MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Early Education and Care

# May EEC Board Meeting

May 13, 2026

# Agenda

**Routine Business:**

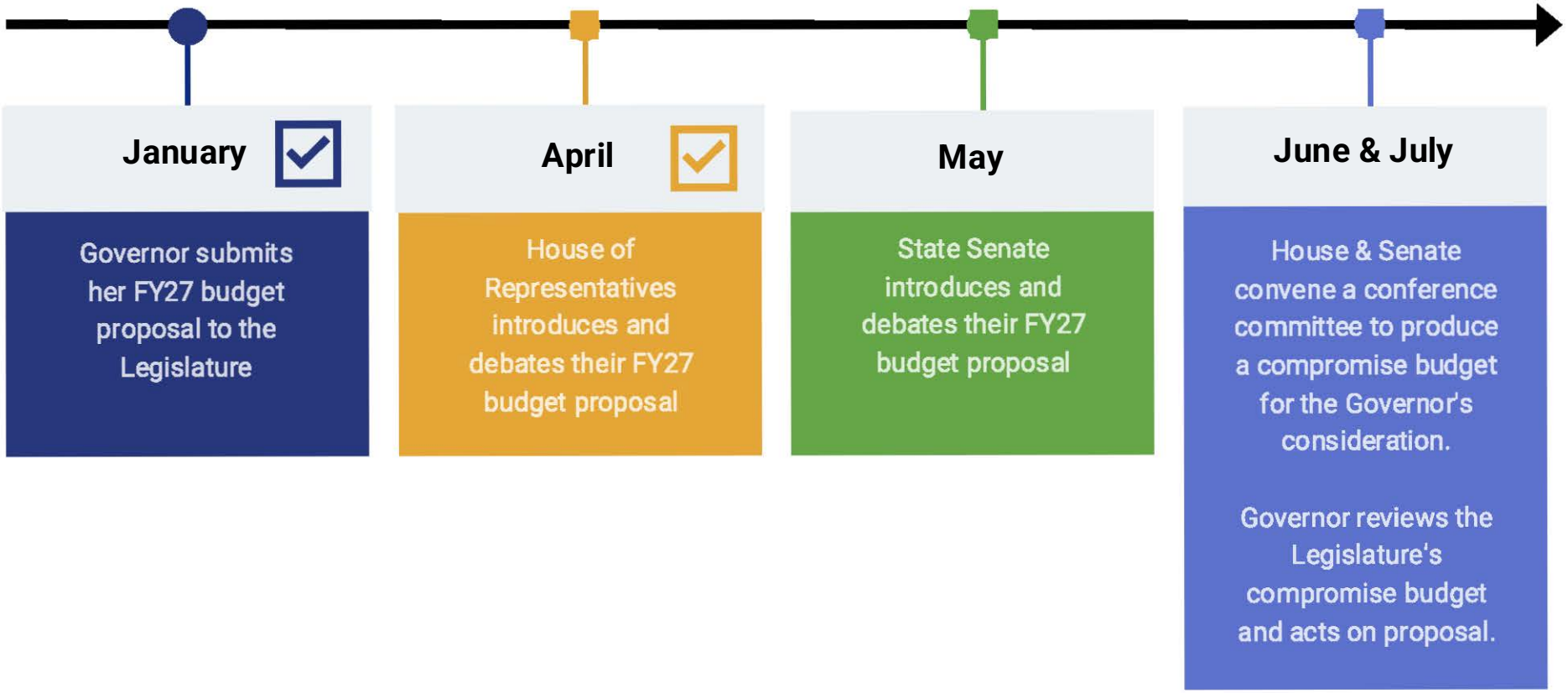
- Approval of minutes from April 8, 2026 Meeting – VOTE

**Items for Discussion and Action:**

- FY27 Budget Updates
- Informal Child Care (ICC) Rate Increase Proposal
- Standards for the Licensure of Residential Programs, Regulation Revisions – VOTE
- Family Child Care (FCC) Capacity Pilot

# FY27 Budget Updates

# State Budget Process



# Highlights from Final House Budget

**Overall, the final House of Representatives budget funds EEC at $1.838 billion, a $23.4M (1.3%) decrease from FY27 H.2 and $158M (9%) increase from FY26 GAA.**

## Alignment with H.2

The House of Representatives budget aligns with H.2 in many accounts, including:

- $475M for C3, with slight difference in fund split between Fair Share and General Fund
- $1.2B for CCFA, with $1.4M more in DCF/DTA Related Care from H.2
- $20M for CCR&Rs
- $20M for Head Start
- $5M for Early Childhood Mental Health Grants
- $2.97M for Career Pathways
- $11.7M for CFCE
- $4.25M for Parent Child+
- $1.75M for Reach Out and Read

## Differences from H.2

- Funds EEC's Administrative line item at $20.3M
  - Earmarks $7.5M for ECE Scholarships and $25K for Old Colony YMCA
  - Largely restores operating funds with small $413K decrease below from H.2
- Funds CPPI at $5M, a $32M decrease from H.2

Review the House of Representatives' **full FY27 budget** on the Massachusetts Legislature's website.

# EEC FY27 House Budget Overview

| $1.838 billion in FY27 House of Representatives Budget | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Line Item & Fair Share** | **Description of Purpose and Investment** | **FY27 House** |
| Administration | Funds staff positions and six offices across the Commonwealth | 20,282,108 |
| Quality Supports | Funds monitoring and licensing activities, quality supports, coaching and technical assistance for programs and educators in the child care system, inclusive of Summer Step Up Program | 48,175,758 |
| Access Management | Funds child care resource and referral activities, as well as a statewide parent hotline | 20,000,000 |
| Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) | Supports financial assistance for eligible children enrolled in child care, including a rate reserve and child care financial assistance waitlist remediation effort, and Early Education and Care Staff Program | 1,222,227,822 |
| Grants to Head Start | Supports grants to all Head Start programs in MA to help meet their non-federal match | 20,000,000 |
| Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) | Funds CPPI communities across the state in an innovative funding partnership between the LEA and local child care providers | 5,000,000 |
| Mental Health Consultation | Funds access to mental and behavioral health consultants for coaching and technical assistance to child care providers | 4,950,000 |
| Community and Family Engagement | Supports a network of 81 community collaboratives designed to provide parenting resources and supports to all families in every community, inclusive of Parent Child Plus programs | 15,990,598 |
| Neighborhood Villages | Funds a pilot program to provide high-quality economically-integrated infant and toddler classrooms | 1,000,000 |
| Higher Education- Career Pathways | Supports a targeted initiative across all the network of state community colleges to develop credit-bearing CDA course work to increase the supply of qualified educators | 2,970,000 |
| Reach Out and Read | Supports Reach Out and Read, a pediatric literacy intervention program which trains doctors, nurse practitioners, and other medical professional to incorporate evidence-based model into regular pediatric checkups | 1,750,000 |
| Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) | Ongoing monthly payments to support operating costs for all EEC-licensed child care providers | 475,000,000 |

# EEC Budget: FY27 H.2 vs. FY27 House (in millions $)

## GENERAL FUND LINE ITEMS

| Line Item | Appropriation Name | FY27 H.2 | FY27 House | House vs. H.2 | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3000-1000 | Administration | $ 13.2 | $ 20.3 | $ 7.1 | Includes $7.5M for ECE Scholarships and $25K for Old Colony YMCA; operational funding reduced by $413K from H.2 |
| 3000-1020 | Quality Improvement | $ 48.2 | $ 48.2 | $ - | Includes $10K for Nauset Youth Alliance |
| 3000-1045 | C3 Grants | $ 115.0 | $ 110.0 | $ (5.0) | Included in 1596-2410 to level fund C3 at $475M |
| 3000-2000 | Access Management | $ 20.0 | $ 20.0 | $ - | |
| 3000-3060 | DCF/DTA Related Child Care | $ 597.2 | $ 598.6 | $ 1.4 | Increase to caseload |
| 3000-4060 | Income-Eligible Child Care | $ 623.6 | $ 623.6 | $ - | |
| 3000-5000 | Grants to Head Start Programs | $ 20.0 | $ 20.0 | $ - | |
| 3000-6025 | CPPI Pre-K Initiative | $ 5.0 | $ 5.0 | $ - | |
| 3000-6075 | Mental Health Grants | $ 5.0 | $ 5.0 | $ - | |
| 3000-7040 | Title IV-E | $ 0.5 | $ 0.5 | $ - | |
| 3000-7050 | CFCE | $ 11.7 | $ 11.7 | $ - | |
| 3000-7052 | Parent-Child Plus Program | $ 4.3 | $ 4.3 | $ - | |
| 3000-7055 | Neighborhood Villages | $ 1.0 | $ 1.0 | $ - | |
| 3000-7066 | Career Pathways | $ 3.0 | $ 3.0 | $ - | |
| 3000-7070 | Reach Out and Read | $ 1.8 | $ 1.8 | $ - | |
| 1596-2410 | C3 Expansion | $ 360.0 | $ 365.0 | $ 5.0 | Included with 3000-1045 to level fund C3 at $475M |
| 1596-2412 | CPPI Pre-K Initiative | $ 32.0 | $ - | $ (32.0) | Reduction in CPPI grants and elimination of Summer Step Up |
| | **TOTAL** | **$ 1,861.2** | **$ 1,837.8** | **$ (23.4)** | |

# FY26 Fair Share Supplemental Budget

In January, Governor Healey filed an **FY26 Fair Share Supplemental Budget** to complement her FY27 budget proposal. It included within the outside sections **$150 million transfer** to EEC's CCFA Programs.

The House and Senate recently approved their versions of the Fair Share Supplemental Budget, which will be reconciled and sent to the Governor for her approval.

## House of Representatives 1596-2702

- **$12.5 million** to reduce the waitlist for the income eligible CCFA program.
- **$10.7 million** for CCFA contracted seats.
- **$8.0 million** for CCFA access for staff working in early education & care.
- **$7.5 million** for loan repayment for staff working in early education & care.

## Senate

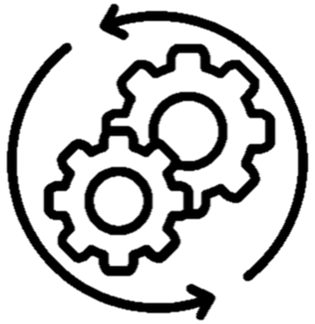
- The Senate proposal does not reflect additional funding for caseload for EEC.

# Next up: SWM and Senate Budgets

**The Senate Ways & Means (SWM) Committee kicked off the next stage of the budget process when it released its budget proposal on May 5.**

SWM funds EEC at $1.844B and **aligns** with H.2 across many EEC priority areas

- Educator Support through C3, CCR&Rs,
- Support for families with CCFA, Head Start
- Wrap-around Supports such as Mental Health Grants, Parent Child+





There are several **watch areas**

- EEC's operational and administrative funding $3.8M below H2 and $10.9M below House
- CPPI falls below H.2's proposal by $8.5M
- SWM does not fund Career Pathways or Reach Out and Read

Review the SWM's the **FY27 budget proposal** on the Massachusetts Legislature's website.

# FY26 Informal Care Rate Increase: Overview and Proposal for Consideration

# FFN Care Within The EEC System

**EEC refers to Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care as Informal Child Care (ICC).** ICC is defined as **license-exempt care** provided by a relative or non-relative for a child receiving Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA).

**ICC caregivers and families** must be approved by EEC in order to receive CCFA reimbursement payments.

## Qualifying for FFN Care with EEC



### Caregivers must

- Be identified as a potential provider by a family approved for CCFA
- Complete the application and approval process through the regional CCR&R, including required background checks and health and safety training (e.g., EEC Essentials, First Aid/CPR)
- Comply with applicable licensing monitoring and safety requirements



### Families must

- Be approved for CCFA
- Identify that they are seeking care from a relative or non-relative
- Provide information about the potential caregiver including contact information, relationship to the child and location of care(in the child's home/caregiver home)
- Acknowledge that the caregiver must complete EEC required ICC requirements before care begins

# Proposed FFN and Informal Care Next Steps

Expand **consumer education** through website and outreach

Create an **ICC unified application** and orientation process

Continue to work collaboratively with FFN and ICC caregivers to better **understand their needs**



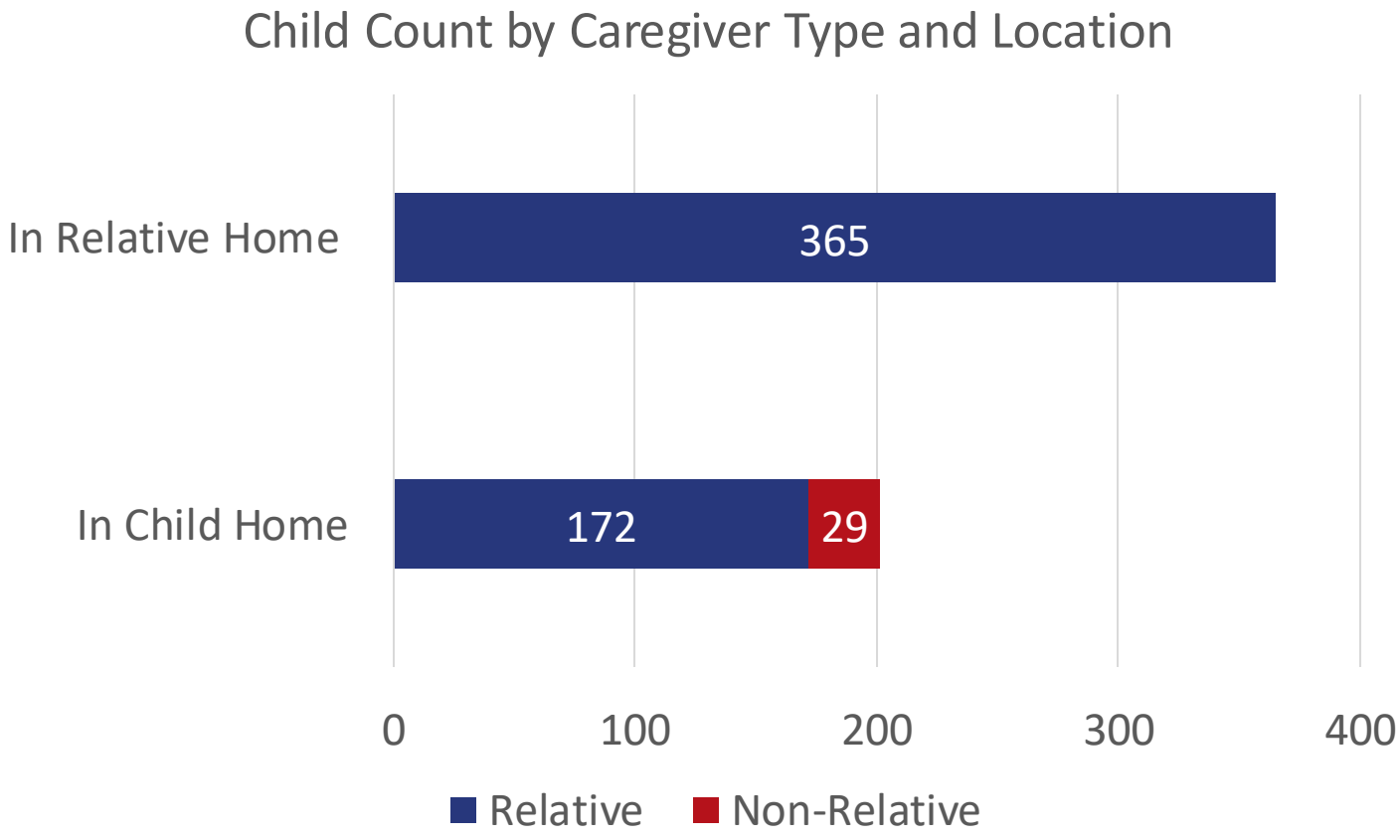
Conduct more **FFN/ICC focus groups** with families and providers

Further explore the **ICC CCFA reimbursement rate structure**, comparing with other states and provider types

Establish an **FFN Advisory Committee** with diverse stakeholders, including Care That Works Coalition and representatives from the formal child care system

# Informal Child Care (ICC) by Caregiver Type and Location

Fiscal Year 2026 through April 16, 2026




285

Relative Caregivers

187

Caregivers in Own Home

98

Caregivers in Child Home

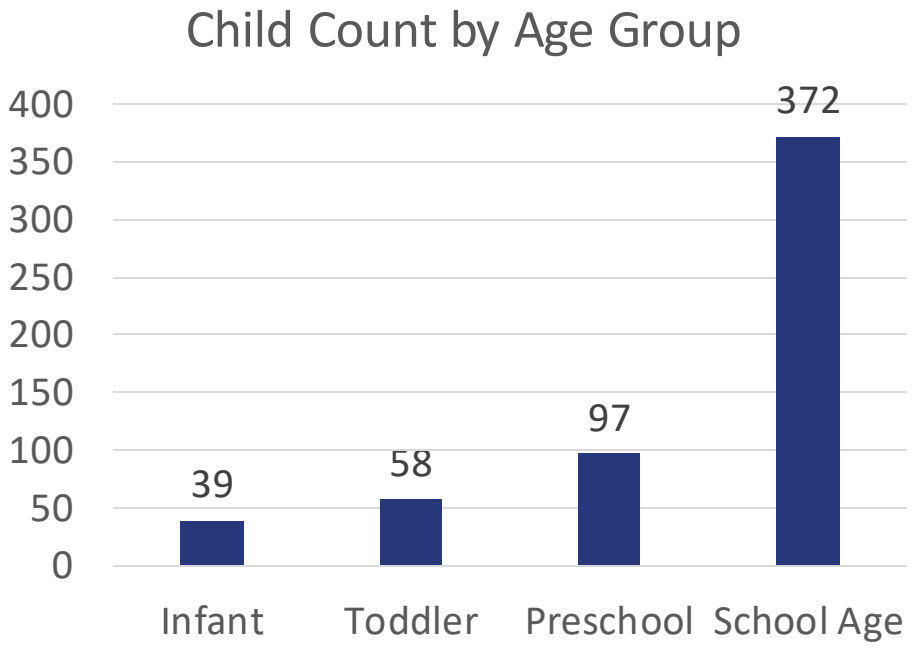
8

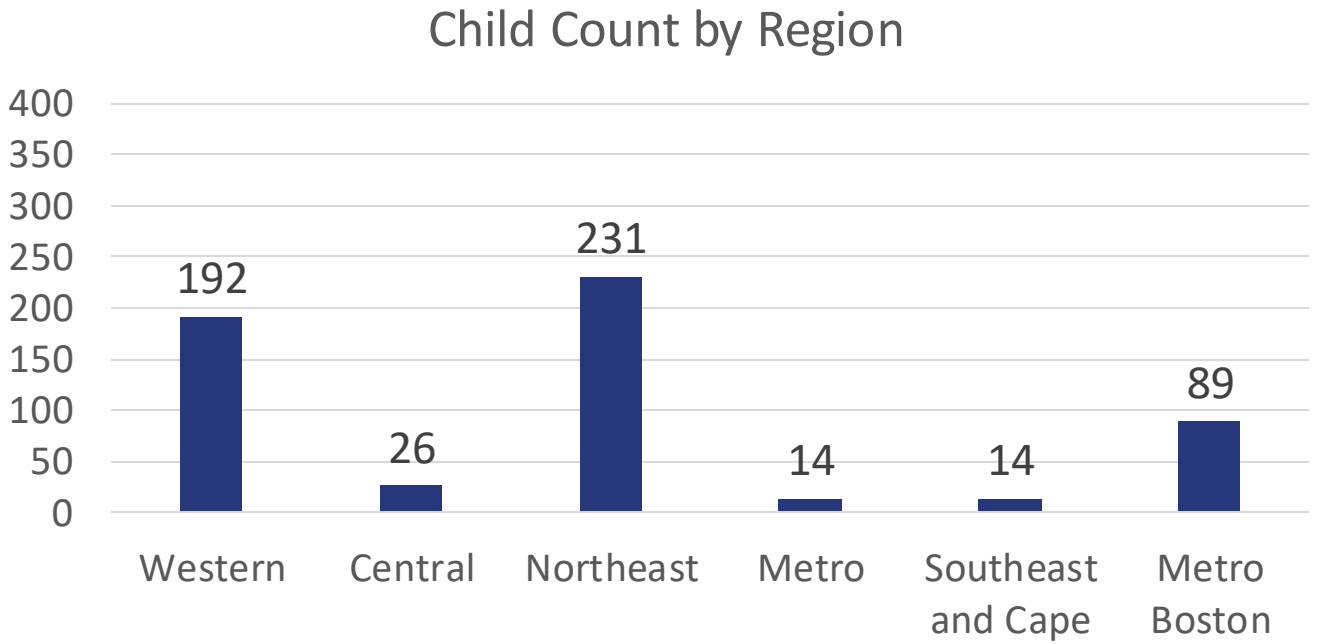
Non-Relative Caregivers

(All in Child Home)

# Informal Child Care (ICC) by Age and Region

Fiscal Year 2026 through April 16, 2026

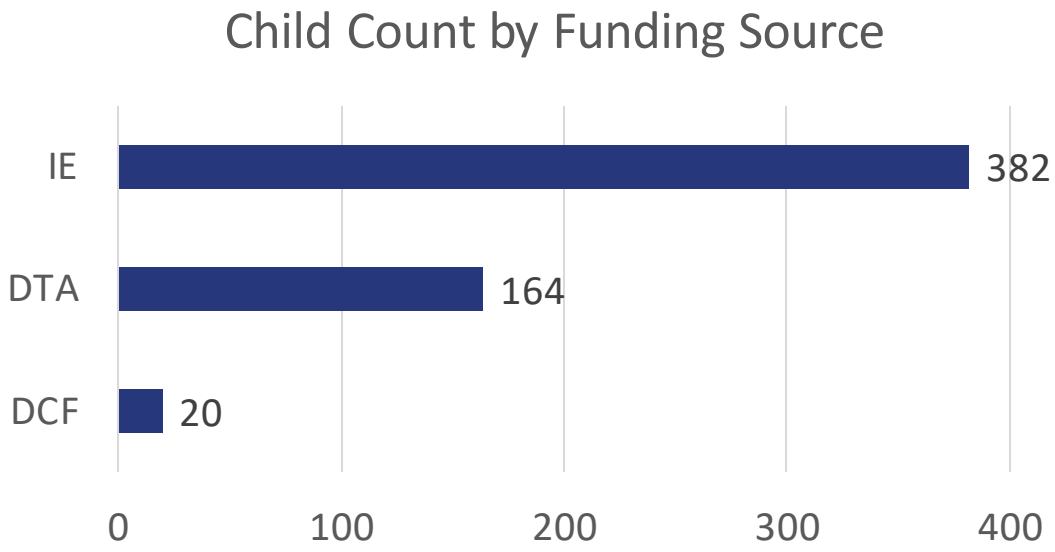


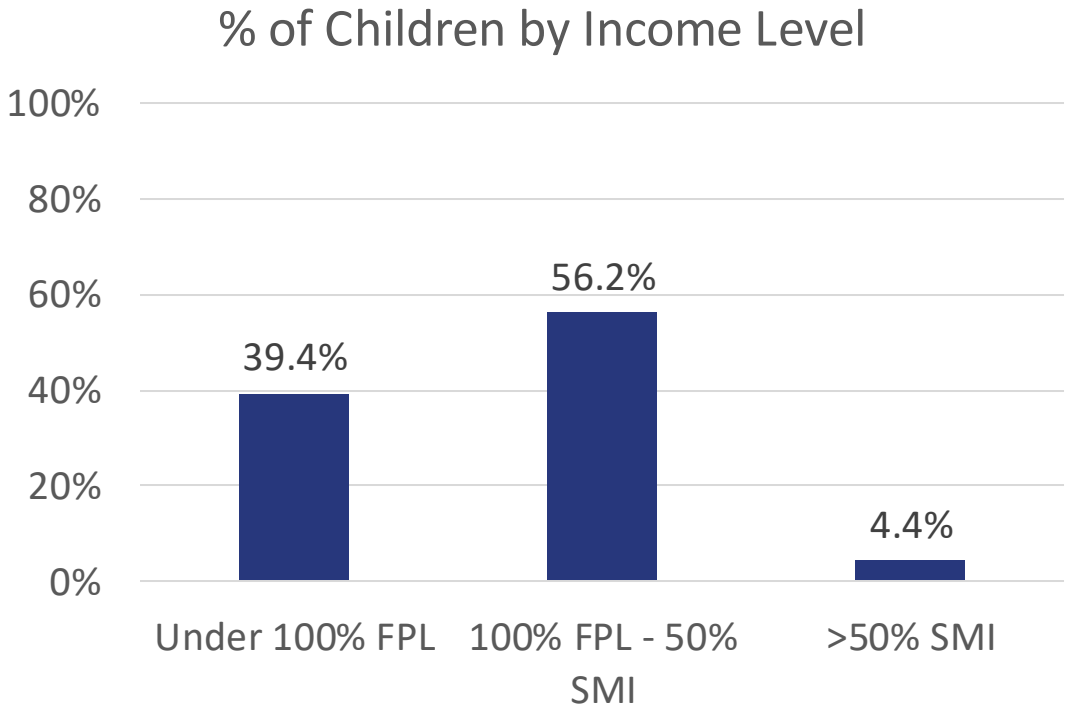



# Informal Child Care (ICC) by Funding Source and Income

Fiscal Year 2026 through April 16, 2026

95% of IE have a Primary Service Need of “Employed”



# Current ICC Caregiver Rates

ICC CCFA daily reimbursement rates are standardized statewide based on part-time and full-time care and where the care is provided (not based on age or region).

| Provider Type | Part-Time | Full-Time |
|---|---|---|
| RIRH-Relative In Relatives Home | $14.74 | $24.57 |
| IHR- Relative in the Child's Home | $10.40 | $17.33 |
| IHNR- Non-Relative in the Child's Home | $10.40 | $17.33 |

**Rates vary based on where care is provided:**

- Lower rates apply when care is provided in the child's home by the relative or non-relative.
- Higher rates apply when care is provided in the relative's home. Care may not be provided in the non-relative's home.

ICC rates are significantly lower than those for licensed programs and total spending represented less than 1% of the total CCFA budget or approximately **$2 million** in FY25.

# FY27 Informal Child Care Rate Increase

Proposal Considerations



Recognize that **current rates are low** and **costs are increasing**



Promote **family access and affordability**



**Move towards consistent rates** regardless of where the care is taking place (in relative's home vs. child's home) to promote greater equity for parents choosing this type of care

# Proposal: Simplify and align rates to increase equity across informal care settings

- **Rate Adjustment:** Raise informal rate for care in child's home to match rate for care in relative's home and apply across-the-board increase to all rates.
- **Rate Increase Range:** $3.00 (care in relative's home) to $10.00 (care in child's home) per day
- **Annual Cost Estimate:** $990K; to be effective for FY27 (starting July 1)

| | Part-Time FFN Daily Rates | | | Full-Time FFN Daily Rates | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Current | Proposed | $ Increase | Current | Proposed | $ Increase |
| **Relative in Relative's Home** | $14.74 | $16.68 | +$1.94 | $24.57 | $27.80 | +$3.23 |
| **Relative or Non-Relative in Child's Home** | $10.40 | $16.68 | +$6.28 | $17.33 | $27.80 | +$10.47 |

Note: In FY26 to date, 365 children (64%) received care in a relative's home, and 201 children (36%) received care in their own home. This care was delivered by 187 caregivers in their own homes and 106 providers in the child's home.

# Standards for the Licensure of Residential Programs, Regulation Revisions

# Primary Goals of Revision

606 CMR 3.00 govern EEC's oversight and licensing of residential programs. These regulations have not seen a comprehensive revision since **1995**.

**There have been targeted revisions since that time, most recently in **2015,** regarding the use of prone, mechanical, and chemical restraints in the residential programs EEC licenses.*

## Goals of Revision



**Center the experience** of the **children and families** that are served by these programs.



**Streamline** to ensure better **efficiency** and less duplication.



**Minimize financial impact** and added costs on programs.



Foster the **development** of a **stable, skilled workforce.**



**Eliminate** provisions, practices, and language that are **outdated** or no longer applicable.



Utilize **research and evidence-based best practices** to **inform** revisions and recommended policy changes.



**Enhance** compliance, accountability, & transparency.



**Promote inclusive**, dignified **language & best practices** that **reflect the needs** of the population served and **improve outcomes.**

# Key Areas of Reform



**Modernize & Streamline Language**

- ✓ Promote inclusivity
- ✓ Enhance alignment with sister agencies
- ✓ Improve accessibility for readers



**Evidence-Based Approach**

- ✓ Incorporate trauma-informed and responsive lens
- ✓ Prioritize permanency
- ✓ Improve outcomes for persons served
- ✓ Better support workforce



**Enhance Clarity**

- ✓ Compliance
- ✓ Transparency
- ✓ Accountability
- ✓ Accessibility for readers

# Path to Effective Date

Work to ensure successful implementation of regulations will continue through the end of 2026.

| SPRING 2026 | Late Spring/ Summer 2026 | Late August 2026 | Winter 2026/27 |
|---|---|---|---|




- Teams from policy, IT, and training will be working throughout the spring and summer with the R & P licensing team to build and implement the systems and supports necessary to ensure successful implementation.
- These teams will continue to monitor these systems and supports for efficacy through the end of the year.
- Provider workgroups will remain in place to facilitate feedback.
- Ongoing technical assistance will be available for providers/programs.

# *Standards for the Licensure of Residential Programs Serving Children and Young Parents* – Proposed Regulation Revisions - VOTE

EEC seeks authority to revise its Residential Program Regulations, 606 CMR 3.00. In order to be adopted, the proposed amended regulations must be filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth and published in the Massachusetts Register. Therefore, EEC recommends the Board authorize the Commissioner of Early Education and Care to file the proposed amended regulations, 606 CMR 3.00, to be effective **November 17, 2026**, with the Secretary of the Commonwealth for publication in the Massachusetts Register.

**MOVED:** that the Board of Early Education and Care, in accordance with G.L. c. 15D, § 3, having solicited public comment as required by G.L. c. 30A, hereby approves 606 CMR 3.00, the proposed amended regulations governing Residential Programs, and authorizes the Commissioner of Early Education and Care to file the proposed amended regulations with the Secretary of the Commonwealth for publication in the Massachusetts Register.

# Family Child Care Capacity Pilot

# Legislative History

The state's **Fiscal Year 2025 budget** included a change to the General Laws governing EEC that removed language that set a cap on the number of children Family Child Care programs could care for, known as group sizes, at 10 children. At the time, FCC providers were the only provider type that was subject to this cap on group sizes through state law.

The removal of this language meant EEC's FCC licensing regulations define group sizes for FCC providers.

While EEC's FCC licensing regulations currently maintain group sizes for FCCs at 10 children, the change to the law has enabled EEC to consider FCC group size and ratios as a part of its ongoing regulatory review.

# Family Child Care Capacity Pilot Program

- The Family Child Care (FCC) Capacity Pilot Program will evaluate the feasibility of increasing licensed enrollment in Family Child Care homes from 10 to 12 children while maintaining program quality, safety, and regulatory compliance.
- The pilot will follow a small group of FCC providers granted permission to serve up to 12 children, collect operational data, educator and family feedback, and licensing monitoring outcomes to inform future regulatory, policy, and support decisions related to FCC capacity, staffing ratios, groupings and licensing structures.

**The Pilot will help identify:**

- Key challenges
- Staffing issues
- Compliance trends
- Impacts to licensors
- System impacts

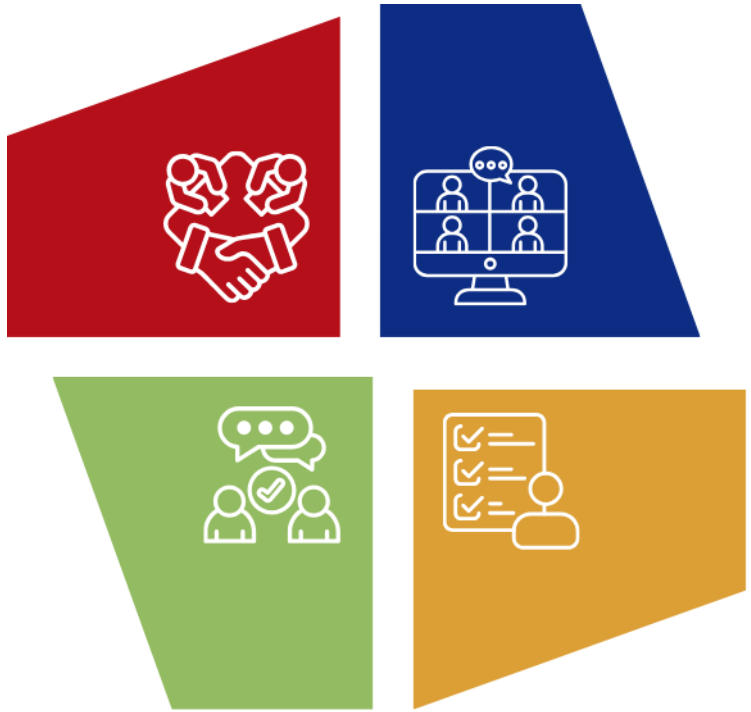
# Feedback for Pilot Design

**Licensor Learning Circles**

FCC Licensing team worked together to put together a pilot proposal and learning goals.

**FCC Systems Working Group**

Gathered feedback from FCC Systems staff on pilot design and support needed for pilot success.



**FCC Educator Working Group**

Gathered feedback from educators across the state on pilot design, participation and learning goals.

**Feedback Survey**

Short survey shared with working group members to weigh in on design elements.

# Pilot Eligibility

- **EEC will send eligible FCC providers (1,374 in total) information on how to apply.**

- **To participate FCC providers should meet the following criteria:**
  - License is in good standing (no pending enforcement actions, sanctions, or serious licensing violations)
  - Licensed for 10 children
  - Program has operated continuously with a licensed capacity of 10 for at least 3 full years

- **Target pilot size: 25-30 programs, ~5 per region to ensure statewide representation and varied program types.**

# Pilot Participation Requirements

**Staffing**
- Licensee resides in the home and actively works full time with children
- 1 full time Certified Assistant
- Additional staff approved, at a minimum, as Regular Assistants

**Facility**
- 35 sq ft/child (420sq ft minimum indoor space for 12)
- 900 sq ft outdoor space meeting current regs (or approved alternative playground)
- Operates on 1st or 2nd floor or basement only

**Notifications**
- Local Municipality
- Local Fire Department
- FCC System
- CCR&R
- CACFP
- Parents & Guardians

**Program/Educator**
- Updated parent handbook
- Staff schedule
- Staff records checklist
- Compliance with transportation regulations

**Monitoring and Data**
- Attend pilot orientation
- Submit monthly attendance
- Complete survey and feedback activities
- Participate in 2 monitoring visits within the first 6 months
- Attend exit meeting

# Pilot Selection Criteria

Each category evaluates a program's readiness to manage expanded enrollment safely.

| Criteria | Description |
|---|---|
| **Learning and Adaptability** | Educator's readiness to participate in the pilot and their ability to adapt program operations |
| **Engagement** | Educator's engagement in professional development, initiatives, and communication with licensing |
| **Educator and Program Experience** | Educator's experience operating an FCC program and ability to maintain quality while caring for a larger group |
| **Family Needs** | Educator's communication and partnership with families and how increased capacity will support family needs |
| **Staffing Consistency** | Educator's ability to maintain safe supervision and consistent staffing practices while caring for a larger group |
| **Attendance Record** | To evaluate consistency and capacity of enrollment/attendance over the previous month, prioritizing programs that maintain full or near-full attendance (10 children). |

# Learning from the Pilot

Key Questions to help inform regulation, policy, and support updates.



## Staffing, Groupings, and Ratios

- How staffing patterns shift
- Approaches to recruitment and retention
- Wage structures



## Program Quality, Health and Safety

- Impact on complaints/non-compliances
- Educator-licensor relationship
- Multi-age curriculum
- Changes to program philosophy/core values
- Quality supports needed



## Operations, Business Practices & Space

- Process for scaling from 10 to 12
- Operational adjustments required
- Insurance and liability considerations
- Impact on space needs
- Changes in program costs, revenue and budgets



## Family and Community Impact

- Sibling care continuity
- Community demand
- Seasonal shifts in care

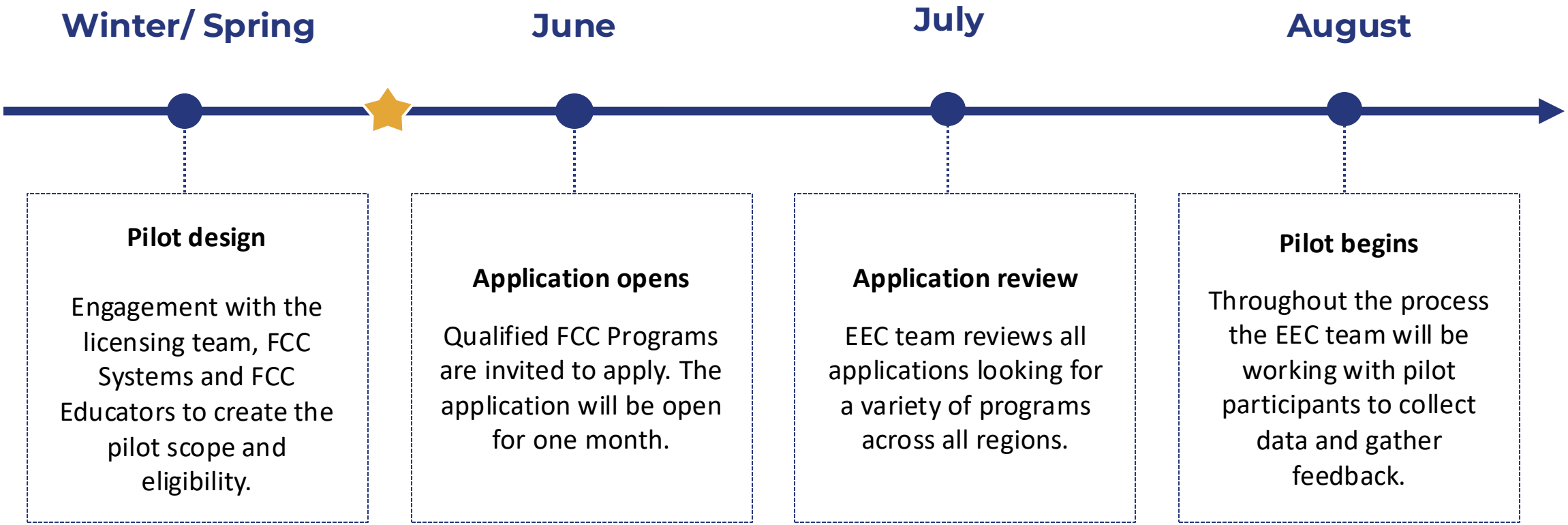


## EEC Process Impacts

- Impact of licensors' workload
- LEAD enhancements required

# Timeline

Proposed next steps for the pilot program



# Thank you!

View Agency KPI  Dashboards (updated monthly) here.

Next Meeting: June 10, 2026 (Boston Office)