

# Boston EQUIP

## Boston Early Education Quality Improvement Project

### 1999 Neighborhood Profiles: East Boston\*

#### DEMOGRAPHICS<sup>i</sup>

East Boston is geographically separated from Boston by the Boston Harbor and the Chelsea Creek. It has a strong maritime heritage as one of America's most important shipping areas. East Boston also has a rich history of serving as a "port of entry" for immigrants: a Jewish settlement in the 1900s, followed by an Irish community, and later a large Italian population which remains there today. From 1980 to 1990 it experienced the most rapid increase (495%) in minority and newcomer populations of all Boston neighborhoods--many from Southeast Asian and Latin America.<sup>ii</sup>

<i>Total Population:</i>	32,941	<i>Median Income:</i>	\$22,925
<i>Population under 18 years old:</i>	6,508	<i>Percent in Poverty:</i>	19.3%
7.1% Age 0-4	2,351	<i>Percent of Youth in Poverty:</i>	33.4%
12.6% Age 5-17	4,157	<i>Unemployment Rate:</i>	10.8%
<b><i>Racial/Ethnic Diversity:</i></b>		<b><i>Highest Educational Attainment:</i></b>	
4.1% Asian		40.8% Less Than 12th Grade	
1.9% Black		34.9% High School Graduate	
17.3% Hispanic		15.4% Some College	
0.5% Native American		9.0% College Graduate	
87.4% White			
6.2% Other			

#### PROGRAM INFORMATION

##### Capacity<sup>iii</sup>

Program Types	Capacity
Center & Head Start Programs (CHS)	517
School-Age Programs (SACC)	257
Family Child Care (FCC)	135

Capacity by Age Group	
<b>CHS</b>	
Infant	20
Toddler	69
Preschool	428
<b>SACC</b>	
Elementary School	169
Middle School	88

##### Waitlists

Demand for child care combined with limitations on capacity often result in long waitlists. The average number of children on a waitlist at individual **Centers and Head Start programs in East Boston is 83; for School-Age Child Care the average is 125<sup>iv</sup>**. Citywide, these numbers are 62 and 10 respectively. In June 1999, approximately 127 of East Boston's children 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 average number of children in East Boston who use subsidies for Centers and Head Start and School-Age Child Care are 29 and 43 respectively.** Citywide, these numbers are 38, 30, and two respectively.

##### ACCREDITATION<sup>v</sup>

Accreditation is often used as an indicator of the

	East Boston	Boston	EQUIP Benchmark
1999 Neighborhood Profiles: East Boston	43%	16%	25%

quality in a child care program. **In this neighborhood, five Centers and Head Start programs are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).** This exceeds both the citywide accreditation average and the EQUIP benchmark. In addition, East Boston is home to one of only two school-age programs in the Greater Boston area which have achieved accreditation by the National School Age Care Alliance.

**TRAINING**

Research shows that the quality of programs is directly related to the education and training of their staff.<sup>vi</sup> Specialized early childhood training for caregivers helps make the most of children’s developmental potential. **In the East Boston programs responding to the survey, 21% of Center and Head Start staff had received college training in the past year. Of the School-Age Child Care programs that responded, none of the assistant group leaders had received college training in the last year, and less than one percent of group leaders had.**

**While none of the CHS programs reported having teachers with a BA or more, 6% of lead teachers did. SACC programs reported that 67% of group leaders and senior group leaders had a BA or more.**

	Staff Receiving College Credit			Staff with BA or more		
	East Boston	Boston	EQUIP Benchmark	East Boston	Boston	
CHS	21%	41%	43%	CHS	NA	29%
SACC	NA	50%	43%	SACC	67%	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 12% of parents are involved in Centers and Head Starts, and 31% of parents are involved in School-Age Child Care.** While neither programs exceeds the EQUIP benchmark, parent participation in SACC is higher than the citywide average.

	Average Parent Engagement		
	East Boston	Boston	EQUIP Benchmark
CHS	12%	26%	50%
SACC	31%	16%	50%

Top Three Parent Engagement Activities	
<b>CHS</b>	
Parent/Teacher Conferences	82%
Program Evaluation	61%
Staff Evaluation	55%
<b>SACC</b>	
Celebrations, Holidays, Festivals	75%
Parent/Teacher Conferences	15%
Advocacy	10%

## SALARIES

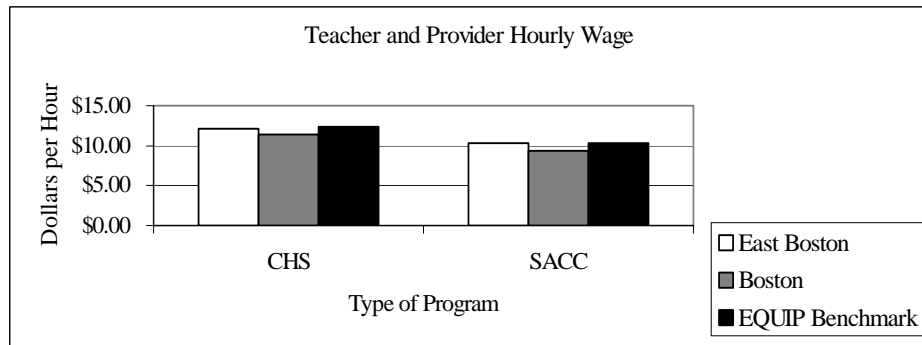
### Teacher and Provider Hourly Wage

Low salaries are often linked to high staff turnover rates and lower quality of child care. Higher salaries generally correlate with higher

levels of education, professional training, and a commitment to staff retention. Higher salaries generally denote higher levels of education, professional training, and a commitment to staff retention.

**In East Boston, the average hourly wages for CHS, and SACC are \$12.15 and \$10.27 respectively.** Both CHS and SACC neighborhood's averages are higher than the citywide averages, but only CHS exceeds the EQUIP benchmark.

	East Boston	Boston	EQUIP Benchmark
CHS	\$12.15	\$11.32	\$12.40
SACC	\$10.27	\$9.41	\$10.35



### Benefits and Health Care

Another indicator of a program's commitment to its staff is the level of benefits offered. **In this neighborhood, School-Age programs tended to have more comprehensive benefit packages than Centers and Head Starts. 57% of CHS programs in East Boston, and 33% of SACC programs, do not offer health care benefits to full-time staff.** For SACC only one provided disability and one provided dental insurance. For CHS maternity leave, disability, retirement package, and dental insurance were less commonly provided. Only one program out of the seven responding provided these benefits to its staff.

### Turnover

Continuous changes in personnel limit efforts to build stable environments and relationships for children and their families. **The turnover rate for CHS was nearly half as large as SACC--25 and 49 percent respectively.** While staff turnover for Centers is higher than that of the entire city, School-Age Child Care turnover is slightly lower than the citywide average.

	East Boston	Boston
CHS	25%	23%
SACC	48%	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. **In East Boston, 43% of Centers and Head Starts and none of the School-Age Child Care programs reported having had to close at least once within the past year.**

## Expand, Relocate, Renovate

**When Centers and Head Start programs were asked if they would like to expand, renovate, or relocate, 29% wanted to expand, 57% wanted to renovate, and 29% wanted to relocate.**

	East Boston	Boston
Expand	29%	63%
Renovate	57%	78%
Relocate	29%	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.

Furthermore, computers can perform a variety of administrative tasks like budgeting or planning. **Four of East Boston's Centers and Head Starts and all of its School-Age Child Care programs reported owning and using a computer.**

### Top Three Computer Uses

- Curriculum Preparation
- In the Classroom with Children
- Reports

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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 East Boston were: 46% for CHS; 100% for SACC. No FCC providers responded to the survey from East Boston.

<sup>i</sup> Statistics are from Rolf Goetze. *Facts about Boston's Neighborhoods: 16 Neighborhoods and 69 Neighborhood Statistical Areas.* February 1995.

<sup>ii</sup> From *A United Way Neighborhood View.* United Way of Massachusetts Bay

<sup>iii</sup> 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.

<sup>iv</sup> Only three programs returned the EQUIP survey and two of those supplied information on only their elementary school age waitlists.

<sup>v</sup> 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.

<sup>vi</sup> Suzanne W. Helburn (editor). *Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers.* June 1995.