



## Department of Early Education and Care

### Language Access Plan

#### I. Introduction

According to the *Language Access Policy Implementation Guidelines* issued by the Massachusetts Office of Access and Opportunity, most individuals living in the Commonwealth read, write, speak and understand English. There are many individuals, however, for whom English is not their primary language. For instance, based on the 2000 census, approximately 1.1 million or nearly 19% of residents speak a language other than English at home. Persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English may be limited English proficient, or “LEP,” and are eligible to receive language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.

Language for non-English speakers and LEP individuals can be a barrier to accessing important benefits or services, understanding and exercising important rights, complying with applicable responsibilities, or understanding other information provided by state programs and activities. State government is committed to improving the accessibility of these programs and activities to eligible non-English speakers and LEP persons, a goal that reinforces its equally important commitment to promoting programs and activities designed to help individuals learn English. State agencies have an obligation, when reasonably possible, to reduce language barriers that can preclude meaningful access by non-English speakers and LEP persons to important government services.<sup>1</sup>

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (“EEC”) has prepared this Language Access Plan (“LAP” or “Plan”), which defines the actions to be taken by EEC to ensure meaningful access to agency services, programs and activities on the part of persons who have limited English proficiency. EEC will periodically review and update this LAP in order to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs and compliance with Title VI and the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (“ANF”) Administrative Bulletin #16.

#### II. Purpose and Authority

In certain circumstances, failure to ensure that non-English speakers and LEP persons can effectively participate in or benefit from state programs and activities may violate Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and associated Title VI regulations against national origin discrimination, Presidential Executive Order 13166, the state’s anti-discrimination statute

– Chapter 151B of the General Laws, and Executive Order 478 regarding non-discrimination, diversity, equal opportunity and affirmative action. Title VI and Executive Order 13166 require recipients of federal financial assistance to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access

---

**Footnote<sup>1</sup>:** See “Language Access Policy Implementation Guidelines” issued by the Office of Access & Opportunity (dated October 10, 2012): [anf-admin-16-guidelines.pdf](#)

– Chapter 151B of the General Laws, and Executive Order 478 regarding non-discrimination, diversity, equal opportunity and affirmative action. Title VI and Executive Order 13166 require recipients of federal financial assistance to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and services by persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English can be considered persons with LEP.

In compliance with the ANF Administrative Bulletin #16 and in recognition of the aforementioned federal and state laws, EEC has prepared this Plan, which defines the actions to be taken by EEC to ensure meaningful access to agency services, programs and activities on the part of persons who have limited English proficiency. Consistent with the guidance of ANF Administrative Bulletin #16, a Limited English Proficient (“LEP”) person is someone who is not able to speak, read, write or understand the English language at a level that allows him/her to interact effectively with EEC staff.

EEC is committed to this Plan as the appropriate response to meeting our clients’ needs. This Plan complies with the Language Access Plan Implementation Guidelines issued by the Massachusetts Office of Access and Opportunity, as well as the requirements of Administrative Bulletin #16 as promulgated by the ANF, which defines a LEP person as someone who is not able to speak, read, write or understand the English language at a level that allows him/her to interact effectively with Agency staff and provides that a client maintains the right to self-identify as a LEP person.

### **III. Agency Description**

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care is focused on strengthening the system of early education and care in Massachusetts as a critical element of the education pipeline from cradle to career. Learning begins at birth and families are their child’s first teacher. Research shows that access to high-quality early education and care is vital to helping all children, especially low-income and high needs children, to gain early literacy skills, academic and social school readiness skills, and increases a student’s chances of successfully completing high school, attending college, and becoming a contributing citizen.

EEC provides early education and out of school time care services for children in Massachusetts through a mixed delivery system which includes, but is not limited to public, private, non-profit and for-profit preschools, child care centers, nursery schools, preschools operating within public and private schools, Head Start programs and independent and system affiliated family child care homes.<sup>2</sup>

EEC’s work is steeped in the notion that *brain building is in progress* for young children in enriching environments with caring adults and meaningful and engaging interactions. The latest science shows that these early experiences actually build the architecture of the developing brain; much like a house is built from the bottom up. Children’s earliest experiences are especially important because building the human brain begins even before birth; a strong foundation in early years greatly increases the chance of long-term positive outcomes. EEC is focused on providing a healthy start for all children and ensuring that every child is reading proficiently by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, as a critical strategy in closing the achievement gap. High quality early learning opportunities and enriching experiences in formal and informal environments provide children with a solid foundation to build off of for a lifetime of success.

---

**Footnote <sup>2</sup>: 2** See M.G.L. c. 15D, §1A.

EEC is the lead agency responsible for licensing early education and care and out-of-school time programs throughout Massachusetts and for administering a statewide child care financial assistance program for low-income families with children up to 13 years of age.<sup>3</sup> EEC is charged with providing support for information and referral services, inclusive programming for children with special needs, parenting and family support, and professional development opportunities for educators.<sup>4</sup>

EEC has five regional offices across the state that oversee licensing operations and provide family and community engagement services. ***EEC is advancing reforms in four areas in an effort to close the academic achievement gap: 1) educator quality, 2) program quality, 3) screening and assessment, and 4) Engagement of communities and families.*** To this end, EEC has defined quality in early education and care settings and continues to provide supports to improve educators' competencies, skills and abilities through professional development to promote effective practice and increase retention. EEC is advancing early learning and development leadership and shared vision across birth to grade 3, is using evidence-based literacy and universal screening practices in communities, and is improving its data systems to better inform program practice and state decision-making.

EEC's provides both direct and indirect services that benefit early educators, families, children, and communities, and EEC makes every effort to provide language accessibility in the provision of these services. EEC's direct services include early education and care program licensing, technical assistance from community/family engagement specialists, training and professional development from educator/provider support specialists, financial assistance reviews and hearings, help desk responses, IT user services, constituent and legislative services, and audit compliance/monitoring. EEC has made active efforts to have in-house language capacity through the hiring of employees with specific language skills and with designated job descriptions, including bi-lingual licensors and administrative staff.

EEC's indirect services through procured services (grants and contracts) include financial assistance for early education and care programs and services through contracts with lead agencies to subsidize enrollment in their early education and care programs, and voucher reimbursement to child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs) for payment to programs for providing subsidized child care services; contracts with child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs) and early education and care programs to administer the vouchers and subsidize enrollment; contracts with CCR&Rs and Mass211 for information, referral and consumer education services; grants to regional Educator/Provider Support (EPS) networks to provide professional development and practice-based supports to educators in Massachusetts; grants to Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) networks to provide family services, education, guidance, referrals, and waitlist enrollment for child care financial assistance; contracts for Early Childhood Resource Centers based in libraries across the state; and purchase of supplemental materials for direct distribution to programs, providers and other support specialists. EEC works to ensure that both the direct and indirect services are accessible to LEP clients, including educators, and families, and we make efforts to support the home language of the families that we serve.

---

**Footnote** <sup>3</sup> See M.G.L. c. 15D, §2.

**Footnote** <sup>4</sup>: For more information about EEC's Strategic Plan: [Department of Early Education Strategic Plan](#)

The EPS professional development includes a focus on creating access for educators whose home language is not English. EEC's Mass211 line offers Spanish bi-lingual operators and telephone interpretation services in over a hundred languages. Some of EEC's child care providers are Spanish-speaking, as well as some CCR&Rs have Spanish and other bi-lingual staff to meet the needs of the diverse families they serve. EEC supports the production of materials in the language of the population where needed, including requiring ECRCs to purchase books in other languages, and procuring the Ages and Stages (ASQ) screener in different languages for children and families whose primary language is not English. See the Language Services Section of this Plan for more information on EEC's investments in language accessibility provided through grant-funded and contracted services.

#### **IV. Language Access Plan**

This Language Access Plan represents EEC's administrative blueprint to provide meaningful access to the services, programs and activities on the part of LEP individuals, and will be implemented subject to the availability of fiscal resources. This Language Access Plan outlines the tasks EEC will undertake to meet this objective.

##### **A. Agency Language Access Coordinator:**

Sarah Harding, Department of Early Education and Care

(EEC) 51 Sleeper Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

Boston, MA 02210

Office: (617) 988-6600

Fax: (617) 988-2451

[sarah.harding@state.ma.us](mailto:sarah.harding@state.ma.us)

##### **B. Agency Language Access Needs Assessment:**

###### **a. Describe the steps the agency will take to ensure meaningful access to the populations whose language meet or exceed the 5% threshold<sup>5</sup>**

EEC has translated a number of important documents for parents and providers who may have limited English proficiency. The EEC Language Access Coordinator will survey managers on an annual basis to collect information on new or additional documents that should be translated. EEC will also collect information on the language capacity of providers through the Professional Qualifications, and of children and their families (home language) through the Early Childhood Information System, the Department's financial assistance databases, and the Financial Assistance Waitlist platform that is currently under development.

---

**Footnote<sup>5</sup>:** State agencies are required to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their services, programs and activities by LEP persons through the development and implementation of a Language Access Plan. Such access shall be ensured when the LEP population meets or exceeds 5% of the agency client population.

In consultation with the EEC Commissioner, the coordinator will prioritize which new documents should be made available for parents and guardians in accordance with the Guidance provided by the Massachusetts Office of Access and Opportunity. The EEC Language Access Coordinator will assess the funding that is available for the translation and will establish timelines and procedures.

**b. Language Makeup of Client Population**

According to data from the U.S. Census performed in 2000, 18.7% of all residents in Massachusetts over the age of eighteen speak a language other than English, and of those residents, 21% speak English “not well” or “not at all.” (See table below).

<b>Population</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of total MA population</b>
Population 18 years and over	4,853,130	100.00%
Speak only English	3,944,715	81.28%
Speak a language other than English	908,415	18.72%
Speak a language other than English (Multilingual in MA)	908,415	<b>100%</b>
Multilingual in MA who speak English "Not Well" or "Not at All"	193,785	<b>21%</b>

<b>Most frequently spoken languages other than English among Multilingual in MA (not all represented languages are listed here)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of Multilingual MA Residents (908,415) that Speak the Language</b>
Spanish or Spanish Creole	71,895	7.9%
French Creole	6,810	0.8%
Italian	6,525	0.7%
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	39,620	4.4%
Russian	8,990	1.0%
Chinese	18,050	2%
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	5,125	0.6%
Vietnamese	8,990	1.0%

In accordance with the 5 percent threshold guidelines established in ANF Administrative Bulletin 16, Spanish is the language that EEC will address, at a minimum, for the constituent group of families who may have limited English proficiency.

The ANF Administrative Bulletin 16 requires that Commonwealth agencies use a 5 percent threshold guideline to determine which language(s) they will prioritize for translation in order to meet the needs of the constituent group of families with limited English proficiency. In addition to translating documents into Spanish at a minimum, for other languages below the threshold, EEC has translated documents into these languages in an effort to increase language access.

EEC serves thousands of children whose primary language is not English. In 2012, the different languages represented in our financial assistance caseload were as follows:

<b>Language</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>% of children</b>
Amharic	3	0.01%
Arabic	55	0.14%
Armenian	8	0.02%
Cantonese	15	0.04%
Chinese	363	0.94%
Croatian	18	0.05%
English	32605	84.22%
French	187	0.48%
German	0	0.00%
Haitian Creole	48	0.12%
Italian	2	0.01%
Japanese	0	0.00%
Laotian	3	0.01%
Polish	3	0.01%
Portuguese	644	1.66%
Russian	27	0.07%
Serbian-Cyrillic	0	0.00%
Slovenian	4	0.01%
Spanish	4718	12.19%
Tagalog	1	0.00%
Vietnamese	11	0.03%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>38715</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**c. Points of Contact between Agency and Client Population**

EEC's main office is located in Boston. EEC also has five regional offices across the state that oversee licensing operations and provide family and community engagement services.

**Main Office**

51 Sleeper Street, 4th  
 Floor Boston, MA 02210  
**Phone:** (617) 988-6600  
**TTY:** (617) 988-2454  
**Fax:** (617) 988-2451

**Western MA: Erin Craft, Director**

95 Liberty Street, Suite 1124  
Springfield, MA 01103  
**Phone:** (413) 788-8401  
**Fax:** (413) 784-1227

**Central MA: Donna Cohen-Avery, Director**

10 Austin Street,  
Worcester, MA 01609  
**Phone:** (508) 798-5180  
**Fax:** (508) 798-5181

**Northeast: Anita Moeller, Director**

360 Merrimack Street, Building 9, Third Floor  
Lawrence, MA 01843  
**Phone:** 978-681-9684  
**Fax:** 978-689-7618

**Southeast and Cape: Mike Avery, Director**

1 Washington Street, Suite 20  
Taunton, MA 02780  
**Phone:** (508) 828-5025  
**Fax:** (508) 828-5235

**Metro Boston: Alina Lopez, Director**

1250 Hancock Street, Suite 120-S  
Quincy, MA 02169  
**Phone:** (617) 472-2881  
**Fax:** (617) 472-2722

**C. Assessment of Need**

As noted above, The most frequently spoken languages according to U.S. Census data among the LEP population in the Commonwealth are Spanish, French Creole, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Mon-Khmer (Cambodian), and Vietnamese. Note that the 2000 U.S. Census does not distinguish by Chinese language types.

**D. Language Resources Assessment:**

- a. Identification of existing staff who are linguistically, culturally, and technically able to deliver services in a language other than English and/or to serve as interpreters (Actual staff need not be identified; languages spoken should be)**

EEC has made active efforts to have in-house language capacity through the hiring of employees with specific language skills and with designated job descriptions. Eighteen percent (18%) of EEC's licensing workforce are bi-lingual. EEC has 79 licensors; included among these are 13 bi-lingual licensors across the state and one bi-lingual investigator. The languages represented by these bi-lingual licensors are Spanish, Portuguese, and Khmer.

The Administrative Assistant in the Lawrence regional office is Spanish-English bi-lingual, one of EEC's Policy Analysts in the main office in Boston is also Spanish-English bi-lingual, and one of the Teacher Qualifications Specialists is multilingual in English, French, and Wolof.

While EEC employs additional staff who speak a number of languages other than English, these staff were not hired to deliver services in a language other than English and/or to serve as interpreters. Therefore, their fluency in the non-English language and their competency to be interpreters has not been evaluated. On an infrequent and informal basis as needed, staff who speak a language besides English provide interpretation services to callers or to individuals who arrive at the office in order to direct their inquiry appropriately. Currently EEC is able to deliver informal interpretation services in the following languages: Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and Khmer.

**b. Language services available under existing contracts to assist agency in meeting language access needs**

Since April 2008, EEC has been providing "QWEST" phone translation services, allowing staff to call a dedicated phone number and request a translator for the language needed to facilitate the communication between staff and consumers. QWEST recently announced a name change and currently operates as Century/Link. Century/Link facilitates consistent staff communication with parents/providers that speak a language other than English and to improve access for all parents to critical information. The number to call for translation services is 888-227-2796. The languages that Century/Link can provide translation services are: Arabic, Bosnian, Brazilian Portuguese, Cambodian, Cantonese, Farsi, French, German, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Lao, Mandarin, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Thai, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. See below for a detailed description of the Century/Link service:

scheduled and unscheduled telephonic (over the phone) interpretation services for non-English speaking individuals 24 hours a day and 7 days a week in 150 languages and various dialects

calls are answered either by an automated or a live agent that will request and process unique Customer ID and billing information, assist in the identification of the non-English speaker's language if required, and then conference in the correct interpreter in accordance with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' language request.

all interpreters provided for interpretation services shall be pre-qualified, tested and trained for industry-standard terminology and will adhere to the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard interpretation guide.

Century/Link shall provide service introduction and interpreter awareness training sessions to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts designated representatives, customer support, technical support and dispute resolution.

EEC contracts with Mass211, a telephone service that provides information to the public on essential community resources by dialing 211 or 1-877-211-MASS (6277); Hearing Impaired: 508-370-4890 TTY. Mass 2-1-1 is an easy to remember telephone number that connects callers to information about critical health and human services available in their community, including early education and care and out of school time information and referral. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Mass211 has Spanish speaking telephone operators, and also has interpreters available covering 147 languages. Mass211's information is also online at [Mass211](#)

EEC also contracts with Catholic Charities to translate vital documents, materials and other resources (including an online course for educators on the Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System) into multiple languages, including Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian-Creole and Chinese.

#### **E. Language Service Protocols:**

Depending on the nature and importance of the information being provided, and subject to availability of resources EEC will inform LEP individuals of the availability of oral interpretation services via bilingual staff or qualified contractors as needed. EEC will also utilize bilingual staff resources in order to accommodate necessary and direct communications between EEC staff and persons with LEP. To the extent feasible, EEC will provide oral interpretation in a timely manner so as to not effectively deny or cause an undue burden or delay relating to important services, benefits, or rights, and will provide oral interpretation by competent interpreters.

If the LEP individual requests his/her own qualified, trained interpreter, this must be allowed even though at the individual's own expense. Use of family members and friends, especially minor children, as interpreters will generally be discouraged. Exceptions may be made where the contact with the LEP person is of a routine nature, one that does not involve confidential matters, or significant/complex matters impacting the individual's eligibility status, payments, or program compliance issues. If staff have questions about the appropriateness of allowing family and friends as interpreters, they should consult with the LEP coordinator for guidance.

EEC has partnered with the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO), and the Office of Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) to respond to the needs of early education and care services of our immigrant and refugee communities in Massachusetts. EEC, HSSCO, and ORI are committed to support the Governor's New Americans Initiative and the School Readiness Project to better integrate immigrants and refugees into society by breaking down barriers to education. The goal of the partnership is to create, improve, and increase access and bilingual bicultural capacity of early education and care services for immigrant and refugee children and families. Two key components of the interagency collaboration strategic plan that address the needs of early care and education services of our bi-lingual/bi-cultural communities. These efforts included the following activities:

- Conducted brief analysis of EEC's current policies, procedures, and protocols regarding access to state services to persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Reviewed federal and state legal obligations of agency regarding LEP access plan

Researched and reviewed other states' and agencies' plans and policies related to translation, interpretation, and language access plan

Identified key external partners and explored opportunities to support EEC's commitment to improve access to services for LEP persons (i.e. Office of Refugees and Immigrants and Greater Boston Legal Services)

Identified state initiatives that highlight access to services to persons with LEP (i.e. Governor's Readiness Agenda, New American's Initiative, Governor's Proposed Executive Order regarding LEP, Governor's Diversity Initiative, etc.)

See "Massachusetts Responding to the Needs of Our Immigrants and Refugees Communities: Access to Early Education and Care Services" at the end of this document for further details on the efforts that EEC has made to improve language access through this initiative.

## **F. Language Services:**

An integral part of creating a high quality system of early education and care is the ability to communicate with parents and providers in their primary language(s). EEC does this in the following ways:

Oral Interpretation – Telephone Support: In 2008, EEC piloted a call-in translation service (from telecommunications company Qwest, now Century/Link) to the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) that work directly with families and providers in the field.

This service has been expanded to contracted providers, Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) networks, and EEC staff to immediately connect to a translator with the ability to facilitate conversations in multiple languages and various dialects. Subject to budgetary constraints and service availability, EEC will continue to utilize the services of professional telephone interpreters.

Oral Interpretation – Staff: Where feasible, EEC will use bilingual staff to communicate with LEP individuals in their primary languages, including assisting such individuals with understanding program materials and filling out forms, answering questions about programs, and responding to submission of materials and information requests. While multilingual staff members are a valuable resource, EEC will be mindful of creating a burden on staff members who volunteer for interpreting services.

Community-Based Resources: In addition to the Mass211 resource noted under "Language Resource Assessment", the Department entered into contracts with several community based resources, including Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&R), early education and care providers and Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grantees to provide early education and care programs and services to the children and families of the Commonwealth.

These entities employ bilingual or multilingual employees that are available to conduct community outreach and provide information, referral and intake services to families with limited English proficiency. EEC's regional Educator/Provider Support (EPS) networks provide professional development and practice-based supports to educators in Massachusetts that include a focus on creating access for educators whose home language is not English. In FY11, EEC awarded 18 grants funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) networks to support their development of community-based strategic plans for meeting the needs of families with children birth to eight years old.

Grantees synthesized all of the data to identify strengths, opportunities and gaps in the current system and used the data to undergird the development of three-year strategic plans that support the objectives of the CFCE grant in the context of their communities. The outcomes of the process included relationships with new community partners to support outreach to isolated families and for translation support.

Written Translation: In FY2008, EEC began a translation initiative to increase access to information for families and early education and care providers as well as to reduce duplicative efforts associated with translating materials. Documents were prioritized for translation into up to 6 languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Khmer, Traditional Chinese, and Vietnamese). These languages were chosen based on a compilation of census data, EEC data regarding the languages of the families we are serving, a CCR&R survey, feedback from our staff in the field as well as our collaboration with the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI).

Mixed Services: EEC has also invested in making professional development and curricula accessible in multiple languages; these resources include:

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS): In FY2011 EEC awarded \$2.82 million in grants to programs in order for them to advance their quality using the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Standards. In order to apply, programs were required to attend a two-day training. Over 1,100 across the EEC licensing regions were trained by the CAYL Institute. There was live, simultaneous translation at all of the trainings in any language requested by participants. Also through this grant the programs received targeted quality coaching and translation services to support their quality improvement efforts.

The QRIS standard on Curriculum and Learning includes: Curriculum, Assessment, Teacher Child Relationships and Interactions, Special Education, Serving Children with Diverse Languages and Culture. One way to measure that this standard has been met is implementation of the Pre Language Assessment Scales (Pre-LAS) which measure young children's expressive and receptive abilities in three linguistic components of oral language.

EEC held 11 trainings across the state, three of which were in Spanish. 180 educators from center based preschool, family child care, Head Start, and public preschool programs were trained. Participants were provided with Pre-LAS 2000 assessment kits in English and Spanish.

For programs who have submitted documentation of their program's QRIS level, EEC has accepted the documents in the primary language of the program and we will secure resources to conduct a translated review of these materials as part of the validation process. Currently these applications are subject to a delay in review as EEC secures the necessary resources to conduct the translated review.

*Business Planning for Early Educators:* EEC commissioned the development of an appropriate course on business planning for early education and care programs, to assist educators in both family child care and center-based settings with implementing sound business practices that will result in higher scores on the measurement tools required at Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 of the QRIS self-assessment process (these include the Program Administration Scale (PAS), the Business Administration Scale (BAS), and the APT.) These tools measure structural quality indicators (program administration & leadership) in FCC and Center-Based/ School-Based programs. The course, once developed, will be available both on-line and face-to-face in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

*Standards Validation and Alignment:* As part of the Department's commitment to offer high-quality early education to the children of Massachusetts, EEC is working with Teachers' College at Columbia University and Yale University on a study of the alignment of the Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers, Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences, Kindergarten Learning Experiences, Curriculum Frameworks for Language Arts and Literacy and Mathematics (for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten), the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, and three assessment instruments for children age three through kindergarten entry. As a part of this work, EEC intends to increase the accessibility of early education and care materials to culturally and linguistically diverse families through translation services and multi-lingual brochures that convey the early learning and development standards to families.

*Higher Education for English Language Learners:* As part of the Dual Language Learner Grant, Wheelock College invited Presidents of Massachusetts state colleges and universities with early education and care programs to participate in an important dialogue focused on advancing the success of English Language Learners in the Commonwealth. EEC awarded funds to Wheelock College to design and deliver an innovative program for educators who are English language learners (ELL) to access higher education while providing the immediate content needed to improve practice with children birth to age 5, who are engaged in formal early education and care.

Specifically, this funding targets family childhood care providers, paraprofessionals and the mixed delivery system whose primary language is not English, with the goal of equipping them to effectively assist dual language learner students by achieving higher academic coursework and credentials themselves. Wheelock College is also studying increasing access to higher education for educators who are English language learners. Wheelock College offered a summer institute for 25 ELL practitioners for whom Spanish is the native language and resulted in 2 undergraduate credits.

#### **G. Vital Document Translation:**

EEC has identified any forms that require parent/family signature (such as the financial assistance agreement and application, parent request for EEC review and hearing) or continued eligibility for financial assistance (i.e., renewal notification letters to parents) as vital documents requiring translation.

EEC has made efforts to make other documents available in Spanish and multiple languages, depending on the resource and subject to availability of funding. These efforts include documentation provided to Family Child Care programs, "fact sheets" for families about EEC child care financial assistance for low-income households and homeless families, and financial assistance wait list letters sent to families. (See Attachment 1 for information on EEC documents that have been translated.) EEC's translation efforts include:

Family Child Care Forms: These forms include the Family Child Care Provider Renewal Application Forms, Family Child Care Assistant Application Forms (new or renewal), Family Child Care Upgrade Applications Forms (provider or assistant), Family Child Care Record Keeping (required forms), Tools for FCC Providers, and the Variance request form. EEC has posted these forms online and these forms have been used by EEC Licensors that provide direct technical assistance to existing and new providers.

Licensing Regulations: Changes in EEC's child care regulations went into effect on January 1, 2010. The regulations were translated into Spanish and Portuguese.

Tips for Parents on Selecting a Quality Program: EEC has developed this document for parents that explains the different types of child care and the key components of quality in a program. EEC translated this document into Spanish and Portuguese and made it available on the Department's website at: [Tips for parents on Choosing Child Care](#)

Learn and Grow Together: This resource guide helps parents understand the many stages of child development (from birth to 14 years) and includes suggestions for fun, low-cost family activities. It is available in Spanish and Portuguese on EEC's website at: [Parent Engagement and Family Support](#)

Infant, Toddler and Preschool Guidelines Brochures for Parents: EEC developed materials for parents which are inspired by the Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers. These brochures focus on five different areas of development and contain things parents can do every day to positively impact your child's brain development. EEC translated these brochures into Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Khmer, and Chinese. They are available on EEC's website at: [Infant, Toddler and Preschool Guidelines brochures](#)

As appropriate and as needed, EEC will make translated available documents online.

EEC has posted on its website documents that are vital to meaningful program access, including application materials, eligibility guidance, appeal/grievance forms, policy guides, reports, and notices of public meetings/hearings. As part of EEC's commitment to improve services to its non-native English speaking constituency, EEC has added to its website, under the Key Resources section, a link to an external "Language Translation Option" provided by Google™. This Google™ tool offers translation to English from over 50 languages. This service is not part of the EEC web site and is offered strictly as a convenience for our users. The EEC website URL for more information on the Language Translation Option is: [EEC Language Translation Option](#). Instructions on obtaining a translation of content on EEC's website using Google™ translate are posted on this page. To obtain a translation of material, users can visit [Google Translator](#), enter the document's complete web address into Google's translation feature, select the appropriate language, and click "Translate".

#### **H. Staff Training:**

In addition to posting the LAP on its website, EEC will post the LAP on its internal Sharepoint webpage where other EEC policies, procedures, and plans are placed. Staff will be informed of this through an all staff email from the Commissioner's Office. The Plan will also be part of the orientation package for new employees.

#### **I. Notice to Public:**

EEC will ensure that LEP persons are aware of the language services available to them, via the following steps:

The EEC will post the LAP on its website. Copies will be made available upon request in hard copy form consistent with the state public records law.

EEC will prominently post at in each office a notice of the availability of language access services.

## **J. Agency Monitoring:**

The EEC Language Access Plan coordinator will be responsible for periodically monitoring compliance with the Commonwealth's Language Access Policy and Guidelines. The monitoring will include assessing the need for any changes in the LAP and its protocols. The review may include an assessment of the following:

Whether there have been any significant changes in the composition or language needs of the program population served by EEC;

A review to determine if additional vital documents require translation;

A review of any issues or problems related to serving LEP persons which may have emerged during the past year; and,

Identification of any recommended actions to provide more responsive and effective language services (for example, adding documents to be translated, creating or expanding partnerships with community organizations, or changing staffing priorities).

An aspect of EEC's LAP monitoring will include an annual discussion of the Plan's implementation at a meeting of EEC Senior Leadership. Also, the LAP Coordinator will meet with the EEC Human Resources Director to discuss distribution of the Plan to new employees to determine if additional information is needed.

The coordinator will take the lead in the review and update, on a biannual basis, of the LAP Plan in order to ensure continued responsiveness to and compliance with the Executive Office for Administration and Finance Administrative Bulletin #16.

## **K. Complaints:**

Individuals may file a complaint with the EEC Language Access coordinator or the Office of Access and Opportunity if they believe they have been denied the benefits of this Plan, by submitting a complaint in writing to:

Sarah Harding, EEC Language Access  
Coordinator Massachusetts Department of Early  
Education and Care 51 Sleeper Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02210

617.988.6600

[sarah.harding@state.ma.us](mailto:sarah.harding@state.ma.us)

EEC has developed this language access plan to provide services to non-English speakers and LEP persons, consistent with the Commonwealth's Language Access Policy and Implementation Guidelines.

---

Sherri Killins, Ed.D.  
Commissioner of Early Education and Care  
Date:

---

Matthew H. Malone  
Secretary of Education

## **Massachusetts Responding to the Needs of Our Immigrants and Refugees Communities: Access to Early Education and Care Services**

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO), and the Office of Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) interagency collaboration presents an opportunity to respond to the needs of early education and care services of our immigrant and refugee communities in Massachusetts. By creating and implementing innovative ways EEC, HSSCO, and ORI are committed to support the Governor's New Americans Initiative and the School Readiness Project to better integrate immigrants and refugees into society by breaking down barriers to education.

The goal of the partnership is to create, improve, and increase access and bilingual bicultural capacity of early education and care services for immigrant and refugee children and families. Two key components of the interagency collaboration strategic plan that address the needs of early care and education services of our bi-lingual/bi-cultural communities are briefly outlined below:

### **Ease access to information by conducting education and outreach activities**

Provide information to immigrant and refugee communities about the various early care and education services in MA.

- Assess the needs and barriers to access and participation in early education and care programs
- Identify ways to expand interagency partnership through sharing of resources and information
  - Connecting families to early education and care providers in their local community
  - Develop effective solutions that address the needs of our bi-lingual/bi-cultural communities

### **Explore opportunities to increase early education enrollment -Cultural preferences**

Expand Licensing opportunities for both home-based and child care centers for bilingual/bicultural providers

- Increase communication with immigrant and refugee communities by developing awareness of available licensing opportunities
- Explore the development of new bi-lingual/bi-cultural home-based and child care centers
- Increase enrollment and participation in high quality preschool programs