

March 14, 2022

Representative Tina Liebling  
Chair, House Health Finance and Policy

Rep. Liebling and Members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee:

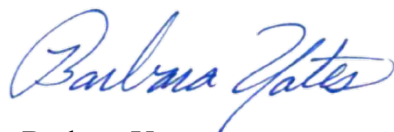
We are writing in strong support of HF 4099, Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grant Program. At Think Small we work to prepare early childhood providers, strengthen families, and catalyze change. We are guided by our strategic plan population level result of preparing all children for Kindergarten in Minnesota.

In order to do this, we must be innovative to tackle and close some of this country's worst disparities tied to child wellbeing for children of color and American Indian children such as health, education, and infant mortality indicators. The first round of 23 Community Solutions grantees are already digging in and showing some of these innovative solutions. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have added another layer of challenges for young children and their families. The Community Solutions Grant Program is a strategy by which we can address the disparities in resources to specific communities. It brings those who are most impacted into the decision-making process.

We support HF 4099 because we believe it is a flexible strategy that addresses inequality as well as amplifies the innovative solutions that leverage community assets, are culturally relevant, and center the experiences and dignity of those most impacted by inequity. Community Solutions Grant Program represents more than money, it is also recognition that communities of color, American Indian communities, and geographically dispersed communities have invaluable knowledge, and must be active and valued participants within the creation of solutions for their communities.

We strongly encourage you to support HF 4099. The collective health and prosperity of our state is tied to ensuring every child has what they need to thrive. Please let us know, at Think Small, if we can assist with any information, you may need in regard to early childhood.

Sincerely,



Barbara Yates  
President and CEO, Think Small