



SHERRI KILLINS  
COMMISSIONER

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

**EMB FY 2011-01**

**EEC Management Bulletin**

**Subject:** EEC Continuity of Care Update to EMB FY2010-06

**Date Issued:** August 10, 2010

**Effective Date:** Immediate

**For Use By:** EEC Contracted Providers, Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs), and Head Start Programs

**Synopsis:** Allows contractors greater flexibility for meeting the continuity of care needs of families through the flex pool.

**Further Info:** [bulletinquestions@massmail.state.ma.us](mailto:bulletinquestions@massmail.state.ma.us)

**Supersedes:** Clarifies and amends June 18, 2010 “EEC Management Bulletin: EMB FY 2010-06, EEC Income Eligible Financial Assistance Access for Continuity of Care” and to the extent that the policies contained in this document conflict with EEC Financial Assistance Policy Guide, the policies contained in this document govern

## **Introduction**

EEC is committed to providing child care financial assistance for children needing continuity of care in accordance with the policy articulated in EMB FY 2010-06. In recognition of that fact that a large number of children age up from pre-school contract slots to school age contract slots at the beginning of each school year and that enrolled families have other continuity of care needs throughout the year, EEC is clarifying and amending EMB FY 2010-06, in order to support families by ensuring smooth transitions for continuity of care for eligible children aging out of contracted child care slots.

## **Policy: Flex Pool Access for Income Eligible Contracted Providers – amended**

Contract providers with children who are aging up or who have other continuity of care needs, but do not have vacant contract slots may continue to provide care to these children through their contract flex pool beyond the 5% flex pool limitation. This EMB is consistent with the open access policy described in EMB FY 2010-06, but allows contract providers to process the continuity beyond their contract and flex pool limits, rather than sending those families to the CCR&R for a voucher.

Contracted providers may enroll children seeking continuity under 2.0.1. A. “Continuity of Care” of the Policy Guide using the flex pool when an alternate contract slot is unavailable, per procedures outlined in EMB FY 2010-06. As always, providers must first fill a vacated contract slot with a child from the flex pool if they are the same program type.

All providers are expected to provide continuity of care through management of their contracted slots. The 5% flex pool allocation offers providers an additional resource to support continuity of care for families beyond their available contracted slots.

EEC recognizes that programs near or at the 5% flex pool utilization may exceed the 5% allocation according to this policy. Please note that providers are expected to manage to a 5% flex pool target. EEC expects that any increases will be temporary and will recede with attrition provided that contractors continue to move kids from the flex pool to vacant slots. EEC will monitor flex pool utilization on a quarterly basis to determine if programs are meeting their target 5%, on average. In addition, EEC will continue to analyze flex pool utilization, budget, and caseload monitoring to determine if the 5% average flex pool utilization is adequate to balance the need for access with budgetary constraints.

If EEC determines that the 5% flex pool target allocation is being used in a way that is inconsistent with its intent, EEC reserves the right to disallow payment for children that were inappropriately placed in the flex pool. This allocation is not intended to increase a provider's maximum obligation; rather it is a tool for providers to manage slots and a budgeting tool for EEC. EEC will review the utility of this allocation and may adjust or eliminate the allocation accordingly.