

PIECE OF CAKE

Building a well-funded, streamlined child care system that works for providers, children, and families



Photo courtesy of East Boston Social Centers



Presented to the Boston Foundation Coffee and Conversation on Friday, June 3 at 9:30

About East Boston Social Centers



Mission: At **East Boston Social Centers**, we cultivate community, belonging, and joy for East Boston residents and our neighbors, through services to support children, families, and individuals of all ages.



Justin Pasquariello



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We are working with you toward a future . . .

. . . when we fully fund critical early education and care infrastructure—
and make the funding model a piece of cake for providers . . .



. . . so providers can give teachers
the equitable pay they deserve and
our children and families can have
the strong system they need.

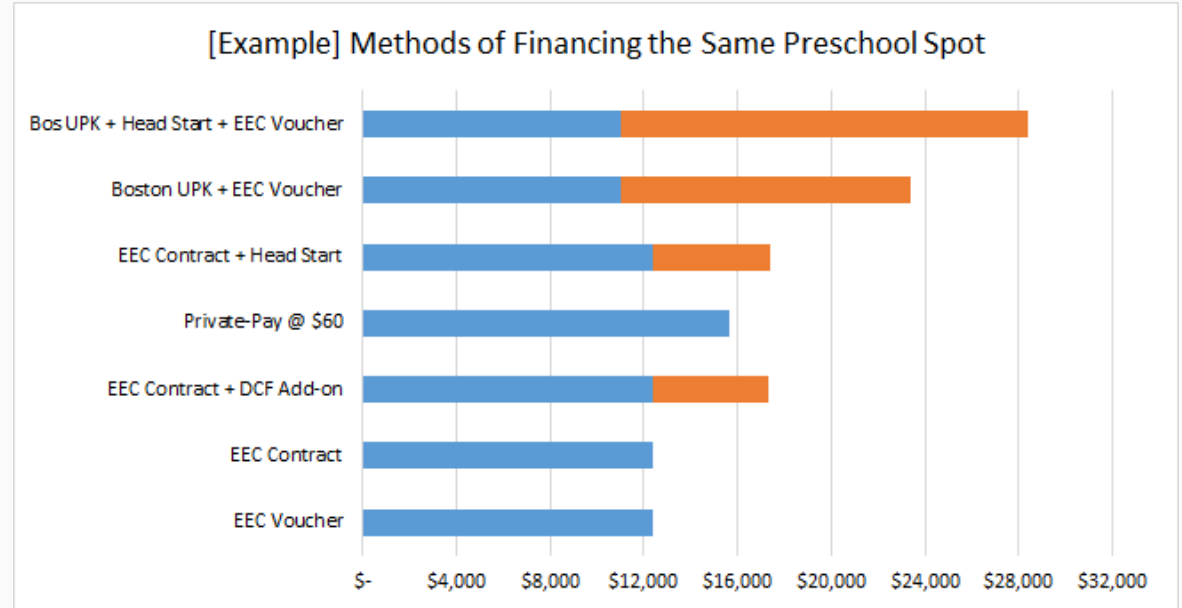


Photo from <https://baketotheroots.de/rainbow-layer-cake/>

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Potentially Many Methods of Funding Same Quality Spot

- Providers balance opportunities for new funding against increasing complexity of our chosen funding strategies
- Administrative costs, expenses for wraparound services, and the uncertainty of partnerships must be weighed carefully
- No evidence that economies of scale ensure sustainability



*Stylized example from Threading the Needle report: “Base revenue” is shown in **blue**, while add-on revenues are in **orange**.
Research conducted in 2021*

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We have found at best, funding and systems work like this . . .



Results

- Fewer children and families served
- Higher administrative costs
- Greater inequity
- Reduced pay for teachers
- Increased difficulty for directors, administrators in managing systems

*With a potential wave of retirements exacerbating the existing staffing crisis, we need better systems to recruit, retain, and support people at all levels in early education and care programs. **Thank you to policymakers, funders, and others for recognizing this and working to address it.***

Photo from cakecentral.com

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Administrative challenges take resources away from children, families, and teachers

Fixed costs, variable payment based on attendance

Countless public health authorities

Separate state and federal financial audits

Varied eligibility requirements by agency

Double certification for enrollment

Family recertification and audit processes

CRIS vs. NAEYC vs. other quality standards

Multiple separate agencies and audits for food

Family eligibility hoops & hurdles

Transportation audits and van replacements

What if funding and systems could work like this?*

Adjust for equity for children, families, & providers

Provide adequate base funding

Centralize, streamline, & simplify funding & admin.

Partner for provider success

Partner to design for child development & family need

Trust children, families, and providers



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Policy Recommendation: simplify eligibility, simplify layering, reduce admin

Simplify, streamline, and align eligibility requirements:

- Simplify (for both parents and providers) process of filling a classroom with children supported through multiple funds
- Reduce administrative costs through aligned reporting and increased trust—so more money goes to children and teachers

Harmonize attendance and assessment requirements:

- Thank you to legislature for work to make permanent payment based on enrollment, not attendance

This will require collaboration between EEC, Head Start grantees, and municipalities. It likely will require some federal waivers.



Source: Threading the Needle Brief

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What we're trying at East Boston Social Centers (together with partners)

Addressing compensation and family cost: seeking support to pilot

- Building out the model of high-quality, affordable early education and care with equitable wages for *all* teachers
- Conducting process and outcome evaluation to help understand how to roll this out more broadly – and to demonstrate multiple levels of impact

Addressing workforce recruitment and retention: other support for staff

- Focusing on professional development and opportunities for growth
- Partnering with Neighborhood Villages for coaching and other supports
- Director of Community Joy joined our team to support staff, family and community wellbeing

Thank you

Brendan Fogarty compiled findings in the *Threading the Needle* report (<https://www.ebsocialcenters.org/reports>). **Caroline Beecher** developed policy recommendations and a brief based on findings.

Special thanks to the more than 30 people from multiple agencies, funders, networks, academic centers and more who participated in interviews for this report and policy brief . . .



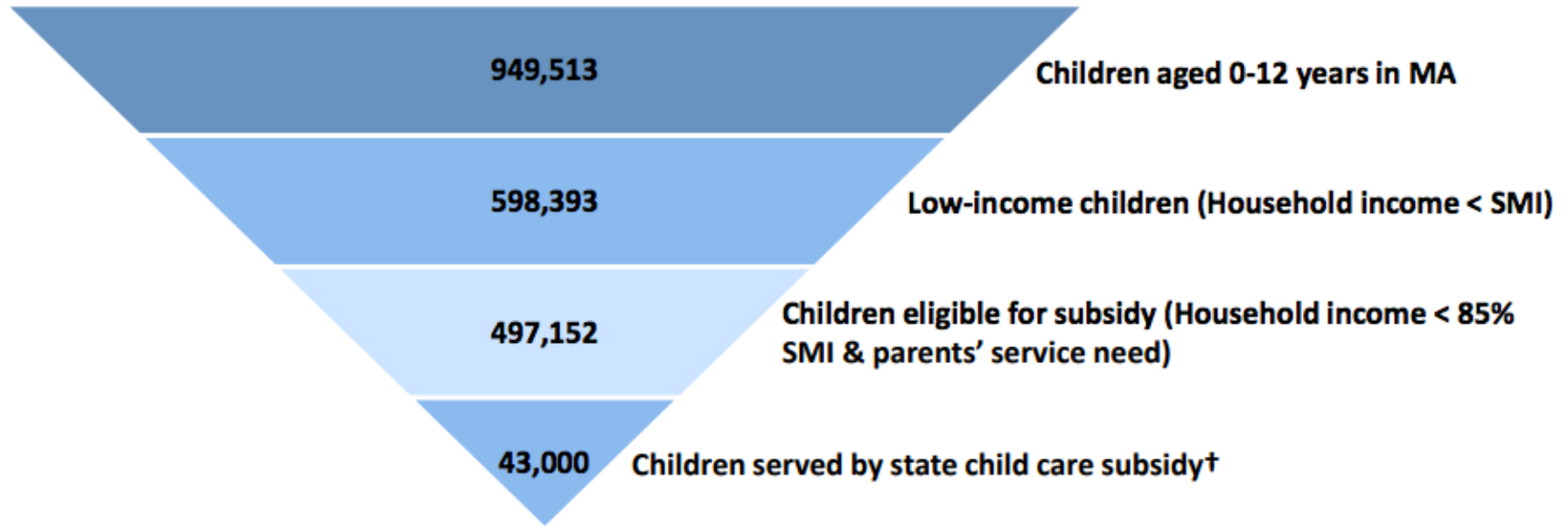
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To EEC, city of Boston, and elected leaders for support for our field. . . and to the teachers and staff who educate and care for our children every day.

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With the current model, many children are not being reached

FEBRUARY 2021



“In February 2021, MA state childcare subsidies served only 9% of eligible children. At its peak in June 2019, subsidies served 12% of eligible children.” Graphic from MA EEC Board Slides 5/11/2021.

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