



April 24, 2023

Dear Health & Human Services and Children & Families Conferees;

Transforming Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce was formed in 2016 to build upon the recommendations of the National Institute of Medicine's "Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age Eight" report. Our goal is to ensure Minnesota's early childhood educators are qualified, diverse, supported, and equitably compensated, regardless of setting.

Policy makers in Minnesota are sitting in an immensely powerful point in our state's history, with a nearly \$18 billion surplus and a child care sector desperately in need of transformational change. We are pleased to see so many incredible proposals that have been included in the bills you have before you in this conference committee.

To that end, we strongly encourage acceptance of the following provisions:

- **Early Childhood Registered Apprenticeship Program – SF2995, the 2nd Engrossment, Art. 13, Sec. 16**
 - \$2M annually to establish a federally-recognized registered apprenticeship program through the Dept. of Labor and Industry, in partnership with the Dept. of Human Services.
- **T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarships** – Line 230 on the SF2995, 2nd Engrossment tracking spreadsheet**
 - \$695K in FY25 and ongoing to award comprehensive scholarships that enable early educators to work towards credentials and degrees by making it possible for them to afford both the time and expense of going to school.
- **Child Care Wayfinder** – SF2995, the 2nd Engrossment, Art. 13, Sec. 15**
 - \$2.9M in FY25 and ongoing to fund the child care one-stop regional assistance network to assist child care providers and individuals interested in becoming child care providers with establishing and sustaining a licensed family child care or group family child care program or a child care center.
- **Empower to Educate** - SF2995, the 2nd Engrossment, Art. 18, Sec. 2(d)**
 - \$1.3M in FY25 in targeted grants to economically disadvantaged individuals. Funds are used to recruit and provide child care training, job skills, and job placement.
- **Child care provider retention payments and transition grant program** - While the Governor's recommendation of \$120M in FY24, \$168.704 in FY25, \$161.7M in FY26, and \$161.715M in FY27 ongoing is much closer to the need, we would**

encourage, at minimum, accepting the language in SF2295, the 2nd Engrossment, Art. 18, Sec. 2, Subd. 20(a) and (b), and Art. 13, Sec. 17

- \$41.895M in FY24 for the transition grants for child care providers that intend to participate in the child care retention program.
- \$101.566M in FY24, \$141.598 in FY25, and \$144.202M ongoing after that, for payments directly to child care centers and family child care providers to be used for across-the-board compensation.
- **Shared Services Alliances** - SF2995, the 2nd Engrossment, Art. 18, Sec. 2, Subd. 20(g), and Art. 13, Sec. 18**
 - \$500K ongoing to help family child care providers achieve economies of scale and run more efficient programs, boost provider wages, increase enrollment, and leverage shared supports services to improve quality.
- **REETAIN grant program – SF2995, the 2nd Engrossment, Art. 18, Sec. 2, Subd. 20(c)**
 - \$1.191M in FY25, \$1.293 in FY25, \$1.8M in FY26 and ongoing to improve access to child care in Minnesota and to strengthen the ability of child care programs to recruit and retain qualified early educators to work in child care programs
- **Establishment of Comparable Competencies to Achieve Comparable Compensation-**
 - Both the House and Senate language achieve the goal of developing a compensation framework for the early childhood workforce that incorporates competencies and experiences, as well as educational attainment.

*** = also a Governor's recommendation*

The early care and learning sector has been “just barely getting by” for far too long. The time is now to show those Minnesotans that we, as a state, value their time and talents, that we care for them as they care for our littles, that they deserve to be acknowledged for holding up the state’s economy and helping to shape young minds in the most formative years. With gratitude, we thank you for your investments and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ann McCully & Nancy Jost
Co-Chairs, Transforming Minnesota’s Early Childhood Workforce