



March 23, 2022

Representative Dave Pinto
Chair, Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee
503 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Committee:

Minnesota's Prenatal to Three Coalition (PN-3) is excited to support the Governor's proposed \$5.1 Billion investments in children and families. The Governor's proposed supplemental budget is a clear sign the Governor and Governor's Children's Cabinet are listening to families with young children across Minnesota. Families are struggling to meet daily expenses and challenges, and many of the investments in HF 4228 will help families with young children get a strong, stable start.

The PN-3 Coalition would like to highlight a number of key policy and funding provisions we hope you will support this Legislative Session:

1. Support for child care and early learning, through a mix-delivery system of private and public programs is essential to keep families working and businesses operating. The time is now to provide supports to existing programs and services and build the infrastructure to address gaps. Specifically, we support
 - Increasing the **Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) rates** to 75th percentile
 - Forecasting **child care assistance basic sliding fee**, to add families from the waitlist
 - Amending **definitions of family** to include foster care families, relative custodian, and guardians
 - Providing **hardship child care stabilization grants**
 - Increasing funds for **early learning scholarships**; and opening Pathway 1 scholarships to all income eligible children beginning birth through kindergarten
 - Preserving **PRE-K slots through VPK, SRP, and PWII**, since families rely on these services statewide
 - Increased **funding for early childhood screening**
 - Support **Head Start Tribal Program set aside** to ensure funding for critical programs
 - **Grow your Own early childhood education** program
 - **Early Childhood Family Education Teacher licensing** support to build capacity to serve more families
2. Support for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Services and Consultation to assist in identifying early developmental concerns and opportunities to connect families to early supports
 - Funding for **early childhood social workers**
 - Increased funding for **infant and early childhood mental health consultation** in schools

3. Support for voluntary **Family Home Visiting services for Every infant** to improve maternal and child outcomes and address the mental health needs of parents, child and families as well as provide continued support for housing, food and employment
 - Support universal family home visiting program
 - Support expanded access to targeted family home visiting programs
4. Statewide **Paid Family & Medical Leave Insurance Plan** will help families as they begin their lives, and assist with medical leaves throughout one's life. These policies help families avoid the false choice of attending to their health and home.
5. Support **Family Friendly Policies Impacting Justice Involved Families** to help connect parents and children as they serve time and prepare to return to their community.
6. Support **Community Solutions Fund for Healthy Child Development** to allow community members to identify solutions to managing and address issues and challenges addressing families.
7. Support **12 month continuous Medical Assistance coverage for children** until age 21. Continuous coverage has been connected to better health outcomes.
8. Support changes to **Doula supervision requirements** to bill directly through Medical Assistance.
9. **Extend MFIP reporting and prospective budgeting to six months.** It is important to help "Stabilizing Working Minnesotans" and reduces administrative costs.
10. Support the **Coordination & funding for Community Resource Hubs** to encourage coordination of early childhood services at the local level to assist family access to community resources.
11. Support **Homework Starts at Home expansion** to prenatal – five.

Minnesota families have struggled during the pandemic. Please join us in supporting HF 4228 to help families get back on track and move forward with a strong, stable start in life.

Thank you,

Deb Fitzpatrick,
Children's Defense Funds-MN,
Co-Chair

Nancy Jost,
West Central Initiative,
Co-Chair

Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn,
MN Prenatal to Three (PN-3) Coalition,
Coalition Coordinator