



BUILDING STRONGER CENTERS

1997-2003

*A Retrospective of an Early Care and Education
Technical Assistance and Training Initiative*

NEW JERSEY COMMUNITY CAPITAL

May 2005

Table of Contents

Special Thanks	1
Acknowledgments	1
Section 1 Introduction	2
Section 2 Creation of Building Stronger Centers	3
Section 3 Program Description	4
Section 4 Recognition of Building Stronger Centers	6
Section 5 Demographic Information of Participating Centers	7
Section 6 Outcomes and Impact Conclusions	8
Section 7 Indicators	11
Section 8 Challenges Faced by the Centers.....	12
Section 9 Challenges for the Project	14
Section 10 Conclusion	15
Appendices	
A. Child Care Collaboration Partners	16
B. BSC Advisory Board Members	17
C. BSC Participants.....	17
Credits	20

New Jersey Community Capital is the trade name used by the Community Loan Fund of New Jersey, Inc. and its affiliated entities for its financial and consulting products and services. The organization facilitates the flow of money and knowledge in order to create wealth and well-being in communities. It finances the creation and preservation of housing, particularly affordable housing, and commercial real estate and provides capital for the development and operations of early care and education centers, schools, health clinics, human and social service programs, cultural and arts institutions, and other community services. New Jersey Community Capital provides loans and investments to businesses that create financial returns for their owners and social returns for their workforce, the communities in which they operate, and the environment.

Capital alone will not solve the needs of many organizations doing work in the communities targeted by New Jersey Community Capital and its investors. New Jersey Community Capital, its advisors and its partners also provide critical technical assistance and consulting services in the areas of finance, marketing, operations, real estate, strategic partnering and negotiations.

Special Thanks

The state-wide Building Stronger Centers initiative—along with its affiliated program, the Urban Child Care Initiative—consisted of a series of training and technical assistance programs encompassing a wide range of business, financial, administrative and programmatic areas. To ensure the most comprehensive and informative content, the Child Care Collaboration partnered with a number of knowledgeable professionals to plan and provide relevant, expert input into each week of training workshops and the subsequent technical assistance activities as well as the policy reports that were issued at the conclusion of some of the cohorts. To all those who participated in making Building Stronger Centers so successful, a very special thank you.

Particular appreciation is given to the staffs of Child Care Connection and New Jersey Community Capital who gave so generously of their time and expertise in conceiving, designing and implementing the initiative. We are especially grateful for their teamwork and camaraderie.

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Adjunct partner organizations included: Association for Children of New Jersey; the Camden County Division for Children; The Center for Non-Profits; National Executive Service Corps; Programs for Parents.

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Introduction

Over the last decade, recognition of the need for high-quality child-care has grown exponentially for all pre-school children, but particularly for those of low- and moderate-income. The increase in the number of working parents and the move in welfare programs from purely supportive to welfare-to-work, as well as new federal and state education requirements for students of all ages, have underscored the importance of safe, caring, affordable environments in which young children can receive quality care and preparation to begin school ready to learn.

New Jersey Community Capital experienced the demand for increased access to quality child care over this same time period through a rising number of financing and information requests. The organization, which has been committed to creating wealth and well-being in low- and moderate-income communities since its inception in 1987, recognized the importance of providing assistance and services to child care providers in New Jersey. This acknowledged need led New Jersey Community Capital to partner with Child Care Connection, the early care and education resource and referral agency for Mercer County, to create the Child Care Collaboration. The Collaboration developed Building Stronger Centers (BSC), a project that addresses both needed programmatic quality improvements and serious gaps in the business performance of many child care centers. New Jersey Community Capital and Child Care Connection developed three overarching goals for Building Stronger Centers to achieve: increase the availability of high-quality child care for low-income children, develop centers' abilities to achieve accreditation from a nationally recognized organization and strengthen the ability of providers to complete their expansion and development plans.

Historically, New Jersey Community Capital concentrated its efforts primarily on financing in the affordable housing sector. However, a comprehensive analysis of redevelopment needs, as well as recognition of societal changes and demands, led to the realization that the organization's efforts in revitalizing communities necessitated a broader approach encompassing areas beyond housing, including available, affordable, high-quality child care. In general, investing in child care in low-income neighborhoods brings numerous returns. The development and expansion of high-quality early care and education services, particularly in disinvested communities, offers a range of economic development possibilities in addition to benefiting young children directly. Perhaps the most important of these are job creation and neighborhood stabilization, which are vital components in community redevelopment efforts. Reliable and sound early care services allow family members to train for and/or return to work with the assurance that their children are well cared for physically, emotionally and educationally. Child care services are an important anchor in solidifying the economic stability of families, as well as the development and growth of communities throughout the state.



In the mid-1990s, federal welfare reform placed increased attention on job placement and employment for low-income parents. Previously, New Jersey's lowest income children had been offered slots in select child care programs funded by state grants; however, the welfare reform mandates broadened the pool of potential participants and gave parents the opportunity to use portable child care vouchers to pay for services from the child care providers that most appropriately met family needs. In addition, the New Jersey Supreme Court's *Abbott v. Burke V* decision (1998) mandated the availability of pre-kindergarten services to three and four year olds in the state's most disadvantaged school districts and required that early care and education providers subcontracting with school districts meet the standards established by the New Jersey Department of Education in order to assure the quality of their programs. As increasing numbers of early care and education providers requested information and financing assistance to be able to participate in these expansion opportunities, it became obvious to New Jersey Community Capital that, along with financing, the provision of technical assistance was necessary. As the organization worked with the child care providers requesting assistance, the staff realized that, along with the expansion of child care spaces, a structured, comprehensive approach was needed. This included learning and applying sound organizational business planning, high-quality programming and sustainable business operations that were essential in order to successfully attract necessary financing. Based on these findings, New Jersey Community Capital partnered with Child Care Connection to develop its Child Care Initiative.

Creation of Building Stronger Centers

The Child Care Collaboration developed the Building Stronger Centers (BSC) initiative in order to fill the recognized need for training and technical assistance described in the previous section. It established the following goals for the child care centers involved in Building Stronger Centers:

- Facilitate the provision of additional child care spaces for low-income children.
- Increase the centers' ability to reach their licensed capacities as set by the Division of Youth & Family Services (DYFS).¹
- Encourage the development and use of sound business planning and management practices.
- Ensure the use of developmentally appropriate curricula and activities.
- Move the centers toward achievement of center accreditation, a measure of quality as determined by a nationally recognized entity.

The Child Care Collaboration created the project's training agenda to provide center directors with the opportunity to formulate specific action plans to address areas of identified needs and develop the skills to implement them. New Jersey Community Capital facilitated the business planning and organizational development components of the training and served as the lead agency in fund development and management for the project. Child Care Connection facilitated programmatic and staff development as well as classroom improvements for the centers participating in the initiative.

Subsequently, The Center for Non-Profits and the Association for Children of New Jersey, two public policy and advocacy organizations, became affiliated with the Collaboration. During their participation, these organizations used "lessons learned" to promote policy changes in the areas of management and sustainability of child care providers. Reflecting the requirements of specific funders to include centers located in particular areas, additional collaborators joined the initiative to provide training and technical assistance services to participating centers in certain geographic sectors. Those organizations included two additional child care resource and referral agencies, the Camden County Division for Children and Programs for Parents in Essex County, and the National Executive Service Corps. (For a description of Collaboration partners, see Appendix A.) The contributions of these partners expanded both the depth of the Collaboration's efforts and the scope of the initiative's impact on communities across the state.

Based on the results of the initial class offering and the commitment of the Child Care Collaboration to continuously improve the initiative both internally and through suggestions by center participants, the project was able to leverage funding for the six subsequent trainings to meet the significant and identified unmet needs of the state's child care sector. Support for the seven classes was provided by a diverse group of funders. (For a list of funders, see Acknowledgments.)

For each of the seven trainings, an advisory board provided guidance on the design, implementation and evaluation of the program; contributed individual expertise; and assisted the Collaboration in selecting the participating centers from among the applications received. Advisory board members included early care and education professionals, representatives of higher education and relevant state government agencies and funders. (For a list of advisory board members, see Appendix B.)



Six of the seven total class offerings were statewide BSC classes conducted between 1997 and 2003. The Collaboration received funding to offer a seventh class, the Urban Child Care Initiative, a similar training and technical assistance program specific to the Essex County cities of Newark, Irvington and East Orange. (For a list of all participants, see Appendix C.)

¹ The New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) is responsible for licensing and monitoring child care providers throughout the state.

Program Description

Building Stronger Centers was created as a 12-month, multi-disciplinary, collaborative initiative combining a weeklong residential training program with several months of hands-on technical assistance. The only cost to the participating centers was a registration fee. In order to reach the broadest audience, program announcements and applications were sent to all licensed child care centers in the state. In addition, the Collaboration scheduled regional information sessions to further inform prospective applicants for each class and to answer questions.

Participants were selected through a competitive application and review process, with approximately 15 center directors/supervisors in each class. The Collaboration established specific criteria for center selection:

THRESHOLD CRITERIA

- Serve at least 25 percent of low-income children.
- Demonstrate need or demand for services to low-income children.
- Demonstrate commitment of management and board to participate in program.
- Meet any specific criteria identified by the funding agency (generally, representation from a specific geography).

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

- Financial condition
- Program philosophy
- Director's qualifications
- Marketing strategy
- Track record
- Future operating strategy
- Parental involvement

After all applications were reviewed and final selections of participants were made, the Collaboration held orientation sessions for each class. These sessions allowed the selected participants to become fully acquainted with the expectations of the initiative and be introduced to Child Care Collaboration staff and each other prior to the training.

The weeklong residential training program included the presentation of hands-on, interactive workshops in which Collaboration staff and independent experts in the business, financial, marketing, legal and programmatic fields presented a carefully conceived curriculum. Topics included strategic planning, writing a business plan, basic budgeting procedures, debt management, marketing, working with an architect, employment law, legal maintenance of child care centers, program philosophy, quality in

child care, grant writing, use of administrative software and advocacy. By the end of the training, each participant had completed an action plan that described expansion and/or improvement goals and the steps needed to achieve those goals.

In addition to benefiting from the workshops, participants had the chance to share information, concerns and advice with each other over the course of the training. Many directors who had described a sense of isolation and not feeling part of a child care universe expressed particular appreciation for this opportunity. A number of directors formed networks and continued to communicate with each other beyond their BSC involvement.

After the classroom training, participants received several months of hands-on technical assistance from Child Care Collaboration staff to help them prioritize and implement their action plans. The assistance provided by New Jersey Community Capital concentrated on business, finance, marketing and administration/management, and was offered in conjunction with the broad-based programmatic assistance provided by Child Care Connection and other partners in the program. The scope of technical assistance provided was comprehensive and wide-ranging, and included:

- Working with directors and staff members during on-site center visits
- Sharing articles, studies and research reports
- Offering workshops for center staff on topics of identified concern
- Providing telephone and on-line consultation

To strengthen the programs and enhance professional skills, staff members of the centers were invited to attend weeklong staff training institutes conducted by Child Care Connection, with a goal of promoting high-quality services. The trainings covered basic child care, advanced child care and infant-toddler care. Members of the non-profit centers' board of directors also received training in board involvement and responsibility.

After each training week, participants were asked to evaluate the offering and provide suggestions for how the program could be improved. The responses were almost universally positive and the suggestions were considered for future trainings.

In order to determine the change effect of the initiative, the Collaboration contracted for the administration of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)² at each of the 45 centers comprising the 2000-2001 and 2002-2003 classes. This evaluation tool, which provides an overall rating of classroom quality, was administered prior to the start of the directors' training

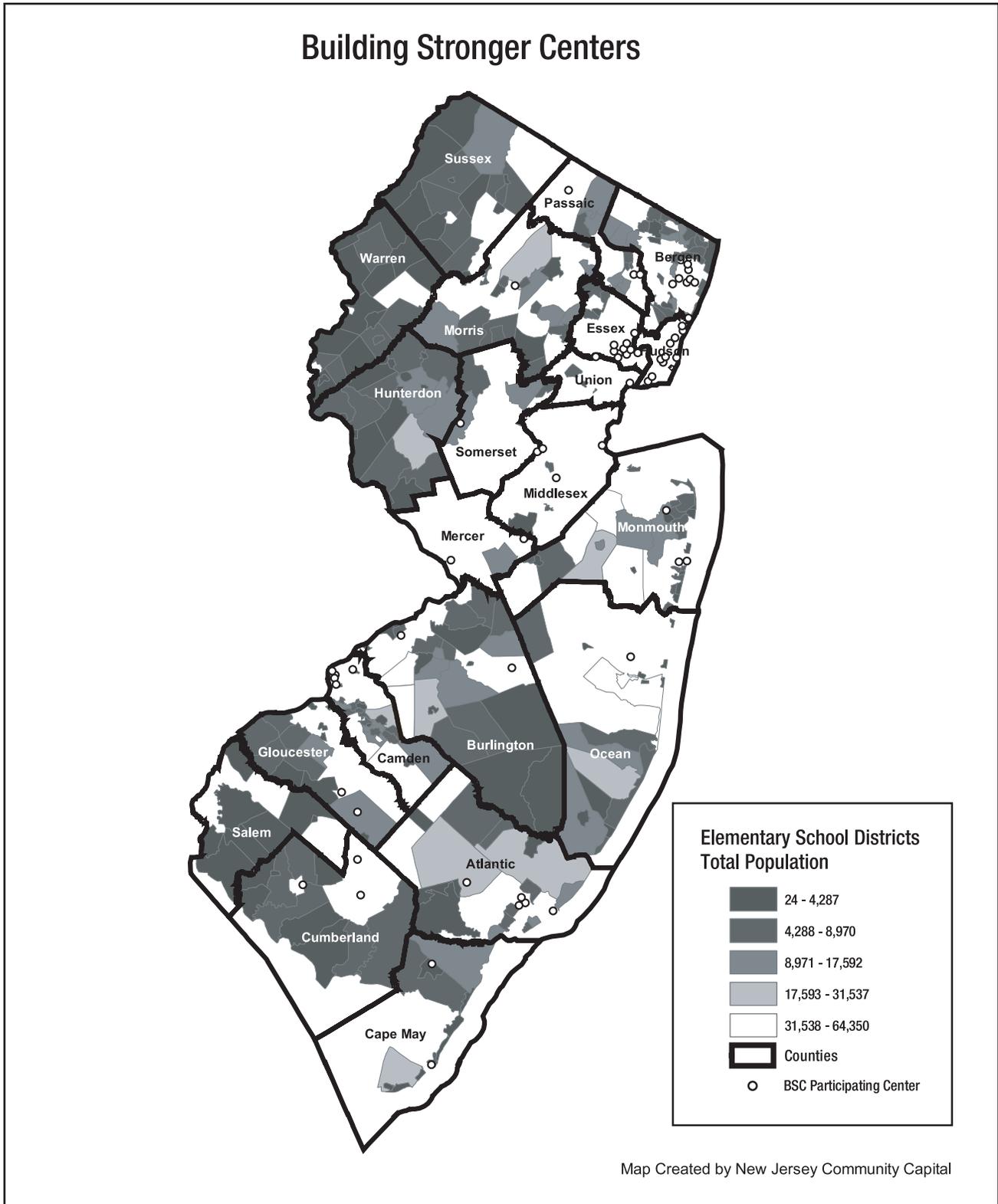
² The ECERS is a nationally recognized assessment tool used to measure the quality of early-care programs for children aged 2 1/2 to 5 years. A more detailed description is incorporated into a later section of the report.

week and re-administered after a significant period of program participation. Evaluation outcomes are discussed in Section 7.

POLICY INVOLVEMENT

Policy reports generated by The Center for Non-Profits and the Association for Children of New Jersey were included in the 1998 and 1999 trainings, respectively. These policy reports described current and urgent areas of needed change. They reflected con-

cerns that had arisen through interactions with the centers and their staffs during training and considered the impacts of current public policies on the provision of quality child care. While production of policy reports was not included in funding for subsequent cohorts, information related to specific issues and their implications were shared in reports to funders, as well as at meetings with child care-focused groups, including the New Jersey Child Care Advisory Council and the Early Care and Education Coalition.



Recognition of Building Stronger Centers

In 2001, Building Stronger Centers was selected as one of only 10 recipients nationwide to receive a training and technical assistance grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration of Children, Youth and Families (ACYF). This grant was the primary support for the two classes offered in 2002-2003.

Each new offering of the program has added to New Jersey Community Capital's reputation in training and technical assistance expertise for child care providers and as a leader in the early care and education facilities development field. Staff members have conducted presentations at conferences and trainings, including those hosted by National Community Capital Association and the Office of Regional Community Affairs of the Federal Reserve Banks of New York and Philadelphia. Recognition of the organization's work is further demonstrated through its membership in the National Children's Facilities Network, a coalition of 27 nonprofit organizations involved in planning, developing and financing early care and education facilities for low-income children. In addition, Building Stronger Centers was designated as an approved alternative to the New Jersey state-mandated Directors' Academy training for all child care centers in the *Abbott* school districts.



WACHOVIA EXCELLENCE AWARD

Reflecting its contributions to community economic development, New Jersey Community Capital received the 2003 Wachovia Community Development Financial Institution Excellence Award for Community Impact for its services to all of the sectors and areas it serves, with particular attention given to its activities in the early care and education sector. This honor was presented at National Community Capital Association's annual conference in November 2003.

BSC REUNION

In March 2003, a reunion was held for all project participants in the seven classes spanning the years 1997-2003. Along with the center directors, Child Care Collaboration partners and funders joined the BSC class members to reminisce, network and celebrate their own successes and those of their colleagues. The enthusiasm and camaraderie exhibited among all the participants who attended reinforced the value of this type of training initiative and the networking opportunities it provides.

“I knew the center program could be improved if staff had more information and training on developmentally appropriate practices and how to plan classroom activities. The training and direction provided to center staff made a huge difference in the quality of our services as reflected in our improved ECERS scores.”

–BSC Training Participant

Demographic Information of Participating Centers

The information reflecting the demographics of the participating centers indicates the scope, both by geography and by size, of the child care programs involved in the project. Analysis of the data will provide insight into the outreach process and may influence the course of action for future efforts.

Point of Information: Nine of the 108 BSC participants were replacement directors of centers that had taken part in previous cohorts. Therefore, for the purpose of discussion, the aggregate data of center participants (i.e., demographic information, accreditation or expansion plans), from the 99 non-duplicative centers has been used. For the purpose of discussing individual achievements (i.e., increases in individual center enrollment or technical assistance requested) data was used from the 108 individual participants.

CENTER LOCATION IN URBAN OR RURAL SETTINGS

- Of the 99 centers, 92, or 93 percent, represented centers in urban settings.
- The remaining 7 centers, or 7 percent, represented centers in rural settings.
- Three classes consisted entirely of urban child care centers. It should be noted that one class, the Urban Child Care Initiative, was funded to provide training and technical assistance only to centers located in the urban cities of Newark, East Orange and Irvington.
- Of the 108 participants, 61 represented centers located in a

metropolitan statistical area³ of one million people or more.

- Aggregate figures for both urban and rural child care centers showed a preponderance of low-income children: 67 percent in the rural centers and 81 percent in the urban centers.

SIZE OF CENTERS

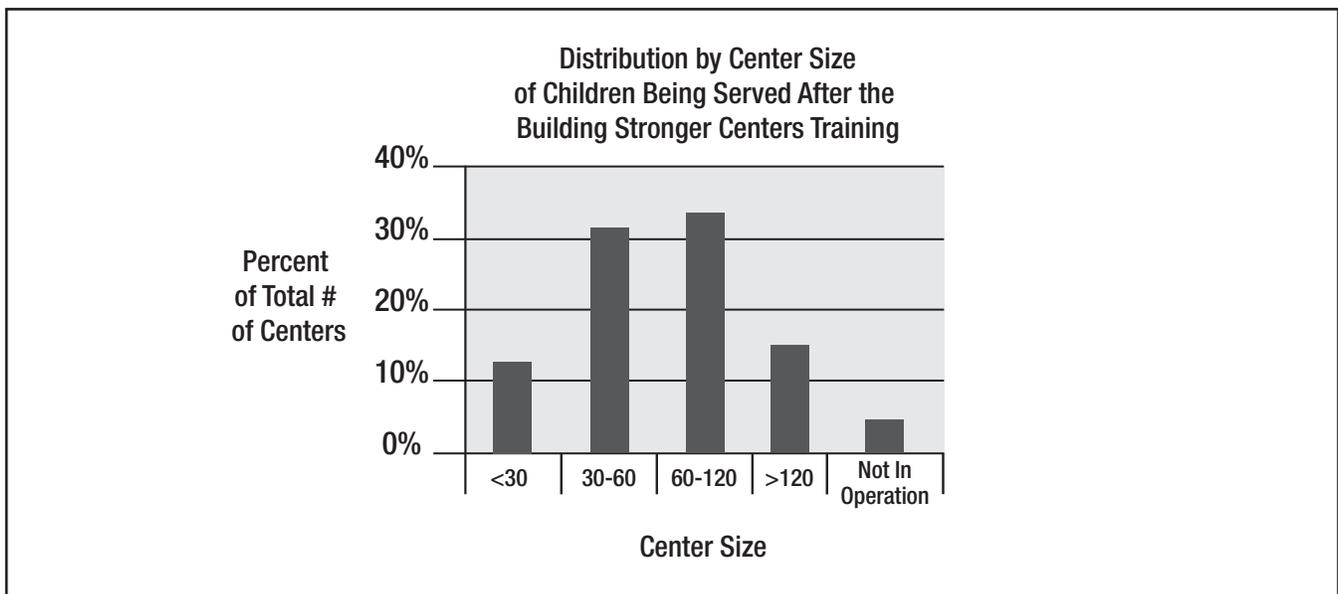
For the purpose of identifying participating centers by size, the Collaboration used the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC)⁴ parameters: under 30 children, 30-60 children, 61-120 children and over 120 children.

The breakdown of centers by number of children served prior to their BSC participation was:

- 17 percent of the centers served fewer than 30 children.
- 27 percent of the centers served between 30 and 60 children.
- 34 percent of the centers served between 61 and 120 children.
- 17 percent of the centers served greater than 120 children.
- 5 start-up centers had no enrollment.

After the centers had completed the training, the distribution of centers by size was:

- 13 percent of the centers served fewer than 30 children.
- 33 percent of the centers served between 30 and 60 children.
- 34 percent of the centers served between 61 and 120 children.
- 15 percent of the served greater than 120 children.
- 5 percent of the centers were not in operation.



³ A large population nucleus, together with adjacent communities, that have a high degree of social and economic integration with that core. US Census Bureau, Population Division, 2004.

⁴ NAEYC is the nation's largest and most influential organization dedicated to improving and assessing the quality of programs for children from birth through third grade and has established an accreditation system to recognize early care and education centers that provide high-quality services.

Outcomes and Impact Conclusions⁵

ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT GOALS

Since its inception, Building Stronger Centers has:

- Conducted seven classes, including its companion program, the Urban Child Care Initiative
- Provided training and technical assistance to 108 center directors/supervisors, representing 99 centers
- Benefited centers serving more than 7,600 children from 16 of New Jersey's 21 counties
- Contributed to strengthening services to low-income families: more than 80 percent of the centers are located in low-income areas and more than 80 percent of children served are low-income, coming from families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or other types of federal, state and local assistance.

Note: The Building Stronger Centers initiative was not structured as a formal research project nor was consistent data collected on each of the seven cohorts. Earlier classes have less substantive data than later ones, and comparable data is not available for each cohort. Since the cohorts were not constructed as controlled research models, this report is presented as a retrospective, using available data and anecdotal observations to report findings and to assess the program's impact.

CHILDREN SERVED

Total Number of Children

New Jersey DYFS determines the maximum number of children that may be served in each center. This number is based on a classroom square footage requirement of at least 35 square feet per child, as well as on the ages of the children served. The number of slots that each center is allowed by DYFS reflects the number of children in attendance per session. Since some are enrolled for half-day sessions or do not attend every day, the total number of children served by a particular center may be greater than the allotted licensed number by DYFS.

The number of children served increased in some centers after the BSC training due to the information gained through business/management and programmatic assistance. Some participants increased the number of enrollment spaces available specifically because they now had the knowledge and tools to expand their operations and market their services in ways they had not considered prior to the training. It was determined that those sites that were able to reach or approach their DYFS-licensed capacities did not have consistently similar characteristics to which the capacity increases could be attributed. The group included non-profits and for-profits; large and small centers; centers in urban and rural settings as well as in *Abbott*⁶ and non-*Abbott* school districts.

The total number of children enrolled pre-training was 7,693. This number represents 103 centers; five centers were start-ups with no

enrolled population prior to their training week. The enrollment total subsequent to the trainings was 7,614. Factored into the post-training total were the closing of five centers, representing a loss of 250 slots, and the impact of the *Abbott* requirements on the centers with local board of education contracts. *Abbott* requirements mandated an increase in classroom square footage per child to 50 from the DYFS requirement of 35, and a decrease in enrollment per pre-K class of 15 from the DYFS maximum of 20. In addition, the unanticipated political forces affecting education in New Jersey at the time the project was originally designed, especially the results of the *Abbott* initiative and the related effect of public school provision of pre-school services, may have adversely impacted the ability of many centers to reach their DYFS-licensed capacities.

Low-Income Children

Research completed by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) found that low-income children in *Abbott* school districts begin school six to 18 months behind their more advantaged peers.⁷ In its 2003 *State of Preschool* report, NIEER states:

*Many studies find that high-quality preschool programs produce large gains in school readiness for economically disadvantaged children. These gains translate into improved achievement and behavior in school. Later, follow-up research with the children at older ages finds that the former disadvantaged preschoolers earn more money, experience more stable home lives and become more responsible citizens than they would otherwise.*⁸

For those centers serving the economically disadvantaged population, as the graph on page 9 illustrates, 23 percent had at least 90 percent of total enrollment filled by children from low-income families before participation in the Building Stronger Centers training. After participation, 77 percent of participating centers had at least 90 percent of enrollment filled by children from low-income families.⁹ Of that number, 28 centers had 100 percent of their total enrollment filled by children of low-income.

⁵ The Child Care Collaboration conducted a total of seven classes: six BSC groups were populated by centers from across New Jersey; one, the Urban Child Care Initiative, was specific to the Essex County cities of Newark, Irvington and East Orange. For the purposes of reporting, the seven cohorts are combined under the BSC name. In reporting on the impact of the BSC Initiatives, the statistics reflect either the total universe of 108 participants as "point in time" findings or the specific data points of the non-duplicative 99 participating centers to more accurately indicate the results achieved in each impact area.

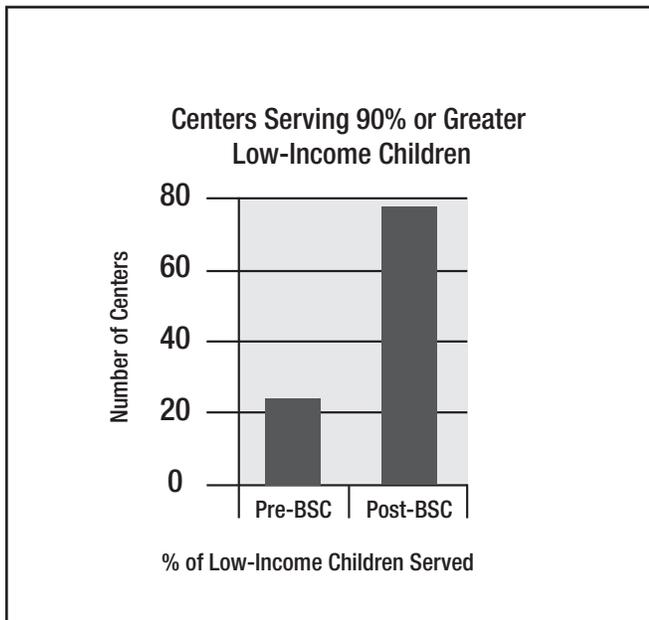
⁶ In 1981, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled on a lawsuit, *Abbott v. Burke*, that challenged the adequacy of public education services in the state's impoverished school districts. The Court ordered the state to address the deficiencies in its poorest school districts, in part to assure that the young children in those districts enter public school prepared and ready to learn. Over the years, a series of *Abbott* rulings have been handed down by the Court, re-affirming its original decision. That decision includes mandates for the availability of free, high-quality pre-school services for 3- and 4-year-old children in the 31 *Abbott* school districts as well as the provision of financing for school facilities construction and improvements.

⁷ *Fragile Lives, Shattered Dreams: A Report on Implementation of Preschool Education in New Jersey's Abbott Districts*. National Institute for Early Education Research, May 31, 2001, pg.4.

⁸ *The State of Preschool: 2003 State Preschool Yearbook*. National Institute for Early Education Research, 2003, pg.12.

⁹ The number of low-income children being served was self-identified by each center on the BSC application form with responses to questions regarding numbers of children receiving child care vouchers and numbers of child care slots funded through Division of Family Development (DFD) Center-Based Care (CBC), the voucher reimbursement program of the state of New Jersey, Department of Human Services.

Five participants involved in the BSC training were Head Start centers, which are required by federal regulations to utilize income eligibility standards for enrollment based on poverty guidelines updated annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



In addition to the substantive benefits for the centers' pre-school population, providing services to low-income children may have benefits to the centers themselves. There are a variety of vouchers supporting child care services for which low-income families are eligible. These include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), WorkFirst New Jersey (WFNJ), New Jersey Cares for Kids (NJCK), and direct DYFS subsidies for at-risk children. These subsidies provide a consistent cash flow for centers as long as families choose these placements for their children and the providers meet the regulatory and reporting requirements mandated by the relevant government agencies. It should be noted that these revenue streams, although more reliable cash flow contributors, may reimburse at a rate of tuition lower than that provided by private-pay families.

While the total number of children served decreased due to the extenuating circumstances described above, the numbers of enrolled low-income children increased by 600: from a pre-BSC total of 5,625 (73 percent of total enrollment numbers) to a post-training total of 6,225 (82 percent). This increase resulted in opportunities for high-quality services to additional low-income children as well as a source of consistent cash flow for participating centers.

ABBOTT ENROLLMENT

Of the 99 non-duplicative centers participating in the BSC initiative, 49 had *Abbott* contracts. Of those 49, 18 centers had negotiated contracts with their school districts and were serving *Abbott* children prior to their participation in Building Stronger Centers. Thirty-one of the 49 centers were either in contract negotiations with their school districts or had signed contracts, but, due to the date of their partici-

pation in the training program and the actual initiation dates of their *Abbott* contracts, were serving no *Abbott* students. Therefore, the pre-BSC *Abbott* numbers reflect *Abbott* enrollment in only 18 centers. The post-BSC enrollment figures encompass all 49 *Abbott*-contracted centers.

Total number of <i>Abbott</i> slots contracted:	2,642
Number of children enrolled in <i>Abbott</i> slots, pre-BSC	822
Number of children enrolled in <i>Abbott</i> slots, post-BSC	2,441

Prior to the training, those centers with *Abbott* contracts that were already serving *Abbott*-eligible students had filled 33.5 percent of the total number of *Abbott*-contracted spots. After the training, the slots in those centers that had *Abbott* contracts and also had *Abbott* students were now 94.6 percent utilized. The skills developed by participation in BSC may have contributed to the increased abilities of those directors to manage the financial, administrative and data collection requirements of the *Abbott* program.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

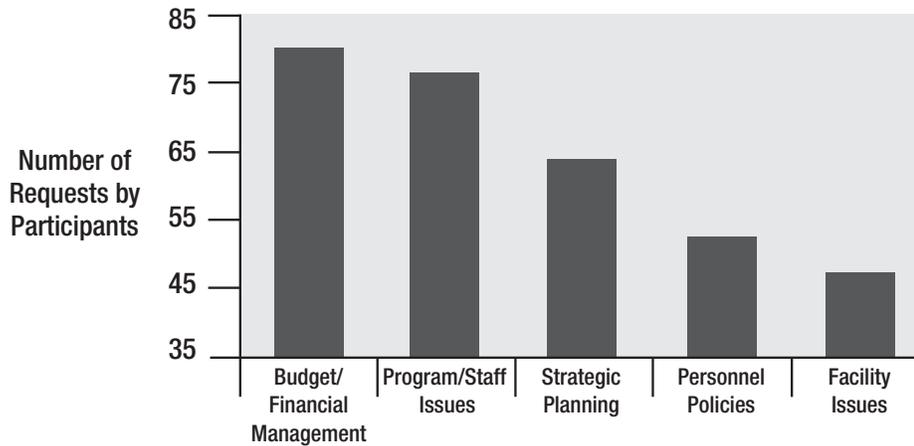
Subsequent to the weeklong directors training, the Collaboration offered one-on-one consulting services, based on the needs identified by each program participant. As the graph on page 10 illustrates, the most commonly requested technical assistance areas were: budget/financial management, program/staff issues, strategic planning, personnel policies and facility issues. Many participants requested technical assistance in budgeting, financial and planning areas to strengthen both their own skills and the future prospects for their centers. The four centers that closed (and the one center that never started operation) all reflected ongoing difficulties in business, financial and budgeting areas, which contributed significantly to their inability to sustain themselves.

In addition to the five most requested components, technical assistance was provided in:

- Writing a business plan
- Developing successful marketing strategies
- Developing a parent handbook
- Assuring developmentally appropriate activities/curriculum
- Developing successful funding and grant-writing skills
- Negotiating and managing *Abbott* contracts
- Assuring ethnically diverse curriculum activities
- Developing appropriate personnel policies
- Working with personnel/staff issues
- Working with the board of directors
- Achieving accreditation
- Room arrangement

Data on technical assistance issues were collected beginning with the 1999 classes and only reflect the needs of the 92 directors/supervisors in those trainings.

Technical Assistance Issues Requested



The project was unable to identify common characteristics of centers requesting technical assistance in specific areas. However, the broad range of technical assistance requested by the participants reflects both the complexity of the child care industry and the breadth of knowledge needed in order to operate successfully.

In general, business/financial skills and strategic planning were not identified as strengths by the program participants. The specific training needs reflected in requests for post-classroom technical assistance by many participants indicated their heightened understanding of the importance of these particular skills and the resulting significant impact on centers' abilities to sustain themselves and grow.

Of the total 92 participants from whom data was collected, 79 (86 percent) requested technical assistance in budgeting/financial management and 62 (67 percent) requested assistance with strategic planning. Despite the technical assistance provided, three of those 92 centers closed. The remaining centers incorporated their strengthened skills to sustain their businesses.

EXPANSION/DEVELOPMENT PLANS

An important component of any organization's growth and sustainability is the ability to develop, improve and/or expand its operations. All the participating directors included expansion and/or development goals in their action plans. A 2003 follow-up survey¹⁰ indicated that, of the 99 non-duplicative centers, 36 (36 percent) completed all or part of their expansion/development plans, which included:

- Renovating facility 14 centers
- Adding classrooms 8 centers
- Opening additional site 7 centers
- Expanding facility 6 centers
- New construction 5 centers
- Purchasing building 3 centers

Financing for expansion/development projects was provided by a variety of sources, including commercial bank loans; loans from Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), such as New Jersey Community Capital; state or corporate grants; and donations from local business and industry. Twenty-eight centers reported the financing costs of their projects, which totaled almost \$6.4 million. The extent of the projects varied from small renovations costing \$1,800 to a \$1.9 million capital campaign for construction of a new building. The completion of their expansion/development projects afforded opportunities for the centers to serve more children, improve their facilities and move toward nationally recognized accreditation.

After completion of the BSC program, many of the directors had improved their capacity and comfort levels with the knowledge and/or tools learned during the training and were better equipped to compete for the funding needed to expand or develop their centers. The completion of the 36 expansion/development projects resulted in quality child care services for an additional 533 children.

CHILD CARE LOAN ACTIVITY

Beginning with its first loan to a child care center in 1989, New Jersey Community Capital has committed 71 loans with a total development value of almost \$49 million to non-profit and for profit organizations providing early care and education to low- and moderate-income children and families. Of those, 29 loans were approved for centers participating in the BSC initiative with a total development value of more than \$15 million.

¹⁰ In 2003, the Collaboration surveyed all 99 centers that participated in Building Stronger Centers in order to update data collected during the trainings by the Child Care Collaboration. Centers were asked to provide information regarding their current enrollment data, number of enrolled low-income children, Abbott participation; expansion, renovation or development projects; and the sources of funding for these projects.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALE (ECERS)

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) is a nationally recognized assessment tool used to measure the quality of group pre-school programs and can be used as a predictor of developmental and educational outcomes for children with more surety than “structural indicators such as staff to child ratio.”¹¹ Thelma Harms and Richard M. Clifford at the University of North Carolina’s Frank Porter Graham (FPG) Child Development Institute created the ECERS in 1980 as an instrument to measure the quality of care provided in individual child care center classrooms serving children aged two and a half through five years. The ECERS is a 43-item scale organized under seven categories: space and furnishings, personal care routines, language and reasoning, activities, interactions, program structure and parents and staff.¹² The score is a composite of these individual components and is based on a seven-point scale, with one demonstrating inadequate care; three, minimal care; five, good care; and seven, excellent care.

Initially, the BSC initiative was conceived as a one-year program and assessment measures were not included in the implementation model. However, as the demand for this type of training increased and additional classes were offered, the Child Care Collaboration, understanding the value of assessing knowledge pre- and post-training, incorporated provision of the ECERS assessment into later classes.

Support for administration of the ECERS was included in the funding for BSC’s 2000 and 2002 classes. The Child Care Collaboration contracted with Kean University’s DART Center in 2000 and with an independent consultant in 2002 to administer the ECERS to the centers participating in those cohorts. Two of the 45 centers were not assessed—one was in the process of relocation and the second was a start-up center that had not yet opened when the pre-training ECERS was administered.

The ECERS was administered in one classroom at each of the 43 centers prior to the weeklong training and again after a significant period of technical assistance in order to most accurately assess the change in quality of those participating centers to whom training and technical assistance was provided. Each center was allowed to select the classroom in which the ECERS would be administered. Because some centers may have selected their “best” classrooms for the ECERS assessment, the scores may not be reflective of an entire program.

All but two centers improved their pre-training scores when re-evaluated. The evaluators noted that these two centers experienced a drop on the “interactions” subscale, which assesses the quality of the relationship among children and staff members, due to staff changes in the targeted classrooms.

The impact of the BSC trainings and the comprehensive technical assistance that followed was reflected in the average improved post-training ECERS scores for all three cohorts:

- 2000 class: + .66
- 2002-I class: + 1.1
- 2002-II class: + .61
- Range of improvement for individual centers: from .05 to 1.79

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN (NAEYC) ACCREDITATION

In determining a center’s eligibility for accreditation, NAEYC utilizes specific criteria to determine high-quality early childhood programs, including curriculum, staff qualifications and professional development, and physical environment. Achieving NAEYC accreditation is a clear indication that a center has been successful in substantially improving and strengthening its program beyond the minimum DYFS requirements for state licensing. While the accreditation process looks at the whole program at a particular center, the “greatest emphasis is placed on the quality of interactions among staff and children and the developmental appropriateness of the curriculum. . . primary consideration is given to the nature of the child’s experiences.”¹³ The value of achieving accreditation is substantive: families have an assurance that the program serving their children is recognized as one of high-quality; and accredited centers are eligible for a higher voucher rate per child than are non-accredited centers.

Ten centers had successfully completed the demanding process for NAEYC accreditation prior to selection for the initiative. An additional nine centers were able to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the training as well as the input provided through technical assistance to achieve accreditation after participating in the BSC program. Subsequent to the BSC training, three centers lost their accreditation because of challenges they faced. (Those challenges are further described in Section 8.) However, all three are currently working toward re-establishing their accreditation.

Of the 99 non-duplicative centers participating in BSC, a total of 16 (16 percent) currently hold NAEYC accreditation. Comparatively, of the 4,263¹⁴ licensed childcare centers in New Jersey, 257¹⁵ (6.3 percent) are accredited by NAEYC.

¹¹ The FPG Child Development Institute at University of North Carolina, <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers/ratingscales.html>.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ National Association for the Education of Young Children website, www.naeyc.org.

¹⁴ New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services, Office of Licensing, March 2005.

¹⁵ National Association for the Education of Young Children, March 2005.

Challenges Faced by Child Care Centers

Over the time period reflected in this report, many participating centers faced a number of significant challenges which, in some cases, impacted their ability to initiate or complete their expansion/development plans. For some, these difficulties affected the financial and/or programmatic stability of their programs.

DIRECTOR CHANGES

"Beyond family, early childhood professionals are the most important people in a child's life. [Children] often spend more of their waking hours with caregivers than with their own parents."¹⁶ Therefore, it is imperative that child care centers meet recognized standards of high-quality. The National College of Education at National-Louis University in Chicago, Illinois, describes center directors as "the gatekeepers to quality, setting the standard and expectations for others to follow."¹⁷ In addition, an abundance of studies of child care have shown that high turnover, low wages and insufficient training has a direct impact on the quality of care provided, and as a result, the developmental outcomes of children.¹⁸ Despite the need for a high-quality staff, The Center for the Child Care Workforce found that the childcare industry is losing well-educated teaching staff and directors at a very high rate.¹⁹ National turnover rates range from 31 to 37 percent annually.²⁰ The national movement toward director credentialing underscores the need for a broad knowledge base, including administrative skills. Recognition of this need has led to the revision of New Jersey's regulations for child care centers, mandating increased educational requirements and administrative training for program directors.

The 2003 BSC survey revealed that, in the 99 centers:

- A significant number experienced director turnover.
 - Thirty-seven (38 percent) experienced director changes at least once.
 - Ten (10 percent) centers changed directors twice.
 - Two centers changed directors three times.
- The reasons reported for the directors' changes were varied.
 - Ten reported administrative/staff changes within their organizations.
 - Nine of the center directors moved to a new job.
 - Five centers closed/sold and re-opened with new directors.
 - Four reported director changes due to illness/death.
 - Two centers cited retirement.
 - One reported a change due to financial difficulties.

For the remaining centers, the center staff member reporting did not know or divulge the reasons for the directors' changes.

Of interest is that, of the 37 centers that experienced directors' changes, 23 (62 percent) were located in *Abbott* school districts.

This may be due in part to the greater administrative challenges in directing an *Abbott* center.

STAFF TURNOVER

In many centers, the problem of maintaining a stable staff is significant. Reasons reported by some center directors for staff turnover include: long work days, lack of health and pension benefits, lack of staff training/necessary skills and, most often cited, low pay scale. Building Stronger Centers did not keep definitive statistics on staff retention. However, the research cited above reflects that finding and keeping qualified staff is vital to maintaining a quality program.

CHILD CARE STAFF SALARIES

In an article for *Child Care Information Exchange*, Ann Epstein writes: "It is widely accepted that well-trained and well-compensated staff are key determinants of early childhood program quality and healthy child development."²¹ Reflecting on the state of the child care workforce, James H. Squires, Ph.D. notes "Early childhood professionals are among the most dedicated, caring people in our society," yet they are compensated with "extremely low pay, low respect, and societal neglect. . . ."²²

In a 2000 survey, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported these average salaries for New Jersey workers:²³

• Elementary school teachers:	\$48,110
• Kindergarten teachers:	\$45,570
• Secretaries	\$31,050
• Preschool teachers:	\$24,140
• Receptionists and information clerks	\$22,460
• Child care workers	\$16,430

The BSC initiatives did not collect sufficient data from the seven classes to definitively assess the aggregate average salary levels at all participating centers. However, analysis of the available salary data reflected average salary scales for non-*Abbott* pre-school teachers and child care workers that were similar to or lower than those reported in the Bureau of Labor Statistics survey.

¹⁶ "America's Other Divorce Crisis." James H. Squires, *Young Children*, May 2004, pg. 75.

¹⁷ *Early Care and Education Curriculum Guide*, National-Louis University, 2004.

¹⁸ *Facts in Action*, Associated Early Care and Education, June 2001, www.factsinaction.org.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Taking on Turnover: An Action Guide for Child Care Center Teachers and Directors*. Marcy Whitebrook and Dan Bellm, Center for the Child Care Workforce, 1999, www.ccw.org/publications.

²¹ "Early Childhood Professionals: Current Status and Projected Needs." *Child Care Information Exchange*, January 2002, pg. 45.

²² "America's Other Divorce Crisis." *Young Children*, May 2004, pg. 75.

²³ <http://www.bls.gov/oes.emp.htm#overview>.

ABBOTT REQUIREMENTS

Of the 99 non-duplicative centers participating in Building Stronger Centers, 61 were located in *Abbott* school districts. Of those 61, 49 had *Abbott* contracts. For all 61, the impact of the *Abbott* mandates has been substantial. In order to fulfill the mandated requirements, those centers with *Abbott* contracts must:

- Assure the *Abbott* classroom prerequisite of 50 square feet per child rather than the DYFS requirement of 35 square feet.
- Limit the maximum number of children in each *Abbott* class to 15 rather than the DYFS limit of 20.
- Provide one early childhood certified teacher with a minimum of a bachelor's degree and one teacher's aide in each *Abbott* classroom.
- Use a pre-school curriculum approved by the school district.
- Comply with the state's budget and reporting requirements specific to the *Abbott* program.

Substantive results of participating in the *Abbott* initiative include:

- For *Abbott*-contracted centers, a specific amount of tuition per child in *Abbott* classes is paid by the local school district and by the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS). The local school district pays for educational services provided during the school day; DHS pays for before- and after-school (wraparound) services. Tuition per child varies by program as well as by district; the average *Abbott* tuition is approximately \$13,000. DFD's 2002 New Jersey Child Care Market Rate Survey reports the average annual tuition for full day, full year services as \$7654. This comparison shows the stark difference between the cash flow of an *Abbott* center versus a non-*Abbott* center. However, centers serving *Abbott* children are offered only one-year contracts, and therefore have no long-term assurance of sustained *Abbott* income.
- *Abbott*-contracted centers serve fewer children than they had previously due to classroom population limits based on requirements of a higher square footage per child and lower maximum number of children in each classroom.
- Centers with *Abbott* classrooms must attract and retain appropriately degreed and certified staff. Although higher salary and benefit reimbursement is available, competing with local boards of education can be challenging.
- Directors/supervisors must fulfill time-consuming budget and reporting requirements.

While state school construction funds are being made available to school districts for construction and improvement projects, community-based centers contracted to provide early care and education for three- and four-year-old children in their districts have not been able to access school construction dollars for their planned projects. A limited amount of facility grant funding was offered through DHS early in the *Abbott* implementation, but is no longer available. Participation in BSC assisted some centers in taking advantage of this funding opportunity when the funds were available.

In addition to the 31 *Abbott* districts, 102 school districts with the largest percentage of low-income children have been designated by the New Jersey Department of Education as Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA) districts. As such, they receive additional state aid to provide high-quality pre-school education for their four year olds to prepare them to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Those centers in *Abbott* or ECPA cities without contracts serving a pre-school population face a possible decrease in enrollment when parents choose the no-cost options for their children. Centers in this situation must develop new strategic, business and marketing plans to serve other age groups and/or expand services in order to sustain their operations. All the participating centers had the opportunity to address these issues and to strengthen their skills in these areas during their BSC training.

Two centers made conscious decisions to withdraw from the *Abbott* program due to the burdensome nature of the requirements. Through the training and technical assistance offered by BSC, they developed the confidence to use their new strategic skills to seek alternate funding for their centers.

CENTER CLOSINGS

A number of centers were adversely affected by specific difficulties: four centers closed permanently due to financial, management or facilities difficulties; two centers closed and re-opened under same management with new names, serving children of different ages than originally served; and one start-up center never opened. Despite the training and technical assistance offered to these centers, substantive problems remained that could not be overcome.



Challenges for the Project

In assessing how the seven trainings were conducted as well as the results of the initiatives, the Child Care Collaboration identified specific areas for improvements.

DATA COLLECTION

More complete and consistent data would have provided a clearer picture of the universe of child care centers served by the initiative. Two examples are the dataset for the ECERS scores and the dataset for staff and directors' salaries. Since the ECERS assessments were not utilized and recorded until the start of the 2000 class, it is not possible to compare the results with previous classes. In addition, many centers did not provide any data regarding salaries, while others provided data reflecting only hourly wage amounts. In the latter instance, the project did not gather the hours worked per week or the number of weeks worked per year and, therefore, was unable to determine average salaries. Nor, with the information collected, was the project able to determine average increases based on pre- and post-training data for salaries and benefits. Additionally, data points that would have proven useful when analyzing centers' quality and improvements include staff turnover rate in each center, credentials and salaries of staff both before and after training, square footage measurements for each classroom in a center and the curriculum used by each center. A comprehensive collection of data would facilitate a more complete analysis of centers' administrative and programmatic operations, as well as progress achieved in these areas.

OUTREACH AND APPLICATIONS PROCESS

Notification of each training and applications were mailed to all licensed child care centers in the state, ranging from approximately 3,500 licensed centers in 1997 to more than 4,000 in 2002. An information session was held for each training, and a total of 330 people attended for all seven cohorts. The Collaboration received 186 applications for all seven classes. The small pool of applicants for each class necessitated less discriminating choices than the Collaboration would have wished. In addition, a relatively small number of applications were received from the southern part of the state; only 26 (24 percent) of the 108 participants were from southern New Jersey. Of those 26, nine centers were located in Camden. Additionally, a very small number of centers from rural locations applied, leading to a total of only seven participants from rural localities, or 7 percent. Strategies considered to ensure a broad selection pool and parity between urban/rural and northern/southern participants included specifically targeted outreach and collaboration with county and community-based organizations, as well as information sessions specific to distinct areas. The limited applicant pool affected the range of centers available for consideration and may have resulted in selection of some centers lacking a commitment to change. This led to inclusion of some centers with significant prob-

lems that the available technical assistance could not overcome. The end result reflects that there is a standard of performance by centers below which the project's level of training and technical assistance could not ameliorate problems.

Although members of the BSC Advisory Board made suggestions for possible candidates based on their own knowledge of the centers, many of those recommended chose not to apply. Some of the directors who did not apply cited the amount of time they would need to spend away from their centers because of BSC's required week of residential training. Some felt that their levels of responsibility necessitated that they be at their centers every day. Other reasons mentioned were the amount of paperwork and management oversight that precluded participation and interest that centered on a loan, not on training. In addition, those directors who felt that they needed no additional training may have regarded their successes and their skills differently than an independent evaluator would.

Additionally, the state-mandated Director's Academy for all *Abbott*-contracted centers began in fall, 2001. Recognition of the BSC trainings as an approved alternative to the Directors' Academy was not announced early enough to allow inclusion on the 2002-03 BSC application form, and this may have lowered the numbers of applications received for these two classes.

PARTICIPATION IN STAFF AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS TRAINING

BSC trainings included staff training institutes, with workshops for basic child care, advanced child care and infant-toddler care, conducted by the Child Care Connection. A stipend for center classroom substitutes was included as an incentive for participation. Each center could send two staff members to the training institutes. Of the 108 participating centers, 54 (50 percent) sent staff to the training institutes.

In addition, training for the centers' board of directors was offered to the 75 non-profit centers in the six statewide BSC classes. Forty-one (55 percent) took advantage of the training. The feedback reflected in evaluations from both training opportunities was very positive.

In many instances, a response rate of 50 percent or higher to training opportunities is considered successful. However, the importance of providing training to enhance staff capabilities, as well as ensuring productive involvement of non-profit centers' boards of directors, underscores the value of raising the percentages of participation to a higher level.

Conclusion

The need for high-quality, affordable early care has been—and continues to be—an essential component in the daily lives of low- and moderate-income working families. The welfare-to-work requirements as well as the New Jersey Supreme Court’s *Abbott v. Burke* decision increased the imperative to provide excellent dependable early care, allowing parents to take advantage of job training and work opportunities as well as benefiting the development and education of young children. The FPG Child Development Institute’s Carolina Abecedarian Project reports: “The importance of high-quality, educational childcare from early infancy is now clear. The Abecedarian study provides scientific evidence that early childhood education significantly improves the scholastic success and educational attainments of poor children even into early adulthood.”²⁴

Recognition of this need led to New Jersey Community Capital’s substantive interest and involvement in the development of these critically necessary services. The organization’s efforts in expanding the availability of early care underscored the need of many providers for training and technical assistance in business, financial and administrative areas. Based on this, New Jersey Community Capital partnered with Child Care Connection to create Building Stronger Centers. By providing a holistic approach to achieving facilities and programmatic quality, the initiative has enhanced the reputation of New Jersey Community Capital as the pre-eminent lender to the early care and education sector in the state. The initiative was created to reflect results in the sustainability and survival of centers serving populations of low-income children, improved quality of child care for low-income children and the promotion of the financial health of participating child care centers. While the impact derived from the financial and intellectual capital provided to projects is often difficult to quantify, New Jersey Community Capital believes that outcome-based measurements are relevant and meaningful, as evidenced by the positive impact that Building Stronger Centers has had on families and children as well as on the greater community:

- The number of low-income slots available was increased by 600.
- The number of centers able to achieve NAEYC accreditation was increased by nine to a total of 19.
- After participation in the Building Stronger Centers program, 36 centers were able to successfully pursue expansion/ redevelopment plans with development costs in excess of \$6.2 million.

A positive outgrowth of the project has been the salutary effect on New Jersey Community Capital’s institutional work. Analysis of the assessment methodologies used in the project led to re-evaluation of lending policies and development of qualitative impact indicators now incorporated into all levels of organizational activities.

Excellent programs and facilities are the cornerstones for high-quality child care centers. The Building Stronger Centers initiative was designed to assist child care centers that serve low-income populations to be sustainable and competitive in the child care industry, through the provision of hands-on technical assistance and programmatic support. New Jersey Community Capital is proud and gratified that this initiative has had a positive impact on early care services for low-income children and families and has resulted in increased numbers of low-income children served, additional centers achieving national accreditation and more centers strengthening their abilities to complete expansion and development plans. The results achieved are substantive; additional funding for the provision of the comprehensive training and technical assistance offered by Building Stronger Centers will lead to expansion and increased availability of the sorely needed high-quality early care that all children deserve.

“We needed assistance in financial management and budgeting in order to move toward sustainability for the center. The training and technical assistance provided by BSC strengthened our skills in these areas and resulted in a more financially sound organization.”

–Early Care & Education
Center Director

²⁴ FPG Child Development Institute, Carolina Abecedarian Project, Policy Implications, <http://fpg.unc.edu>

Appendix A

Child Care Collaboration Partners

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS

» **New Jersey Community Capital** is the trade name used by the Community Loan Fund of New Jersey, Inc. and its affiliated entities for its financial and consulting products and services. The organization facilitates the flow of money and knowledge in order to create wealth and well-being in communities. It finances the creation and preservation of housing, particularly affordable housing, and commercial real estate, and provides capital for the development and operations of early care and education centers, schools, health clinics, human and social service programs, cultural and arts institutions, and other community services. New Jersey Community Capital provides loans and investments to businesses that create financial returns for their owners and social returns for their workforce, the communities in which they operate, and the environment.

Capital alone will not solve the needs of many organizations doing work in the communities targeted by New Jersey Community Capital and its investors. New Jersey Community Capital, its advisors and its partners also provide critical technical assistance and consulting services in the areas of finance, marketing, operations, real estate, strategic partnering and negotiations.

» **Child Care Connection (CCC)** is a resource and referral agency with 20 years experience providing training programs in business operations and quality enhancements to child care management and staff. Among other programs, CCC provides Child Development Associate (CDA) credential training as well as child care employment/parent training for low-income people and other vulnerable populations. CCC promotes quality standards in many ways, including assisting an impressive number of New Jersey centers to attain National Association for the Education of Young People (NAEYC) accreditation. As the Unified Child Care Agency for Mercer County, CCC operates the voucher certificate payment system, administers the family day care home registration program and operates a number of outreach, training, technical assistance and referral programs. CCC's main role within the Child Care Collaboration was to coordinate the weeklong directors' trainings and to promote high-quality standards in child care for low-income families.

ADJUNCT PARTNERS

The following organizations partnered with the Child Care Collaboration for specific offerings:

» **Association for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ)** is an independent, statewide, nonprofit child advocacy organization established in 1978. ACNJ has pursued its mission to heighten public awareness and responsiveness to the needs of New Jersey's children and families by serving as a voice for children. ACNJ advocates on a wide variety of issues affecting children and families, including education, child care, child abuse and neglect, foster care and adoption, income supports, housing and other basic needs, health and nutrition, mental health and

juvenile justice. Its main roles in the Child Care Collaboration were to enhance the capacity of the child care provider community and its constituents, including low-income parents, to become more effective advocates and translating the experiential findings of the Collaboration to public and private policy makers.

» **Camden County Division for Children (CCDFC)** was established as a Community Coordinated Child Care Council in 1971 with experience in provision of training, technical assistance and coordination of services to the publicly funded child care centers. Under the direction of the Camden County Board of Chosen Freeholders, its mission, as the Unified Child Care Agency for Camden County, has expanded to include services to the entire child care community. CCDFC's main role in the Child Care Collaboration was to provide educational opportunities for center staff and to promote high-quality standards in child care for low-income families through technical assistance, supplementing the efforts of Child Care Connection's in South Jersey locations.

» **The Center for Non-Profits (CFNP)**, founded in 1982, is the nation's first statewide umbrella organization for nonprofits. Its mission is to build the power of the nonprofit sector to improve the quality of life for the people of New Jersey. It achieves this mission by providing advocacy, technical assistance, public education and research. Its main role with the Child Care Collaboration was to assist child care providers in the development of board roles and responsibilities and in the development of policies and procedures to manage the daily operations of the organization.

» **National Executive Service Corps (NESC)** is a nonprofit organization founded in 1977 by a group of retired senior-level business executives who believed that the management of nonprofit organizations could be strengthened by the use of time-honored business practices. Senior executives share their skills and experience to provide top quality management consulting and advisory services to organizations in a variety of arenas, including public and private education, healthcare, social services and local, state and federal government. NESC's main role in the Child Care Collaboration was to provide consultation, training and technical assistance services to a number of child care centers needing business, organizational and financial direction and support.

» **Programs for Parents (PFP)** is a nonprofit organization that has offered comprehensive programs and services for children and families since 1984. PFP is the Unified Child Care Agency for Essex County and, as such, administers the child care voucher and the Family Day Care Provider programs; trains child care professionals in both credit and non-credit courses, including CDA training; provides assistance with NAEYC accreditation; and coordinates *Abbott* district collaborations. PFP also provides a wide range of child care information to families and to the broader community. Its main role in the Child Care Collaboration was to provide training and technical assistance for participating centers to promote high-quality child care services for low-income families.

Appendix B

BSC ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Odessa Davis	New Jersey Professional Development Center
Fran Durst	Wachovia Bank
Liz Janota	Camden County Empowerment Zone Corporation
Susan Kraham	Rutgers Law School, Environmental Law Center
Dr. Judith Krom	Thomas Edison College
Jacques Lebel	New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
Beverly Lynn	New Jersey Department of Human Services
Ann MacVicar	Kean College Child Care Center & New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children
Jonathan Muse	Rutgers University Educational Opportunity Fund Program
Barbara Rambo	Wachovia Regional Foundation
Barbara Reisman	The Schumann Fund for New Jersey
Ciro Scalera	Association for Children of New Jersey
Deborah Smith	JP Morgan Chase
Beverly Wellons Ranton	New Jersey Department of Human Services
Cecilia Zalkind	Association for Children of New Jersey
Thomas Zsiga	North Jersey Community Coordinated Child Care & New Jersey Child Care Advisory Council

Appendix C

BSC PARTICIPANTS

Center	Location
1998	
Alphabets Preschool	Asbury Park
Bernice Miller Day Care	Camden
Burlington County CAP	Burlington
Christ Church Day Care	Paterson
Lorraine Stitt Rainbow Learning Center	Asbury Park
Martin Luther King, Jr. Child Development Center	Camden
Mi Casita Day Care	Camden
New Visions Community Cultural Center	Trenton
O.C.E.A.N., Inc.	Toms River
Park Day Nursery	Dumont
Precious Littles	Newark
Puerto Rican Community Day Care	Trenton
Rainbow Kids Learning Center	North Bergen
Urban League of Essex County	Newark
Woodbury Child Development	Woodbury
YWCA of Hudson County	Bayonne
1999, GROUP 1	
Atlantic HR Inc. Adriatic Day Care Center	Atlantic City
Christ Wee Care Day Care Center	Pleasantville
Community Day Nursery	Bayonne
Day Nurseries, Inc.	Montclair
Junior Prep Preschool Center	Union City
Little People at Work, Inc.	Neptune

Appendix C (continued)

Center	Location
Margaret P. Muscarelle Child Development Center	Garfield
Martin Luther King Jr. Child Development Center	Camden
Mount Carmel Guild Day Care Center	Trenton
Omni Day Care	West Milford
Tri-City Peoples Corp.	Newark
Wilson Child Care Center II	Pleasantville
YWCA of Camden and Vicinity	Camden
Zelphy's Creative Learning Center	Millville

1999, GROUP 2

Alpha Child Care	Willingboro
Apples & Books, Bugs & Sticks	Branchburg
Bayonne Head Start	Bayonne
Dr. Pal's	Clayton
Ferguson Family Day Care	Bridgeton
Ironbound Children's Center	Newark
It Takes a Village	Jersey City
Jane Addams	Toms River
Kids World (KWCDC)	Camden
Little Folk's Academy	Jersey City
Little Lambs for Jesus	Camden
No. Hudson CAP	West New York
North Delsea Day Care	Vineland
Oasis Child Care	Jersey City
Straight & Narrow	Paterson
Respond/Washington Street	Camden
Suffer Not Day Care	North Wildwood

2000-01

Atlantic Human Resources	Pleasantville
CMI Community Center	Elizabeth
CMI Day Care	Elizabeth
Dorothy's Little Tot Preschool	Paterson
Grace Lutheran Church & School	Teaneck
Hoboken Day Care 100	Hoboken
Kids Care USA	Fort Lee
Leonard Johnson Day Nursery	Englewood
Monmouth Day Care Center	Red Bank
Mt. Carmel Guild	Trenton
Puerto Rican Assn. for Human Development	Perth Amboy
Raritan Valley YMCA	East Brunswick
Union Twp. CAO	Vauxhall
Union Twp. Head Start	Elizabeth
WEE Care Center	Somerset
Whitney Young Day Care Center	Elizabeth

2002-03, GROUP 1

A Child's Garden of Learning	Budd Lake
Cape Human Resources	Woodbine

Appendix C (continued)

Center	Location
Country Kids	Bridgeton
Davis-Holland Learning Center	Mays Landing
Hackensack Child Development Center	Hackensack
It Takes a Village II	Jersey City
Little Lighthouse	Teaneck
Little People's Academy	Dover
Miss Bette's Little Treasures	Franklinville
No. Hudson CAP-Children First	West New York
Precious Steps	Plainfield
Preschool Pals	Flemington
Puerto Rican Action Board Preschool	New Brunswick
St. Cecilia's Little Angels	Pennsauken
Union Twp. CAO	Vauxhall

2002-03, Group 2

Bergenfield Early Childhood Learning Center	Bergenfield
Better Beginnings	Hightstown
Dr. Pal's Place Daycare	Clayton
G.E.M.S. Earlystart Kids	Teaneck
Harambee Family Academy	East Orange
It Takes a Village III	Jersey City
Jersey City Academy of Learning	Jersey City
Keys School	Newark
LaBar Day Care Center	Camden
Little Folks' Academy	Jersey City
Mary Wheeler-Willis	Newark
Passaic Head Start	Passaic
Somerset Child Development Program	Somerset
YMCA Pre-School	Paterson

URBAN CHILD CARE INITIATIVE, 2000

Babyland-Bakery Village	East Orange
Babyland - #3	Newark
Babyland - #7	Newark
Creative Concepts	Irvington
Ironbound Children's Center	Newark
Mary Wheeler-Willis	Newark
Newark Tenants Council	Newark
Ninja University	Irvington
Norjenes Day Care	East Orange
Precious Littles	Newark
Smart Cookie	East Orange
St. Ann's	Newark
The Little Ones	East Orange
Tiny Toddlers	Newark
Urban League of Essex County	Newark
Wellspring II	Irvington

Credits

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“We had dreams for construction of an addition to the center, but we had no action plan to make it a reality. The training helped us focus on what needed to be accomplished and how to move ahead successfully to make it happen.”

–Executive Director,
Child Care Organization



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