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Field Operations Memo 2006- 47
October 26, 2006

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: TAFDC: EEC Changes to Child Care Services

Background

DTA and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) have met on several occasions to discuss child care needs of TAFDC recipients, and to develop policies and procedures to better meet those needs. The meetings, which highlighted mutual concerns of the two agencies in the provision of quality child care services to TAFDC families, were held to find ways to streamline the child care referral process.

EEC has announced changes to its child care services policies. The changes are effective November 3, 2006. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies who issue vouchers for child care to TAFDC recipients, have been advised of these key changes and will use them when issuing vouchers to current and former recipients. EEC policy changes, in some instances, have been made in an effort to conform to DTA child care policies.

Purpose of Memo

This memo informs TAO Staff about the EEC child care policy changes; and that these changes do not impact DTA policies and procedures.

EEC Policy Changes

The policy changes made by EEC and given to the CCC&Rs for implementation are:

Change to CCR&R voucher availability: CCR&Rs will now issue child care vouchers up to two weeks prior to the start of a recipient's ESP activity or employment with a current Child Care Referral notice. There is no impact to DTA policy, as DTA child care services policy already allows this. **(106 CMR 201.210)**

Full time vouchers for post-secondary education: EEC has authorized the CCR&Rs to provide full time vouchers for students taking 12 credit hours of post-secondary education. TAFDC recipients who are attending a post-secondary educational component, not beyond an Associate's degree, for 12 credit hours per semester, are affected by this EEC policy change.

12 Month vouchers for Transitional Child Care: Former TAFDC recipients in need of child care services who meet DTA requirements for receiving Transitional Child Care (TCC) services are now eligible to receive a voucher from the CCR&Rs for a 12- month period. This EEC policy change allows former TAFDC recipients to verify changes with the CCR&Rs less often than they were required to in the past.

Note: TCC referral notices currently display dates indicating that TCC is for 12 months; however, language on the notices indicates that the referral is for the first six months of receipt of TCC services. The TCC services are, in fact, provided for 12 months. DTA is currently looking into modifying our TCC notice to exclude the "first six month" language.

EEC: maternity leave policy change: EEC has a maternity leave child care policy for working parents that allows income eligible child care recipients to continue to receive child care while on maternity leave from their jobs. The maternity leave period has been changed from eight weeks to twelve weeks of continued child care services for these income eligible families. EEC has asked DTA to allow that TAFDC recipients who are employed; receiving child care services; and granted maternity leave by their employer with the intention to return to work when the leave expires, be granted continued child care during the maternity leave period, up to a maximum of 12 weeks to match EEC income eligible guidelines.

**EEC Policy
Changes
(continued)**

NOTE: DTA does not currently have a maternity leave policy for employed recipients. However, DTA will consider, on a case by case basis, each recipient's need for continued child care services, while on maternity leave granted by their employer. In those circumstances Directors should call the Policy Hotline for guidance.

**Future BEACON
Notices Changes**

DTA is exploring the need to make changes to recipient notices on BEACON for those participating in an ESP activity, or who are employed, and receive child care services. These potential changes to the notices will improve the way in which child care services are continued when there is a change in a recipient's activity.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.
