

Name/Organization	Topic/Comments
<p>Carolyn Canina, Cambridgeport Children's Center</p>	<p><b>C3</b> - I am writing in regard to the changes that are being made to the allocation of the C3 funding effective May 2024 on behalf of Cambridgeport Children's Center (fondly known as Tot Lot) and other small, private early childhood programs.</p> <p>Cambridgeport Children's Center is a small, non-profit family coop serving between 29 and 35 children daily ages 15months to 5-year-olds. Tot Lot has been part of the community for over 50 years and started as a small play group. We have been in our current location since September 1975. We strive to stay true to our values of diversity, learning, communication, and community. We are committed to providing ratios that we believe are instrumental in providing high quality education and care. Our toddler classroom of 9 has 4 educators and our preschool classroom of 20 has 5 teachers. We strive to provide high quality early education and care to families of diverse economics through our tiered tuition scale based on families' annual income. Currently 23% of our families are below the 85 median income percentiles, with 10% below the 50% percentile and 13% below the 85 percentiles.</p> <p>The C3 grant has been instrumental in allowing us to significantly increase salaries and benefits to teachers, which is vital to retain and recruit qualified educators. We have used 100% of our grant to support teachers' salaries, benefits, and professional development. In the first year we gave monthly stipends to all educators and were then able to increase the starting salary for new teachers and therefore increased all current educators to ensure their salaries were equitable to new educators based on experience and qualifications.</p> <p>Based on the Commissioner and the Governor's public announcements about the benefits of the program, highlighting Massachusetts as leaders in the field of Early Education and Care and the commitment to moving this line item into the state budget we felt secure to add the C3 grant as a line item in our budget for the 2024-2025 budget. This enabled us to minimize the tuition increase for the 2024-2025 year, give educators salary increases as part of our 5-year plan to align our salaries with public school salaries and maintain our ratios which enables us to provide high quality education and care practice.</p> <p>We are asking both EEC and the Governor to reconsider this decision and to continue the C3 grant as was originally implemented for the remainder of the current fiscal year and to maintain the same in our 2024-2025 state budget.</p>

	<p>Impact on our program is the revised allocation is not reconsidered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding will decrease by over \$20,000 for this fiscal year and if the new allocation is for the next fiscal year we will have over \$100,000 decrease in funding.</li> <li>- Higher increase in tuition</li> <li>- Reduction of educators by 2</li> <li>- Reduction in benefits</li> </ul>
Jenn Silva, Cambridge Nursery School	<p><b>C3</b> - I am emailing as a director of a non profit preschool who has taken quite the financial hit due to COVID. The C3 grant is important to our school to maintain our doors open. We are a 100 year old school and would love to be here for 100 more and I believe by continuing the C3 funds, it will help us. Thank You.</p>
Kathryn Broge, Cambridge Nursery School	<p><b>C3</b> - I learned last week during our Cambridge Nursery School Board meeting that EEC is cutting the C-3 Grant funding by 25% in May and June and further that we do not yet know if the grant will continue into the new 24-25 school year.</p> <p>As we commemorate our 100th year as the country's oldest parent cooperative preschool, we have been reflecting on the ways in which we have been able to survive and thrive in the ever changing economic and demographic climate in Cambridge.</p> <p>I can say with confidence and appreciation that the C-3 grants we have received to date have been vitally important to our ongoing operations in supporting staf and other daily school needs to best serve our students.</p> <p>I write to respectfully express my strong support for the continuation of these grants with the forthcoming budget approval from the Board.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and effort.</p>
Noelle D'Intino, Scribble Time	<p><b>C3</b> - I am writing to bring to your attention a matter of significant concern that was communicated you to licensed centers in Massachusetts . You shared that centers, including mine – ScribbleTime, are facing unexpected and drastic cuts to our C3 funding. Several centers across the Commonwealth are set to lose the allocated funding accounted for in our budgets through June 30, 2024, with the potential impact beginning as soon as May.</p> <p>I am aware of the increasing number of centers joining the program, which is a positive indicator of growth in early education services. However, I firmly believe that centers like mine, which have weathered the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, should not bear the brunt of funding reductions as new programs join the initiative. We have</p>

	<p>demonstrated commitment, endured losses, and actively invested in rebuilding the workforce in Massachusetts.</p> <p>While I acknowledge that funding circumstances may change in the next fiscal year, I respectfully urge you to consider the impact on existing centers and advocate for the continuation of funds through the end of the current fiscal year, as originally expected.</p> <p>I want to express my gratitude for the investment in early education, which has had a positive impact on centers like ScribbleTime. We have utilized increased funding to enhance our services, including hiring an assistant director, providing double vacation time, adding additional staff, investing in professional development, and implementing minimal tuition rate increases. Losing just two months of funding will undoubtedly have a considerable impact on our budget.</p> <p>I kindly request your support in urgently addressing this issue to prevent the loss of funding in May. I am eager to discuss this matter further and would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you or someone in your office at your earliest convenience.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your support in ensuring the continued success of early education centers in our community.</p>
Wendy Buzzell, Peek-A-Boo! Family Child Care & Preschool	<p><b>C3</b> - I am a family child care provider in Southborough, Massachusetts. Having cared and educated children in my town and surrounding communities for 27 years, I am deeply concerned about the recent decision made by the Department of Early Education and Care to decrease my monthly C3 (Commonwealth Cares for Children) Grant by 45%.</p> <p>I was notified March 7th that this change would take place May 1st despite being told that this funding would be available to me through June.</p> <p>My grant amount is \$1666.67 and will decrease to \$750.00.</p> <p>I depend on the grant to pay my full time assistant minimum wage. This way I could meet the needs of more families by enrolling more children, pay my assistant better, purchase educational materials and curriculum, replace worn and broken equipment and toys, purchase equipment and toys I have never been able to afford and purchase quality food to name a few. I am still trying to pay off debt (a SBA loan for \$50,000 when we had no idea what to expect) accumulated during the mandated unpaid 4</p>

	<p>month shut down, to continue with my rates from 2020 and not increase them despite food, municipalities, equipment, etc. increasing exorbitantly.</p> <p>I feel I am being discriminated against because I am a private pay provider meaning that my clients pay their tuition. Many family child care providers who care for children whose parents are eligible for vouchers/ subsidies will continue to receive their full grant.</p> <p>The families I care for are valuable members of our community yet because they are able to pay child care tuition, I am losing 75% of my grant which may result in me having to close my business and leave those families without care.</p> <p>I have heard that there are many providers signed up to enroll children whose families pay with vouchers but they have not received a phone call or a placement in many years and because they do not have any subsidy children enrolled, they will lose 75% of their grant. This is a circumstance beyond their control, yet I they are being penalized by the Department of Early Education and Care.</p> <p>Despite being promised the full grant for fiscal year 2024, we were told last week that our grants would be significantly decreased due to the influx of new providers applying for the grant. As a veteran private pay provider who has dedicated years and personal money to create a quality program, I feel it is unreasonable and not fair for me to lose 75% of the grant while new providers who accept vouchers will receive 100% of their grant.</p> <p>I implore you to support me and my colleagues in righting this discriminatory decision.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration of my request.</p> <p>Sincerely</p> <p>Wendy Buzzell Peek-A-Boo! Family Child Care &amp; Preschool</p>
Rachel Juzapavicus, Family Child Care Provider	<p><b>C3</b> - I am a family child care provider in Lunenburg Massachusetts. Having cared and educated children in my town and surrounding communities for 8 years, I am deeply concerned about the recent decision made by the Department of Early Education and Care to decrease my monthly C3</p>

	<p>(Commonwealth Cares for Children) Grant by 75%.</p> <p>I was notified March 7th that this change would take place May 1st despite being told that this funding would be available to me through June.</p> <p>My grant amount is \$ 1089.00 and will decrease to \$272</p> <p>I depend on the grant to pay my assistant so that I could meets the needs of more families by enrolling more children. The money has also allowed me to purchase educational materials and curriculum, to replace worn and broken equipment and toys, to purchase equipment and toys I have never been able to afford, to purchase quality food.</p> <p>I feel I am being discriminated against because I am a private pay provider meaning that my clients pay their tuition. Family child care providers who care for children whose parents are eligible for vouchers/ subsidies will continue to receive their full grant.</p> <p>The families I care for are valuable members of our community yet because they are able to pay child care tuition, I am losing 75% of my grant which may result in laying off my assistant and I will have to tell three of my families that i can no longer provide childcare for them. My waitlist is 2 years long, I know other providers in Central MA has similar wait lists. These families will have a very hard time finding new child care.</p> <p>Despite being promised the full grant for fiscal year 2024, we were told last week that our grants would be significantly decreased due to the influx of new providers applying for the grant. As a veteran private pay provider who has dedicated years and personal money to create a quality program, I feel it is unreasonable and not fair for me to lose 75% of the grant while new providers who accept vouchers will receive 100% of their grant.</p> <p>I implore you to support me and my colleagues in righting this discriminatory decision.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration of my request.</p> <p>Sincerely, Rachel Juzapavicus</p>
AmberRose Beal Osiris, Amber R's Family Daycare	<p><b>C3</b> - I currently accept vouchers, at this time I have 3 vouchers enrolled. I have a licensed capacity of 10. 30% of my slots are filled by vouchers.</p>

	<p>Just 3% short of the newly required 33%. 2 slots are reserved for my own children so really it's 45% of my income at this time and for the foreseeable future. If the grant is lowered for me I will have to stop taking subsidies all together and I know that it's a high need in my area. My rent alone is over 4000 a month and I can't afford to take any more subsidies than I currently do but am also dependent on the grant to keep the current subsidies enrolled.</p> <p>I lose a child over the summer for 6 to 8 weeks because he's school age and goes to camp but I won't be able to accept him back if the current grant goes away.</p> <p>This grant has enabled me to sustain my rates without increases for families. It has enabled me to accept subsidies and vouchers. I have been able to assist my subsidized families with copays. The quality of care has been easier to maintain. I have been able to afford air conditioning in the summer. I have been able to afford better quality materials and supplies for learning. This grant has been a blessing to all but especially family child care. FCC rates are so much lower than centers already, as are our grants but we all now need to adjust as we are constantly doing and try to maintain standards with less. For a state and country that realized how important and essential we are to the economy, it seems like again its put on the wayside. My city lost half its fcc providers during covid. HALF were not able to sustain their businesses when we were needed the most and they didn't come back. Daycare in Somerville is incredibly ridiculous to find especially for infant care, I have no openings until 2025 right now and a waitlist that many will never come off of. I urge you to find the funding to ensure we don't lose more providers in this field. Universal preschool only makes up a small percentage of those needing care and we are really starting to push the demand greater than the supply.</p>
Fiona Mack, Parent, Cambridge Nursery School	<p><b>C3 - To Whom It concern,</b></p> <p>I learned last week during our Cambridge Nursery School Board meeting that EEC is cutting the C-3 Grant funding by 25% in May and June and further that we do not yet know if the grant will continue into the new 24-25 school year.</p> <p>As we commemorate our 100th year as the country's oldest parent cooperative preschool, we have been reflecting on the ways in which we have been able to survive and thrive in the ever changing economic and demographic climate in Cambridge.</p>

	<p>I can say with confidence and appreciation that the C-3 grants we have received to date have been vitally important to our ongoing operations in supporting staff and other daily school needs to best serve our students.</p> <p>I write to respectfully express my strong support for the continuation of these grants with the forthcoming budget approval from the Board.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and effort.</p>
Gail M. Ader, Cooperative Learning Community	<p><b>C3</b> - The Commonwealth of Massachusetts should be a leader, as it was with affordable health care, and make long-term investment into early education and care.</p> <p>The C3 grants should not be on the table. The impact it will have on centers, family child care providers and families will be huge. The system is in crisis which is why these were referred to as "stabilization" funds. Without them, the system will go back to being unstable. Our state already has some of the highest costs of living in the country, inclusive of housing, utilities, and childcare. Now, with this funding drastically slashed for so many programs, our childcare rates will skyrocket, centers will close and our work force will suffer. We are the workers who support the workers. Please prioritize C3 grants and reverse this horrible and misguided decision.</p>
Meredith Ruhl, The Family Cooperative	<p><b>C3</b> - I was troubled to hear about upcoming significant cuts to the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) grant awards in May and June. As a board member at The Family Cooperative (TFC) in Watertown and as a parent to two young children, I know how much of an impact C3 grant funding has had on TFC and other early childhood programs over the past few years. The sudden shift in funding this May and June is frustrating and potentially damaging to children, families, and educators. It is crucial for the grant funding to continue with stability and certainty this year and going forward.</p>
Lindsay Mangold, Children's Literacy Initiative	<p><b>Early Childhood Support Organization Initiative</b> - I appreciate the opportunity to share with you today some highlights from the MA ECSO (Early Childhood Support Organization) Initiative. The MA ESCO Initiative includes a collaborative partnership between CLI (Children's Literacy Initiative), UMB Strong Start, and University of Florida's Lastinger Center's Flamingo Early Learning. I would like to share a highlight on behalf of CLI about the work happening with Leaders and Educators in our 34 programs across the commonwealth.</p> <p>I would like to share a story from a center we have worked with for 4 years – they are one of the first centers we met in the ECSO Initiative. They are a large school and are a part of a larger organization. This is big systems work! I visited last week as their leader coach and support system – touching base after 6 months on their own. We saw two PreK classrooms – one teacher who had been a part of our direct teacher coaching support, and one that was newer to the center who did not</p>

	<p>receive CLI support but has been trained and coached by her leadership team. Both classrooms were amazing. We saw whole group investigations into mixing flour and water – children shouting out predictions on what they thought would happen and making connections like, “it looks like baby formula!” and, “are we baking a cake like in the book The Mixed Up Truck?” They tested gentle mixing and mixing more vigorously. The mixture was added to the sensory table for further investigation after circle – children primed with new words, techniques, and wonderings. In the other room, children read the rhyming book “Bee Bim Bop” where a Korean American family makes a special meal together. Children made connections to using chopsticks, treasured meals, and played a game with words that rhyme with “bake.” They also made connections to the ways the family showed kindness to each other and practiced being kind themselves using classroom puppets. The visit was full of connected, affirming, and exciting learning opportunities.</p> <p>We are in a moment of high turnover and educators new to early childhood entering programs hungry to learn and grow. Our partnership with center leaders to help them blossom as instructional leaders and use of CLI’s Blueprint curriculum has allowed for sustainable curriculum depth and high-quality offerings for children. To see such wonderful instruction in both a new teacher’s classroom and a veteran teacher’s classroom is support that leadership systems and materials matter.</p>
Min Hyung Cha, Cambridge Nursery School	<p><b>C3</b> - I hope this message finds you well. I am a parent at Cambridge Nursery School. During our recent Cambridge Nursery School Board meeting, we learned that the EEC plans to cut the C-3 Grant funding by 25% in May and June, with uncertainty about its continuation into the new 24-25 school year.</p> <p>As we celebrate our 100th year as the country's oldest parent cooperative preschool, we've been reflecting on how we've survived the changing economic and demographic climate in Cambridge with the grant in the past years.</p> <p>I want to express my appreciation for the support we've received through the C-3 grants, and concern for the cut. The C-3 grants are and have been crucial for our ongoing operations, supporting staff and addressing daily school needs for the benefit of our students. With confidence and gratitude, I am writing to express my support for the continuation of these grants, especially as we approach the forthcoming budget approval from the Board.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration. Your support means a lot to us, and we look forward to your response.</p>
Janine Crowningshield, Family Child Care Provider	<p><b>C3</b> - Good afternoon. I have been an FCC Educator since August 2011. I have accepted vouchers since 2013. I was open as an Emergency Care Childcare throughout the COVID closure. I have not been able to</p>



increase my rates since July of 2020. My daily rate is a measly \$43. More than 50% of my enrollment are elementary teacher families who can only afford part time care because of their pay rate. I currently have 1 full time child enrolled. The other 6 are part time. 1 after school child and the other school age is voucher and only here on school vacations. My teacher families will decrease their days even more for the Summer because they can't afford it.

I am now with Bethel Childcare Services since Community Action of the Pioneer Valley dumped us FCC's.

Like I said I accept vouchers. However, I'm located in Charlemont, Mass (Western Franklin county) where our local elementary schools offer free preschool for the last 10 years or so. I have no problem taking on new voucher families. But the problem is where I'm located there is not a need for care for vouchers. I currently have 1 school age voucher enrolled. Which even having this 1 school age voucher enrolled, I never received the last round of voucher bonuses. I have not received any calls from families with vouchers looking for care since Covid 2020.

How is that my fault? Why should I be penalized? I feel my C3 grant should not be decreased or changed because I don't have 33% vouchers enrolled. It's not my fault.

This grant has helped me make improvements in my childcare, replace broken toys, pay my mortgage and utilities, not have to raise my rates, provide meals, etc.

Not to mention you all shut down families applying for vouchers. No common sense there if you expect and want private family child care educators to accept vouchers. Why should they if you closed the system because you made your goal of 58,000 vouchers?

Here is a thought, think the government should consider helping teachers out by giving them vouchers to help them.

By continuing the current C3 grant rate would help me this Summer when I won't be full because teacher kiddos will decrease their days. Kind of hard to fill those slots and not have teachers lose their spots in the Fall. Also going into Fall I will have 2 full time slots open because of free pre-K and the calls I'm getting are for infants but I can't take them because of the under age 2 regulations.

I'm sorry to say but there are a lot of providers not able to fill slots for multiple reasons. Families can't afford it and currently can't apply for a voucher, you allowed to may new FCC's to open and get the grant just to watch their own children and take away from those who have been

	<p>providing care for many years, universal free preschool taking away from FCC's as we can only have 3 children under the age of 2 at one time.</p> <p>I beg you to keep the C3 grant available to all providers not just providers who take vouchers. If not I will likely be closing my program due to lack of enrollment this Fall. Like I said I accept vouchers, have no problem enrolling voucher families but like I said above why should I be penalized for not receiving calls to enroll voucher families.</p> <p>Maybe consider 2025 round of c3 grant go to not just voucher providers but private providers who were open as emergency care during COVID.</p>
Amy Phillips, Family Child Care Provider	<p><b>C3</b> - I am a family child care provider in Somerset, Massachusetts. Having cared and educated children in my town and surrounding communities for 16 years, I am deeply concerned about the recent decision made by the Department of Early Education and Care to decrease my monthly C3 (Commonwealth Cares for Children) Grant by 70-75%.</p> <p>I was notified March 7th that this change would take place May 1st despite being told that this funding would be available to me through June.</p> <p>My grant amount is \$ 1,666 and will decrease to \$ 499.</p> <p>I depend on the grant to meets the needs of more families by enrolling more children, pay my assistants more to retain them, purchase educational materials and curriculum, to replace worn and broken equipment and toys, to purchase equipment and toys I have never been able to afford, to purchase quality food. To pay off debt accumulated during the mandated unpaid 4 month shut down, and not increase my rates despite food, municipalities, equipment, etc. increasing exorbitantly.</p> <p>I feel I am being discriminated against because I am a private pay provider meaning that my clients pay their tuition. Family child care providers who care for children whose parents are eligible for vouchers/ subsidies will continue to receive their full grant.</p> <p>The families I care for are valuable members of our community yet because they are able to pay child care tuition, I am losing 75% of my grant which may result in me having to close my business and leave those families without care.</p> <p>I have been signed up to enroll children whose families pay with vouchers yet I have not received a phone call or a placement in several years and because I do not have any subsidy children enrolled, I will lose 70-75% of my grant. This is a circumstance beyond my control yet I am being penalized by the Department of Early Education and Care. The one child I do care for that has a voucher is due to a DCF situation, which is</p>

	<p>extremely stressful yet this child has been with me for the last 2.5 years. I promised to see her through her early learning years!</p> <p>Despite being promised the full grant for fiscal year 2024, we were told yesterday that our grants would be significantly decreased due to the influx of new providers applying for the grant. As a veteran private pay provider who has dedicated years and personal money to create a quality program, I feel it is unreasonable and not fair for me to lose 70-75% of the grant while new providers who accept vouchers and have not experienced the hardship of COVID, will receive 100% of their grant.</p> <p>I implore you to support me and my colleagues in righting this discriminatory decision.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration of my request.</p>
Shannon Nelson Pope, Stony Brook School	<p><b>C3</b> - As a preschool provider in the Boston metro, I would like to share that monthly C3 Funding has been critical to our ability to financially stay afloat over the past few years. Having suddenly received notice saying that our funding, which was promised through June, will now abruptly be cut for the final months of this fiscal year, I am concerned. We have all budgeted around this funding, but now face some hard decisions with the reduction in funding.</p> <p>On top of the devastating financial hit that early childhood programs have faced during the pandemic, early childhood providers continue to struggle to stay afloat, as numerous challenges threaten our industry. Here are some of the few impacting our program (but these concerns are common for our field):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The expansion of the UPK program has been devastating for our enrollment. As a program that is only licensed for 2.9 - 6 years, we lose business to families that are leaving BPS K-1 programs AND families who are leaving for UPK programs. Thus for the first time in years, we have had to close a classroom because we did not have enough children enrolled... despite accepting vouchers. While I would love to participate in the UPK program, there is no way in which to do this authentically, as a Reggio Emilia inspired school. We are not in alignment with their preset curricular approach and we do not believe this approach supports all children - especially those with learning differences.</li> <li>2. Teachers are demanding higher pay to keep up with inflation. Even by offering teachers an hourly rate of \$22-\$29/hour, we have spent over \$5000 in the past few months and have been unable to hire. Teachers are demanding higher salaries, yet parents are not able/willing to pay increased tuition. The C3 grant has bridged that gap in our budget, and is the only way we are able to pay teachers a higher salary, without raising tuition higher than it already is. The math simply does not work... The</li> </ol>

	<p>profit margins in early childhood are so thin, that many of us are just barely scraping by from month to month. We are not financially able to sustain increased teacher salaries without supplemental income, as our families cannot afford the real costs associated with providing this programming. The real cost of providing a high quality early childhood program is simply just too high.</p> <p>3. We cannot afford to pay \$35-\$55/square foot for commercial real estate rental. One way to help reduce the burden to childcare providers would be to secure lower rate commercial rental opportunities throughout the city. We cannot afford retail spaces! How can the city/state help us find more suitable, affordable locations to rent?</p> <p>While it has always been my dream to run a preschool program, and I believe our work is incredibly important and impactful, I am extremely concerned by the state of our field and quite frankly my ability to survive as a small business owner. Without substantial funding, our field is on the brink of collapse. This would be devastating for the workforce, and it would disproportionately impact women. I sincerely urge you to hear us loudly, and clearly, when we say that this funding is absolutely necessary - there is so much at stake. The field of early childhood simply cannot continue without the monetary funding and support from the state of Massachusetts.</p>
Ilan Saenz-Grant, Family, Friend, and Neighbor Provider	<p><b>Family, Friend, and Neighbor Provider Child Care</b> - I am writing to inform you that I recently signed a petition to support Family, Friend, and Neighbor child care. Family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) providers offer trusted child care close to home, especially during early mornings and late evenings when options are limited. However, FFN providers are reimbursed at a rate of \$9 to \$23 per child per day, and many parents can't split their vouchers to pay FFN providers in combination with formal programs.</p> <p>We strongly appreciate and support the Department's work to raise reimbursement rates for family child care centers and center-based programs. We also know that the EEC has considered rate increases for FFN providers.</p> <p>As parents, providers, and community members we ask the Department of Early Education and Care to raise reimbursement rates for FFN providers to at least the state minimum wage. We are also calling for improvements to the child care voucher so parents can use the full ten-hour daily value for the combination of formal and FFN care that works for their schedules.</p> <p>We appreciate your dedication to our community and your commitment to improving the lives of caregivers and working families. Care That Works looks forward to working with you to achieve these goals.</p>

	Thank you for your time and consideration.
Tim D, Child Care Center Owner	<p><b>C3</b> - I write today as concerned owner of a childcare center on cape cod and am very worried about the new funding schedule of the c3 grant money. I believe that all mass licensed childcare centers must go through the same procedures to get their licenses and have the same credentials and certifications, so they are pretty much all equal. In this state where we have a governor and a government that from day one preached equality, equity, and inclusion, I am a little puzzled why that hasn't carried over to c3 funding program. I am puzzled that two centers that had to go through the same process to get licensed the same credentials and certifications as such and has utilized the c3 funding to make their centers better by improving wages, programs, and the facilities would see such a discrepancy in funding just because one takes vouchers (which the funding for the vouchers does not come out of the c3 funding and will always be there) and one that doesn't take vouchers. With that being said like all centers who have improved with c3 funding can someone tell me how by taking that much revenue from a center that doesn't take vouchers how are they supposed to support what they have done i.e. raised wages ,improvements. In a government which prides itself on equality, equity, and inclusivity it sounds a little discriminatory against the centers that do not take vouchers. So instead of helping the centers that you oversee you are going to send us to a third party to try to resolve something that is happening in your backyard, typical state of Massachusetts bureaucracy, so your job.</p>
Sarah Doyle, Forest Friends Preschool at Wright-Locke Farm	<p>I'm writing on behalf of our preschool, Forest Friends Preschool at Wright-Locke Farm (a non-profit) in Winchester, MA. While our program is in an economically gated community, the vast majority of our families who attend our Forest Friends Preschool are not Winchester residents.</p> <p>This coming school year, 1/3 of our families will be receiving some sort of financial assistance. With the EEC Child Care Subsidy, we have been able to shift funds from salary to scholarships/financial assistance. With the loss of \$2,500/month, we may be unable to meet the needs of our families.</p> <p>We currently do not have students who are on vouchers or receiving state subsidies (we are always open to it). But that does not mean we don't have students whose families don't need financial assistance. Losing any part of the \$2,500 will hurt the program.</p> <p>We are also in support of other EEC programs that have greater needs than ours. We understand how important funding is for each program with their unique sets of circumstances. We do not want any program to lose its grant.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and I'm happy to connect further about it.</p>

<p>Pamela Wade, Family Child Care Provider</p>	<p><b>C3</b> - First, I would like to thank you all for working so diligently and supporting the Early Education Family in Massachusetts; especially with your combined efforts to bring the C3 funding to all providers in Massachusetts. This funding has done so much for me, my program, and most importantly my child care families!</p> <p>Second, I would like to comment about the EEC Lead alert email that came out on Thursday alerting programs (I believe only FCC programs were contacted) that there would be a change in disbursement amounts for May and June for the C3 funding.</p> <p>I love my profession! I am only 1 MTEL away from becoming a teacher. However, I will never take that test because I love all ages of children, I love the mixed ages, and I love my children that are lucky enough to spend their day with me and their siblings; I love my profession. I have been a licensed child care educator/provider for over 25 years. I was lucky enough to complete my Associates Degree and Bachelors Degree in Early Education and Care through your wonderful education grant. I am also a certified teacher, lead teacher, director, infant/toddler, preschool, and director II certified through EEC. I've seen the ups and downs, policy changes, and I also was an emergency provider during the entire pandemic. When we got back to business after that tough time, I thought the worst was behind us. Then sadly so many providers decided not to return to the field and of course the dreaded price increases across the board in our world.</p> <p>On a little different side note, I also attended every zoom meeting with Commissioner Sam to help provide feedback for updating the EEC FCC regs. Everyone in Child Care who spent time on this provided wonderful insight of how child care works in our systems and updated regs on how to provide us all longevity during these changing and crazy times, as well as update some really out of date regs. Now I read through your board minutes that you all are starting from ground zero. I was hopeful these changes would be happening way before now. These changes are so important. Please look over these notes we worked hard on to pull together the reg changes. These will be so refreshing and will energize all of our businesses.</p> <p>I am contracted under Kids Unlimited in Charlton, MA to take voucher children. I have had some amazing families that came to me with vouchers and I'm still family friends with them today. Currently the way enrollment has taken shape, my families I care for are middle income to lower income families (not within range to qualify for vouchers). These families are also clearly feeling the economic hardship of the inflation that is plaguing us all now. It's these families that don't ever catch a break. They don't qualify for aid of any type and work paycheck to paycheck. This funding was one way to help them see that they matter too.</p>
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	<p>With the grant, I'm able to give these families a little break in tuition and also not raise my rates. I have planned on the grant to help out through June. It is a tough situation I am in now and need to pass on to my families only receiving 25 or 30 percent of the funding. I am happy that the funding has been successful in increasing our provider/educator numbers. However, the providers that have been with you through the thick and thin of it for years and years, taking away the two months of full funding as promised, will force our hands to pass along the change to our families. I'm asking you wholeheartedly to reconsider this change.</p> <p>Also, I want to let you know how grateful I am that you all are proposing the funding continue in the next physical year. I am praying that the original formula is used to calculate individual funding. I feel so strongly that all children in childcare, providers/educators, and families should be treated equally across the board. We all provide the same care, follow the same rules/regs, and have the same goal to meet the basic, current, and future needs of our beautiful children.</p> <p>Thank you for listening!</p>
Nola Glatzel, Family Child Care Provider	<p><b>C3</b> - I want to first thank you for your dedicated support of Early Childhood Education in our state. I am writing with concern after receiving an email from the Department of Early Education and Care this morning in regard to changes in the Community Cares for Children program in the coming months. According to the email, some childcare providers and centers will see their C3 grant amount decrease in May and June due to lack of funding for this program, which was initially planned to continue through the end of the fiscal year.</p> <p>I became a Family Childcare Provider in 2019, and soon came to see that there was a gap between the amount that families can pay for childcare and the cost of running a high-quality program. I had families express to me that they were paying more for childcare than for their mortgage, that they were barely able to make money after their childcare expenses, and that that childcare costs were a deterrent for mothers to reenter the workforce. Meanwhile, even with the high cost of my program, I was barely able to make it work and I wasn't the only one. This was a problem long before COVID-19, but it was also heightened by the Pandemic. The C3 grant, originally funded through ARPA, was a lifeline to myself, many providers, and many families. Using C3 grants, I was able to give partial scholarships to some families, hardship scholarships to others, accept state vouchers for the first time, make needed renovations to my play space and outdoor space, and increase my assistants' hourly pay rate.</p>

	<p>I made my budget for this school year with the assumption that I would continue to receive the C3 grant in the amount of \$1666 per month. For this reason, I did not increase my rates this year, despite a \$200 increase in my rent, increased heating and cooling bills, increased food costs, and raising my employees' pay rate by \$2/hr. With the expectation of the C3 grant, I also gave one family a \$120 discount per month and gave another family a \$380 discount due to hardship when their third child was born.</p> <p>I accept students with vouchers, but I currently only have one student who receives a state voucher so I will receive 55% of the expected amount for May and June. With these changes, I will receive \$961/month instead of \$1666. While this may not seem like a big difference, it will be a financial challenge for me personally as I will either cause financial hardship to the families who have already signed a contract for the year, to my assistant, or to myself. I can't imagine raising rates midyear or decreasing the amount I pay my amazing and hardworking assistants, so it seems that I personally will take the \$700/month hit.</p> <p>I have attached my Family Childcare's profit and loss information for the past two years so that my income, expenses, and the importance of this grant can be understood. I implore you to please do all that is in your power to continue the funding for the C3 grant program through the end of the fiscal year. The email from the Department of Early Education and Care reads, "C3 has been a game changer for early education and care programs – this year contributing to a 7% increase in childcare programs, adding more than 10,600 child care slots across the state. The C3 formula is based on the number of programs and children served. C3's success in supporting new programs and classrooms to open is creating larger than expected growth. This means that the amount budgeted for C3 will need to be shared amongst more providers." I was so happy to see what a positive impact the C3 grants have had in the past several years. Let's not take a step backwards here, and remember the reason for this amazing growth.</p> <p>Working as a Family Childcare Provider is a challenging and at times, unstable job. Families withdraw their children at times with only a few weeks notice and we, as providers, have to scramble to fill spots and keep our incomes consistent. This grant has provided much-needed stability to our profession. Please do not let the Department of Education and Care be another cause of instability and unexpected</p>
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income loss in our profession. Please do what you can to keep funding as promised through the end of the fiscal year.

**2023 Profit and Loss**

**2023 INCOME**

**Total Income: \$112,387**

Parent Pay: \$43,010

State Grant: \$20,004

Truro Childcare Voucher: \$44,373

Eastham Childcare Voucher: \$5,000

**2023 Expenditures**

**Total Expenditures: \$112,739**

Rent: \$24,800

Owner Draw / Director Pay: \$24,000

Supplies / Art Materials / Toys: \$11,180

Food: \$4,140

Insurance: \$2,845

Repairs and Maintenance: \$4,220

*(including garbage, pure solutions, cleaning, and landscaping)*

Payroll Wages: \$30,163

Electric: \$6,653

Professional Development: \$660

Internet and Phone: \$2679

Advertising: \$535

Software, Subscriptions, and Memberships: \$864

**2022 Profit and Loss**

**2022 INCOME**

**Total Income: \$123,881**

Parent Pay: \$69,668

State Grant: \$16,160

Truro Voucher: \$36,553

Eastham Grant: \$1,500

**2022 Expenditures**

**Total Expenditures: \$123,881**

Rent: \$35,000

Owner Draw / Director Pay: \$31,107

Supplies / Art Materials / Toys: \$12,882

Food: \$2,581

Insurance: \$1,510

Repairs and Maintenance: \$5,928

*(including garbage, pure solutions, cleaning, and landscaping)*

Payroll Wages: \$17,697

	<p>Electric: \$5,851</p> <p>Professional Development: \$1,251</p> <p>Internet and Phone: \$2864</p> <p>Advertising: \$429</p> <p>Software, Subscriptions, and Memberships: \$1206</p> <p>New Website and Branding: \$5,575</p>
Andrew Kessler, Kessler Childcare Holdings	<p><b>C3</b> - I write today in advance of tomorrow's public comment section for the board meeting as I am unable to attend with such short notice. The short notice I am talking about is not about the timing of the meeting, but rather the change announced less than a week before the meeting regarding c3 grant funding. I have no issues with needing to take a haircut. However, I do have issues with the timing and the fact that the haircut amount is not being spread equally across all grant recipients. I.e., some providers will still receive full funding because others will take a 75% cut.</p> <p>C3 has been helpful to many centers in many ways. For my organization we have two programs on different ends of 495. Recognizing that the grant funds would not stay in perpetuity I had a tough time using them to increase salaries. Instead took a pizza pie approach where a quarter went towards salaries, a quarter towards operating, a quarter towards monthly bonuses to staff and the final quarter towards capital improvements. A strategy that has worked well for my programs rewarding staff, making much needed capital improvements and limiting the increase in tuition to below inflation rates for families we serve.</p> <p>Grants being expected on a fiscal calendar and then to have amounts cut so drastically when the monies have already been allocated for the fiscal year is an exceptionally large mountain to climb. I hope the board reconsiders the decision so that the haircut is more manageable. Thus allowing planned bonuses and capital improvements can go on as planned along with planned rate increases staying below inflation.</p> <p>On a side note, this seems to me like what happened during covid when voucher providers still were paid for their slots but non voucher providers received nothing from eec and had to scramble to pay necessary bills while shut down for covid. I understand the need to support voucher providers but at the cost to the rest of us. I am not sure that is the way to keep the childcare cliff that is happening in other states from happening here!</p> <p>Now to speak to the future of c3 grants. I do believe that the current system may be a little skewed. As I am sure many for profit centers are taking the money as just that profit. That will happen in any grant situation. I worked in the non-profit childcare sector for many years before starting my own for-profit programs. I know the struggles that non-profit centers face and the need they fill, especially for taking supportive slots. I once took supportive slots but between the waiting</p>

	<p>period to get paid and the low reimbursement rate I was unable to continue to do so as it was not financially feasible. I am however looking into it again especially as I provide reduced/free care to my staff and taking vouchers would alleviate some of the financial hardship. The eec provider voucher system was a great idea. Just wanted to say that.</p> <p>If the board plans to continue c3 grants based on the new allocation I strongly ask that you reconsider as a large swath of the commonwealth is not in supported slots and those providers should not be penalized for not accepting 33% supported slots. The math just does not work. If taxpayers' money is supposed to be for everyone, increasing voucher reimbursement rates and providing most of the c3 pot to voucher providers, you are not sharing the taxpayer funds equally and the result will be higher fees for non-supportive slots and as the data has shown potential closing of programs.</p> <p>So, my advice is to flip it on its head and give 25% more to programs that are 33% supported slots. To me that seems like a much more amicable way of sharing the funds than the current system. The good of the many in my mind must outway the needs of the few.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to hear me out.</p>
Missy Whitney, Haverhill Daycare	<p><b>C3</b> - First and foremost, I would like to say Thank you! Thank you for your attention to the Early Childhood field in Massachusetts. We have been so very grateful for the C3 grant as it has allowed us to pay our staff a semi-livable and a little closer to their deserved wage. 100% of the money received from the grant went to my staff in the form of bonuses. We recently were able to renew our contract for vouchers as we were unable to accept them in the past due to us giving our staff free daycare. This policy, as you know, led to our reimbursement rate with CCC being \$0. The same amount as our lowest paying child. I had reached out to the state many times over this rule and did not make any progress.. Someone finally listened, and I am so happy you have provided vouchers for staff and allowed us the rights to do as we wish in this area. Our staff deserve the extra benefits. We appreciate you listening and making a difference in our field.</p> <p>Sadly, even with all of this positive, there has come heartbreak and discouragement again. I was very disheartened to read that those of us, who are private paying centers or only have a few vouchers will be losing money from the C3 grant. With this funding I have not only been able to give my staff bonuses but I have been able to keep my tuition rate stable without an increase. My rate is currently affordable for many parents (currently lower than the CCC reimbursement rate). We do have many who struggle with their weekly payment but don't qualify for vouchers. We have offered some scholarship funding to make their care more affordable especially during a health crisis, accident, etc We did not get paid during the covid shut down like contracted centers did from the</p>

	<p>state. I couldn't justify in good conscious charging parents who weren't receiving care for months. I do not typically receive federal nor state funding/grants, as most primarily voucher centers do. I typically do not qualify as I am a small, non profit with minimal low income families; however, as I stated before, many of our families are struggling to pay their tuition. I am saddened to read that we are being cut from receiving our full grant payment and I feel we are often forgotten. This cut may bring about me losing some long term, high quality staff who need to make a livable wage. I will not be able to replace these staff with the current hiring selection crisis. I will also be forced to raise my tuition rates by 15% in order to make up the difference in staff salaries. This will of course effect the families we serve in a time when many are already struggling. We provide phenomenal care to our students, as all of our former and current licenser can tell you. We have participated in the ECSO program for 3 years and my staff are a rare find, 30-49 years of dedication by some. We are serving the children and grandchildren of our former students. You do not find that out there much today. We have a low staff turnover because of our happy environment but this financial situation/crisis is sure to have an effect on this going forward. I feel that we should not have to be the ones who always take the cut and are usually forgotten about for grants and funding.</p> <p>An across the board, universal cut to all centers would have been fair as there are so many of us out here struggling that are providing high quality care and an amazing curriculum to our students. Centers receiving subsidies are actually more financially stable than those not as we have seen in the past with the many closings of private care centers in this state. I hope that you will look at us with the same appreciation and recognize our needs are the same as those centers with primarily contracted slots.</p> <p>Thank you for all you do. We do appreciate the changes you have made over the years.</p>
Rebecca Blair, Children's Center of Lexington	<p><b>C3</b> - On behalf of the Board of Directors at the Children's Center of Lexington, I am writing to express our sincerest gratitude for the C3 Stabilization Grant awarded to our organization over the past few years. This grant has proven to be an invaluable asset to our center, enabling us to make significant enhancements that have positively impacted our staff and the families we serve.</p> <p>The contours of the C3 Stabilization Grant have been essential to the ongoing success of our program. The funding has provided us with the means to implement crucial improvements, particularly in the areas of staff compensation and benefits. With this funding, we were able to offer our dedicated staff members a much-needed increase in wages, along with enhanced benefits and professional development opportunities. These investments have not only recognized the hard work and</p>

	<p>dedication of our staff but have also contributed to a more sustainable and fulfilling work environment.</p> <p>One of the grant's most significant outcomes has been its positive impact on staff retention. By providing competitive wages and comprehensive benefits, we have seen a notable increase in employee satisfaction and loyalty. As you are well aware, staff retention is paramount to the success of any early childhood center, and the C3 Stabilization Grant has played a vital role in helping us maintain a stable and skilled workforce.</p> <p>In addition to supporting our staff, the grant has also allowed us to make improvements to our facilities and resources. We have been able to keep tuition rates reasonable for our families while updating classroom and playground equipment, ensuring that our environment remains safe, engaging, and conducive to learning.</p> <p>The support and investment provided through the C3 Stabilization Grant have had a profound and lasting impact on the Children's Center of Lexington, enabling us to fulfill our mission of providing high-quality early childhood education and care to our community. We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to utilize this funding to its fullest potential, and we remain committed to continuing our efforts to support the well-being and development of young children and their families.</p> <p>Once again, we extend our deepest appreciation to you and your team for your dedication to early childhood education and for your continued support of programs like ours. We cannot express to you how much this grant has benefited our program, and we know that future funds will continue to help our program flourish.</p>
Daniel and Megan Cuzzolino, Cambridge Nursery School	<p><b>C3</b> - I learned last week during our Cambridge Nursery School Board meeting that EEC is cutting the C-3 Grant funding by 25% in May and June and further that we do not yet know if the grant will continue into the new 24-25 school year.</p> <p>As we commemorate our 100th year as the country's oldest parent cooperative preschool, we have been reflecting on the ways in which we have been able to survive and thrive in the ever-changing economic and demographic climate in Cambridge.</p> <p>I can say with confidence and appreciation that the C-3 grants we have received to date have been vitally important to our ongoing operations in supporting staff and other daily school needs to best serve our students.</p> <p>I write to respectfully express my strong support for the continuation of these grants with the forthcoming budget approval from the Board.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and effort.</p>

<p>Marianne Maloney, Weston Wing</p>	<p><b>C3</b> - Firstly, please let me acknowledge the benefits the grant has brought to our program. The sudden and unplanned announcement regarding the large change in the grant awards has created a budgeting issue for our program. We will lose 75% of the grant. Having used the funds to increase salaries, benefits, vacation and professional development we are now going to have to pull back on our plans. For families, we will need to put forward a tuition increase. For teachers promised a livable salary and professional level benefits we will have to go back to the drawing board.</p> <p>My question is are we going to see more change or is this it? We feel, once again, at the bottom of the professional totem pole. Why when the early investments in providing high quality early ed and care reaps so many benefits.</p> <p>I wish we could have had at the very least two months time and consideration for our hard work in improving the lives of children and families.</p>
<p>Allegra Taylor, Children's Center of Lexington</p>	<p><b>C3</b> - I hope this message finds you well. As the Executive Director of the Children's Center of Lexington (CCL), I am writing to express our profound gratitude for the pivotal role the C3 Stabilization Grant has played in the sustainability and flourishing of our center over the past few years. The grant has not only been a lifeline during challenging times but has also been instrumental in allowing us to uphold our mission and expand our services in meaningful ways.</p> <p>CCL, as the longest-running full-day childcare service in Lexington, stands as a cornerstone in the community. Our commitment to providing high-quality early childhood education is unwavering, and the support from the C3 Stabilization Grant has been crucial in maintaining this commitment. One of the most significant impacts of the grant has been on our ability to increase teacher salaries significantly. This financial enhancement has enabled us to retain our invaluable teachers during a period when the education sector is experiencing unprecedented turnover. It's not an exaggeration to say that without this grant, we might have faced the heart-wrenching decisions of downsizing, closing classrooms, and parting ways with dedicated staff members.</p> <p>Moreover, the grant has empowered us to provide substantial scholarships to families in need. Operating in Lexington, where tuition rates are inherently high, we have been able to offer \$80,000 a year in free tuition to refugee and other high-risk families, thanks to the grant. This effort not only supports the children and families directly affected but also enriches our CCL community as a whole, fostering a diverse and inclusive environment. With ongoing financial support from the Early Education and Care (EEC), we aim to extend this offering to include recently relocated migrant families, further broadening our reach and impact within the community.</p>

	<p>While we are immensely thankful for the support we have received this past year, the reality is that continued financial assistance is essential for us to maintain and expand our services. The stability and enhancements provided by the C3 Stabilization Grant are foundational to our role as a pillar of the Lexington community. To continue being an outstanding member of this community and to sustain our contributions, we respectfully request ongoing support from the EEC.</p> <p>The Children's Center of Lexington is more than just a childcare provider; we are a place where families grow together, where children receive the foundational education and care they deserve, and where teachers find a rewarding and supportive work environment. Your continued support ensures that this invaluable work not only continues but also thrives.</p> <p>Thank you once again for the crucial support you have provided thus far. We are hopeful for the future and the possibility of continuing our fruitful partnership with the EEC, for the benefit of our community and the many families and children we serve.</p>
Alexa Vainqueur, Children's Center of Lexington	<p><b>C3</b> - We, the early childhood teachers at the Children's Center of Lexington, are reaching out to extend our heartfelt gratitude for the financial support provided by the C3 Stabilization Grant. The impact of this grant on both our professional lives and the quality of education and care we can offer to the children is truly significant.</p> <p>First and foremost, the grant has directly contributed to an improvement in our financial well-being through increased wages. This enhancement has not only recognized our dedication and hard work but has also significantly contributed to our personal and professional stability. In a field as demanding and as crucial as early childhood education, this financial support means we can continue to devote ourselves to the children and families we serve without the added stress of financial insecurity.</p> <p>Additionally, the grant has facilitated a substantial improvement in our school environment. The introduction of new materials and resources has transformed our classrooms into even more engaging and stimulating spaces for the children. These updates have allowed us to enhance our curriculum and provide a richer learning experience that supports the diverse needs of every child.</p> <p>The grant has also made it possible for us to benefit from outside consultation and support, further enriching our program. This opportunity has been invaluable in allowing us to implement best practices, stay current with the latest research in early childhood education, and continually improve the quality of care we provide.</p>

	<p>Perhaps most importantly, the increased professional development opportunities afforded by the grant have been transformative. These opportunities have enabled us to grow as educators, expand our skill sets, and stay abreast of the evolving landscape of early childhood education. Professional development is the cornerstone of maintaining high-quality education and care, and this grant has significantly increased our access to these vital resources.</p> <p>The C3 Stabilization Grant has had a profound impact on our work and the overall success of the Children's Center of Lexington. It has provided us with the necessary tools and resources to further our mission of fostering an environment that supports the holistic development of every child we have the privilege to teach.</p> <p>We are deeply thankful for your support and commitment to early childhood education. The investment in our program through the C3 Stabilization Grant demonstrates a genuine commitment to the well-being and future of our children and community.</p> <p>Thank you for recognizing the value of our work and for providing us with the means to excel further. We look forward to continuing to make a positive impact in the lives of the children and families we serve, with your ongoing support.</p>
Beth Sidel, 4 The Love of Learning Preschool	<p><b>C3</b> - My first response is regarding the email sent by EEC Thursday 3/7/24 of the change in C3 Grant allocation which I sent to the Governor, my Representatives and the Commissioner, followed by my thoughts regarding the grant for the new Fiscal Year 2025.</p> <p><b>**First Response/Letter sent 3/7/24**</b></p> <p>I am writing to you in response to the email that was sent out to providers today in regards to the C3 Grant.</p> <p>While I have been very appreciative of the grant money that has been helping predominantly women owned businesses in Early Childhood the last few years, I am extremely disappointed in this latest development.</p> <p>Many people were encouraged to open new programs over the last several months by many different organizations, including Neighborhood Villages. Due to these programs opening, many of whom are now STRUGGLING to find children to attend, VETERAN providers who have NEVER had ANY help or support for the last several decades, are going to get money ripped away from them. This is not just grossly unfair, but is DISCRIMINATORY.</p> <p>While I anticipated potentially losing the grant at the end of June, I was trying to make a plan. HOWEVER, I expected the money would AT LEAST</p>



	<p>last until June as that was communicated to us over and over. I used that money to HIRE a STUDENT INTERN for this semester who is lucky enough to have a HIGHLY EDUCATED VETERAN PROVIDER, be her mentor.</p> <p>So my options now are: to fire her, ask her to work unpaid, raise parent tuition, or take money out of my already subpar pay as a VETERAN PROVIDER with a MASTERS DEGREE!! This is completely unacceptable.</p> <p>Many providers, both FCC and Center Based are sharing similar experiences.</p> <p>If there is any way to remedy this situation, or at least make it fair for ALL children and providers, I URGE you to take corrective action immediately.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and I look forward to your response.</p> <p><b>**THOUGHTS GOING FORWARD***</b></p> <p>As I understand, going forward, the same money has been allocated to the C3 Grant which was not enough this fiscal year to sustain the number of programs accessing this grant. What is most worrisome is the vision that Massachusetts does not value ALL of the children in this state, ESPECIALLY the ones serviced by private pay providers, many of who serve children in MULTIPLE TOWNS.</p> <p>I am very concerned that the language being used in the bill being voted on Thursday 3/14/24 will be challenging to interpret and leave providers vulnerable for possible lawsuits. Not to mention, while I understand the voucher system is being worked on to make things easier for providers, it is definitely not there yet. Rates are still astronomically low for Family Childcare Providers, and there are still a lot of unfair stipulations on payment for vacation and days off. What other profession would someone with a Master's Degree who has been working over 28 years have to fight to be paid for even 1 week of vacation?</p> <p>I strongly urge you to consider funding the C3 grant for ALL providers, and revisit possibly adding a stipulation around attesting to take a voucher AFTER the voucher system is in a better place to PROPERLY SUPPORT providers.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
Elizabeth Yacteen, Miss Beths Daycare	<p><b>C3</b> - I Am a FCC provider located in East Longmeadow. I have been caring for and educating children in my town and community for over 30 years. The need for FCC in our community is crucial , as I have had a waitlist for 4 years, and receive inquiries daily for people in need of infant and toddler care.</p>

	<p>Without the use of assistants ,I would not be able to accommodate all the families that I have, as well as provide more intimate care with the help of assistants.</p> <p>Since covid closure, not only have I seen more children with extra needs due to non socialization outside of their homes, but alot of one on one is needed with a majority of my DC children.</p> <p>I am grateful that with the grant, it allows me to have the extra help, along with providing the children with lots of materials that help them learn while exploring and building strong social and emotional skills that will help them move on to prek or kindergarten with enrichment from all areas of development.</p> <p>Recently, private providers like myself were notified by ECC that the grant would be drastically reduced to those that fell in certain demographic communities. Unfortunately that is going to cut my grant to 25% of what I receive now. That will be devastating not only for myself, my assistants as well as my families that work hard and need childcare to help promote our community and state through the workforce..</p> <p>I feel like once again we are being discriminated against as we have families that pay privately, and pay their own child's tuition, without the state's help.</p> <p>How does this seem fair? I can assure you the families I care for are valuable and productive members of the community, however because they are able to pay childcare tuition,I will lose 75% of the grant which will mean I will have to close my program, and those families will be out of care despite being promised the FULL grant for fiscal year2024, once again we are left in limbo as to will we ?or won't we lose the grant promised. Also as a veteran provider of over 30 yrs, it is hard to see newly licensed providers who sign up for vouchers receive 100% of the grant and not be affected.</p> <p>I ask that you reconsider this discriminatory decision and make alll FCC providers feel recognized for their exemplary role as our children's caregivers.</p>
Juanita Gutierrez, Cambridge Nursery School	<p><b>C3</b> - I learned last week during our Cambridge Nursery School Board meeting that EEC is cutting the C-3 Grant funding by 25% in May and June and further that we do not yet know if the grant will continue into the new 24-25 school year.</p> <p>As we commemorate our 100th year as the country's oldest parent cooperative preschool, we have been reflecting on the ways in which we have been able to survive and thrive in the ever changing economic and demographic climate in Cambridge.</p>

	<p>I can say with confidence and appreciation that the C-3 grants we have received to date have been vitally important to our ongoing operations in supporting staff and other daily school needs to best serve our students.</p> <p>I write to respectfully express my strong support for the continuation of these grants with the forthcoming budget approval from the Board.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and effort.</p>
Lauren Begen, Cambridge Nursery School	<p><b>C3</b> - I learned last week during our Cambridge Nursery School Board meeting that EEC is cutting the C-3 Grant funding by 25% in May and June and further that we do not yet know if the grant will continue into the new 24-25 school year.</p> <p>As we commemorate our 100th year as the country's oldest parent cooperative preschool, we have been reflecting on the ways in which we have been able to survive and thrive in the ever changing economic and demographic climate in Cambridge.</p> <p>I can say with confidence and appreciation that the C-3 grants we have received to date have been vitally important to our ongoing operations in supporting staff and other daily school needs to best serve our students.</p> <p>I write to respectfully express my strong support for the continuation of these grants with the forthcoming budget approval from the Board.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and effort.</p>
Roxanne Cyrankowski, Fowler Road Family Preschool	<p><b>C3</b> - My name is Roxanne Cyrankowski and I am a licensed family childcare provider in Westfield. Since 1994, I have cared for infants through school age children in my home. I have worked with Valley Opportunity Council, New England Farmworkers Council, and DCF providing subsidized care for voucher children. I even took in one of the children as a foster home. While providing full-time care to multi-aged children, I participated in the very successful community partnership program for working families.</p> <p>When providers were encouraged to pursue a CDA credential, I was immediately on board and earned and renewed many times, until I received an associate degree. When providers were encouraged to participate in the QRIS, I was the first provider that Amy Carey from Preschool Enrichment Team walked through the process. It was a learning experience for both of us. At the time, I became a level one and was otherwise pursuing my degrees. That leads me to earning a teaching certificate, lead teaching certificate and then director I and II certificate. Following those certifications, I decided to pursue a bachelor's degree and this summer, I will graduate from Merrimack College with a degree in Family and Child Studies.</p>

	<p>When the pandemic caused providers to close their programs, many of us stepped up to provide care for those caring for our communities. We were scared, had minimal guidance, minimal PPE and still welcomed numerous children of complete strangers into our home, while exposing ourselves and our families to the virus. I lost three of my enrolled childcare families during this time and never refilled those spots.</p> <p>When providers in my town were afraid to reopen after the COVID closures, I set up a Facebook group to answer questions, provide support and guide them to the correct resources, and when parents went back to work and were frantically trying to find care because their providers closed, I guided them to Western Mass Licensed Childcare (Facebook group) to help them find new care.</p> <p>I am co-admin of Western Mass Licensed Childcare. We are a Facebook group that connects LICENSED providers, centers, and preschools with families looking for childcare. We currently have over 4,000 members. I see daily new providers have openings, and I see daily that seasoned providers who have been in business many years have openings. The C3 grant has allowed us to replace old, broken and outdated materials, curriculum, playground equipment and supplies with new, updated and age-appropriate materials that meet guidelines and regulations. We have hired assistants, provided livable wages to those assistants, gave bonuses, and were able to give families discounts and sliding-scale fees so they could afford to work. The C3 grant let us continue to do what we love! We didn't have to close. We didn't have to raise our rates.</p> <p>I am currently in a position that I didn't expect. I planned on the C3 grant through July as promised. My assistant is in college, taking early education courses, with the help of the ECE scholarship. She has already earned her CDA and preschool teacher certifications. Together, we run an amazing program for children ages 3-5. I worked THIRTY years to build my business and reputation. I was proud that my daughter wanted to become a provider like myself. She has shown her dedication and passion to our profession.</p> <p>What concerns me is that I might have to let her go. I wasn't expecting to lose the grant for May and June, and I wasn't expecting to lose 75% because I don't have three voucher children in my program. Voucher rates don't pay teachers! I can't afford to work TWO FULL MONTHS before I receive payment. Payroll for my assistant is weekly. It isn't monthly. I kept my rates low for working families, and now I will suffer the consequences.</p> <p>As a SEIU trained provider mentor, I watched new providers flood the market. I watched them open programs with newly designed and decorated classrooms, new materials and supplies, and new</p>
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	<p>playgrounds. I have worked thirty years to afford the materials I have. The commercial playground that I own came from a center in Boston. It is disheartening to see these brand new providers with cookie-cutter websites and copy and pasted advertisements promoting childcare services, yet they join our groups and don't know the simplest of EEC regulations. I think it was in haste that they were pushed through trainings, given stipends and flooded the field in towns that don't even support the providers who have been open for years. These brand new providers are shocked that they are struggling to find families to fill their programs. They now are living on the promised C3 grants. Please rethink your stance to cut our grants to 75%. It will have a detrimental effect on the childcare field.</p>
<p>Renee Buddington, Children's Center of Lexington</p>	<p><b>C3</b> - We, the early childhood teachers at the Children's Center of Lexington, are reaching out to extend our heartfelt gratitude for the financial support provided by the C3 Stabilization Grant. The impact of this grant on both our professional lives and the quality of education and care we can offer to the children is truly significant.</p> <p>First and foremost, the grant has directly contributed to an improvement in our financial well-being through increased wages. This enhancement has not only recognized our dedication and hard work but has also significantly contributed to our personal and professional stability. In a field as demanding and as crucial as early childhood education, this financial support means we can continue to devote ourselves to the children and families we serve without the added stress of financial insecurity.</p> <p>Additionally, the grant has facilitated a substantial improvement in our school environment. The introduction of new materials and resources has transformed our classrooms into even more engaging and stimulating spaces for the children. These updates have allowed us to enhance our curriculum and provide a richer learning experience that supports the diverse needs of every child.</p> <p>The grant has also made it possible for us to benefit from outside consultation and support, further enriching our program. This opportunity has been invaluable in allowing us to implement best practices, stay current with the latest research in early childhood education, and continually improve the quality of care we provide.</p> <p>Perhaps most importantly, the increased professional development opportunities afforded by the grant have been transformative. These opportunities have enabled us to grow as educators, expand our skill sets, and stay abreast of the evolving landscape of early childhood education. Professional development is the cornerstone of maintaining high-quality education and care, and this grant has significantly increased our access to these vital resources.</p>

	<p>The C3 Stabilization Grant has had a profound impact on our work and the overall success of the Children's Center of Lexington. It has provided us with the necessary tools and resources to further our mission of fostering an environment that supports the holistic development of every child we have the privilege to teach.</p> <p>We are deeply thankful for your support and commitment to early childhood education. The investment in our program through the C3 Stabilization Grant demonstrates a genuine commitment to the well-being and future of our children and community.</p> <p>Thank you for recognizing the value of our work and for providing us with the means to excel further. We look forward to continuing to make a positive impact in the lives of the children and families we serve, with your ongoing support.</p>
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**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
EARLY LEARNING CENTER**



**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
EARLY LEARNING CENTER**

**Sunday March 10, 2024**

***The Commissioner***  
**50 Milk Street, 14th Floor**  
**Boston, MA 02109**

Dear Commissioner's Office,

We would like to introduce ourselves, Gail Forbes Harris Educational & Community Advisory Committee Chair and Sandra Réjouis-Bernard Parent/Guardian Advocacy Chair. We are reaching out to your office to advocate for the LAMOUR Clinic and LAMOUR Community Health Institute, Inc. (referred to as "LAMOUR"), specifically their Youth Development Training Program. We have been providing services since 2009. This organization is dedicated to offering high-quality educational, behavioral health, and culturally competent therapeutic care to children, adults, and families in communities of Massachusetts.

Since May 2023, we have been in the process of renewing our Department of Early Education and Care licenses. Despite efforts to engage with various individuals within the Department of Early Childhood Education through meetings and correspondence over the past year, we have faced challenges and technical issues that are hindering our license renewal progress.

Similar to the recently opened Bentley Academy Innovation School/Early Childhood Center, we are eagerly anticipating our planned opening in the Summer of 2024. Due to this deadline our urgency to address this issue is of the most important. For more information on our vision, mission, see our new site location and video tour of our location at 161 Forbes Rd, please visit [\[Vision Site 161 Forbes Rd Braintree, MA\]](#).

Currently, LAMOUR is working on renewing licenses for the following program sites:

**LAMOUR Clinic located at 44 Diauto Dr, in Randolph, MA Click Link below**

[LAMOUR Clinic](#)

We are currently looking for support in our Renewal of Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) licensure for Center for Children with Special Needs Large Group and School Age operating as LBD Youth Development Early Learning Center

**LAMOUR Community Health Institute, Inc located at 161 Forbes Rd, Braintree, MA Click link below**

[YOUTHDELC](#)

We are currently looking for support in our Renewal of Provisional Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) licensure and in the process of obtaining Massachusetts Department of Elementary Secondary Education (DESE) licensure for Braintree site Special Education Therapeutic Early Learning Preschool operating as LCHI Youth Development Early Learning Center

44 Diauto Drive  
Randolph MA 02368

Phone (781) 885-7252  
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[YOUTHDELC.org](#)

161 Forbes Road  
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Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Services

Family Support and Stabilization Services



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The renewal of these licenses not only create job opportunities but also offer educational pathways for individuals in the communities we serve, aligning with the Commonwealth's workforce development mission. We kindly request a meeting or call to discuss our concerns and seek guidance on facilitating the licensing renewal process. The non-renewal of our license has impacted our ability to open our new site location, provide services, miss funding opportunities, and provide job opportunities over the past year. As advocates for black, indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) communities, we are dedicated to advancing these valuable services. Your assistance in navigating this impasse would be greatly appreciated.

Our committee advocacy members are looking forward to meeting with you. To extend an opportunity to get to know our program better and the vision of our sites. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Gail Forbes Harris

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Acting Director of Education

Educational & Community Advisory Committee Chair

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Family Support and Stabilization Services



March 11, 2024

To the Members of the Board of Early Education and Care,

We write to you today with significant fear for the entire early childhood education sector of our Commonwealth and we are forced to demand a reevaluation of the sudden decrease in C3 FY24 funding and an increase in funding for FY25.

Our Commonwealth is in the middle of an early childhood education crisis—both in terms of cost and access. **Massachusetts already has the most expensive childcare costs in the country.** For the families who choose to stay or have no option to leave, greater demand for affordable, convenient childcare spots than exist causes significant stress and forces parents—and disproportionately women—to leave the workforce.

**The significantly higher than expected demand for C3 grants is a warning sign that demands further action, not less.** The answer is not also to give more to fewer organizations. The answer is to meet the demand of our early childhood education centers and to ensure the stability of the thousands of families that rely on these ECEs to pay our bills, to support our children, and to advance ourselves. **You must demand that your budget match the demand of these vital institutions, without which our economy would not function.**

Our children attend or attended The Family Cooperative (TFC) in Watertown, MA. **With the changes to FY24 C3 funding, TFC will receive \$24,000 less in funding over just two months.** Our directors and teachers work tirelessly to create a warm, supportive, joy-filled environment in which our children have thrived. And they do so for far less pay than their worth. Their budget is incredibly tight as we know they are for so many ECEs in this Commonwealth. What they accomplish on a shoe-string budget is nothing short of a miracle and a testament to their will, creativity, and grit to meet the needs of their community—but that can only last for so long.

**For FY24, your adjusted grant amounts undermine every single organization with whom you set expectations at the beginning of the year.** To give two months notice for that significant of a change in funding is disrespectful, is unrealistic, and threatens the viability of centers and schools across the Commonwealth who are working every day simply to exist.

**For FY25, your diluted allotment of grants threatens the stability of the entire sector.** COVID-19 did not cause our ECE crisis. It simply made the crisis impossible to ignore. Just because the problem is larger than you anticipated does not mean it can once again be ignored. **You must answer the call to support our ECEs.**

Please show the families of Massachusetts that you care about them. That you care about women. That you care about access to childcare that allows parents like us to be members of the workforce and to support our families.

Sincerely,

**Marissa Finer**

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**Patricia & Terence McCarthy**

Teachers and working parents of a former TFC student (Age 11)  
[tjm087@gmail.com](mailto:tjm087@gmail.com)

## Board of Early Education and Care:

My name is Gina Tiberio Hamilton and I am a licensed private pay family child care provider in Shrewsbury. Since 1990, I have nurtured and educated well over 100 children ranging in age from 5 weeks thru kindergarten with elementary school age children attending during out of school hours. I also administer the Massachusetts Family Child Care Providers Group which presently includes 929 licensed family child care providers from across the State. On behalf of the group, I write today to implore you to consider continuing the C-3 grant funding for ALL family child care providers regardless of the zip code in which they live or the incomes of the families for whom they care.

The C-3 grants have had a significant and essential impact on all providers but specifically, I want to address the difference it has made for private pay providers and those who have signed on to take subsidies but do not presently have any subsidy families enrolled. The grants have:

1. Allowed providers to get out from under the debt incurred during the mandated shut down when most providers did not receive a penny of tuition.
2. Funded much needed improvements and repairs to physical space therefore making programs safer and more inviting.
3. Enabled providers to hire assistants and increase capacity which meant serving more families.
4. Provided funding to avoid raising tuition rates during a time when food, water, oil, electricity, gas, and supply rates skyrocketed.
5. Gave providers the option of offering sibling discounts and tuition breaks to struggling families.
6. Afforded the luxury to purchase materials for science, sensory, music, language arts, math activities and more as well as gross motor equipment for outdoor play to enhance the children's learning experiences.
7. Took off the stress of enrollment vacancies that even veteran providers who have always had waiting lists are experiencing due to parents keeping their babies home for the first year juggling their care with working from home, families enrolling part time with grandparents caring for the children to keep tuition bills affordable, and more children leaving care to attend preschool.
8. Kept the doors open – the doors that opened years and, in many cases, decades ago – the doors thousands of children have walked through and became part of the child care families where they were nurtured and educated while their parents worked.
9. Enabled providers to “breathe” as the funding alleviated stress when vacancies occurred and slots remained open for weeks or months and when a hot water tank, heating system or roof needed to be replaced, peeling paint needed to be scraped and the house repainted, a new fence installed, the septic system

needed work and any of the other major expenses that had to be dealt with to continue to be a licensed provider in our State. Getting a break from chronic worry, the joy of being able to improve the physical space and purchase learning materials and equipment to improve the children's experience has had a considerable impact on the mental health of providers.

The recent 75% reduction of grant funding for private pay providers and those providers enrolled for subsidies but without any enrolled has been devastating. Many are preparing to let their assistants go as they depended on the grant to pay them. Without an assistant, the provider is mandated to return to a license for six meaning four families will be asked to leave the program. There is no question that rates will be increased for without the grant funding, providers cannot afford the exorbitant increases in the cost of food, water and sewer, electricity, oil, equipment, supplies, repairs, liability insurance, etc. Sadly, providers will close their programs which not only hurts them financially and increases our State's unemployment rate but has a negative impact on the families in the provider's community as they will experience less availability.

Our gratitude as recipients of the Commonwealth Cares For Children grants is immense. We have been able to increase capacity and serve more families, improve quality, and get relief from the chronic stress of operating a child care program post pandemic.

Please understand that ALL children deserve and need care and support as do ALL family child care providers. Making quality child care affordable and accessible is NOT reserved for only those children of a particular zip code or families of a certain income. Being able to continue to provide quality care and help raise and educate the future is not only the goal of providers who reside in communities deemed vulnerable. We are one dedicated field serving one population in one State. Please support us equally.

Thank you for your dedication to the families across Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Gina Tiberio Hamilton (Over In The Meadow FCC)

& The Members of the Massachusetts Concerned Family Child Care Providers

Dear Governor Healy, Senator Comerford, Representative Blais, Senator McGovern, EEC Board of Directors, Mr. Lewis, Ms. Spilka, and Commissioner Kershaw,

My letter is in regards to the following email which providers received Thursday, March 7, 2024.

*Dear Provider,*

*Due to greater than expected growth in the Commonwealth Cares for Children C3 program over the past several months, EEC must make adjustments to C3 monthly payments for some programs in May and June to live within fiscal year (FY) 2024 budgeted funding levels.*

*All programs who currently participate in C3 will continue to receive funding through June 2024 and Governor Healey has proposed continuing C3 in FY 2025. The state's 2025 fiscal year begins July 1, 2024.*

*Starting with May 2024 C3 payments, some early education and care programs across the state will experience a **decrease in their** monthly payment amount as follows:*

- **No change:**
  - Programs whose enrollment is made up of 33% or more of children receiving EEC child care financial assistance (known as "vouchers" or "contracts").
  - Head Start (Head Start) and Early Head Start (Early Head Start) programs.
- **55% of regular monthly C3 payment:**
  - Programs whose enrollment is made up of less than 33% of children receiving EEC child care financial assistance (known as "vouchers" or "contracts") but are serving at least one child receiving EEC financial assistance, and/or
  - Programs that operate in a highest SVI community.
- **30% of regular monthly C3 payment:**
  - Programs who do not currently serve any children receiving EEC child care financial assistance but have a voucher agreement or contract for EEC financial assistance and do not operate in a highest SVI community.
- **25% of regular monthly C3 payment:**
  - Programs who do not currently serve any children receiving EEC child care financial assistance, do not have a voucher agreement, and do not operate in a highest SVI community.

*C3 has been a game changer for early education and care programs – this year contributing to a 7% increase in child care programs, adding more than 10,600 child care slots across the state. The C3 formula is based on the number of programs and children served. C3's success in supporting new programs and classrooms to open is creating larger than expected growth. This means that the amount budgeted for C3 will need to be shared amongst more providers. With these changes, EEC is ensuring that C3 continues to reach all programs universally, while directing greater resources to programs serving low- and moderate-income working families.*

As a director of a small group child-care program, this email held **devastating** news. In my very long history of child-care in the state of Massachusetts, the C3 grant was the first time that we have **EVER** received a source of income whose purpose was to support program staff. Using the funds as proposed, our program hired two teaching assistants and raised the low income of our other teachers as well as provided decent benefits (sick/vacation time – though they all still lack a health care or retirement package.)

**The direct result of the cuts as proposed for our program staff means:**

- All teachers will take a sudden and unplanned pay decrease.
- All teachers will lose their benefit package (or have it greatly reduced).
- Two teacher aides will unexpectedly lose their jobs.

**The direct result of the cuts as proposed to our children and families means:**

- Higher children to staff ratio which is a **huge** burden given the challenges faced by all children in all programs; meaning it will be impossible to meet the many needs of those in care and desired classroom results will not be achieved.
- Children will experience teacher "burnout" and the return of high staff turnover. Prior to the C3 grant, our program had as many as seven different teachers in each year due to inadequate salary. No matter which district children live in – or their level of poverty – this is unhealthy for all.
- Tuition increases including families who have taken on second jobs just to survive.
- As our aides fill in as our substitute teachers as needed - as there is no available pool of substitutes especially since Covid (for a variety of reasons) – **our program will need to close** if staff is out sick or on vacation. Due to the C3 grant, we have not had to close since implemented as we have available substitutes. We are a child-care program and this will cause major problems for our families.

**The related but more indirect result of the cuts is the potential to close the program.** This weekend is only the second time since 1995 that we have talked about throwing our hands in and just plain giving up. The first time was through Covid and we were very close to not reopening our doors as the finances were just too bleak. The reality is that it is just too hard, year after year, paying employees low salary and not offering decent benefits. The women working in our program are not supplementing family income; they **ARE** the family income. And this week, they need to be told that they are going to experience a decreased paycheck. C3 brought such hope to our program and made a major difference in the

lives of our community children. And now that is being cut 75%. **75%!** Who can possibly come up with a budget that can support that time of decrease? I challenge all of you as readers to contact me and help us solve this pending problem. **We are at an absolute lose. And, the bottom line is, our program never intended to become one of custodial care; we are an educational facility, but that task cannot be achieved without financial assistance. Without the continued funds that we have been receiving from C3, we will be literally taking the Education out of the ECC and we will sadly become an Early Care facility.**

Everyone working in the direct care of children knows that without public assistance, the Early Education and Care workforce suffers which has a huge impact on classroom quality and access.

**The direct result if we close our program (which is almost full for the coming September when children head off to kindergarten).**

- There will only remain two non-school based programs in our four-town district. And one of those programs is half infant toddler and half preschool, and one is half-day. We will be getting close to a child-care dessert.

**And finally, the method of redistribution feels completely unfair, discriminatory, and off-base.** All educators understand that some populations are far more vulnerable than others; however, there are a lot of variables that should be taken into consideration when tying program funding to risk factor. The year is 2024 and we have just come off a worldwide pandemic and our economy has taken a steep decline which is something that has affected **everyone** regardless of the 2020 stated average census income. My families are all suffering from one challenge or another, which means their children are suffering as well. The climate is one of the bleakest we have experienced.

Though we know Head Start has a known vulnerable population, the fact that they are not taking any of this decrease regardless of their receipt of federal and state funds seems unjust. Though my school is in a lower SVI district, **the C3 grant is ALL the funding we receive!** Ditto on the fact that some of the 7% of new programming is through Neighborhood Villages which has a proposed five-year budget that makes us salivate! We don't even come close to even dreaming about the type of money they are talking about receiving yet they are able to participate in our lose of 75% of our allocation.

Additionally, our school typically has **ONLY three to four children who live in our district as we don't enroll by zip code.** The other children come from higher SIV districts and this is not being taken into consideration. Each year we have children from Greenfield, Turners Falls, Montague, South Hadley, Hatfield, and Holyoke. Despite this, the procedure to cut is **being broad brushed** and is not based on fact. **It is based on assumption** that we only serve those directly living in our community. **It is based on assumption** that our teachers earn a living wage. **It is based on assumption** that our tuition rates are higher than higher SIV communities. None of that is true, these are not facts. And, though we do not currently have a voucher child, our door is open to any who come to the door. We are being literally punished because we don't have a current opening in our program.

**Please consider revising this proposed format as it is going to cause total disruption and possible the closing of long-term programs.** We have just gotten our feet back on the ground and now you are pulling the rug right out from under us! We will once again be literally clinging to the ledge with our fingertips and we are just getting worn to the bone from all the work it takes to hold tight. **C3 has been the only lifeline private, non-school based programs have EVER received and it has benefited all of our children and our families.**

There has to be a different remedy that will be fair to all of the children and families throughout the mixed delivery system that the Commonwealth prides. I apologize for the length but there is so much at stake for the children we are supposed to care about.

Extremely disappointed and disheartened,  
Laura Winter, Small World Preschool  
[Lwinter5@yahoo.com](mailto:Lwinter5@yahoo.com); 413.362.2305



**HOW MASSACHUSETTS COULD BETTER COORDINATE INFORMATION AND SERVICES  
FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO AGE FIVE**

**Statement of  
Diane Schilder\*  
Senior Fellow, Urban Institute**

**before the  
Massachusetts Board of Early Education and Care**

**PUBLIC BOARD MEETING**

**March 13, 2024**

\*The views expressed are my own and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders. This testimony provides excerpts from a forthcoming report recommending action to create a system of information and connections for Massachusetts families seeking early childhood services.

I thank Maia Berlow and Fiona Blackshaw for helpful comments and edits in preparing this testimony and our research team for work on the project. The research team includes Kimberly Lucas, Elly Miles, Eve Mefferd, Jonah Norwitt, Justin Doromal, and Paige Sonoda.

Chair Belsito, Secretary of Education Tutwiler, and members of the board, thank you for the opportunity to provide a statement today.

I am a Massachusetts resident and a senior fellow at the Urban Institute, a nonpartisan, nonprofit policy research organization. I recently concluded a research project designed to capture evidence about access to early childhood information and services for Massachusetts families with children under age 5. The views I express today are my own and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders.

In our study we heard from 104 family members, 32 early childhood service providers and administrators, and 20 business leaders, policymakers, community leaders, and others with a vested interest in early childhood services and systems. We heard about families' struggles getting information and connections to needed early childhood services and providers' frustration navigating inefficient and different policies and regulations across sectors. Our definition of early childhood services included services related to health and well-being, family and caregiver support, education and care, and community engagement.

Our research team found a pressing need for a state-funded system that provides comprehensive and timely information and connections to early childhood services. Families and service providers alike told us they are on their own navigating a patchwork of information and services rather than an early childhood **system**:

1. Although we focused on infrastructure to support an early childhood system, we heard that *services* including the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Program and the Child Care Financial Assistance Programs need adequate funding so families can access needed services.
2. We also heard that families and many service providers do not know where to find information and connections to early childhood services. Families told us that taking time away from work and caregiving to seek the information they need is stressful and often unproductive.
3. Families and service providers told us they face confusion and inefficiencies because publicly funded early childhood services are administered in different places, have unique eligibility requirements, and are not coordinated. One community leader told us, "We have 30 different databases, some of which are required by different funders. This isn't a cross-agency problem—this is just within our own agency."
4. Coordinating services for families in each town and municipality throughout the Commonwealth is very difficult for service providers and families alike.
5. While over 50 initiatives currently exist, they are inadequately funded, and the lack of a sustained commitment means service delivery is inefficient and families are confused.

To address this issue, we recommend policies that coordinate the patchwork of Massachusetts' early childhood services and long-term state funding for an early childhood infrastructure that connects families to information and services. This approach could address several problems we documented by

- aligning, coordinating, and building on current initiatives, leveraging their expertise and capacity while reducing inefficiencies;

- establishing state and local processes that engage the full range of early childhood services and people with a vested interest in them , including businesses, philanthropies, families, service providers, and community leaders; and
- ensuring the long-term viability of current services by adequately funding C3, child care assistance, and funding for early childhood infrastructure that supports comprehensive coordinated information and services .

This is a systems-level problem and requires systems-level solutions.

I appreciate your time and consideration of these comments and welcome any future opportunity to share research and data with the board.

For more information about our project's findings and recommendations, see <https://www.urban.org/projects/informing-policy-strengthen-early-childhood-infrastructure-massachusetts-families-children>.





# CONNECTING THE DOTS

INFRASTRUCTURE TO HELP MASSACHUSETTS  
FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN  
CONNECT TO SERVICES



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# ABOUT THE URBAN INSTITUTE

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit research organization that provides data and evidence to help advance upward mobility and equity. We are a trusted source for changemakers who seek to strengthen decisionmaking, create inclusive economic growth, and improve the well-being of families and communities. For more than 50 years, Urban has delivered facts that inspire solutions—and this remains our charge today.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was funded by the Commonwealth Children’s Fund. We are grateful to them and to all of our funders, who make it possible for Urban to advance its mission.

The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders. Funders do not determine research findings or the insights and recommendations of Urban experts. Further information on the Urban Institute’s funding principles is available at [urban.org/fundingprinciples](https://urban.org/fundingprinciples).

We are grateful to the many people in Massachusetts who provided insights, perspectives, and recommendations.

### They represent the following parts of early childhood systems:

- health and well-being
- education and care
- family and caregiver support
- community engagement<sup>1</sup>

### They also include the following:

- **104 Massachusetts family members** who participated in focus groups and completed surveys
- **32 Massachusetts early childhood service administrators and providers**, who oversee organizations and provide direct services to families
- People who generously offered their time and expertise to participate in our project’s **steering committee**, whose names appear in appendix D.
- **20 people with a vested interest in coordinated early childhood systems** who shared perspectives with us, **including state and community policymakers, business leaders, and people overseeing early childhood services**

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# CONNECTING THE DOTS: INFRASTRUCTURE TO HELP MASSACHUSETTS FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN CONNECT TO SERVICES

Nearly 70,000 babies are born in Massachusetts each year (Hamilton, Martin, and Osterman 2022). From birth through age five, these children experience a crucial period of growth, developing more rapidly than in any other period of their lives (Shonkoff and Phillips 2000).<sup>2</sup> In an ideal world, these children and their families would be surrounded by easily accessible and interconnected resources to help them navigate these critical early years, putting them on a trajectory toward optimal growth and development. Instead, research suggests many families are on their own when it comes to finding resources and services that will help them guide their children to the best possible start in life (Forry et al. 2013). This uneven access can exacerbate equity gaps that negatively affect families, particularly those who live furthest from opportunity. Until now the extent of this problem, and the possible solutions for Massachusetts families and service providers, have not been well documented.

To address this gap, a research team from the Urban Institute and Northeastern University carried out a yearlong project. The project documented people's experiences in Massachusetts, identified existing services and supports, and developed policy recommendations. The project developed recommendations based on the perspectives of more than 100 families with children from birth to age 5, as well as service providers and others with a vested interest in early childhood services in Massachusetts. We reviewed published research and publicly available information about publicly and philanthropically funded initiatives designed to meet families' needs for information about, and connections to, early childhood services. Ultimately, we developed recommendations for Massachusetts' design and implementation of a system of providing families with information about, and connections to, services. We refer to this system as infrastructure.<sup>3</sup> This report presents the project's findings and recommendations.

## BACKGROUND AND METHODS IN BRIEF

The project team began our work by reviewing a recent Legislative Commission's report (EECERC 2022) and a statewide consensus Early Childhood Agenda<sup>4</sup> that prioritized the need for local infrastructure to support families with young children throughout Massachusetts. These documents highlighted the importance of local information and connections, given the variation across the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts. The project team focused on local early childhood infrastructure to provide information, connections, and services so the systems could be tailored to differences in geographic, sociocultural, demographic, linguistic, and political contexts across Massachusetts.<sup>5</sup> The team then engaged in a series of data collection and analysis activities described in box 1 on the next page.

## BOX 1

### METHODS IN BRIEF

We spoke to more than 100 people in Massachusetts, including families, service providers, program administrators, policymakers, advocates, representatives of social service networks, and business leaders. We also administered surveys that families completed. To document existing initiatives, we reviewed public websites and existing research. We crafted our project to address the following questions:

- **What are the experiences and perceptions** of families, service providers, and others with a vested interest in early childhood services related to accessing information about, and connections to, early childhood services?
- **What efforts exist** in Massachusetts and selected initiatives across the country to support families' access to information about, and connections to, services, and what does existing research suggest about these efforts?
- **What recommendations emerge** from interviews with families, service providers, and others with a vested interest in early childhood services; an analysis of published research; and a review of existing efforts?

We also conducted a landscape review (Miles et al. 2024). We engaged a steering committee of state and community leaders, including policymakers and parents who reviewed the findings and informed the refinement of the recommendations. Appendix A provides additional details about the study methods and the terms and definitions used throughout the report.

---

**We use the term infrastructure to refer to the system that provides families with information about, and connections to, early childhood services.**

---

Research shows that to produce benefits and desired long-term outcomes, the quality of early childhood services is important, and services must be available. A recent Economic Review Commission report (EECERC 2022) and the Early Childhood Agenda<sup>6</sup> prioritize specific statewide policies and funding to improve quality and increase the availability of services. Quality is defined in many ways, but consensus reveals quality services meet families' needs and reflect cultural and linguistic competence. The Urban and Northeastern research team acknowledges the importance of quality and availability but focused the research on infrastructure that provides families with information about, and connections to, services.

TABLE 1  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

## We Found

## We Recommend

- 1 We found a **pressing need** for Massachusetts families with children from birth to age 5 to obtain information on, and connections to, early childhood services. Current public funding for early childhood services and infrastructure is inadequate to meet the need.
- 2 We found families rely on multiple sources to learn about the early childhood services they need, and perceive a **patchwork—rather than a system—**of information on, and connections to, services.
- 3 We found a **formal state role is viewed as valuable** in supporting local early childhood infrastructure, as some features should be universally applied across the Commonwealth.
- 4 We found some **infrastructure components need to be determined at the local level** to be tailored to the specific needs of the locality.
- 5 We found families and service providers are **not aware of many of the initiatives** that currently exist across the Commonwealth.
- 6 We found **philanthropic and business engagement** is needed in addition to public funding.

- 1 We recommend **comprehensive legislation** and a commitment to **sustained state investment** to support the creation and implementation of local early childhood infrastructure in each community.
- 2 We recommend **an improved system that coordinates and aligns with existing initiatives that combine a “hub” and “no-wrong-door” approach** in the communities where they exist.
- 3 We recommend the creation of an **interagency state-level team of leaders** that works to align early childhood systems **and support standardization** of local infrastructure.
- 4 We recommend development of both a **process and funding sources that foster innovation and offer flexibility** to create infrastructure relevant to the local context, driven by a consortium in each locality that brings together providers, families, and others with a vested interest.
- 5 We recommend **an investment in clear and descriptive branding** so that families and providers can easily identify and find trusted sources of early childhood information and connections.
- 6 We recommend **formal collaboration among leaders from the public sector, philanthropy, and business** to support innovation in the design and implementation of local early childhood infrastructure.

## FINDINGS

This report presents evidence and recommendations based on an analysis of the evidence. The key finding is that a pressing need exists for families in Massachusetts to obtain information about, and connections to, early childhood services. Current funding is inadequate to meet families' needs despite the existing patchwork of initiatives. To address this need, we recommend legislation and an associated public investment in early childhood infrastructure. We developed six key findings and associated recommendations, presented in table 1.

We analyzed data from focus groups, interviews, analyses of existing initiatives, and research to document evidence of existing needs and the consequences people perceive of not addressing the need.

### 1 We found a pressing need for Massachusetts families with children from birth to age 5 to obtain information on, and connections to, early childhood services. Current public funding for early childhood services and infrastructure is inadequate to meet the need.

Despite the strong evidence of improved outcomes for families who access connections to needed services (Enlow, Passarella, and Lorch 2017; Gillispie 2021; Masten, Lombardi, and Fisher 2018; Novoa 2020; Schneider and Gibbs 2022),<sup>7</sup> our study participants told us the following:

- In Massachusetts, most families with young children who participated in our study feel they are navigating a maze to learn what services are and are not available, get connected to services, and obtain most early childhood services. Service providers and people with a vested interest also told us families must navigate a maze and have challenges being connected to services.
- Lacking connections to services is causing stress and delays in obtaining services for many families in Massachusetts. Most families who participated in our study told us they have had difficulty obtaining information about early childhood services and have wasted time and money seeking services. Many told us they have experienced delays in getting early childhood services, such as speech and language services and early education and care. These delays cause additional stress, compounding the strain families told us they feel when attempting to find information and connection to services.
- Local and tailored information about, and connections to, services best meet the needs of most families participating in our study, according to focus group participants and survey respondents. Many study participants told us they believe there is a role for local infrastructure to support families seeking early childhood services.



My biggest frustration is searching for child care services....It's hard when you have a whole list of 10 people to call, but then when you whittle it down and do all the calling while you're watching your kids, while you're trying to work from home, [and each provider has a waitlist]. So I know it would be hard to do, but it would be a nice resource to be able to have someone tell me who knows what's open and available who has done all of that for me.





## FINDINGS, CONTINUED

Evidence highlights the promise of several existing initiatives to connect families to services but reveals inadequate funding for many in the state (Miles et al. 2024). Current infrastructure efforts fail to meet the existing need according to study participants.

- The low wages of most sectors of the early childhood workforce have resulted in an inadequate supply of workers and associated delays accessing information about, and connections to, services such as family engagement and caregiver support services, early education and care, and community engagement opportunities. Families in our study reported reducing their labor force participation because they could not find early education and care, leading to financial and emotional stress. Some depend on informal arrangements, relying on family and friends or using local parenting social media sites to find early education and care. Although our study focused on connections to services, many study participants noted that infrastructure to support families' connections to services requires adequate public funding for each service.
- Budgets of some state early childhood service initiatives designed to connect families to services have not increased for a long time. Multiple publicly funded service providers told us they have been struggling to provide high-quality information about, and connections to, services with budgets that have not increased commensurate with inflation. Many reported that family engagement facilitators and other initiatives connect families to services, but it is challenging to retain staff because many publicly funded initiatives have not experienced increases in funding and staff wages have not increased as a result.
- Restrictions on administrative funds create challenges with coordinating services as well as barriers to creating a system of early childhood services. Several local leaders and early childhood service administrators told us they value working with other service providers to learn about services, so they are positioned to connect families to needed services. However, restrictions on administrative funds and administrative burdens associated with public funds mean administrators have to volunteer extra time for such work. That is, funds cannot be used to pay administrators for time spent coordinating services. Many reported they feel providing families with up-to-date and timely information and connections is very important and should be funded, but many feel exhausted providing services and that it is not appropriate to continue volunteering time to coordinate services for families.

**Funding is top of list. Understanding the community and data that inform decisionmaking [is important and requires funding]...Understanding community need and building relationships—interpersonal relationships in the community—[takes time and funding]...to lead to meaningful change.**

—service provider

## We found families rely on multiple sources to learn about the early childhood services they need, and perceive a patchwork—rather than a system—of information on, and connections to, services.

Despite multiple initiatives that provide some information and links to early childhood services, no comprehensive early childhood infrastructure exists that offers all families comprehensive information about, and connections to, services. Existing initiatives are limited in scope, meeting the needs of specific eligible families or restricted to certain neighborhoods or communities. As a result, families experience an uneven and inconsistent patchwork of information, connections, and services.<sup>8</sup> See appendix B for a list of efforts.<sup>9</sup>

Almost a third (or about 31 percent) combine a “no-wrong-door” approach with a “hub”. Box 2 shows the range of approaches in Massachusetts. Nonetheless, families access information about, and connections to, services through various means, with most relying on informal networks. Specifically, they use the following sources:

- **Local libraries.** Families receive valuable information about play groups and preschool from their local libraries, often offered by service providers funded through the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grant program. However, eligibility restrictions prevent some families from accessing certain services, leaving them uncertain about where to find more early childhood information.
- **Informal sources.** Trusted family, friends, and existing service providers play a crucial role in educating families about early childhood services. Many families turn to the internet and social media for recommendations for most early childhood services and rely on social media posts from people they know, including neighbors and families they have met through parenting groups.
- **Health care providers.** Most families access pediatric information about services through insurance portals or the Health Care Connector, trusting these sources to provide reliable information and connections (Sapiets et al. 2023). Massachusetts ranks first in the nation for providing quality health care.<sup>10</sup> Most families also told us they trust information provided by pediatricians, and many said they wished pediatricians’ offices offered more connections to early childhood services, especially family engagement groups and early education and care services. Yet service providers said currently most lack billing codes to provide information on, and connections to, services, and therefore doing so requires volunteering time as noted above.
- **Some local school districts.** Several families told us the local school district had received a grant from the state to provide free preschool and other early childhood services.<sup>11</sup> However, many families told us their local school district did not offer free preschool and they did not have access to information, connections, and services through their school district.
- **Local Head Start and Early Head Start programs.**<sup>12</sup> A few families noted that Head Start programs offered eligible families information about, and connections to, the range of early childhood services available. Some also told us about a specific Head Start provider who had given their family information or connected them with a specific service.

Despite multiple initiatives that provide some information and links to early childhood services, no comprehensive early childhood infrastructure exists that offers all families comprehensive information about, and connections to, services. Existing initiatives are limited in scope, meeting the needs of specific eligible families or restricted to certain neighborhoods or communities. As a result, families experience an uneven and inconsistent patchwork of information, connections, and services. See appendix B for a list of efforts and figure 1 for a map showing distribution of initiatives across the state.

## TYPES OF APPROACHES

Existing initiatives range in approach and intensity. Terms used to refer to these approaches with definitions and examples are presented below.

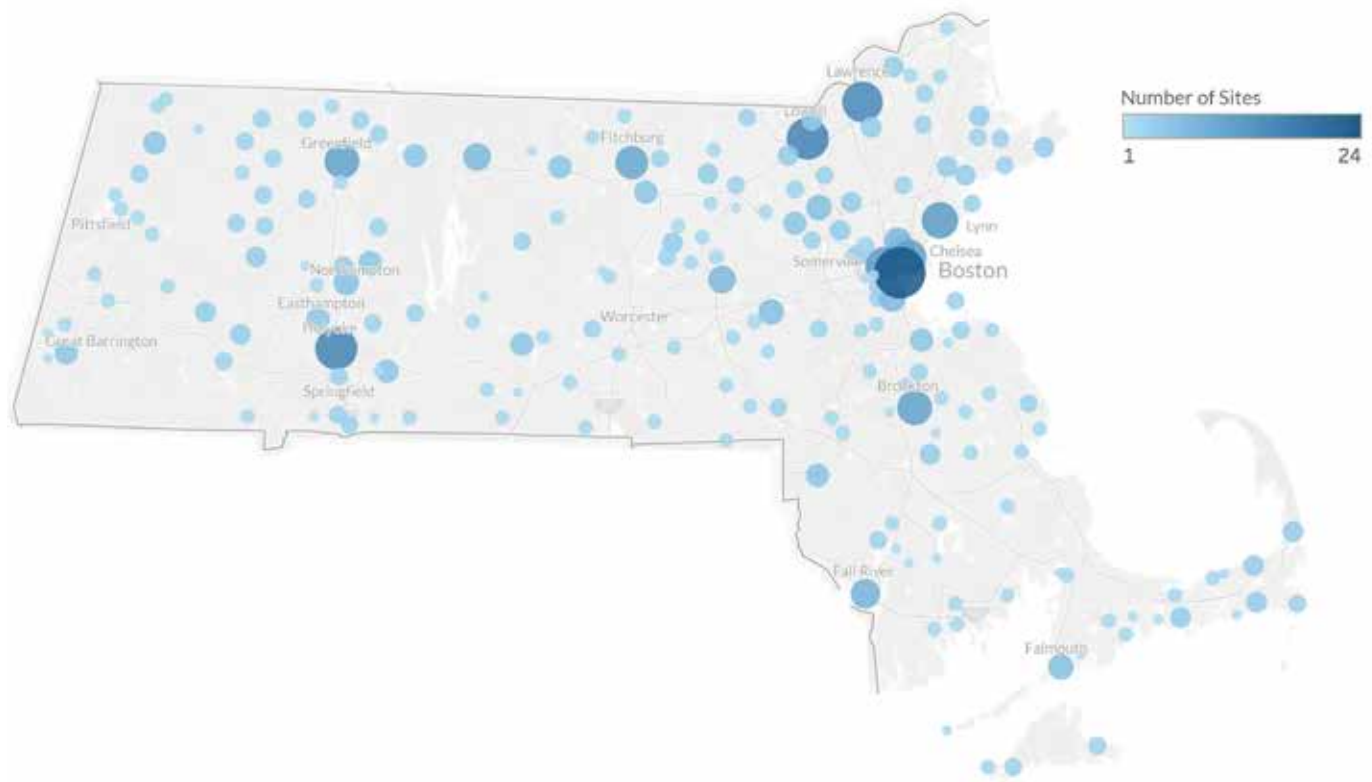
- **No-wrong-door services approach.** This decentralized approach involves linking services via referrals and warm handoffs. Providers in different locations connect families to other services that meet their early childhood and family needs. Decentralized approaches reflect varied levels of partnership across providers. Examples of this approach include Parents as Teachers and Welcome Baby.
- **Hub service approach.** This approach provides centralized, colocated resources and services for families. Examples include the Early Childhood Resource Centers and the Western Mass MOMs initiative.
- **Mixed hub and no-wrong-door service approach.** This approach offers both colocated services and referrals to, from, and between service providers that are not colocated. Participants in our study reported they value the mixed hub and no-wrong-door approach. Examples include the Boston Community Pediatrics, Family Resource Centers, and ROCA.
- **Virtual light-touch information.** This approach offers virtual or in-person information. One platform for light-touch information sharing in Massachusetts is the Department of Early Education and Care's database of licensed child care providers. Families who know about the service can search the database to find care options. Families can also call 211 to learn about child care, behavioral health services, early intervention, and safety net resources. Few families in our study knew about these virtual light-touch information sources, and those who did told us some of the information they accessed was not complete or out of date.
- **Focused coordination services approach.** This approach involves two or more service providers working together to offer families specific coordinated services. Examples include the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative and Pediatric Palliative Care. Families who accessed these services reported benefits of this approach.

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Although some local community-based organizations are working to coordinate early childhood services and some services are connected at the state level, a patchwork of initiatives and services exists in most communities. Study participants voiced a need for better coordination and alignment of early childhood information and services at the local level. This finding is consistent with existing research conducted in other locations.

FIGURE 1

Geographic Distribution of Initiatives Providing Connections to Early Childhood Services in Massachusetts



### 3 We found a formal state role is viewed as valuable in supporting local early childhood infrastructure, as some features should be universally applied across the Commonwealth.

While our study focused on local infrastructure, participants and the steering committee members nevertheless emphasized the importance of state support for local efforts. Study participants view the following as important ways the state could best contribute to early childhood initiatives:

- supporting innovation across localities by offering the types of supports state agencies gave to communities when allocating stimulus funding in recent years<sup>13</sup>
- supporting financial management so localities that lack financial management capacity can access and use public funds to coordinate information and connect families to services
- funding and supporting information technology that employs an interoperable single-source

approach so each hub can provide families with local information about, and connections to, services through a website or app

- purchasing some resources through local shared services agreements or through statewide purchasing of resources, like real-time translation, financial management tools, and information technology solutions
- disseminating information about existing resources
- streamlining eligibility for state-funded programs and creating crosswalks for programs with fixed legislative eligibility
- supporting development and use of performance metrics

Study participants appreciate specific state supports, such as real-time information offered by a team, mutual problem solving, technical assistance, and access to some state resources that they might otherwise be unaware of. However, information gaps remain, especially regarding state-provided resources like 211, which offers information about

early education and care, as well as a database of providers. Language barriers further exacerbate these gaps.<sup>14</sup>

Study participants and committee members also believe the state should standardize performance metrics and requirements to improve efficiency in offering information, connections, and services. This is consistent with existing research on promising approaches to early childhood systems building (Cobb and Ponder 2014; Connors-Tadros 2022). Yet these metrics should not impose another set of requirements on localities.

#### 4 We found some infrastructure components need to be determined at the local level to be tailored to the specific needs of the locality.

Study participants told us that offering timely and accessible information, connections, and services requires an understanding of each locality's resources, family needs, and service provider funding. Reflecting on the features of local systems to provide information, connections, and services, study participants told us they value initiatives that do the following:

- **Prioritize family assets, voice, and decisionmaking with equity at the center** for successful provision of information, connections, and services to families (Gil and Johnson 2021; Sears et al. 2023).<sup>15</sup> Several study participants told us prioritizing equity is essential and important for designing systems to connect families to services that reflect families' assets and needs. Equitable access means that families who face structural barriers are engaged in the design so that systems to provide information, connections, and services meet their needs.

- **Reflect the assets, needs, and constraints of families and service providers within the locality.** We heard that families living in different regions bring different assets and experience varying constraints. For example, families on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket have different experiences depending on the time of year, with an influx of needs in the summer and persistent needs at other times. They face transportation constraints that make it difficult to access services off the islands. In contrast, families in central cities possess specific assets and networks, acting as vital communicators with other families, and families in rural areas possess other unique assets and specific challenges accessing services. To meet families' needs, opportunities must be tailored to local contexts and conditions. To be effective, study participants told us the design of local early childhood infrastructure should begin with an assessment of the assets of families, service providers, and community members, which can be leveraged to provide coordinated early childhood information, connections, and services.
- **Engage existing service providers and community leaders** to design and implement the local system that fosters awareness of available resources and facilitate information dissemination. Study participants who are service providers said any initiative that ignores the assets of existing service providers and community leaders is destined to fail because "picking a winner" can create competition among community members rather supporting collaboration that is needed to create a system. Study participants told us that funding a single entity when many service providers are not fully funded can create competition and impede the

We have 30 different databases, some of which are required by different funders. This isn't a cross-agency problem—this is just within our own agency. Coordinating services for families in these circumstances is very difficult.

—community leader

creation of local infrastructure that represents each sector, engages families, and prioritizes equitable access. Therefore, participants recommended that local infrastructure be developed by a consortium of organizations that represent each early childhood sector that engages families.

- **Combine a “hub” and “no-wrong-door” approach so families seeking information know where to look and those accessing services can also get information and connections.**<sup>16</sup> See box 2 for definitions and figure 2 for a visual depiction of this approach. Families seeking specific information told us they would value an identifiable local virtual or physical hub that could provide them with a list of available options or a person who could help them navigate the hub to learn what resources and services are available. At the same time, others value learning about early childhood information and connections to services through existing networks, including doctors’ offices or community resources like local libraries. Most families told us they would value information and connections that included a local identifiable hub with information provided through existing early childhood service providers and community resources. And service providers told us they also value local identifiable sources of other services. Existing research shows benefits of these approaches to providing families with information and connections to services (Clark, Cahill, and Ansell 2022; Honisett et al. 2022).<sup>17</sup>

5

## We found families and service providers are not aware of many of the initiatives that currently exist across the Commonwealth.

Most families reported substantial stress seeking information about family and caregiver support groups, early education and care, and community resources. Many learned about early childhood services through libraries or local community organizations, but the actual initiatives are supported through state dollars. Families told us they spent hours seeking information available online or in their communities, but they did not know where to look, or the information they found was out of date. Specifically, study participants told us the following:

- Easily identifiable, local information, connections, and services are necessary to meet families’ needs. Families highly value being connected to existing service providers through trusted sources or warm handoffs, such as introductions over email. Many believe that having assistance in navigating and screening service providers would be incredibly beneficial, as it can be overwhelming to do it all on their own.
- Most families do not know where to find information, connections, and early childhood services. For families who are Black or Hispanic, have low incomes, are immigrants or refugees, and whose primary language is not English, early childhood information about, and connections to, services are especially lacking, and finding existing sources information is confusing for many families.<sup>18</sup>



“No wrong door” is a great phrase, but if you are asking me to do 100 extra things on top of everything else, or my staff who are overworked and overwhelmed, it’s just not practical. It affects quality of life and then physicians will just quit and retire. People are leaving medicine because it is just too much. Something like 211 [a phone number that anyone can call to learn about services] that provides local information and connections would be great if it really worked. I didn’t even know about it. Oh my gosh, that would be great for those of us caring for young children and for families if it was up to date and had the information we need.

—pediatrician





- It is difficult to find credible, trustworthy, and timely information about most early childhood services. In selected localities, families reported benefiting from stumbling upon some early childhood services such as parenting groups, publicly funded preschools, and comprehensive medical services. For instance, one parent shared positive experiences with a local parenting group she attended where she met others in the community and was connected to services. However, most families told us discovering information was a matter of chance. Many families who accessed preschool or family groups, both funded through the Commonwealth Preschool Partnerships Initiative grant, did not know these were state-funded initiatives and instead referred to them by the name of the key contact saying the person at a community-based organization or library was the reason they got information about, and connections to, services. Most said they believed credible, timely, and reliable information is needed.

## 6 We found philanthropic and business engagement is needed in addition to public funding.

Many initiatives identified in our review of existing initiatives receive public and philanthropic support funds and engage business and community partners. Study participants reported that even with large public investments, philanthropic support allows communities to innovate and develop systems tailored to families' needs. Study participants noted that philanthropies currently play a critical role in supporting the documentation and dissemination

of best practices, offering consultation, and funding localities lacking baseline infrastructure and experience with providing coordinated and aligned information, connections, and services.

Most study participants told us they see a valuable continued role for philanthropy, business, and community partners to support innovations and fill gaps that public funding cannot easily address. Philanthropy, businesses, and community partners have a relatively small role given the magnitude of the investment needed that would require large public support. Nonetheless, several study participants told us that philanthropy plays a critical role in supporting innovations that could inform the publicly funded infrastructure design and implementation. Another unique opportunity for philanthropy is to support the branding and marketing of the local hubs so families can more easily identify information about, and connections to, early childhood services.

A few study participants shared ideas for business involvement in supporting local early childhood infrastructure. One parent focus group participant recommended engaging real estate and rental agents in sharing information about early childhood resources. She recently moved and her realtor shared resources that included information about community resources, public schools, and local businesses but did not include information about connections to early childhood resources. Other focus group participants said they would value information shared from real estate agents and other local businesses so they can more easily identify places in the community that provide connections to services.

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One family member reported, “The first interactions we had with the community itself were through the library, who then introduced me to our community network for children, through the school district, and that’s how we developed our community network for things like story times and events for the children.” Others participating in the focus group lamented that they did not have connections or networks and wished community networks and connections to services could be available to them.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

Family members, service providers, administrators, policymakers, and others with a vested interest in early childhood services in Massachusetts shared recommendations to address existing needs. The project team also gathered evidence about the critical conditions of success for early childhood systems.

**1 We recommend comprehensive legislation and a commitment to sustained state investment to support the creation and implementation of local early childhood infrastructure in each community.**

Such legislation would reflect a long-term state commitment to supporting localities seeking to provide families with young children needed early childhood information, connections, and services. A commitment to ongoing appropriation is needed to build on and strengthen existing services and efforts and to support the development of new local early childhood infrastructure. This investment would also need to incorporate the unique assets within each location.

Steering committee members and study participants reported that the state has piloted numerous initiatives, but these have not been sustained or adequately funded. Several pointed to the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993<sup>19</sup> that included both equity and adequacy measures as a model of the state demonstrating a long-term and sustained commitment to addressing a problem of inequity (e.g., Kim 2018).

**2 We recommend an improved system that coordinates and aligns with existing initiatives that combine a “hub” and “no-wrong-door” approach in the communities where they exist.**

Rather than replacing existing initiatives, evidence suggests sustained infrastructure requires building on assets in communities by funding consortia to provide families with needed information and connections. It is important that consortia engage families and leaders representing health and wellness, family and caregiver supports, education and care, and community engagement. And existing community resources should dedicate time to identifying information and connecting families with early childhood resources. It is also important that each consortium fund dedicated staff whose roles are to coordinate across early childhood service providers to produce timely, relevant, and trustworthy information for families and to connect families with needed services.

**“Legislation and funding to fully support early childhood services and infrastructure is the social justice issue of our time. We are talking about a major systems-change effort that requires a substantial commitment.”**

—early childhood leader



3

**We recommend the creation of an interagency state-level team of leaders that works to align early childhood systems and support standardization of local infrastructure.**

This leadership team should provide support in the following ways:

- support innovations by partnering with communities that are designing and implementing local infrastructure by providing real-time information, state-level service coordination, and technical assistance
- streamline eligibility for state-funded programs and create crosswalks for programs that have legislative eligibility that cannot be changed
- support building financial capacity and offer management supports
- purchase resources such as branding of local infrastructure, real-time translation, fiscal management tools, and information technology solutions
- work to support common data elements and data sharing, recognizing the investment in time and dollars needed to do so
- facilitate sharing of innovations among communities
- disseminate information about existing resources to localities, service providers, and families

4

**We recommend development of both a process and funding sources that foster innovation and offer flexibility to create infrastructure relevant to the local context, driven by a consortium in each locality that brings together providers, families, and others with a vested interest.**

This process and these funding sources should do the following:

- reflect a commitment to equity and be centered on family voice and family access to services
- be overseen and administered by a consortium that includes representatives from each early childhood service sector and people with a vested interest in early childhood services that reflect local contexts
- prioritize timely and trustworthy information about, and connections to, early childhood services that are culturally and linguistically competent to best meet all families' needs (Gil and Johnson 2021; Sears et al. 2023).
- distribute funds through an organization or agency to those participating in the consortium, including families and early childhood service providers<sup>20</sup>
- be universally available to all families in each locality throughout the state
- support a “hub” and “no-wrong-door” approach tailored to each locality. A hub represents colocation of services, and a no-wrong-door approach is when families receive information from each separate early childhood service provider to connect them to other early childhood and family-facing services (UMBC Center for Community Collaboration 2016).



#### BOX 4

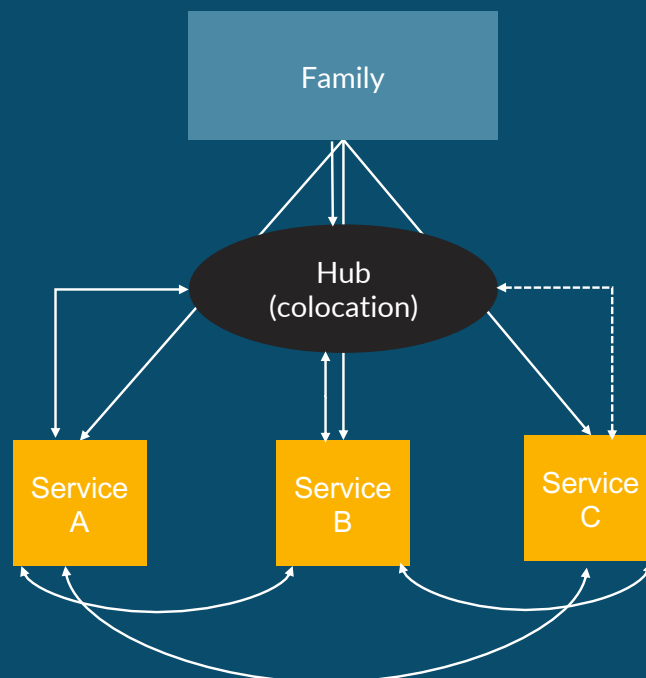
### RECOMMENDED IDEAL EARLY CHILDHOOD INFRASTRUCTURE

The recommended ideal early childhood infrastructure addresses the problem families currently experience in trying to find information about, and connections to, services. Figure 2 below presents a visual depiction of the combined “hub” and “no-wrong-door” approach. According to families who participated in the study, the recommended infrastructure would do the following:

- Provide families with a clearly identifiable hub that offers a website with up-to-date and reliable information about connections to early childhood services and a phone number with a person who connects families to health and well-being services, family and caregiver support, early education and care, and community resources. Some families told us the infrastructure would also provide families with user-friendly apps to use on their mobile devices. Many communities would have a physical location where families could go to access information, connections, and services.
- Offer information and connections tailored to families' needs. Light-touch information options would be available universally, and more intensive and culturally and linguistically competent connections would be available to families with more intensive needs for connections to services.
- Give families who do not know about the hub information and connections through early childhood service providers, other families, and community resources. Early childhood leaders representing health and well-being, family and caregiver supports, early education and care, and community resources would regularly meet to update the information and learn about possible new connections.

FIGURE 2

Recommended Approach to Providing Families with Connections to Early Childhood Services





**5** We recommend an investment in clear and descriptive branding so that families and providers can easily identify and find trusted sources of early childhood information and connections.

Families and service providers seeking timely, relevant, and trustworthy information about, and connections to, early childhood services could benefit from a clearly branded resource that is easily recognizable and easy for families and service providers to identify. To address the stress families experience when seeking information and connections, families and service providers told us they need the resource to be clearly identified.

**6** We recommend formal collaboration among leaders from the public sector, philanthropy, and business to support innovation in the design and implementation of local early childhood infrastructure.

This collaboration should do the following:

- contribute to the branding and marketing of the local infrastructure by engaging advertising organizations and firms with expertise in marketing so families and service providers can more easily identify information sources
- continue to support existing innovations through supplemental or pilot project funding that are aligned and coordinated with philanthropy and businesses funding innovations that are not feasible with public funds
- support efforts to document promising practices and share innovations
- provide a platform for localities to share information and learn from one another
- offer supports to localities that are tailored to each locality's history of supporting early childhood infrastructure—to provide parents with information, connections, and services

**“** You can't do anything major on the margin. This requires a substantial commitment and dedicated staff to update information and connections to early childhood services.

—state leader



# APPENDIX A. METHODS

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Since June 2022, the project team has engaged in a series of activities to determine the ideal local early childhood infrastructure for Massachusetts:

### 1 Convening a steering committee comprised of state and local policymakers, administrators, and family members

Steering committee members were selected based on specific knowledge and expertise related to early childhood systems and specific components of early childhood systems.

### 2 Hearing from families across Massachusetts about experiences and recommendations

Families with children younger than age six provided us with their input. Sixty-four family members completed surveys, and 20 participated in one-on-one interviews or focus groups. These family members live from the western to the most eastern parts of the state, including participants from the Berkshires to Boston, Springfield and the North Shore, Cape Cod and the Islands, and many suburban areas. They told us they speak several different languages. We asked them about their experiences accessing information and services beginning with the birth of their child. And we used a “journey map” to consider families’ experiences learning about information on, and connections to, services from birth until the child began kindergarten. These families shared positive experiences accessing services as well as challenges, brainstormed promising approaches, and recommended what the state could do to best meet their needs.

### 3 Learning from early childhood service providers in Massachusetts

People who administer programs and work directly with families with young children participated in focus groups, interviews, and web-based surveys. We heard from **34 service providers** representing the range of early childhood services. We also heard from **20 state and local leaders**, people who oversee early childhood programs and policies, business owners, and people who make or inform decisions that affect how families access information about early childhood services.

### 4 Examining the landscape of early childhood systems efforts in Massachusetts

The team examined peer-reviewed research publications, grey literature, public documents, and informal materials documenting existing early childhood initiatives designed to improve services for families with young children. In total, the team identified 58 initiatives and programs that included the coordination of services for families with young children (appendix B). The team created a set of qualitative codes to systematically document the elements of existing initiatives in Massachusetts, as well as promising approaches that exist both nationally and in states, communities, and tribes with elements that could be transferrable to Massachusetts.

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The project goal was to determine the ideal local early childhood system for Massachusetts so families with children from birth to age 5 know where to find information and connections for the range of early childhood services. For this project, the team categorized services into four broad categories: family and caregiver support, education and care, health and well-being, and community engagement.<sup>21</sup> Table A.1 on the next page presents additional information about these categories.

TABLE A.1

## KEY EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES AS DEFINED BY MASSACHUSETTS EARLY CHILDHOOD (EC) 101<sup>a</sup>

Service category	Definition
<b>Family and caregiver support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family financial security</li> <li>Basic needs and safety net</li> <li>Parenting</li> <li>Child welfare</li> </ul>	<p>Services that address the social and economic well-being, education, and growth of families or caregivers of young children. Services can include parenting supports, family educational and career support, food security and nutrition services, housing stabilization services, economic assistance and security programs, and legal services. Service provision can include home-visiting or child welfare interventions, and service providers tend to primarily interact with parents and caregivers.</p>
<b>Education and care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child care and early education</li> </ul>	<p>Services that support young children's socioemotional and cognitive development in settings without their parent or caregiver present. This includes child care and early education, out-of-school programming, and special education and early intervention. Service providers tend to primarily interact with children.</p>
<b>Health and well-being</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical health care</li> <li>Mental health and socioemotional well-being</li> </ul>	<p>Services that promote the development, physical health, and mental health of young children and their families or caregivers. Services can include pre- and postnatal care, pediatric health care, mental and socioemotional health and well-being, and health insurance. Service providers primarily interact with both parents and children.</p>
<b>Community engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nonprofits or community-based organizations</li> <li>Representatives from community organizations</li> <li>Public community spaces</li> </ul>	<p>This service mechanism involves nonprofits or community-based organizations as main sectors, families' primary points of contact, and practitioners. Examples include public libraries, museums, public outdoor spaces and recreation areas, community organizations, and faith-based organizations. Services provided in the community engagement system generally fit within one or more of the other EC 101 systems.</p>

TABLE A.2

**KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

<b>Connection</b>	The act of connecting someone to a person or organization that can directly address a specific need or interest. Connections can happen in person (e.g., through an in-person introduction), over the phone (by transferring a caller directly to a person or organization), or over email (by introducing two parties to one another). Connections can happen in the context of an ongoing trusted relationship or a light informational interaction with a service provider. To be useful to families, connections need to be timely, available, accessible (culturally, linguistically, etc.), trustworthy, and made to a person or organization that can directly address a need or interest.
<b>Coordination</b>	The act of one early childhood service provider connecting families with information, connections, or services to different early childhood service providers in a timely manner that meets family need. To be useful to families, it is important that coordination is tailored, sequenced, and intentional. For some services such as early intervention, coordination is mandated. In some cases, a coordinator or navigator works with families to identify available services that meet families' needs. Note: Some programs use the term coordination in law or regulation to refer to the act of connecting a family to a service. We use the term coordination to refer to aligning both information and connections among early childhood service providers.
<b>Early childhood services</b>	Services for families and young children before the age of kindergarten entry. Early childhood service providers include pediatricians, early education and care providers, social workers, and home visitors who support family engagement; and other community organizations that provide information and connections such as librarians. To be useful to families, it is important that services are timely, available, and trustworthy. Note: We use the EC 101 to categorize services. Our study focused on the availability, not quality, of services.
<b>EC 101</b>	EC 101 categorizes early childhood services as follows: (1) family and caregiver support; (2) early education and care; (3) health and well-being; and (4) community engagement.
<b>Hub</b>	Hub is defined as the place where families easily access early childhood information and connections to services.
<b>Information</b>	Knowledge and facts about early childhood services. Information can include contact information (such as a phone number), business information (such as whether a service is open or has space to serve new children and families), and available resources to support families' search (such as family navigators). Information can be shared verbally, in a printed format, or digitally (on a website or through social media). Families can also find information independently through any of these sources or through family or friends. To be useful to families, it is important that information be up to date, timely, available, and accessible.



Term	Definition
<b>Infrastructure</b>	The standard definition is (1) the system of public works of a country, state, or region <i>and</i> the resources (such as personnel or equipment) required for an activity; (2) the underlying foundation or basic framework (of a system or organization). Our study focused on infrastructure to support coordinated access to early childhood information, connections, and services.
<b>Local</b>	We use the term local, rather than community, as the geographic descriptor that reflects specific physical, sociocultural, and political characteristics. The primary local units of governance in Massachusetts are municipalities (cities overseen by mayors and towns overseen by town councils).
<b>Services and service provider</b>	An individual or organization who can directly address a specific need or interest.



# APPENDIX B. DETAILS FROM THE LANDSCAPE REVIEW ABOUT THE PROJECT

The team conducted a landscape review to identify existing initiatives that support connections to information and services for families. The team searched the internet, consulted with a steering committee and study participants, and reviewed selected national initiatives that were identified by funders, leaders, and study participants. We included initiatives that provide direct services to families and coordination or connections to services and did not include efforts that were designed to support coordination among service providers but lacked any direct delivery of services to families. We identified 58 initiatives that met this criteria in Massachusetts. For more information about the methods and findings from the landscape review, see Miles et al. (2024). Table B.1 shows the initiatives we identified from the landscape review.

**TABLE B.1**  
**INITIATIVES FROM THE LANDSCAPE REVIEW** URLS ACCESSED AS OF AUGUST 25, 2023

Initiative	URL
Baby University	<a href="https://www.cambridgema.gov/dhsp/programsforfamilies/babyuniversity">https://www.cambridgema.gov/dhsp/programsforfamilies/babyuniversity</a>
Boston 311	<a href="https://www.boston.gov/departments/boston-311">https://www.boston.gov/departments/boston-311</a>
Boston Family Engagement Network	<a href="https://bfen.link/">https://bfen.link/</a>
Boston Community Pediatrics	<a href="https://www.bostoncommunitypediatrics.org/">https://www.bostoncommunitypediatrics.org/</a>
BPS Countdown to Kindergarten	<a href="https://www.tbf.org/news-and-insights/press-releases/2022/february/chelsea-2021-grants-20220202">https://www.tbf.org/news-and-insights/press-releases/2022/february/chelsea-2021-grants-20220202</a>
Children & Youth with Special Health Needs Community Support Line	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/contact-a-resource-specialist-for-information-on-state-and-community-based-assistance">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/contact-a-resource-specialist-for-information-on-state-and-community-based-assistance</a>
City Connects	<a href="https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/lynch-school/sites/city-connects.html">https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/lynch-school/sites/city-connects.html</a>
Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) Grant	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/fy-2023-commonwealth-preschool-partnerships-initiative-cppi-maintenance-grant">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/fy-2023-commonwealth-preschool-partnerships-initiative-cppi-maintenance-grant</a>
Community Action Agencies	<a href="https://www.masscap.org/">https://www.masscap.org/</a>
Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Network (CFCE Grant)	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/coordinated-family-and-community-engagement-cfce-network">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/coordinated-family-and-community-engagement-cfce-network</a>
Cradles to Crayons	<a href="https://www.cradlestocrayons.org/">https://www.cradlestocrayons.org/</a>



Initiative	URL
Department of Public Health (DPH) Care Coordination Services	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-dph-care-coordination">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-dph-care-coordination</a>
DTA Works Internship Program	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/news/massachusetts-connecting-tafdc-families-with-high-demand-jobs-in-healthcare-and-education">https://www.mass.gov/news/massachusetts-connecting-tafdc-families-with-high-demand-jobs-in-healthcare-and-education</a>
Early Childhood Resource Centers	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/early-childhood-resource-centers">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/early-childhood-resource-centers</a>
Early Intervention	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/orgs/early-intervention-division">https://www.mass.gov/orgs/early-intervention-division</a>
Early Intervention and Early Education and Care Collaboration	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/early-intervention-and-early-education-and-care-collaboration">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/early-intervention-and-early-education-and-care-collaboration</a>
Early Intervention Parenting Partnerships (EIPP)	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/early-intervention-parenting-partnerships-eipp">https://www.mass.gov/early-intervention-parenting-partnerships-eipp</a>
Every Child Shines	<a href="https://everychildshines.org/affiliated-organizations">https://everychildshines.org/affiliated-organizations</a>
Family TIES	<a href="https://www.massfamilyties.org/">https://www.massfamilyties.org/</a>
F.O.R. Families (Follow-Up Outreach Referral)	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/for-families-follow-up-outreach-referral">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/for-families-follow-up-outreach-referral</a>
Family Aid Boston	<a href="https://familyaidboston.org/">https://familyaidboston.org/</a>
Family Nurturing Center	<a href="https://familynurturing.org/">https://familynurturing.org/</a>
Family Resource Centers	<a href="https://www.frcma.org">https://www.frcma.org</a>
Family Support Centers	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dds-family-support-centers">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dds-family-support-centers</a>
FIRST Steps Together	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-first-steps-together">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-first-steps-together</a>
Food is Medicine MA	<a href="https://foodismedicinema.org/food-is-medicine-massachusetts">https://foodismedicinema.org/food-is-medicine-massachusetts</a>
Head Start Comprehensive Services	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/guides/head-start-early-head-start">https://www.mass.gov/guides/head-start-early-head-start</a>
Healthy Families Massachusetts	<a href="https://childrenstrustma.org/our-programs/healthy-families">https://childrenstrustma.org/our-programs/healthy-families</a>
Healthy Families America	<a href="https://www.massgeneral.org/community-health/cchi/programs/healthy-families-america-home-visiting">https://www.massgeneral.org/community-health/cchi/programs/healthy-families-america-home-visiting</a>
HealthySteps	<a href="https://massthive.org/zero-to-three--boston-ma--healthysteps-at-boston-medical-center/5718053136629760">https://massthive.org/zero-to-three--boston-ma--healthysteps-at-boston-medical-center/5718053136629760</a>
Hilltown Families	<a href="https://hilltownfamilies.org/">https://hilltownfamilies.org/</a>

Initiative	URL
MA Children's Trust Family Centers	<a href="https://childrenstrustma.org/our-programs/family-centers">https://childrenstrustma.org/our-programs/family-centers</a>
Mass 211	<a href="https://mass211.org/">https://mass211.org/</a>
Massachusetts Family Networks	<a href="https://www.bostoncentral.com/resources/early_child_centers/p43.php">https://www.bostoncentral.com/resources/early_child_centers/p43.php</a>
Massachusetts Child Care Resource & Referral Network (MACCRR)	<a href="https://machildcareresourcesonline.org/">https://machildcareresourcesonline.org/</a>
Massachusetts Community Resource Directory	<a href="http://massthive.org/">http://massthive.org/</a>
Massachusetts Pregnant and Parenting Teen Initiative (MPPTI) Program	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/the-massachusetts-pregnant-and-parenting-teen-initiative-mppti">https://www.mass.gov/the-massachusetts-pregnant-and-parenting-teen-initiative-mppti</a>
MassCARE	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/masscare">https://www.mass.gov/masscare</a>
MassStart	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/doc/masstart-program-brochure-2/">https://www.mass.gov/doc/masstart-program-brochure-2/</a>
One Somerville Every Child	<a href="https://mcusercontent.com/71abe80aabb9010b7a39320db/files/976bab6c-79ee-8140-d1bd-74e36e186379/2022_11_05_CCF_Somerville_Case_Study.pdf">https://mcusercontent.com/71abe80aabb9010b7a39320db/files/976bab6c-79ee-8140-d1bd-74e36e186379/2022_11_05_CCF_Somerville_Case_Study.pdf</a>
Parent Child Plus	<a href="https://www.parentchildplus.org/state/ma/">https://www.parentchildplus.org/state/ma/</a>
Parents as Teachers	<a href="https://parentsasteachers.org/evidence-based-home-visiting/#aboutebm">https://parentsasteachers.org/evidence-based-home-visiting/#aboutebm</a>
Partnership for Early Childhood Mental Health	<a href="https://ecmhatters.org/ecmh-first-in-action/">https://ecmhatters.org/ecmh-first-in-action/</a>
Pediatric Palliative Care	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/learn-about-the-pediatric-palliative-care-network">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/learn-about-the-pediatric-palliative-care-network</a>
Project EARLY	<a href="https://sites.bu.edu/asd/project-early/">https://sites.bu.edu/asd/project-early/</a>
Resources for Parents and Caregivers of Young Children	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/resources-for-parents-and-caregivers-of-young-children?utm_">https://www.mass.gov/resources-for-parents-and-caregivers-of-young-children?utm_</a>
ROCA	<a href="https://rocainc.org">https://rocainc.org</a>
Somerville Early Childhood Hub	<a href="https://somervillehub.org/">https://somervillehub.org/</a>
Somerville Partnership for Young Children	<a href="https://somervillechildren.org/">https://somervillechildren.org/</a>
TeamUp	<a href="https://teamupforchildren.org/">https://teamupforchildren.org/</a>

Initiative	URL
The Neighborhood	<a href="https://www.neighborhoodvillages.org/the-neighborhood">https://www.neighborhoodvillages.org/the-neighborhood</a>
Together For Kids Coalition	<a href="https://togetherforkidscoalition.org/">https://togetherforkidscoalition.org/</a>
United Way of Mass Bay DRIVE	<a href="https://unitedwaymassbay.org/our-impact/supporting-young-children/drive">https://unitedwaymassbay.org/our-impact/supporting-young-children/drive</a>
Welcome Family	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/welcome-family-information-for-families">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/welcome-family-information-for-families</a>
Western Mass MOMs Initiative	<a href="https://eohhs.ehs.state.ma.us/DTA/PolicyOnline/BEACON5/!SSL!/WebHelp/X_Prog/Mental_Health_Outreach_to_Mothers_MOMs/MOMs.htm">https://eohhs.ehs.state.ma.us/DTA/PolicyOnline/BEACON5/!SSL!/WebHelp/X_Prog/Mental_Health_Outreach_to_Mothers_MOMs/MOMs.htm</a>
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/orgs/women-infants-children-nutrition-program">https://www.mass.gov/orgs/women-infants-children-nutrition-program</a>
413 Cares	<a href="https://www.413cares.org/">https://www.413cares.org/</a>



# APPENDIX C. ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Study participants suggested using a collective impact framework to guide the work of early childhood leaders who would participate in local consortia to design and implement the local early child infrastructure. Specific recommended features include the following:

- using common agendas that reflect priorities and baseline conditions in each locality
- developing and implementing plans that describe how the consortium will regularly engage with the community
- specifying the roles and responsibilities of each member of the consortium and service providers vis-à-vis the hub and no-wrong-door strategy
- using performance metrics that are locally tailored
- engaging an organization to manage the funding that has the capacity to manage and distribute funds to the consortium
- acknowledging the dynamic nature of providing families with up-to-date and timely information, connection, and services

# APPENDIX D. STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We are very grateful to the people below (listed alphabetically) who volunteered their time, expertise, and insights in shaping the scope, methods, and recommendations of the project:

- |                         |                    |                   |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| ▪ Nicole Blais          | ▪ Clare Higgins    | ▪ Yolanda Ramos   |
| ▪ Joni Block            | ▪ Jenise Katalina  | ▪ Kate Roper      |
| ▪ Renée Boynton-Jarrett | ▪ Teddy Kokoros    | ▪ Haji Shearer    |
| ▪ Nikki Burnett         | ▪ Maria Moeller    | ▪ Ben Siegel      |
| ▪ Joy Cohen             | ▪ Tyreese Nicolas  | ▪ Shareef Smith   |
| ▪ Chad d'Entremont      | ▪ Amy O'Leary      | ▪ Eugenia Soiles  |
| ▪ Don Hawley            | ▪ Binal Patel      | ▪ Pamela Thompson |
| ▪ Kaeleigh Hernandez    | ▪ Maria Paz Moreno | ▪ Donna Traynham  |

# SOURCES

## BOX 1

**Source:** Authors' analysis.

## TABLE 1

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of data collected from more than 100 people through focus groups, interviews, and surveys; reviews of published research; and a systematic review of existing initiatives across Massachusetts.

## BOX 2

- a. Lynn A. Karoly, M. Rebecca Kilburn, and Jill S. Cannon, "Proven Benefits of Early Childhood Interventions" (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2005); Emily S. Lin, Sean K. Flanagan, Shannon M. Varga, Jonathan F. Zaff, Max Margolius, "The Impact of Comprehensive Community Initiatives on Population-Level Child, Youth, and Family Outcomes: A Systematic Review," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 65, no. 3–4 (2020): 479–503, <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12398>; Valerie Sollars, "Defining Quality in Early Childhood Education: Parents' Perspectives," *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 28, no. 3 (2020): 319–31, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2020.1755488>; Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Christina Weiland, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Margaret Burchinal, Linda Espinosa, William T. Gormley, Jens Ludwig, Katherine Magnuson, Deborah Phillips, and Martha Zaslow, "Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool" (Washington, DC: Society for Research in Child Development, 2013).
- b. Alison Hooper, Rena Hallam, and Christine Skrobot, "Our Quality Is a Little Bit Different': How Family Childcare Providers Who Participate in a Quality Rating and Improvement System and Receive Childcare Subsidy Define Quality," *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 22, no. 1 (2021): 76–94, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949119858985>; Karin Ishimine, Collette Tayler, and John Bennett, "Quality and Early Childhood Education and Care: A Policy Initiative for the 21st Century," *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy* 4 (2010): 67–80. <https://doi.org/10.1007/2288-6729-4-2-67>.
- c. Emily C. Hanno, Katherine Gonzalez, Stephanie M. Jones, and Nonie K. Lesaux, "Linking Features of Structural and Process Quality Across the Landscape of Early Education and Care," *AERA Open* 7 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211044519>.
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- e. Sally M. Grantham-McGregor and Susan P. Walker, "Early Childhood Interventions: Issues to Consider in Getting to Scale," *Pediatrics* 151, Supplement 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2023-060221P>; Erin Sibley, Eric Dearing, Claudio O. Toppelberg, Arnstein Mykletun, and Henrik D. Zachrisson, "Do Increased Availability and Reduced

- f. Cost of Early Childhood Care and Education Narrow Social Inequality Gaps in Utilization? Evidence from Norway," *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy* 9 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40723-014-0004-5>.

## BOX 3

- a. Massachusetts 211, United Way of Massachusetts, accessed August 4, 2023, <https://mass211.org>.
- b. Children's Trust, *2020–2021 Annual Report* (Boston: Children's Trust, 2021).

## BOX 4

**Sources:** Urban Institute analysis of data collected through focus groups, interviews and surveys, reviews of published research, and a review of existing initiatives across Massachusetts. For more information, see Miles et al. (2024).

## TABLE A.1

**Source:** EC 101 definitions can be found at "Massachusetts EC 101," Massachusetts Early Childhood Funder Collaborative, accessed August 21, 2023, <https://www.earlychildhood101.org/>. Foundational literature on early childhood services models can be found at Baumgartner, Cavadel, and Allison-Clark (2021).

- c. Early Childhood (EC) 101 is a project of the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative. Also known as the Massachusetts Early Childhood Systems Map and Data Overview project, EC 101 defines early childhood as birth through age 5. This includes the experiences of children and their caregivers in the first years of life that span across health and well-being, family and caregiver support, education and care, and community engagement. ECE 101 aims to present the state of young children in Massachusetts in a visual, accessible format that allows for clear understanding of the current conditions of the early childhood landscape. The Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy (<https://www.renniecenter.org/>, accessed August 21, 2023) led this work and created the data visualizations.

We list child welfare under both family and caregiver support and health and well-being, as the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families can serve both functions.

## TABLE A.2

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of data collected through focus groups, interviews and surveys, reviews of published research, and a review of existing initiatives across Massachusetts.

## TABLE B.1

**Source:** Authors' review of existing initiatives in Massachusetts designed to coordinate or provide information on comprehensive services to families with young children.

# NOTES

1. These four categories are used in Early Childhood (EC) 101, a project of the Massachusetts Early Childhood Funder Collaborative, as a way of organizing early childhood services. It is important to note that other frameworks organize services differently. Because the framing is common in Massachusetts, our project uses the EC 101 categories. EC 101 defines early childhood as birth through age 5. This includes the experiences of children and their caregivers in the first years of life that span across health and well-being, family and caregiver support, education and care, and community engagement. ECE 101 aims to present the state of young children in Massachusetts in a visual, accessible format that allows for clear understanding of the current conditions of the early childhood landscape. The Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy (<https://www.renniecenter.org/>, accessed August 21, 2023) led this work and created the data visualizations. EC 101 definitions can be found at "Massachusetts EC 101," Massachusetts Early Childhood Funder Collaborative, accessed August 21, 2023, <https://www.earlychildhood101.org/>. Foundational literature on early childhood services models can be found at Baumgartner, Cavadel, and Allison-Clark (2021).
2. "InBrief: The Science of Early Childhood Development," Center on the Developing Child, accessed August 21, 2023, <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-science-of-eecd/>.
3. Two recent Massachusetts reports note the urgent need for early childhood infrastructure: (1) Early Education and Care Economic Review Commission (2022); (2) "The Early Childhood Agenda," Strategies for Children, accessed August 21, 2023, <http://www.strategiesforchildren.org/>. Also, the urgent need for early childhood infrastructure has been elevated in the research since 2000—see Gallagher and Clifford (2000).
4. "The Early Childhood Agenda," Strategies for Children, accessed August 21, 2023, <http://www.strategiesforchildren.org/>.
5. Massachusetts has 351 cities and towns responsible for local governance. Massachusetts has no unincorporated land. See "Massachusetts City and Town Incorporation and Settlement Dates," Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, accessed August 4, 2023, <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cisctlist/ctlistalph.htm>.
6. "The Early Childhood Agenda," Strategies for Children.
7. Mid-Atlantic Regional Education Lab, "What Does Recent Research and/or Studies on Strategies for Family Engagement Say?," Institute of Education Sciences, Regional Educational Laboratory Program, February 2, 2018, <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Region/midatlantic/Ask-A-REL/30113>.
8. Examples exist across health, early education and care, family engagement, and community services. For example, more than 40 years ago the Massachusetts Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) was created to coordinate early care and education; and Vital Villages, an effort to provide comprehensive services to families accessing health care, began in 2010. According to the Massachusetts Office of the State Auditor (1999), the School Improvement Act of 1985 sparked the creation of the CPC program, which required participating communities to form a CPC Council as a mechanism for developing collaborative relationships and partnerships with the aim of improving early childhood care and education in the community.
9. Of the initiatives identified in Massachusetts, 22 had published some form of evaluation, defined very broadly to include any report or summary of outcomes. Two more were in the process of evaluations but had not yet published them. While the other initiatives may also be conducting evaluations, the research team was not able to identify public reports that shared this information. Separately, a total of eight national initiatives explicitly involved an evaluation or study component. Unlike the Massachusetts landscape review, the team did not count how many national initiatives shared public summaries of outcomes. See, for example, Rausch, Bold, and Strain (2021) and Davies (2022).
10. "2023 Scorecard on State Health System Performance," The Commonwealth Fund, June 22, 2023, <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/scorecard/2023/jun/2023-scorecard-state-health-system-performance>.
11. The Commonwealth Preschool Partnerships Initiative (CPPI) grant is a competitive grant program available in the following communities in Massachusetts: cohort 1: Boston, Lowell, New Bedford, North Adams, Somerville, and Springfield (fund code 515); cohort 2: Holyoke, Lawrence, and Northampton (fund code 516). It is designed to support collaborations between public school districts and Department of early Education and Care (EEC) licensed early education programs to explore ways to expand local access for three- and four-year-old children and provide opportunities for access to high-quality care that meets the diverse needs of families in their communities. For more on the CPPI grant, see "FY 2023 Commonwealth Preschool Partnerships Initiative (CPPI) Maintenance Grant," Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, accessed July 17, 2023, <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/fy-2023-commonwealth-preschool-partnerships-initiative-cppi-maintenance-grant>. For more information about this program, see Kershaw (2022).
12. Head Start and Early Head Start programs receive grant funding directly from the federal government and in return offer early care and education and comprehensive health, early intervention, and family engagement services to eligible children and families. Eligibility criteria include being a child with a documented disability, being in foster care, or living in a family with an income below the federal poverty level that is unhousehold, receives public assistance, or receives social security insurance.
13. The supports include offering technical assistance to communities, frequent webinars that highlight promising approaches, and consultation when community leaders have questions about what is allowable using public funds.
14. One example is that several service providers told us they have not been able to offer services to families who are immigrants who do not have social security numbers. We also learned that service providers can access information and supports from the Massachusetts Office of Immigrant and Refugee Assistance, but few early childhood service providers are aware this information exists. These information gaps are exacerbated by limited language access. Some early intervention, early care and education, and family engagement providers work with families who speak languages that staff do not speak and need real-time translation. An illustrative example is that some early childhood educators described using Google translate to contact family members when a child was sick.



15. Rod Martinez, Mari McGilton, Romel Shuler, Mel Langness, Lauren Farrell, Helen Skipper, Davon Woodley, Azhar Gulaid, and Janeen Buck Willison, "New York City's Wounded Healers: Findings from a Study of Credible Messengers," Urban Institute, March 29, 2022, <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/new-york-citys-wounded-healers-findings-study-credible-messengers>.
16. Hub is defined as the place where families easily access early childhood information and connections to services. No wrong door is defined as an approach in which families accessing one service receive information about, and connections to, other needed services or to a physical or virtual hub that connects families to needed services.
17. Toivonen Tuukka, and Nicolas Friederici, "Time to Define What a 'Hub' Really Is," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, April 7, 2015, [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/time\\_to\\_define\\_what\\_a\\_hub\\_really\\_is](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/time_to_define_what_a_hub_really_is).
18. See, for example, "Child Opportunity Levels," Diversity Data Kids, accessed July 17, 2023, <https://www.diversitydatakids.org/maps/#/explorer/tracts/0/15/10,15//xc/n/1.0.14/42.033/-71.672/7.56/>.
19. Chapter 71, An Act Establishing the Education Reform Act of 1993, <https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/handle/2452/26086>.
20. Sarah Stachowiak and Lauren Gase, "Does Collective Impact Really Make an Impact?," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, August 9, 2018, [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/does\\_collective\\_impact\\_really\\_make\\_an\\_impact](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/does_collective_impact_really_make_an_impact).
21. Early Childhood (EC) 101 is a project of the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative. Also known as the Massachusetts Early Childhood Systems Map and Data Overview project, EC 101 defines early childhood as birth through age 5. This includes the experiences of children and their caregivers in the first years of life that span across health and well-being, family and caregiver support, education and care, and community engagement. ECE 101 aims to present the state of young children in Massachusetts in a visual, accessible format that allows for clear understanding of the current conditions of the early childhood landscape. The Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy (<https://www.renniecenter.org/>, accessed August 21, 2023) led this work and created the data visualizations. EC 101 definitions can be found at "Massachusetts EC 101," Massachusetts Early Childhood Funder Collaborative, accessed August 21, 2023, <https://www.earlychildhood101.org/>. Foundational literature on early childhood services models can be found at Baumgartner, Cavadel, and Allison-Clark (2021).

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**Paige Sonoda** is a research analyst in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population. She focuses primarily on qualitative research and is on the social safety net team. She recently earned a BA in psychology and sociology from Bates College. Sonoda received the Drake Bradley Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research for her senior thesis work on multiracial Asian American identity and racialization. At Bates, she assisted with a content analysis of community action agencies, working to identify framings of poverty within the nonprofit industrial complex. She also completed a research internship with the American Institutes for Research in their workforce development office.

**Anna Fleming** is a research analyst in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population. She works on a variety of child care and early education projects.

# STATEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE

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## MASSACHUSETTS HEAD START ASSOCIATION

Testimony to the Board of the Department of Early Education and Care  
March 13, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver public comment today regarding the recent reductions to the Commonwealth Cares for Children grant and planning for C3 grants in FY25. My name is Michelle Haimowitz, and I am the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Head Start Association (MHSA).

MHSA is a membership organization that represents the 28 Head Start and Early Head Start Programs in Massachusetts. Head Start is a federal grant program that provides early education and comprehensive child and family services, including health, mental health, nutrition, and family leadership and resources to vulnerable children and families. Collectively, these 28 programs serve more than 11,000 children from birth to age five in Massachusetts. Head Start eligible children are among the most vulnerable in our Commonwealth; Head Start serves children from families earning under the Federal Poverty Level, children experiencing homelessness, and other very vulnerable children at no cost to the family. 30% of Head Start children also receive a child care subsidy to supplement Head Start funding and provide comprehensive full-day full-year care for eligible families.

In the last week EEC has had to make some very tough decisions regarding the C3 program, which has been so important to program stability over the last several years. I am testifying today to express gratitude and support for EEC's prioritization during that process of programs that serve the most vulnerable families, including Head Start programs. Early education programs that serve vulnerable children and families experience added costs and challenges in providing comprehensive services, addressing children's mental health needs, and providing trauma-informed care and family engagement. During times of inadequate funds, we thank the Board and the Department for prioritizing the stability of programs serving the most vulnerable families.

As we work together to build C3 into a long-term investment in programs and their workforce, we encourage the Board to continue to examine who programs serve and prioritize funding for programs that serve the most vulnerable families, including those who receive Head Start, subsidies, and those who are eligible for Head Start and subsidies. In order for programs to be able to invest C3 funds in the ongoing personnel costs that they most need investment in, the funds need to be annualized, permanent, and stable. Head Start programs, like so many of our early education colleagues, maintain strong fiscal operations with sound fiscal controls. Head Start budgets cannot sustain uncertainty or one-time investments. We hope we can continue to work with EEC to develop a funding model for C3 that emphasizes ongoing investments in programs.



**MASSACHUSETTS  
HEAD START ASSOCIATION**

We are grateful for our ongoing partnership with the Department, Commissioner Kershaw, and the Head Start State Collaboration Office and its Director Amy Whitehead-Pleaux. We are glad to be at the table with our Department partners to best support vulnerable families and the programs that serve them.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony and we look forward to continuing to partner with the Department and the Board.