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## **LOCAL PRESCHOOLERS SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERNATIONAL MUSIC PROGRAM**

HAMPTON, VA (July 24, 2017) – Downtown Hampton Child Development Center (DHCDC) has partnered with the Musikgarten Foundation to become the first early childhood center in the Commonwealth of Virginia to implement the *Music for Learning* program. This year the Center has been selected as one of only two schools in the United States to participate in this internationally acclaimed program.

Musikgarten is a leader in early childhood music education — for children and teachers. The *Music for Learning* program not only helps children develop their innate musical abilities, but is also designed to promote child development in the areas of motor, language, listening, social/emotional and cognitive skills.

“My goal as a mentor is to help the teachers develop the skills needed to lead the music activities when the grant is complete,” says Linda Madler, Music Specialist for the Musikgarten Foundation. “The teachers at the Center have fully embraced all aspects of this program and are vital to its success.”

The students at DHCDC come from significantly diverse backgrounds, economic statuses, and experiences. Music is something that transcends all of our differences and can help meet the cognitive, social and emotional needs of all children regardless of their skills and abilities. Studies indicate that early music instruction positively impacts language and literacy development; others point to improved pattern recognition skills which are the basis for mathematical learning; still others reveal the social and emotional benefits of being involved in music.

“Music is powerful. It can be used to celebrate diversity, share ideas and create a community,” says Vondella Gregory, the Center’s Program Director. “At DHCDC we believe music and movement classes are not only important, but necessary for our student’s growth and development. We are encouraging our students to learn about themselves and others with the help of music.”

A music component is critical to all quality early childhood programs. The Center’s program will involve children, teachers, and parents in a dynamic learning process, helping them form the basis for a life-long love of music and developing skills leading to success in the school environment.

Downtown Hampton Child Development Center is a nonprofit preschool whose mission is to nurture young children by providing affordable, quality preschool programs that develop the “whole child” and foster school readiness. Serving children ages 6 weeks to 5 years, DHCDC’s four-star rated program (VSQI), NAEYC accreditation, and degreed teachers place it among the top child care centers in Virginia. DHCDC offers the Peninsula’s only sliding-scale tuition rate, based on family income, with a focus on children from “at risk” and underserved populations. The organization began educating and caring for children in 1971, with support from downtown Hampton churches and the City of Hampton, and has grown to serve more than 200 children. As a 501(c)(3) organization, DHCDC still depends on strong support from the community. For more information, please visit [www.dhcdc.org](http://www.dhcdc.org).