



**Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association**  
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*IMAA is building bridges between cultures.*

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Chairperson Rep. Dave Pinto  
Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155-1298

Re: HF 1994 - APPROPRIATION; PARENTCHILD+ PROGRAM

Dear Chairperson Pinto and Members of the House,

Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association (IMAA) strongly supports House Bill HF 1994, because Minnesota families need evidence-based and research-validated early childhood literacy and school readiness program for children ages 16 months to four years. IMAA is refugee led and multi-cultural organization that has 39-year experience in serving refugee and immigrant families in Rochester, Minnesota area. Through ParentChild+ project, we are also proud partner with Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis (JFCS).

Since 2019, IMAA has actively participated in delivering ParentChild+ curriculum to refugee and immigrant families in Rochester, Minnesota. We started with 15 families first program year and have grown the program to serve 40 families this program year. This program year, majority of families served are refugees from East Africa (Somalia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia), and most recently from Afghanistan. We hire locally and each family is matched with a community-based early learning specialist (ELS) who shares their language and cultural background. Our early learning specialists build meaningful relationships with families and support parents in realizing their role as their children's first and most important teacher as well as ongoing academic advocates. As we build strong trust relationships with families, early learning specialists are able to connect families to a wide-range of community resources and programming including food, housing, health care, and educational services. As families graduate from ParentChild+, our staff works to ensure that the program children are enrolled in high-quality preschool programs, the critical next educational step.

The impact that ParentChild+ program has had on refugee and immigrant families in Rochester area is immense. When our young children are nurtured through an effective early childhood literacy and school readiness program, they can achieve their full potential and their parents have more options to improve their future. For these reasons, IMAA respectfully asks for your "Aye" vote for House Bill HF 1994.

Sincerely,

Armin Budimlic  
Executive Director