

“Where are the children?!”

Data and Results

April 2007

Funding provided by Boston Community Partnerships for Children

We began hearing from programs this fall that they were having an unusually hard time filling their programs with children. Here are some of the anecdotes we heard...

- 1 program sent more than 350 letters from September – December to fill 2 empty subsidized slots. They were finally filled in February.
- 1 program lost over \$125,000 in revenue in the months of Sept. and October due to empty slots
- Turnover which usually is contained to September stretched into October and even November this year

Programs are having a hard time
finding children to fill slots.

Why?

Everyone's got a hypothesis.

Boston EQUIP's task was to put data to these hypotheses and find out what was happening.

Two documents were created.

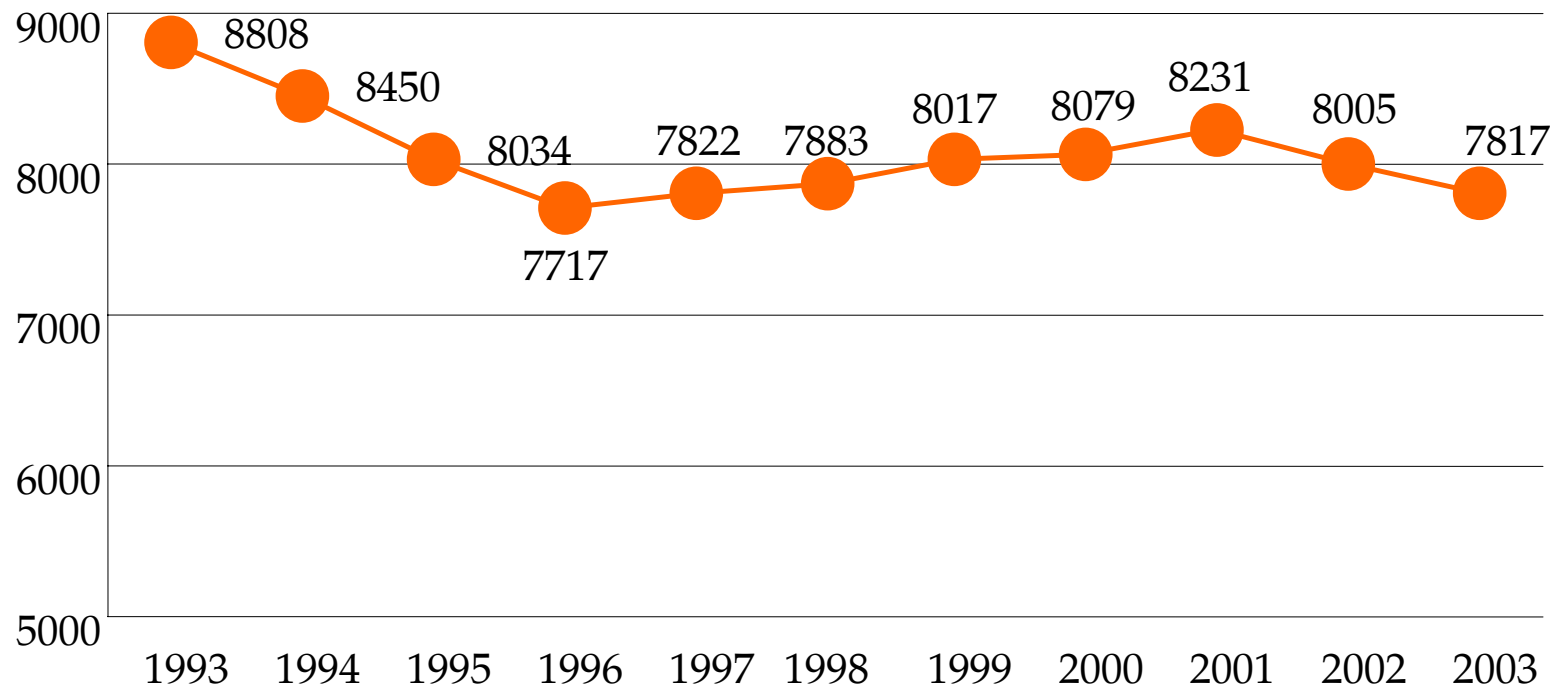
- 1) Executive Summary – “Where are the Children?!”
- 2) PowerPoint containing the data we looked at to test the hypotheses – “Where are the Children?! Data and Results”

Important to remember that we
are looking for change,
why are things different now?

Population Hypotheses

Hypothesis: Fewer children are being born each year in Boston.

Data: True. 1000 fewer children are born each year than ten years ago.

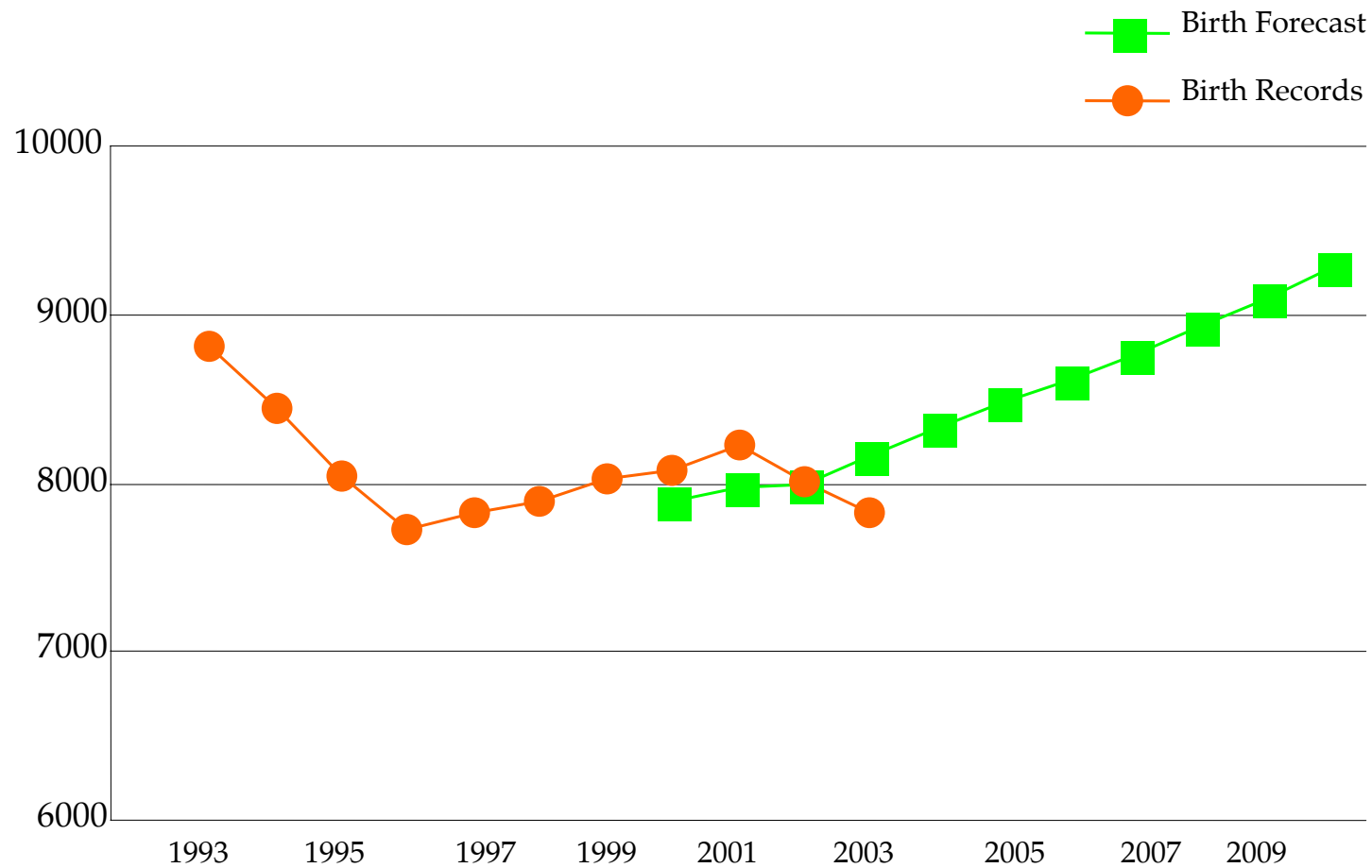


Boston Birth Records 1993-2003

Source: Boston Natality 2005. Boston Public Health Commission.

Hypothesis: Fewer children are being born each year in Boston.

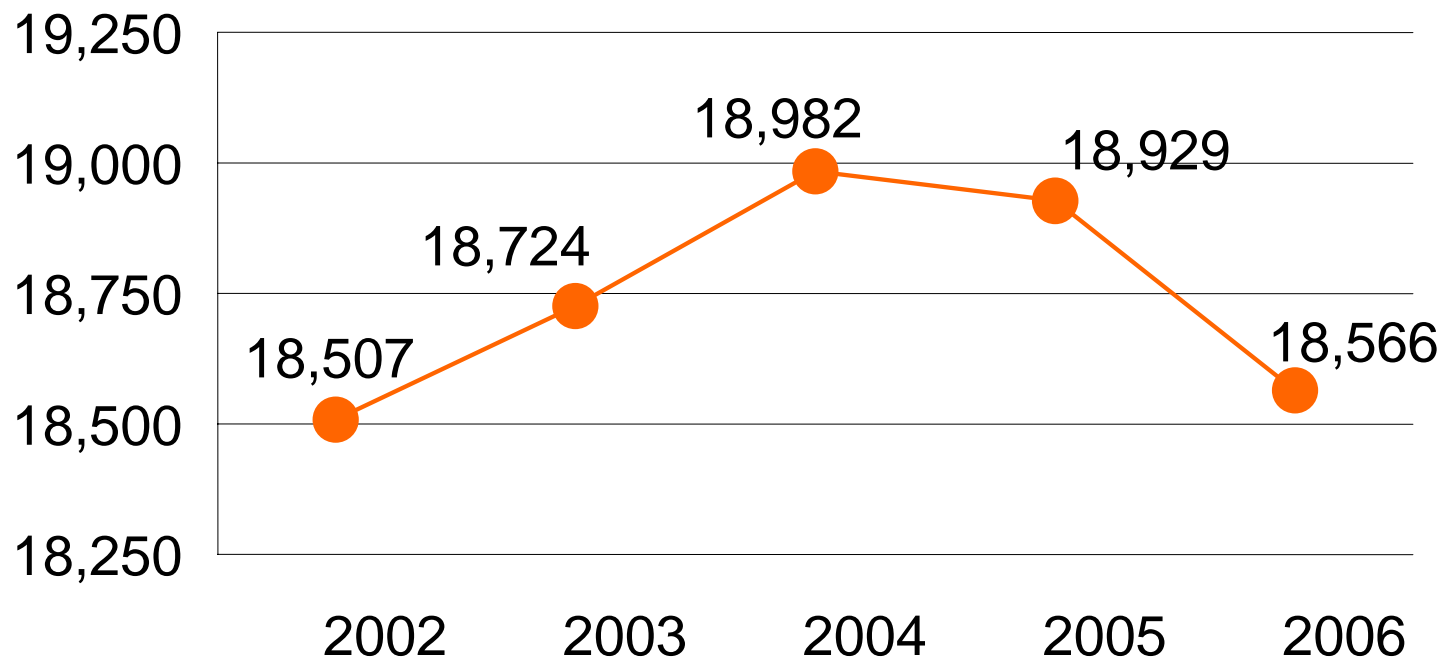
Data: True. However the birth forecast is for the birth rate to increase to 9277 children a year by 2010.



Birth Forecast Source: MISER

Birth Record Source: Boston Natality 2005. Boston Public Health Commission.

Hypothesis: There are fewer preschool-aged children in Boston.
Data: True. Over the last four years, the preschool cohort of Boston children has increased and decreased by about 400 children (using birth record data).



Source: Boston Natality 2005. Boston Public Health Commission.

Hypothesis: The demographics of the city are changing.

Data: True. The population in Boston is shrinking.

In Boston, between 2001-2004,

- Total population decreased by 2.9%.

However, the Mayor reported a census adjustment, indicating a slight increase in Boston population between 2000 and 2005 [1.3%]

- The number of households with one or more persons <18 years decreased by 13.6%

(Did you know? Only 25% of households in Boston have own/related children under age 18)

Hypothesis: The demographics of the city are changing.

Data: True. there has been a shift between married couple families with children and female-headed households with children.

By 2005, there were **2874 fewer** married couple families with own children <18 years since 2000. In 2000, they made up 52% of the households with children and in 2005 they made up 48%.

However, there was an **increase of 2,131** female-headed households (no husband present) with own children between 2000 and 2005. In 2000, they made up 38% of the households with children and in 2005 they made up 47%.

Hypothesis: The demographics of the city are changing.
Data: True. There has been an increase in the foreign born population relative to the rest of the population.

In Boston, between 2000-2005

The number of foreign born people decreased, but as the total population decreased, they became a larger percentage of the population.

(2000 Foreign born = 151,836 [25.8%])

(2005 Foreign born = 144,274 [27.7%])

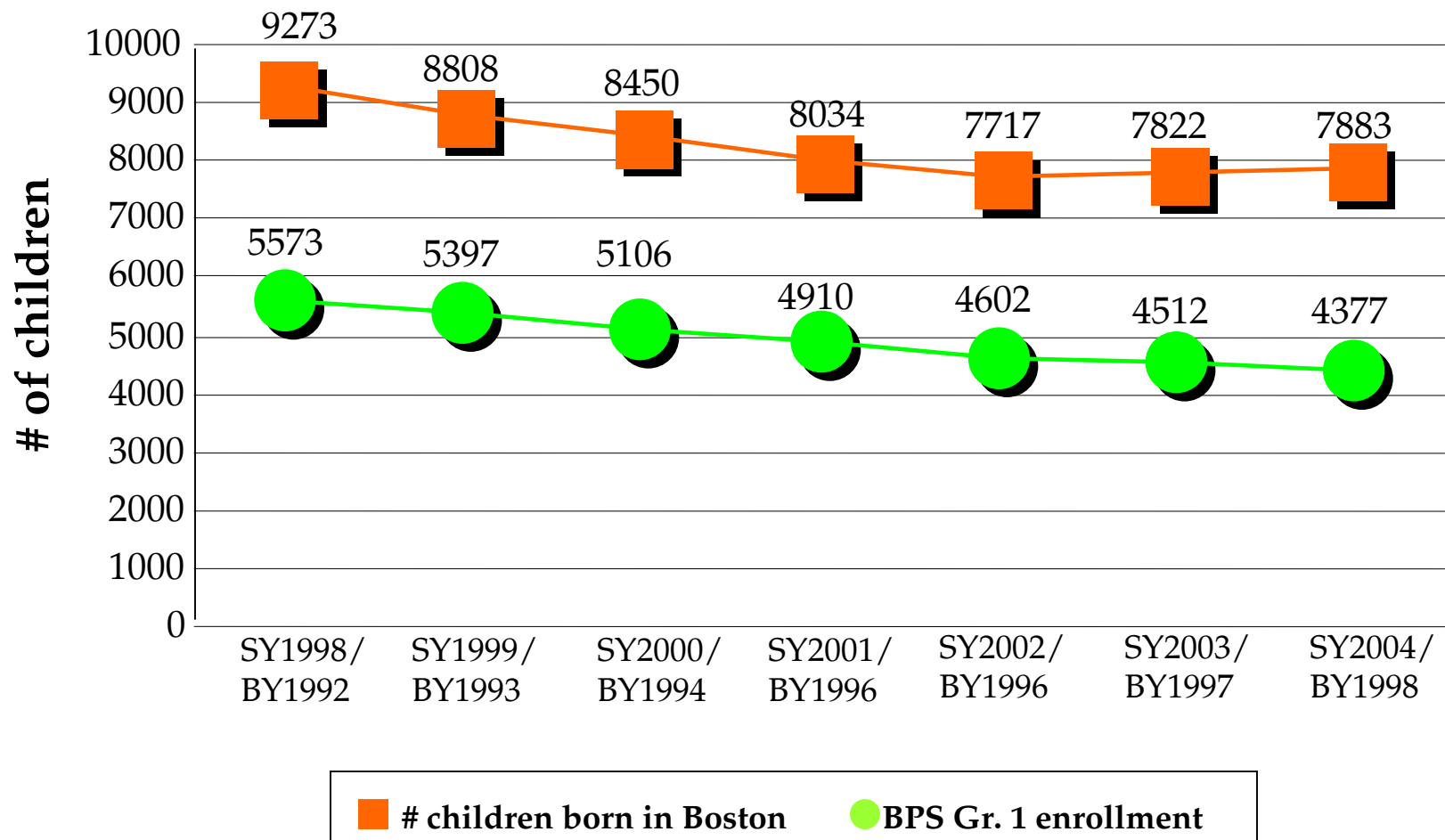
However, children of immigrants are less likely to use ECE.

- more likely to live in household with low maternal employment rates and in two-parent households
- *“Young children of immigrants are less likely to participate in every type of non-parental care arrangement than children of U.S.-born citizens and are more likely to be in the care of a parent”*

Hypothesis: More families with young children are moving out of Boston.

Data: Possibly. Just under half of each Boston birth cohort do not enroll in BPS Grade 1, and it appears that the rate is increasing.

However, there are also alternative explanations for the rate increasing which we did not explore in the time frame of this project.

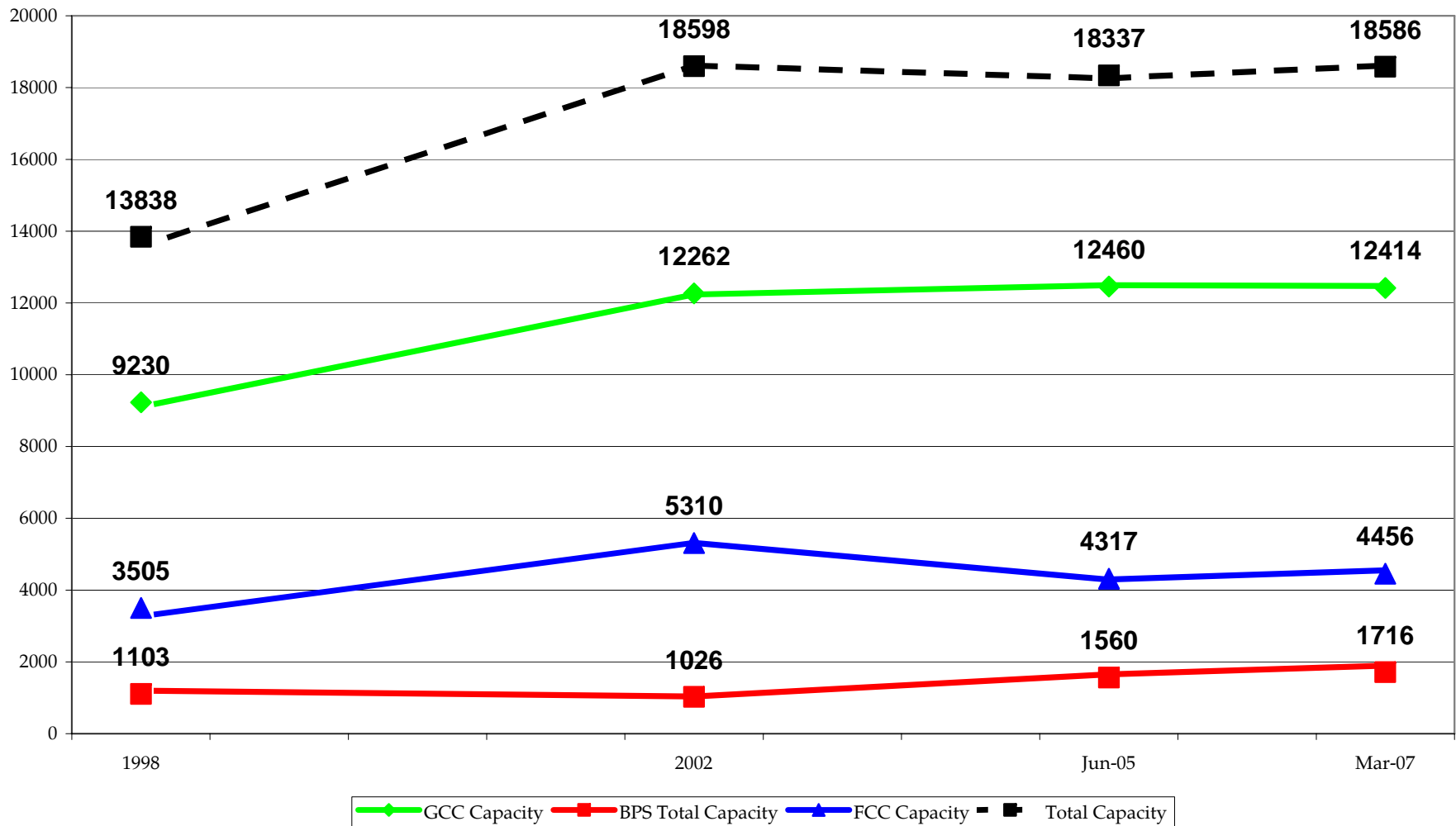


Source: Boston Natality 2005. Boston Public Health Commission, Boston Public Schools Enrollment Forecast (2004).

Capacity Hypotheses

Hypothesis: Capacity in Boston has increased, in particular because of the BPS K1 expansion.

Data: True. Although capacity has increased across all settings by at least 4,748 spaces in the last 9 years. Current ECE capacity (Center/Head Start, Family Child Care, Boston Public Schools, Catholic Schools) = 19,202 (Longitudinal graph below does not include Catholic Schools capacity)




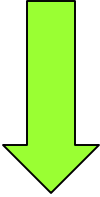
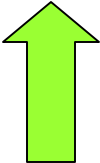
Hypothesis: Turnover in slots has increased.

Data: During the scope of this project we were unable to identify an easily accessible data source to test this hypothesis.

Affordability Hypotheses

Hypothesis: Families in Boston can't afford early care and education.

Data: Undecided. The median income has increased, but the number of single mothers living below the poverty line has increased.

2000		2005
\$39,629 = Median family income		\$49,320 = Median family income*
24.5% of families with children <5 live below the federal poverty line		20.9% of families with children <5 live below the federal poverty line
45.6% of single mothers with children <5 live below the federal poverty line		60.2% of single mothers with children <5 live below the federal poverty line

The 2005 SMI was \$78,312, compared to the MI in Boston of \$49,320.

Hypothesis: Families in Boston can't afford early care and education.
Data: Undecided. Yet looking at the cost of living would suggest most families' budgets are tight.

Boston Median Family Income = \$49,320

According to The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Massachusetts, families with these configurations need at least this much to be sufficient

	1 adult, 1 preschooler	2 adults, 1 preschooler, 1 school-age
1998	\$32,280	\$42,564
2003	\$44,046	\$54,612
CHANGE	36%	28%

The Greater Boston Housing Report Card (2005/2006) also stated that a “family of four required \$64,656 to make basic ends meet in Boston”

Hypothesis: Families in Boston can't afford early care and education.

Data: Undecided for Boston, but Massachusetts is one of the top 10 least affordable states for a 4-year old in child care. (The high cost may be due to our high staff child ratios.)

Ranking of Cost of Child Care for a 4-year-old (1 = Highest; 50 = Lowest)						
State	Average Annual Cost of Pre-School Care	Median Income for Single Parent Family with Children under 18	Percent of Median Single Parent Family Income Spent on Pre-School Care	Median Income for Two Parent Married Family with Children under 18	Percent of Median Two Parent Family Income Spent on Pre-School Care	Ranking of Pre-School Care as a Percent of Income
New York	\$8,530	\$21,128	40.4%	\$74,431	11.5%	1
Minnesota	\$8,832	\$28,425	31.1%	\$77,744	11.4%	2
California*	\$7,576	\$24,388	31.1%	\$69,513	10.9%	3
Massachusetts	\$9,628	\$23,673	40.7%	\$91,223	10.6%	4

Ranking of Cost of Child Care for an Infant (1 = Highest; 50 = Lowest)						
State	Average Annual Cost of Infant Care	Median Income for Single Parent Family with Children under 18	Percent of Median Single Parent Family Income Spent on Infant Care	Median Income for Two-Parent Married Family with Children under 18	Percent of Median Two-Parent Family Income Spent on Infant Care	Ranking of Infant Care as a Percent of Income
Minnesota	\$11,796	\$28,425	41.5%	\$77,744	15.2%	1
Massachusetts	\$13,480	\$23,673	56.9%	\$91,223	14.8%	2

Hypothesis: Families in Boston can't afford early care and education.

Data: Prices for center-based care increased more rapidly in other Regions over the last five years than they did in Region 6.

According to the 2006 Market Rate Survey:

“Median full-time prices for group center care increased least rapidly in Boston (Region 6). To be more specific, center prices for infant care in Boston increased by only 5%, center prices for toddler care by 9% and center prices for the care of preschoolers by only 4% between 2003 and 2006.”

Hypothesis: Families in Boston can't afford early care and education. Data: True. Budget experts recommend, child care costs should equal about 10% of the budget. The cost of child care in Boston ranges from 16% to 32% of families' incomes, for just 1 child's arrangements.

	Median Rate Region 6	Annualized	% of Boston Median Income
CB Infant	\$60	\$15,660	32%
CB Toddler	\$50.25	\$13,115	27%
CB Preschool	\$36	\$9,396	19%
Family Child Care	\$30	\$7,830	16%

Hypothesis: Many children in Boston qualify for subsidies, but they do not have access to them.

Data: Depends on the stringency of the subsidy requirement. Many children meet the income requirements, few children meet the income + full-time employed parent requirements.

	Less than 25% SMI	Less than 50% SMI	Less than 85% SMI
% of children	26%	48%	71%
# of children	11,122	20,533	30,372



Family income levels of Boston children (0 - 5.4 yrs)

Family income levels of Boston children (0-5.4 yrs) with all parents working full-time



	Less than 25% SMI	Less than 50% SMI	Less than 85% SMI
% of children	.75%	8%	17%
# of children	321	3,422	7272

Hypothesis: There are fewer subsidies available right now.

Data: Undecided. The number of vouchers is up slightly since the end of 2004.

Contract subsidies have remained constant for several years. We were unable to gather longitudinal data about CPC slots or philanthropic/private subsidies.

Hypothesis: There are fewer kids on the waitlist than in the past.

Data: False. There are more kids on the waitlist than 18 months ago. Although the waitlist is a snapshot in time, and there are still unresolved data entry and duplication questions about families on the waitlist. (Unresolved question if it's taking longer to fill slots, b/c of the waitlist.)

	# of kids on waitlist	
	June 2005	January 2007
Infants	479	636
Toddlers	770	801
Preschool	695	1071

Context of subsidies

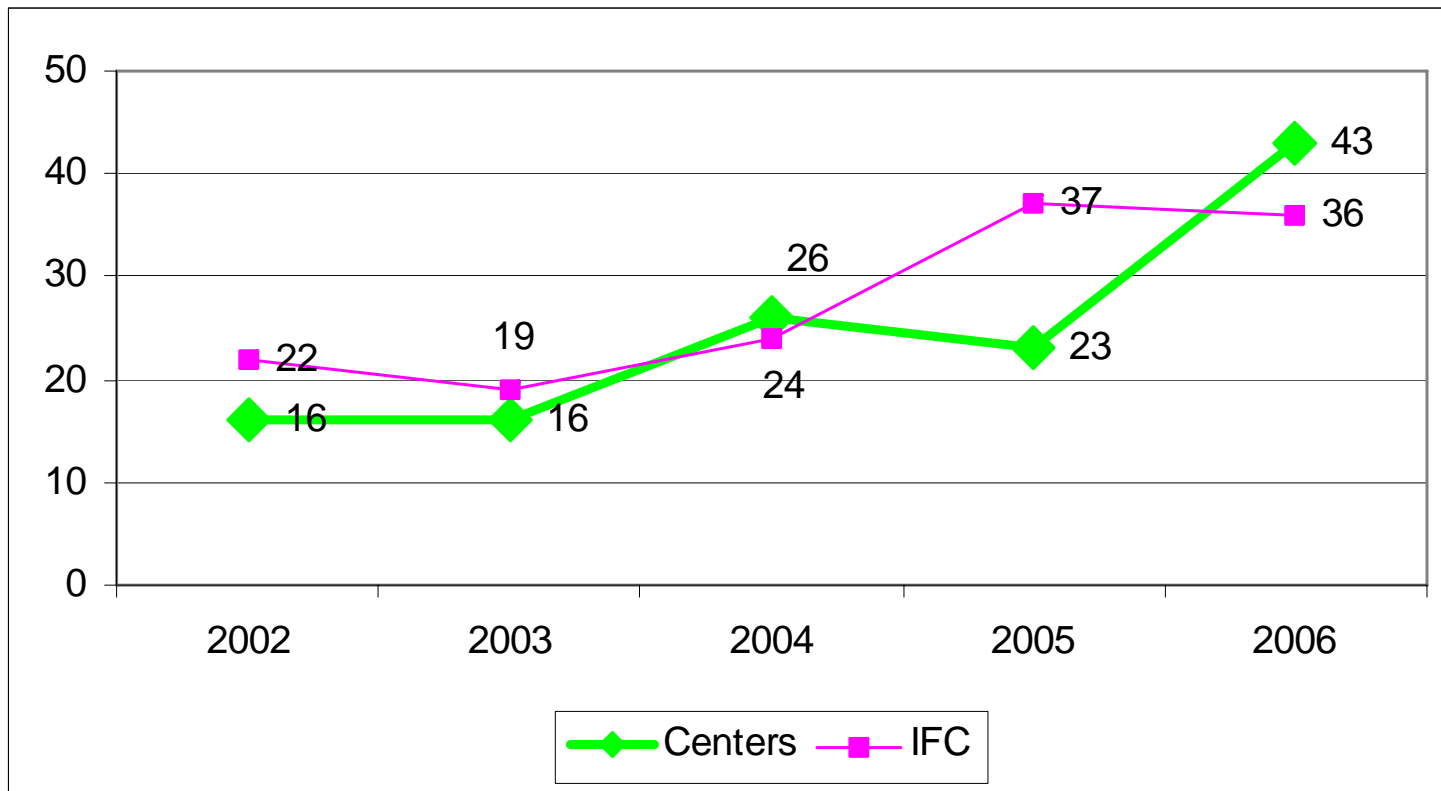
- Centralized waitlist – anecdotes of it taking longer to find families, increased paperwork to find families
- Priority categories
- Rigor of documentation – audits and enforcement have increased
- Qualifying median income for subsidies was recently updated to 2005 median income

Hypothesis: Something is amiss in the Supportive Child Care System, because programs have an abnormal amount of openings, and Boston has no children on the waitlist.

Data: During the scope of this project we were unable to identify an easily accessible data source to test this hypothesis.

Hypothesis: The number of programs accepting subsidies has increased, including the number of parochial schools accepting vouchers.

Data: True. Based on newly entered Voucher agreements with the CCR&R, there was a substantial increase in group-based providers accepting vouchers between 2003-2006. Also, there are currently about 11 parochial schools who accept vouchers, 7 started within the past year.



Source: Child Care Choices of Boston; Table shows the number of new providers with agreements, not the total number of programs w/ agreements. Data is for Region 6.

Summary

- Fewer kids are being born each year.
- Capacity has increased by 4,748 spaces over the last 9 yrs.
- Now have enough capacity for 81% of preschool population. Possibly at saturation point for ECE capacity.
- Because of high cost of living in Boston and cost of ECE, family budgets continue to be tight, making it hard to afford early care and education.
- There are more programs accepting subsidies, creating more options for families and more competition for programs.
- Anecdotally, the centralized waitlist is making it take longer to fill slots.
- The next question is does the current system/capacity meet the needs of families? What does this look like from the customer's perspective?

For more information:

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