

Boston EQUIP

Boston Early Education Quality Improvement Project

1999 Neighborhood Profiles: South Boston*

DEMOGRAPHICSⁱ

South Boston is a tight-knit community with many generations of families spending their entire lives in the neighborhood. Traditionally home to manufacturing and harbor-related industries, it was hit hard by the decline in manufacturing jobs in the region. Recently the community has experienced an increase in births to unwed mothers and a higher than average school dropout rate. The community also faces a high number of children living in poverty.ⁱⁱ

<i>Total Population:</i>	29,495	<i>Median Income:</i>	\$25,539
<i>Population under 18 years old:</i>	5,644	<i>Percent in Poverty:</i>	17.3%
5.7% Age 0-4	1,682	<i>Percent of Youth in Poverty:</i>	27.1%
12.5% Age 5-17	3,692	<i>Unemployment Rate:</i>	9.3%
<i>Racial/Ethnic Diversity:</i>		<i>Highest Educational Attainment:</i>	
1.8% Asian		24.8% Less Than 12th Grade	
1.0% Black		40.0% High School Graduate	
1.0% Hispanic		18.9% Some College	
0.5% Native American		16.2% College Graduate	
96.5% White			
0.3% Other			

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Capacityⁱⁱⁱ

Program Type	Capacity
Center & Head Start Programs (CHS)	414
School-Age Programs (SACC)	190
Family Child Care (FCC)	19

Capacity by Age Group	
CHS	
Infant	11
Toddler	19
Preschool	384

Waitlists

Demand for childcare 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 is 100; for School-Age Child Care the average is 65.** Citywide, these numbers are 62 and 10. In June 1999, approximately 107 of South 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 South Boston who use subsidies for Centers and Head Start and School-Age Child Care are 16 and 29 respectively.** Citywide, these numbers are 38 and 30 respectively.

ACCREDITATION^{iv}

	South Boston	Boston	EQUIP Benchmark
<i>1999 Neighborhood Profiles: South Boston</i>			
Boston EQUIP, Associated Early Care and Education, CHS Berkeley St, Ste 306, Boston, MA 02116	90%	16%	25%
Phone: 617-695-0700 x 229 www.bostonequip.org	ECC 25%	10%	25%

Accreditation is often used as an indicator of the quality in a child care program. **In this neighborhood, none of the Center and Head Start programs are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and one Family Child Care provider has earned accreditation from the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC).**

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 South Boston, 19% of Center and Head Start staff received college training in the last year; 35% SACC staff received college training.**

While 16% of CHS teachers and lead teachers have a BA or more, none of the FCC providers or SACC group leaders and senior group leaders do.

Staff Receiving Training for College Credit			
	South Boston	Boston	EQUIP Benchmark
CHS	19%	41%	43%
SACC	35%	50%	43%
FCC	--	57%	43%

Staff with BA or more		
	South Boston	Boston
CHS	16%	29%
SACC	0%	55%
FCC	0%	12%

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 30% of parents are involved in Centers and Head Starts, and 21% of parents are involved in School-Age Child Care in South Boston.** CHS parent

participation is higher than the citywide average and the EQUIP benchmark, yet SACC parent participation is substantially below both.

Average Parent Engagement			
	South Boston	Boston	EQUIP Benchmark
CHS	30%	26%	50%
SACC	8%	16%	50%

Top Three Parent Engagement Activities	
CHS	
Parent/Teacher Conferences	93%
Celebrations, Holidays, Festivals	57%
Program Evaluation	49%
SACC	
Advocacy	25%
Parent/Teacher Conferences	23%
Staff Evaluations	20%

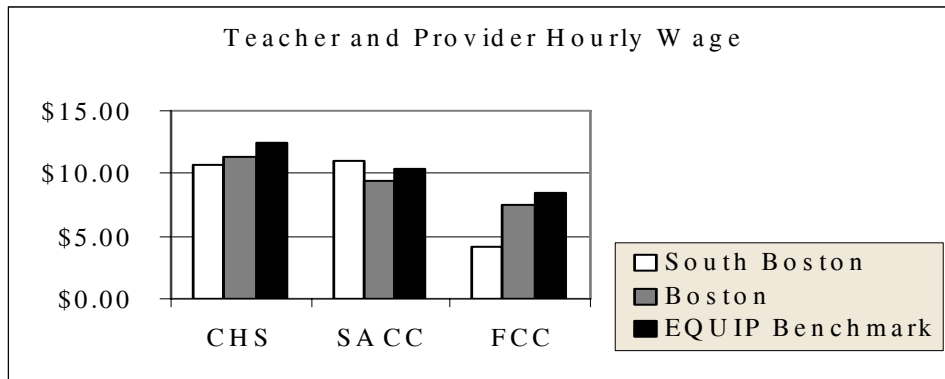
SALARIES

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. **The average hourly wages for CHS, SACC, and FCC in**

South Boston are \$10.77, \$11.00, and \$4.08 respectively. SACC is the only program type with hourly wages higher than both the citywide average and the EQUIP benchmark

	South Boston	Boston	EQUIP Benchmark
CHS	\$10.77	\$11.32	\$12.40
SACC	\$11.00	\$9.41	\$10.35
FCC	\$4.08	\$7.47	\$8.46



Benefits and Health Care

Another indicator of a program's commitment to its staff is the level of benefits offered. In this neighborhood, CHS and SACC provide fairly comprehensive benefits to their full-time employees. **All programs and providers reported offering health care coverage for full-time employees.** Among CHS, the one benefit that was not generally provided is paid maternity leave; only a quarter of the programs responding provided this benefit.

Turnover

Continuous changes in personnel limit efforts to build stable environments and relationships for children and their families.

CHS and SACC programs in this neighborhood reported similar levels of annual staff turnover--16.5 and 18.8

percent respectively. Both are substantially lower than the citywide averages.

	South Boston	Boston
CHS	16.5%	23.3%
SACC	18.8%	56.3%

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. **Only one out of eight centers responding and neither of School-Age Child Care programs reported having to close at least once in the past year.**

Expand, Relocate, Renovate

When Centers and Head Start programs were asked if they would like to expand, renovate, or relocate, 5 (63%) wanted to expand, 3 (38%) wanted to renovate, and 3 (38%) wanted to relocate.

	South Boston	Boston
Expand	63%	63%
Renovate	38%	78%
Relocate	38%	39%

Computers

Caregivers can use computers for both instructional and administrative purposes. They can selectively choose appropriate material to help children develop basic cognitive skills. Furthermore, computers can perform a variety of administrative tasks like budgeting or planning.

- | |
|---|
| <p>Top Three Computer Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word Processing • In the Classroom with Children • Curriculum Preparation |
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Seventy-five percent of the Centers and Head Starts, and both of the School-Age Child Care programs responding reported owning and using at least one computer.

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 South Boston were: 90% for CHS; 100% for SACC; and 33% for FCC.

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

ⁱⁱ From *A United Way Neighborhood View.* United Way of Massachusetts Bay

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.