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**Holding Fast to the Light: Statement from Erikson Institute on Head Start**

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Mariana Souto-Manning, PhD, President of Erikson Institute, issued a statement today calling for the protection of the federal Head Start program from threats to its funding and operations, evidenced through the recent closure of regional administrative offices and proposed funding cuts. Below is an excerpt of the statement:

*At Erikson Institute, we were founded on a promise:*

*That the lives of young children matter—profoundly, urgently, eternally.*

*That in the smallest among us burns the brightest hope for our collective future.*

*That education, care, and dignity are not privileges to be rationed, but rights to be fiercely protected.*

*Head Start was born of the same dream.*

*It recognized that when we honor the full humanity of every child and family, we do more than transform individual lives—we weave a stronger, more just society.*

*Today, that dream is under threat.*

*Recent changes to Head Start risk shrinking opportunities, silencing family voices, and dimming the brilliance that lives in every child. In a moment that demands bold investment in justice and joy, retrenchment is not an option.*

*At Erikson, we answer with action—and with hope.*

*Through our work in early childhood teacher education, child development, infant and early childhood mental health, and early intervention, we prepare educators to recognize the genius, cultures, languages, and infinite promise of every child. We work so that no child's light will be dimmed by policy or prejudice. We work so that the future will shine brighter because of what we choose to do today.*

You can read the full statement here: [Erikson Institute Statement on Head Start Changes: Holding Fast to the Light | Erikson Institute](#)

For interviews with [President Souto-Manning](#) or other Erikson experts in early childhood, please contact Sheila B. Haennicke, Director of Communication at [shaennicke@erikson.edu](mailto:shaennicke@erikson.edu) or 708-214-4933.

**About Erikson Institute:**

*Erikson is a leading institution of higher education that prepares professionals to address the urgent challenges facing young children, their families and communities. Our innovative programs, transformative research and impactful advocacy empower early childhood professionals to drive lasting change. Erikson strives to build a future where every child thrives.* Learn more at [www.erikson.edu](http://www.erikson.edu)

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