

Boston EQUIP

Boston Early Education Quality Improvement Project

1999 Neighborhood Profiles: Charlestown, North End*

DEMOGRAPHICSⁱ

Traditionally home of employees of the now-decommissioned Navy Yard, Charlestown has experienced a shift in its population and industry. The Navy Yard has been converted to residential and office space, and an increasing number of young professionals are joining the families who have lived in the area for years. The North End is most known for its strong tie to Italian roots. With a high level of the educational attainment, this neighborhood has one of the smallest populations of children under 18 in the city.ⁱⁱ

<i>Total Population:</i>	25,653	<i>Median Income:</i>	\$35,570
<i>Population under 18 years old:</i>	2,868	<i>Percent in Poverty:</i>	10.4%
4.0% Age 0-4	1,020	<i>Percent of Youth in Poverty:</i>	17.7%
7.2% Age 5-17	1,848	<i>Unemployment Rate:</i>	5.4%
<i>Racial/Ethnic Diversity:</i>		<i>Highest Educational Attainment:</i>	
2.1% Asian		19.3% Less Than 12th Grade	
0.5% Black		22.5% High School Graduate	
2.3% Hispanic		17.7% Some College	
0.1% Native American		40.5% College Graduate	
96.7% White			
0.7% Other			

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Capacityⁱⁱⁱ

Type of Program	Capacity
Center-Based & Head Start Programs (CHS)	452
Licensed School-Age Programs (SACC)	84
Family Child Care Programs (FCC)	12

Capacity by Age Group	
Infant	48
Toddler	81
Preschool	323
School-Age	84

Waitlists

Demand for childcare combined with limitations on capacity often result in long waitlists. **The average number of children on a waitlist at each individual Center and Head Start program is 101, compared to the citywide average of 62.** In June 1999, approximately 72 children living in Charlestown or the North End were on the waitlist for a state Office of Child Care Service (OCCS) subsidy, according to OCCS.

Subsidies

Subsidies often provide access to child care for families who cannot afford to pay regular rates. **Per program, the total number of children in this neighborhood who use subsidies for Center-based and School-Age Child Care is 43 and 16.** Citywide, these numbers are 38 and 30 respectively.

ACCREDITATION^{iv}

Accreditation is often used as an indicator of the quality in a child care program. **There are currently no programs in Charlestown or the North End that are accredited by either the National Association for the Education of Young Children or the National Association of Family Child Care. Among the neighborhood’s Centers and Head Start programs, time was the most commonly cited barrier to accreditation.**

TRAINING

Research shows that the quality of programs is directly related to the education and training of their staff.^v Specialized early childhood training for caregivers helps make the most of children’s developmental potential. **In Charlestown and the North End, 14% of Centers and Head Start staff has received college training in the last year while 38% of SACC staff has received college training.**

A significant number of the neighborhood’s early childhood professionals have obtained college degrees. **Those who have obtained a BA or more include: 27% of CHS teachers and lead teachers and 50% of SACC group leaders and senior group leaders.**

Staff Receiving College Credit in Past Year				Staff with BA or more		
	Charlestown, North End	Boston	EQUIP Benchmark		Charlestown, North End	Boston
CHS	14%	41%	43%	CHS	27%	29%
SACC	38%	50%	43%	SACC	50%	55%

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Parents play a significant role in the education of their children. Many programs encourage opportunities for parents and providers to work together not only in activities inside the classroom like assisting teachers or participating in celebrations, but in the leadership of the program through activities like hiring staff, evaluating programs, and serving on governing boards. **Averaging the parent engagement on a number of activities, an overall score indicates 27% of parents are involved in Centers and Head Starts, and 12% of parents are involved in School-Age Child Care in Charlestown and the North End.** While parent participation in CHS is slightly higher than the citywide average, neither SACC nor CHS has met the EQUIP benchmark of 50%.

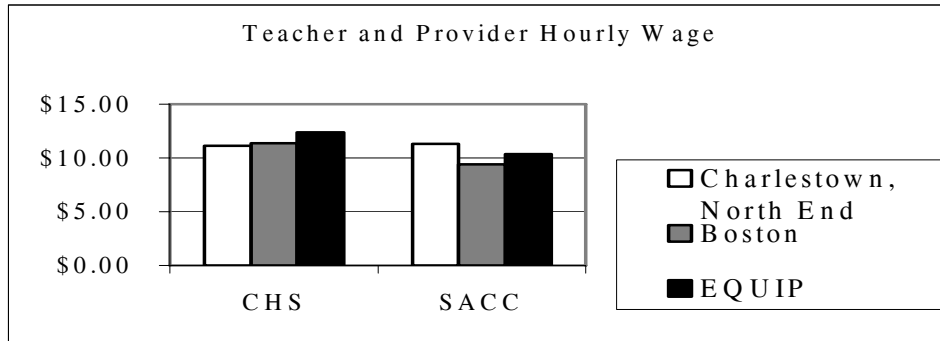
	Charlestown, North End	Boston	EQUIP Benchmark
CHS	27%	26%	50%
SACC	12%	16%	50%

Top Three Parent Engagement Activities	
CHS	
Program Evaluation	62%
Celebrations, Holidays, Festivals	54%
Parent/Teacher Conferences	50%
SACC	
Fundraising	44%
Celebrations, Holidays, Festivals	40%
Parent/Teacher Conferences	40%

SALARIES

Low salaries are often linked to high staff turnover rates and lower quality child care. Higher salaries generally correlate with higher levels of education, professional training, and a commitment to staff retention. **The average hourly wages for CHS and SACC in Charlestown and the North End are \$11.13 and \$11.33 respectively.** Hourly wages for the neighborhood’s school-age child care staff are higher than citywide averages and higher than the EQUIP benchmark.

	Charlestown, North End	Boston	EQUIP Benchmark
CHS	\$11.13	\$11.32	\$12.40
SACC	\$11.33	\$9.41	\$10.35



Benefits and Health Care

Another indicator of a program’s commitment to its staff is the level of benefits offered. **17% of Center and Head Start programs in Charlestown and the North End do not offer health care coverage to their full-time employees.** Among Center-based programs, paid maternity leave was the benefit least likely to be offered--only two of the six offered this benefit. For the two School-Age Child Care programs that responded, neither offered paid maternity or disability leave, tuition assistance or dental insurance.

Turnover

Continuous changes in personnel limit efforts to build stable environments and relationships for children and their families. **CHS and SACC programs’ annual staff turnover was 21 and 75 percent respectively.** While the staff turnover for CHS is slightly lower than that of the entire city, SACC turnover is substantially higher than the citywide average.

	Charlestown, North End	Boston
CHS	21%	23%
SACC	75%	56%

FACILITIES

Physical environment is important in a program’s ability to deliver quality care. A safe, well-maintained, inviting, and well-designed environment contributes to physical, emotional, and cognitive development in children.

Closures

Program closures due to unforeseen circumstances such as building problems place a burden on

parents to seek alternative child care while providers potentially face lost revenue and the prospect of losing families. In addition, closures due to facility problems are an indicator of the need for repairs and general maintenance. **Two of six center-based programs, and one of the two School-Age Child Care programs responding in Charlestown and the North End reported having to close at least once in the past year due to facility problems.**

Expand, Relocate, Renovate

When Centers and Head Start programs were asked if they would like to expand, renovate, or relocate, five (83%) wanted to expand, four (67%) wanted to renovate, and three (50%) wanted to relocate.

	Charlestown, North End	Boston
Expand	83%	63%
Renovate	67%	78%
Relocate	50%	39%

Computers

Caregivers can use computers for both instructional and administrative purposes. They can selectively choose appropriate material to help children acquire basic cognitive skills while becoming accustomed to using a computer. Furthermore, computers can perform a variety of administrative tasks like budgeting or planning. **Five of the six centers and Head Starts and all of the School-Age Child Care programs reported owning and using a computer.**

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| <p>Top Three Computer Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word Processing • Enrollment • Internet |
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What is Boston EQUIP?

The purpose of the Boston Early Education Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP) is to measure and help improve quality for the 25,000 children and families that use Boston’s public and private early childhood and school age care and education programs. In the Spring of 1999, Boston EQUIP surveyed licensed center-based, Head Start and Boston Public School early childhood programs, school-age child care programs, and a representative sample of licensed family child care providers. A total of 264 of Boston’s early childhood and school-age programs returned surveys.

For more information, contact Boston EQUIP at 617-695-0700 x229.

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* Unless otherwise identified, all data is from 1999 Boston EQUIP Third Inventory. Analysis by Alyssa Na'im. Return rates in this neighborhood were: 55% for CHS and 50% for SACC. No FCC providers responded to the survey from this area.

ⁱ Statistics are from Rolf Goetze. *Facts about Boston’s Neighborhoods: 16 Neighborhoods and 69 Neighborhood Statistical Areas.* February 1995.

ⁱⁱ City of Boston website: <http://www.ci.boston.ma.us/neighborhoods/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ School-age capacity numbers are projected from 1999 Boston EQUIP data. All other capacity numbers are from the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services 1998 licensing records.

^{iv} CHS Accreditation is from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. FCC Accreditation and CDA numbers are from the National Association for Family Child Care.

^v Suzanne W. Helburn (editor). *Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers.* June 1995.