



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Department of Early Education and Care

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Ann Reale  
Commissioner

**Board of Early Education and Care**

Minutes

April 4, 2006

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Ashburton Café Conference Room

One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108

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**Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Present:**

**Elizabeth Childs**

**Julie P. Culhane**

**David P. Driscoll**

**Christopher E. Goode**

**Fred Habib**, EOHHS designee

**Linda Mason**

**Patricia Plummer**, Board of Higher Education designee

**Mary Torrence**

**Ann Reale**, Commissioner of Early Education and Care

**Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Absent:**

**Timothy Murphy**, Chairman

**Judith Gill**

**Bernard Russell, Jr.**

Commissioner Reale called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm.

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**Routine Business:**

**Agency Updates from the Commissioner**

**Board of Early Education and Care Anniversary**

Commissioner Reale wished a happy first year anniversary to the Board and mentioned that Linda Mason has been reappointed to serve another term.

**Central Office Move**

EEC has been working with the landlord and architect to finalize a floor plan that accommodates the agency's needs, including a state-of-the art conference room for Board meetings and trainings. The new space will also have a kitchenette, a "quiet room" for private phone calls and nursing moms, a library alcove for law books, periodicals and other important literature, and best of all, a beautiful view of the Fort Point Channel and Boston Harbor.

**Jan Avallone Departure**

Jan Avallone will leave EEC after 25 years of dedicated public service, through every iteration of this agency in that time. From OFC to OCCS to EEC, Jan has done a remarkable job of managing complex tasks and serving many Commissioners well. EEC is fortunate to have had her expertise and institutional knowledge to see us through the transition to the new agency, and also fortunate that she will not be going far as she takes on an important and exciting opportunity at DOE to directly oversee schools run by the Commonwealth that serve over 1,000 students.

**Statements from the Public**

- Roy Belson, Superintendent, Medford Public Schools, regarding eligibility and EEC budget
- Bethann Stollo, MASSCAP, regarding eligibility
- Sharon Scott Chandler, ABCD Boston, eligibility and low-income families
- Jack Mogielnicki, Lynn Economic Opportunity, regarding eligibility

## Approval of the March 7, 2006 Minutes

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: unanimously, that the Board of Early Education and Care approve the minutes of the March 7, 2006 regular meeting as presented by the Commissioner.**

### Items for Discussion and Action:

#### **EEC Guiding Principles**

- Put children and families first
- Be flexible and accountable
- *Balance access, affordability, quality, and coordination/continuity of care*
- Prioritize the needs of low-income families
- Build on strengths of current system; minimize weaknesses; maximize resources
- Seek input from staff and stakeholders
- Keep interested parties informed of progress
- Provide timely and comprehensive information to Board for decision-making

#### **April Agenda**

- FY06 Available Funds Project Update
- Addressing Access Challenges:
  - FY07 CPC Continuation Grant Criteria
  - Statewide system for managing financial aid

#### *I. FY06 Available Funds Project Update*

##### **Transportation Rate Increase**

- Underway, payments expected to
  - contract providers in April (for March service month and July-February retro)
  - voucher-only providers in May (for April service month and July-March retro)

##### **Internet Readiness and IT Capacity Building**

- Approximately 5,000 computers equipped with EEC-related programs and software, technical assistance and training, e-mail address and initial internet connection
- RFR released March 29th
- RFR for providers to be released during the second week of April
- Equipment installation from late May through early August, 2006

##### **Family Support and Parenting Education and Activities**

- Draft of guidebook under review internally and by other state agencies
- Planning for sponsored activities and events underway

##### **College Prep Skill Building and Behavior Management Training**

- RFR for grants will be released in April

## II. FY07 CPC Continuation Grant Criteria

### **Access Challenges**

- Choice of provider driven by funding stream
- No single source of complete information
- Conflicting eligibility standards
- Wait list not reliable
- Administrative infrastructure not aligned
- Multiple family support programs not aligned

Different eligibility criteria and inconsistent information lead to uneven access for families. Family support programs will be discussed more at a later date.

### **How do we align administrative infrastructure?**

- Award FY07 Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) continuation grants based on statewide system
- Implement fair and equitable statewide system for managing EEC financial aid
- Fully assess all local and regional EEC administration and make recommendations for administrative and regulatory overhaul to Board in 9-12 months

### **Background: Community Partnerships for Children Program (CPC)**

- Established in 1993 as part of Education Reform to develop a local system of early education and care
- 164 local grants, serving 336 communities, to:
  - ✓ Provide financial assistance to preschool aged children of working families
  - ✓ Support comprehensive services for children and families
  - ✓ Improve program quality and professional development opportunities for early education and care staff
  - ✓ Establish local councils that determine needs and decide on spending priorities at the local level, and coordinate resources within the community
- In FY05 \$46.6M provided “direct services” to approximately 11,000 children (at any one time) in public schools, Head Start, center-based programs and family child care
- More than 1000 providers also received support through local quality initiatives.

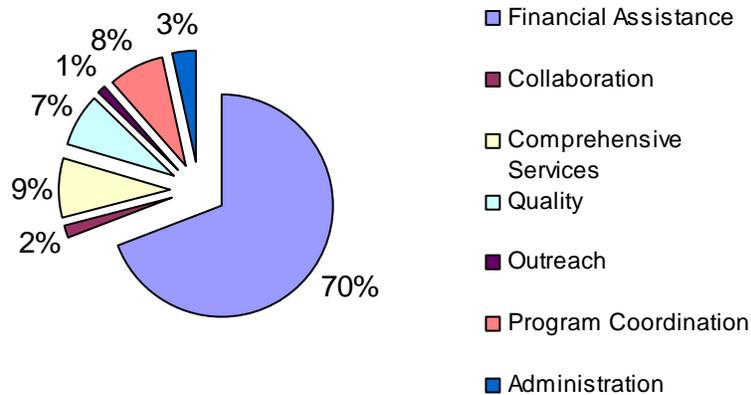
### **CPC Phases Background**

- Phase I
  - FY86 – Funding to support integrated preschool classrooms and Kindergarten enhancements, based on district size and low-income data. 75% of funding awarded to low income districts. 88 CPCs -- Estimated FY06 \$6.8M
- Phase II
  - FY93 – At-risk funding, based on school population/district size and 75% to low income districts. 52 CPCs -- Estimated FY06 \$5.7M

- Phase III
  - FY96 – Established to serve working families, priority  $\leq$  100% SMI  
161 CPCs -- Estimated FY06 \$56.1M

**Background: CPC Funding by Objective**  
**\$68.6 M Allocated to 164 CPC Grantees**

**FY05 CPC Grant Expenditures**



**FY07 CPC Continuation Grant Round**

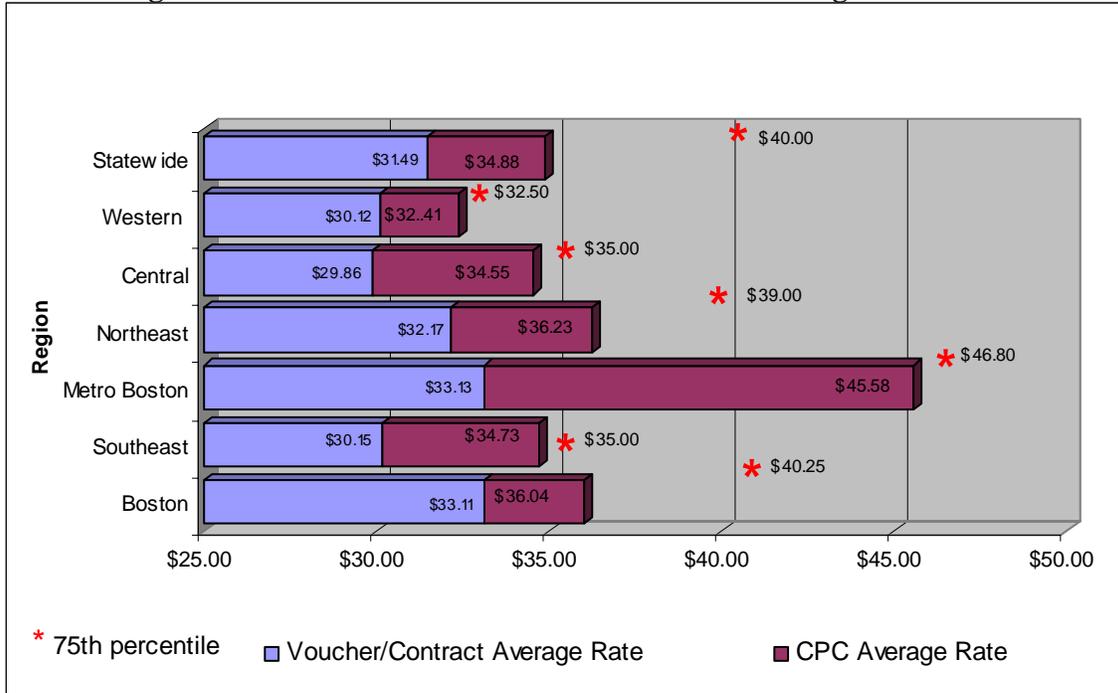
**What's not changing:**

- Phase I
- NAEYC accreditation requirement
- All children currently in care will remain eligible
- Allocation of current funding
  - Each CPC will receive the same amount as in FY06
  - Each CPC will spend at least as much on “direct services” (financial aid to families) as in FY06- no requirement to spend more vs. “indirect services”

**What is changing:**

- Local planning and administrative opportunities
  - Encourage multi-CPC proposals, especially for smaller CPC's
  - Require technological capacity for data collection and communication/business with EEC and providers
  - Require child and family specific data collection through state system
- Provider participation
  - Open participation for all qualifying providers
  - Include 15 communities not represented by any CPC
- Maximum allowable rates and rate setting methods
- Use of consistent priorities and statewide system for managing “direct services” of financial assistance to families

## Ranges of Rates Paid for Center-based Pre-School Programs



### Rate disparity across system

For Licensed, Center-Based Pre-K Providers:

- 256 different rates  
Average = \$33/day; range = \$20 to \$97/day
- 122 different rates in Metro Boston region  
Average = \$37/day; range = \$29 to \$97/day
- 86 cases where provider is paid 3-5 different rates, ranging from \$30 to \$52 per day

Because rate setting methods differ among funding streams and within the CPC funding stream, CPC rates are set locally by 164 separate Councils across the State. Each CPC uses some combination of private providers and/or public school programs.

There are four methods for setting provider rates, two methods for public school payments and eight for paying a combination of public school and private provider rates. 46 CPCs use private providers only, 112 CPCs use private providers and public schools, and three CPCs use public schools only.

### FY07 CPC Continuation Grant Round

What is changing?

- Maximum allowable rates and rate setting method  
*To reduce rate disparity:*
- Set maximum rates after asking each community to make recommendation
- Encourage consistent method for setting rates

For information on EEC's activities and children's issues, visit us at [www.mass.gov/EEC](http://www.mass.gov/EEC).

- Require communities not using per child rate in public schools to assess that option
- Broader use of statewide system for managing “direct services” or financial aid to families
  - Provide fair and equitable statewide policy for prioritization of children and families
  - Require use of centralized waitlist for remaining FY07 enrollment and plan for all FY08 enrollment
  - Require cross community placements across all communities
  - Serve eligible children in 15 communities without CPC

**CPC Grant Round Timeline**

April 4: Board reviews and votes on RFP criteria  
 April 4 – 28:  
 Review and refine policy changes with input from stakeholders  
 Finalize draft RFP  
 May 2: RFP release  
 June 2: Responses due back from CPCs  
 June 30: Grants approved

The Board opted to delay consideration of the pending motion to approve the CPC grant round criteria until the end of the meeting, after the planned discussion of eligibility criteria.

*III. Statewide System for Managing Financial Aid*

**Why address access challenges?**

- Create fair and equitable entry for children and families
- Provide clear, consistent information to families
- Better ensure priority for vulnerable families and children at risk of school failure.
- Provide continuity of early education and care across communities
- Establish foundation for five-year plan for growth
- Provide equitable and even access to children and families.

**How should we address access challenges?**

In FY06:

*Completed to date:*

Implementation of centralized statewide waitlist accessibility for:

- ✓ 14 R & R’s as of December, 2005
- ✓ 250 contracted providers as of January, 2006
- ✓ 130 CPC’s as of April 1, 2006 (remaining 34 by late April/May)

Improvement of centralized waitlist functionality and reliability:

- ✓ Over 1/3 of the 20,000-plus records merged in December were duplicates and removed
- ✓ On-going technical assistance and new functionality added at user requests
- ✓ Real-time data now available statewide

*For discussion today:*

Development of clear statewide policies and priorities for entry on and exit off centralized waitlist, to be implemented in FY07

**In FY07:**

- Implement clear statewide policies and priorities for entry on and exit off centralized waitlist
- Propose new regulations for statewide eligibility standards
- Develop a five-year plan to:
  - Provide financial aid to families at higher incomes over time
  - Provide greater access to “pre-k”
  - Measure progress toward greater access, affordability, *and quality*
  - Support children’s mental and behavioral health needs
  - Implement more training, education and compensation for the early education and school age workforce
  - Set and implement standard rates more representative of cost of care

**What key access challenges need to be addressed today?**

Statewide priorities for financial aid:

- Within existing eligibility standards
- To be implemented in FY07
- To be used by R & Rs, contracted providers, and CPCs as they manage centralized waitlist for financial assistance

**Current Income Eligibility Standards: Statutes, Regulations and Policies**

Contracts and Vouchers

EEC Subsidy Regulations:

- Family income must be at or below 50% SMI at initial application for financial assistance; thereafter, family income must not exceed 85% SMI.
- Family with a special needs child or incapacitated parent eligible if income is at or below 85% SMI; thereafter, family income must not exceed 100% SMI.

Federal CCDF Regulations:

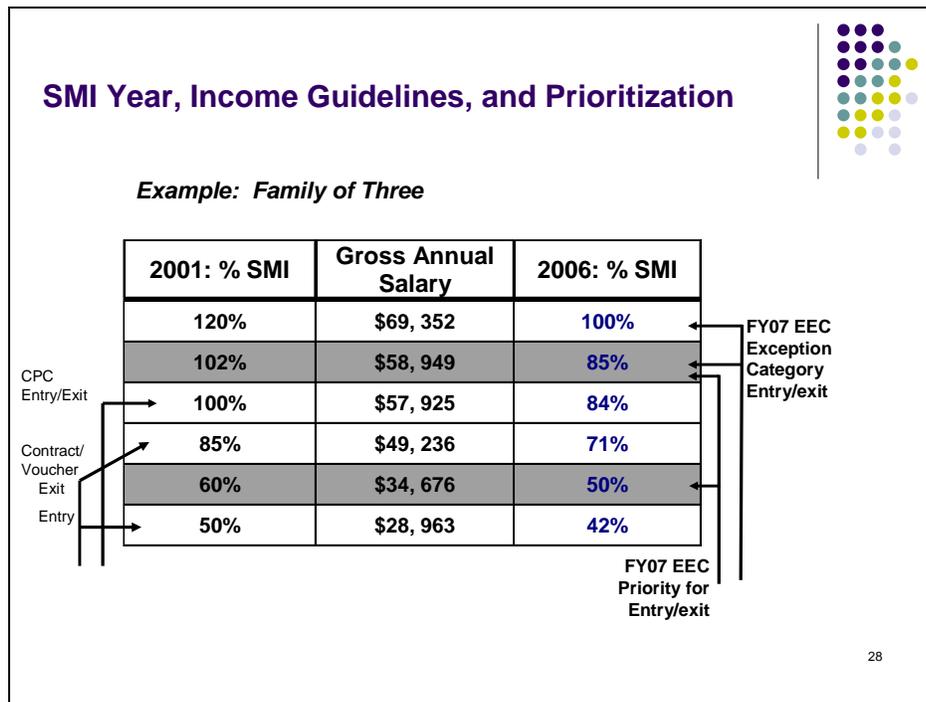
- Family income must not exceed 85% of SMI; exceptions must be submitted in state plan

Community Partnerships for Children:

- Chapter 15, Section 54, paragraph (h) of the General Laws:  
Families with incomes below the statewide median income (100% SMI) shall be given priority for CPC services.
- CPC Technical Assistance Guide:  
If all families with incomes below 100% SMI are served, communities may provide services to families with incomes up to 125% SMI.
- CPC budget line item language:  
CPCs must prioritize services to children on the “waiting list formerly maintained by the Office for Child Care Services.”

## Statewide system priority recommendations for FY07

	Existing Contract/Voucher	Existing CPC	Statewide system recommendations for FY07
<b>Age of children served</b>	Infants up to age 13	Pre-k only	No change
<b>State Median Income Year (SMI)</b>	2001	2001	Update to 2006
<b>Income Guidelines</b>			
<i>Basic</i>	Entry below 50% SMI Exit at 85% SMI	Entry/exit up to 100% SMI (Phase III); priority from waitlist	No change, but make prioritization fair and equitable (see slide 30)
<i>For exception categories</i>	Entry up to 85% SMI Exit at 100% SMI	None specified (Phase II)	Entry up to 85% SMI Exit at 100% SMI
<b>Activity Requirement</b>			
<i>Basic</i>	Minimum 20 hours of work or related activity	Working full or part-time- hours not defined (Phase III)	Allow work <i>and</i> related activities, prioritize 20 hours or more
<i>For exception categories</i>	No requirement for some	No requirement for Phase II- At Risk	No requirement for some
<b>Exception Categories</b>			
	See slide 29 for complete list	See slide 29 for complete list	Create NEW exception categories by merging current practice with other research-based risks.



<b>Low-Income Child Care (Vouchers/Contracts) Children 0 - 12 Years Old</b> <i>Some Variation between Contract and Voucher</i>	<b>Community Partnerships for Children Preschool Children Only</b> <i>Criteria Applied with Local Variations</i>
<b>Exceptions (to income OR activity requirement)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special needs (child or parent)</li> <li>• Teen parents</li> <li>• Homeless (in shelter)</li> <li>• Foster parent</li> <li>• Grandparent</li> </ul>	<b>Exceptions (Phase II “At Risk” only):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low income</li> <li>• Disability or mental, chronic, or terminal illness</li> <li>• Low maternal education (no high school diploma)</li> <li>• Single parent</li> <li>• Homelessness or frequent moves</li> <li>• Physical or emotional abuse or neglect</li> <li>• Substance abuse</li> <li>• Prolonged unemployment</li> <li>• Deprived or isolated environments</li> <li>• Premature birth or low birth weight</li> <li>• Evidence of lead paint poisoning</li> <li>• Evidence of inadequate nutrition or nurturance</li> </ul>

**To create consistent access for children and families most at-risk:**

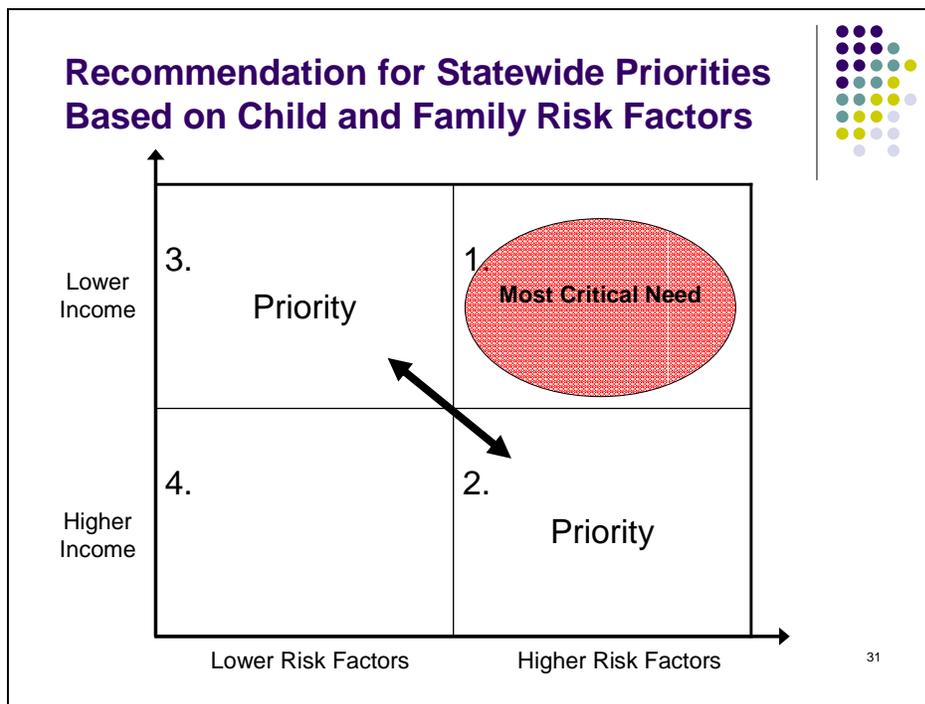
- Merge current exception categories with other research-based risk factors.
- Recommend standard terms, definitions, verification process and priorities to Board on June 6.
- Meet the challenge of balancing needs of family with needs of child AND balancing flexibility/discretion with accountability.



## Who gets priority?

	Contract/Voucher	CPC	Recommendation
<b>Prioritization Criteria</b>			
<b>Who gets financial aid first?</b>	<b>Immediate Access (no waitlist):</b> Current or former TAFDC client Continuity of care (for children in care and siblings) Some teen parents	n/a	No change
	<b>DSS/Active 51A (“Supportive” care- via separate EEC contracts)</b>	n/a	No change, but align with exception categories
	<b>Priorities from waitlist:</b> Homeless Foster Care Teen parent Active military personnel Disaster (e.g., hurricane relief) Grandparent family	Children on waitlist (<50% 2001 SMI)  Other criteria at discretion of individual CPC	See slide 32
<b>How is prioritization for financial aid managed?</b>	DTA referral for TAFDC families	n/a	No change
	DSS referral for 51A families	n/a	No change
	Through R & R and contracted providers, from centralized waitlist	In transition-based on centralized waitlist and/or at discretion of local councils and providers	Statewide system using centralized waitlist- see slide 32

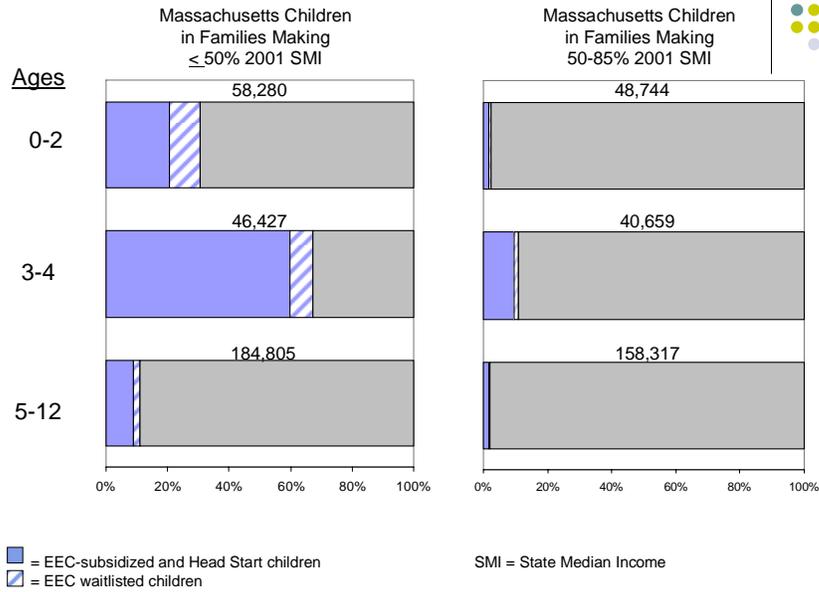
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**What are FY07 recommendations for prioritization on a statewide basis?**

1. First priority and immediate access for current or former TAFDC families
2. Priority Access for DSS families with open case (51A)
3. Priority Access for families in Exception Categories reflecting risk factors (entry up to 85% 2006 SMI; exit at 100%)  
Develop policy manual by June 6 to define and prioritize exception categories, and determine common verification process.
4. Priority Access for families with no other risk factors (entry up to 50% 2006 SMI; exit at 85%)
5. Access for families with pre-school children at or below 85% 2006 SMI with no other risk factors

## Children currently receiving EEC or Head Start financial aid for care, by age and family income

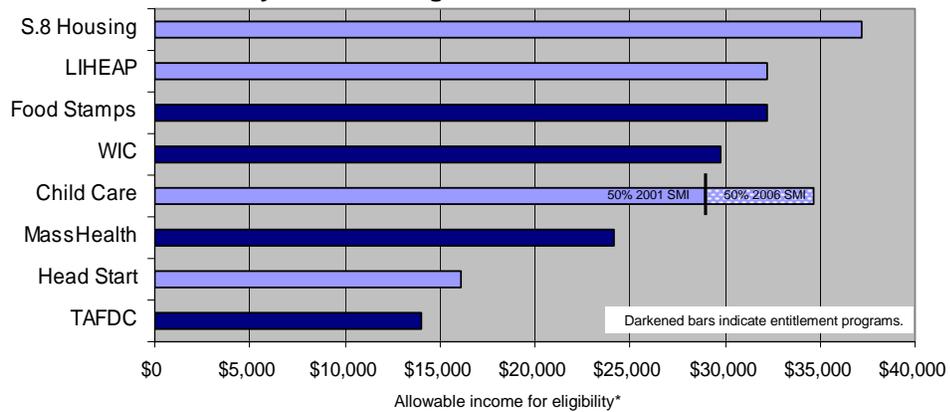


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## How Does Priority Compare to Other Means-Tested Programs?



**EXAMPLE: Family of three living in Boston**



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### **How will families receive financial aid?**

Statewide system using centralized waitlist:

1. Families access centralized waitlist from any CPC, R & R or contracted provider
2. Categorization of priority is fair and equitable regardless of access point
3. Families taken off statewide waitlist based on priority (for CPC's, contracts, and vouchers)
4. For CPC's\*-
  - a. Serve priority families within CPC area first
  - b. "Cross-community" placement for priority families in other communities
  - c. If funding is still available, contact EEC before serving families at above 50% SMI with no other risk factors

\*Will not apply to children currently in care.

### **What will this mean to families?**

- More fair and equitable access to financial aid
- Clear, consistent information
- Better priority for vulnerable families and children at risk of school failure
- Continuity of early education and care across communities

Board members discussed the implications of the update to the State Median Income year and to the statewide prioritization for access to early education and care financial assistance. Linda Mason voiced support for EEC's decision to move in the direction of a statewide system and mentioned that a statewide system requires more resources, as well. Commissioner Driscoll emphasized the importance of this policy decision and its implications for preventing the gaps in academic performance that are still prevalent within Massachusetts.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: unanimously, that the Board of Early Education and Care approve the Department's recommendation to update the state median income year used to determine the Commonwealth's income eligibility guidelines for early education and care financial assistance from 2001 to 2006;**

**that the Board further approve the Department's recommendation to implement fair and equitable statewide prioritization for access to financial assistance, subject to the Department's further development of and recommendations for standard terms, definitions, verification processes and priorities, based on the following criteria, and in the following order:**

- 1. first priority and immediate access for current or former TAFDC families;**
- 2. priority access for DSS families with open cases (supported 51A);**
- 3. priority access for families in exception categories reflecting risk factors (entry up to 85%, exit at 100%, 2006 SMI);**

4. **priority access for families with no other risk factors (entry up to 50%, exit at 85%, 2006 SMI); and**

Julie Culhane removed herself from the subsequent discussion and vote for the approval of the budget and guidelines for the award of Community Partnerships for Children Grants in Fiscal Year 2007, citing a conflict of interest that would inhibit her ability to participate.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Early Education and Care approve the Department's budget and guidelines, as described in the attached proposal, for the award of Community Partnerships for Children grants in fiscal year 2007.**

Julie Culhane abstained from the vote.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: unanimously that the meeting adjourn at 2:55 p.m., subject to the call of the Chairman.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ann J. Reale  
Commissioner of Early Education and Care