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Study Finds Most Detroit Children Lack Access to Early Childhood Care
More Slots, Quality Improvements and Community-specific Strategies Recommended

Detroit, MI—The Kresge Foundation and Midwest nonprofit IFF today released a comprehensive needs assessment of early childhood care and education in the city of Detroit. The new study — [The System We Need: A Neighborhood Snapshot of Early Childhood Education in Detroit](#) — estimates that in 2015 nearly 28,000 of the city’s children ages birth to 5 needed but did not have access to quality early childhood care.

The study analyzes the number of slots available through early childhood care programs at licensed and registered facilities, and compares this total with the number of children eligible for and in need of early childhood care. It also breaks down this estimate of the supply and demand for early childhood care by individual neighborhoods and program types, such as Head Start and Great Start Readiness Program. Watch this [short video](#) to learn more.

“The need for more and better quality early childhood care extends to almost every corner of the city, but every neighborhood’s need is different,” said Kirby Burkholder, IFF’s executive director in Detroit. “By calculating which areas need what type of care and how much, this study will help providers and policymakers to address specific gaps.”

Highlights from the study include:

- **Most Detroit children lack access to early childhood care.** Detroit has approximately 56,000 children ages birth to 5, about 46,000 of whom are estimated to need early childhood care. However, only about 18,000 of these children have access to care now, leaving a gap of 28,000.
- **The need for additional early childhood care is both deep and wide.** Nearly half of this gap is concentrated in 10 neighborhoods, mostly in Northeast, West and Southwest Detroit. Still, additional slots are needed across every program type and in most of the city’s neighborhoods.
- **The number of quality providers is increasing, but more are needed.** Although the number of early childhood care providers participating in Michigan’s Great Start to Quality has increased meaningfully over the past two years, fully half of Detroit’s licensed and registered providers still

do not participate in this essential ratings program, and most do not offer full-day, full-year programs — the gold standard for early childhood care.

“Every child in Detroit deserves the best start possible. High-quality early childhood programs can create opportunities that help all young Detroit children and their families succeed,” said Wendy L. Jackson, deputy director for the Kresge Foundation’s Detroit program. “We need many more of these programs in Detroit to support the city’s comeback. We at Kresge will be working over the next five years to make sure that happens.”

Commissioned by The Kresge Foundation to inform its work on early childhood, the study’s data was first collected for 2014 and then updated to reflect 2015 changes. It is being released today in conjunction with Kresge Early Years for Success or KEYS, the Foundation’s \$20-million initiative to remake Detroit’s early childhood system, and with *Building a Better System: The Need for Early Childhood Education in Macomb, Oakland and Out Wayne Counties*, a similar needs assessment that looks at the early childhood care and education system for the entire Tri-county region.

Copies of the full Detroit report are available at kresge.org/library/system-we-need-neighborhood-snapshot-early-childhood-education-detroit. An executive summary and videotaped briefing that looks at both the Detroit and Tri-county findings are also available at cfsem.org/media/SEMichIFFStudy.

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The Kresge Foundation is a \$3.5 billion private, national foundation that works to expand opportunities in America’s cities through grantmaking and social investing in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services and community development in Detroit. In 2014, the Board of Trustees approved 408 awards totaling \$242.5 million. That included a \$100 million award to the Foundation for Detroit’s Future, a fund created to soften the impact of the city’s bankruptcy on pensioners and safeguard cultural assets at the Detroit Institute of Arts. A total of \$138.1 million was paid out to grantees over the course of the year. In addition, our Social Investment Practice made commitments totaling \$20.4 million in 2014.

IFF is a mission-driven lender, real estate consultant and developer that helps communities thrive by creating opportunities for low-income populations and individuals with disabilities. From child care to senior housing, IFF works closely with clients from every sector, offering affordable, flexible financing; full-scale real estate consulting; and community development services. Since 1988, we have made over \$570 million in loans, leveraged \$1.8 billion in community investments and grown our total managed assets to \$371 million. In Michigan, IFF has provided nearly \$40 million in financing for nonprofits and housing developers across the state, and consulted with 40 agencies on real estate projects.