



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Detroit Day of the Young Child Highlights Hopes for the City's Young Children**

*Parent, Caregivers, Residents Envision Making Detroit a Kid-Friendly City by 2027*

**DETROIT, April 27, 2017** - Hundreds of parents, caregivers and residents are coming together today to celebrate the **First Annual Detroit Day of the Young Child** by hosting and attending listening sessions about what early childhood could and should look like in the city. More than 30 one-hour listening sessions are taking place today across Detroit and many are open to the public.

**Hope Starts Here: Detroit's Early Childhood Partnership** is organizing these listening events with community partners and individuals as part of a yearlong planning process to envision what it will take to make Detroit a kid-friendly city by 2027. Input from the listening sessions will be folded into the Hope Starts Here vision and action plan due out later this summer.

On Tuesday, April 25, the Detroit City Council unanimously passed a resolution to make April 27 the first Annual Detroit Day of the Young Child.

"The Hope Starts Here initiative is about community creating solutions together, and getting at the root of what we are all struggling with when it comes to raising our children in Detroit," said Maria Montoya, mother of three and a local family advocate, who is struggling to find an early childhood care and education program for her four-month-old daughter. "I work with families everyday trying to help them access quality programs, and I have attended hundreds of hours of meetings to discuss what quality looks like, and why it is important. Being unable to find care that you can afford, and you're comfortable leaving your child with can make you feel helpless. These conversations give me hope, and make me feel proud of my decision to live in the city and raise my children here."

In the lead-up to today's First Annual Detroit Day of the Young Child, dozen of additional sessions were hosted. Families, schools, youth organizations, businesses, faith-based organizations and local governments have stepped up to host listening sessions today -- with a shared commitment to improving the lives of Detroit's youngest citizens.

"I was amazed at all the voices in the room at our listening session," said Esmeralda Torres, a parent from Southwest Detroit. "Families and neighborhood leaders alike shared one table to talk about a better future for our kids."

**Detroit residents are encouraged to attend any of the public events taking place today.** An online map of events is available at [bit.ly/DetroitDOYC](http://bit.ly/DetroitDOYC). Detroiters can also join the conversation online by following [Hope Starts Here Detroit on Facebook](#) and via the hashtags #HopeBuilds #DetroitDOYC.

A few of today's listening sessions include:

- **The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Mayor's Task Force for the Well-Being of Children and Families**, hosted by Black Family Development, Inc., from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m at 23500 West Seven Mile Road, Detroit.
- **Living Arts' Detroit Wolf Trap Book Debut** at the Ford Resource and Engagement Center – Mexicantown Mercado from 11 a.m. to noon at 2826 Bagley, Detroit.
- **Brilliant Detroit Parent Center, along with Central Detroit Christian Development Corporation** from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at 803 Hazelwood St, Detroit.

In January 2017, Hope Starts Here surveyed more than 1,600 Detroiters to learn what would help families have safe healthy places for children to grow and learn while parents go to school and work to pursue their dreams. Respondents, half of whom are raising children under the age of 5, identified child care accessibility and affordability, safety, and education as top concerns. Details of survey results are [here](#).

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**About Hope Starts Here**

Hope Starts Here: Detroit's Early Childhood Partnership is a community engagement and strategic planning process designed to create a vision and action plan to make Detroit an equitable, world-class city for our youngest residents and their families. Hope Starts Here is supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and The Kresge Foundation. Learn more at [HopeStartsHereDetroit.org](http://HopeStartsHereDetroit.org) and on [Facebook at @HopeStartsHereDetroit](#).