



MEDIA STATEMENT

Contact:

Sierra Wallace | swallace@dckids.org | 901-604-1928

Tawana Jacobs | tjacobs@dckids.org | 301-325-8687

Under 3 DC Meets with the Bowser Administration In Response to the 2024 Proposed Budget

Today, [Under 3 DC](#) met with Deputy Mayor Paul Kihn and OSSE Superintendent Christine Grant to discuss early childhood education in the District and express our strong support for Mayor Bowser's proposal to make child care more affordable for working families by raising the income limit to qualify for the child care subsidy program to \$90K for a family of four. However, we believe it will be impossible to increase accessibility for 2,100 children while proposing other early childhood systems budget cuts that will affect their teachers.

Mayor Bowser's budget cuts \$5.4 million from the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund in this year's proposed supplemental budget and in her 2024 – 27 fiscal year financial plan. This is of great concern to our coalition since the Pay Equity Fund is still in the implementation stage. These cuts also disempower a predominantly women-of-color workforce that has been undercompensated for decades but stood strong alongside other essential workers during the pandemic.

The unprecedented national child care crisis opened the eyes of many residents. It brought together some unlikely allies to successfully advocate for early childhood educator pay parity with DC Public School teachers. The historical creation of the pay equity fund catapulted DC into the national spotlight once again as a leader in early childhood education. So much so that officials in the Biden Administration are paying attention. This Tuesday, President Biden signed an executive order directing federal agencies to find ways to make child care more accessible.

As a national leader in working to create an accessible, affordable, and equitable high-quality early childhood system, it is the District's responsibility to continue moving forward, not go backward. Mayor Bowser acknowledges that child care is essential to revitalizing downtown DC. Expanding the subsidy program will be life-changing for many working families who have had to make hard choices to afford child care. We thank Mayor Bowser for this step forward in progress. However, we can not stop here. The District business community relies on child care and as it grows, so should early child care. The business community also acknowledges that its workforce, including early educators *and* program directors, deserve fair compensation for the critical role they play in the lives of our youngest residents..

A nation seeking solutions to the child care crisis is watching.

###

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.