



Office of Early Childhood City Council Hearing

May 6, 2025

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BOSTON'S COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN & FAMILIES



The Office of Early Childhood was established in 2022 to advance the Mayor Wu's Administration's vision of making Boston *First for Families*. We support the wellbeing and flourishing of all infants, toddlers, and young children growing up in the City of Boston.

Early Education and Care

The background image is a serene park scene. In the foreground, a lush field of white tulips is in bloom. Behind the flowers, a calm body of water reflects the surrounding greenery. Large, leafy trees frame the water. On the right side, two people are walking along a path that runs parallel to the water. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Investments in Stability & Quality

1. Opened 34 new family child care across all neighborhoods
2. Provided 107 financial and marketing/communications courses through CEF
3. Produced the third Child Care Supply and Demand Report
4. Invested in Nutrition and Movement cohorts with BPHC. We have trained over 74 FCC providers, their staff, and parents on the importance of nutrition, movement and getting off screens for young children.
5. Created a Farm to Table curriculum with Mass Audubon and will provide gardening beds and training for over 50 providers in June
6. Provided training on Ages & Stages, Touchpoints and MASSAIM endorsement
7. Produced better communications for families and providers to access services

Family Child Care Road Map



Boston Pre-K

Boston Pre-K is a high-quality, highly affordable Pre-Kindergarten program available to families in Boston, funded and administered by Boston Public Schools.

It uses the nationally-acclaimed “Focus Curriculum,” a play-based curriculum focused on early literacy and whole-child development for children ages 3 & 4.

Boston Pre-K is more than childcare. It’s an opportunity to positively guide the path of your child’s life – an opportunity every child and family deserves.



76

Boston Public
Schools



37

Community-Based
Organization
Programs



8

Independent
Schools



11

Family
Child Care

Access: Great Starts Enrollment Platform

Great Starts provides access to child care and PK-12 school information for all children in the City of Boston. It also simplifies the registration process and generates more traffic and visibility for Boston Public Schools.

Streamlining and Simplifying Processes for Families and Administrators

City of Boston child care finder from Birth up to Pre-Kindergarten

Addresses the gaps families experience across programs

Find and Apply for Boston PreK and K-12

Multilingual (10 languages)

Mobile and User friendly



A scenic view of a park with a lake, trees, and white tulips. The foreground is filled with a dense field of white tulips. In the middle ground, a calm lake reflects the surrounding greenery. Two people are walking along a path on the right side of the lake. Large, leafy trees frame the scene on both sides. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

Connect, Learn, Explore

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

- **Connect, Learn, Explore** aims to ensure that all young people in Boston should learn to swim, connect with the arts, play a sport, learn to bike, and develop a connection to nature
 - Expanded Summer Biking with 22 Success Link participants at 7 locations across the city; 5 parks and 2 BCYF
 - Reintroduced Youth Cycling Program at BPS schools: provided instruction at 13 schools during the school day for 3200 children
- **International Day of Play** Boston celebrated the first day of play on City Hall Plaza in 2025 and has started planning for this year on the plaza, in our schools, at BCYF, and in community health centers.



Event at David Ellis BPS School

Key Partners: Highland Street Foundation, Children's Hospital, New England Conservatory, and many others

BIKE TOWNS: MOAKLEY PARK, SOUTH BOSTON



Extreme Heat & Young Children

A scenic view of a park with a lake, trees, and white tulips. The foreground is filled with a dense field of white tulips. In the background, a calm lake is surrounded by large, leafy trees. Two people are walking along the shore of the lake on the right side.

CLIMATE AND HEAT

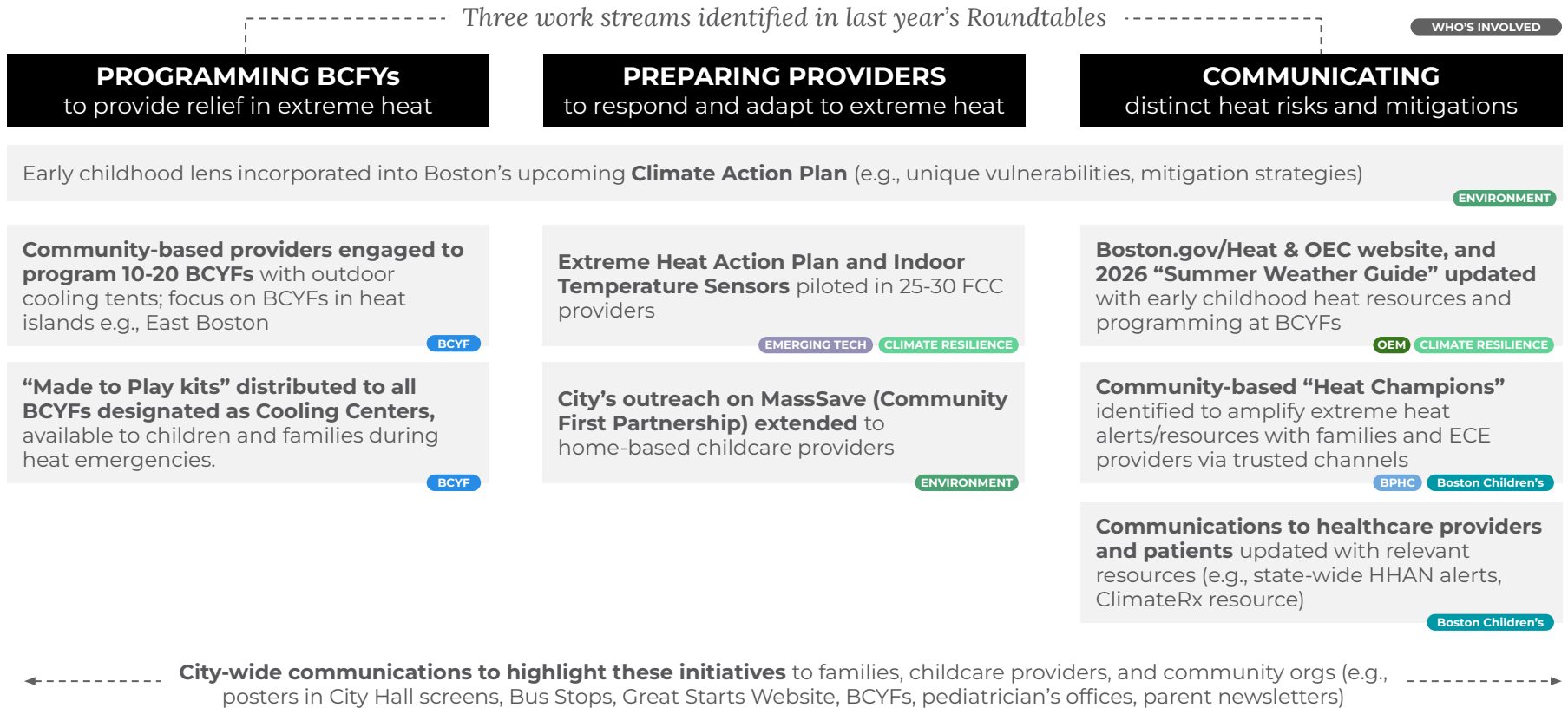


In 2024, the Office of Early Childhood hosted a three part round table with Harvard's Center for the Developing Child to explore the **impact of heat on young children and coordinate efforts across city cabinets**. Three pilots have been launched for this summer.

- Cooling Retrofits for child care providers
- Third Space options during heat emergencies geared at families with young children, and
- Outreach and communication strategies to parents of young children regarding municipal cooling initiatives.

Key Partners: Harvard Center for the Developing Child & East Boston Social Center

EXTREME HEAT AND CHILDREN



EXTREME HEAT AND CHILDREN

The Heat Action Plan & Temperature Sensor Pilot equip ECE providers with an Action Plan to protect young children during periods of extreme heat, and indoor temperature sensors so they know when to act.

Piloted with 25-30 FCC providers

ACTION PLAN

Before

How to prepare for a heat event?

Plan your programming: Provide opportunities for children to cool down with water-based activities such as swimming, water play, or running through sprinklers.

Educate on Heat Safety: Teach children about the importance of staying hydrated, seeking shade, and recognizing the signs of heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Encourage them to speak up if they feel unwell.

Create a Cool Environment: Use fans, air conditioning, or evaporative coolers to maintain a comfortable indoor temperature. Keep curtains or blinds closed during the hottest part of the day to block out sunlight.

Be aware of heat stress symptoms: Understand how extreme heat impacts young children, including symptoms of heat stress such as irritability.

During

What to do during a heat event?

Stay hydrated and seek shade: Encourage children to drink plenty of fluids, preferably water, throughout the day. Use misting fans or spray bottles to cool their skin.

Seek Shade: When outdoors, find shaded areas such as under trees, canopies, or umbrellas to provide relief from direct sunlight.

Limit outdoor activities and physical activity: During the hottest parts of the day, ideally between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM, avoid strenuous activities and games that may increase body temperature and lead to heat exhaustion or heatstroke. Instead, opt for quieter indoor activities during the hottest times of the day.

Dress Appropriately: Dress children in lightweight, loose-fitting clothing made of breathable fabrics such as cotton. Light-colored clothing can also help reflect sunlight and keep them cooler.

Apply Sunscreen: Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a high SPF rating to protect children's skin from harmful UV rays. Reapply sunscreen every two hours, especially if they are swimming or sweating.

Use fans and fans: Encourage children to wear hats for indoor fans and fans to provide relief from direct sunlight and humidity to avoid heat stroke and dehydration.

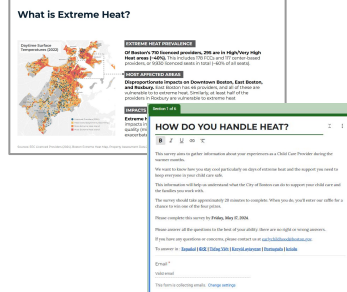
Simple, multilingual guide on how to protect young children in heat

SENSOR



Indoor temperature sensor providing alerts at 85F, 90F, and 95F

TRAINING & FEEDBACK



Webinar for participants; evaluation survey and 1-1 feedback interviews

NEXT STEPS

Exploring partnership with Boston University

Identifying pilot participants using Extreme Heat Survey

Incorporating feedback on Action Plan from parent partners