

From the Hotline

Q. A teen parent came into the office recently and told me that, although she completed high school and passed the required subjects, she was unable to pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Exam. To meet teen parent school attendance requirements, must she continue to attend a high school or GED program?

A. This teen parent is not required to continue attending a high school or GED program. If she can verify the successful completion of her high school course work, then she is considered to have met our teen parent school attendance requirements and is considered to have received a diploma for purposes of teen parent eligibility as described in 106 CMR 203.610. She may, however, become subject to the work program requirement and time-limited benefits.

Q. Yesterday, a teen parent came into our office and said that, although she could verify her completion of high school, she didn't pass the MCAS Exam in May and wants to retake the Exam in the fall. Furthermore, before retaking the Exam she would like to enroll in a remedial course at a local community college. Can this teen parent retake the MCAS Exam and continue to remain exempt from the time-limited benefits and the work program requirement?

A. Yes. A teen parent who has received a Certificate of Completion or can verify through a written statement from the high school that she has successfully completed her high school course work may retake the MCAS Exam and remain exempt from time-limited benefits and the work program requirement. Also, it is acceptable for her to enroll in an MCAS remedial class while awaiting her next opportunity to retake the Exam.

Q. Can the teen parent described in the previous question continue to retake the MCAS Exam indefinitely?

A. In the previous example, the teen parent failed the MCAS Exam at the end of May. This means that she must retake the Exam before the end of November to remain exempt from the time-limited benefits and the work program requirement.

If a teen parent has completed high school and fails the MCAS Exam, she can remain exempt from time-limited benefits and the work program requirement until she retakes the MCAS or for a period of six months, **whichever is sooner.**

Information on the MCAS Exam and its impact on TAFDC eligibility can be found in *Transitions*, August 2003. Also, information on the MCAS Exam can be found by visiting the DOE website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pathways>.



"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect."
Chief Seattle, 1854