



Camden City Board of Education

*Early Childhood
Education Advisory
Council*

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Office of Early Childhood Education

2010

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I. Executive Summary

The Camden City Early Childhood Education Advisory Council (CCECEAC) was designed to support the efforts of the Office of Early Childhood Education in Camden City by promoting community collaborations and strengthening family involvement. The goal of this Council is to support children and families as life-long learners. The responsibilities of the Council include providing recommendations for planning and implementation of the program and participating in the development of the Five-Year Preschool Program Plan.

The Council's community partners include: Early Care and Education Providers, Community Development Institute (CDI) Head Start Program, Child and Family Advocates, Camden City Government, Health Agencies and Providers, Social Service Providers, Higher Education, Division of Children and Families (DYFS), Teacher's Associations, Philanthropic Organizations, The Business community, Neighborhood Organizations, Early Intervention/Special Education Advocacy Groups, and other community groups.

***“You really can change the world if you care enough”
-Marian Wright Edleman***

With the increasing number of changes in the infrastructure of our families due to various aspects such as: transitioning from one area to another, lack of economic resources, limited transportation, and minimal knowledge regarding the Office of Early Childhood Education, this Needs Assessment was created to determine and meet the needs of the population we serve. This assessment provides necessary data to govern the Office of Early Childhood Education in planning, budgeting, and offering these services. The data obtained from the sample size of 938 surveys (Appendix B) revealed that two areas in the City with the largest number of preschool aged children are East Camden and Fairview, with the other areas following. Consequently, the

outcomes of this assessment will continue to address enrollment needs, recruitment and academic excellence in hopes of reaching all eligible preschool-aged children in the City of Camden. We propose to maintain a collaborative approach for community outreach that is inclusive of both private providers as well as the Camden City Board of Education's in-district schools.

II. Office of Early Childhood Education Mission Statement

The Office of Early Childhood Education's mission is to provide an all-inclusive, high quality preschool education for 3 and 4 year old children who reside in Camden City. We believe early childhood is a crucial time in development that requires positive experiences from which children can develop and grow. We will:

- provide a safe and nurturing environment where children will play, explore, experiment, and develop a lifelong joy for learning
- utilize developmentally-appropriate practice and proven research to guide instruction
- implement a research-based curriculum with an aligned assessment system
- intentionally plan lessons, activities, and experiences that promote high expectations, exceed standards, and build a strong academic and social-emotional foundation
- promote acceptance and understanding of our unique and special attributes
- provide an inclusive program with appropriate supports and individualized plans as needed for children with special needs or dual language learners
- develop creative thinkers and problem solvers who make good choices and develop positive self esteem

- collaborate and partner with families, health service providers, and community stakeholders
- provide ongoing, comprehensive professional development to early childhood professionals who educate and support our children and families.

We also believe that children learn best by doing. Our approach is “**Help Me to Do It Myself,**” which allows children to become self-sufficient learners in the world in which they live.

III. Introduction

Children of today are our leaders for tomorrow. Our society is built upon the hard work and dedication of those who came before us. Children’s social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical development during the first five years will continue to impact a child as they develop into adulthood. Camden City is dedicated to promoting a strong foundation of support for our children and families. Exposure to a research-based, developmentally appropriate early childhood curriculum will further enhance Camden City’s families to prepare their children for today and the exciting potentiality of tomorrow.

A high-quality early childhood program provides children with a solid foundation on which to build their future education. Our early childhood staff and leadership understand that young children have unique learning styles and a great amount of energy. Each prekindergarten classroom should be an interesting, unique, and exciting place where active learning happens the moment the child walks through the door and continues throughout their lifetime. An effective early childhood teacher continually adapts and expands the curriculum by ensuring that they

incorporate developmentally appropriate practices to meet the needs and interests of individual children. Furthermore, **if parents are concerned that their preschool child is developing or learning differently, they can call and request an evaluation for preschool special education and related services at 856-374-6021 (birth-three), 856-966-6259 or 6260 (three-five).** The strong partnership developed between early childhood staff, administration, families, and the community will nurture our children to become confident life-long learners.

IV. History

Camden has experienced some extreme social and economic circumstances that have affected the success and survival of children and families. If this deprivation is left unaddressed it will have an adverse effect on our economy and our national preeminence. Therefore, it is imperative that intervention strategies be implemented that will provide opportunities for children living in these conditions to acquire the skills and concepts that will render them successful in the 21st Century.

The class size consists of 15 children, one Certified Teacher in Early Childhood Education, and one Instructional Assistant. Our classrooms provide developmentally appropriate activities for children to learn as they interact with materials, books, and people. We invite children to observe, experiment, and make their own choices. Our children begin a positive school experience as they learn socialization skills, enhance emotional development, and learn through play. The classroom environment is supportive and caring where the children can develop a sense of trust and belonging. The children's culture, diversity, and individual differences are recognized, respected, and celebrated. Through these positive experiences it is our goal to instill within our children an appreciation for life-long learning. The program is

designed to provide a smooth transition from home to preschool and from preschool to kindergarten.

V. Demographics

According to “Kid’s Count” 2010 Kids Count Key Data Trends:

- the number of children age 5 and younger increased slightly even as the overall child population declined
- mirroring a national trend, the New Jersey’s child population has grown more racially diverse. Nearly half of all children, 48% are African American, Hispanic, Asian or of mixed race.
- close to a third of all New Jersey children live in immigrant families
- more than three-quarters of children in immigrant families are bilingual
- enrollment in full-day, publicly funded preschool increased 12 percent over five years
- New Jersey far surpasses the U.S. average in the percentage of children enrolled in public or private preschool (ACNJ, 2010).

Camden City

The Camden City Board of Education has continued to respond to the New Jersey Supreme Court mandated school reform for the provision of preschool programs for children starting at the age of three. The New Jersey Department of Education’s increased funding to the Camden school district provided an opportunity to extend services to preschool children “to provide a ‘thorough and efficient system of education’ and to “ensure both equity and excellence are afforded to all students in New Jersey” (Muirhead, Tyler, & Hamilton, 2001, p1).

Camden City has a relatively young population in comparison to New Jersey based on the 2000 census. Thirty-five percent of Camden City's population is under the age of 18 while only twenty-five percent of New Jersey's population is under 18. Statistics have shown that the demand for affordable, quality preschool and child development opportunities has dramatically increased.

Based on trends in the Census data, Camden is on track to become a majority Latino city at some point in the near future. Historically, Camden's Hispanic population has been predominately Puerto Rican. However, between 1990 and 2000, Mexicans and Dominicans were the fastest-growing Hispanic populations. Although based on a small sample, the American Community Survey (ACS) data suggests this growth in regards to the Hispanic population has continued to increase (US Census: American Community Survey).

The current trends are as follows:

- Puerto Rican population remains steady.
- White (non-Hispanic) and African-American populations have declined.
- Dominican, Mexican, and Vietnamese populations have increased (US Census: ACS).

Camden City has a relatively young population when compared to the State of New Jersey. In 2000 there were 7,302 children in Camden city under the age of five years and 8,153 children between the ages of five and eight years. It was noted by CamConnect reports that there were 1,719 births in Camden City in 2001 and 1,643 births in 2006. These figures have been projected to have increased slightly this year according to preliminary 2010 census figures (CamConnect, 2008).

**City Kids Count Data 2006
Camden City Profile
Early Care and Education**

	Year	City Average	City	NJ
Child Care Supply (Slots per 1,000 children 0-4)	2006	963	606	568
Percent of Children Enrolled in State-Approved Pre-K	2005/06	53	53	19

In a 2009 Community Assessment by CDI Head Start, the following results have been cited:

The "... 2007 American Community Survey Data shows the population in the City of Camden has declined by about 5, 000. Despite this, the estimated Head Start eligible population has increased from about 1,900 in 2000 to over 2,000 in the year 2007. This is due to the increase in 0-5 year olds and increasing poverty rates, particular among families with children under the age of 18, from 39.3% to 50%, and families with children under the age of 5, from 43.7% to 50%. It should be noted that these estimations are based on sample data and subject to a margin of error. Consequently, further analysis is needed" (CDI Head Start 2009 Community Assessment, p.3).

In addition to the information assessed for the population in the City of Camden as stated above, it was also found in the New Jersey Kids Count 2010 – The State of Our Children report that:

"... in the midst of this tough economy the state has achieved important successes for children and families. New Jersey has a nationally acclaimed preschool program that changes lives. More than 40,000 young children are enrolled in this high-quality, full-

day program that increases their chances of success in school and life” (ACNJ, 2010, p.3).

The overall estimated universe of children three-five years of age in the City of Camden to be served by preschool programs in general, has increased over the past several years as noted by the New Jersey Department of Education. Camden City Public Schools, Head Start, and Private Providers are statistically responsible for the quality and delivery of services to significant numbers of preschoolers as noted by the projected 2010 Census, Head Start Report, CamConnect Data, and 2010 New Jersey Kid’s Count (State of Our Children) Report.

VI. Long Range Facilities Plan

There are many changes and additions to the original Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) with the goal of successfully serving and accommodating all preschool-aged children of Camden City’s large community. Camden’s preschool students receive a highly qualified and developmentally appropriate educational program by attending an in-district school, approved private provider, or Head Start program, which are contracted with Camden City’s Board of Education.

Several new schools within the Camden City School district have been constructed and opened. The Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) opened in January 2009; Henry B. Wilson and Dudley Elementary Schools both opened in September 2009; and Octavius V. Catto Community School opened in August 2006.

A number of changes have been made with private providers and Head Start programs, including the building of state of the art facilities, discontinuing and/or downsizing various classrooms, as well as discontinuing classrooms that did not meet the high quality of standards

throughout the district. Since 2005, the following private providers were affected: Black People's Unity Movement (BPUM) South, Camden City YMCA, Mary H. Thomas, Neighborhood Center, Bernice Miller, Martin Luther King Child Development Center, Tranquility, BLV, Kids World Child Development Center, and Your Future Academy. Little Folk discontinued its contract with the school district due to Archway closing its Camden City program. Respond Inc. closed the Leaps and Bounds site which had two classrooms, and Head Start was reduced by one classroom due to not being fully enrolled by October 15 of 2009. Lastly, Camden County Council on Economic Opportunity Head Start (CCCOEO) is now the Community Development Institute (CDI) Head Start Program, which continues to serve our children throughout Camden City.

A. DISTRICT ENROLLMENT

IN-DISTRICT, PRIVATE PROVIDERS, and HEAD START

As of October 15, 2009, the Camden Board of Education accounted for 2,277 preschool students enrolled in the program. By the end of the 2009-2010 school year, the number of enrolled preschool-aged students increased to 2,353. It is estimated for the City of Camden that there are currently 2,716 preschool students (CDI Head Start 2009 Community Assessment). According to the district's count, there are approximately 1,111 preschool students in-district schools, approximately 888 preschoolers placed in private providers (School 50) and approximately 401 placed in Head Start (School 51) programs (See Appendix A-1).

For the 2010 – 2011 school year, enrollment for any regular and inclusive classroom setting was filled to capacity by October 15, 2010. There were 2,345 preschool-aged students enrolled and accounted for by October 15, 2010. Only 28 slots were available in the self-contained and autistic classrooms, which are housed at ECDC. All other in-district schools,

private providers and Head Start programs were filled to capacity. These numbers demonstrate a need for more classrooms throughout Camden City.

According to a family survey collected by the Early Childhood Education Advisory Council, a majority of preschool-aged students reside in the East Camden section of Camden. The second largest representations of preschool-aged students reside in the Fairview area. These findings demonstrate a need to ensure appropriate classroom space in these specific areas to accommodate current and future family demographics (See Appendix A1 -11). Lastly, it is unknown how many children are in a private day care setting not contracted by the district, family-based settings that accommodate children ages three to five, or children who remain at home until kindergarten.

Eligible students must be 3 years old on or before October 1 of the upcoming school year in order to be registered as a student. However, a student requiring early intervention services can be registered upon turning 3 years old regardless of the date of birth. In-district students are categorized as “PK3” or “PK4” depending on his or her date of birth; private provider students are categorized as “PP3” or” PP4”.

B. SCHOOL & CLASS INVENTORY

The Camden City school district currently has 21 elementary schools with 18 serving preschool-aged students. The following represent in-district elementary schools with preschool-aged classrooms: Henry L. Bonsall School, Octavius V. Catto Community School, Cooper’s Poynt School, Alfred Cramer School, Riletta Twyne Cream School, Dr. Henry H. Davis School, Dudley Elementary School, Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC), Lanning Square School, Francis X. McGraw School, Rafael Cordero Molina School, Harry C. Sharp School, Charles Sumner School, George Washington School, John Greenleaf Whittier School, Dr. Ulysses S. Wiggins School, Henry B. Wilson School, and Yorkship School. (Refer to chart 1).

For the 2010-2011 school year, there are a total of 78 in-district classrooms and 1,128 available slots to include regular and special education students. ECDC has increased to 30 preschool classrooms due to high demand in attendance. According to the New Jersey Administrative Code Titles 6 & 6A, (2009-2010) "...The district board of education shall ensure that one appropriately certified teacher and one appropriately qualified teacher assistant, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:13A-4.3(f) and (g) are provided for every preschool class of 15 children. Class size shall not be greater than 15 children".

Chart 1

School Name	Address	# of classes	# of slots
Henry L. Bonsall School	1575 Mt. Ephraim Ave, Camden, NJ 08104	3	45
Octavius V. Catto Community	3100 Westfield Ave, Camden, NJ 08105	6	90
Cooper's Poynt School	3 rd & State Sts., Camden, NJ 08102	5	75
Alfred Cramer School	2800 Mickle St., Camden, NJ 08105	1	15
Riletta Twyne Cream School	1875 Mulford St., Camden, NJ 08104	1	15
Dr. Henry H. Davis School	3425 Cramer St., Camden, NJ 08105	2	30
Dudley Elementary School	Federal & State Sts., Camden, NJ 08104	4	60
Early Childhood Development Center	1602 Pine St, Camden, NJ 08103	30	380
Lanning Square School	1020 3 rd St., Camden, NJ 08103	3	45
Francis X. McGraw School	3051 Fremont St, Camden, NJ 08105	1	15
Rafael Cordero Molina School	601 Vine St., Camden, NJ 08102	4	60
Harry C. Sharp School	928 North 32 nd St., Camden, NJ 08105	1	15
Charles Sumner School	1600 South 8 th St., Camden, NJ 08104	4	60
George Washington School	1033 Cambridge Ave., Camden, NJ 08105	2	30
John Greenleaf Whittier School	740 Chestnut St., Camden, NJ 08103	1	15
Dr. Ulysses S. Wiggins School	400 Mt. Vernon St., Camden, NJ 08103	3	45
Henry B. Wilson School	855 Woodland Ave., Camden, NJ 08104	4	60
Yorkship School	1251 Collings Ave., Camden, NJ 08104	3	45

Currently, there are 12 private providers to include the Community Development Institute Head Start program contracted with the Camden City Board of Education. The private providers (not including Head Start) have a total of 20 sites located throughout Camden City with a total of 58 classrooms and 870 slots for regular and inclusion preschool-aged students. The following are private provider programs: Black People's Unity Movement (BPUM) West, Broadway Family Center, Camden Day Nursery, El Centro Day Care Center, Hispanic Day Care, Mi Casita, Respond, Inc., Rowan University Childcare, Rutgers Early Childhood Program, St. Joseph's Child Development Center, and Labar Ward Center for Children. The Community Development Institute (CDI) Head Start program has a total of 4 sites located throughout Camden City with a total of 25 classrooms and 375 slots for regular and inclusion preschool-age students. (Refer to Chart 2).

Chart 2

Private Provider & Head Start Programs	Location	# of classes	# of slots
Black People's Unity Movement (BPUM) West	501 West St, Camden, NJ 08103	2	30
Broadway Family Center	250 Line St, Camden, NJ 08103	2	30
Camden Day Nursery	327-331 Stevens St, Camden, NJ 08103	2	30
Community Development Institute (CDI) Head Start	500 Pine St, Camden, NJ 08103	25	375
Head Start Centerville	1475 S. 8th St, Camden, NJ 08103	8	120
Head Start Pierce Avenue	1700 Pierce Ave, Camden, NJ 08105	6	90
Head Start Pine Street	508-516 Pine St, Camden, NJ 08103	6	90
Head Start 27 th Street	804-806 N. 27th St, Camden, NJ 08105	5	75
El Centro Day Care Center	438 Martin Luther King Blvd, Camden, NJ 08103	4	60
Hispanic Day Care Center	3901 Westfield Ave, Camden, NJ 08105	4	60
Mi Casita			
Mi Casita East	2601 Carman St, Camden, NJ 08105	5	75
Mi Casita South	551 Spruce St, Camden, NJ 08103	4	60
Respond, Inc	532 State St., Camden, NJ 08102	20	300
Respond Bank St	155 Marlton Ave, Camden, NJ 08105	2	30
Respond Fairview	3001-07 Fenwick Rd, Camden, NJ 08104	5	75
Respond Linden St	400 N. 9th St, Camden, NJ 08102	4	60
Respond North	548 State St, Camden, NJ 08102	2	30
Respond Pyne Poynt	924 N. 8th St, Camden, NJ 08102	4	60
Respond State Street	6th & State St, Camden, NJ 08102	2	30
Respond Stockton	200 S. 27th St, Camden, NJ 08102	1	15
Rowan University Childcare	200 N. Broadway, Camden, NJ 08102	2	30
Rutgers Early Childhood Program (*Leap Academy Bldg.)	311 Cooper St, Camden, NJ 08102 *639 Cooper St., Camden, NJ 08102	4 2	60 30
St. Joseph's Child Development Center	17 Church St, Camden, NJ 08105	5	75
Labar Ward Center for Children	1101-1105 Broadway, Camden, NJ 08103	2	30

**C. FACILITIES STANDARDS and REQUIREMENTS (SUBCHAPTER 7.
Facilities 6A:13A-7.1 Space requirements)**

According to the New Jersey Administrative Code Titles 6 & 6A (2009-2010), the following are standards and requirements the Camden City School District shall ensure:

(a) The district board of education shall ensure, for all newly contracted private provider and local Head Start agency preschool classrooms, a minimum of 950 square feet per classroom consisting of 750 square feet of usable space, 150 square feet of storage and equipment or furnishings that are either built in or not easily movable and 50 square feet of toilet room.

(b) The district board of education shall ensure that all construction or alteration of playgrounds and playground equipment complies with N.J.A.C. 5:23-7 and 11, the barrier free sub code and playground safety sub code respectively found within the Uniform Construction Code.

(c) Any changes affecting the physical space or location of contracted private provider or local Head Start agency preschool classrooms require approval from the school district and shall meet the space requirements established in (a) and (b) above.³⁹

(d) The district board of education shall engage in systematic, long-range facilities planning to ensure that adequate facilities exist in the community to meet the elements of high-quality preschool established in this chapter.

D. SPECIAL EDUCATION INVENTORY

INCLUSION AND FACILITY PLANNING

The Office of Early Childhood Education is committed to meeting the needs of each and every preschool-aged student including those with special needs. Children with special needs are entitled to be educated in the least-restrictive environment to the maximum extent possible. For that reason, children with special needs who are placed in inclusive settings get the best of both worlds. Teachers modify and/or adapt the activities, materials, and environment while creating a regular routine to meet the needs of each individual child. Each child is exposed to positive

social interactions with typically-developing children and will receive any supports as outlined in their IEP within their natural environment - the classroom.

Currently, the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) models the least restrictive environment by offering the following educational settings: 10 self-contained classrooms and 20 regular/inclusion education classrooms. Furthermore, other in-district schools, private providers, and Head Start programs provide inclusive settings that further promote appropriate settings closest to the families' neighborhoods. Full support classrooms have been disseminated to promote opportunities for all children to be in a least restricted environment in order to meet the district's goal for inclusion students.

According to Individual Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), facilities shall meet the needs of all Special Education students who require services. Services include, but are not limited to, physical therapy (PT), speech therapy, occupational therapy (OT), modifications and other related services for behavioral/ medical issues. Spatial area is required to be able to provide such services.

Lastly, if parents are concerned that their preschool child is developing or learning differently, they can call and request an evaluation for preschool special education and related services at 856-374-6021 (birth-three), 856-966-6259 or 6260 (three-five).

E. OTHER SERVICES

1. Bilingual

The Office of Early Childhood Education (ECE) believes that dual-language homes create an opportunity for children to retain their home language as well as successfully learn English as part of their daily school experiences. Educational Program Specialists (EPS) work with individual teachers to develop weekly planning forms (lesson plans) that show English

Language Learner (ELL) strategies such as Picture Support Systems (Survival Phrases), props, acting out, gestures, and finger plays. The EPS stress the importance of choosing units of study that are relevant to the children's prior knowledge and support the ELL activities through read-alouds, songs, pictures, and repetition.

The classrooms are equipped with literacy materials in many languages, not just English. ECE staff provide district-wide professional development in techniques, strategies, and materials needed for creating language-rich environments that facilitate the support of the child's home language and development of English in their natural preschool environment. District staff and parent/community volunteers provide home language translation, explain cultural beliefs to program staff, and assist with outreach to families as needed.

The Office of Early Childhood Education strives to ensure that Bilingual services are available to both in-district, private providers, and Head Start. Currently, Bilingual schools include: Catto, Dudley, Sumner, and Bonsall. Bilingual services are based upon a language survey completed by the parent/guardian to determine the language of a family.

2. Wrap-Around

The Office of Early Childhood Education is committed to meeting the diverse needs of our families and children. Many of the Camden City families are employed and/or attend higher education or technical/vocational training programs. The purpose for expanding in-district wraparound services is to create more family schools and to meet the needs of families who need childcare before and/or after school that exceed the current six-hour programs. The in-district schools offer wraparound services through *Catapult*, a before-and-after school program. The private providers offer wraparound services through the *Abbott Voucher Program*. The goal is to expand wraparound services throughout the district to include ECDC, Catto, H.B. Wilson,

Dudley, Cooper’s Poynt, and Wiggins. The extended day program will allow children to start school at 7:30 a.m. and remain until 5:30 p.m. Parents can choose both the morning and afternoon option of extended day or one of the two depending on their needs. A typical school day for private providers usually starts at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. In-district schools start at 8:30 a.m. and end at 2:55 p.m.

3. Preschool Intervention & Referral Team (PIRT)

This team “is in place to assist preschool staff in addressing children’s *persistent* challenging behaviors (i.e. physical, social, and language). Through the development and implementation of an intervention plan and positive behavior support plan (PBS), teachers are given strategies and interventions that address a variety of *persistent* challenging behaviors in young children (i.e. aggression and lack of socialization), behaviors that may otherwise prevent successful participation in general education classrooms” (NJ DOE Preschool Implementation Guidelines, Aug 2008).

VII. Professional Development

Early Childhood Professional Development Advisory Council

The Camden City Office of Early Childhood will develop a collaborative and comprehensive partnership with community partners to seamlessly identify and promote awareness of existing resources that further enhance the holistic development of our community’s children, families, and early education professionals. The list is intended to promote networking opportunities so further trainings can be developed that benefit the professional development hours of early childhood professionals, or to help parents identify

critical partners that can sponsor family trainings on topics important to the Camden City community.

Chart 3

ECE higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rutgers University-Camden: <i>Childhood Studies/ECE:</i> Ingrid E. Campbell, 856-225-6739; <i>Teacher Preparation Program:</i> P-3: Dr. Sara Becker, 856-225-6409 Camden County College: Human Services/ECE: Dr. Fatimah Sedighi, 856-227-7200 x 4535
County social services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camden County Social Services Board 808 Market St Camden, NJ 08102 856-225-8891
County mental health supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.camdenhealth.org/index/CamdenResources_counselingandmentalhealth.cfm
Adults learning supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tests of General Educational Development (GED): http://www.state.nj.us/njded/students/ged/index.html Information on how to go about taking the Tests of General Educational Development (GED) and obtaining your New Jersey State-Issued High School Diploma. List of testing centers with contact information is provided. http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/forms_pdfs/edtrain/08%20ABE-%20Funded%20Grants%20Progr%20LIST.pdf <p>This comprehensive site lists all current state funded GED, ESL, and Adult Basic Education (ABE) providers across the state, ideal for transient families!</p>
Faith-based community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camden Churches Organized for People Camdenchurches.org
Nutrition (child/family)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rutgers Collaborative Extension: Robin E. Waddell 856-225-6169
Public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camden County Division of Community Health Services: (856) 225-5128 East Camden Regional Health Center 26th & Federal Streets Camden, NJ 08105 (856) 756-2264
Exceptional populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Early Intervention Collaborative at: 888-653-4463 or EICC@snjpc.org Camden City Board of Education: Dr. Jonathan C. Ogbonna, Director Special Services 201 N. Front Street Camden, New Jersey 08102 Main Office:(856) 614-7617 or (856) 614-7618
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.camden.lib.nj.us/reference/njresources.htm#education A great resource for anything New Jersey!

VIII. Community Definition

Community Collaboration

Young children learn and develop better when they have the support of families who, in turn, have the support of individuals and institutions from their communities. When families, communities, and schools collaborate regarding goals and how to reach them, everyone involved will benefit.

Our program has in place an Early Childhood Education Advisory Council. The mission of this council is to support the Office of Early Childhood Education in providing a solid foundation for learning to eligible three and four year old children in the City of Camden. This effort is done by promoting community collaboration and strengthening family involvement. The goal of the council is to support children as life-long learners. The responsibilities of the council include providing recommendations for planning and implementation of the early childhood program and participating in the development of the three-year plan. This council is representative of the community and includes private providers, families, higher education, mental health agencies, teachers (kindergarten and preschool), NAACP, social service providers, Head Start, child and family advocates, religious leaders, early childhood program staff and others deemed appropriate.

The Office of Early Childhood Education works together with the community to achieve our goals of providing values, culture, and learning that will improve the social, cultural, and vocational opportunities for all children and families. We also represent our program at various community committees that include the Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC), the Children, Youth and Families Sub Coalition (CPAC), the Camden County Covenant for

Children, Youth and Families, and Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies/Healthy Start of Camden City - providers meetings.

Community Involvement in Preschool Curriculum

The Carnegie Task Force (1996) indicates that “when parents...become actively involved in their children’s education at school and in the community, their children earn higher grades and higher scores on achievement tests than do those whose parents are uninvolved”. With this in mind, we stress the importance of our council and the involvement of both parents and community members in the education of all of our preschool children.

It is a known fact that as children learn about their world through concrete experiences, that they will discover how things and ideas connect and relate to each other. By taking children on walks in the neighborhood, to the local post office, to the local corner store and other places in the community, they will be able to gather first hand information that will enable them to answer questions, make discoveries, and construct meaning out of the connections and relationships they see. This will now enable teachers and parents to develop and expand on social studies lessons with the children.

Our curriculum, *Creative Curriculum.net*, emphasizes developing meaningful learning opportunities for children in a variety of contexts. We are proposing community involvement from our council to include making these opportunities available. We need to bring the *outside* community in to the classroom and, take the *inside* school learning out to the community.

IX. Family Resources

In September, family surveys are distributed to all preschool families to determine any services a family is in need of and what types of workshops families would like to attend.

Families are invited to ***Preschool Night***, held in October of each year, where parents and family members can attend to learn about what happens in preschool on a daily basis. Preschool Night focuses on topics that include, but are not limited to, Math, Literacy, Creative Arts, and Block Play.

Families are also invited to attend numerous workshops throughout the school year. The topics of these workshops include: Child Development, Creative Curriculum, Child Behaviors, Positive Discipline, Autism Spectrum Disorders, and Transitioning to Kindergarten, to name a few. Information is sent to families throughout the school year regarding GED classes, English Learning Classes, Parenting Classes, NJ Family Care, and other workshops and/or resources within the area.

At the end of the school year, ***Spring Extravaganza*** is held as a district-wide event to inform the entire Camden City community about our preschool program and encourage families to register their child (ren) in the program. Also, many community organizations attend this event to provide resources and information to families.

Due to the information we received from the parent survey we have found a need to collaborate with Camden City healthcare providers, such as; CAMcare Health Corporation, Cooper Pediatrics and Osborn Health Family Center; Faith Based Organizations and all of the social service agencies including Healthy Families, Hispanic Family Center, Center For Family Services and Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies/Healthy Start. The department will provide additional education on parenting, child development, immunizations, nutrition, dental and vision care information during the scheduled family workshops. With these new collaborations, we will be able to provide workshops that provide information for parents to understand their child's development and/or developmental delays and where they can seek further assistance.

We are building relationships with other social service agencies that focus on strengthening the family unit by providing education and resources that will help them maintain self-sufficiency and that will empower children with literacy, social skills, and values development.

Family Involvement

Children are the lifeline that binds a family together!

In the family structure, parents/guardians/family members serve as the child's first teachers. The educational process for young children in the City of Camden is greatly enhanced and strengthened through the Office of Early Childhood Education. Families can participate in many ways; these include, but are not limited to, the following: participation in the *Early Childhood Education Advisory Council*, attending parent workshops, volunteering in the classroom, engaging in child-centered activities as a family (*Preschool Night* and *Spring Extravaganza*), bringing learning into the home, having goals for participation in the child's education and to follow their child's progress through interacting with creative curriculum.net.

Family involvement and support make a critical difference!

X. Plan of Action

Proactive Approaches for Recruitment

We take a proactive approach to enrollment, recruitment, and outreach. Our program utilizes public awareness strategies such as fliers, cable television, public service announcements via the radio (in appropriate languages), billboards, and door-to-door contacts with families throughout the City of Camden.

We are always looking at which strategies work best and we plan to use these strategies to enhance our efforts to fill all slots and meet the needs of all families.

We designed our *Spring Extravaganza* to be utilized as an outreach vehicle to register families earlier by getting the information regarding our program out to the community in an educational, fun exciting day for families.

The Early Childhood Education Advisory Council (ECEAC) has created this Needs Assessment to address the “universe” to be served by the Office of Early Childhood Education in the future. We have gathered information regarding children within the City of Camden from birth to age five, where they are living, where they may be currently receiving services and other demographic information (Appendix B). This has been completed in collaboration with entities on the Council which include: Headstart, Private Providers, Families, the Community Planning and Advocacy Council (CPAC), Healthy Families Initiatives and more. We also work closely with the Camden County Covenant for Children, Youth and Families on these issues and others affecting the health and welfare of all children in Early Childhood.

XI. Evaluation

The ECEAC self assessment has forged alliances and partnerships that have converted good intentions into action. The Council promotes the development and enhancement of partnerships between Camden City families, the school board and the community. The ECEAC has created a self assessment to assist with maintaining the mission, goals, and efforts in developing a nurturing environment for Camden City’s three and four year old children. This self assessment is a method used for assessing what we are doing; why we are doing it; and what we need to do to improve ECEAC’s performance.

The ECEAC self assessment will insure that families are being strengthened through the continuum of preventive and supportive services. These services focus on healthy and positive outcomes for Camden City families and children. This self assessment is an ongoing process that will allow the Council the flexibility to make changes in the measures of obtaining those outcomes.

The ECEAC self assessment will allow families the opportunity to communicate in an open forum to share their individual perspectives in a candid manner; assuring that the information provided will be used to support meaningful change; showing families that they are an integral part in the process of planning, delivering, and evaluating educational services. The outcomes extend beyond the individual, the organization, and the community we are all accountable in making sure our children are life-long and self-sufficient learners (Appendix C).

XII. Conclusion

The Camden City Early Childhood Advisory Council has found this Needs Assessment to be a necessary document that will serve to support the Office of Early Childhood's mission to serve all eligible 3 and 4 year old children who reside in Camden City. The data demonstrated the need to ask families for their address to ensure accuracy of where they are located in the city. The assessment indicated a need to increase availability of spaces in various areas throughout the City, primarily in East Camden and Fairview. The Office of Early Childhood Education will now take this information into consideration when determining how we can expand services for the 2011-2012 school year.

XIII. Contributors

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Organization:</u>
Bailey, Linda	Camden Board of Education
Barfield, Kevin	Parent
Bey, Pauline	Parent Advocate
Burnett, Sylvania	Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies
Campbell, Ingrid	Rutgers University, Center for Childhood Studies
Chavis, Cheryl	Camden Board of Education
DeStratis, Chris	Camden Board of Education
Gonzalez, Migna	Camden Board of Education
Hines, Shandra	Camden Board of Education
James, William	Community Planning and Advocacy Council (CPAC)
Maronski, Barbara	Center for Family Services
McRae, Michele	Camden Board of Education
Miller, Michelle	CDI Head Start
Sanders, Phyllis	Department of Children Services
Schneider, Gladys	Camden Board of Education
Soltero, Kay	Camden Board of Education
Stone-Mitchell, Dr. Gloria	Respond, Inc.
Wilson, Martha	Camden City Board of Education
Woods, Rev. Calvin	Parkside United Methodist Church

XIV. References

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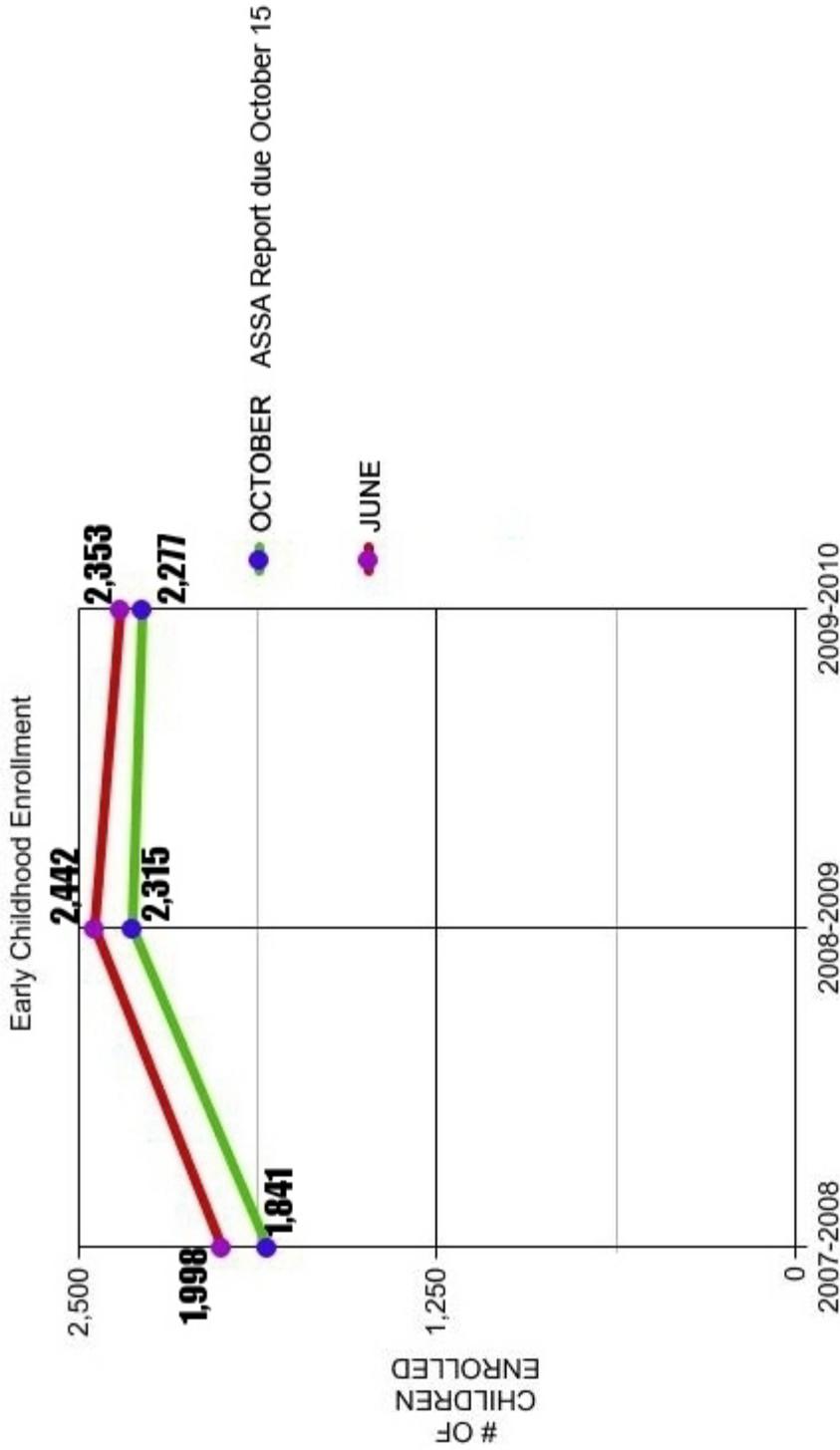
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APPENDIX A-1



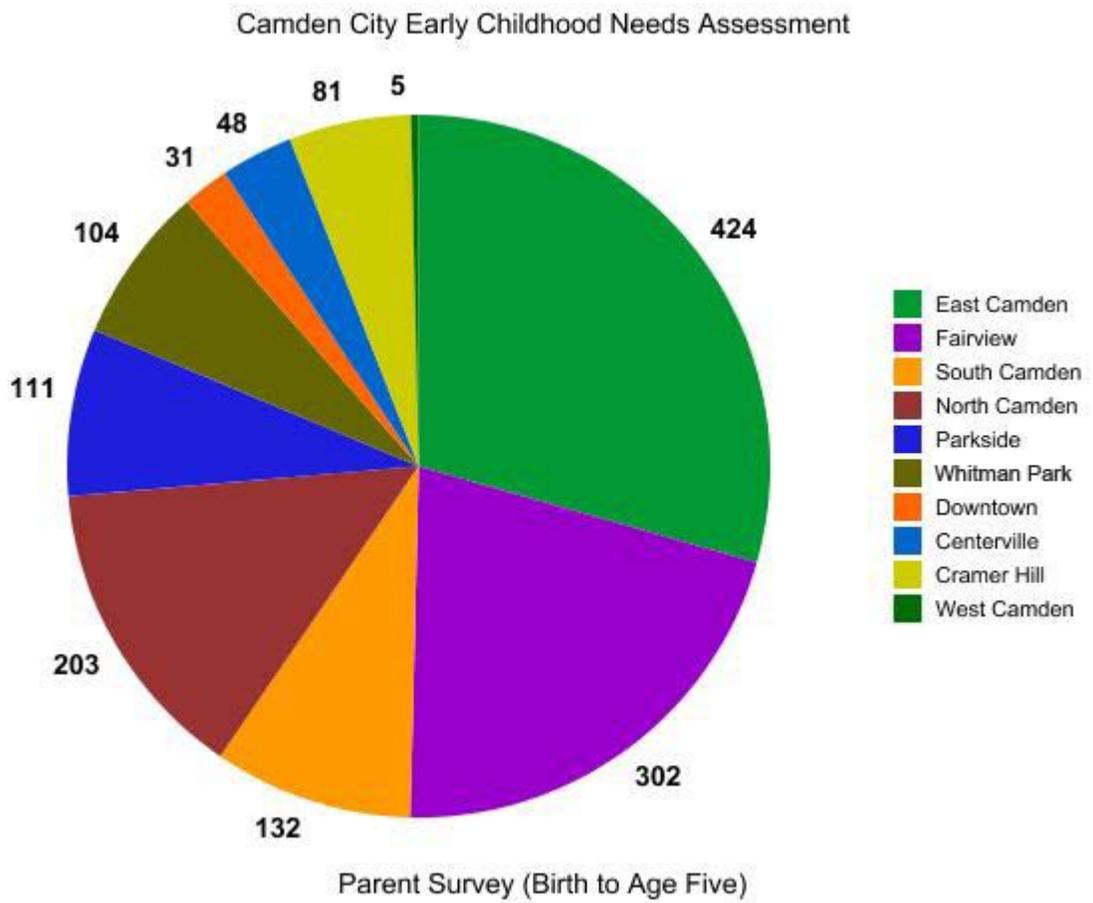
***Projection for 2010-2011: 2,396 children (with the ability to increase)**

****The numbers of children enrolled in October and June of 2009-2010 is lower than the recorded numbers in 2008-2009 due to the fact that the number of classrooms opened in in-district locations were less than the number of classrooms closed in child-care provider locations.**

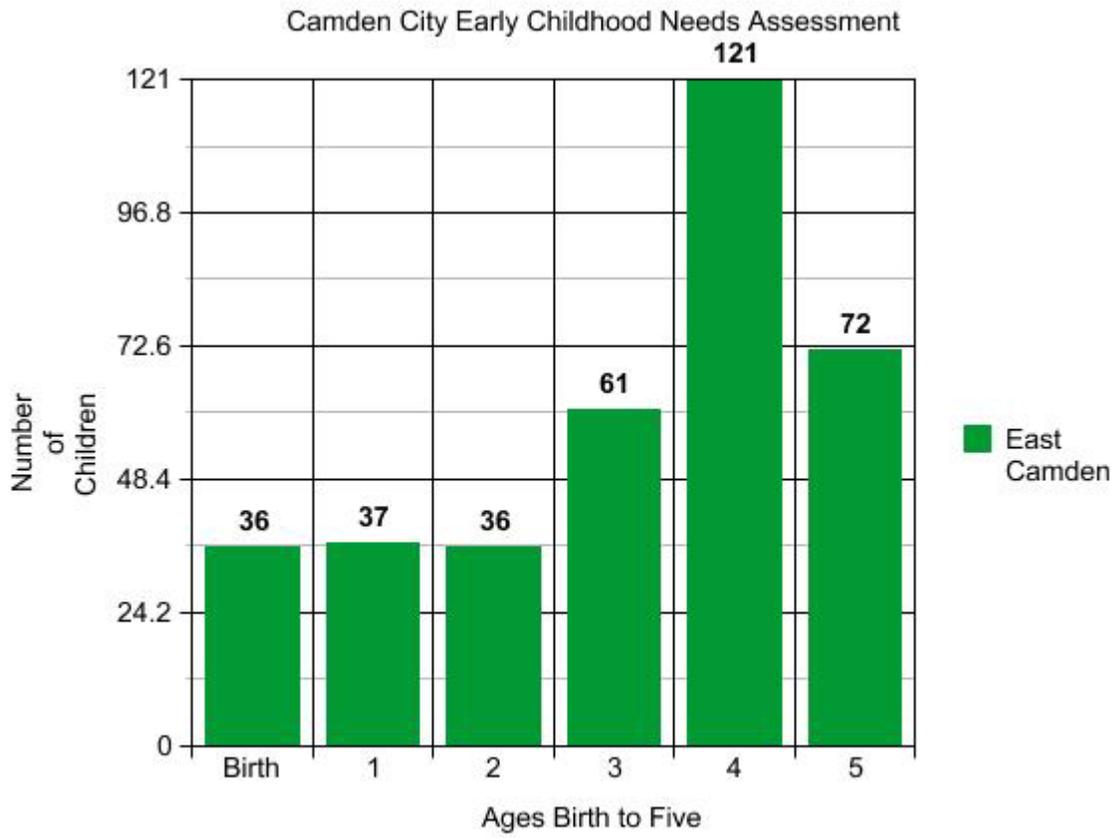
Graph created July 15, 2010

APPENDIX A-2

Needs Assessment – Chart 1

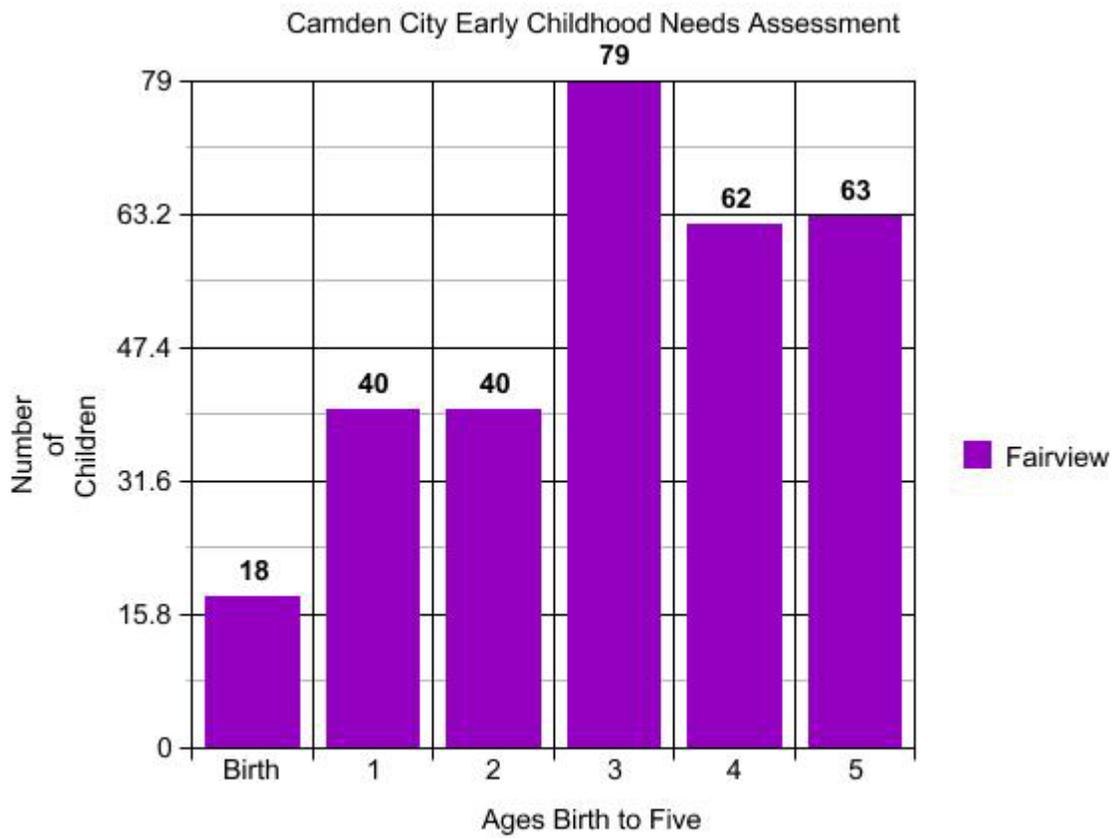


APPENDIX A-3



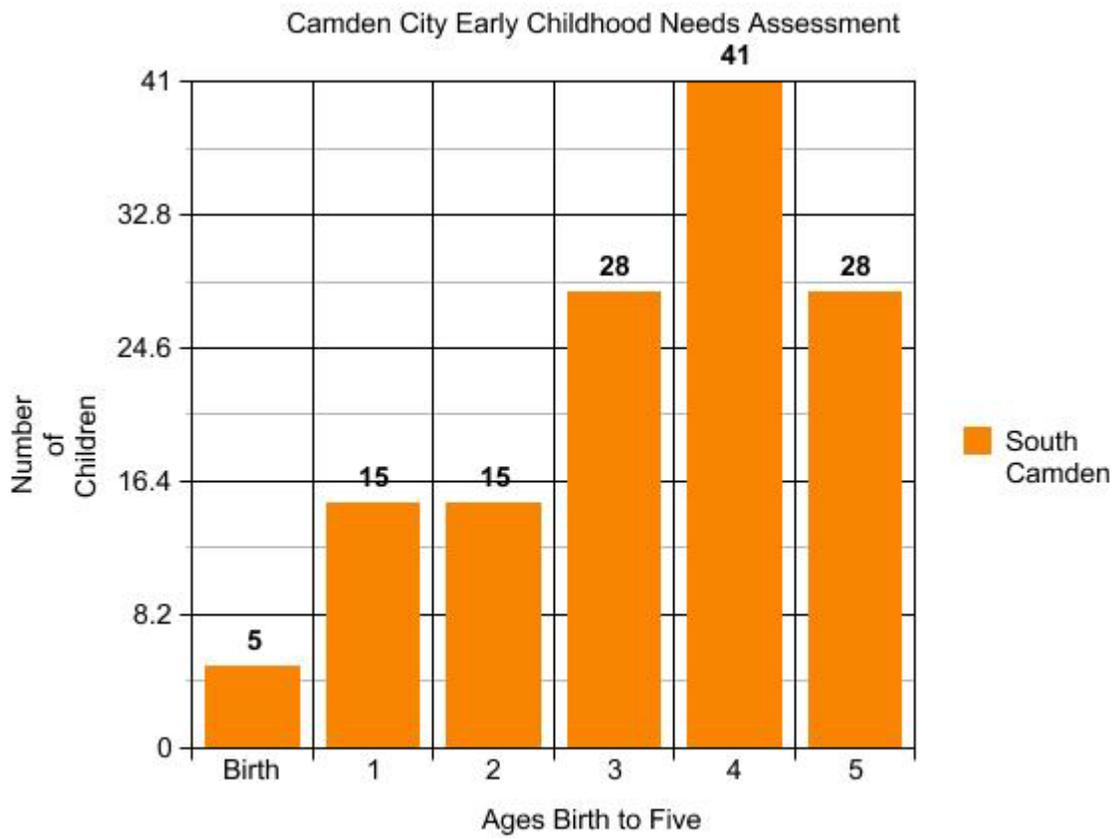
Parent Survey (Birth to Age Five) - East Camden

APPENDIX A-4



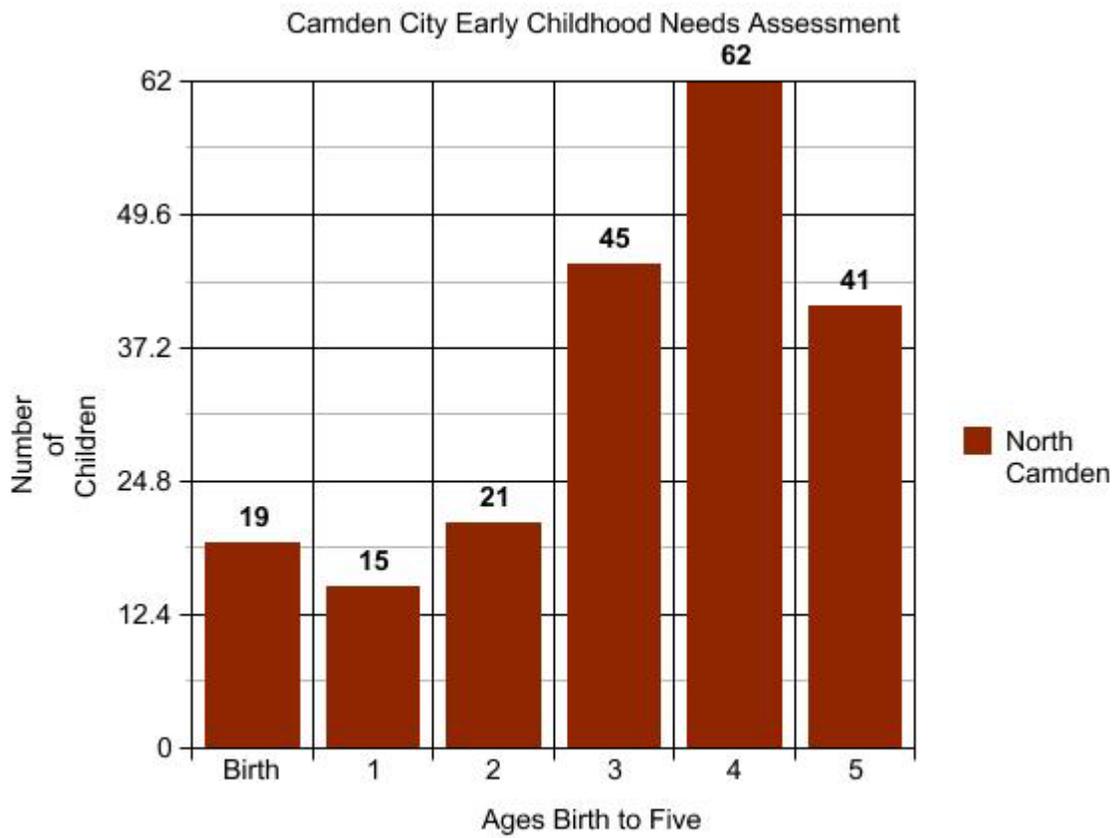
Parent Survey (Birth to Age Five) - Fairview

APPENDIX A-5



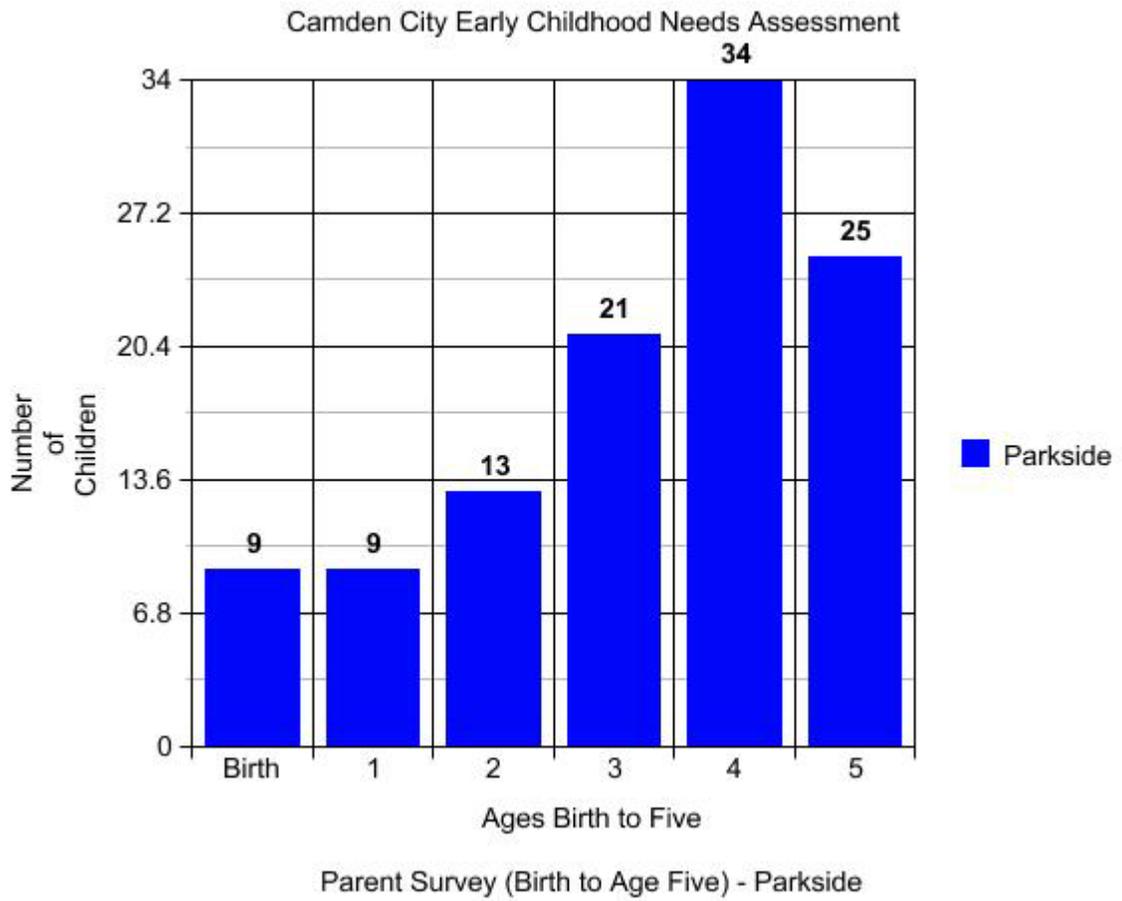
Parent Survey (Birth to Age Five) -South Camden

APPENDIX A-6

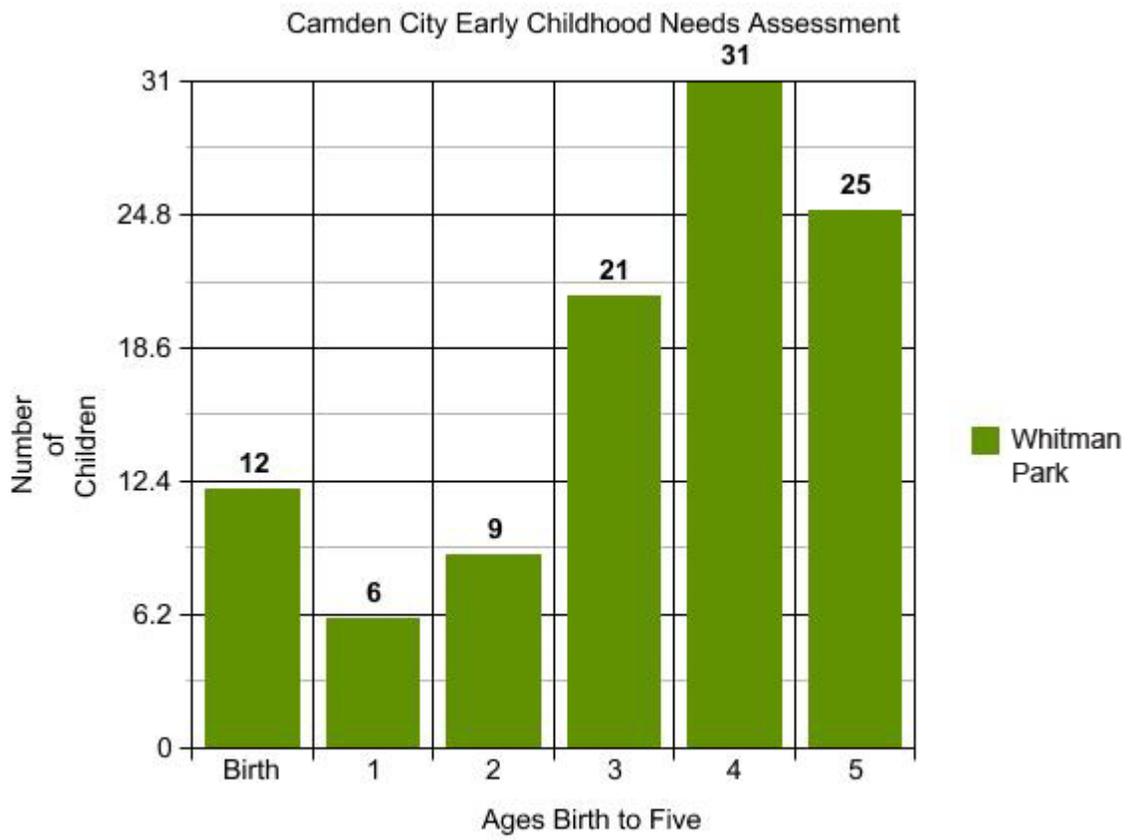


Parent Survey (Birth to Age Five) - North Camden

APPENDIX A-7

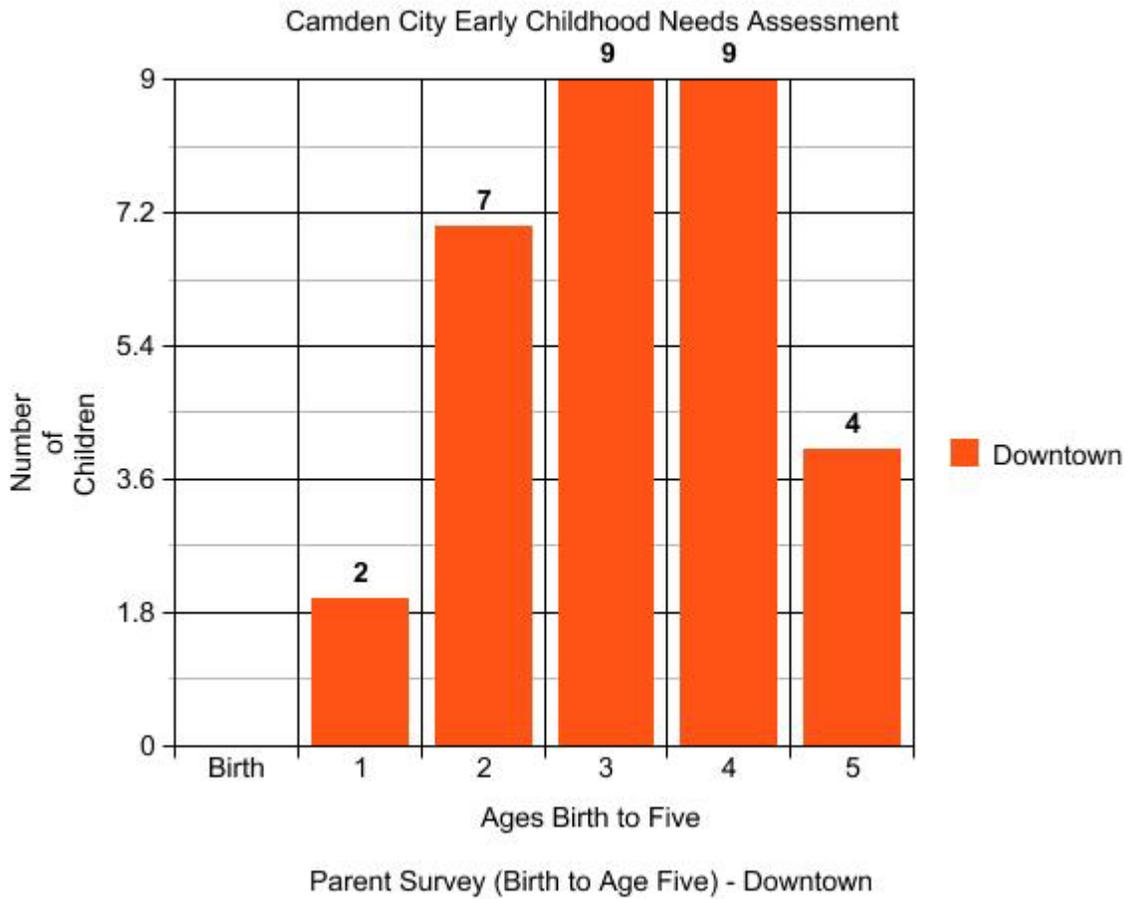


APPENDIX A-8

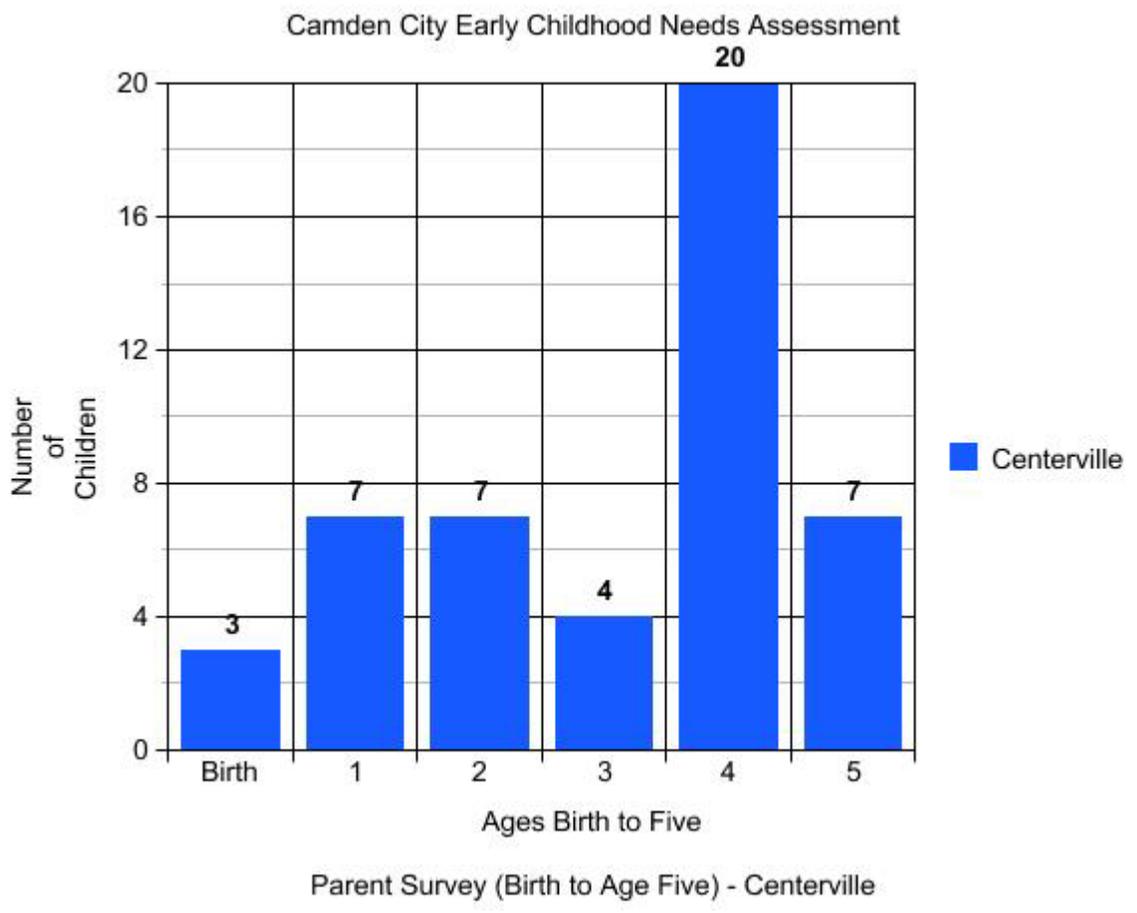


Parent Survey (Birth to Age Five) - Whitman Park

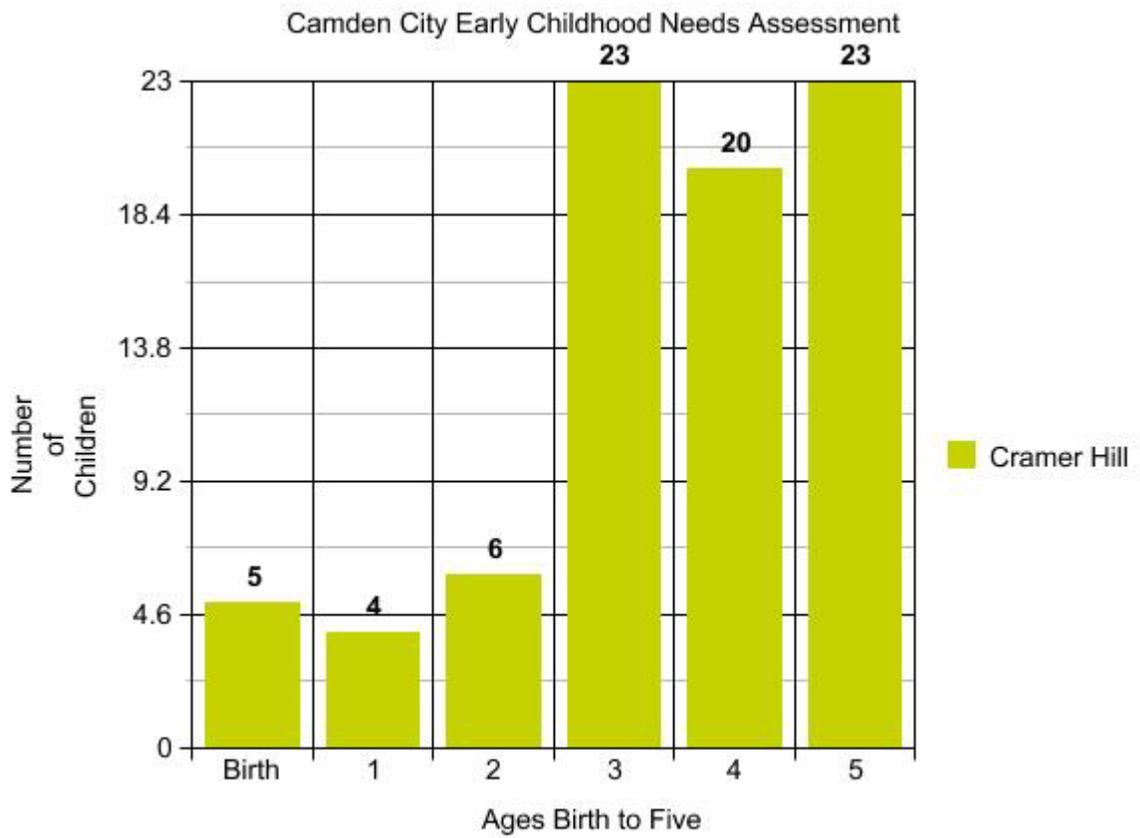
APPENDIX A-9



APPENDIX A-10

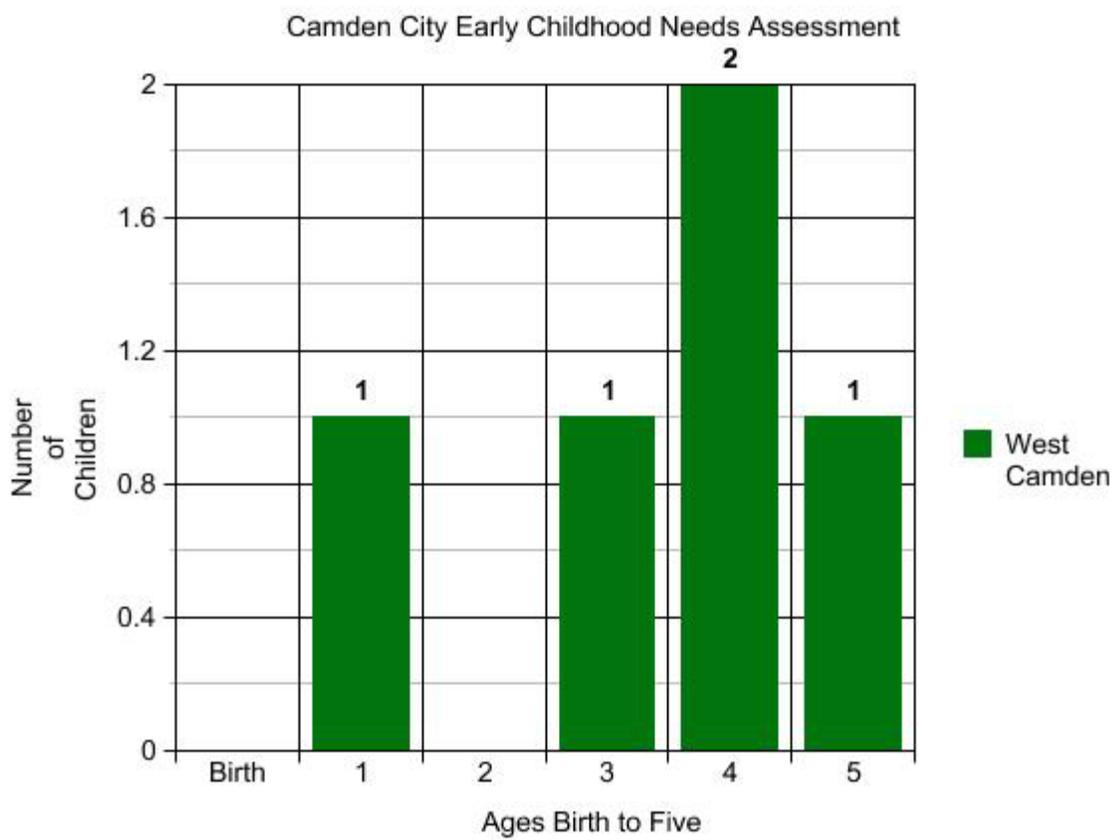


APPENDIX A-11



Parent Survey (Birth to Age Five) - Cramer Hill

APPENDIX A-12



Parent Survey (Birth to Age Five) - West Camden

APPENDIX B – Parent Survey 2010

**CAMDEN CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

2009-2010

Members:

- Cheryl Chavis- Chair
- Kevin Barfield
- Pauline Bey
- Ingrid Campbell
- Colandus "Kelly"
Francis
- Migna Gonzalez
- William James
- Susan Leggoe
- Barbara Maronski
- Michele Miller
- Sr. Donna Minster
- Betty Mitchell
- Migdalia Polo
- Flora Rivera
- Kay Soltero
- Gloria Stone-Mitchell,
Ed.D
- Ana Trotter
- Diana Walker
- Stan White
- Rev. Calvin Woods

March 16, 2010

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey and return to your child's teacher by Wednesday, March 31, 2010!

The purposes of this survey is to account for all preschool-age children who live in Camden City and has attended, are currently attending, or who has not attended a preschool program. Your feedback will help us determine how many preschoolers reside in Camden City, what section of Camden the child lives, and how many children were enrolled, are currently enrolled, or were not enrolled in any type of early childcare.

The results will be used by the Early Childhood Education Advisory Council Members (listed to the left) to complete a Needs Assessment to determine if we are meeting the needs and/or how to improve meeting the needs of all families with preschool-age children who reside in Camden City. Meetings are held at Respond, Inc. 925 N. 8th St, Camden, NJ 08102. All are welcomed to attend!

You may contact Cheryl Chavis, Chairperson, at 856-966-2320 or Migna Gonzalez, Social Worker, at 856-966-4171 if you have any questions or concerns.

SURVEY

1. What section of Camden do you live? _____

Example: (Parkside, East Camden, Fairview)

2. How many children under the age of 17 live in your home? _____

3. List the ages of all children in your home: _____

4. Is any child currently in a preschool/childcare setting? If so, please check all boxes that apply.

Preschool Program	Daycare Center	Family Child Care	Other	None

Please write name of program.

5. If any child older than preschool-age were in a preschool/childcare setting, please check all boxes that apply.

Preschool Program	Daycare Center	Family Child care	Other	None

Please write name of program.

APPENDIX C

ECEAC SELF- ASSESSMENT TOOL