Childcare during the pandemic and its implications for the future

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Virtual Early Childhood Coffee & Conversation Series
When the Bough Breaks: Part Four
March 4th, 2022
The Boston Opportunity Agenda is dedicated to ensuring that all of Boston’s residents have the opportunity to acquire the education they need to find work in the region’s knowledge economy and to help them lead secure, fulfilling lives.

While Boston has many exciting programs and organizations that focus on providing opportunities for individuals, the Boston Opportunity Agenda is a long-term partnership focused on achieving systemic change that will ultimately affect all Boston residents. We fervently believe that by combining our resources, expertise and influence around a single agenda, we will have a greater impact on Boston’s cradle-to-career educational pipeline.
Data & Public Accountability

- Regular reporting progress on key metrics
- Use of common definitions, metrics and benchmarks to track Boston’s progress toward achieving its education goals

Collective Action

- Convene diverse, cross-sector stakeholders
- Form networks that share data and best practices

Increase Investment

- Aligning efforts to ensure efficient, effective, equitable investment of resources across Boston’s Education system
Birth to Eight Data Committee

- City of Boston (Mayor’s Office of Women’s Advancement & Office Economic Mobility Lab)
- United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley
- Strategies for Children
- Northeastern University
- Boston Public Schools
- Eastern Bank
- Wellesley Centers for Women
- Vital Villages
- Boston Children’s Hospital
- Boston Public Health Commission
- Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
- Boston Indicators
- Boston Planning and Development Agency
- The Boston Foundation
- Care Institute
- Education Development Center
- Boston Indicators
Data Committee
Developed 61 Questions

2017

2018

Mapped the availability and quality of existing data

2019

State of EEC Report

2020

State of EEC Brief (Pandemic I)

2021

State of EEC Brief (Pandemic II)
As of March 2021, Boston lost 21% of its programs between December 2017-March 2021.

Loss by Program type
FCC: 24%
Center-based: 10%
Supported City and State partners to create policies and advocate for funding and resources

Informed Boston Resiliency Fund allocation of over $500,000 to emergency early educators
Estimated total loss of programs (2017 –2022): approx. **16%**

Estimates do **NOT** take into account individual closed classrooms


*Thank you, Paula Gaviria Vilarreal!*
A key driver of the current childcare crisis is the limited early care workforce &

A robust early educator workforce is a key driver for an accessible, high quality childcare ecosystem
Past BOA Reports and Briefs have clearly defined the problem of access, affordability, and quality across Boston’s neighborhoods, particularly for infants and toddlers.

Current Survey
What data is needed to address the main workforce crisis through policy, practice, and funding?

Which data can help early educators in advocacy, professional development, and business decisions?
What do we know?

Representative sample across MA
• Conducted pre-pandemic

Variability among early educators
• Sociodemographics (race, ethnicity, language, age, gender identity)
• Education attainment and PD

Common across early educators
• Economic concerns (not able to pay bills, not having enough food, reliance on government assistance, little to no benefits)

What do we still need to know?

Region-specific data
Boston: Neighborhood-specific data
Disaggregation of data to surface specific inequities
What data is needed to address the early educator workforce crisis through state and local policy, practice, and funding?

- **System Indicators**

Which data can help early educators in advocacy, professional development, and business decisions?

- **Spoke with stakeholders across sectors: providers, system leaders, directors, professional organizations, researchers, funders, policymakers**

**Knowledge Translation/Participatory Research**

- Instead of translating findings later, begin with the questions the field needs answered
• Current pay and benefits
• Preferred pay and benefits
• Years of Experience
• Higher ed institutions attended
• Higher ed institutions and training preferred

• Career pathways to date
• Future career aspirations
• Which sectors of the economy are supported by providers
• Staffing shortages/ Closed classrooms
• Professional Supports, Program and Business Supports
Professionally Translated into 7 Languages

- Spanish
- Portuguese
- Chinese
- Haitian Creole
- Cape Verdean
- Arabic
- Vietnamese

Thank you, Diana Tran!
Who should take this survey?

- Any early educator, assistant or administrator who has worked or is working in a center or family childcare

- **SURVEY RAFFLE**: All participants will be entered into a raffle to win one of five VISA gift cards worth $150 EACH
Democratize Data

- As investments in data infrastructure increase at local and state levels, increased capacity to collect, understand, and use data at all levels will be more important.

- Share data reports with stakeholders, including FCC and Center-based educators.

- Collect more questions from the field. Create a network of early educator professionals who use data for reporting AND continuous improvement.

- “…Centrality of early educators and childcare in our civic infrastructure…”

  (Making Childcare Work, 2022: Mayor’s Office of Women’s Advancement and Economic Mobility Lab)
Take part in our early education research!

The Boston Opportunity Agenda seeks members of the early education workforce to take the Massachusetts Early Educator Survey and share it with their networks of early education and care administrators, educators, and assistants in your center or family childcare. Your responses will improve our understanding of the field and inform critical decisions about early education and care practice, policy, and funding.

The survey takes about 20 minutes and every participant will be entered into a lottery to win one of five $150 Visa Gift cards.

The results will be shared publicly in a future report.

CLICK HERE TO TAKE THE SURVEY

• Link: https://www.bostonopportunityagenda.org/research
Thank You!