

Boston EQUIP

Boston Early Education Quality Improvement Project

Profile of Family Child Care Programs

(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 results of 2001 Boston EQUIP surveys from Family Child Care programs in Boston. A total of 75 providers responded to the survey.

Program Information

- ◆ Providers responding to the Boston EQUIP survey had been caring for children for anywhere between one and 30 years, with the average length of time being just over seven years as a provider.
- ◆ Most providers (72%) responding had a licensed capacity of six children, with 17% licensed for “6+2 children” and 8% licensed as large family child care (up to 10 children).
- ◆ While providers reported that they offered some special arrangements, some types of care are still in short supply. 64% of providers responding reported that they provided back-up care, and 47% provided emergency care. Only 15%, however, provided sick care, and 13% provided overnight care. 16% of those responding offered care on the weekends.
- ◆ Almost all providers responding (94%) served preschool aged children (ages 2.9 years to 4.11 years), and most also served toddlers (92%). A lower percentage provided services to infants (77%), and only 58% served Kindergarten children.
- ◆ Approximately 19% of providers reported that they had a paid assistant. On average, these assistants were paid \$7.19 per hour. Among those providers without

assistants, 60% said they didn't need one, 46% said they couldn't afford one, and 12% said they couldn't find a qualified assistant.

Education and Training

- ◆ One in five (20%) of the providers responding had a college degree (Associates degree or higher), while 80% did not. 40% of providers had some college or had completed a certificate program, but did not have a degree, and 11% had a Child Development Associated credential.
- ◆ Among those responding, five percent had their National Association of Family Child Care accreditation, and approximately a third (31%) were pursuing the NAFCC accreditation.
- ◆ 51% of the providers responding had received training for college credit within the previous twelve months.
- ◆ The most popular areas for additional training selected by providers were infant and toddler development (58%), computers (57%), and curriculum development for preschoolers (51%).
- ◆ The most prominent barrier to training identified by providers was that most opportunities are during the day, and it is difficult to take time off to attend (48%). Other barriers identified included not being able to leave one's family or program to take more training (28%) and the cost of training (25%).
- ◆ 72% of providers said they would be interested in receiving training through the internet.

Fees, Subsidies, and Income

- ◆ Providers charged an average of \$102.66 per week, but as much as \$240 per week, for an average week of 34.6 hours per child.
- ◆ Providers reported that approximately 53% of the children they served received subsidies to defray the costs of care. Approximately 13% of children received subsidies through basic and supportive contracts. 27% received basic or TANF related vouchers. Just over 6% received Community Partnerships for Children subsidies, and about 5% received some other kind of subsidy. 40% of providers responding said they used some type of local Community Partnership for Children resources.

- ◆ Based on reported fees and numbers of children, and taking into consideration the time spent in activities both directly and indirectly related to caregiving, family child care providers earned an average income of \$9.76 per hour.
- ◆ Among the providers responding, 15% had access to health care coverage through their own business or through a system, 48% did not have access to health care benefits at all.

Services

- ◆ Most providers offer nutritional support to the children they serve. Approximately 93% of providers in Boston are members of a child food program, compared to 84% statewide. On average, providers receive \$276 per month from the food programs. Of those not participating, half said it was because participation was too time consuming.
- ◆ Only 13% of providers responding offered some kind of transportation to families. This compares with 22% statewide.

Child and Family Demographics

- ◆ Providers responding to the survey reported that approximately 26% of the children they served were Hispanic compared to about 36% of the providers responding, and about 42% were black (non-Hispanic) compared to about 37% of providers. Approximately 18% of the children and 19% of the providers were Caucasian (non-Hispanic). About 4% of both the providers and the children represented in the data were Asian, and about 4% of each fell under the category “other.”
- ◆ Most children served by those responding to the survey spoke English while at the program (69%), but approximately one in five (22%) spoke Spanish in the program, slightly lower than the 30% of providers who reported that Spanish is the primary language spoken in their family child care home. 64% of providers reported that English was the primary language spoken in the program. Other languages spoken in family child care programs responding included Chinese (3%), Vietnamese (1%) and French (1%).
- ◆ Approximately one percent of the children served by responding providers spoke American Sign Language as their primary language.
- ◆ Providers reported that of those families whose incomes they were able to determine, 56% had family incomes of below \$20,000 per year. Most of the rest (27%) had incomes between \$20,000 and \$40,000.

- ◆ Providers reported that just over half (53%) of the families they served had a single parent.

Serving Children with Special Needs

- ◆ Providers reported that on average 27% of the preschool and school-age children they served received special education services through the public schools. This compares to 18% on average statewide.
- ◆ Among the infants and toddlers served, providers reported that on average 25% received services for special needs through an Early Intervention program.
- ◆ 68% said that they needed additional training to better serve children with disabilities or other special needs. 55% said they needed additional supplies and equipment, and 34% said it would be useful to have a toll-free phone number where they could get advice on working with children in their programs. 27% said they needed one on one consultation in their homes.

For more information contact Associated Early Care and Education Boston EQUIP, 617-695-0700, x229, or go to www.AssociatedEarlyCareAndEducation.org.