



Massachusetts

Community Partnerships for Children

Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) is a locally design initiative to build a system of early childhood services and programs for 3- and 4-year-old children. Each CPC must (1) increase the affordability and accessibility of programs to families through tuition assistance and scholarships, (2) enhance collaboration among providers, other family services, and the community, (3) provide comprehensive services—for example, family education and literacy, nutritional programs, home visiting, (4) improve and ensure program quality, and (5) increase outreach to parents, hard-to-reach populations, and the community.

Eligibility

Income: children in working families earning up to 125 percent of the state median income

Age: 3- and 4-year-olds

Priority: children in working families earning less than 100 percent of the state median income; foster parents, and grandparent caregivers. Some at-risk families are exempt from the work requirement.

Length of Program

Locally determined. As the state level, one-third of all funds must be use to fund full-day/full-year slots. Approximately 70 percent of children are in full-day programs five days per week, and 30 percent are in part-day. Sixty-two percent of programs operate during the academic year, and 38 percent operate year-round.

Eligible Providers

Public schools, Head Start, private preschools or child care centers, family child care providers and systems

Number Served¹

14,894 (2003-04): 5,121 in public schools; 9,908 in center-based child care; 2,272 in Head Start; 992 in family child care

Total Annual Budget

\$68.6 million (2003-04), 75 percent from general revenues and 25 percent from federal CCDF and TANF money; was \$78.3 million in 2002-03

Monitoring

Each year, 20 percent of all programs have a Comprehensive Review and Site Visit (CRSV). CRSV is a collaborative effort that includes Early Learning Services staff, CPC Coordinators, staff from private audit firms, and early care and education consultants.

¹ For updated figures on the program budget and number served, please see the NIEER State Preschool Yearbook at: <http://nieer.org/yearbook/states/>

Each review team conducts a programmatic and fiscal review of the selected program. The programmatic review includes observation and interviews with local staff. The fiscal review includes a review of all student and financial records.

Governance

How are state pre-k programs integrated into community-based settings?

Localities form a Community Partnership for Children (CPC) Council and develop a proposal to address the unmet needs of preschool children in their town(s). Councils include parents, members of the child care community, public schools, Head Start and family child care programs, and other community representatives. CPCs designate a lead agency—often a school district, Head Start agency, or other child care provider—to distribute CPC funds to other programs as outlined in the proposal. There are no quotas or minimums, except that one-third of the funds must pay for full-day/full-year programs.

Are there requirements to integrate the state pre-k and subsidized child care programs at the state or local level?

Yes. The enabling legislation states, “The [State Board of Education] shall collaborate with the Office for Children, the Massachusetts Association of Day Care Agencies, Parents United for Child Care, the Young Men’s Christian Association of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Independent Child Care Organization, and Head Start to develop, for said programs, a common set of standards and licensing procedures built around the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs accreditation process.” Historically, these organizations (with others) comprised the Early Childhood Advisory Council to the State Board of Education. Legislation in 2004 established a new board and new Department of Early Care and Education to bring child care and CPC under one authority.

At the local level, each CPC makes its own decisions about the role of child care in the CPC initiative.

Procedures and Supports for Community-based Providers

What are the rules/guidelines for notifying and selecting pre-k providers?

CPC Councils determine who will provide CPC-funded services; providers must meet the program and teacher standards. Every three years, each council completes a community profile to survey the supply and demand for pre-kindergarten in the community, and develop a plan to meet unmet needs. Parents and providers learn about CPC through this profiling process. When the state board of education increases funding for CPCs, it sends a letter to all providers to alert them.

There is no on-site review of programs as part of the application process, and the process does not vary based on the type of program applying. Programs must meet standards prior to approval, although several standards do allow programs to request and receive waivers—if they are in the process of accreditation, for example—or to phase-in some of the requirements. Examples of phase-in include the fact that newly hired teachers in community-based settings have until 2010 to obtain an Associate’s degree and until 2017 to obtain a Bachelor’s degree.

What resources are available to help providers become eligible to deliver pre-k services?

CPC funds are used for the following supports; professional development/training for directors, teachers, and paraprofessionals; the purchase of supplies and materials, and for programs to seek accreditation.

Do teachers working in community settings earn comparable wages and benefits once they obtain the same credential as teachers in school-based settings?

No.

Supports for Working Families

Is there any explicit discussion in the legislation or regulations of extending the day, coordinating with the child care subsidy program, or helping working families?

Yes. The purpose of the program includes the following: “Working together, agencies and families in a community or group of communities build a network of programs and services that increases the availability, affordability, and quality of programs that are responsive to the needs of working parents and that enhance children’s learning and healthy development.”

The enabling legislation notes, “Pursuant to this section, the department shall seek to increase the availability of early care and education services and to encourage all local providers of such services to work together to create an array of options allowing families to select programs that fit with their schedules. Not less than one-third of the total slots funded shall provide full-day, full-year care that meets the needs of parents who work full-time. All slots funded pursuant to this section shall be in addition to existing services and shall be responsive to the needs of working parents.”

What policies help working families access pre-k and other supports?

Program rules limit eligibility to children with all available parents employed (both parents are working or the single parent is working). One of the stated priorities of the program is to “conduct community outreach to ensure that children of families who may be difficult to reach by traditional methods are located and offered an opportunity to participate in a program that meets their needs.” In awarding CPC grants to local programs, CPC Councils are required to take into consideration the transportation needs of families, and any other services that may be required to help working families access CPC programs. Transportation is an allowable expense. Programs are also expected to work with their local child care resource and referral agency to serve families from the child care subsidy wait list.

Once enrolled, programs must ensure children have access to medical/social/mental health, hearing, vision, and dental screenings and services, including referrals if necessary. Each local grantee determines how to provide these programs and services, and may choose to provide them directly, sub-contract with social workers or other specialists, or refer families to services available in the community.

Funding

What is the per-child payment for the pre-k program?

Payment varies based on the actual costs of the provider, so per-child costs will vary within each community. Local councils submit budget requests that identify the actual cost-per-slot using one of several approved accounting methods. On average, CPC pays \$4,400 per child.

How does the state pre-k funding affect other potential sources of funds for a provider?

CPC funds support the development of a system of early education and care in local communities. CPC funds can be used to support early education and care services. In addition, while CPC funds cannot be used to pay for early education and care services currently funded by another source, they may be used to complement other funding sources. For example children funded in a half-day preschool program paid for by Head Start or the public schools may have an extended-day covered by CPC. All children in a community are eligible for comprehensive services funded by CPC, which may include family support, mental health, medical or dental services, and/or transportation. Additionally all early childhood programs in a community are eligible to participate in quality enhancements funded by CPC, which include support for programs to become accredited, scholarships for teachers to obtain Associate's and Bachelor's degrees, and other professional development activities.

Sources

- Interview: Elisabeth Schaefer, 10/13/2004
- Website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/els/>
- Legislation: CPC enabling legislation [M.G.L. Chapter 15, Section 54] is Appendix A of the TA Guide
- Sub-contracting requirements: <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/grants04/rfp/391.html>

For information about national trends, read CLASP's *All Together Now: State Experiences in Using Community-Based Child Care to Provide Pre-kindergarten* at http://www.clasp.org/publications/all_together_now.pdf.