

Boston EQUIP

Boston Early Education Quality Improvement Project

Committee Report: Workforce

(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 in the area of early childhood staffing and workforce issues.

Training and Education

- ◆ Approximately 29% of teachers and lead teachers in center-based programs had a Bachelor's Degree or higher at the time of the survey – the same proportion as was reported in 1999 EQUIP data. In addition to those teachers holding a bachelor's degree, in 2000/2001 28% of teachers and lead teachers in Head Start programs held Associates degrees and 13% of other center-based teachers and lead teachers held Associates degrees.
- ◆ Significant numbers of teaching staff are receiving college-level training. 66% of directors, 45% of lead teachers, 48% of teachers, and 38% of assistant teachers reportedly received training for which they earned college credit in the 12 months preceding the survey.
- ◆ Directors and others responding to the survey identified key training needs for their teaching staff. Training topics that were of most interest include behavior and classroom management (80%), stress management (60%), building positive relationships with parents (59%), and special needs/disabilities (54%). 77% of those responding said their staff would be interested in receiving training through the internet.

Compensation

- ◆ Programs citywide reported paying the following salaries to full-time staff on average:

Position	Lowest Hourly Pay	Highest Hourly Pay	Average Hourly Pay
Directors	\$15.67	\$19.99	\$19.16
Lead Teachers	\$12.20	\$14.49	\$13.65
Teacher	\$10.09	\$12.11	\$11.22
Assistant Teacher	\$8.40	\$9.74	\$9.17

- ◆ Overall, center-based programs offer significant benefits to their full-time teaching staff. 93% offer paid vacation, 58% offer life insurance, 66% offer retirement, 73% offer tuition assistance, 85% offer health care, and 63% offer dental. The degree to which these benefits are paid for by the employer varies considerably.
- ◆ Pay was identified as a high priority by those responding to the survey. When asked how they would use \$10,000 per year of additional funds in their programs, the option most often selected was to increase salaries of existing staff.

Turnover

- ◆ When asked to identify the key barriers to achieving program accreditation, staff turnover was identified as the largest.
- ◆ Turnover for teaching staff in Boston early care and education programs was approximately 28% in the year preceding the survey. Full-time teachers experienced the highest turnover at 32%, with 27% of full-time lead teachers leaving their positions, and 27% of full-time assistant teachers.
- ◆ According to those who completed the survey, 38% of teaching staff who left their positions left for a position in another field, while 29% left to accept a position in a related field, and 28% left for reasons related to their salaries. About one-fifth (19%) of staff left for disciplinary reasons.
- ◆ On average it took programs 16 weeks to find a replacement when teaching positions were open. About one third (33%) reported being very satisfied with their replacements, while 2% were not satisfied. The reasons most often cited for dissatisfaction with new staff were lack of experience (72%), lack of education (64%), and lack of training (56%).

Diversity

- ◆ Boston's early care and education teachers are racially diverse. Among the programs responding, 37% of teaching staff were Caucasian (non-Hispanic), 22%

Hispanic/Latino, 30% Black (non-Hispanic), 5% Asian, and 5% “other.” In comparison, programs reported that the children they serve were approximately 27% Caucasian, 19% Hispanic, 37% Black, 7% Asian, and 4% “other.”

- ◆ The leadership of programs is somewhat less racially diverse, with 68% of directors Caucasian, 22% Black, 2% Hispanic, 3% Native American, and 6% “other.”
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Approximately 93% of staff in the programs responding were female.

Other Challenges

- ◆ Programs reported making some staffing changes to meet the needs of children with disabilities or other special needs. Of those that reported making adaptations (almost half the programs responding), more than one third (38.5%) reported making staffing changes, and three quarters of the programs reported undergoing additional training.

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