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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT AND DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND SUPPORT SERVICES
EXTEND PARTNERSHIPS WITH CHICAGO EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS**

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) today announced an extension of funding for 25 early learning program providers who saw a decrease of more than 20% in funding as a result of the City's recent RFP process. The City will extend funding for these providers to 80% of their existing contract level through June 30, 2020, which will allow children and families to remain in their current programs through the program year.

"While the City works to live up to our commitment to provide high-quality learning programs in every community, and to ensure fair, competitive pay for our early childhood teachers, we are deeply aware of the impact that a loss of funding has had on our valuable community partners, particularly around the timing of the decisions," said Mayor Lightfoot. "That's why we are making this investment to ensure all families can remain in current programming for the duration of the school year, and to continue working with all current providers in transitioning to a new funding model that will increase quality and full-time preschool and childcare options for working families across our city."

Ensuring continuity and stability for families and quality programming for all children is a top priority for the City, which is why DFSS will work diligently with early learning program providers who saw a decrease in funding to create a sustainability plan for their organizations.

"Through the RFP process, the City of Chicago is increasing support and funding toward serving families in communities across Chicago," said DFSS Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler. "However, we are sensitive to the fact that any loss of funding – particularly coming mid-year – can dramatically impact the level of service our community partners are able to provide. That's why we are working closely with families as well as our community-based partners to ensure a smooth transition to a stronger system, allowing our youngest learners to thrive not only this year, but throughout their formative years."

Given the City's efforts to boost quality and adapt to the rapidly changing requirements of today's early learning landscape, DFSS created an RFP designed to align with best practices. The RFP, launched by DFSS earlier this year, awarded nearly \$200 million in funding to 101 providers based on proposals demonstrating the ability to meet key policy goals, including



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kindergarten readiness, increased salary minimums for pre-k teachers, enhanced credentials for early learning staff and ability to meet federal and state requirements to fund and deliver quality education.

As a result of the recently-awarded RFP, the City of Chicago has increased early learning funding by \$42 million over last year and has increased the number of slots allocated for children ages birth to five in communities across Chicago. The City has allocated up to \$6 million to extend funding for the early learning program providers who saw a decrease of more than 20% in funding through June 30, 2020.

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