

**Written Testimony to the House Early Childhood Finance and Policy  
Committee in Support of HF1024**

February 17, 2021

Dear Chair Pinto & Members of the Committee:

We are writing as pediatricians and a professional educator based on our expertise in child development, education, and preventive medicine.

We fully support the intent and the need for a Department of Early Childhood that HF1024 would create. The strong emphasis on coordination of early childhood programs spread out between DHS, MDH, and the MDE has been needed for some time and now is the time to bring it to fruition. The youngest Minnesotans and their families can wait no longer. This is especially true for families with low incomes and other inequities, including those the result of bias and circumstance of location. These are the infants, children, and parents who will benefit most and who will pay the greatest dividends to society.

Support starting with pregnancy and the first 1000 days of life is essential to achieve healthy brain development. Past fragmentation of efforts and various inequities have been barriers to this goal. Both barriers can be resolved by creating this unifying cabinet-level Department.

We the undersigned believe strongly in the necessity for this committee and the legislature to act on behalf of our youngest citizens beginning with the creation of a Department of Early Childhood. We wish you well in this undertaking and we are ready to help in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Dale Dobrin, MD

Mary Meland, MD

Ada Alden, PhD

Roger Sheldon, MD

Sheldon Berkowitz, MD, Chair MNAAP for  
all members of MNAAP

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