**Group and School Age Child Care Licensing Policy Statement  
Number: P-GCC/SA-11**

Any program of research or experimentation in child care must be consistent with the goal of child care licensing standards as stated at 102 CMR 7.01: to assure every child "a fair and full opportunity to reach his full potential." In the broad sense, research and experimentation that increase our collective knowledge of children and their development and/or train professionals for careers in early childhood education and care or related fields meet this purpose. In addition, any unusual treatment of a child or children must also be directed towards this goal, be consistent with their developmental needs, and may not violate any provision of child care licensing standards 1.

Child Care Licensing Standards [ see 102 CMR 7.04(12)] require the written informed consent of parents for each occurrence of research and experimentation or unusual treatment. Written informed consent shall mean that the parent is provided with the following information in writing and consents to it in writing:

* the identities, positions, and qualifications of the individuals conducting the research;
* the nature and purpose of the research;
* the duration of the research and the frequency of contact between their child and the researcher;
* the specific location where the research is to occur;
* any risks or consequences involved in the research or experimentation;
* an ethics statement regarding research at the center, including documentation of approval by an appropriate human subjects review committee, and a copy of 102 CMR 7.04(12).

The center must keep a log documenting research as it occurs. The log must include the researcher and the child who participated, the duration of the session, and the times the child was removed from and returned to the classroom, if any.

When research and experimentation or unusual treatment will occur at a location that is not part of the licensed child care space the parental consent discussed above must also include an authorization to release the child to the researcher. The authorization to release may include multiple researchers.

When research and experimentation or unusual treatment will occur in the center's licensed space it must be supervised by program staff.

1A program may seek a variance of a specific licensing regulation to substitute an alternative method of meeting the intent of the regulation, or may seek exemption from a particular regulation through a pilot or demonstration project.

For more information, see the Technical Assistance paper: Pilot or Demonstration Projects *,* at http://www.mass.gov/eec.