



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

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COMMISSIONER

Subsidized Child Care Reauthorization FAQ

Subject: Guidance for the Reauthorization Process During COVID-19 Mandated Child Care Closures

Date Issued: April 1, 2020

For Use By: Subsidy Administrators (EEC Contracted Providers and Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies)

Further Info: eeccsubsidymanagement@mass.gov

In light of the emergency order extending the temporary closure of all non-emergency childcare programs until May, EEC would like to provide the following guidance for parents and providers of the subsidized child care programs. This guidance was created as an effort to eliminate barriers to continued subsidized child care and to provide as much flexibility as possible during this time. If you have any questions about this guidance, please email the EEC Financial Assistance Unit at eeccsubsidymanagement@mass.gov.

1. My child is enrolled in subsidized care. Will my child still be eligible for care once all programs reopen?

Yes. The temporary closure of all child care programs will not impact any eligibility for care. If your subsidy is due to expire before May 31, 2020, EEC is granting extensions for all subsidies as detailed in Question 3.

2. My program is closed – do I still need to have staff doing subsidy administration work? Are subsidy administrator staff considered essential employees under the Governor’s Executive Order?

Subsidy Administrators are covered as essential staff under Governor Baker’s executive order. It is EEC’s expectation that all Contracted Providers and CCRRs have staff available to continue processing any changes required by parents to ensure continuity of subsidized child care. Contracted Providers, CCRRs, and all Voucher Only Subsidy Providers are also expected to complete billing for subsidized child care through CCFA. EEC encourages all programs to allow staff to work remotely if possible and if not, to follow all social distancing guidelines.

EEC understands that Contracted Providers and CCRRs may be working with limited staff at this time. However, EEC may need to contact you with questions or requests for information. So that EEC can reach the correct person if needed, please complete this survey to provide EEC with your designated contacts: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EECCSubsidyContactCOVIDClosures>. This survey is **only** for EEC Contracted Providers and CCRRs and should not be completed by Voucher Only Providers. Voucher Only Providers should remain in contact with your CCRR to respond to any questions or issues that may arise.

3. What do I do if I have a family whose authorization is going to expire soon?

In order to mitigate the impact of this emergency, all families whose 12 month authorizations that have an end date of 3/16/2020 through 5/31/2020 will automatically receive a 6 month extension on the authorization end date. Families who are currently in a provisional authorization that have an end date of 3/16/2020 through 5/31/2020 will automatically receive an additional 12 week provisional authorization. These automatic extensions apply to all programs: Income Eligible including Homeless and Young Parent programs; DCF-Referred Child Care, including Transitional Child Care; and DTA-Referred Child Care, including Transitional and Post-Transitional Child Care.

EEC will be completing these extensions in CCFA on behalf of Subsidy Administrators and asks that Subsidy Administrators do not enter anything into CCFA for these families unless instructed by EEC. If you have a family that has already provided all documentation for reauthorization, the reauthorization may be entered into CCFA to prevent the parent from having to complete the reauthorization process again. However, Subsidy Administrators must pay close attention daily to notices in CCFA as the ability to enter authorizations may be shut off to allow for the creation of the automatic extensions.

4. Can a parent opt out of the extension and/or make other changes to their subsidy?

The purpose of the extension is to provide stability and continuity for both parents and providers during this emergency, not to mandate that a child continue in care. EEC understands that parents may have changes in circumstances over the course of the extension and may no longer want or need the child care. Therefore, parents can continue to make changes to their subsidy at any time, including voluntarily terminating the subsidy or requesting an approved break in care. EEC is working to ensure that all Temporary Changes, Non-Temporary Changes, and Income Changes can continue to be processed in CCFA after the extensions are completed. In the case of a parent wishing to terminate the subsidy, EEC requests that Subsidy Administrators ensure that they advise the parent on the implications of the request and ensure that the parent is aware of all options so that the parent may make an informed decision. However, Subsidy Administrators must pay close attention daily to notices in CCFA as the ability to enter authorizations may be shut off to allow for the creation of the automatic extensions.

5. I have a family who expired but who has given documentation to return within 30 days. Can I restart the family's authorization even while we are shut down?

Families should not be restarted during the shutdown, but can be restarted to coordinate with a program's reopening. Since this may result in families not being able to re-access care within the 30 day limit, EEC is extending the time period for families to return to care to be 60 days from the last authorization date. If parents are unable to provide full documentation to return to care, parents may receive a 12 week provisional authorization to return to care while full documentation is collected. However, Subsidy Administrators must pay close attention to notices in CCFA as the ability to enter authorizations may be limited to allow for the creation of the automatic extensions. However, Subsidy Administrators must pay close attention daily to notices in CCFA as the ability to enter authorizations may be shut off to allow for the creation of the automatic extensions.

6. Should I still issue termination notices to families for non-payment of fees or for any other reason?

EEC requests that all termination notices be held until the mandated closure of child care programs has been lifted.

7. All of my staff are working remotely and cannot send reauthorization letters to those who are due to expire in 45 days. What should I do?

EEC chose the dates for the automatic extensions with this issue in mind so the automatic extensions will cover families who are due to expire in the next 45 days. For families that expire after 5/31/2020, EEC understands that Subsidy Administrators may not be able to mail reauthorization letters at this time. Letters should be sent to all families as soon as possible after the closures are lifted and EEC will temporarily lift the requirement to notify families at least 45 days in advance. Subsidy Administrators should make their best effort to reach out via phone or email to families who expire starting in June and work with those families who received less than 45 days notice to prioritize reauthorization. For families who receive less than 45 days notice, EEC will cover a break in authorizations if the child continues to attend care. Please contact EECSubsidyManagement@mass.gov for detailed guidance to follow in such situations.