



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

TEMPORARY POLICY	
Use of Volunteers During the COVID-19 Pandemic	Field Operations – Group and School Age Child Care Programs
Effective Date: November 13, 2020	

Policy Statement

Maintaining appropriate staffing in child care programs is essential to providing a safe environment for children and educators. As the colder weather emerges and COVID-19 progresses, more programs may face staffing shortages due to illness, exposure, and the need to care for a family member. Child care programs need to be prepared for these next few months with a plan to mitigate the impact of potential staffing shortages. To that end, EEC is sets forth this temporary policy to outline how group and school age programs may use volunteers to address staff coverage and avoid compromising supervision and safety.

Regulatory Authority

All programs seeking to utilize volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic are subject to all applicable EEC regulations regarding such use. EEC licensing regulations that shall apply during the COVID-19 pandemic include but are not limited to:

If the program uses volunteers, a plan for their use that includes: a. appropriate orientation, supervision and training b. documentation of the dates, hours of service and responsibilities of each volunteer used by the program; c. a provision that volunteers must be under the direct visual supervision of an EEC qualified educator at all times; and d. provisions for compliance with EEC Background Record Check regulations regarding volunteers. [7.03(1)(c) 7.]

Volunteers shall not be included in staff to child ratios unless they are at least 16 years of age. [(7.10(3)(b)]

Whenever more than one educator is providing care: 1. the Licensee must establish a written schedule listing all persons on duty, including volunteers. The schedule must show compliance with at least the minimum educator ratios at all times, including during breaks and planning time; 2. the Licensee must keep the schedule current and posted in an area easily visible to educators, parents, and visitors. (c) Notwithstanding the staff to child ratios provided at 606 CMR 7.10(4), there must always be a second adult trained in the program's health care and emergency procedures immediately available in case of an emergency. [7.10(8)(b) and (c)]

Policies for the Use of Volunteers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Individuals to be Utilized as Volunteers

Individuals who may be used as a volunteer include Family Child Care Assistants, teachers, parents, paraprofessionals, and high school students at least 16 years of age or older, college students, and parents.

Programs shall only use volunteers who have met all EEC requirements in accordance with 606 CMR 7.09, including complete Background Record Checks, in accordance with 606 CMR 14.00. Volunteers that have volunteered at and been through a Background Record Check through a public school and will be volunteering in the program for less than 5 hours per week may submit an attestation from the school to confirm completion of the Background Record Checks.

Unless the individual serving as a volunteer meets the qualifications required for the EEC staff member, the volunteer shall not be used to meet staff/child ratios in Child Care facilities and must always be directly supervised by a qualified staff member.

Assignment of Volunteers

Each volunteer shall be assigned to a specific role.

Programs shall ensure that volunteers are adequately trained for the responsibilities they will take on. Orientation and training related to work duties and the Minimum Requirements for Health and Safety shall be conducted prior to assuming volunteer positions.

Programs shall consider how volunteers may be used for administrative duties that do not involve the direct care and supervision of children. Such duties include but are not limited to daily screening¹, facilitation of hand washing, and office and administrative duties.

Programs must inform all families that volunteers, including high school students if applicable, may be volunteering in the program.

COVID-19 Rules for the Use of Volunteers

Volunteers must be assigned to stable groupings and may not be rotated across classrooms during a single volunteering shift. Programs should make every effort to maintain assignments for the duration of the volunteer's time at the program.

All volunteers shall be subject to daily health screening and attestation and must adhere to all Minimum Requirements for Health and Safety, including the use of masks and the distancing of at least 6 feet from others. Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures set forth by the program as related to COVID-19 health and safety shall be subject to dismissal.

The total number of volunteers used in a program should be limited, to the extent possible, to minimize opportunities for exposure.

Programs utilizing volunteers in a manner that is inconsistent with the EEC licensing regulations and this policy shall be restricted from further use of volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ A qualified person must be on site and available to volunteers and parents during arrival and dismissal activities. This is important during times of transition and in case a parent has a question or concern.