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Erikson Institute to address traumatic violence affecting more than 100,000 young children in Chicago
New Center for Children and Families will open in Little Village in 2019

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Leaders from Erikson Institute announced today at the organization's annual luncheon that a new, first-of-its-kind Center for Children and Families (CCF) will open in Chicago's **Little Village** neighborhood, a primarily Latinx community challenged by high rates of poverty, violence, and the additional stressor of deportation.

In Chicago, over half of children under the age of 5 (more than 102,000) live in a community that experienced over four homicides in 2017. Little Village, one of the areas with the highest rates of gun violence in the city, has one of the largest populations of children among Chicago's 77 community areas. These issues often go ignored but have a direct impact on young children's mental health, and Erikson's relationship-based approach will address this need.

Because a child's experiences during their earliest years have a lasting impact on brain development, Erikson saw a critical need for the Little Village community to have access to family-based, infant and early childhood mental health services. The new center will be the **only provider of extensive diagnostic assessments and treatment plans for children 0 to 8 in the area**. It will serve as CCF's second community-based satellite, the first of which opened in 2012 and serves Chicago's Austin neighborhood.

Slated to open in **January 2019**, the 2000 square foot center will offer a variety of direct services in a supportive space, carried out by highly trained, bilingual practitioners and experts in the field who will enhance families' strengths to improve child outcomes.

The announcement positions Erikson, an esteemed nonprofit organization that educates child development professionals, serves vulnerable children and families, and influences early childhood policy, as a leader in

trauma-focused care that is culturally responsive. Direct services provided by the center will include home visits, crisis intervention, early intervention clinics, trauma-informed diagnostic assessments, infant/early childhood mental health assessments and services, and medical diagnostic assessments.

In remarks delivered to the luncheon crowd of nearly 500 of Illinois' most engaged and generous early childhood leaders, Erikson President and CEO **Geoff Nagle** said, "Our new center will anchor our work even more firmly in the community, expanding mental health services for infants, young children, and their families." The center's services will be "rooted in Erikson's deep understanding of trauma, child development, and the role culture plays in families' lives," he added. Nagle also thanked the Pritzker Foundation and Cari and Michael Sacks for their generous philanthropic support of the Little Village center.

Also announced at the 52nd annual luncheon was the news that contributions made to Erikson, which help fuel the institution's critical work as a leader in the field of early childhood, reached a record-breaking **\$1.4 million dollars**. An anonymous supporter will also match additional donations collected through December 1 up to \$200,000 through a challenge grant. For more information on Erikson Institute's Centers for Children and Families, visit <https://www.erikson.edu/center-children-families/>

***Erikson Institute** educates, inspires, and promotes leadership to serve the needs of children and families. We have the premier graduate school dedicated to child development. We provide direct services to our community's most vulnerable children and families. We are leaders in influencing early childhood policy. We work tirelessly every day so that all children can achieve optimal educational, social, emotional, and physical well-being. At Erikson Institute, we know that investing in the early years of children will last a lifetime.*

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