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**MAYOR EMANUEL INCREASES CITY'S INVESTMENT IN PRE-KINDERGARTEN TO REDUCE
IMPACT OF STATE CUTS TO FUNDING**

City's \$9 Million Investment to Protect 5,000 Early Learning Seats and Alleviate State's Cuts to Child Care Assistance Program

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced the city is investing funding to restore pre-k for roughly 5,000 children impacted by the recent changes in eligibility for the state Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). This investment in the 2016 budget will restore funding for more than half of the 9,000 pre-kindergarten seats affected by the state's move, and will allow early learning facilities across the city to continue providing services many working families rely on.

"A budget is a reflection of our values as a city. Every child in the City of Chicago should have access to pre-k, regardless of neighborhood or family income," said Mayor Emanuel. "In Chicago, high-quality pre-k and kindergarten is not the exception, it is the expectation. These cuts by the State threaten the access we have built for families across the city, and thereby opportunities that are critical to the future of our kids."

In June, Governor Rauner tightened the requirements under which a family can qualify for the Child Care Assistance Program. While previously, families with incomes up to 185 percent of the federal poverty line qualified, under today's state rules families cannot earn more than 50 percent of the federal poverty level to qualify.

For example, under the previous state eligibility requirements a working single mother could have made up to \$2,300 per month and still qualified for CCAP. But the new state guidelines deem a working single mother making more than \$600 a month—the equivalent of 15 hours of work or less under our new \$10 minimum wage—as ineligible for assistance.

The Rauner Administration's move excluded 90 percent of the working families receiving subsidized child care in Chicago, and threatened to close the doors of early learning facilities across the city. With the Mayor's added funding, thousands of working families will remain eligible and will continue to have access services that they rely on.

When Mayor Emanuel took office in 2011, he began steadily expanding early learning programming through a three-year \$36 million investment in the City's budget. Since then, the early childhood service provision in Chicago has been lauded as a national model.

Under the Mayor's original three-year plan, funding from the city was set to decrease to \$6.6 million. This investment will hold steady funding for pre-k services at \$15 million for the upcoming school year, and is an extension of the Mayor's plan. By redirecting the City's corporate contributions, Mayor Emanuel will protect thousands of the children who would have otherwise lost access to full-day pre-kindergarten.

Early childhood education remains a top priority for Mayor Emanuel and the City of Chicago. Last year, Mayor Emanuel announced an investment that would close the gap on pre-kindergarten education for 4-year old children in low income families.

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