

# Boston EQUIP

## Boston Early Education Quality Improvement Project

### Committee Report: Access and Affordability (Community Profiles 2001 Data)

*Associated Early Care and Education, Inc. (formerly Associated Day Care Services) and a community-based advisory of early care and education providers, advocates, and policymakers established Boston EQUIP in 1995 in an effort to improve the quality of early care and education services in Boston. After completing its first survey of licensed center-based child care, family child care, public pre-school programs, and after-school programs, Boston EQUIP's advisory established a set of five benchmarks for quality improvement in the areas of accreditation, facilities, teacher education and training, teacher salaries, and parent engagement. Since that time, Boston EQUIP has surveyed Boston's licensed early care and education school-age child care programs three times – in 1997, 1999, and most recently in the winter of 2000-2001.*

**The following report summarizes the findings of the 2000-2001 survey related to access and affordability:**

#### Parent and Child Demographics

- ◆ Center-based programs responding to the Boston EQUIP survey served an average of 55 families per program, although some are much larger and some are much smaller.
- ◆ Programs reported that approximately 53% of the children they served were from single-parent families.
- ◆ Directors reported that almost a third (32%) of the children in their programs came from families where English is the second language. The languages spoken by staff very closely mirror those spoken by the children who attend their programs. While programs reported that 16% of their children spoke Spanish in their homes, 17% of teaching staff were fluent in Spanish. For all other languages reported (except Khmer) a higher percentage of teachers were fluent in the language than the percentage of children who spoke it in their homes.
- ◆ According to those responding to the survey, more than half (58%) of the families being served in center-based programs had incomes below \$20,000 per year. Another 25% had annual incomes of between \$20,001 and \$40,000.

## **Program Capacity and Enrollment**

- ◆ On average, center-based programs in Boston reported having licensed capacity for 58 children, with enrollment of 48 children full time and 29 children part-time. Programs were not asked to report vacancy rates.
- ◆ Of those programs responding, 29% had expanded services in the past year to serve additional children. Those program expansions were primarily funded through Community Partnership funds (37%) in addition to general operating funds (24%).
- ◆ Almost a third of programs responding (30%) said they could expand their programs if more subsidies were made available. Programs said they could expand to serve an average of 26 additional children per program.

## **Subsidy Utilization**

- ◆ Approximately 39% of programs responding said they accepted subsidies through basic or supportive contracts with the Office of Child Care Services. A much larger proportion – 74% – said they accepted voucher subsidies. Approximately 14% of the programs responding provided services to children enrolled in Head Start, and exactly half reported serving children subsidized through the Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) program.
- ◆ Programs reported approximately the same number of children on their waitlists for subsidies – an average of 45 children per program – than on their general waitlists for access to services, which averaged 44 children per program. Service waitlists were slightly higher for infants, while subsidy waitlists were higher for toddlers and pre-school aged children.
- ◆ The exception was services for kindergarten aged children (5 & 6 year olds), for which programs had an average of seven children per program awaiting services and 22 children per program in need of subsidies.
- ◆ Programs reported waitlists declining in relation to the age of children. Among the programs responding, 79% had a waitlist for infants, 70% for toddlers, and 56% for pre-school aged children.
- ◆ On average 41% of programs' income comes from parent fees, while 51% comes from government funding including vouchers, contracts, Head Start, and Community Partnerships for Children.

*For more information contact Associated Early Care and Education Boston EQUIP, 617-695-0700, x229, or go to [www.AssociatedEarlyCareAndEducation.org](http://www.AssociatedEarlyCareAndEducation.org).*