

Representative Dave Pinto  
Chair, Children and Families Finance & Policy Committee  
503 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 29, 2023

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Start Early Funders Coalition, we would like to share our appreciation and support for HF 238 before your committee. 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 supporting policies that will benefit low-income, rural and Black, Indigenous and children of color and their families; and the programs that serve them.

The early childhood omnibus bill shares many of our priorities that all children in Minnesota have a strong and healthy start and are prepared to contribute to our state's vitality. In particular we were pleased to see priorities to see more children able to access programs that make child care and early learning accessible including the establishment of the Great Start scholarship program. The establishment of the Department of Children, Youth and Families and the adjustments made to the Parent Aware Quality Rating and Improvement System are important systemic fixes to provide support and resources that meet family's needs. We also were pleased to see resources for Family, Friend and Neighbor childcare providers through the inclusion of the FFN grant program. The inclusion of the elements that will directly benefit the early childhood workforce will have a significant impact broadly on the early childhood system and we were particularly pleased to see shared services, Grow your Own support, retention payments and the establishment of the wage scale through the Children's Cabinet Working Group. Our early childhood system requires significant investment after decades of underinvestment to ensure all families have access to affordable programs that will meet their needs, with a fairly compensated and supported early childhood workforce, and these investments move us in the right direction.

We support a robust early childhood system that gives children and families access to a continuum of high-quality child care and early learning programs. We must maintain and continue to grow equitable investments in critical early childhood programs based on ongoing community feedback and guidance.

Sincerely,

Carrie Zelin Johnson  
Start Early Funder  
Coalition Coordinator

Allison Corrado  
Public Policy  
Committee

Denise Mayotte  
Public Policy  
Committee

Nancy Jost  
Public Policy Committee