

## Governor’s Policy & Supplemental Budget Proposals

### Supporting Children of Incarcerated Parents

Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan’s policy and supplemental budget proposals include several recommendations in multiple agencies to support children of incarcerated parents through increased family connections and prioritized access to supports. Preserving relationships with family members while an individual is incarcerated leads to decreases in stress and trauma on children of incarcerated parents, promotes rehabilitation, and reduces recidivism. Studies repeatedly find a significant link between family contact and success when returning to community.

#### Department of Corrections (DOC) Proposals



**Create a Family Support Unit:** The requested investment of \$280,000 in FY 2023 and each year ongoing will create a family support unit within the DOC that focuses on supporting meaningful connections between incarcerated individuals and their families. The investment will provide needed DOC staffing capacity to explore and partner on evidence-based programming with community members and organizations such as parenting programs. The unit will lead the agency on developing strategies and policies to support incarcerated individuals and their families.



**Invest in Connecting Families:** The requested investment of \$1.5 million in FY2023 and each year ongoing will provide more frequent communications and related supportive services for incarcerated individuals with their family members and other approved support persons or service providers through in-person visits, video visits, and phone calls. Those who are incarcerated face challenges in keeping in touch with their families. Notably, usually family members of those incarcerated pay the often high cost of phone and video calls to support their incarcerated loved ones.

#### Department of Health (MDH) Proposals



**Healthy Beginnings/Healthy Families:** This package has a four-strategy approach, with one of the strategies to sustain and expand the Minnesota Model Jail Practices Learning Community. This program promotes evidence-based policy and practice changes in county jails to support incarcerated parents and their minor children, and the program aims to improve parent-child relationships, reduce recidivism, increase child well-being, and improve public safety.



**Home Visiting Expansion:** The Governor recommends an increase in prevention-focused family home visiting services to families with children under age five. Currently, Minnesota is only serving approximately 10 percent of eligible families who would benefit from home visiting services. The proposal seeks to serve 38,275 families in Year 1, 66,670 families in Year 2, and 103,414 families in Year 3 through short-term home visiting services to all children born in Minnesota, focusing on home visiting to priority populations, including families affected by incarceration, and expansion of long-term home visiting to families.

## Department of Education (MDE) Proposals



**Prioritization for Early Learning Scholarships:** This a policy proposal (no cost) that would add children of parents who are incarcerated to the populations that would be prioritized for Early Learning Scholarships. The Governor’s supplemental budget also has a \$75 million per year expansion of the Early Learning Scholarships that go directly to families that is estimated to serve 10,000 additional children.



**Mixed Delivery Pre-K Expansion:** This investment will fund access to Pre-K for 6,000 more four-year-olds through a mixed-delivery model requiring a combination of school-based programs (40%), Head Start (30%), child care centers and family child care programs (30%). The investment also extends the duration of programming for existing pre-K seats. The expansion would provide categorical eligibility to Pre-K for children with a parent who is incarcerated.