

Update from the EEC - June 13, 2020
(EEC = MA Dept of Early Education & Care)

Dear colleagues and stakeholders:

As child care programs prepare to reopen in the new environment, we are all reflecting on the ways in which the world has changed, the implications for our work, for child care providers, and most of all, for the children and families we support. The dedication of the field to communities across the Commonwealth has inspired me, every day, to ensure this year of transition propels us into a better, stronger future.

Now we are releasing plan templates and [instructions](#) to help programs prepare for reopening. The purpose of these templates is to address the range of operational preparedness or needs that programs will face when they open their doors to children again. Additionally, updated [Minimum Health and Safety Requirements](#) with some additional flexibility around preschool ratios have also been posted.

Beginning early next week, [Reopening Plans](#) and [Self Attestations](#) can be submitted through LEAD. We will review plans quickly for provisional approval (no longer than 5 days for programs in good standing prior to closure) and programs can reopen as soon as they receive provisional approval, which will come from the licensor.

Between our June 1st release of the Minimum Health and Safety Standards to operate child care and now, many have raised questions about important child development, business sustainability, family communication, and classroom management concerns. In response, we adapted our requirements to introduce as much flexibility as

possible for creative approaches and we will rely on provider expertise to create reasonable plans for their own child care settings. The [FAQs](#) and [supplemental guidance](#) documents are intended to set forth the *principles* that will guide decision making as we navigate reopening. We will rely on providers and families' abilities to make the personal decisions that are right for them, that keep children and educators safe and healthy, and enable child care to reopen so that families can safely return to work.

We host two Town Halls next week to share more information and guidance, and take questions from our community of providers, families, and partners. Town Halls will be hosted on Wednesday, June 17th at 6pm and Thursday, June 18th at 11am via Facebook Live. If you would like to participate in the town hall in Spanish, a registration link will be sent out early this coming week.

In the meantime, we have posted some answers to our most frequently asked questions below.

I'm looking forward to seeing you in person- in classrooms, child care homes, and playgrounds- again soon. In the meantime, stay safe.

Stay well,
Commissioner Sam