

February 22, 2021

**RE: Please support early childhood mental health**

Dear Chairs Abeler, Benson, Fischer, Liebling, Pinto, and Schultz:

We are a group of child advocates respectfully requesting that your committees on health, human services, and early childhood come together to support early childhood mental health this session.

Specifically, we hope the legislature will **adopt the early childhood policy provisions proposed as part of the Uniform Service Standards package** from Minnesota DHS, including the use of the DC:-5 diagnostic classification tool.

Simply put, clinical tools for adults are not the right ones to use with young children. The social, emotional, and developmental challenges that appear in the first years of life can have a particularly high overlap in symptoms. One example is that trauma often can appear to be similar to anxiety or other disorders in some young children. But, the treatment approaches are markedly different for the different diagnoses. It takes a trained clinician using the right tools to be able to identify the right diagnosis — which then makes it possible to select the most effective early intervention.

The DC:0-5 tool has nationwide support and is the only diagnostic tool specifically developed for and validated with young children. Having more clinicians in Minnesota using it is an important part of building the early childhood mental health system, and it will reinforce other investments the Legislature continues to make in evidence-based early childhood practices like Attachment Bio-Behavioral Catch-up, Parent-Child Interactive Therapy, and Early Childhood Consultation.

Therefore, we ask you to please support the early childhood mental health policy language this year.

Thank you,

#	Agency	Name
1	Amherst H. Wilder Foundation	Pahou Yang
2	Canvas Health	Matt Eastwood
3	Central Minnesota Mental Health Center	Rick Lee
4	Change Inc.	Jody Nelson
5	Family & Children's Center	Dr. Leah Morken
6	Family Innovations, Inc.	Ed Frickson
7	Fernbrook Family Center	Denise Gardner
8	Fraser	Diane Cross

*(list continues on next page)*

<b>#</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Name</b>
9	Greater Minnesota Family Services	Tom Belcher
10	Headway Emotional Health Services	Pat Dale
11	Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center	Erik Sievers
12	Human Development Center	Ben Hatfield
13	Lee Carlson Center For Mental Health & Well-Being	Rob Edwards
14	Lighthouse Child & Family Services	Julie Hanenburg
15	Lutheran Social Services	Trevor Johnson
16	NAMI Minnesota	Sue Abderholden
17	Northwestern Mental Health Center	Shauna Reitmeier
18	Northwood Children's Services - Little Learners Enrichment Center	Dawn Peterson
19	Solutions Behavioral Healthcare Providers	Kelli Gast
20	South Central Human Relations Center, Inc.	Gary Hird
21	St. David's Center for Child and Family Development	Julie Sjordal
22	Therapeutic Services Agency	Cheryl Smetana McHugh
23	University of Minnesota - Birth to 3 Program	Maria Kroupina
24	Village Family Service	Kelly Olson
25	Washburn Center for Children	Tom Steinmetz