



MASSACHUSETTS
**Department of
Early Education and Care**



September EEC Board Meeting

September 10, 2025

Agenda

Routine Business

- Approval of minutes from August 13, 2025 Meeting – VOTE

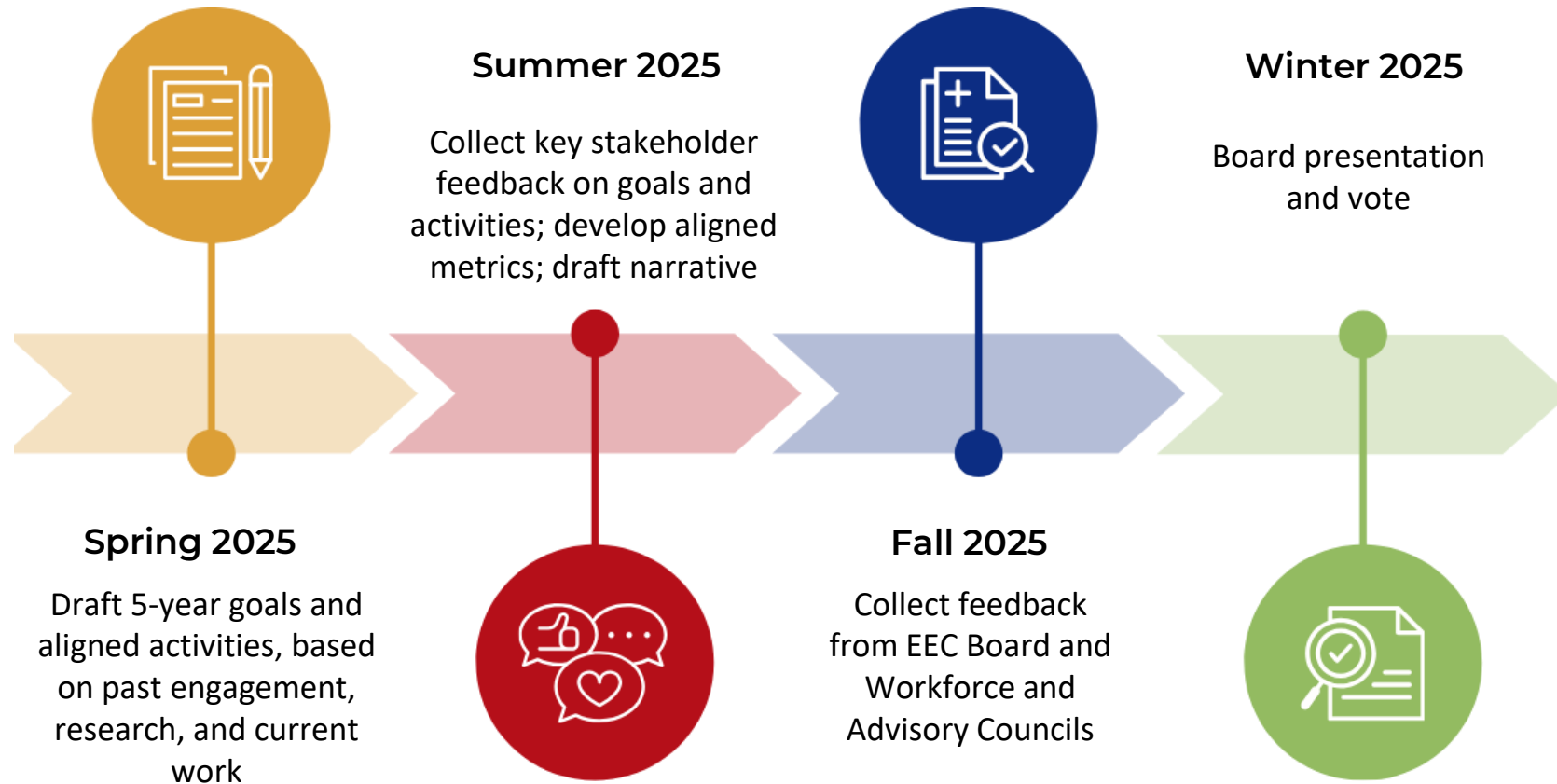
Items for Discussion and Action

- Board Strategic Planning Session – Summary, Reflections, and Takeaways
- Fiscal Year 2026 State Budget Overview
- Fiscal Year 2026 Support for Career Pathways & ECE Scholarships – VOTE
- Inter-agency Early Education and Child Care Task Force Update



Board Strategic Planning Session – Summary, Reflections, and Takeaways

Strategic Action Plan Timeline



2026-30 Foundations: Strategic Objectives



FAMILY ACCESS

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



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.



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.



AGENCY INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Key Areas of Focus

There are five key areas of focus in FY26:

Child Care Financial Assistance

Background Record Checks

Regulation Revisions

Workforce

Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3)

FY26 Priority Outcomes

CCFA

- Implement Family Advisory Council
- Update EEC's cost of care and revenue models to improve modeling for OST, administrative costs, and additional revenue sources (e.g., CPPI)
- Implement \$20M increase for CCFA reimbursement rates
- Modernize CCCFA IT, including re-platforming and launching Family Portal for CCFA applications and waitlist management
- Develop monitoring and support program for CCFA Contract Providers (targeting implementation in fall 2026)
- Update CCFA policies and procedures to fully implement recent regulatory changes (e.g., 85% SMI, codify priority populations, exclude public benefit income)

BRC

- Implement updated policies, procedures, and trainings to better support EEC-licensed programs and staff to have a transparent and efficient background records check experience

REGULATION REVISIONS

- Promulgate updated Residential Licensing Regulations (for fall 2026 implementation)
- Draft updated FCC Licensing Regulations (for fall 2026 public comment)

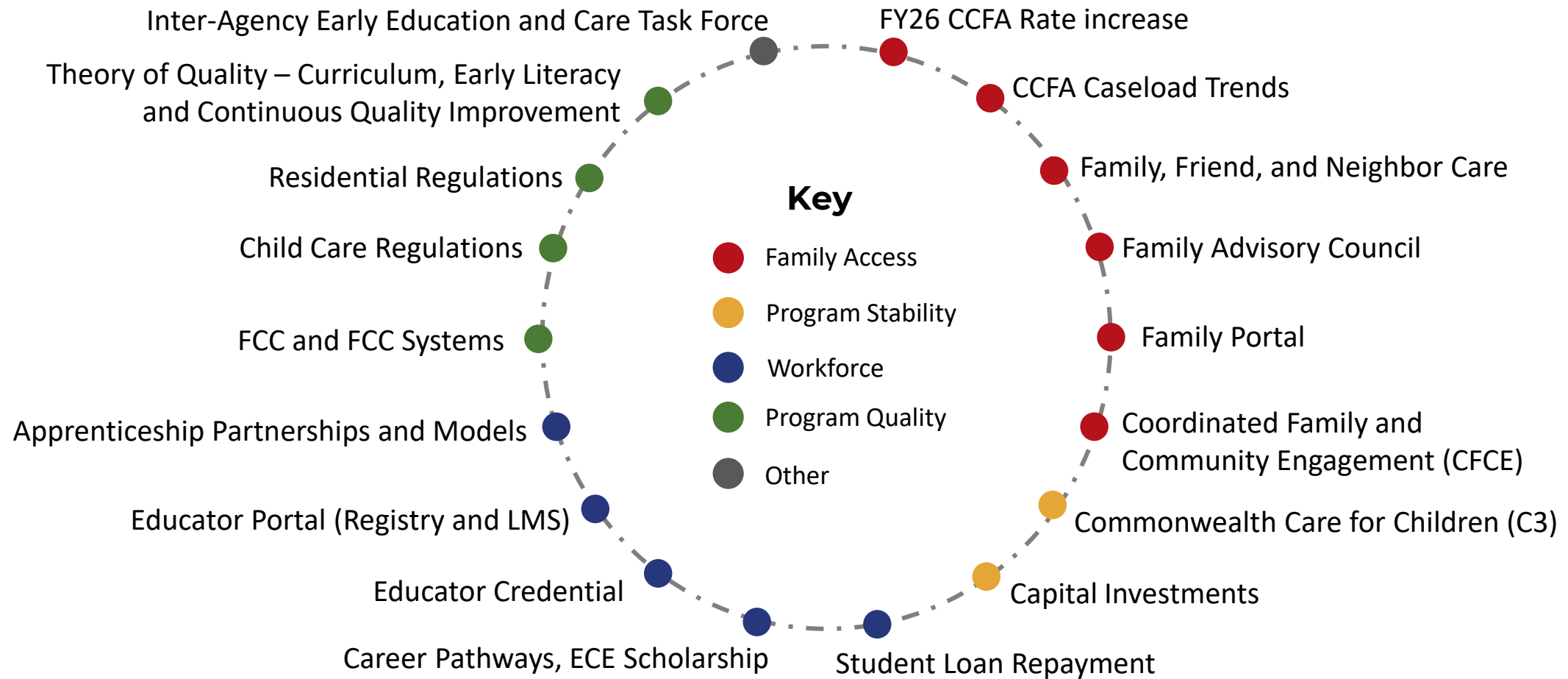
C3

- Implement updated C3 formula
- Promulgate C3 regulations

WORKFORCE

- Develop child care salary scale model to inform future conversations around compensation
- Implement student loan repayment program
- Begin offering new community college courses that will satisfy future credential requirements
- Launch Educator Portal to support teacher certification and credential tracking, including the migration of PQR certification information
- Launch new Learning Management System (LMS) with integration to Educator Portal
- Promulgate updated regulations recognizing the new Educator Credential

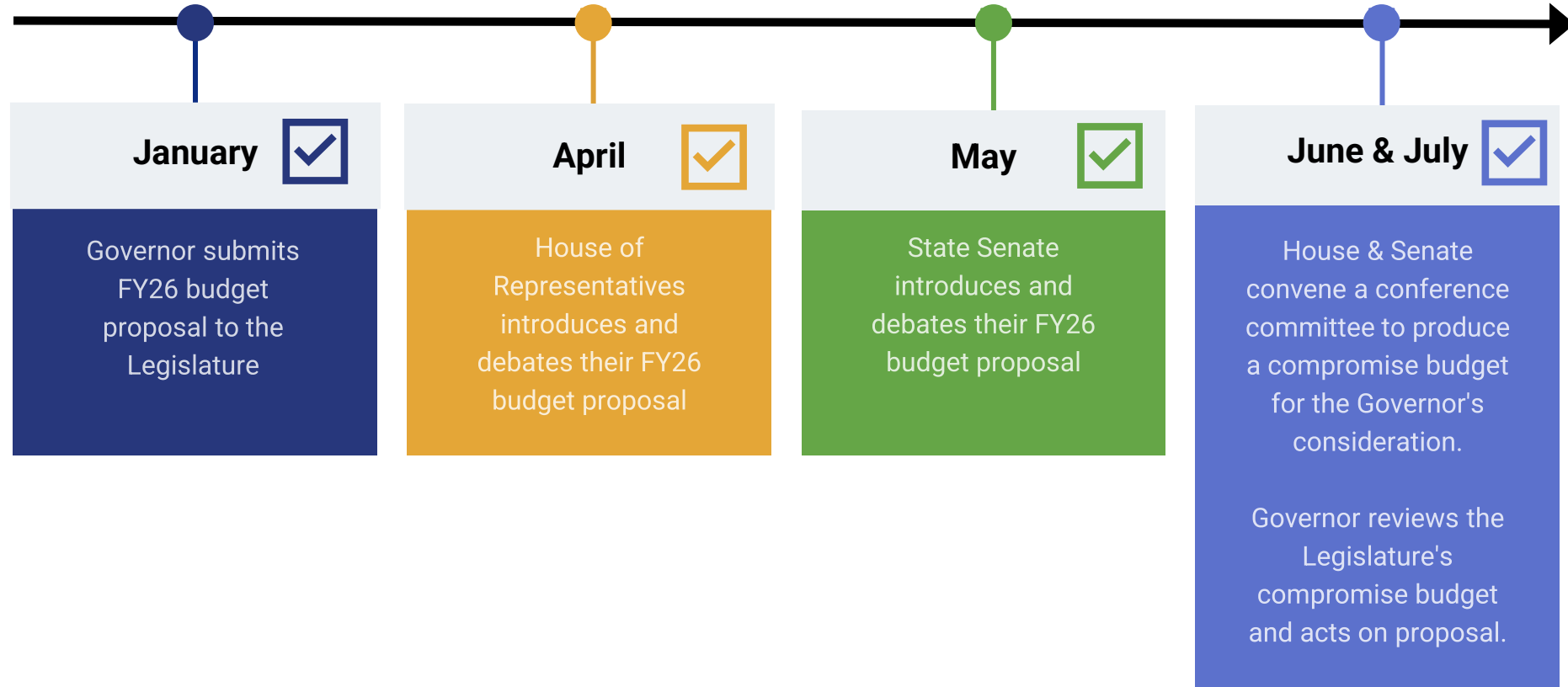
Major Topics for Board Input and Action in FY26





Fiscal Year 2026 State Budget Overview

State Budget Process



Gateway to Pre-K FY26 Budget Highlights

The Governor's H.1 budget continues to make progress in key areas of the Gateway to Pre-K agenda:

Continued investment in the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI)

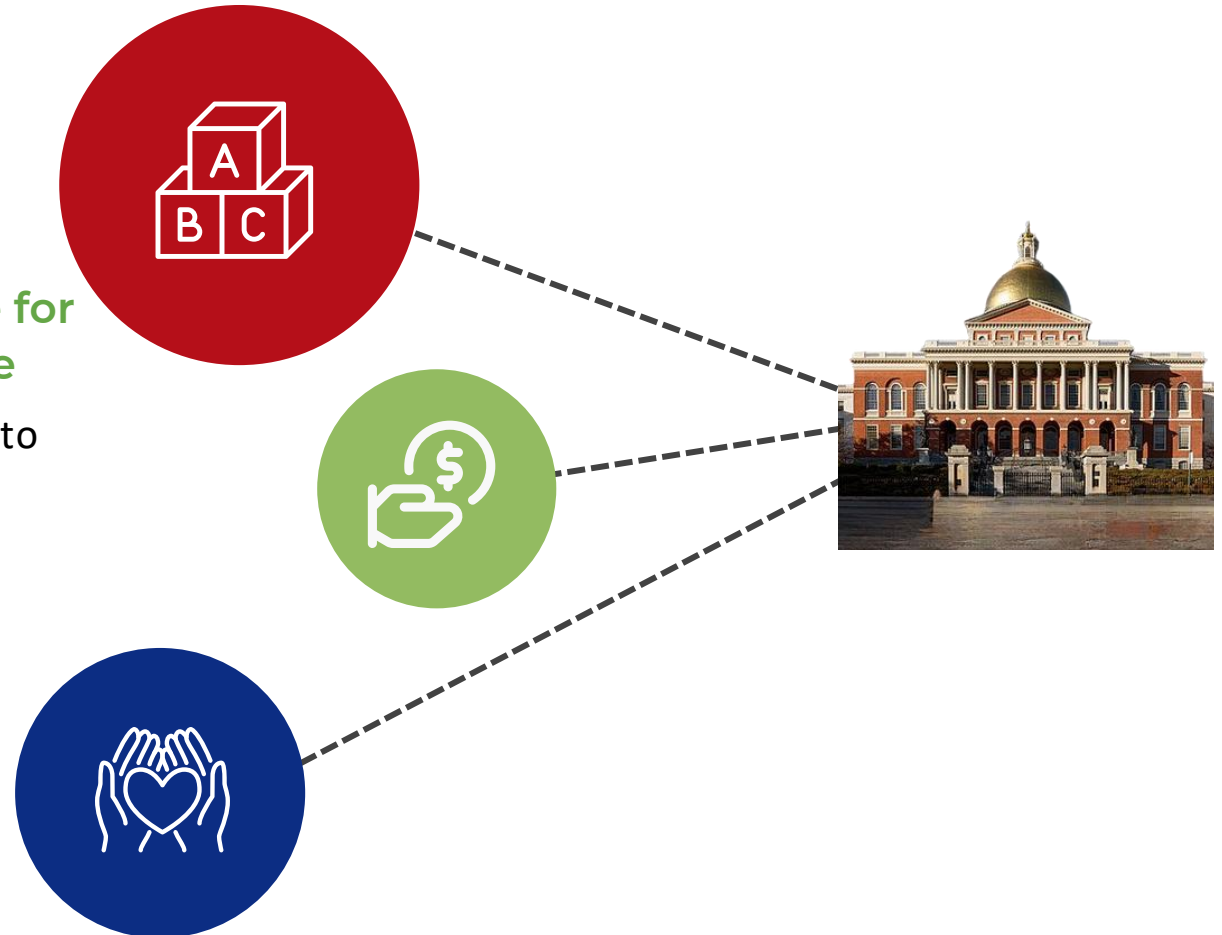
The CPPI line item in FY26 will maintain and support all existing communities

Supporting continued access to affordable care for families through Child Care Financial Assistance

Investments in child care financial assistance line-items to maintain FY24 and FY25 caseload expansion

Sustaining \$475M for Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3)

C3 continues to be a priority and state investment in the program maintains critical operational supports to early childhood programs



FY26 Agency Budget Highlights

Overall, the final FY26 budget funds EEC at \$1.7679 billion, 10% increase from FY25 final enacted budget. The budget includes:

- **\$475 million** for **Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3)**, funded from both general appropriations and Fair Share revenue
- **\$1.06 billion** to support families receiving **Child Care Financial Assistance** (Income Eligible and DTA/DCF-Related)
- **\$20.5 million** for the **Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI)**
- **\$57 million** for EEC **Administration and Quality**, which includes \$5 million earmarked for the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Scholarship.
- **\$20 million** for **child care resource and referral services**
- **\$20 million** for supplemental grants to **Head Start and Early Head Start** programs
- **\$11.7 million** for the **Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE)** grant program
- **\$3 million** for **Career Pathways** (EEC Board considering proposal to fund the program at \$7.5 million at September Board Meeting)
- **\$5 million** for **Early Childhood Mental Health grants**
- **\$4.25 million** for the **ParentChild+** program
- **\$1.75 million** for **Reach Out and Read**
- **\$1 million** for **Neighborhood Villages**

EEC FY26 Budget (in millions)

GENERAL FUND LINE ITEMS

Line Item	Appropriation	FY25 GAA	FY26 H.1	FY26 GAA
3000-1000	Admin	\$27.70	\$8.00	\$11.52
3000-1020	Quality Improvement	\$52.60	\$46.90	\$45.45
3000-1045	C3 Stabilization Grants	\$300.00	\$200.00	\$115.00
3000-1049	Employer-sponsored Child Care	\$2.50	--	--
3000-2000	Access Management	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00
3000-3060	DCF/DTA Related Child Care	\$356.60	\$448.20	\$448.21
3000-4060	Income-Eligible Child Care	\$417.20	\$517.60	\$517.64
3000-5000	Grants to Head Start Programs	\$18.50	\$18.50	\$20.00
3000-6025	CPPI Pre-K Initiative	\$17.50	\$17.70	\$5.00
3000-6075	Early Childhood Mental Health	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00
3000-7050	Coordinated Family & Community Engagement	\$11.90	\$11.70	\$11.74
3000-7052	Parent-Child Plus Program	\$4.30	\$4.30	\$4.25
3000-7055	Neighborhood Villages	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00
3000-7066	Career Pathways	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$3.00
3000-7070	Reach Out and Read	\$1.80	\$1.80	\$1.75
Total		\$1,241.60	\$1,305.70	\$1,209.56

EEC FY26 Budget (in millions)

FAIR SHARE-FUNDED LINE ITEMS

Line Item	Appropriation	FY25 GAA	FY26 H.1	FY26 GAA
1596-2410	Child Care Grants to Providers	\$175.00	\$275.00	\$360.00
1596-2411	Income Eligible Access (Waitlist Remediation)	\$15.00	--	\$10.70
1596-2412	CPPI Pre-K Initiative	\$5.00	--	\$15.50
1596-2429	Early Education & Care Provider Capital Grants	\$15.00	--	--
1596-2434	Rate Increases for Early Education and Care	\$65.00	--	--
1596-2435	EEC Affordability	\$18.00	--	--
1596-2452	Child Care Supports	--	\$98.00	\$83.00
Total		\$293.00	\$373.00	\$469.20

To see the **full list of line items** and proposed funding levels, see the FY26 General Appropriation Act (GAA) [here](#).

FY25 Fair Share Supplemental Budget

In January, Governor Healey proposed an **FY25 Fair Share Supplemental Budget** to complement her FY26 budget proposal. It included **\$150 million to support:**

- Capacity building and workforce development
- Family access and affordability
- Implementation of the Early Education and Care Task Force recommendations
- Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) (over the next 3 years)

The final [FY25 Fair Share Supplemental budget](#) included \$45.5 million in total for the agency, and our work, including:

- **\$20 million** for CCFA reimbursement rate increases in FY26.
- **\$8 million** for CCFA access for staff working in early education and care.
- **\$7.5 million** for loan repayment for staff working in early education and care.
- **\$10 million** for capacity building to connect families to child care providers and support workforce development for early educators.

Additionally, the supplemental budget also establishes the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in Massachusetts, without designated funding.



Fiscal Year 2026 Support for Career Pathways and ECE Scholarships

Career Pathways

Massachusetts Community Colleges & other 2 year institutions have dedicated supports for early childhood staff to take college courses.



A single point of contact for student questions and information



Academic and career advising for course and program selection and enrollment



Access to college level courses towards certificates or degrees



Support in accessing tutoring, mentoring, the library and other vital resources such as a food pantry and counseling services



Assistance and support applying for the ECE Scholarship



Pays for college courses and supports access to MassReconnect, MassEducate, and other ways to pay for higher education

Early Childhood Educator Scholarship Program



Jointly offered by EEC and the Department of Higher Education (DHE) to help educators increase their qualifications through a college degree.



Based on a per credit rate, depending on the type of institution.



Provides funding to assist with the cost of a maximum of three courses per semester during the traditional fall, spring and summer.

So far, 591 students have been approved in FY26 (fully committing DHE's \$5M)

Proposal for Use of Scholarship Funding

The final FY26 budget includes \$15M in higher education opportunities for early education and care staff. In collaboration with DHE, EEC is proposing to continue to address gaps in scholarship opportunities by using these funds across Career Pathways and the existing ECE Scholarship:

Career Pathways	ECE Scholarship
<p>Funds the program at \$7.5 total in FY26, with \$3 M from the appropriation, \$2M from the FY26 Fair Share supplemental budget, and \$2.5M from EEC's Administrative line item.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fund early educators taking their first course before certificate or degree matriculation and if taking only one course, less than 6 credits (Not currently covered by MassReconnect and MassEducate)• Maintain this important bridge to higher education for the early education workforce	<p>Supplement \$5M for ECE Scholarship funding from DHE with \$2.5M in EEC's Administrative line, totaling \$7.5M for FY26.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustain recent changes to better support new educators:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Eligibility for scholarship award for fewer than 6 credits at a time○ Priority for educators working in socially or economically disadvantaged community

FY26 Support for Career Pathways & ECE Scholarships

The Career Pathways Program, through 15 public community colleges and Urban College, provides academic services to educators, including coursework, textbooks, tutoring, mentoring, technology, and other student support services. In FY26, the program was funded at \$3 million, a reduction from previous year's funding. To ensure continuity of services for current and prospective students, EEC proposes using \$2.5 million of the scholarship funds provided in the FY26 budget and \$2 million in the Fair Share Supplemental budget to fully fund the existing Career Pathways Program for FY26 at \$7.5 million.

Additionally, the existing ECE Scholarship Program provides financial assistance towards a college degree for individuals in the early education and care field. In FY26, the Program was funded at \$5 million, down from \$7.5 million. In FY25, the program used \$2.5 million of the new scholarship funds to expand the existing ECE Scholarship Program, with modifications to the eligibility requirements, including to comply with Section 19F. EEC proposes continuing this funding in FY26 by using the remaining \$2.5 million from the FY26 budget administrative line towards the ECE Scholarship Program.

MOVED: That the Board of Early Education and Care, subject to revision by the Commissioner, approves the Department's proposal to submit to the Board of Higher Education for its approval, the use of:

- \$2.5 million from the scholarship funds towards the existing Career Pathways Program for FY26.



Inter-Agency Early Education and Child Care Task Force Update

Task Force Project Management Team



Dana Sullivan,
Chief of Strategy &
Operations,
Administration and
Finance (ANF)



Faith Ambrose,
Policy Manager,
Executive Office of
Education (EOE)



**Gaby Santana
Goldstein,**
Employer
Partnership
Manager,
Department of Early
Education and Care
(EEC)



Emily Conner-Simons,
Director of Special
Projects, Department
of Early Education and
Care (EEC)



Allison Pinto,
Contracted Project
Management
Support, Boston
Consultant Group
(BCG)

About the Inter-Agency Task Force



The Task Force was established by Executive Order 625 to ensure that Massachusetts leads the nation in early education and **child care access, affordability, equity, and quality**.



The Task Force is co-chaired by the **Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development**, and the **Secretary of Economic Development**. Additional members of the Task Force are the Secretaries of Administration and Finance, Energy and Environmental Affairs, Health and Human Services, Housing and Livable Communities, Public Safety and Security, Technology Services and Security, Transportation, and Veterans Services, or their designees.



The Task Force is engaging with industry and business leaders, organized labor, health services stakeholders, housing and planning experts, working parents and caregivers, and child care providers and experts.



The Task Force developed and is coordinating the implementation of a set of 29 cross-secretariat recommendations.

Priorities of the Inter-Agency Task Force

In year 1, we focused on learning ...

- 1 Conducted 14 listening sessions across the state
- 2 Surveyed practices of other states and nations
- 3 Identified existing resources and opportunities across government



*Link to the
Year 1 report*

In year 2, we're focusing on action ...

Implementing a set of **29 recommendations** published in the Year 1 report. Recommendations center on 5 main goals:

- 1 Ensure broad **access and availability** of early education and child care for families with young children
- 2 Support **high-quality** early education and child care programming
- 3 Make early education and child care **affordable** for all families, prioritizing those with the highest needs
- 4 Foster **sustainable business conditions** for all types of programs with fewer barriers to entry
- 5 Build a robust **workforce ecosystem** that supports the growth and wellbeing of educators and providers

Also working on a Year 2 Report describing the progress made this year and plan to continue the work into Year 3

Project Management and Structure

Full Task Force

Frequency: Quarterly

Whole-of-Government Task Force Membership

Steering Committee

*Co-Chair Designees, A&F, EEC
Frequency: Monthly*

EEC
Commissioner Amy
Kershaw

EOED
Emily MacCormack

A&F
Chief of Strat. & Ops
Dana Sullivan

EOLWD
Policy Director
Rob Cohen

EOE
Undersecretary
Mark Reilly

Project Mgmt. Team (PMO)

*Project managers from A&F, EOE and EEC to provide
day-to-day support to the lead Secretariat/Agency
staff on prioritized recommendations
Frequency: Weekly*

PMO team led by Dana Sullivan

EOE
Policy Manager
Faith Ambrose

EEC
Employer Partnerships
Mgr.
Gabriela Goldstein

EEC
Dir. of Special Projects
Emily Conner-Simons

BCG/EOE
Contract PM Support
Allison Pinto

Working Groups

*Groups to be formed to progress the day-to-day work
of the recommendations, consisting of Task Force
Members, EEC staff & other agency/partner designees
Frequency: Weekly/as needed*

EEC

Secretariat/Agency
Members

Additional support
(nonprofits, quasias, etc.)

Overview of recommendations

Issue area	Time	#	Recommendation	Lead agency
Access	Short	1	Nature/Outdoors	EEA
		2	Explore child care in affordable housing projects	EOHLC
		3	Incentivize new buildings with EECC space	EOHLC
		4	Improve family-facing EECC portal	EEC
		5	Leveraging Family Resource Centers	EOHHS
		6	Repurpose public space for EECC programs	DCAMM
		7	Include art in EECC via Mass Cultural Council	Mass Cultural Council
	Long	8	Review zoning and health regulations	EOHLC, EOHHS
		9	Integrate CCFA with public benefits	EOHHS, EEC
		10	Enhance online child care search	EEC, EOE
Quality	Short	1	Improve access to mental/behavioral health supports	EOE, EEC
		2	Supports for Children with Disabilities	DESE SPED
	Long	3	Expand mental health resources & professionals	EOE
Affordability	Short	1	Family-Friendly Employer Practices	EOLWD
	Long	2	Explore employer-sponsored EECC incentives	EOED, EEC
		3	Encourage Dependent Care Assistance Programs	EOED
		4	Traffic Safety	EOE, EEC
Sustainable Business	Short	1	Business Front Door	EOED
	Long	2	Expand business support to EECC sector	EOED
		3	Provide shared workspaces for new FCC providers	EEC
		4	Broadband access	EOED
Workforce	Short	1	Benefits	ANF
		2	Offer discounts to EECC educators like K-12	EOE, EOED
		3	Formal Workforce System	EOWLD
		4	Higher Ed Pathways	DHE
		5	Expand use of registered apprenticeships in EECC	EOLWD, EEC
	Long	6	Identify opportunities to increase EECC compensation	EEC
		7	Extend local discounts to EECC staff	EOE
		8	Develop stipend for EECC workforce trainees	EOLWD

Highlights of key progress



Benefits

The Health Connector for Business (HCB) is Massachusetts' official health insurance marketplace for small employers, offering coverage options for businesses with fewer than 50 FTEs. In partnership with HCB, the Task Force is hosting [webinars on October 7 and 15](#) to raise awareness of this resource among EEC centers.



Public Spaces

EOE, EEC, and DCAMM are working together to highlight and advance opportunities for integrating child care into public spaces to expand access and reach families where they live, learn and work. Later this fall, HCC will be opening their new Itsy Bitsy Child Watch space, a key example of child care availability at community colleges supporting parent and caregivers to pursue academic opportunities.



Business Front Door

EOED recently launched the Business Front Door, a centralized portal designed to help businesses of all sizes access state resources more easily. EEC was identified as a priority sector and has a trained navigator. By hosting info sessions, EEC has already received nearly 20 inquiries, including requests for financing support, workforce assistance and general business guidance.

Highlights of key progress



Higher Education Pathways

EEC and DHE are working with community colleges to develop a foundational certificate for those pursuing a degree in early childhood, to promote consistency, transferability, and degree attainment across schools. Also developing companion guide for students to understand pathway options.

Nature and the Outdoors

Developing initiatives to expand access to and awareness of nature-based engagement. Efforts include communications campaigns on the importance of outdoor play, training for CFCE and program staff in existing early education nature learning activities, and grants to support natural play space improvements, gardening, and outdoor gear.

Employer Child Care Innovation Fund (ECCIF)

The FY25 budget appropriated \$2.5M to EEC to launch a competitive matching grant pilot program to expand access to high-quality, affordable child care by incentivizing employer investment. In partnership with the Commonwealth Corporation Foundation, EOED, and EOLWD, EEC has designed a flexible program to engage the business community in a meaningful and sustainable way. EEC plans to post an Expression of Interest and RFP between October and December.



THANK YOU




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



Appendix

Employer Child Care Innovation Fund

Program Goals

-  Incentivize employers to advance family-friendly policies for their working parent employees.
-  Expand access to affordable, high quality child care for working parents.
-  Expand capacity in the early education and child care sector.

Employer Child Care Innovation Fund

KEY ELEMENTS



Description

- Competitive matching grant program to help employers support working families in the Commonwealth.
- Aligned with the Commonwealth's Workforce Agenda priority industries in high-demand, low-wage industries.
- Eligible applicants include employers, group of employers, an early childhood educator (FCC or nonprofit center) partnering with an employer(s), and intermediaries (i.e., Chambers of Commerce, Community Foundations, etc.).



State Supports

- The state will provide a dedicated researcher to measure the outcomes of the pilot.
- Community of Practice between grantees.
- Fees paid for technical assistance or consulting services are an allowable matching expense that require pre-approval and need to be incurred during the life of the grant.



Desired Outcomes

- A positive return on the employers' investment.
- A positive impact on access and affordability for families.
- Expanded capacity (i.e., additional seats) in the local early childhood education sector.