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**In Push Toward His Goal of Universal Child Care in the District**
**Councilmember Robert White Takes on Access**

Washington DC – At-Large Councilmember Robert White is taking on the goal of establishing access to early childhood development for all children in the District. White, the father of a toddler himself, has been researching the issue for several months and is taking his ideas this week to child development providers to discuss his research and findings with people he called “the subject-matter experts.” The discussion will on occur on Thursday, March 9, 2017, at 7:00 PM at the Petworth Library (PET Meeting Room), located at 4200 Kansas Avenue, NW.

***In the District, the average cost of child care is over $1,800 a month and there are over 22,000 children under the age of three, but less than 8,000 slots at licensed child care centers.*** White said, “The District is in the midst of a baby boom that far outpaces the available seats for our youngest learners. As a parent who struggles with the expense of child care and has lived through the difficulty of finding a program for my daughter, I know we have a serious problem and I want to fix it.” White said he has found that child care providers, which face the high cost of leasing space in the District while receiving low government reimbursements are finding it nearly impossible to operate quality centers. “The result,” he said, “is that thousands of children are being left behind developmentally before their first day of school and high stress and high competition for parents.”

Councilmember White last week released a [Transition Report](http://bit.ly/CMRW_Report) indicating that he would take on access to early childhood development and child care in his first term. White said the goal originally stemmed from watching his now eight-month-old daughter develop as he campaigned for his seat on the DC Council, and shopped for daycare. “I was astounded at how much she learned each day and realized that we have to use the early years productively to teach all of our city’s kids and cut away at the astounding achievement gap we see in elementary school.” White said that when his Transition Committee told him that they, too, thought early childhood development was one of the most critical education needs in the District, he knew he had to think big and move immediately. White said, “Our children’s education during their most critical learning years of zero to three is the absolute most worthy investment we can make.”

*White has served the District as an At-Large Councilmember since September 16, 2016. His focus is on education, affordable housing, workforce development, and returning citizens. Additionally, Councilmember White sits on the Committees on Education, Finance and Revenue, Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization, Human Services, and Labor and Workforce Development. Councilmember White has placed an emphasis on early childhood care and education to bridge the achievement gaps by ensuring every child has equal access to high-quality, affordable early childhood development and education programs.*

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