

# BRIDGING THE GAP: INVESTIGATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENCORE TALENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN NEW JERSEY



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## I. INTRODUCTION

New Jersey is making significant efforts towards the well-being of young children through various policies. By addressing health and nutrition, early care and education, and economic supports for parents, New Jersey promotes a system that is comprehensive in its attempt to foster a positive environment for child development<sup>1</sup>. However, policy provides only the framework. Child care providers, including care centers and schools, deliver the supports. It is at this level, the level of the provider, that there is a strong need for additional assistance to create the environment envisioned by New Jersey's policies.

In partnering with Encore.org, Masters Candidates from the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy explored the field of early childhood care and education in New Jersey (continuing research in locations investigated previously). This report defines "Encore Friendliness" in the context of working with early childcare providers, presents findings from current literature regarding early childhood education and volunteer management, and discusses opportunities as well as barriers to Encore engagements based on interviews with childcare providers.

Following this introduction and the subsequent research questions, the second section presents the literature review used to inform this project. Section III describes the methods used for data collection for each location. Section IV presents the findings that emerged through the research process. The report concludes with recommendations for Encore talent to engage with early childcare providers.

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<sup>1</sup> "New Jersey Early Childhood Profile." National Center for Children in Poverty. Mailman School of Public Health Columbia University, 2014.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Our research explored the following core questions:

1. What variables are used to define and characterize an organization that is “Encore Friendly”?
2. What are the current needs of early childcare providers?
3. What are the barriers to engagement of Encore talent?
4. What actions or policies demonstrate Encore Friendliness by early child care providers?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN NEW JERSEY

The subject of education within the United States remains a major focus for both policymakers and politicians alike. However, in recent years, these local and national actors devoted a great deal of attention to early childhood education. Research demonstrates that the aptitude and skills expected of kindergarteners continues to grow with each passing year<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, an emphasis on quality pre-k programs is no longer an *optional* or *supplemental* form of education, but a requirement for children striving to succeed in later years of education. The state of New Jersey tries to respond to this challenge by way of several programs:

- Abbott Preschool Program
- School Funding Reform Act
- Grow NJ Kids

Each of these programs addresses the issue of providing quality early education to New Jersey’s residents.

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<sup>2</sup> NGA Center for Best Practices. “Governors’ Forum on Quality Preschool.” 2003.

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### ABBOTT PRESCHOOL PROGRAM<sup>3</sup>

In 1998, the state of New Jersey launched its Abbott Preschool program, named for a series of New Jersey Supreme Court cases<sup>4</sup>, which sought to provide New Jersey's 3-4 year olds residing in low income neighborhoods with the opportunity to attend quality, accredited, full-day preschools<sup>5</sup>. Currently, over thirty different low income school districts participate in the Abbott program, which is implemented through a multi-faceted public-private system, in which public school districts may offer preschool programs themselves or they may partner with Head Start or private child care centers<sup>6</sup>. Abbott also implemented standards for all schools in participation; these are: (1) early childhood certification for all pre-k teachers, (2) classroom sizes of 15 students or fewer, (3) presence of assistant teachers in all pre-k classrooms, (4) wrap-around support services for students, and (5) a standardized curriculum that corresponds with the state's regulations<sup>7</sup>.

In 2013, a fourth and fifth grade follow-up study, known as the Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study (APPLES), demonstrated that students who attended Abbott preschools experienced noteworthy increases in Language Arts, Math, and Science skills. APPLES also indicated fewer special education placements of students who attended publicly funded preschools as well as higher rates of

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix *Figure 1: NJ Abbott Districts*, for a complete list of districts.

<sup>4</sup> 1981's *Abbott v. Burke* challenged the constitutionality of the state's funding formula, citing that poor urban districts suffered from severe funding disparities. Subsequent to the initial *Abbott v. Burke* decision in 1985, the NJ Supreme Court issued several more *Abbott* rulings. *Abbot V* (1998) is responsible for the introduction of high quality education in low-income, urban areas. (*The History of Abbott V. Burke*, <http://www.edlawcenter.org/cases/abbott-v-burke/abbott-history.html>)

<sup>5</sup> Brown, Brentt, and Saskia Traill. "Benefits for All: The Economic Impact of the NJ Child Care Industry." 2006, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Barnett, Steven; Kwanghee Jung, Ming-Jong Youn, and Ellen Frede. "Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow-Up." 2013, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

grade promotion. Finally, graduates of Abbott preschools were shown to be ahead of other non-Abbott students by nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a school year<sup>8</sup>.

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## SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM ACT

While the Abbott Preschool program demonstrated a number of improvements over the previous early childhood structures servicing low income students, in 2008, the state of New Jersey approved the School Funding Reform Act (SFRA). This revised formula stipulates a “base cost” per pupil, with special additional funds being provided to low income students, disabled students, and students learning English as a second language<sup>9</sup>. Under Abbott, all residents are entitled to publicly funded preschool, regardless of income status; however the SFRA enables students, who meet the additional funding criteria, to access these funds regardless of district residence. Thus, the State Legislature sought to phase out Abbott districts, as the new student based SFRA, would render Abbott funding obsolete.

However, since 2010, the SFRA remains drastically underfunded due to budget cuts and an improper implementation of the formula. Subsequently, a growing number of school districts are inadequately funded, increasing their risk of staff turnover and larger classroom sizes<sup>10</sup>. Disparities between more affluent and impoverished school districts continue to grow. In 2011, the New Jersey Supreme Court mandated full funding of the formula by the state for those 30 districts previously considered part of the Abbott program for the 2011-2012 academic year<sup>11</sup>. Nevertheless, many underfunded schools fall outside of those initial 30

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<sup>8</sup> Zalkind, Cecilia. “The ABCs of Preschool: Lessons Learned from New Jersey.” 2013.

<sup>9</sup> “Education Law Center.” Education Law Center. Accessed March 26, 2015. <http://www.edlawcenter.org/issues/school-funding.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Education Law Center. “Shortchanging New Jersey Students: How Inadequate Funding Has Led to Reduced Staff and Growing Disparities in the State’s Public Schools.” 2014.

<sup>11</sup> “Education Law Center.” Education Law Center. Accessed March 26, 2015. <http://www.edlawcenter.org/issues/school-fundiong.html>

Abbott districts. Currently, the New Jersey Department of Education obtained a federal grant that may offer some additional funds to preschools throughout the state, but the majority of these grant funds will be put towards maintaining programs already in existence rather than creating new preschools<sup>12</sup>.

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## GROW NJ KIDS

Grow NJ Kids is a new quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) implemented to improve the child care system through different incentives and opportunities. Initially the plan is to be administered amongst the state's Head Start Programs and select publicly funded preschools, although it is estimated that all publicly funded preschools will be in participation by 2020<sup>13</sup>. The foremost goals of Grow NJ Kids are to:

1. Provide parents with reliable/quality information in order to select an appropriate childcare provider.
2. Offer incentives to childcare providers through the scholarships and additional funding.
3. Offer training and workforce development to those in the field.
4. Expand the availability of early child care to low-income children<sup>14</sup>.

## NEW JERSEY STANDARDS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS

According to several respected rankings, the educational system in New Jersey is among the nation's best<sup>15</sup>—research reports published by the National Institute for Early Childhood Research applaud New

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<sup>12</sup> "Education Law Center." Education Law Center. January 5, 2015. Accessed March 26, 2015.  
<http://www.edlawcenter.org/news/archives/other-issues/top-5-issues-facing-nj-public-schools-in-2015.html>

<sup>13</sup> Advocates for Children of New Jersey. "Grow NJ Kids: First Steps Toward Quality Child Care." 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> The Quality Counts 2014 report released by the Education Week. National Education Association's annual rankings & estimates.



Jersey's preschool programs<sup>16</sup>. New Jersey sets a number of standards to develop high-quality early childhood education programs.

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## CERTIFICATE FOR TEACHERS

The State of New Jersey emphasizes a highly standardized teaching style for preschool teachers being that the preschool age group is a developmentally influential period of life. The state expects pre-school teachers to guide children on the right track and to help their students to lay a foundation for future study. Thus, in order to become a qualified teacher, one needs to become certified according to the specifications of the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE).

First, all candidates must have at least a bachelor's degree earned from a regionally accredited college/university and receive a cumulative GPA<sup>17</sup> of at least 3.0<sup>18</sup>. There are five types of certifications for pre-K through grade 3 teachers, of which candidates must obtain at least one. Other requirements such as a teacher preparation program, a basic skills test, and a content area assessment testing are demanded by different kinds of certifications. Once a candidate satisfies all the requirements, they must then submit their applications online and provide the requisite documents. Finally, they need to pass a criminal history background check in order to obtain a position within a New Jersey school. The length of time necessary to complete this process of preschool certification may vary given New Jersey's comparatively strict standards for preschool teachers.

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<sup>16</sup> National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). "The State of Preschool 2013: State Preschool Yearbook". 2013

<sup>17</sup> This GPA requirement is for students graduating on or after September 1, 2016. Students who graduated prior to this date are required to have a GPA of at least 2.75.

<sup>18</sup> State of New Jersey Department of Education. "Preschool through Grade 3 Certificate of Eligibility" "Preschool through Grade 3 Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing" "Preschool through Grade 3 Standard Certificate". 2014

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## OTHER CERTIFICATES

In addition to certificates of preschool classroom teachers, New Jersey also requires two other types of certifications for employees who work in schools under the supervision of the NJDOE: educational service personnel certificates and school leader certificates<sup>19</sup>. Educational service certificates apply to service personnel, such as school consultants, school nurses, and school social workers<sup>20</sup>. School leader certificates are required of school administrators, principals, supervisors, and school business administrators<sup>21</sup>. Generally, these positions stipulate that candidates must hold a Master's degree or higher, although some may request that applicants have relevant professional experience and/or pass a praxis exam.

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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Since teachers and school leaders have a direct effect on child development, NJDOE adopted professional development regulations to meet rapidly changing professional standards for teachers and school leaders. This program facilitates the effectiveness of educators and stimulates child development. Individual teachers are mandated to have an individualized professional development plan (PDP) under the guidance of a supervisor. New arrivals have the first 30 days of employment to complete their development plan, while others need to complete the plan by the end of each school year<sup>22</sup>. To accord with teachers' annual evaluation results, NJDOE adjusted professional development learning time from 100 hours over 5 years to at

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<sup>19</sup> New Jersey Department of Education. Certification & Induction. <http://www.state.nj.us/education/educators/license/overview/>. Accessed March 26, 2015.

<sup>20</sup> New Jersey Department of Education. <http://www.state.nj.us/education/educators/license/esp/>. Accessed March 26, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> New Jersey Department of Education. <http://www.state.nj.us/education/educators/license/sl/>. Accessed March 26, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> New Jersey Department of Education. "Overview of Revised Professional Development Regulations". 2014.

least 20 hours for each school year<sup>23</sup>. School leaders are not exempt from this requirement. Professional development plans are based on both evaluations and professional goals. This planning structure connects teachers and school leaders' performances with learning strategies and has certain level of flexibility.

#### VOLUNTEERING ENVIRONMENT IN NEW JERSEY

The state of New Jersey, in addition to providing a comprehensive credentialing system for early childhood education professionals, also maintains a well-developed volunteer sector; volunteers are regarded as *vital resources* for local communities and social services not exclusively limited to education. According to statistics from New Jersey Governor's Office of Volunteerism (NJGOV), there are currently more than 1.5 million volunteers within the state<sup>24</sup>. Governor's Office of Volunteerism, established by former New Jersey governor Christine Todd Whitman, promotes volunteerism and coordinates volunteer activities throughout the state<sup>25</sup>. Its partnership with schools, volunteer centers, disaster response organizations, faith-based organizations, community organizations, and other volunteer groups has extended engagements of volunteers in social service and community improvement areas.

NJGOV provides a list of New Jersey's many volunteer centers (almost each county has one), community service-based organizations, and large, statewide, volunteer groups on its website. People interested in participating can easily find volunteer opportunities on the sites, and some of them even link directly to non-profit organizations in search of volunteers themselves. In addition to a digital search, NJ

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Mission of Governor's Office of Volunteerism. [http://www.nj.gov/state/programs/dos\\_program\\_volunteerism.html](http://www.nj.gov/state/programs/dos_program_volunteerism.html). Accessed March 26, 2015.

<sup>25</sup> New Jersey Department of State. "Executive Order #99 Governor Christine Todd Whitman". [http://www.nj.gov/state/dos\\_statutes-volunteerism.shtml](http://www.nj.gov/state/dos_statutes-volunteerism.shtml). Accessed March 26, 2015

residents may also encounter volunteer opportunities in their own communities since local volunteer centers and regional non-profits tend to have vacancies for nearby residents.

Volunteering in New Jersey is quite flexible in that it allows individuals to choose from diverse opportunities that interest them. However, there are still some requirements and regulations for volunteers: (1) some volunteer activities may demand training before volunteers may participate, especially for certain types of emergency response activities; (2) Volunteers who aim to work directly with children and other vulnerable groups are requested to have background check; (3) New Jersey offers charity immunity to non-profit organizations so that they are not liable for damage caused by negligence to beneficiaries of that organization including volunteers (except for sexual assault and operation of motor vehicle)<sup>26</sup>. Therefore, New Jersey maintains a high level of volunteer management.

#### THE ROLE OF ENCORE TALENT

New Jersey's stringent requirement for entry into early childhood education and the current funding climate for pre-K through 12th grade education has limited the opportunities available for paid employment. Therefore it is important that we address the ability of early childhood providers to offer impactful volunteer opportunities to Baby Boomers.

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#### DEFINING ENCORE FRIENDLINESS

Encore friendliness refers to the capacity of nonprofit organizations to support and manage volunteers during their 'second act' careers. Specifically, Encore friendliness refers to the policies and volunteer management practices related to workplace flexibility and competencies in supporting post career professionals. The following review of volunteer management literature and volunteer trends of Baby

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<sup>26</sup> Nonprofit Risk Management Center. "State Liability Laws for Charitable Organizations and Volunteers". 2001

Boomers aims to provide a framework for understanding the need in the early childhood sector for policies and practices that directly support Baby Boomers interested in pursuing second act careers with purpose.

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## VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT IN ENCORE CAREERS

The Baby Boomer generation, those born between 1946 and 1964, are the largest generational cohort in American history. Currently 77 million Baby Boomers are active in American communities, some are continuing in their careers, some are enjoying a leisure filled retirement, and many are engaged in Encore careers and volunteer work. The unique characteristics of Boomers, compared to previous generations, and the adoption of quality volunteer management practices by organizations is deserving of further exploration. Because Baby Boomers are more likely to volunteer as skill-based volunteers and are more inclined than their parents' generation to volunteer in youth and child focused organizations<sup>27</sup>, the current economic strain on the early childhood sector in New Jersey makes for a vibrant environment of opportunities.

The type of volunteer experience is important to Boomers, however the management of the volunteer experience is a component that cannot be overlooked. According to a 1998 survey, skill based volunteering may not be as attractive to Boomers as "well managed, efficient uses of time"<sup>28</sup>. A 2004 analysis by researchers from the Urban Institute of 3,000 charitable organizations assessed the adoption of best practices and the impact on volunteer retention. The researchers identified nine best practices, including:

- supervision and communication with volunteers
- liability coverage

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<sup>27</sup> Foster-Bey, John, Robert Grimm Jr., and Nathan Dietz. 2007. "Keeping Baby Boomers Volunteering". Washington D.C.: Corporation for National and Community Service.

<sup>28</sup> Prisuta, Robert. 2003. "Enhancing Volunteerism Among Aging Boomers." Conference on Baby Boomers and Retirement: Impact on Civic Engagement. Cambridge: AARP.

- screening and matching volunteers to jobs
- regular collection of information on volunteer involvement
- written policies and job descriptions
- recognition activities
- annual measurements of volunteer impact
- training and professional development for volunteers
- training for paid staff<sup>29</sup>

Hager and Brudney found that a small minority of charitable organizations have adopted a significant number of the suggested best practices. Of the nine, supervision and communication between the organization and volunteers were the only practices used across charities<sup>30</sup>.

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#### VOLUNTEER RETENTION: KEY BARRIER TO ATTRACTING ENCORE TALENT

Although necessary, the emphasis on documentation on the behalf of organizations is associated with lower rates of volunteer retention<sup>31</sup>. Baby Boomers want well managed, structured volunteer opportunities<sup>32</sup> but want to maintain some autonomy over their work<sup>33</sup>. The administrative focus of organizations may not be the most supportive for Encore talent.

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<sup>29</sup> Hager, Mark A, and Jeffrey L. Brudney. 2004. "Volunteer Management: Practices and Retention of Volunteers". Washington D.C.: Urban Institute.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Johnson, Christopher, Mei Cobb, Miriam Parel, Marie Bouvier, and Jennifer Fauss. 2004. "50+ Volunteering: Working for Stronger Communities". Atlanta: Points of Light Foundation.

<sup>33</sup> Corporation for National and Community Service. 2002. "Baby Boomers and Volunteering: Findings from Corporation Research".

A 2007 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics data, from the years 2002-2006, made two important observations related to volunteer management: (1)volunteer retention was drastically impacted depending upon who initiated the volunteer work (i.e.: the organization or the volunteer), and (2) volunteer hours and retention are positively correlated<sup>34</sup>. While high retention rates were found amongst those volunteers who sought out opportunities themselves, it was solicited volunteer opportunities initiated by the organization that had the highest overall rate of retention<sup>35</sup>. Boomers who worked more were more likely to continue volunteering with a single organization for a longer period. This implies that Boomers are attracted to organizations that form a personal relationship with them, provide structured management, and allow for opportunities to advance and take on greater responsibility.

### III. RESEARCH PROCESS & METHODS

The purpose of this research is to assess the opportunities available for Encore talent in early childhood education in New Jersey. Building upon the research completed by 2014 Bloustein Practicum group, the research team continued investigating Jersey City, Newark, Paterson and Toms River and identified the major players in early childhood education to include childcare centers and schools (public and private). The research team developed interview guides to be used for each player and used the following methods to develop the findings in this report.

#### INTERVIEWS WITH CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

The Department of Education (DOE) has specific education initiatives for early childhood, as such, the DOE compiles a comprehensive database of childcare providers throughout New Jersey. This database

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<sup>34</sup> Foster-Bey et. al

<sup>35</sup> Foster-Bey et. al

served as the starting point for outreach from the research team to childcare providers. The research team reached out to approximately 100 early child care providers and conducted 15 interviews between February and April across four different sites. The purpose of these interviews was to collect information on the current engagement of volunteers at the center/school, the needs of the center/school, and opportunities for Encore talent therein.

## INTERVIEWS WITH EXPERTS

The research team interviewed 4 early childhood education experts from New Jersey who were selected based on a number of criteria including:

- Provided recent contributions to research in early childhood education
- Worked directly with childcare providers
- Advocated for the rights of children in New Jersey

The interviews involved understanding the current climate of early childhood education in New Jersey and served as another point of reference to gain referrals to early childcare providers.

## INTERVIEWS WITH VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS

The research team interviewed 3 volunteer organizations in New Jersey. The purpose of these interviews was to gain a perspective on the current involvement of Encore talent within volunteer organizations. Additionally, we wished to gain a better understanding of how organizations decided on volunteer opportunities and how these organizations managed their volunteers. Researchers concluded these organizations could become potential models for Encore talent management in the future, and as such, began initial investigations through this lens.

## LIMITATIONS

This study is qualitative in nature; therefore, the information compiled cannot be generalized to the entire New Jersey population. Researchers investigated three urban areas in North Jersey and one suburban



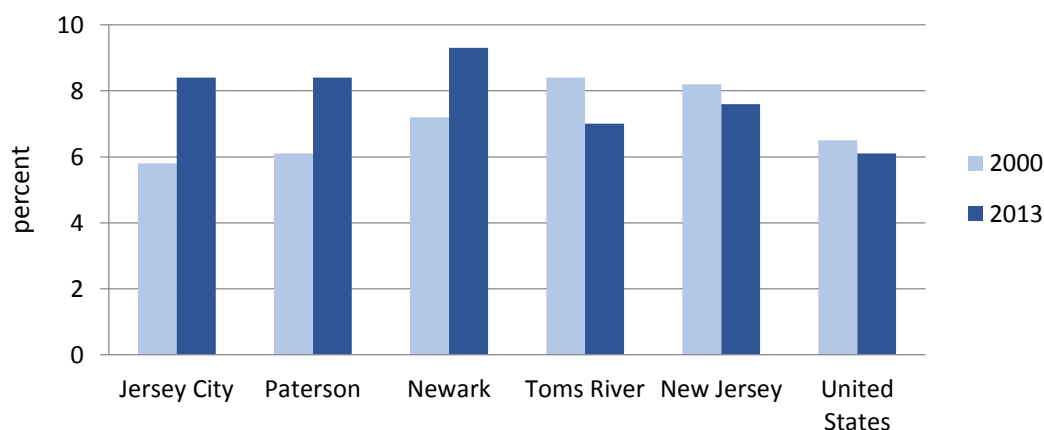
area in South Jersey, which is not representative of state demographics overall. Researchers completed interviews with child care centers that were receptive and responsive which, in itself, has certain implications for the information collected.

#### IV. CITY PROFILES

The table below offers a brief overview of some relevant educational demographic information for each of the cities in which interviews were conducted. The four cities chosen for this report represent a range of demographics found in New Jersey, related to school enrollment, the presence of childcare providers, national origin, and Hispanic origin. The table provides a summary of key demographic features of the four cities to be taken into consideration for planning an Encore volunteer program in the early childhood sector in New Jersey. All four cities have greater than half of the total number of three and four year olds enrolled in schools (including private and public preschool). Jersey City, Paterson, and Newark all represent the urban cores of North Jersey and are Abbott districts. Toms River, located in South Jersey, is a suburban area.

	<b>Jersey City</b>	<b>Paterson</b>	<b>Newark</b>	<b>Toms River</b>
<b>Students enrolled in nursery school, preschool</b>	5,052	3,371	7,261	1,475
<b>Percent of 3 and 4 year olds enrolled in school out of all 3 and 4 year olds in city</b>	65%	64%	71%	60%
<b>Estimated Number of Licensed Child Care Centers (2014)</b>	117	68	162	38
<b>Affiliated with school district</b>	40	33	47	N/A
<b>Hispanic, non-white</b>	35%	61%	38%	14%

### Nursery School/Preschool Enrollment (%): 2000 & 2013



Note: Percentage represents the preschool enrollment population out of the total population 3 years + enrolled in school.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey.

New Jersey is unique amongst the United States, in that Abbott districts are required to offer public preschool to all district residents. According to statistics from the Census Bureau<sup>36</sup>, the percentage of the

population under age 5 in the United States decreased slightly from 2000 to 2013. Paterson, Newark, and Toms River experienced similar trends for their populations under 5, while Jersey City's population under 5 experienced a minimal increase. Though the population of children under age 5 remained relatively stable over the past decade or so, preschool enrollment rates have experienced more dynamic changes. The national preschool enrollment rate declined from 2000 to 2013. However, enrollment in early childhood education in Jersey City, Paterson, and Newark increased substantially over the same period, indicating a growing demand for early childhood education in New Jersey's northern urban centers. These increases in enrollment may be explained by the availability of publicly funded preschool programs in Abbott districts like Paterson, Jersey City, and Newark. Nevertheless, the rise in enrollment rates is an important trend demonstrating the growth within the sector.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census. U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey.

## V. KEY FINDINGS

### FINDING 1:

FUNDING FOR PROVIDERS IS ALWAYS A CONCERN.

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#### JERSEY CITY

In order to support teacher and administrator training programs, Jersey City's early childhood education programs require a significant amount of funding. Child care providers in Jersey City adhere to state ECE regulations: classes contain 15 or fewer students, routine personnel background checks are conducted when hiring new staff, and well equipped classrooms are maintained by the district. Although Jersey City receives state aid for its preschool programs, providers still face a financial shortage due to Jersey City's comparatively larger student population.

Due to budget concerns, some centers cannot afford outside play spaces for children, while others are unable to meet the demand for classroom space. This is especially true for private providers and Head Start programs contracted by the state as part of the Abbott program. Additionally, one public administrator mentioned that providers participating in those publicly contracted preschool programs expressed concerns regarding punctual and prompt reimbursements from the state. Reimbursement rates have not risen according to increased costs for providers. As a result of this financial strain, providers struggle to maintain salaries, let alone provide more paid positions for Encore talent.

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#### TOMS RIVER

Within Toms River, a CCR&R representative spoke of the financial struggles of many of the private childcare providers in the area. According to this source, the SFRA allows low-income students the opportunity to attend private childcare centers at a subsidized rate; being that Toms River is not an Abbott district, there is no district wide, publicly funded preschool (outside of the federally administered Head Start). Thus, low-income students in the area rely on individually provided state subsidies. These subsidies,

however, place a great deal of strain on the private childcare providers themselves. The maximum amount an early childcare provider may collect from a state subsidized child aged 2.5-4 years is roughly \$130, far less than the market rate of many private childcare providers. Subsequently, some centers have had to shut down, as a combination of fixed costs and subsidized tuitions made it financially unviable to continue operations. Ocean Inc.'s Head Start also testified to a constant battle over funding. Though Ocean Inc. employs a grant writer in order to seek out additional funds for the program, the Toms River Head Start facility is currently at capacity, with many students waitlisted, hoping for a chance to enroll. Thus, the demand for Head Start is high within Toms River, yet the program is unable to answer this demand.

**KEY TAKE-AWAY:** *The state funding formula, regardless of Abbott status, leaves many providers financially constrained. Though providers may be in need of additional staff, more classroom resources, and larger facilities, their funding capacity curtails these possibilities. This environment may have several different implications for Encore talent: first, paid positions for encore staff may be limited; second, opportunities for volunteer work may be prevalent; finally, the capacity to recruit, manage, or maintain volunteers may be curtailed due to a limited number of paid staff members able to dedicate time and resources, outside of their existing responsibilities, to volunteer management.*

## FINDING 2:

CHILDCARE PROVIDERS MORE READILY REPORT VOLUNTEER VERSUS PAID POSITIONS.

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### JERSEY CITY

Since funding is a serious concern for providers in Jersey City, volunteer opportunities seem to have greater potential than paid positions. Occasionally, child care providers may post paid positions online, which are open to retirees. Interviewed administrators denied the existence of age discrimination, but they agreed that some positions are required to have special certificates, and these positions are sporadic and irregular.

Providers routinely welcome volunteers to share their talents and help with daily activities. Generally, local community members who intend to engage in public services could call or walk into childcare centers, asking directly whether there are volunteer opportunities at that time. According to respondents, they are often able to place passionate and determined candidates into suitable volunteering positions. Most common jobs for volunteers are teacher's assistants, children-sitters, and reading helpers in private childcare centers. For public preschools and contracted providers within statewide preschool programs, they would like to recruit volunteers who could organize school trips and assist with classroom arrangement. Due to underfunding and limited staff resources, providers are more willing to offer volunteer opportunities than paid ones so they may simultaneously reduce the number of staff on payroll while keeping operating expenses at an ideal level.

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#### NEWARK

With increasing budget cuts in the city, childcare providers and preschool programs are also feeling the pinch. The need for volunteers with specific skills has grown, but the reliance on volunteers has not. Child care providers have mentioned a desire for volunteers who could assist with answering phones, greeting parents, decorating classrooms, taking inventory of supplies, marketing, bookkeeping, and other administrative duties. At this point, the directors have taken the lead on these initiatives but with time constraints, many of these tasks remain undone. Without the ability to hire a person to maintain these tasks, skilled volunteers would be most welcome.

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#### TOMS RIVER

With regards to volunteer involvement, all three Toms River based interview subjects supported the use of volunteers within their organization. However, opportunities within each organization varied. The private preschool, affiliated with the local YMCA chapter, utilized volunteers, but did not permit volunteers to participate directly in the childcare program. Within this childcare center, volunteers typically performed

clerical tasks or assisted with specific organizational events (open house days, fairs, etc.). The Ocean Inc. Head Start representative praised the volunteers involved within their program. Unlike the private pre-k, Head Start facilitated regular, recurring volunteer participation within preschool classrooms. More importantly, the Head Start program specifically sought out retirees for their volunteer program. Volunteers regularly engaged in dramatic play sessions and read to students on a regular basis. The CCR&R agency representative also spoke of an environment that welcomed volunteers; however, many volunteer opportunities originated from the Children's Home Society office in Trenton—not from Toms River. Both the private child care facility and the CCR&R did not actively recruit encore volunteers, yet both representatives agreed that Encore talent could be utilized within their volunteer groups.

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**KEY TAKE-AWAY:** *Funding concerns have forced many childcare providers to focus on using volunteers, either family members of children, students, or volunteer agencies, but many do not actively seek volunteers. Organizations expressed willingness toward volunteer engagement for day to day activities, help with field trips, classroom decorating and restoration, and other assorted activities. It is important to note that many child care providers, when interviewed, tended to view volunteer work largely in terms of direct care/clerical positions. Specialized opportunities did not always come to mind when questioned.*

### FINDING 3:

*PROVIDERS ARE IN NEED OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE AVAILABLE, FLEXIBLE, SKILLED, AND EXPERIENCED.*

### OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

United Way's *Success By Six* (SB6) program demonstrated a strong need for diverse and experienced talent. SB6 maintains only a handful of paid staff members, who, due to budget constraints, consistently rely on volunteer participation to develop programs that fit with the organization's mission to provide quality, affordable, and accessible early childhood education. Retired volunteers often serve as committee members for the organization as they can more easily dedicate their time and expertise. In fact, several of SB6's committees are led by retirees; the majority of volunteers are former professionals, although there is no implicit preference for any given profession.

The regional manager of SB6 indicated volunteers need not necessarily have an early childhood education background; while one committee was headed by a retired Head Start Director, another was led by a former Exxon executive. SB6 recognizes that a wide variety of professional backgrounds have the input necessary to aid the early childhood sector in a myriad of ways. Those with financial or business backgrounds may be able to assist struggling early child care centers to operate within budget limitations; those with education backgrounds may host parent workshops. Volunteer engagements are at the discretion of the volunteers themselves; they may limit themselves to

### UNITED WAY'S *SUCCESS BY SIX*

United Way of Northern New Jersey's Success by Six program seeks to increase quality, accessibility, and affordability of early childhood education. Success by Six operates in 5 NJ counties: Morris, Essex, Somerset, Sussex, and Warren. Success by Six helps by:

- Providing continuing education programs for teachers/staff.
- Offering informational workshops to parents and scholarships to families in need.
- Supporting childcare centers with management resources/strategic planning.
- Convening a monthly steering committee, responsible for setting an organizational agenda.

**For more information, visit:**

[http://unitedwaynnj.org/ourwork/ed\\_successby6.php](http://unitedwaynnj.org/ourwork/ed_successby6.php)

solely attending monthly committee meetings, in which they may weigh in on different programs/initiatives, or they may attend every program sponsored by SB6.

Organizational administrators mentioned that experienced retirees with special skills in accounting, business, technology, or even in administration are desired because they are cost effective and time efficient (experienced retirees cutback time spent training new, inexperienced recruits). Moreover, retirees can utilize their expertise to assist those new to accounting, administration, education, etc. In New Jersey, there is a position in child care centers, known as the *family worker position*, jointly funded by DOE and DHS. It is vital for child care programs, especially in Head Start agencies<sup>37</sup>. This position is a paraprofessional position, which receive mentoring from district social workers but are not licensed social workers themselves, and the position is not a well-paid one. Thus, Encore talent with the time and motivation might be a match for child care providers, given their demonstrated interest in contributing to youth education.

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## PATERSON

In Paterson, organizations that engage volunteers assume that Baby Boomers will have childcare experience and expertise based on personal life experiences. They hope to engage boomer volunteers as partners who will help support younger staff and bring a more personal understanding of child development. Individuals specifically mentioned believing that boomers would be better equipped to support struggling students, address behavioral concerns, and engage parents better than younger peers.

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<sup>37</sup> Since the children participating in the state-funded preschool program are almost all from low-income families. The family workers help to connect those families to the additional health and social services they're eligible to receive, which may include anything from food banks, to medical clinics, to job training programs.



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**KEY TAKE-AWAY:** *Given the aforementioned financial constraints, many providers, when prompted, are in need of skilled individuals who will work as volunteers without pay or at a reduced rate. Many providers indicate a need for talent with a variety of professional expertise, such as accounting, business administration, and tech backgrounds; however, at least one provider indicated a desire for Encore talent lacking in professional expertise, but abundant in personal life experiences as parents or community members. Providers recognize the value of Encore talent in that they arrive at an organization already equipped with the skills necessary to assist the organization immediately, as well as to pass on their professional knowledge to other individuals.*

#### **FINDING 4:**

**BILINGUAL INDIVIDUALS ARE NEEDED WITHIN THE FIELD.**

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#### **NEWARK**

Newark has a very diverse population, and its child care providers struggle to have staff who are able to converse with the varying population demands. Some child care providers indicated a student population fluent in Spanish, Portuguese, Hindi, Arabic, and English. Many people seeking employment in childcare will speak English, but in order to communicate effectively with parents or children, there is a demand for individuals who speak another language. Child care providers explained that the ability of staff to speak multiple languages helps to ease the stress of some parents who are not fluent or conversant in English.

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#### **JERSEY CITY**

Recruitment of bilingual, even multilingual staff, is highly desired by Jersey City providers. Non-English speaking students, especially those participating in the public preschool system, need multilingual individuals to assist them in learning English as a means of familiarizing them with the language. In addition, there are several childcare centers established solely for French or Spanish speaking parents and children learning

English as a second language. In order to increase effective communication between parents and providers, teachers and other staff (particularly receptionists) are required to have dual language skills.

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## TOMS RIVER

When questioned, a Head Start representative spoke of the growing need for bilingual volunteers, particularly those fluent in both Spanish and English. She mentioned their usefulness in translating between head classroom teachers and parents. However, the influx of Spanish speaking students also presented a unique volunteer opportunity for the Head Start Program, regardless of language fluency. Many preschool aged students of foreign born parents had little to no acquisition of the English language, given that their primary interactions until preschool had been with Spanish speakers. Thus, the Head Start preschool program became their foremost exposure to English speakers—an interaction that would serve as the foundation for future academic success. For this reason, Head Start volunteers are encouraged to interact and speak English with these students constantly during times when paid staff members might be too busy to offer individualized attention in order to boost their comprehension. While bilingual skills are certainly an asset in the sector, non-bilingual volunteers still have a great deal to offer non-English speakers.

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**KEY TAKE-AWAY:** *New Jersey is a culturally and ethnically diverse state. In the locations that we explored, childcare providers expressed needs for bilingual staff and volunteers. Some shared that their staff needed to speak Spanish in order to be able to communicate with parents. Other languages such as Arabic, Hindi, and Portuguese would also be helpful for those working in childcare centers.*

## FINDING 5:

SOME BARRIERS TO ENCORE TALENT EXIST IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

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## NEWARK

Child care providers in Newark will pair volunteers with teachers. This enables volunteers to meet the immediate needs of children in the classroom. However, some teachers express frustration and challenge the use of volunteers due to the increased burden placed on the teacher. When volunteers are older than the teacher, teachers struggle to maintain classroom control. Due to such stringent educational requirements, even at the pre-school level, it is vital for volunteers to follow the direction of the teacher who has been trained to manage the classroom. Volunteers who are older than teachers may find themselves impatient with the teachers' methods and want to help, but, in doing so, it causes tensions among teachers.

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## JERSEY CITY

The prerequisite for those who intend to work in the child care field is a background check. Those interested in participating in direct child care and teaching, must possess all relevant certificates and attend continuous development programs. These processes require a time commitment that may discourage some participants from pursuing engagements in the sector. Furthermore, one interview indicated that several volunteers became incensed at the background check requirement. Some of those interviewed expressed concern regarding the physical demand some positions require, such as holding children or squatting on the ground to play. Volunteers assisting teachers are expected to be current on curriculums, educational trends, and sometimes, technology. Some of these requirements may be a minor barrier for Encore talent.

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**KEY TAKE-AWAY:** *There are barriers for Encore talent working in early childhood education. A certain degree of familiarity with educational trends/curricula is expected of Encore talent working directly with educators and students. The hours and stamina required of some positions in early childhood education may also serve as a barrier to Encore talent. Tensions between classroom teachers—who may be younger—and Encore talent may disrupt and strain encore engagements within the sector. Additionally, external requirements such as background checks and certificates may impede their engagement due to the time associated with their*

*acquisition. Finally, since management systems may be under-resourced, Encore talent who are willing to devote their time have limited channels to search for support and receive relevant information.*

#### **FINDING 6:**

**THERE IS SOME RELUCTANCE/HESITATION TOWARD THE USAGE OF VOLUNTEERS.**

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#### **JERSEY CITY**

Providers in Jersey City praised volunteers' contribution; however, they also expressed hesitation in using volunteers. Since volunteers' participation is wholly out of goodwill, providers can hardly reprimand for failing to follow organizational regulations. Some volunteers are too inconsistent; their late arrival or even absence without advanced notification led problems. Some providers complained that they have encountered similar conditions several times; consequently, they are not willing to recruit volunteers. Another concern in utilizing volunteers is that there is no additional budget for background check fees. They are struggling with funding, so it is difficult to spend more money on less important, non-essential items.

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#### **NEWARK**

Child care providers and preschool programs in Newark have highly engaged volunteers, from those who participate in classroom activities such as story time to those acting as chaperones on field trips. Despite this level of participation, many providers are reluctant to continue volunteer engagement. Inconsistency in attendance, lack of interest in activities, and overall tension between teachers and volunteers have made child care providers less inclined and more reluctant to accept volunteers. One preschool executive director had mentioned that her school had worked with over 4 separate volunteer organizations, and all of them sent volunteers ill-suited to work with young children. After repeated attempts to engage volunteers, she decided her time would be better spent elsewhere. The preschool no longer uses volunteers.

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#### **TOMS RIVER**

The YMCA affiliated preschool program reported some obstacles in utilizing volunteers, particularly with regards to scheduling. Volunteers required a great deal of coordination, and, at times, this degree of effort and involvement could be exhausting. A representative explained that volunteers themselves maintained inconsistent schedules and varying degrees of commitment to the program; family obligations, weather conditions, or a doctor's appointment could prevent a volunteer from giving their time to the organization without warning. For this reason, the sorts of responsibilities given to volunteers were limited, as they could not always be depended upon.

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**KEY TAKE-AWAY:** *In addition to the limitations on volunteer management due to funding constraints, many childcare providers recognized additional barriers to volunteer engagement based in the inconsistent attendance of volunteers, high level of coordination required to effectively engage volunteers, low skill level and lack of experience in early childhood of many volunteers, and the increased costs to conduct background checks and fulfill other state mandated requirements for volunteers. Without structured support and training, childcare providers may forgo engaging volunteers.*

#### **FINDING 7:**

**SUCCESSFUL USAGE OF VOLUNTEERS REQUIRES A COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.**

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#### **TOMS RIVER**

Both the YMCA affiliated preschool representative and the Head Start representative spoke of well-developed volunteer management systems. The YMCA affiliated preschool asks that volunteers complete an application which includes introductory orientation materials. This organization also requires a minimum of three references, either personal or professional, from volunteers as well as a criminal background check. Once an individual is approved for volunteer work, they are referred to the department director, who helps to

place the individual in an appropriate department. Additionally, there is a full-time staff person responsible for coordinating volunteering activities and schedules.

Head Start also utilizes a robust screening and placement process for volunteers. First, Ocean Inc. (the agency managing Head Start for Ocean County) actively recruits volunteers from the community, regardless of age, through community events, information fairs, and the circulation of brochures/flyers. Moreover, the Toms River Ocean Inc. office's proximity to county municipal buildings and the county library allows for pedestrian traffic to "walk-in" and request volunteer information; as such, information about volunteering for Head Start is quite accessible. Once volunteers express interest in the Head Start program, they are referred to a site supervisor who explains volunteer expectations and responsibilities. During these sessions with a site supervisor, volunteers are asked about their interests and wishes; site supervisors then attempt to place volunteers in a position that aligns with their interests in order to maximize their experience. Volunteers are required to sign in and out for each volunteer engagement, and they are managed on a daily basis by the head teacher of their assigned classroom. Subsequently, Head Start maintains a well frequented volunteer program, in which volunteers interact with students on a regular and recurring basis.

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## PATERSON

In Paterson, the New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC) engages volunteers through the AmeriCorps program to support programming in its five partner schools. The majority of AmeriCorps (participating through the direct service State and National program) are recent college graduates. Volunteers are recruited primarily through career fairs in the area and at area colleges/universities. Although the AmeriCorps program is managed nationally, NJCDC provides on-site orientation and training for all new corps members including a site visit in advance of the beginning of their corps year; corps members are briefed on the demographic needs of the community; and all corps members are supported with an on-site supervisor in addition to an organization coordinator. Our contact at NJCDC

stated that prioritizing communication among volunteer and managers/supervisors was crucial to the success of volunteers, especially since they are dealing directly with children.

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## JERSEY CITY

Inclusion of volunteers in Jersey City has great potential, but volunteer management is slightly disorganized. The consensus from interviewed providers is that they cannot spare staff to specially administer volunteers programs and handle related transactions because of a limited financial capacity. Some providers demonstrated that they do not actively recruit any volunteers. Since they do not have a central contact person for volunteers, the only way for local community members or parents to contact them is to repeatedly call the child care center to inquire about open positions or activities in need of volunteers. Consequently, the appropriate and efficient use of volunteers is difficult and seldom achieved. Most providers expressed a willingness to have outside organizations helping assist with the recruitment and management process. One of the interviewed providers collaborated with the Easter Seals of New Jersey<sup>38</sup> to improve volunteer management. Compared to other providers, its cooperation with this experienced organization has saved both time and energy in recruiting and training.

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**KEY TAKE-AWAY:** *Across the state providers have varying capacities to support volunteers through effective management practices. Providers that have dedicated staff and a structured program to manage volunteers are better equipped to utilize volunteers and have better experiences with volunteers. For many organizations a lack of funding and organizational know-how have limited the ability of childcare staff to recruit, support, and retain*

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<sup>38</sup> Easter Seals New Jersey is a nonprofit organization which provides services to the disabled and those with special needs. It also has a senior program to help the elderly re-enter society.

*volunteers. Partnerships with volunteer organizations have filled this need for some childcare providers allowing them to benefit from engagement with skill based volunteers.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations should be read as sequential—they are presented in a step by step fashion that seeks to facilitate an easy integration of Encore.org's presence in New Jersey's early childhood sector.

### RECOMMENDATION 1:

*ANTICIPATE COMMUNICATION WITH EARLY CHILDCARE PROVIDERS TO BE CHALLENGING.*

In the four locations explored, the directors of the childcare centers were hard-pressed to find time to discuss opportunities for Encore talent. It took researchers repeated outreach attempts, scheduling and rescheduling to speak with child care providers. It is our recommendation, when continuing outreach with early childcare providers, to provide ample time and resources for outreach and scheduling in order to ensure contact.

### RECOMMENDATION 2:

*UTILIZE CCR&R AGENCIES IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY PROMINENT/STABLE CHILDCARE PROVIDERS.*

Facilitating a relationship between Encore talent and early childhood education providers must begin with the proper identification of early childhood centers in need of the services Encore talent can provide. CCR&R agencies are a network of organizations created as resources for parents of students as well as for childcare centers themselves. As such, CCR&R agencies are familiar with the dynamics of the early child care centers in their area; they are responsible for keeping up-to-date records of early child care centers in their region. Therefore, in order to ascertain which centers in a particular area are in need of volunteer work or additional staff, Encore.org should first contact their local CCR&R agency, as opposed to searching for child



care center contact information via the web. Much of the contact information listed for early care providers on the internet may be incorrect or out of date. The position of CCR&R agencies enables them to be in constant contact with providers, and thus, enables them to provide reliable information.

#### RECOMMENDATION 3:

##### *BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH ORGANIZATIONS THAT CURRENTLY ENGAGE ENCORE TALENT.*

Launching a project in a new place always requires ample information to realize demands and resources. Local organizations or branches of several national nonprofits currently engaging Encore talent have already established a comprehensive system in recruiting, managing, and allocating Encore talents. They have a better understanding of the local nonprofit environment, state regulations, and residents' willingness to participate. Collaborating with experienced organizations could save time and generate useful strategies in leveraging talent and resources for the benefit of the local community. In New Jersey, there are existing programs for helping senior citizens using their talents to re-enter society, such as the Easter Seals' Senior Program, AARP, and United Way's *Success by Six*. These existing networks and connections serve as a platform from which Encore can build greater opportunities for talent to serve.

#### RECOMMENDATION 4:

##### *CREATE AN EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY TO WORKING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION*

The state of New Jersey, in order to work directly with young children, requires the acquisition of licenses and certifications. With requirements regularly changing, NJDOE has recognized the need to make this information readily accessible to those interested in entering early childhood education. NJDOE has placed all relevant memoranda and requirements on a centralized webpage<sup>39</sup>, but has yet to provide a step-

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<sup>39</sup> New Jersey Department of Education. "Educator Recruitment, Preparation, and Recognition." February 4, 2015. <http://www.nj.gov/education/educators/rpr/preparation/>.

by-step process to navigate licensing and certification. We recommend Encore.org take the initiative to streamline the process for Encore talent, in order to create an accessible pathway into early childhood education.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:**

*FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES LOOK TOWARD DIRECT CARE/CLERICAL POSITIONS.*

Given the constrained budgets of many child care centers, the opportunities for paid positions tend to be scarce. However, this financial limitation places a greater emphasis on the need for volunteer positions. Many child care providers welcome the opportunity to use Encore talent in roles that may involve direct care and interaction with students as reading tutors, play-time companions, and assistants to paid in-classroom staff. Early child care centers also express a need for clerical support on the part of volunteers with tasks such as answering phones and managing/organizing files. Many of these volunteer level tasks do not require a high degree of professional expertise, but they are an asset to many child care centers. Additionally, there is a place for skilled volunteer work (even if unpaid): the demand for multilingual volunteers continues to grow, especially in New Jersey's urban centers, and volunteers in organizations such as United Way's *Success By Six* utilize their previous professional backgrounds to assist child care centers. Encore talent interested in volunteer work or engagements with more flexible hours should look toward these aforementioned opportunities.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:**

*FOR PAID OPPORTUNITIES, LOOK FOR SPECIALIZED POSITIONS*

Childcare providers did not initially express paid opportunities for Encore talent, however, by the end of the interviews, childcare providers articulated a need for key positions within the childcare centers. Childcare centers need help with marketing, accounting, professional development of staff, and administration. The directors of the childcare centers expressed paid opportunities for the following

positions: receptionists, accountants, marketing specialists, education training specialists, executive directors, and administrative assistants. These positions do not all require a background in education, but do require some post-secondary education and training. These positions are also often left vacant because directors do not have the time to recruit for these positions, but recognize the immediate need. Encore talent that is interested in paid positions in early childhood education, would be well-advised to investigate similar opportunities to meet the needs of childcare providers.

#### RECOMMENDATION 7:

*DEVELOP A TALENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO ACT AS A BROKER TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF BOTH ENCORE VOLUNTEERS AND ORGANIZATIONS.*

Encore should focus on further developing tools to assess the needs of Encore talent and childcare providers, including organizational capacity, funding limitations, and language needs; providing support to match Encore talent with providers; and offering training for childcare providers who wish to engage Encore talent and skilled volunteers. Developing a *talent management system* would alleviate the additional stress of volunteer management on smaller sized childcare providers, who may lack the staff to do so, and would serve as a bridge between Encore talent seeking volunteer opportunities and centers in need of their services. Encore.org, as a third party organization outside of the currently stressed funding system, is positioned to provide direct consultation and management services to childcare providers. Many lack the human capital and financial resources to effectively manage volunteers in-house; a few organizations already report utilizing a third party volunteer management service.

#### CONCLUSION

Throughout the investigation, the research team has been mindful of Encore.org's plans for a national rollout campaign in the near future. This report is a preliminary effort to collect vital information that can be used to inform Encore.org's next steps. Although this study is qualitative by design, the information gathered

can easily inform next steps for a large scale quantitative study. The research team is confident in its findings that Encore talent can find a place to serve in early childhood education and, in fact, would provide experience, insights, and specialization that will meet the needs of early childcare providers.

## APPENDIX

### LIST OF ACRONYMS

**AARP – THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED PERSONS**

**ABBOTT– ABBOTT PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

**APPLES – ABBOTT PRESCHOOL PROGRAM LONGITUDINAL EFFECTS STUDY**

**ACNJ – ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN OF NEW JERSEY**

**CCR&RS – CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL AGENCIES**

**DFD – NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**

**DHS – NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

**DYFS – NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**ECE - EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

**NIEER – NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EARLY EDUCATION RESEARCH**

**NJDOE – NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**NJGOV – NEW JERSEY GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF VOLUNTEERISM**

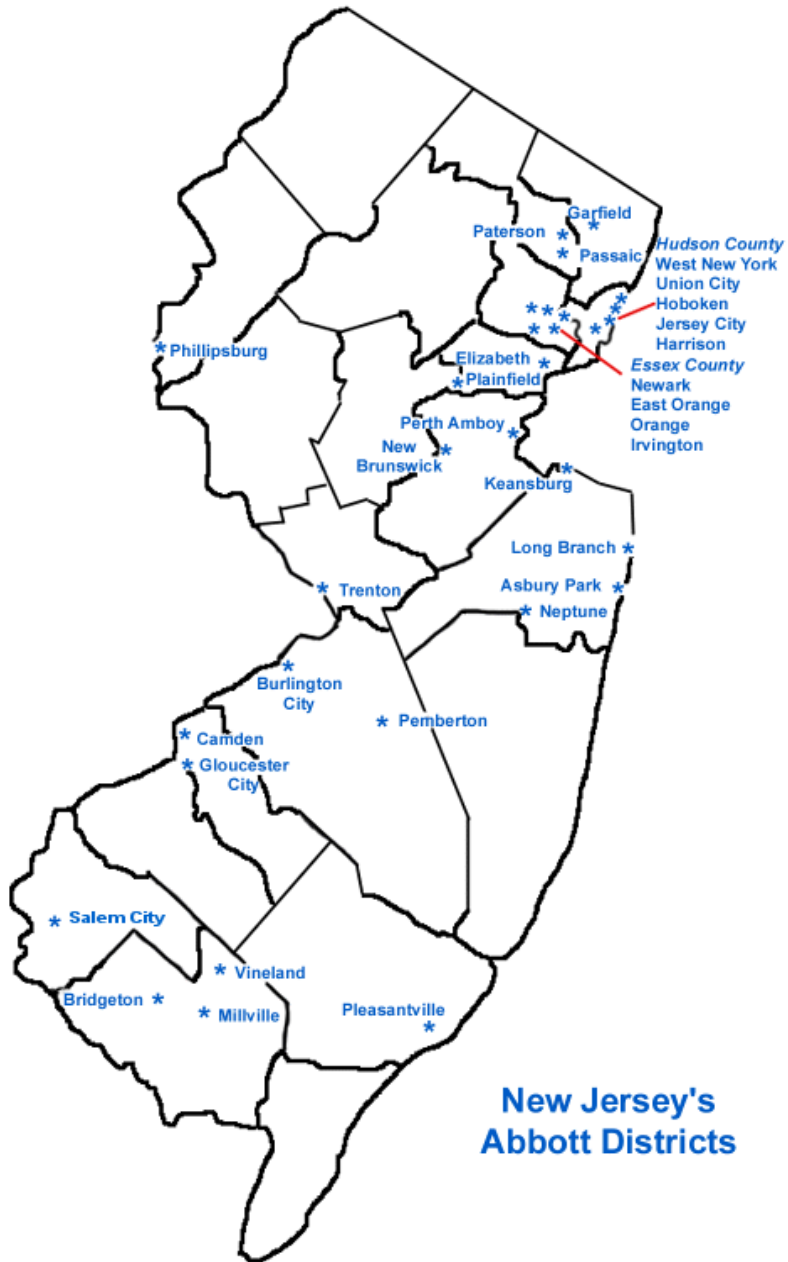
**PDP – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**QRIS – QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM**

**SB6 -- UNITED WAY'S SUCCESS BY SIX**

**SFRA – SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM ACT**

## NEW JERSEY'S ABBOTT DISTRICTS



Asbury Park  
 Bridgeton  
 Burlington City  
 Camden  
 East Orange  
 Elizabeth  
 Garfield  
 Gloucester City  
 Harrison  
 Hoboken  
 Irvington  
 Jersey City  
 Keansburg  
 Long Branch  
 Millville  
 Neptune Township  
 New Brunswick  
 Newark  
 Orange  
 Passaic  
 Paterson  
 Pemberton  
 Perth Amboy  
 Phillipsburg  
 Plainfield  
 Pleasantville  
 Salem City  
 Trenton  
 Union City  
 Vineland

Figure 1: <http://www.edlawcenter.org/cases/abbott-v-burke/abbott-districts.html>

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Provider	Contact Person	Phone	Email	Address	Encore Talent	Capacity
<b>America's Hope Day Care and Education</b>	Miss Chona	201-200-0100	NA	925 West Side Ave. Jersey City, NJ 07306	NA	Depend on cases
<b>Babyland Family Services</b>	David Riggo	973-817-8469	NA	755 S Orange Ave. Newark NJ 07106	NA	NA
<b>Bobbies Babies Child care &amp; Family Enrichment Center LLC</b>	Tangela Stewart	973-353-0102	tangela@bobbiesbabies.com	744 Broad St. Newark, NJ 07102	Yes	Consistent
<b>Boys &amp; Girls Club of Hudson County</b>	Adam Jaeger	201-333-4100	ajaeger@bgchc.org	225 Morris Blvd. Jersey City, NJ 07302	Yes	Inconsistent
<b>Busy Place Early Learning Center</b>	Miss Joselys	(201) 217-1441	<u>NA</u>		NA	NA
<b>Canaa Day Care Center</b>	Mel	973-344-6775	NA	205 Thomas St. Newark, NJ 07114	Yes	Case by Case
<b>Concordia Learning Center</b>	Migdalia Viole	201-876-5432 ext. 101	mviole@clcnj.org	761 Summit Ave. Jersey City, NJ 07307	Yes	Depend on programs
<b>Early Childhood Center of the Ironbound</b>	Monica Vines	973-589-8695	NA	697 Market St. Newark, NJ 07105	Yes	Inconsistent
<b>French Academy of Jersey City</b>	Guitty Roustai	(201) 459-6462	groustai@faacademy.org	209 Third St. Jersey City, NJ 07302	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Jersey City Public School</b>	Dr. Patricia Bryant	201-915-6045	<u>pbryant@jcboe.org</u>	346 Claremont Ave. Jersey City, NJ 07305	Yes	Inconsistent
<b>Newark Public Schools Office of Early Childhood</b>	Nan Ofosu-Amaah	973-733-6234	famaah@nps.k12.nj.us	2 Cedar St. Newark, NJ 07102	Yes	Inconsistent

<b>Ocean Inc. Ocean County Head Start</b>	Kathy Werner	732-244-5333	<a href="mailto:kwerner@oceaninc.org">kwerner@oceaninc.org</a>	40 Washington St. Ste 1 Toms River, NJ 08753	Yes	Yes
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<b>Childcare Resource &amp; Referral Agency</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Encore Talent Engagement</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
<b>Programs for Parents, Inc</b>	Nancy DeFrank	973-744-4050 ext 1011	ndefrank@programsforparents.org	570 Broad St. Newark, NJ 07102	No	No
<b>The Children's Home Society of NJ</b>	Maureen Lawrence	732-557-9633 ext 108	mlawrence@chsof.nj.org	1433 Hooper Ave. Toms River, NJ 08753	No	Not in Toms River Office
<b>Urban League of Hudson County</b>	Elnora Watson	201-451-8888 ext. 246	ewatson@ulohc.org	253 MLK Dr. Jersey City, NJ 07305	Unknown	Unknown
<b>4Cs of Passaic County, Inc.</b>	Antonio DiNizo	(973) 684-1904	dinizoad@aol.com	2 Market St, Suite 300, Paterson, NJ 07501	Unknown	Unknown

<b>Volunteer Organizations</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Encore Talent Engagement</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
<b>United Way: Success By Six</b>	Kathy Kwasnick	973-579-3040 ext. 130	kathy.kwasnick@unitedwaynnj.org	Yes	Yes
<b>RSVP</b>	Stephanie Grove	973-637-1766	sgrove@jfsmetrowest.org	Yes	Yes



## DISCUSSION GUIDE: EARLY CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

### *Community served by the center:*

1. How many children are served by this center? What is the age range?
2. Is there a specific curriculum used (may not be an academic component for day cares)
3. Education model-holistic (covering nutrition, health, family welfare “whole child”)

### *Staff Members-Structure:*

1. Are there a variety of position available - varied job roles?
2. Who does bookkeeping, who does advertising, who does state reporting, how do you find clients?
3. If you have volunteers, are the responsibilities for volunteers restricted in any way versus employed?
4. Do you currently have volunteers, if so, how is that managed? if not, why not?

### *Volunteer Engagement-experience with volunteers:*

1. Have you engaged volunteers? Why or why not? Do you actively recruit volunteers?
2. Are you able to use volunteers?
3. Volunteer terms? long term (repeated engagement) (let them define time length) versus short term (one time i.e. painting projects)
4. Describe experience with volunteers: challenges and benefits
5. May be applicable to public preschool programs: have you worked with outside volunteer management? i.e. Americorps or AARP
6. Talk me through the volunteer process: how do you initiate/orient volunteers? (Is there a screening process, orientation, review of expectations; is there a written code of conduct, or is it verbal; is there a receiving area for volunteers--sign in book)
7. How do you follow-up with volunteers? (means of communication, scheduling)

### *Discuss opportunities for Encore talent--identify the needs of child care center*

1. What are some ways that they can better serve their kids
2. You had volunteers available what would you have them do
3. What problems/challenges do you face on a daily basis (i.e. tardy parents, tardy staff, resource shortages for materials/food/etc)
4. Challenges with reporting requirements, maintaining state regulations
5. If you could change one thing with the child care center, and resources were not a limitation, what would it be?

### *Assessing Encore Friendliness*

#### *Workplace flexibility*

1. Are there shifts that people work (or is it 9-5) shorter shifts (2-3 hours); i.e. web design, would you hire a contractor to do that?

#### *Accessibility*

1. How do your kids get here (is there public transportation)
2. What are the physical demands of this job (labor intensive)
3. If you were able to get volunteers who have retired, how could you see yourself using this resource?
4. Do you see any challenges with having older (50+) volunteers?
5. Why or why not: elderly volunteers?

#### *Outro*

What haven't I asked that I should have asked?

Who else should I talk to? Please introduce me!

## DISCUSSION GUIDE: ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS

### *Introduction*

- Introduce yourself (Rutgers student, Encore research)
- Inquire about their position, how long they have been there, their responsibilities.

### *State/City-Wide Early Childhood*

1. What do you see as the most eminent concerns facing the early childhood sector in New Jersey? (staffing, credentials, facilities, resources)
2. How does New Jersey compare to other state's early childhood requirements and standards? Do we have more restrictions than other states? Does the state make it easier or harder for childcare providers?
3. What are some of the common complaints you have heard from childcare providers? What services or resources do they lack?
4. How would you describe your relationship to child care providers? Are there a number of different providers within different sectors (public, private, non-profit)? If so, how often do you interact and on what basis (monthly, weekly, in-person or not)?

### *Staffing/Credential Concerns*

1. How hard is it to obtain qualified and motivated staff?
2. Do you experience a high degree of turnover in staff within your early childhood centers?
3. Give me a snapshot of the typical early childhood teacher or teachers assistant....how much education have they had and how old are they?
4. Do you advocate the use of volunteers within early childhood? And if so, in what capacities (reading tutors, secretarial/book-keeping work, etc.)?

### *Volunteer Positions*

1. Has your organization or district utilized volunteers in the past? If so, from where did you recruit your volunteers?
2. What are your organizational requirements for volunteering? Can you talk me through the process of becoming a volunteer with your organization? Is there an application? Where do volunteers access information about your organization? Do you advertise for volunteers? Is there a central contact person in the organization for volunteers?
3. What do you look for in volunteers? Do you have a profile of an ideal volunteer? Skills? Characteristics?
4. With current volunteers, do you mostly engage episodic, short term, or long term volunteers?
5. How do students and parents typically react to outside involvement on the part of volunteers?

### *Encore Friendliness*

1. 1. We are working for an organization interested in opportunities (paid or volunteer) for older Americans (50+) within the early childhood sector, what do you see as opportunities or as barriers for this demographic?
2. Are these barriers embedded in policy?
3. If you do utilize older Americans as paid or volunteer staff, in what roles do they participate? Is there room for expanded roles? What do older volunteers/staff excel at?
4. What else should I ask that I have not? And who else should I speak with? Introduce me!

## PROVIDER QUESTIONNAIRE

Upon completion of the report, the team decided it would be beneficial to create a questionnaire that could potentially be used in the ongoing initiatives of Encore.org. The following pages represent the final deliverable of our consultation based on the objectives defined for the initial product.

## 2015 New Jersey Early Childhood Questionnaire

Encore.org is interested in learning about early childcare providers and their needs. The information collected will be used to inform our work with post-career volunteers who are interested in early childhood centers in New Jersey. This survey is completely voluntary and your participation is highly valued.

Please allow 10 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

### Section A: Profile of Childcare Center

1. Please indicate the number of students currently enrolled in your center:

# Half Day Students

# Full Day Students

2. Please indicate the number of workers currently at your center:

# Part Time Workers

# Full Time Workers

3. Are any of your current full or part time workers volunteers?

☐ YES → Go to Question 4

☐ NO → Go to Section C

4. Approximately what percentage of your volunteers are over age 50?

%

## Section B: Childcare Centers with Volunteers

1. What sorts of tasks do your volunteers perform? *Check all that apply.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Teacher's Helper       | <input type="radio"/> Tech Support               |
| <input type="radio"/> Receptionist           | <input type="radio"/> Professional Development   |
| <input type="radio"/> Bookkeeping/Accounting | <input type="radio"/> Outreach/Recruiting        |
| <input type="radio"/> Translator             | <input type="radio"/> Any Others (specify) _____ |

2. From which of the following do your volunteers come? *Check all that apply.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Walk-ins                     | <input type="radio"/> AmeriCorps                       |
| <input type="radio"/> Students' Families           | <input type="radio"/> Senior Citizens (people over 50) |
| <input type="radio"/> High School/College Students | <input type="radio"/> Religious Organizations          |
| <input type="radio"/> AARP                         | <input type="radio"/> Other (specify) _____            |

3. Which of the above is your main source of volunteers? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What *percentage* of your volunteers are:

% Regular/Recurring

% Occasional/Episodic

5. Describe your satisfaction with your current volunteers. Are you satisfied with

- ☐ All of them
- ☐ Some of them
- ☐ A few of them
- ☐ None of them

6. Please indicate how much of a problem you have had with volunteers. *Check all that apply.*

	Major Problem	Minor Problem	Not at all
Scheduling/Attendance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clarity of Responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tensions with Paid Staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Level of Familiarity with Education Standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inexperience with Children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### Management

7. Is there a person in your organization who coordinates volunteers?

☐ YES → Go to Question 8

☐ NO → Go to Question 9

8. Approximately how many hours per week do they spend on that task?

9. Is volunteer management a problem, if so, how much?

☐ Major problem

☐ Minor problem

☐ No problem

10. For new volunteers is there a(n) \_\_\_\_\_? *Check all that apply.*

☐ handbook

☐ orientation

☐ training



11. Is there a volunteer interview process?

☐ YES

☐ NO

**Continue to Section D**

### Section C: Centers without Current Volunteers

1. Please indicate which reasons influenced you to **NOT** engage volunteers and how much each reason influenced your decision?

	Major Influence	Minor Influence	No Influence
Previous bad experiences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do not know where to find them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do not need them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Association with lower quality work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do not have time to manage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Failure to meet state regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concerns over liability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Too small a center, limited space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Have you engaged volunteers previously?

☐ YES → Go to Question 3

☐ NO → Go to Question 4

3. Would you consider engaging volunteers to fulfill the following roles? *Check all that apply.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Teacher's Helper       | <input type="radio"/> Tech Support               |
| <input type="radio"/> Receptionist           | <input type="radio"/> Professional Development   |
| <input type="radio"/> Bookkeeping/Accounting | <input type="radio"/> Outreach/Recruiting        |
| <input type="radio"/> Translator             | <input type="radio"/> Any Others (specify) _____ |

4. If you could partner with an organization that coordinates volunteers, would you use volunteers?

- ☐ Definitely      ☐ Probably      ☐ Unsure      ☐ Probably Not      ☐ Definitely Not

#### Section D: Center Needs

1. What are your current unmet needs?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Funding                | <input type="radio"/> Translating                    |
| <input type="radio"/> Building Maintenance   | <input type="radio"/> Professional Development       |
| <input type="radio"/> Marketing              | <input type="radio"/> Recruitment                    |
| <input type="radio"/> Web Design             | <input type="radio"/> Reception/Administrative Tasks |
| <input type="radio"/> Others (specify) _____ |  |

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your feedback is highly valued and most appreciated.