



Fiscal Year 2023 Performance Oversight Messaging Guide

Situational Analysis

Before Mayor Bowser submits her fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget to the DC Council on March 22, 2023, **the DC Council wants to hear from the early learning community** (advocates, educators, medical professionals, parents, program directors, and providers) **about how agencies are doing this year.** After the historic 2021 tax increase allowing for the introduction and first year of implementation of the Pay Equity Fund in 2022, this is our opportunity to give Councilmembers an update on how agencies are implementing all programs in the Birth-to-Three law. The Performance Oversight Hearings are a time to inquire about the reach and effectiveness of the Pay Equity Fund, Home Visiting, Healthy Futures, HealthySteps, the child care subsidy program, and child care credentialing requirements.

What is extraordinary about this year is that **Mayor Bowser has proposed a new child care affordability initiative inline with our budget requests to her..** Let's support her initiative and continue to advance our policy agenda to deepen investments in early childhood.

The Under 3 DC team is available to answer any questions you have about the performance oversight process and the toolkit contents. Feel free to contact anyone on staff directly.

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Performance Oversight Hearing Dates



>>[Hearing Sign-Up Form](#)<<

Messaging Frame:

Every child in the District deserves a safe, healthy start to life that includes a high-quality early learning experience.

Talking Points

Pay Equity Fund

- Based on recent data from OSSE, more than 90% of the District's early childhood educators took home a living wage in FY 2022 thanks to the establishment of the Pay Equity Fund.
- To see the educators' joy in receiving acknowledgment for their work and hearing stories about how they can now afford to invest in long-put-off family and health care needs tells us the value of our advocacy and your legislative support.
- The compensation increase, which includes the free health care benefit provided through HealthCare4ChildCare, has helped lessen the early learning workforce exodus just as families have begun to return their children to child care.
- As OSSE moves closer to implementing the permanent early educator compensation program, we recommend they continue open communication about instructions and deadlines; and we recommend a 90-day public comment period on the program design.
- As the District charts a path forward for life after the pandemic, it is vital to remember that early learning leadership stood with educators to serve young children and their families throughout the COVID emergency. And yet, their salaries remain depressed, threatening retention of early learning leadership in the District. Expand the Pay Equity Fund to include fair compensation for center directors.

Protecting child care subsidy and expanding eligibility

- Every child deserves access to high-quality, affordable early learning- and the District currently falls short. Every cent in the child care subsidy budget is needed.
- Child care is an essential component of life for District families and businesses. There will be no opportunity to reshape DC by attracting and retaining young families without affordable child care.
- Work patterns are changing. Early childhood centers and homes need additional support to offer child care options during nontraditional hours.
- On average, DC residents spend 29% of their family incomes on child care. Low- and middle-income families feel this unsustainable burden most because child care costs exceed the federal Health and Human Services affordability standard of 7%. The District can reduce this growing financial burden on families by making more households eligible for the subsidy program.
- Operating expenses for child care providers have continued to increase since child care subsidy rates were last updated in 2021, and providers need higher subsidy reimbursement rates.
- As with every other industry, those able to pay the most for child care set the market rate. In DC, this translates to the highest-earning families paying more than \$2K a month on average and

the lowest-income families receiving a subsidy to help them manage costs. Middle-income families are fleeing.

- If we want the District to truly be an equitable place for its residents to call home, it is time to expand the child care financial assistance to the District's middle-income families.
- We support Mayor Bowser's proposal to expand the subsidy program to include families making up to 300% of the federal poverty level (about \$90K for a family of four). Our Coalition shares the same goal.
- Currently, District families earning up to 250% of FPL can participate in the child care subsidy program. The number of children ages 0-5 in families with income up to 300% of FPL is lower than the number of children 0-5 in families with income up to 250% FPL pre-pandemic. We can afford to let more families in.
- All working families should be able to afford to live where they work. Right now, the high cost of living serves as a barrier for low-and middle-income families.

Home Visiting, Healthy Steps, and Healthy Futures

- The financial squeeze on all but the highest-earning District families is very real, evidenced by increasing rates of food insecurity and requests for rental assistance. Family support services available at little or no cost, like Healthy Futures, Healthy Steps, and Home Visiting can be critical lifelines and an opportunity for families to thrive.
- Home visitors, like child care teachers, have been some of the most dedicated, yet underpaid professionals working with District families and children for years. The competitive labor market has driven many working for underfunded programs to seek higher-paying jobs in other industries.
- For District families who are often among the most stressed about their economic well-being, home visitors provide expectant parents and families with young children the support and positive reinforcements necessary to manage their family life alongside a challenging external environment.
- Increasing wages for home visitors will help retain a workforce critical to achieving a District goal of reducing maternal mortality and building a first-class early childhood system.
- Healthy Futures has not expanded at the level first envisioned in the Birth-to-Three law. Still, it has consistently expanded every year by adding more child development centers and home providers while overcoming challenges.

Twitter Hashtags and Handles

[Mayor Bowser](#), [OSSE](#) and a majority of the [DC Council](#) follow us on Twitter. They see what we say and what our national early childhood partners amplify. It is important for the early learning community to stick together and advance policies that make a healthy start possible for all young children in the District of Columbia.

Don't forget to include our coalition in your tweets! This hashtag populates the Twitter feed on the Under 3 DC website.

#Under3DC

Handles to follow & retweet

- @Under3DC
- @JUFJ
- @DCAEYC
- @DCELCCollab
- @DCFPI
- @WeAreDCAction

DC Policymaker Twitter Handles		
Name	Ward	Twitter Handle
Mayor Muriel Bowser	Districtwide	@MayorBowser
Chairman Phil Mendelson	At-Large	@ChmnMendelson
Anita Bonds	At-Large	@AnitaBondsDC
Christina Henderson	At-Large	@CMCHenderson
Kenyan McDuffie	At-Large	@CM_McDuffie
Robert White	At-Large	@CMRobertWhiteDC
Brianne Nadeau	Ward 1	@BrianneKNadeau
Brooke Pinto	Ward 2	@CMBrookePinto

Matt Frumin	Ward 3	@CMFrumin
Janeese Lewis George	Ward 4	@CMLewisGeorgeW4
Zachary Parker	Ward 5	@CMZParker5
Charles Allen	Ward 6	@CMCharlesAllen
Vincent Gray	Ward 7	@VinceGrayWard7
Trayon White	Ward 8	@trayonwhite

Sample Tweets and Social Media Graphics

S1: Thanks to the Pay Equity Fund more than 90% of the District’s early childhood educators received a living wage in FY23. They can now receive FREE #HealthCare4ChildCare

S2: Expanding the Pay Equity Fund to program directors will ensure they also receive fair compensation.

S3: DC families pay an average of \$2K a month on child care. While lower-income families receive subsidies to help, middle-income families are left behind.



Performance Oversight



More than **90%** of the District's early childhood educators took home a living wage in FY 2022 thanks to your establishment of the **Pay Equity Fund**.



It is vital to remember that early learning program directors stood with educators to serve young children and their families throughout the COVID emergency. Their salaries remain depressed, threatening retention of early learning leadership in the District.



Amend the Pay Equity Fund to include a compensation increase for Early Learning Program Directors.



Every child deserves access to high-quality, affordable early learning and the District remains far from meeting this goal. Until then, **every cent** in the child care subsidy budget is needed.



On average, DC residents spend 29% of their family incomes on child care. Low- and middle-income families feel this unsustainable burden most because child care costs exceed the Health and Human Services affordability standard of 7%. The District can reduce this growing financial burden on families by making more of them eligible for the subsidy program.



UNDER 3 DC

For District families who are often among the most stressed about their economic well-being, home visitors provide expectant parents and families with young children the support and positive reinforcements necessary to manage their family life alongside a challenging external environment.



Increasing wages for home visitors will help retain a workforce critical to achieving a District goal of reducing maternal mortality, building a first-class early childhood system, and creating a more equitable place to call home for all residents.



UNDER 3 DC