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MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON ANNOUNCES \$7M CITY INVESTMENT TO INCREASE COMPENSATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS

The Mayor's investment will bring an estimated 3,000 workers closer to pay parity within the early learning workforce, benefiting 86 early learning providers across Chicago.

CHICAGO – Today, Mayor Johnson and the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) announced a \$7M City investment to provide a cost-per-child increase towards salaries for early childhood professionals. Leveraging Mayor Johnson's \$7M investment, this will be the first time Corporate funds are applied for early childhood workforce enhancements. At least 3,000 early childhood workers across at least 86 early care and education providers will receive wage increases averaging 5-10% to bring their pay closer in line with the broader K-12 education workforce.

"At a time when the federal government is cutting funding for early childhood, the City of Chicago is stepping up," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "This investment is about our early learners, but it is also about the parents who rely on our early childhood workforce, and it's about the dignity of the workers themselves."

Through this investment, all state-funded workers will see an 5-10% increase and in their salary. Head Start workers will receive a one-time bonus of 2%. The average salary for non-federally funded early childhood workers is \$35,000, well below the average salary for Chicago Public Schools (CPS) educators.

"A successful early learning landscape hinges on the strength of our workforce," said **Acting DFSS Commissioner Maura McCauley**. "This investment toward pay parity honors the immense value of staff in early childhood programs across the city of Chicago. We are also proud to share that our commitment doesn't end here – DFSS will continue its effort to move the needle toward pay parity through a forthcoming study with recommendations for future salary funding."

DFSS Children Services Division will coordinate a research and evaluation project with Center for Early Learning Funding Equity (CELFE) to provide a comprehensive



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analysis of models and make recommendations for a funding strategy that allocates funding to community-based organizations that align salaries to parity with CPS. The results from this research will inform an Early Learning Workforce Salary Funding Strategy to be incorporated into DFSS's next Early Learning RFP.

"We are here today because Mayor Johnson and the City Council listened to the voices of organized early childhood workers, parents and community who have a vision for good jobs and child care for all," said **Tahiti Hamer, early childhood teacher at the North Lawndale YMCA**. "Together, we took the first step towards making early childhood jobs ones that will support workers and our families. This will make it possible for child care centers to stay open to serve kids and families who need early care and education now."

DFSS Children Services Division works with providers to serve approximately 13,000 children 0-5 years old with both State and Federal funding. Funding for this investment comes from the City's Corporate funds, allocated by the Office of Budget and Management.

"I have a four-year-old and finding culturally responsive childcare in my neighborhood was just impossible. The childcare center had a wait list but could not find a teacher to fill the role. Childcare workers need adequate pay so they can afford to stay in the field and parents like me are not forced between being a working mother or paying my bills," said **Rocio Garcia, a Chicago parent**. "That's why I joined the coalition and am thankful for Mayor Brandon Johnson's leadership to achieve this crucial step in the right direction."

Mayor Johnson signed a proclamation last month making April [Month of the Young Child](#). This investment aligns with two of the Johnson administration's top priorities: [investing in young people](#) and [supporting working people](#).

"SEIU Healthcare Illinois and the Child Care for All coalition organized city-wide to sound the alarm on the child care workforce crisis. We held town halls, showed up at budget listening sessions, testified before the City Council and delivered a petition with 1,800 signatures to City Hall," said **Brynn Seibert, Vice President & Child Care & Early Learning Division Director, SEIU Healthcare Illinois**. "We are grateful that Mayor Brandon Johnson listened and is taking action to raise wages for thousands of early childhood workers in City-administered programs across Chicago."

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