



Representative Dave Pinto  
Chair, Health and Human Services Finance & Policy Committee  
503 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 4, 2022

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Start Early Funders Coalition, we are writing to express concern with HF 3485 as it is written currently. Our vision as a Coalition is that every child in Minnesota is physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively prepared for school and lifelong success. Our coalition is committed to advancing racial equity in our early childhood systems and advocating for policies that benefit Black, Indigenous and other children of color, their families and the programs that serve them.

HF 3485, as written currently, would allow for 3–4-year-olds to be in school age care without any other regulatory changes to how that care is provided. We recognize and support the bill author's intent of the bill to ensure that our 3–4-year-olds in school based or Pre-K programs receive the same level of funding for extended day programs as other elementary students, and encourage clarity in the bill to ensure we continue to provide care to our youngest children in ways that appropriately meet their developmental needs. Appropriate regulations to ensure safety must continue to be front and center in our conversations about accessing high quality early childhood care and education. Data over many years show that Black, Indigenous, People of Color children are not well served in Minnesota's public schools and we have among the worst in the nation achievement gaps between our BIPOC students and white students. It is critical that we ensure our youngest BIPOC students receive the appropriate and high-quality care they deserve. It would be tragic to place 3 and 4-year-old BIPOC children in such settings.

The Start Early Funders Coalition supports a robust early childhood system that gives children and families access to a continuum of high-quality early care and education programs. We appreciate the committee's commitment to our Coalition's vision and look forward to continued partnership towards greater outcomes. We must maintain and continue to grow investments in critical early childhood programs based on ongoing community feedback and guidance.

Thank you,

Carrie Zelin Johnson  
Start Early Funders Coalition Coordinator  
Start Early Funders Coalition

The Start Early Funders Coalition for Children and Minnesota's Future is a collaboration of more than 15 members of Minnesota's philanthropic community. The Coalition provides critical leadership and funding for research, program development, public policy and grant making to improve early childhood efforts in Minnesota. We are working together to ensure every child in Minnesota is physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively prepared for school and lifelong success.