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Quality Progress Report (QPR)
For
Massachusetts
FFY 2024

QPR Status: Accepted as of 2025-03-28 19:54:33 GMT

The Quality Progress Report (QPR) collects information from states and territories (hereafter referred to as lead agencies) to describe investments to improve the quality of care available for children from birth to age 13. This report meets the requirements in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 for lead agencies to submit an annual report that describes how quality funds were expended, including the activities funded and the measures used to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services.

For purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions of applicable laws printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text. The lead agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to the applicable laws regardless of these modifications.

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

The Quality Progress Report (QPR) collects information from lead agencies to describe investments to improve the quality of care available for children from birth to age 13. This report meets the requirements in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 for lead agencies to submit an annual report that describes how quality funds were expended, including the activities funded and the measures used to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services. Lead agencies are also required to report on their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) quality improvement investments through the CCDF Plan, which collects information on the proposed quality activities for a three-year period; and through the ACF-696, which collects quarterly expenditure data on quality activities.

The annual data provided by the QPR will be used to describe how lead agencies are spending a significant investment per year to key stakeholders, including Congress, federal, state and territory administrators, providers, parents, and the public.

Specifically, this report will be used to:

- Ensure accountability and transparency for the use of CCDF quality funds, including a set-aside for quality infant and toddler care and activities funded by American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act
- Track progress toward meeting state- and territory-set indicators and benchmarks for improvement of child care quality based on goals and activities described in CCDF Plans; and
- Understand efforts in progress towards all child care settings meeting the developmental needs of children
- Inform federal technical assistance efforts and decisions regarding strategic use of quality funds.

What Period Must Be Included: All sections of this report cover the federal fiscal year activities (October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024), unless otherwise stated. Data should reflect the cumulative totals for the fiscal year being reported, unless otherwise stated.

What Data Should Lead Agencies Use: Lead agencies may use data collected by other government and nongovernment agencies (e.g., CCR&R agencies or other TA providers) in addition to their own data as appropriate. We recognize that lead agencies may not have all of the data requested initially but expect progress towards increased data capacity. The scope of this report covers quality improvement activities funded at least in part by CCDF in support of CCDF activities. Lead agencies must describe their progress in meeting their stated goals for improving the quality of child care as reported in their FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

How is the QPR Organized?

The first section of the QPR gathers basic data on the population of providers in the state or territory and goals for quality improvement and glossary of relevant terms. The rest of the report is organized according to the ten authorized uses of quality funds specified in the CCDBG Act of 2014:

1) Support the training and professional development of the child care workforce
2) Improve the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines
3) Develop, implement, or enhance a quality rating improvement system for child care providers
4) Improve the supply and quality of child care for infants and toddlers
5) Establish or expand a lead agency wide system of child care resource and referral services
6) Support compliance with lead agency requirements for licensing, inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety
7) Evaluate the quality of child care programs in the state or territory, including how programs positively impact children
8) Support providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation
9) Support the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development
10) Other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry.

The Office of Child Care (OCC) recognizes that quality funds may have been used to address the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. These activities should be reflected in the relevant sections of the QPR.

When is the QPR Due to ACF?

The QPR will be due to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) by the designated lead agency no later than December 31, 2024.

Glossary of Terms

The following terms are used throughout the QPR. These definitions can also be found in section 98.2 in the CCDBG Act of 2014. For any term not defined, please use the lead agency definition of terms to complete the QPR.

Center-based child care provider means a provider licensed or otherwise authorized to provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a non-residential setting, unless in

care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work. Associated terms include "child care centers" and "center-based programs."

Director means a person who has primary responsibility for the daily operations and management for a child care provider, which may include a family child care provider, and which may serve children from birth to kindergarten entry and children in school-age child care.

Family child care provider means one or more individuals who provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a private residence other than the child's residence, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work. Associated terms include "family child care homes."

In-home child care provider means an individual who provides child care services in the child's own home.

License-exempt means facilities that are not required to meet the definition of a facility required to meet the CCDF section 98.2 definition of "licensing or regulatory requirements." Associated terms include "legally exempt" and "legally operating without regulation."

Licensed means a facility required by the state to meet the CCDF section 98.2 definition of "licensing or regulatory requirements," which explains that the facility meets "requirements necessary for a provider to legally provide child care services in a state of locality, including registration requirements established under state, local or tribal law."

Programs refer generically to all activities under the CCDF, including child care services and other activities pursuant to §98.50 as well as quality activities pursuant to §98.43.

Provider means the entity providing child care services.

Staffed family child care (FCC) networks are programs with paid staff that offer a menu of ongoing services and resources to affiliated FCC educators. Network services may include individual supports (for example, visits to child care homes, coaching, consultation, warmlines, substitute pools, shared services, licensing TA, mental health services) and group supports (for example, training workshops, facilitated peer support groups).

Teacher means a lead teacher, teacher, teacher assistant or teacher aide who is employed by a child care provider for compensation on a regular basis, or a family child care provider, and whose responsibilities and activities are to organize, guide and implement activities in a group or individual basis, or to assist a teacher or lead teacher in such activities, to further the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children from birth to kindergarten entry and children in school-age child care.

1) Overview

To gain an understanding of the availability of child care in the state or territory, please provide the following information on the total number of child care providers.

1.1 State or Territory Child Care Provider Population

1.1.1 Total Number of Licensed Providers:

Enter the total number of licensed child care providers that operated in the state or territory as of September 30, 2024. These counts should include all licensed child care providers, not just those serving children receiving CCDF subsidies.

[x] Licensed center-based programs **2939**

[ ] Unable to provide number. Indicate reason:

Additional clarification: Based on most recent submission of the FY 2024 ACF-800 data there were 2136 licensed center-based programs receiving CCDF funding. Please report the number of ALL licensed center-based programs operating in the state here, regardless of receipt of CCDF funding.

[x] Licensed family child care homes **5590**

[ ] Unable to provide number. Indicate reason:

Additional clarification: Based on most recent submission of the FY 2024 ACF-800 data there were 388 licensed family child care homes receiving CCDF funding. Please report the number of ALL licensed family child care homes operating in the state here, regardless of receipt of CCDF funding.

2) Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce

Goal: *Ensure the lead agency's professional development systems or framework provides initial and ongoing professional development and education that result in a stable child care workforce with the competencies and skills to support all domains of child development.*

2.1 Lead Agency Progression of Professional Development

2.1.1 Professional Development Registry:

Did the lead agency use a workforce registry or professional development registry to track progression of professional development during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

[x] Yes. If yes, describe: **EEC maintains a Professional Qualifications Registry (PQR). EEC's PQR gathers important information on the size, composition, education, and experience of our current workforce.**
[ ] No. If no, what alternative does the lead agency use to track the progression of professional development for teachers/providers serving children who receive CCDF subsidy? Describe:

2.1.2 Participation in Professional Development Registry:

Are any teachers/providers required to participate?
[x] Yes. If yes, describe: **Educators working in EEC-licensed or funded programs serving children from birth through school age, regardless of setting, must create an individual educator profile in the PQ Registry. EEC has also required participation from educators who work in programs that are not subject to EEC licensure, including those who work in public preschools or license-exempt programs, if they wish to participate in funded trainings. Educators that have participated in the past but do not currently work in EEC programs are not required to update or remove their entries, so the registry captures both current and past educators.**
[ ] No. If no, describe:

2.1.3 Number of Participants in Professional Development Registry:

Total number of participants in the registry as of September 30, 2024 **215,375**

2.1.4 Spending - Professional Development Registry:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[ ] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

2.2 Workforce Development

2.2.1 Professional Development and Career Pathways Support:

How did the lead agency help teachers/providers progress in their education, professional development, and/or career pathway between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024 (check all that apply)? If selected, how many staff received each type of support?

[x] Scholarships (for formal education institutions) **419 scholarships awarded**
[ ] Financial bonus/wage supplements tied to education levels
[x] Career advisors, mentors, coaches, or consultants **The service is provided but data on the number of individuals is not available.**
[ ] Reimbursement for training
[ ] Loans
[ ] Substitutes, leave (paid or unpaid) for professional development
[ ] Other. Describe:
[ ] N/A. Describe:

2.2.2 Spending - Professional Development and Career Pathways Support:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

2.3 Child Care Provider Qualifications

2.3.1 Number of Licensed Child Care Programs Qualifications:

Total number of staff in licensed child care programs with the following qualification levels as of September 30, 2024:

[x] Child Development Associate (CDA) **2,061**
[x] Associate's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **17,396**
[x] Bachelor's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **50,088**
[x] State child care credential **72,548**
[x] State infant/toddler credential **42,002**
[ ] Unable to report this data. Indicate reason:

2.3.2 Number of Licensed CCDF Child Care Programs Qualifications:

Total number of staff in licensed CCDF child care programs with the following qualification levels as of September 30, 2024:

[ ] Child Development Associate (CDA)
[ ] Associate's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education)
[ ] Bachelor's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education)
[ ] State child care credential
[ ] State infant/toddler credential
[x] Unable to report this data. Indicate reason: **EEC does not track this information.**

2.4 Technical Assistance for Professional Development

2.4.1 Technical Assistance Topics:

Technical assistance on the following topics is available to providers as part of the lead agency's professional development system (can be part of QRIS or other system that provides professional development to child care providers):

[x] Business Practices
[x] Mental health for children
[x] Emergency Preparedness Planning
[x] Other. Describe other technical assistance available to providers as part of the professional development system: **Through trainings/consultations from the Quality Team, Behavioral Health Team, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Grantees, and Professional Development Centers covered the following training topics: Business Practices, Mental and Behavioral Health for Children, Learning Environment, Leadership and Administration, Goal Setting and general Continuous Quality Improvement Trainings.**

2.4.2 Spending - Technical Assistance for Professional Development:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

2.5 Spending – Training and Professional Development

2.5.1 Spending – Training and Professional Development:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP

Stabilization 10% set-aside) to support the training and professional development of the child care workforce during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? $**17942699**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **EEC provides educational supports through the Career Pathways grant, collaborating with 15 Community Colleges and Urban College to provide college courses. For educators who need to attend classes in languages other than English, EEC contracts with Urban College to provide college courses. EEC has also established a network of Professional Development Centers (PDCs) that are able to provide professional development to child care programs.**

2.6 Progress Update

2.6.1 Progress Update – Training and Professional Development:

Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 6.3.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

Educators working in EEC-licensed or funded programs serving children from birth through school age, regardless of setting, must create an individual educator profile in EEC's Professional Qualifications Registry (PQR) and update it annually. EEC requires educators who work in programs that are not subject to EEC licensure, including those who work in public preschools, to register if they would like to participate in trainings funded by EEC or are in programs participating in EEC's Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS). EEC's PQR gathers important information on the size, composition, education, and experience of our current workforce. It stores information about the retention and turnover of educators working in early education and out-of-school time programs. This information that is collected from the PQR will help EEC respond to the needs of all early educators and programs in Massachusetts. EEC intends to build a new registry and credentialing IT product to correspond with the launch of a new credentialing system. Participation in the registry will be required for credentialling and program staff rosters will link by role to individuals in the registry. --Program Information: Given the COVID-19 crisis, EEC has paused its Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to allow programs more time and resources to focus on virus prevention strategies. At the same time, EEC has engaged in stakeholder feedback sessions (via survey and video conferencing) about the development of a new program quality support system driven by programs' commitment to continuous quality

improvement and diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. This system will focus on the following domains of quality: interactions, learning environment, family engagement, leadership and professional learning, business practices, and curriculum and assessment. EEC plans to launch a new quality support system in FY24 beginning with a focus on interactions and plans to scale up both expectations and supports from FY22-24.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 6.3.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: EEC's current educator certification system requires a series of credit-bearing or CEU coursework to qualify. EEC provides grant funding to the state's network of fifteen community colleges through the Career Pathways Program to make the required coursework accessible to educators looking to advance their certification and to grow and retain the early educator workforce. With this funding, the colleges provide tuition-free courses, course materials, and wrap-around support services. Since fall 2019 through August 2024, 13,893 educators were awarded Career Pathways funding. In addition to the community colleges, EEC provides funding to Urban College for credit-bearing courses in languages other than English. Courses are offered in five different languages (English, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Portuguese, and Spanish) and are aligned with EEC certification and the CDA credential. Since April 2019 through August 2024, 1,521 students were enrolled in courses in languages other than English. Both programs aim to support the diverse early educator workforce and streamline pathways towards higher education. EEC in partnership with the Department of Higher Education also administers the Early Childhood Educator Scholarship to provide financial assistance to early educators and out of school time staff wishing to pursue associates, bachelor's, or master's degrees in early childhood education. EEC's upcoming new competency-based credentialing system will outline clear expectations for training and trainers, including quality expectations and alignment of content to the competencies outlined in the system. EEC is currently working with a vendor to develop the competency expectations and verification requirements of the planned credential. EEC has also established a statewide training network as part of the Statewide Professional Development Academy and regional Professional Development Centers to provide state-funded professional development opportunities to the early education and out of school time workforce within each region of the Commonwealth. These entities serve educators working in EEC's mixed delivery system including those working in family child care homes, center-based programs, and those that are exempt from licensing and has a broad reach in the field; 4,861 educators participated in professional learning communities in FY24, for example. They provide services in multiple languages. Courses are listed on EEC's online

Learning Management System (LMS). EEC's online LMS provides free online self-paced and facilitated courses in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese. The native player of the LMS (navigation, buttons, etc.) allows users to choose to navigate the system in their chosen language. The LMS is also mobile enabled, allowing participants to access courses with their smartphone or tablet. All educators are required to take the 13 health and safety package made available on the LMS, with 15,000 having already completed the revised version. 7,200 educators have enrolled in a course focused on working with multi-age groupings, 7,300 are enrolled in an Introduction to Curriculum course, and an additional 45,150 have registered for a series of courses focused on the Pyramid model practices. EEC recently published a course for potential trainers and content developers that has nearly 200 enrollments, and a micro-learning course that supports educators in using EEC's Early Learning Guidelines with more than 250 enrollments.

3) Improving early learning and development guidelines

Goal: To ensure the lead agency has research-based early learning and development guidelines appropriate for children birth to age 12, including children with special needs and dual language learners that are used to inform practice and professional development.

3.1 Early Learning and Development Guidelines

3.1.1 Spending - Early Learning and Development Guidelines:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to improve early learning and development guidelines during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[ ] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on improving upon the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines? $**496981**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not capture in the item already reported: **Contract claimed: Early Childhood Curriculum Review**

[ ] No

3.2 Progress Update

3.2.1 Progress Update - Early Learning and Development Guidelines:

Improving upon the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 6.4.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

n/a

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 6.4.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

EEC has worked with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to finalize rubrics that detail criteria for high-quality preschool and infant-toddler curriculum, aligned with the Commonwealth's Early Learning Standards. Seven preschool curricula, six infant and/or toddler curricula, and one mixed age (family child care) curriculum have been rated and reviewed by independent review teams. Individual curriculum reports describe the strengths and weaknesses in how each curriculum addresses the criteria, including ratings and reviews for each quality indicator. Several grant-funded district and licensed early education program staff have participated in trainings to support them in using these rubrics to analyze their own curricula. Three public school districts and one nonprofit that each developed their own early childhood curricula were trained to use the rubric to analyze their self-developed curricula. They then updated their curricula based on the findings. EEC and AIR have also developed and piloted a set of seven resources to guide family child care educators to engage in a curriculum planning process.

EEC has also launched a self- paced micro-learning course available on EEC's learning management system that supports educators in using EEC's Early Learning Guidelines with more than 250 enrollments.

4) Developing, implementing, or enhancing a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) and other transparent system of quality indicator

Goal: To ensure the lead agency implements a quality rating and improvement system, or other quality rating system, to promote high-quality early care and education programs.

4.1 Quality rating and improvement system status

4.1.1 QRIS or other system of quality improvement status:

Indicate the status and include a description of the lead agency's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

[x] The lead agency QRIS is operating state- or territory-wide.

- General description of QRIS: **There are four QRIS tiers: Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4. Levels 2, 3, and 4 are considered high quality. With the transition of the QRIS to a more focused system based around continuous quality improvement, a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and program-focused work, we have tied program quality to 6 key areas: Leadership and Professional learning, Physical Environment, Curriculum/Assessment, Adult/Childhood interactions, Business Practices, and Family/Community Partnership. These standards, in practice, ensure that families have the resources to thrive socially and economically and that children are well prepared for school success and life-long learning.**
- How many tiers/levels? **4** [insert number of tiers below as required and describe each tier and check off which are high quality]
    - Tier/Level 1: **Reflects programs that have entered the QRIS.**
      [ ] High Quality
    - Tier/Level 2: **At this level, providers self-assess progress on the program quality standards.**
      [x] High Quality
    - Tier/Level 3: **Requirements for this level have been validated by program quality specialists (PQS). At level 3, programs are required to have an in-person visit and informal assessment from a Program Quality Specialist. Programs are also required to complete additional requirements such as higher benchmarks for teacher qualifications.**
      [x] High Quality

- Tier/Level 4: **Requirements for this level have been validated by program quality specialists (PQS). At level 4, programs are assessed in-person from a reliable rater. The program must exceed a certain score from the ERS tools in order to attain a level 4 designation.**
  [x] High Quality
- Tier/Level 5:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 6:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 7:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 8:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 9:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 10:
  [ ] High Quality

- Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition: **653**
- Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition: **1,470**
- Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition: **1,822**
- Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition: **30,538**

[ ] The lead agency QRIS is operating a pilot (e.g., in a few localities, or only a few levels) but not fully operating state- or territory-wide.

- General description of pilot QRIS (e.g., in a few localities, or only a few levels):
- Which localities if not state/territory-wide?
- How many tiers/levels? [insert number of tiers below as required and describe each tier and check off which are high quality
  - Tier/Level 1:
    [ ] High Quality
  - Tier/Level 2:
    [ ] High Quality
  - Tier/Level 3:
    [ ] High Quality
  - Tier/Level 4:

[ ] High Quality

- Tier/Level 5:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 6:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 7:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 8:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 9:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 10:
  [ ] High Quality

- Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:

- Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:

[ ] The lead agency is operating another system of quality improvement.

- General description of other system:
- Describe assessment scores, accreditation, or other metrics associated with this system:
- Describe how "high quality" is defined in this system?
- Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:

- Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:

[ ] The lead agency does not have a QRIS or other system of quality improvement.

- Do you have a definition of high quality care?
  [ ] Yes, define:
  - Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:
  - Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:
  - Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:

- Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:

[ ] No

4.1.2 Spending - Quality rating and improvement system status:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[ ] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[ ] CCDF quality funds
[ ] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ]Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[x] No

4.2 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems participation

4.2.1 QRIS or other system of quality improvement participation:

What types of providers participated in the QRIS or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024 (check all that apply)?

[x] Licensed child care centers
[x] Licensed family child care homes
[x] License-exempt providers
[x] Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy
[x] Early Head Start programs
[x] Head Start programs
[x] State Prekindergarten or preschool programs
[x] Local district-supported Prekindergarten programs
[x] Programs serving infants and toddlers
[x] Programs serving school-age children
[x] Faith-based settings
[ ] Tribally operated programs

[ ] Other. Describe:

4.3 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits

4.3.1 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits:

What types of financial incentives or technical assistance are available for providers related to QRIS or other system of quality improvement? Check as many as apply.

[ ] One-time grants, awards or bonuses
- Licensed child care centers
- Licensed family child care homes

[ ] On-going or periodic quality stipends
- Licensed child care centers
- Licensed family child care homes

[ ] Higher CCDF subsidy rates (including tiered rating)
- Licensed child care centers
- Licensed family child care homes

[x] Ongoing technical assistance to facilitate participation in QRIS or improve quality of programs already participating in QRIS (or some other technical assistance tied to QRIS)

[ ] Other. Describe

4.3.2 Spending - Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[ ] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

4.4 Spending – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

4.4.1 Spending – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) related to QRIS or other quality rating systems during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? $**24750**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

4.5 Progress Update

4.5.1 Progress Update – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems:

Developing, implementing, or enhancing a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) or other transparent system of quality indicators.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.3.6 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.
As MA revises our quality support system, we are examining the use of tools and measures that support high quality adult/child interactions as a first phase of supports. Over time, additional tools and measures will be added to support program quality across domains ranging from curriculum and assessment to family engagement to business practices to physical environment.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.3.6 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
During the COVID-19 crisis and based on feedback from stakeholders, EEC has paused its Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to allow programs more time and resources to focus on stabilizing program operations and supports for the workforce, children, and families. At the same time, EEC is revisiting the design of the current QRIS and identifying opportunities for revision and improvement. In FY 2025, EEC plans to pilot a new program quality support system driven by programs' engagement in continuous quality improvement, systems of professional supports for the workforce, and diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, with programs receiving a new contract to provide child care financial aid to families. The program quality staff have continued to support programs in developing Continuous Quality

Improvement Plans (CQIP) and provided technical assistance related to program quality (PQ). Programs that continued to implement QRIS-type standards such as environmental and language- based practices were supported by the PQ team. For example, when programs used measurement tools such as the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) and CLASS assessments, the PQ team provided technical assistance when needed. Programs were also able to access the tiered quality rate by submitting a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan for Quality Specialist review. Over the past year, we have supported programs in their CQIP journey by providing virtual and in-person Technical Assistance (TA) visits, providing trainings on program assessment strategies, and meeting with statewide coaches on the CQIP process and how best to support their programs. Throughout the year, the PQ team has supported 580 programs via technical assistance and has reviewed 58 CQIP documents in service of the subsidy infant/toddler rate increase criteria.

5) Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers

Goal: Ensure adequate and stable supply of high quality child care with a qualified, skilled workforce to promote the healthy development of infants and toddlers. Please report on all activities funded by quality dollars and infant toddler set-aside.

5.1 Infant/Toddler Specialists

5.1.1 Infant/Toddler Specialists:

Did providers have access to infant/toddler specialists during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

[ ] Yes

- Number of specialists available to all providers
- Number of specialists available to providers serving children who receive CCDF
- Number of specialists available specifically trained to support family child care providers
- Number of providers served
- Total number of children reached

[x] No, there are no infant/toddler specialists in the state/territory.

[ ] N/A. Describe:

5.1.2 Infant/Toddler Specialists Supports Provided:

If yes, what supports do the infant/toddler specialists provide?

[ ] Relationship-caregiving practices (or quality caregiving/developmentally appropriate practices)

[ ] On-site and virtual coaching

[ ] Health and safety practices

[ ] Individualized professional development consultation (e.g., opportunities for or awareness on career growth opportunities, degreed/credential programs)

[ ] Group professional development

[ ] Family engagement and partnerships

[ ] Part C early intervention services

[ ] Mental health of babies, toddlers, and families

[ ] Mental health of providers

[ ] Behavioral Health

[ ] Other. Describe

5.1.3 Spending – Infant/Toddler Specialists:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[ ] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[ ] CCDF quality funds
[ ] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ]ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[x] No

5.2 Staffed Family Child Care Networks

5.2.1 Number and Description of Staffed Family Child Care Networks:

How many staffed family child care networks operated during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

[x] Number of staffed family child care networks: **38**

- Describe what the network/hub provides to participating family child care providers: **Family child care systems offer a range of support services to family child educators to help them achieve their goals for a responsive, meaningful and high quality child care program, including: referrals of children, monthly home visits by degreed early childhood professionals, on-site curriculum training and support, evening and Saturday professional workshops, educational newsletters, technical assistance to address licensing and program quality issues, CDA certification and NAFCC accreditation assistance, billing and administrative services, and consultation services with health and mental health specialists.**

[ ] No staffed family child care networks operate in state/territory

5.2.2 Spending - Staffed Family Child Care Networks:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[ ] CCDF quality funds
[ ] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[x] Unable to report. Indicate reason: **The funds provided to staff family child care networks is embedded in the child care reimbursement rate and include quality activities as well as providing administrative support to family child care providers.**

[ ] No

5.3 Spending - Programs and services for infants and toddlers

5.3.1 Spending - Programs and services for infants and toddlers:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside), above and beyond to the 3% infant and toddler set-aside, to improve the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? $**133000000**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **The above figure reflects the portion of C3 granted for infant and toddler seats. This amount is above the required 3% set aside for infant/toddler quality.**

5.4 Progress Update

5.4.1 Progress Update - Programs and services for infants and toddlers:

Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.4.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.
Currently, EEC collects Continuous Quality Improvement Plans (CQIPs) from programs that are maintained by program quality staff. Staff work with programs on their Improvement Plans and provide technical assistance, if possible, to help programs meet their plan. Programs complete CQIPs based on their quality rating, and submit new CQPIs once they move through that particular rating onto the next . An EEC Program Quality Specialist Program Quality Specialists will verify the CQIP using the following criteria:
CQI action steps are informed by program-level data

Data and QRIS measurement tools scores must be current within the past 12 months

Action steps should be SMART* (specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-related)

Action steps should be distinct and easy to understand

Content in the CQIP must be detailed; the Program Quality Specialist should get the sense that the program has thoughtfully selected the goals using program-level data

CQI goals must be individual to the program (i.e.: not cookie cutter or using umbrella agency CQIP templates)

CQIP may be submitted in the educator/administrator's preferred language

If the CQIP meets these criteria, the Program Quality Specialist may verify the CQIP as meeting the requirements for QRIS. If any of these criteria is not met upon review of the CQIP, the Program Quality Specialist will request follow-up information from the program before verifying the CQIP. Program Quality Specialist may suggest the program prioritizes action steps to match EEC priorities (such as regulatory issues or prioritizing safe and healthy environments during the Covid-19 crisis). The Program Quality Specialist may also refer the program for additional

technical assistance regarding development of goals. The Program Quality Specialist should specifically reference which criteria need to be addressed.

Additionally, EEC is in the process of developing a new quality support system for use across the mixed delivery system. We have begun to engage stakeholders in feedback sessions about the importance of high quality programs for infants and toddlers and expect to launch the new system with a focus on reciprocal relationships and high quality interactions between adults and children in programs. We will continue to use tools developed to support high quality adult/child interactions and environments, such as the ITERS, to support quality programs for our youngest learners.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.4.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
EEC launched its stabilization grants in August 2021 and continued through September 2024 and beyond, to support programs in sustaining operations and promoting the supply of child care for children and families. The formula for this grant has focused on licensed capacity and staffing models, rather than enrollment, which helps insulate programs from enrollment fluctuations, helping to prevent program closures. It also includes an additional payment adjustment for programs available to serve higher need children either located in communities with high social vulnerability as documented by the CDC metric or serving significant percentages of children with subsidies (>33%). Programs recertify and provide information about enrollment and staffing monthly as well as completing a quarterly survey on spending and more detailed enrollment information. The staffing adjustment provides additional funding for programs that report staffing with more than the minimal educators required by regulations for a preschool classroom. This was designed to increase funding to cover the additional costs incurred by the higher staffing levels required to serve infants and toddlers. A review of program grant information shows that programs serving infants and toddlers are receiving larger grant awards, suggesting that this design is working. Data from FY24 C3 applications indicates that, on average, center-based programs serving infants and toddlers receive $41 more per slot than those without infant-toddler classrooms ($135 in comparison to $94)"
Recent analysis suggests that approximately $156 million in C3 funding in state FY24 went to center-based programs serving infants and toddlers. EEC currently contracts with 38 FCC Systems to enroll children receiving child care financial assistance across a network of affiliated FCC educators. These systems have a long history of supporting affiliated educators, not just with subsidy enrollment, but in meeting licensing expectations and improving program quality. Approximately half of FCCs are members of an FCC system. The contract re-procurement for

FY25 aims to secure more contracted slots for infants and toddlers, increasing the dedicated financial assistance for these populations. We estimate an increase of over 950 infant and toddler seats when the new contracts begin in FFY25. Our infant and toddler rates experienced the largest increases in FY24 due to a recognition of higher costs for quality care of those age groups.

6) Establishing, expanding, modifying, or maintaining a statewide system of child care resource and referral services

Goal: Lead agency provides: services to involve families in the development of their children, information on a full range of child care options, and assistance to families in selecting child care that is appropriate for the family's needs and is high quality as determined by the lead agency.

6.1 Spending – Child Care Resource and Referral Services

6.1.1 Spending – Child Care Resource and Referral Services:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to establish, expand, modify, or maintain a statewide CCR&R during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to **establish, expand, modify, or maintain a statewide CCR&R** during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? $**2182239**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent **CCRR, Mass 211, KPMG - Assisted in the effort to reprocure child care resource and referral services across the Commonwealth. They provided implementation supports for child care financial assistance regulations, policies and procedures reforms as it relates directly to CCRR services.**

[ ] No

6.2 Progress Update

6.2.1 Progress Update – Child Care Resource and Referral Services:

Establishing, expanding, modifying or maintaining a statewide system of child care resource and referral services.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.5.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.
The CCRR contract contains several reporting requirements that the Department uses to evaluate the effectiveness of the CCRR Network. In addition, EEC requires the CCRR Network to conduct satisfaction surveys with the individuals receiving services at the local level. The results of these surveys are sent to EEC on a monthly basis.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.5.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
EEC continues to collect a number of regular data reports from the CCRRs to track performance across all areas of responsibility, including: (1) weekly voucher reports on the number of families offered new vouchers and the status of existing vouchers; (2) monthly data reports tracking waitlist, caseload, and provider services, and staffing; (3) monthly report detailing family referral services; and (4) parent satisfaction survey. All of these reports together contain a number of key indicators that help EEC to evaluate the effectiveness of the CCRR Network. The data is then used to make determinations on where quality improvements are needed. In addition, EEC fully implemented The Financial Assistance Case Tracking System (FACTs) statewide. In June and July of 2024, EEC trained over 150 CCRR staff in FACTS. FACTs is currently being utilized statewide by all CCRRs and provides data to EEC on processing times for child care financial assistance applications from notification of funding to childcare placement. In support of improving the overall CCRR system, EEC has hired five Regional Family Access Specialists who will provide contract management to each CCRR. Through these regional roles, the Key Performance Indicators for customer service, eligibility services, family services and provider services will be fully developed and implemented. Establishing baseline performance expectations allows both EEC and CCRR's to measure their performance in serving families and ensure it is high-quality, respectful, and consistent. In partnership with CCRRs and families, EEC is focused on expanding equitable and dignified access to high-quality early education and care. This work included a series of system reforms focused on significantly updated and new child care financial assistance regulations and interim policies effective October 1, 2023. EEC trained CCRR staff to operationalize new regulations and interim policies with a focus on principles of engagement with families, the family journey, and expectations for providers. EEC has also begun a procurement for an EEC Family Portal and Case Management System which is anticipated to conclude in November 2024. This will begin to modernize the EEC digital

experience.

7) Facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspection, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards

Goal: To ensure child care providers maintain compliance with lead agency licensing, inspection, monitoring, and health and safety standards and training.

7.1 Complaints about providers

7.1.1 Number of Complaints about providers:

How many complaints were received regarding providers during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? **1,047**

7.1.2 Spending - Complaints about providers:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity (including maintaining a hotline)?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

7.2 Licensing Staff

7.2.1 Number of Licensing Staff:

How many licensing staff positions were there in the state or territory during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? Number of staff **91**

7.2.2 Spending – Licensing Staff:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

7.3 Health and Safety Standards Coaching and Technical Assistance

7.3.1 Coaching or technical assistance on health and safety standards as a result of inspection:

How many child care programs received coaching or technical assistance to improve their understanding and adherence to CCDF health and safety standards as a result of an inspection or violation during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? **5,189**

7.3.2 Spending - Coaching or technical assistance on health and safety standards as a result of inspection:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

7.4 Spending - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards

7.4.1 Spending - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspections, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? $**6078277**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

7.5 Progress Update

7.5.1 Progress Update - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards:

Facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspection, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.6.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.
EEC is in the process of developing a new quality support system for use across the mixed delivery system. We have begun to engage stakeholders in feedback sessions about the importance of high quality programs for infants and toddlers and expect to launch the new system with a focus on reciprocal relationships and high quality interactions between adults and children in programs. Currently, EEC collects continuous quality improvement plans from programs to track their meaningful engagement in this process and developing plans to evaluate and support ongoing quality improvement efforts.

EEC has long had in place robust licensing standards that reflect strong health and safety expectations and provides the foundational level of quality expectations. Program compliance to these standards is evaluated by licensors during annual visits to programs.

EEC funds multiple entities to support quality improvement in licensed programs, including the Strong Start Professional Development Centers, the Early Childhood Mental Health Grantees,

the Strong Start Learning Management System, the Pyramid Model Consortium and the Early Childhood Support Organizations. Each of these grantees is required to collect information to allow EEC to track program participation and support receipt. This allows EEC to understand who is receiving supports ranging from basic health and safety to trainings to in depth coaching and consultation. In the future, we will develop the capacity to track the extent programs sustained targeted practices when the direct support ends.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.6.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
During the past FFY, EEC conducted 951 investigations regarding complaints on programs. This required 970 visits to programs and led to approximately 60% (575) of investigations having at least 1 non-compliance and approximately 40% (376) with no non-compliances. Overall, 1542 non-compliances were issued to programs. EEC required each program to complete a corrective action plan. Currently EEC has approved 1360 corrective action plans. Plans not fully approved could be waiting because: a program had multiple non-compliances and EEC has only approved a portion of the plan while working with the program on the remaining non-compliances; a program is awaiting results from the child welfare agency before entering its plan; or the plan is in review and not yet due for approval.

8) Evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs and services, including evaluating how programs positively impact children

Goal: Lead agency investment in effective quality improvement strategies using reliable data from evaluation and assessment

8.1 Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs

8.1.1 Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs:

What measure(s) or tool(s) were used to evaluate and assess the quality of and effective practice in center-based programs during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

[ ] QRIS
[ ] CLASS
[ ] ERS
[ ] FCCERS
[ ] ITERS
[ ] State evaluation tool. Describe
[ ] Core Knowledge and Competency Framework
[x] Other. Describe **Programs are required to have Continuous Quality Improvement Plans (CQIP) to participate in the QRIS system.**
[ ] Do not evaluate and assess quality and effective practice

8.1.2 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

8.2 Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs

8.2.1 Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs:

What measure(s) or tool(s) were used to evaluate and assess the quality of and effective practice in family child care programs during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

[ ] QRIS
[ ] CLASS
[ ] ERS
[ ] FCCERS
[ ] ITERS
[ ] State evaluation tool. Describe
[ ] Core Knowledge and Competency Framework
[x] Other. Describe **Programs are required to have Continuous Quality Improvement Plans (CQIP) to participate in the QRIS system.**
[ ] Do not evaluate and assess quality and effective practice

8.2.2 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

8.3 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs

8.3.1 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP

Stabilization 10% set-aside) on evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs, practice, or child development during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?
$120099

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

8.4 Progress Update

8.4.1 Progress Update - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs:

Evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs and services, including evaluating how programs positively impact children.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.7.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.
MA is developing a set of observable practices and indicators for measuring the progress of programs in the emerging quality support system.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.7.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
Due to the QRIS being on pause during this time, EEC was not able to use traditional metrics to evaluate program quality. To replace this process, the quality team has instituted a process by which programs submit a CQIP (Continuous Quality Improvement Plan) for review, providing an opportunity to better understand program improvement goals. The CQIP is the lynchpin in the process of programs identifying needs and developing steps to address those areas of concern. The process is self-driven, allowing the programs to individualize the process. Due to the customizability of the process, programs are able to use measurement tools and/or processes that best fit the areas of need. When the CQI process is complete, the programs reflect upon the process and determine next steps. The program quality unit used the CQIP template as the foundation for evaluating programs and their quality progress. When engaging programs in the CQI process, program quality specialists (PQS) encourage teams to look at their programs from a realistic perspective, allowing them to focus on moving towards higher quality practices. At times it has been a challenge for program administrators to shed their natural bias when engaging with the CQI process so the PQS will work with the program to establish mechanisms to collect and review data to inform their goals for improvement. Discussions with programs provide an opportunity to review potential solutions to these challenges and programs are

encouraged to use observation tools to support CQIP efforts. Throughout the year, the PQS team has supported 580 programs via technical assistance and has reviewed 58 CQIP documents.

It is important to note that the low number of CQIP reviews is specifically related to the timing of subsidy rate policy changes whereby the quality rate has been integrated into the standard rate structure.

9) Supporting child care providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation

Goal: Support child care programs and FCCs in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation by a national accrediting body with demonstrated, valid, and reliable program standards of quality

9.1 Accreditation Support

9.1.1 Accreditation Support:

How many providers did the lead agency support in their pursuit of accreditation (e.g., financial incentives, technical assistance with the accreditation process, coaching/ mentoring by accredited programs) during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

[ ] Yes, providers were supported in their pursuit of accreditation

a. Licensed center-based programs
b. License-exempt center-based programs
c. Licensed family child care homes
d. License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home)
e. Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy

[ ] No lead agency support given to providers in their pursuit of accreditation.
[x] N/A. Describe: **EEC does not currently provide specific supports for accreditation although providers may use C3 grant funds for this purpose.**

9.1.2 Spending – Accreditation Support:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[ ] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[ ] CCDF quality funds
[ ] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP

Stabilization 10% set-aside) on accreditation during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? $

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent

[x] No

9.2 Progress Update

9.2.1 Progress Update – Accreditation Support:

Supporting providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.8.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.
EEC tracks how may accredited programs are participating in the Massachusetts QRIS and their QRIS Levels. In addition, EEC receives data from EPS grantees related to the number of programs that are accredited in the Commonwealth.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.8.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
As part of the planning for a new quality system, EEC is evaluating the role accreditation should play in program quality rating.

10) Supporting providers in the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development

Goal: Assist programs to meet high-quality comprehensive program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development

10.1 High-Quality Program Standards

10.1.1 High-Quality Program Standards:

How did the state or territory help providers develop or adopt high quality program standards during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

[x] QRIS, check which indicators the lead agency has established:
- **[x]** Health, nutrition, and safety of child care settings
- **[x]** Physical activity and physical development in child care settings
- **[x]** Mental health of children
- **[x]** Learning environment and curriculum
- **[x]** Ratios and group size
- **[x]** Staff/provider qualifications and professional development
- **[x]** Teacher/provider-child relationships
- **[x]** Teacher/provider instructional practices
- **[x]** Family partnerships and family strengthening
- **[ ]** Other. Describe:

[x] Early Learning Guidelines

[x] State Framework. Describe **EEC has developed rubrics to review the quality of preschool and infant/ toddler curriculum. During this time period, training and technical assistance in the use of this tool are available to programs and formal reviews of preschool curricula are available.**

[ ]Core Knowledge and Competencies

[ ] Other. Describe

[ ] N/A – did not help provider develop or adopt high quality program standards

10.1.2 Spending - High-Quality Program Standards:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to **support providers in the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development** during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? $**3296659**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **Contract includes: Mental Health Grants**

[ ] No

10.2 Progress Update

10.2.1 Progress Update - High-Quality Program Standards:

Supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.9.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.
MA is developing a set of observable practices and indicators for measuring the progress of programs in the emerging quality support system.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.9.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
EEC funds multiple entities to support quality improvement in licensed programs, including Professional Development Centers, the Learning Management System, the Pyramid Model Consortium, and the Early Childhood Support Organizations. Each of these grantees is required

to collect information to allow EEC to track program participation and support received. This allows EEC to understand who is receiving supports ranging from basic health and safety trainings to in depth coaching and consultation. In the future, we will develop the capacity to track the extent of programs sustaining targeted practices when the direct support ends. Our Professional Development Centers supported 482 professional learning communities in FY24. One of those was in Cantonese, 38 in Portuguese, 348 in Mandarin, 108 in Spanish, and 287 in English. This served 4,861 educators overall. In addition, the Professional Development Centers offer coaching to Program leadership and Family Child Care Programs. They conducted 884 cases in FY 24: 24 in Chinese, 126 in Portuguese, 199 in Spanish and 489 in English. To support programs in meeting children's mental health needs, EEC continues to offer mental health services through its Mental Health Consultation Grant, which includes mental health supports, strategies, and services that address the developmental, emotional, and behavioral challenges of infants, young children, and their families, to promote school success, ensure healthy social-emotional development, and reduce the suspension and expulsion rate in early education and care settings. To track outcomes, each grantee was required to complete the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Grant Performance Report, which includes a number of data points such as: the number of early education & care programs requesting and receiving services; the number of educators participating in consultation; the number of children benefitting from ECMHC services; the number of individualized behavior support plans implemented; the number of children retained in early education & care programs; and the number of families referred to additional supports & services when appropriate.

11) Other activities to improve the quality of child care services

Goal: To improve the quality of child care programs and services related to outcomes measuring improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry

11.1 Sustainability funding to child care providers

11.1.1 Sustainability funding to child care providers:

Did the state or territory continue to provide stabilization grants to child care providers using funds other than the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Stabilization funds during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

[x] Yes. If yes, describe and check which types of providers were eligible and number served. **Eligible programs include all EEC licensed programs (center-based and family child care programs), as well as funded programs such as public and private schools that are not licensed by EEC but participate in CCDF.**

- **[x]** Licensed center-based programs **2751**
- **[x]** License-exempt center-based programs **76**
- **[x]** Licensed family child care homes **5173**
- **[ ]** License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home)
- **[ ]** In-home (care in the child's own home)
- **[ ]** Other (explain)

[ ] No.

[ ] N/A. Describe:

11.1.2 Spending – Sustainability funding to child care providers:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- **[ ]** CCDF quality funds
- **[x]** Non-CCDF funds
- **[ ]** CARES funds
- **[ ]** CRRSA Funds
- **[ ]** ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- **[ ]** ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- **[ ]** Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

11.2 Data Systems Investment

11.2.1 Data Systems Investment:

Did the state/territory invest in data systems to support equitable access to child care (e.g., modernizing and maintaining systems; technology upgrades and data governance improvements to provide more transparent and updated information to parents; a workforce registry; updated QRIS systems; CCR&R updates; monitoring systems) from October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

[x] Yes. Describe: **EEC has continued to modernize its technology and user experience in support of equitable access to child care throughout the past year on multiple fronts.**

Within the realm of child care financial assistance, EEC both made updates to existing systems and made significant strides in product planning, securing funding, and initiating procurement toward a large-scale modernization of the end-to-end workflows.

First, the Financial Assistance Case Tracking System (FACTS) for EEC's CCRRs was updated with additional functionality, including support for tracking cases that come through agency referrals from the Department of Transitional Assistance and the Department of Children and Families and the cases coming off of EEC's income-eligible waitlist. EEC anticipates that FACTS will be replaced as part of the overall modernization efforts, but this work allows CCRRs to handle these applications digitally in the interim and allows EEC to evaluate metrics and potential user experience (UX) options for the future.

EEC has also been making updates to the CCFA software system to support updated financial assistance regulations, policies, and procedures, with an aim to improve the user experience for providers and CCRRs and facilitate a larger push toward equity and financial stability for the field. Initial efforts are underway to update the current system to a more modern architecture, which will allow future improvements to be made more easily and speedily and will set EEC up for a larger overhaul of the UX in support of prospective payments.

In looking forward, EEC finished its engagement with the New Practice Lab from New America to evaluate and redesign the user experience of families and providers within the financial assistance workflow. Work from this effort informed the project proposal submitted by EEC for capital funding from the state's FutureTech IT Bond Bill. EEC's proposal

was one of the few new projects approved by the capital review board for funding, and on Sept 27, 2024, EEC posted an RFQ for a new Family Portal and Case Management System. EEC is also in the process of standing up a new Grants system from Linq, which will replace the functionality within the CCFA software.

In parallel with this effort, EEC has been working on an RFQ for an Educator Portal and Credential System. The intent is to align both portals with similar interface patterns and shared code to ensure that the user experience is consistent and that technical maintenance on both can eventually be handled by a single combined team. The development of the technical requirements and drafting of this RFQ happened during the period of this QPR, though posting occurred just after.

EEC has also continued to invest in regular updates in both its background record check (BRC) system, Navigator, and its LEAD portal for licensed and funded programs. These updates align the technology systems to improve operational workflows and aim to improve the user experience for all users of these systems. LEAD allows programs apply for and renew their licenses, respond to monitoring visits and investigations, submit transactions, access Child Care Search information, and apply for C3 grant funding. The legacy BRC system is being phased out and all programs have now moved to the new background record check (BRC) system Navigator. This new system facilitates a more streamlined process where a majority of BRC approvals are now automated, reducing the amount of time required to complete an eligibility review for a potential staff person. Programs can immediately access the status of their BRCs through the Navigator system either using reports or a dashboard which summarizes them by category (valid, nearing expiration, or expired). Programs can also see if a candidate has scheduled an appointment and when the appointment was completed. Licensors use the same Navigator system where they are able to see hiring decisions as well as dashboard summaries of the BRC status for potential, new, and existing program staff to streamline this part of health and safety monitoring during preservice and annual visits.

[ ] No

11.2.2 Spending - Data Systems Investment:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[ ] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

11.3 Supply and Demand Analysis

11.3.1 Supply and Demand Analysis:

Did the state/territory conduct an analysis of supply and demand or other needs assessment to identify areas of focus to build supply or target funding from October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024?

[x] Yes. Describe findings: **EEC has been working with an outside vendor to develop a model of supply and demand for early education and care across the Commonwealth. The database combines U.S. Census data with state licensing and subsidy data, as well as data from the state's operational grant program, to create a picture of the supply and demand for care in the Commonwealth, with disaggregation by various geographies (zip code, census tract, town, etc.), age, provider type, family income, and participation in the labor market. In FFY24, the team focused on augmenting the model by incorporating additional data sources, including data on the Child Opportunity Index (COI), allowing the team to look at the data in the model alongside other place-based measures of need.**
[ ] No

11.3.2 Spending - Supply and Demand Analysis:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds

[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

11.4 Supply and Demand Initiatives

11.4.1 Supply and Demand Initiatives:

Did the state/territory implement initiatives designed to address supply and demand issues related to child care deserts and/or vulnerable populations (such as infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, English language learners, and children who need child care during non-traditional hours) during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? Check all that apply.

[x] Child care deserts
[x] Infants/toddlers
[x] Children with disabilities
[ ] English language learners
[ ] Children who need child care during non-traditional hours
[x] Other. Describe: **C3 incentivizes expansion of infant-toddler classrooms by funding programs serving infants and toddlers at a higher per slot rate. Programs serving children in areas designated as very low opportunity per the Child Opportunity Index (COI), also receive a significant equity adjustment to their funding. Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) grants build local preschool access by funding supports for a range of child needs from services for children with disabilities and English Language learners to addressing barriers to access specific to local communities such as limited transportation, to affordability challenges for those not reached by the child care financial aid system. In March 2024, EEC reprocured contracted seats in child care programs for the first time in 15 years. Through this re-procurement, EEC reallocated seats across the Commonwealth, based on needs determined by research and analysis, prioritizing infant and toddlers, children in child care deserts and high poverty areas, children with disabilities, and children in highest need. This prioritization was used in determining the target seat allocations and will be implemented as of 10/1/24 with the start of the new contracts. In addition, EEC has begun hosting in-person Potential Educator Meetings (PEM) in Spanish and English and is also working to provide training and support in Portuguese.**

11.4.2 Spending - Supply and Demand Initiatives:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[ ] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

11.5 Provider Compensation and Benefits

11.5.1 Spending - Provider Compensation and Benefits:

What compensation and benefits improvements did teachers/providers receive between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024 (check all that apply)? If indicated, how many providers received each type of support?

[ ] Financial bonuses (not tied to education levels)
[ ] Salary enhancements/wage supplements
[ ] Health insurance coverage
[ ] Dental insurance coverage
[ ] Retirement benefits
[ ] Loan Forgiveness programs
[ ] Mental Health/Wellness programs
[ ] Start up funds
[x] Other. Describe: **EEC provides FCC educators who participate in the State's Child Care Financial Assistance programs with a significant number of paid approved closure days: 12 holidays, 10 flexible days to be used at the provider's discretion, and five professional development days. EEC provides active FCC educators with funds, negotiated as part of the union contract between EEC and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) FCC Child Care Educations Local 509, for health reimbursement. Management of these funds is handled by the FCC Union. In January 2023, EEC launched an Early Education and Care**

pilot for staff working in early education and care programs, giving them immediate priority access to child care financial assistance in the form of voucher and contracted seats. EEC has instituted a new policy, following a successful pilot year, to provide priority access to child care financial assistance for staff working in early education and care programs, including allowing FCC educators who qualify to care for their own children in a placement. Staff are eligible at 85% of the SMI, above the current initial income eligibility level for other families. This program served 1,178 children during the reporting period. The C3 operational grant supported programs in providing additional compensation and benefits, but we do not track how many individuals benefited from these improvements. C3 grants can be used for: a) personnel costs, benefits, stipends, and other supports for recruitment and retention; b) professional development and other investments to support staff in building educator qualifications; c) other investments to improve program quality such as supplies, curriculum, screening tools, etc.; and d) rent or mortgage payments, utilities, facilities maintenance and improvements, or insurance.

[ ] N/A. Describe:

11.5.2 Spending - Provider Compensation and Benefits:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[ ] CCDF quality funds
[x] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

11.6 Spending – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services

11.6.1 Spending – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP

Stabilization 10% set-aside) on other activities to improve the quality of child care services during October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024? $**584365712**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **The above figure includes the amount of C3 for age groups older than toddlers.**

11.7 Progress Update

11.7.1 Progress Update – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services:

Other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.10.1 of the 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.
n/a

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.10.2 of the 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **The C3 stabilization grant application process collects significant data from participating programs on program operations, fund use, and enrollment. EEC has been analyzing this information regularly and sharing results with the Board of Early Education and Care, our governing board. EEC's analysis has shown meaningful positive changes in program staffing and overall licensed capacity since the beginning of the grant in 2021. The average hourly wage for center-based educators has increased from $18.90 to $22.94 (an increase of $4.04) between the start of the grant and the end of FFY24 and statewide capacity has increased by more than 6,800 seats over the course of FFY24. EEC has also continued the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative grant (CPPI), which provides funds to districts to collaborate with and fund licensed early education providers to expand local access to quality preschool. These funds have been used to support providers serving children with a range of special needs, including itinerant special education services, contracted mental health services, and Dual Language Learners training. This grant was increased by $5 million in FY24 and has grown from nine grantee districts in 2019 to 28 in 2024. EEC is also investing in the expansion of and ongoing improvement of a number of systems supporting program quality. The early childhood mental health grantees received and additional $1.5 million to expand access to their consultation**

services. EEC and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education are collaborating around improvements to better support early language and literacy development, with plans for significant funding in the future to support these efforts. Attention to early literacy, understanding of the basics of trauma-informed care, and needs of dual language learners will be explicitly integrated into all levels of a new credential being planned.

12) Annual Report

Lead agencies must submit an annual report, as required at 45 CFR § 98.53(f) (4), describing any changes to lead agency regulations, enforcement mechanisms, or other lead agency policies addressing health and safety based on an annual review and assessment of serious child injuries and any deaths occurring in child care programs receiving CCDF, and in other regulated and unregulated child care centers and family child care homes, to the extent possible.

12.1 Annual Report and Changes

12.1.1 Annual Report:

Describe the annual review and assessment of serious injuries and any deaths occurring in child care programs receiving CCDF, and in other regulated and unregulated child care centers and family child care homes, to the extent possible. **All deaths of children are reviewed by the statewide child fatality review team (SCFRT), which EEC participates in on a bi-monthly basis. The purpose of the state team is to decrease the incidence of preventable child fatalities and near fatalities by: (i) developing an understanding of the causes and incidence of child fatalities and near fatalities; and (ii) advising the governor, the general court and the public by recommending changes in law, policy, and practice that will prevent child fatalities and near fatalities. EEC reviews and conducts an assessment on a regular and on-going basis. Whenever EEC is alerted to an incident of serious injury, defined as any injury to any child which occurs during the hours while such child is in care and which requires hospitalization or emergency medical treatment, EEC will conduct an investigation that is escalated to an investigator. It is common that the EEC investigator conducts the investigation with the child welfare agency DCF. DCF determines if abuse or neglect occurred. The EEC investigator conducts a very thorough review which may include the child care staff and educators, medical staff, parents, and any other individuals that may have pertinent information. When the investigation is completed and submitted for approval, the investigation is reviewed by an investigations manager, the Associate Commissioner of Investigations, the licensing supervisor, the Regional Director, and, at times, the Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations. As the investigation is reviewed, common themes and policy implications may be identified. The Regional Directors meet with the Deputy Commissioner on a weekly basis. At times, a serious injury report is discussed to determine statewide themes, root causes and potential ideas on how to prevent future incidents.**

12.1.2 Annual Report Changes:

Describe any changes to lead agency regulations, enforcement mechanisms, or other lead agency policies addressing health and safety based on the annual review and assessment. **No significant changes to regulations and policies have been made in the previous year.**