



MASSACHUSETTS
**Department of
Early Education and Care**



October EEC Board Meeting

October 14, 2026

Agenda

Routine Business:

- Approval of minutes from September 9, 2026 Meeting – VOTE

Items for Discussion and Action:

- EEC Board FY28 Budget Recommendations – VOTE
- Workforce Development Priorities and Updates
- Inter-Agency Task Force on Child Care and Early Education Update
 - Child Care on Campus Initiative



EEC Board FY28 Budget Recommendations

Proposed FY28 Budget Priorities

Building on the agency's Strategic Objectives, the Board of Early Education and Care's recommendations are to support work across these objectives to support the needs of families, educators and programs.



FAMILY ACCESS

Families have equitable access to quality and affordable early education and care in the communities in which they live, learn, and work.



PROGRAM QUALITY

Programs licensed or funded by EEC support children's health and safety and provide high quality environments that are culturally responsive, inclusive, and support children's learning and development in partnership with families.



PROGRAM STABILITY

Programs licensed or funded by EEC are operationally stable and financially sustainable.



WORKFORCE SUPPORTS

A diverse field of educators, leaders, and program staff is competitively compensated and supported by clear professional pathways that promote quality, retention, and advancement.



AGENCY INFRASTRUCTURE

EEC has sufficient internal capacity, organizational structures, and diverse perspectives and expertise to carry out its mission and strategic objectives.

Proposed FY28 Budget Priorities

The Board's recommendations come down to three steps: **restore** the administration line item that makes everything else possible, **maintain** the core investments in CCFA, C3, CPPI, and the workforce, and **add** resources where families and providers need them most.

Restore

EEC's Administrative Funding Restore EEC administrative funding to \$13.1 million in FY28 to sustain essential agency operations, workforce supports, and critical research, data, and technology infrastructure needed to advance key reforms and system modernization.

Pre-K Access through CPPI and a Whole-System View. Restore CPPI funding following a 30% reduction to sustain and expand mixed-delivery preschool access, while encouraging EEC, EOE, and partner agencies to assess funding holistically, address gaps, support underserved families and educators, and strengthen the child care system.

Maintain/Add

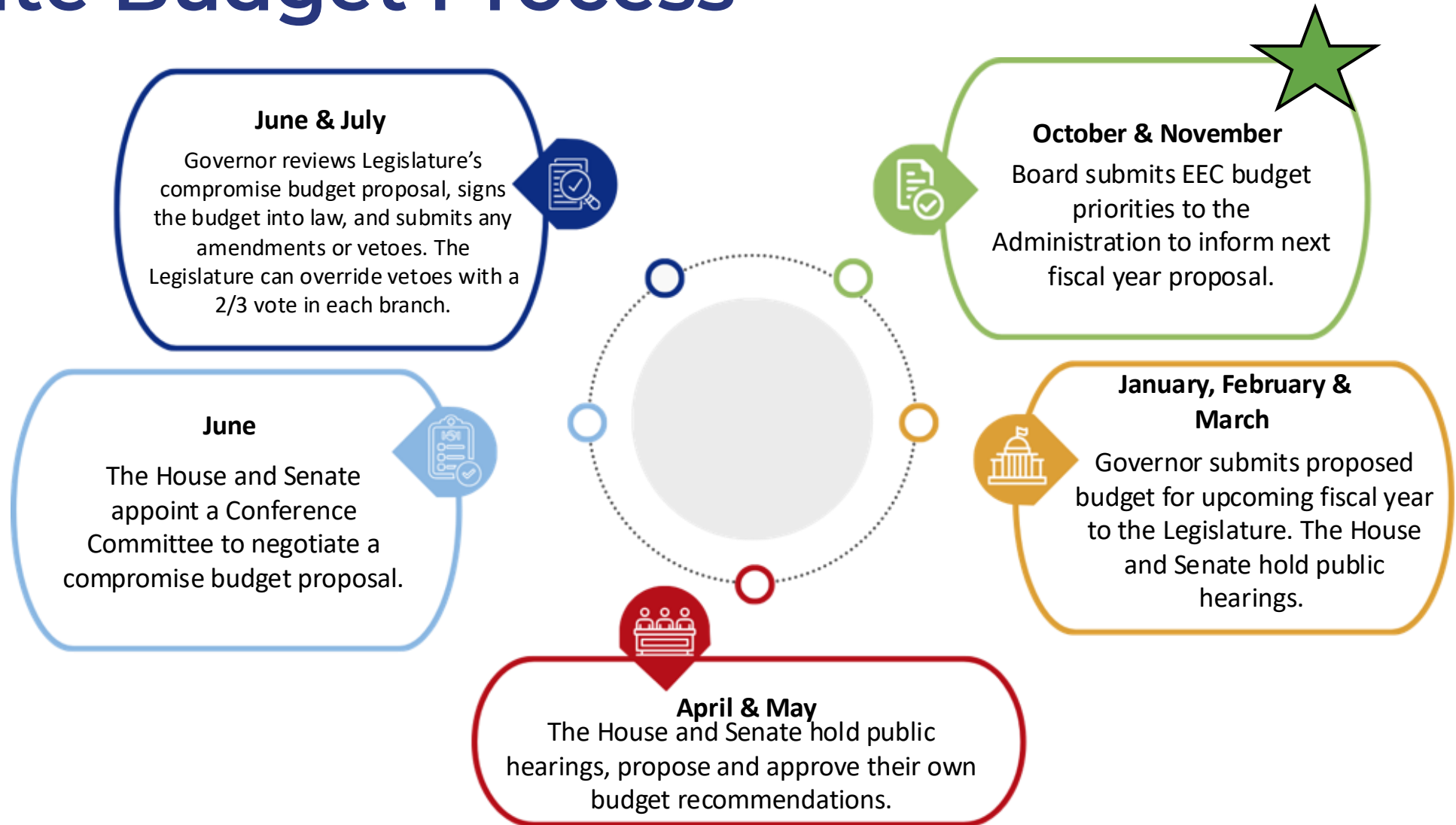
Family Access through CCFA. Continue investment in CCFA to expand access to high-quality child care, alongside improvements to MyChildCareMA to help families access assistance, navigate the system, and enroll in care quickly and with dignity.

Program Stability and Workforce Compensation through C3. Increase C3 funding in FY28 to include newly licensed programs, sustain child care capacity growth, and preserve progress in affordability and educator compensation.

Workforce Supports and Recent Innovations. Continue investing in workforce development through credentials, apprenticeships, vocational education, and higher education pathways, while reinvesting in the Employer Child Care Innovation Fund and Student Loan Repayment for Early Educators and prioritizing meaningful improvements in educator compensation.

Strengthening Family Child Care Systems and Infrastructure. Target FY28 investments in family child care (FCC) program growth and capital facilities grants to strengthen provider sustainability, while updating regulations through stakeholder engagement, aligning licensing and certification requirements to support educator mobility, and standardizing system supports across providers.

State Budget Process



Board of Early Education and Care FY2028 Budget Priorities Memo

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 15D, Section 4 requires that the Board of Early Education and Care "... review and make recommendations regarding the budget to the secretary [of Education]" for consideration during the Fiscal Year budget development process.

MOVED: That, the Board, in accordance with G.L. c. 15D, § 4, hereby approves and adopts the recommended priorities for the Fiscal Year 2028 budget and authorizes the Commissioner to submit the budget recommendations to the Secretary of Education.



Workforce Development Priorities and Updates

The Early Education & Care Workforce in Massachusetts

- Educators wages are increasing over time but are low when compared with state benchmarks and other competitor occupations.
- The most common benefits offered to educators are paid time off and paid sick leave, although family child care (FCC) programs offer them at lower rates compared to center-based programs.
- Departure rates are highest among assistant teachers, although these rates have improved significantly in the past few years.
- EEC has multiple initiatives underway to support and strengthen the early education workforce and improve recruitment, retention, and advancement.

\$24.65
per hour

Average wage for teachers at center-based early education programs (May 2026), roughly equivalent to a \$51,000 annual salary. Educator wages have increased 16% since 2022.

21%
departure rate

Share of teachers at C3-funded center-based programs leaving their position in the previous year, as of spring 2026. Educator turnover among center-based teachers has improved in recent years, from 28% in 2021/2022 to 21% in 2026.

These data reflect the workforce across programs receiving Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) funding and are therefore not necessarily representative of the entire early education & care workforce in Massachusetts.

Skilled Staff Support High-Quality Early Education & Care

Skills of the workforce drive the quality of interactions and the teaching and learning in the classroom/ home



Characterized by frequent warm, supportive and stimulating interactions



Children have opportunities to play and explore in a safe and engaging environment



Planful curriculum shapes opportunities to learn through active experiences in ways that are responsive to individual needs



Families are empowered to engage in collaborative partnerships and programs are inclusive and supportive to the diversity of families and children served

Building a Highly Skilled Workforce



Competency-based System (Higher Education and Professional Pathways to a credential)

Professional learning pathways that support the skills and practices essential to EEC's vision of quality.

- Multiple options responsive to individual needs of diverse field
- Pathways consistently build expertise over time



Recruitment & Retention

Sufficient educators entering the field through these pathways to staff all classrooms. Educators staying in the field while learning and growing their skills to build a highly professional workforce.

Pathways to Earning a Credential



1. **Higher Education**, including:

- Early Education Foundational Certificate available at community colleges
- College degrees

2. **Professional Development**, including:

- EEC-developed training packages being piloted by the Academy
- Child Development Associate (CDA)

- PLUS -

Years of Experience: Time spent working in the field.

Higher Education Strategy

Supporting successful advancement in higher education system for early educators

Navigation Support

Career Pathways provides support for those seeking higher education opportunities, by guiding through:

- Registration
- Advising
- Paying for courses and degrees

Financial Support

Leverages all available scholarship funding for affordability and sustainability:

- MassReconnect
- MassEducate
- ECE Scholarship

Loan repayment is also available to reduce debt for working educators.

Degree Pathways

Clear and accessible certificate to degree pathway:

- 16-credits Foundational Certificate contribute directly to the attainment of an associates degree
- 2+2 agreements transfer AA into BA pathway

Happening this year

- Career Pathways funding supplemented with scholarship funds
- Foundational certificate is now available in multiple languages at all 15 community colleges and Urban College
- Higher education opportunities at no cost for early educators
 - Encourage perspective educators to enter early education and care
 - Retain passionate, high quality staff
- Loan repayment opportunities continue

Professional Development Strategy

Additional advancement options for educators looking outside of higher education

- Supportive for educators who
 - Already have degrees in other fields
 - Cannot access financial aid
 - Longstanding history of negative academic experiences
- Broadly available to the field through EEC-funded professional learning systems, with potential for future expansion
- Tightly integrates training with on the job learning and practice

Competency-based learning

- Training is organized around clear educator competencies and what educators can do in practice.

Active, required participation

- Educators are expected to engage, reflect, and participate throughout the training.

Built-in practice application

- Educators practice new skills during sessions and apply them on the job between sessions.

Testing the Professional Development Pathway

Training Pilot

This year EEC, in partnership with the Statewide Professional Development Academy and Professional Development Centers, is piloting trainings in English and Spanish.

Level 1 credential training pilot began in October 2026 (Spanish options coming next)

- Trainings intended for educators interested in deepening their knowledge and skills in the foundations of early childhood education

Leadership training pilots underway and will continue in FY27

- Trainings intended for those interested in deepening knowledge in supporting adult learning through a variety of roles

Small scale evaluation planned to solicit educator feedback and understand training implementation to inform plan for scaling

Plan to expand opportunities for training agencies to participate in training of trainers after initial pilot, including for OST (in FY28)

Strong Educational Leadership is Key

Strong educational leaders create the conditions that facilitate educator professional growth and support job satisfaction

- Educational leadership support educators in
 - Applying and practicing skills
 - Building a sense of agency professionally
 - Engaging collaboratively around professional learning
 - Feeling confident and supported
 - Investing in ongoing professional learning
- Educators supported in this way:
 - Build professional skills continuously
 - Report more job satisfaction
 - Contribute and feel responsible for ongoing quality improvements in their programs

Leaders Implement:

- CQI and Professional Development Planning
- Opportunities for reflective practice
- Collaborative reflection and planning
- Job-embedded professional learning opportunities

How Are We Supporting Program Leadership

Educational leadership expectations reflect a fundamental shift in the role of all program leaders

Educational leaders need intensive targeted supports to respond to changing expectations

- New mentor and leadership training available broadly through PDCs and the Academy
- Leadership coaching available regionally through PDCs for FCC, GSA, and OST
- ECSO initiative for center-based leadership teams, focused on CQI and curriculum

Targeted leadership support for CCFA contracted providers, including FCC Systems, focused on:

- Capacity building around educational leadership, continuous improvement and planning training and job embedded PD for educators
- Enhancing supports for behavioral health, social emotional learning and educator wellness
- Piloting support for high-quality curriculum criteria (including curriculum-based assessment) and a user-informed process for developing new resources

Recruitment and Skill Building - Apprenticeships

GROW Grants

- Collaboration with MA Department of Apprentice Standards (DAS)
- 11 Grantees
 - 39 Early Childhood and Out-of-School Time (OST) programs
- To become:
 - Child Care Development Specialist
 - Early Childhood Educator
 - Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education



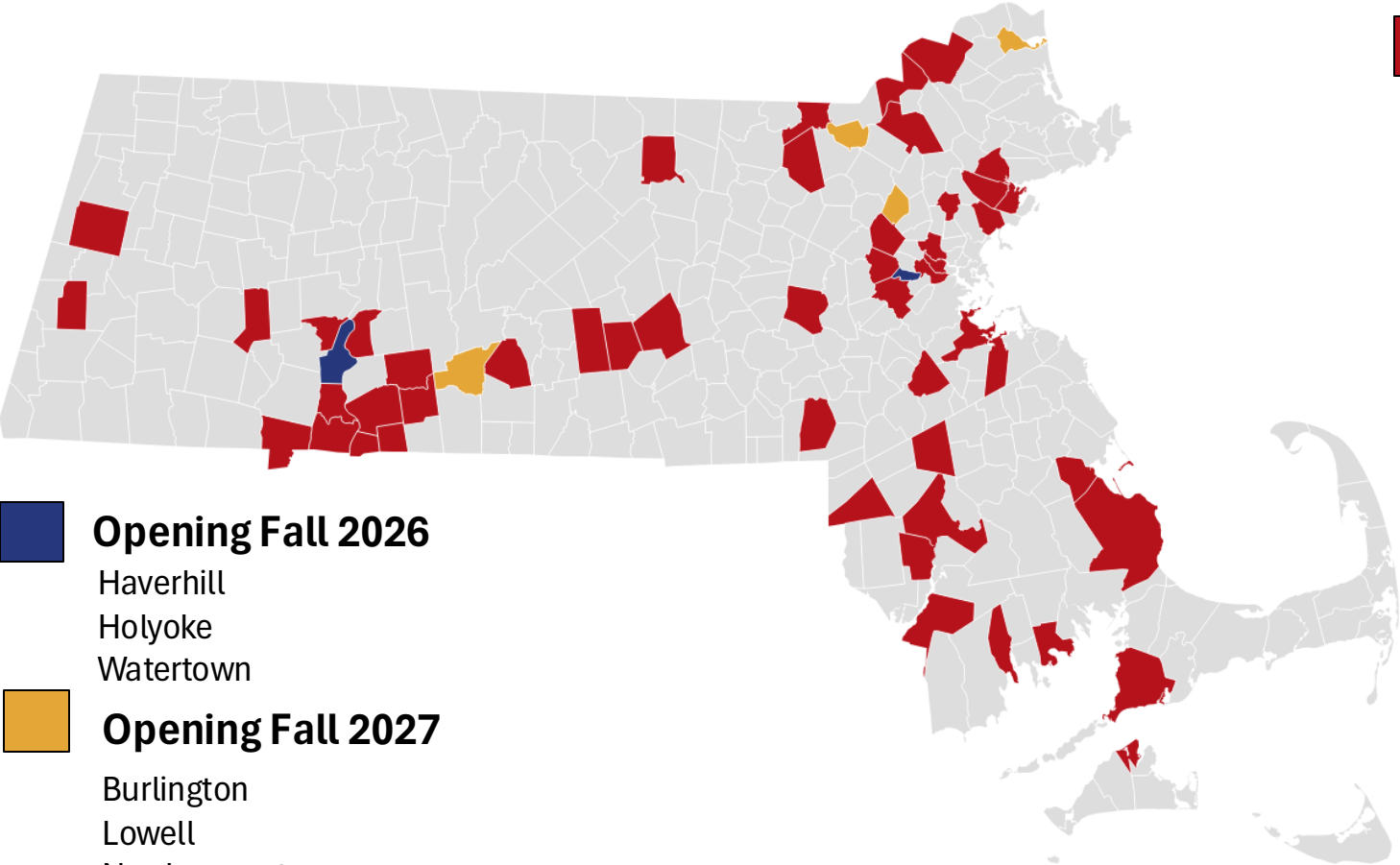
Recruitment - Chapter 74 Programs

In Massachusetts, **Chapter 74/Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Early Education and Care (ECE)** is a state-approved high school CTE program that provides students with academic instruction and hands-on experience in early childhood education. Completion of an approved Chapter 74 ECE program can meet certain **EEC teacher-level qualification requirements** and provides a pathway into the ECE workforce and further postsecondary education.

Early Childhood programs are in all EEC regions and are growing:

- 52 programs are running across the state
 - 3 opening in the fall of 2026
 - 6 in the application cycle aiming to open in the fall of 2027

Chapter 74 Program Locations



Open Now	Easthampton	Pittsfield
Andover	Fall River	Plymouth
Attleboro	Feeding Hills	Quincy
Cambridge	Fitchburg	Salem
Canton	Framingham	Somerville
Danvers	Franklin	South Hadley
East Falmouth	Haverhill	Easton
East Longmeadow	Huntington	Southwick
Easthampton	Kingston	Spencer
Fall River	Leicester	Springfield
Feeding Hills	Lexington	Stockbridge
Fitchburg	Longmeadow	Taunton*
Framingham	Ludlow	Tyngsborough
Franklin	Lynn	Vineyard Haven
Haverhill	Mattapoisett	Wakefield
	Medford	Waltham
	Methuen	Warren
	New Bedford*	West Springfield
	Newtonville	Westford
	North Dighton	Weymouth
	Peabody	Wilbraham
		Worcester

**Has more than one program*

Supporting Recruitment - Coordination with MassHire and Career Pathways

MassHire counselors have been trained to work with Career Pathways coordinators to help guide prospective educators to a career and degree path.



When prospective educators connect with Career Pathways they can get assistance navigating their options for continued education, financial assistance and employment opportunities.

Professional Portal

EEC is consolidating and modernizing the tools that the ECE workforce use for their professional development to create a "one-stop shop" for educators, with a modern and user-friendly interface and to streamline EEC operations through improved admin experiences.



PQR

Integrate professional registration process



StrongStart (LMS)

Integrate access to required trainings



Teacher Certification

Build improved process for applying for certifications



Program Admin Access

Build program-level view into educator qualifications



Educator Credential

Develop application process for new credential

Next Steps

- Continue to pilot and **expand professional development training packages** that will support advancement in the new credential for educators and leaders
 - Complete initial pilot of all Level 1 training packages
 - Design and pilot Level 2 training packages
 - Complete design and pilot of all leadership packages
- **Foundational certificate** is now available at all 15 community colleges and Urban College
- Develop **educational leadership certificate** with community colleges and expand Foundational certificate to other colleges
- Finalize the credential and **revise regulations**
- Continue ongoing integration of **credential systems into Chapter 74/CTE** and apprenticeship programs
- Continue to identify opportunities to **support growth in compensation** (e.g. loan repayment, ECE Scholarship, ECE Child Care Financial Assistance, C3)
- Continue **Portal development** as navigation tool



Inter-Agency Task Force on Child Care and Early Education Update: Child Care on Campus Initiative

Inter-Agency Early Education and Child Care Task Force

Established in 2024, the Inter-Agency Early Education and Child Care Task Force brought together all Massachusetts Secretariats to collaborate on solutions to strengthen Massachusetts' early education and care sector.

In Year 1, through national research, 14 local listening sessions, and opportunities for online feedback, the Task Force established 29 recommendations, focused on access, affordability, quality, sustainable business conditions, and workforce development, that identified specific agencies to collaborate in unique ways to address key challenges.

One of them focused on the use of public spaces for child care, and evolved into this recommendation for year 3:

The Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), Department of Higher Education (DHE), EOE and EEC in partnership with the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges and other public higher education representatives will explore opportunities to expand early education and care programs in public higher education.

Why Child Care on Campus?

Massachusetts faces several interconnected opportunities:

- Families need access to affordable, reliable, high-quality child care to be able to pursue educational attainment and professional success
- Colleges and universities are working to improve student persistence and degree completion, and faculty/staff recruitment and retention
- Employers are seeking high-skilled workers to enter key fields

By expanding access to child care and family-friendly supports for parents on campus, Massachusetts can help more students, faculty and staff succeed and strengthen workforce skills, all while increasing access to high-quality early education and care for children and families.

Child Care on Campus in MA

10 out of MA's 29 public institutions of higher education have on-campus child care. Here's what it looks like on three campuses.

Holyoke Community College

Itsy Bitsy Child Watch

Program: Created to improve student retention, this licensed program provides options for both recurring and occasional care while students attend classes, tutoring sessions, or other academic commitments.

Mount Wachusett Community College

Monty's Cubs Child Watch Program:

created to improve student retention, this license-exempt program provides flexible occasional care while students attend classes, meet with advisors, or participate in tutoring.

Garrison Center for Early Childhood Education: A licensed child care program run by MOC/Head Start, to support workforce preparation for early educators.

UMass Amherst

The Center for Early Education and Care (CEEC) is a licensed child care program that serves a mix of UMass students, faculty, and staff.

The Student Parent Programs office provides case management, advocacy, child care subsidies, family-friendly programming, and 1:1 needs assessments to improve student parent persistence and graduation. The university also offers a residential community for student caregivers and after-hours child watch sessions.

Task Force Working Group

A working group of representatives from EEC, EOE, DHE, and DCAMM began meeting regularly to assess a path forwards. Across 2024-early 2026, they completed the following workstreams and identified key themes.

Collected information on the current state of child care on all MA public higher education campuses

Hosted a leadership meeting to discuss the importance of child care and identify ways for the state to support the creation of more campus child care

Hosted bimonthly working group of designees from each institution to share best practices and discuss ways to support child care on campuses

Key themes:

- There is no one-size-fits-all for campus child care. There are a variety of models that work for different audiences;
- MA has strong exemplars of child care on campus, and staff passionate to share their expertise;
- Campus child care has a positive impact on student success;
- Campuses face similar challenges:
 - Understanding the need for child care on their campus;
 - Understanding different types of child care programs;
 - Understanding child care facilities requirements;
 - Identifying start-up and ongoing operational funding;
 - Understanding EEC licensing rules.

Developing a Resource Guide (2026)

A small group of campus-based volunteers met biweekly to brainstorm key information, best practices, and guidance for campus leadership.



Called "**Building a Family-Friendly Campus: A Guide to Child Care and Parent Supports**," the resource guide is intended to demystify the many different pathways that IHEs can take to improve family-friendly supports on their campuses, including child care, and summarize relevant resources to help them identify and plan a path forwards.

Building a Family-Friendly Campus: A Guide to Child Care and Parent Supports

Benefits of
Child Care for
Students, Faculty,
and Staff

Self Assessment

Types of Child
Care Services and
Wraparound
Supports

Funding and
Budgeting

Facilities
Requirements



Thank you!

View Agency KPI Dashboards (updated monthly) [here](#).

Next meeting: THURSDAY, November 12, 2026 at EEC's Boston Office