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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Early Education and Care

EMB FY 2011-08	EEC Management Bulletin
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- Subject:** EEC Financial Assistance for Supportive Families
- Date Issued:** January 7, 2011
- Effective Date:** Immediate
- For Use By:** EEC Supportive Child Care Providers and Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
- Synopsis:** Establishes and implements a policy that allows DCF families to receive supportive child care services for a transition period of up to six months upon DCF case closure
- Further Info:** bulletinquestions@massmail.state.ma.us

Introduction

The purpose of this Bulletin is to implement a policy that allows families involved with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to receive Transitional Supportive Child Care services, for a period of up to six (6) months upon the closure of their case with DCF.

DCF Transitional Child Care

With the passage of the state fiscal year 2011 budget the Governor and the Legislature approved language that permits the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to utilize funding from EEC's 3000-3050 Supportive Child Care account **"to provide services during a transition period of 6 months for families upon the closure of their [Department of Children and Families (DCF)] case."** Historically this account has exclusively funded children and families open as consumers with DCF.

DCF Case Closure and the Provision of Transitional Supportive Child Care

The decision to close a DCF case shall be discussed by the social worker with the family. If a family is receiving Supportive Child Care, as a component of their current DCF Service Plan, DCF should consider discussing case closure with the Supportive Child Care Provider who may have helpful input that may inform the Department's decision around case closure.

In cases where the child is currently receiving Supportive Child Care, the DCF social worker, in conjunction with his/her supervisor, should consider the need and appropriateness of Transitional Supportive Child Care **for a period of up to 6 months**. This is a clinical decision based on the interest in ensuring the family's continued progress toward stabilization, continuing to reduce risk, and potential for repeat maltreatment.

Referral for DCF Transitional Care

To ensure the most effective and efficient use of the early education and care resources available through the EEC Supportive Child Care account, the DCF social worker should consider the following options when a case is closing:

- (1) Transitional Supportive Child Care: The family and child could benefit from continued Transitional Supportive Child Care and the additional services associated.

If the DCF SW chooses this option, the Area Office Child Care Coordinator should complete a referral for Transitional Supportive Child Care and submit the referral to the family's supportive child care provider or to the local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R)¹. Please understand that Transitional Supportive Child Care cannot exceed six (6) months and no extensions may be permitted. The DCF Area Office may consider the provision of Transitional Supportive Child Care for a period of shorter than six (6) months when deemed appropriate. The appropriate Director of Area or a designee should sign off on any case where Transitional Supportive Child Care will be provided.

Please note that providers shall not place children in Transitional Supportive Child Care without a DCF referral. EEC will not reimburse providers for children placed without a valid DCF referral for Transitional Supportive Child Care.

- (2) Income Eligible Child Care: The family and child have a sufficient supportive network in place, which does not require the additional services associated with Transitional Supportive Child Care for purposes of ensuring family stability; however, the family and child may benefit from continued child care financial assistance.

If the DCF social worker chooses this option, the family should be referred to their current supportive child care provider or the local CCR&R serving the family's city/town, in order to conduct an eligibility assessment for the EEC Income Eligible Child Care program.²

In such circumstances, the contracted provider or the CCR&R should assess the family for continuity of care based on EEC continuity of care policies as enumerated in Section 2.0.1. A. Continuity of Care and Table 2.0.1.A. in the EEC Financial Assistance Policy Guide.

Reimbursement of DCF Transitional Care

Release notes regarding implementation of DCF transitional care for contracted providers and for CCR&Rs managing existing DCF vouchers will be posted on eCCIMS by close of business today, January 7, 2011. To be reimbursed for DCF transitional care, supportive providers and/or CCR&Rs must maintain the DCF referral on file and use the appropriate codes.

¹ Referrals should be submitted to the CCR&R if the family is utilizing a 9S voucher, which are currently being phased out.

² The supportive child care provider or the CCR&R will conduct the eligibility assessment; therefore, DCF social workers should not advise families of their potential eligibility status or make any assurances related to parent co-payments or fees.