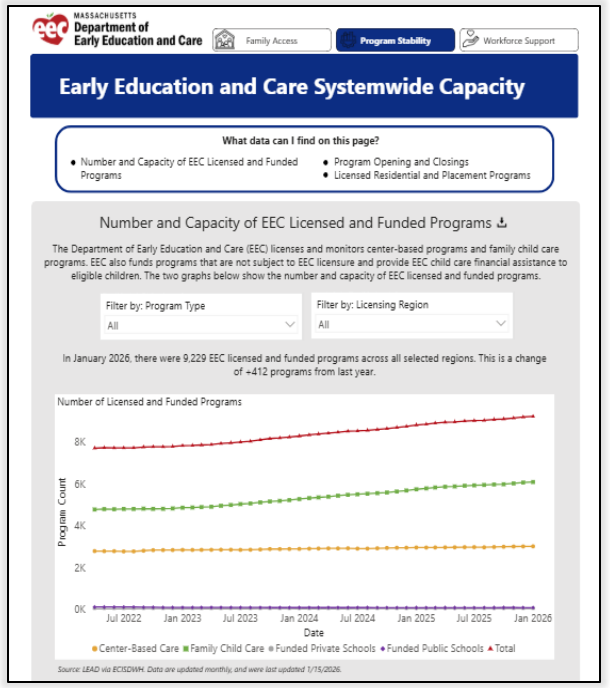
Mathematica

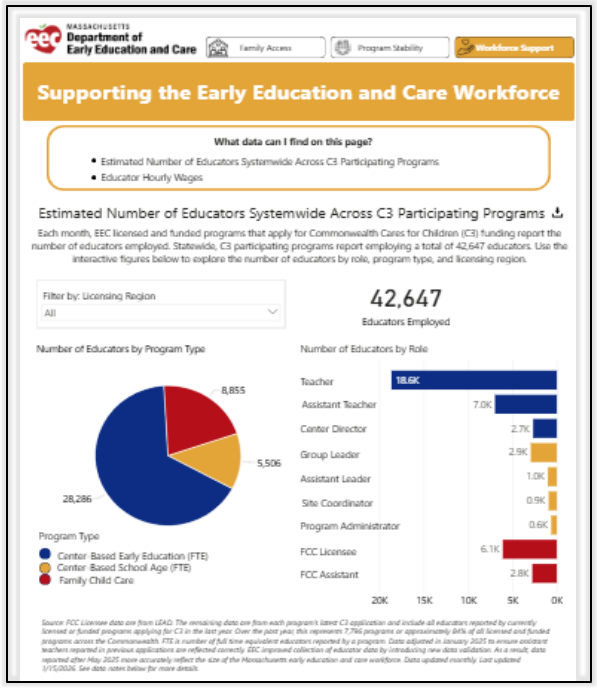
- Evaluated the implementation and initial outcomes of Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the Commonwealth's early education sector to develop an evidence base that will support the ongoing expansion of workforce development pathways.

EEC Data Accomplishments

- The expanded research capacity works hand in hand with our data analytics team.
  - EEC has worked to improve our public-facing data to make it more accessible and easier to navigate.
  - Added functionality so internal and external users can download data and answer key questions (e.g. CCFA Caseloads, C3 Funding, Child Care Capacity)







Data Advisory Commission

Established and convened to inform research and data priorities

- New Commission enacted as part of FY25 state budget with representation from policy, advocacy, and direct service associations and organizations
- Focus includes (and is not limited) to:
  - Identify, analyze and make recommendations on high-impact, cost-effective data strategies for assessing the needs of families and children to ... strengthen the department's capacity to use data to inform strategic resource allocation and implementation decisions.
  - Make recommendations to improve the use of state, provider and program-level data related to the cost, quality and utilization of early education and care services
- Met three times in 2025
  - Reviewed and advised on research and data priorities, data systems, and metrics to track progress of the 2026-2030 EEC Strategic Action Plan
  - Annual report is in development

Learn more about the Data Advisory Commission.

Research Priorities by Strategic Areas of Focus

Family Access and Affordability

- Understanding and tracking child care supply, access gaps, and affordability
- Studying investments and strategies to expand access to early education and care and support families
- Measuring the impact of CCFA reforms and rate adjustments over time

Program Stability

- Evaluating existing EEC strategies to support program stability
- Exploring strategies to promote financial and operational stability

Program Quality

- Understanding current program practices and quality improvement efforts to shape existing and future EEC supports for programs.
- Assessing impact of existing EEC supports on leadership and educator support, curriculum, and assessment implementation, classroom interactions and family engagement

Workforce Support

- Understanding who is in the workforce and common entry points, experiences, and pathways
- Examining rates, patterns, and contributors to workforce mobility, turnover, and attrition
- Evaluating how different workforce strategies, supports, and investments support recruitment, retention, advancement, and educator well-being

Next Steps



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

- Continue ongoing research and pursue opportunities for new research partnerships that are aligned with EEC research agenda priorities



Expanding Public Access to EEC Research, Data, and Analyses

- Develop additional data briefs and products
- Expand current EEC data dashboards and provide easy access to underlying data
- Share research findings and data tools with a variety of stakeholders



Improving Data Quality

- Make incremental refinements to existing data systems and collection processes
- Improve data quality and consistency via ongoing technology modernization efforts



Streamlining Data Collection

- Identify opportunities to reduce burden, while ensuring that EEC has data needed to assess system needs, understand program and policy effectiveness, and comply with reporting requirements

Thank you!

View Agency KPI Dashboards (updated monthly) here.

Next Meeting: March 11, 2026 (EEC's Metro Boston Regional Office, Quincy, MA)