

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS MINIARD CULPEPPER, HENRY SANTANA, EDWARD M. FLYNN, BREADON, DURKAN, FITZGERALD, LOUIJEUNE, MURPHY, PEPÉN, WEBER, AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

**ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A CHILDCARE ACCESS
FUND**

WHEREAS, Access to affordable childcare is a critical component of economic stability for working families, particularly for single parents who must balance employment, education, and caregiving responsibilities; *and*

WHEREAS, In Suffolk County the average monthly cost of childcare has been estimated at approximately \$2,500, creating a significant financial burden for families and presenting barriers to workforce participation, educational advancement, and long-term economic mobility; *and*

WHEREAS, The availability of affordable childcare is directly connected to housing stability, workforce participation, and poverty reduction, particularly for single mothers and families pursuing higher education, job training, or career advancement opportunities; *and*

WHEREAS, Childcare providers themselves face significant financial pressures, including workforce shortages, rising operational costs, and limited access to stabilization resources, which may contribute to reduced childcare availability across the City of Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts administers childcare assistance through the Department of Early Education and Care, but limited capacity, eligibility thresholds, and waitlists leave many Boston families without adequate support; *and*

WHEREAS, Providing targeted financial assistance through childcare providers to reduce tuition costs represents a legally permissible and effective mechanism to expand access to childcare services pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston Office of Early Childhood currently administers programs and initiatives supporting childcare providers, expanding access to early education, and promoting affordability for Boston families, positioning the Office to effectively administer a Childcare Access Fund; *and*

WHEREAS, Establishing a dedicated Childcare Access Fund will help expand childcare access, stabilize childcare providers, and support working families across the City; **NOW, THEREFORE**

Be it ordained by the City Council of Boston as follows:

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter X: Housing Services is hereby amended by inserting a new section establishing a Childcare Access and Stabilization Fund as follows:

There shall be established within the City of Boston a fund to be known as the Childcare Access Fund.

Section 1. Purpose.

The purpose of the fund shall be to expand access to affordable childcare by providing financial support to licensed childcare providers that reduce tuition costs for eligible low-income families not fully served by existing state childcare subsidy programs.

Section 2. Uses.

The Childcare Access Fund shall be administered by the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood. The fund may be used to provide financial assistance including but not limited to grants to licensed childcare centers and family childcare providers that agree to reduce tuition for eligible families, support for families on state childcare subsidy waitlists, co-payment assistance for subsidized families, and targeted investments to expand childcare access in underserved neighborhoods.

Section 3. Funding Sources.

Funds collected pursuant to this section may be used to support Childcare stipends or tuition assistance for low-income families. The Childcare Access Fund shall be supported through contributions including but not limited to:

- (a) Annual municipal programmatic or public health-related fees associated with childcare provider participation in City-supported childcare initiatives;
- (b). Voluntary participation contributions from childcare providers who elect to participate in City childcare access initiatives or workforce support programs administered by the the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood;
- (c) Grants, philanthropic contributions, state or federal funding, and other public or private sources dedicated to supporting childcare access and early childhood development.

Section 4. Governance.

The Boston Office of Early Childhood shall establish guidelines governing the administration of the fund, including eligibility criteria for families and providers, coordination with state childcare subsidy programs, and reporting requirements. The Office shall submit periodic reports to the Boston City Council regarding fund revenues, expenditures, and program outcomes.

Section 5. Severability.

The provisions of this ordinance are severable and if any provision, or portion thereof, should be held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality or invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions, which remain in full force and effect.

Section 6. Effective Date.

The provisions of this ordinance shall be effective immediately upon passage.

Filed on: April 8, 2026