

# Boston EQUIP

## Boston Early Education Quality Improvement Project

### Committee Report: Program and Services

*(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 program and services:**

#### **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.

## Meeting Special Needs

- ◆ Programs are serving children with a variety of needs, but relatively small numbers had Individual Education Plans (IEPs) at the time of the survey (4% of children), and only slightly more were being served through Early Intervention (approximately 6%).
- ◆ Programs reported that approximately two thirds of the children they referred for special education or early intervention services in the previous year had received those services. Asked why the remaining third had not received services, programs said that in more than half the cases (56%) parents refused the service. In 31% of the cases, the child did not receive the service due to scheduling conflicts, and in 19% of cases transportation was a barrier to receiving services.
- ◆ Almost half the programs responding (46%) reported having served children in the previous year with disabilities or special needs that required program adaptations. The numbers being served averaged approximately seven children per program.
- ◆ Among the programs making adaptations for children with special needs, 77% reported making curriculum modifications, 75% said they changed their staff training, 39% said they made staff changes, and 15% said they made physical modifications to their programs.
- ◆ While almost a third of programs responding said there were no barriers to serving children with disabilities, approximately 40% cited staffing as a barrier, second only to training (41%). Space and facility limitations were a barrier for 27% of the programs responding.

## Program Services

- ◆ Center-based programs responding to the survey reported providing a number of services for children and families. Programs were most likely to provide parent education (79%), developmental assessments (68%), meals (67%), and family support (64%).
- ◆ Programs were least likely to provide dental screening (19%), hearing or vision screening (28%), and speech and language services (31%).

*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).*

