



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES THE "EVERY CHILD READY CHICAGO"  
INITIATIVE TO ENSURE OUR YOUNGEST LEARNERS, FROM BEFORE  
BIRTH TO AGE 5, CAN THRIVE**

*City of Chicago launches a multi-year initiative in partnership with Start Early (formerly the Ounce of Prevention Fund) to align the city's early childhood systems so that all children in Chicago enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life*

**CHICAGO** — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced the launch of Every Child Ready Chicago, a public-private partnership led by the City of Chicago in partnership with [Start Early](#) (formerly the Ounce of Prevention Fund). The multi-year effort seeks to align the prenatal-to-five systems and supports serving Chicago's children and families, creating a coordinated early childhood ecosystem that prepares every child in the city to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

"As a city, we must ensure every child, regardless of their zip code, receives a high-quality early education, providing them the tools and opportunities they need to thrive," said Mayor Lightfoot. "The Every Child Ready Chicago partnership is an investment in our children, by creating a system that, before birth, ensures our youngest Chicagoans are growing and prepared to achieve great success for years to come."

Over the past few months, COVID-19 has illuminated the lasting impact of institutional racism and structural inequality that exist in our nation and throughout our city. Those impacts are reflected in the outcomes of early learning for Chicago's youngest — just one in three Black children (30 percent) and one in five Latinx children (20 percent) in the city are considered "ready" for kindergarten based on the most recent state Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS).



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“Research proves quality early childhood experiences can level the playing field and help children and families overcome many of the inequities that have been magnified by the pandemic,” said Start Early president Diana Rauner. “We are excited to work with the Mayor to build a more unified, equitable and accountable early childhood system that prepares every child for success in school and life.”

This fall, Every Child Ready Chicago will convene leaders from early childhood programs and services, research and advocacy communities, parents and families of young children, and City agencies to create a shared and inclusive vision of what a high-quality early learning system looks like. This Early Childhood Working Group will guide the City and help lay the groundwork for a multi-year strategic plan to create a strong and equitable system where all children, particularly those in under-resourced communities, have access to quality services and achieve positive outcomes.

The public-private partnership would not be possible without founding gifts from Crown Family Philanthropies, BMO Harris Bank, the Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation, the John and Kathleen Schreiber Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust.

For more information about Every Child Ready Chicago, including a full list of Working Group members, visit [chicagoearlylearning.org](http://chicagoearlylearning.org).

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