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Duolingo Commits $1 Million to Early Childhood Education in Pittsburgh

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New “Early Learners First” program makes multi-year grants to local child care providers; covers child care costs for local families

PITTSBURGH, Sept. 20, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- **Duolingo (NASDAQ:DUOL)**, the world’s leading mobile learning platform, today announced a $1 million per year investment as part of the “Duolingo Early Learners First” program. The new program aims to expand access to quality child care for the Pittsburgh community. As part of the multi-year commitment, Duolingo will partner with local child care providers to stabilize their operations, with the goal of fully funding more high-quality child care seats for local families. This program builds upon the company’s mission to improve access to education and be a good neighbor in its local community.

The child care industry is under immense strain nationwide which only worsened during the pandemic. A recent study from Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children reveals the ongoing impact of the child care crisis across the state, citing that less than 50% of child care in Pennsylvania meets high-quality standards. According to Cara Ciminillo, Executive Director of Trying Together, a Pittsburgh-based nonprofit that supports the work of early childhood in the region, “Child care teachers earn less than $12.50 an hour, which is under $26,000 annually. Families can't afford to pay any more and child care teachers can't make any less."

“We’re excited to help create a sustainable early learning ecosystem in Pittsburgh to ensure that our local community has the tools necessary to thrive, which includes access to quality child care,” said Kendra Ross, Head of Social Impact at Duolingo. “Whether it’s making sure everyone has access to the best education, mitigating the child care crisis here in our East Liberty neighborhood, or helping to remove barriers to opportunity for hard-working families, these investments will spur our community’s growth for years to come.”

Today’s announcement kicks off phase one of funding to help local child care programs increase their program capacity, staffing and support for families. In addition to the grants, selected providers will also receive business coaching assistance from community-based partner(s) to help stabilize their business. In subsequent years, early learning programs will receive a grant allocated towards tuition-free seats for qualified families.

“The Early Excellence Project is excited to work alongside Duolingo, Candor & Co Consulting, and Trying Together in our quest to narrow the opportunity gap children from underserved areas face in early childhood education. We believe the Early Learners First program is a fantastic step towards bringing equity into early childhood education in Pittsburgh,” says Lyasha Bishop-Gaines, Executive Director of The Early Excellence Project.

For more information on the Duolingo Early Learners First program, visit the Duolingo blog.

About Duolingo

Duolingo (www.duolingo.com) is the most popular language-learning platform and the most downloaded education app worldwide. The app makes learning languages, math and music fun with bite-sized lessons that feel like playing a game. The company's mission is to develop the best education in the world and make it universally available.

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