



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON SIGNS PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING APRIL
MONTH OF THE YOUNG CHILD**

CHICAGO – Today, Mayor Johnson issued the following proclamation designating April as Month of the Young Child. Chicago Early Learning (CEL), which is comprised of Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) Child Services Division and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Office of Early Childhood, celebrates the nationally recognized Month of the Young Child and Día de Los Niños by offering early learning and literacy activities across the City of Chicago.

"The Month of the Young Child is a powerful reminder that our youngest voices must be at the center of every decision we make," said **Rosario Hernandez, Senior Policy Analyst at the Latino Policy Forum**. "For me, that means championing high-quality bilingual early learning opportunities and advocating for stronger investments in the early childhood system, so that all children can thrive from the start."

"It is a time to for community members and elected officials to greet each other like the Maasai people in Africa by asking "How are the Children?" and hope for the response of "All the children are well" which highlights the high value on our children's well-being and demonstrates that all community members carry an equal weight of caring for the children," said **Edna Vidaurre, Regional Council Manager for Region 1-A** of Birth to Five Illinois. "So, whether you celebrate Week or Month of the Young Child, Dia de los Niños or Children's Day, join us in proclaiming, celebrating and making a commitment to Chicago's children, families and providers to meet the needs of our youngest community members so no matter what zip code they live in, they meet their fullest potential."

The full text of the Proclamation can be found below:

WHEREAS, the first years of a child's life are the most critical for brain development and lay the foundation for all future learning. High-quality early childhood education and care help ensure strong, positive outcomes for children-preparing them for school, improving long-term health, and increasing economic success; and



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WHEREAS, In the City of Chicago, there are 187,890 children under the age of five, with over 87,000 living in families at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. In Fiscal Year 2024, more than 26,000 children participated in the Child Care Assistance Program. Access to affordable, high-quality early care supports working families, promotes equity, and strengthens communities; and

WHEREAS, Children and families benefit from developmentally appropriate, accessible, and affordable early learning environments, and educators need access to support services-such as mental health consultation, early intervention, and comprehensive service coordination-to best serve young learners.

WHEREAS, we recognize that early childhood educators are essential to delivering high-quality care and education. Yet, current funding structures often fall short in providing the compensation, training, and support needed to retain a well-qualified workforce and ensure low child-to-educator ratios that keep children safe and thriving;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BRANDON JOHNSON, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO, do hereby proclaim the month of April as the MONTH OF THE YOUNG CHILD, celebrating the importance of early childhood and honoring our youngest learners and recognizing those who care for them. The City celebrates the nationally recognized "Week of the Young Child" from April 7- 11 and the launch of the Chicago Early Learning Application on April 8th - a vital tool that helps families access high quality early learning opportunities across the city. And in recognition of the diversity of our communities, we also celebrate Dia de los Ninos on April 30th, uplifting the cultural richness of our children and affirming our collective commitment to early literacy through equitable, high-quality early childhood education for all children.

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