



MEDIA STATEMENT

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FINAL DC BUDGET EXPANDS CHILD CARE ACCESS BUT CUTS OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON, DC (May 30, 2023)—Today, the DC Council held its second and final vote on the 2024 fiscal year budget. We appreciate Mayor Bowser's actions to increase child care assistance and are grateful the DC Council followed through to give access to 2,100 more families. They stabilized funding for HealthySteps and Healthy Futures, protected nearly \$72 million in the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, and have allocated \$300,000 to increasing home visitor salaries for Child and Family Service Agency (CFSA) programs.

Unfortunately, their priorities do not go far enough in building an equitable, high-quality early childhood system, and this budget breaks several promises. This budget cuts other early childhood programs. For example, unlike their CFSA peers, home visitors working for the Department of Health programs will not see a pay raise for a fifth year. And families and child care providers who were hit hardest during the pandemic will likely be the last to recover after the DC Council approved a \$11 million cut in child care funding for TANF-eligible families, \$8 million cut from the Back2Work child care grants, and cut funding and assistance for child care providers serving families in Wards 7 and 8.

"Child care is the work that makes all other work possible. We are pleased to see much of the Birth-to-Three funding protected in this budget and especially thrilled about the child care expansion to more families remaining in the budget. But, the cuts to other financial support programs across the child care continuum are egregious and short-sighted. We call on Mayor

Bowser and the DC Council to work even more closely with the early childhood community to advance our equity goals, not take steps back.” Perry continued.

As a national leader in early childhood, the District must lead with equitable and just policies and funding. Under 3 DC will continue its advocacy to prioritize the needs of the District’s youngest children, their families, and those who work to support their education and well-being. We recognize the 2024 fiscal year budget is not the end of this fight, and we will continue to press on.

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Under 3 DC harnesses the voices and power of District families with young children, early educators, health professionals and community-based organizations to shine a spotlight on the need for more public investments in early education and health programs for infants and toddlers. Together, we can set the District of Columbia on a path to creating and sustaining a high-quality, equitable early childhood system.