



April 12, 2023

Representative Liz Olson
Chair, Ways & Means Committee
Room 200, State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Olson and Members of the Committee:

Minnesota's Prenatal to Three Coalition (PN-3) writes in support of HF 238. We want to acknowledge the work of this body to prioritize infants and toddlers this session; investing in early childhood programs will help families have a strong start in life. We hope the Ways & Means committee will join us in supporting HF 238, to ensure more children have access to the early childhood care and learning programs they need to be successful in school and in life.

Below we highlight key provisions we hope the Committee will support:

Family, Friend, and Neighbor Grant Program [119B.196] Art. 1. Sec. 25. Line 19.5

Family Friend and Neighbor (FFN) care grants allows care providers already providing child care for over 40% of children in Minnesota access to culturally appropriate training, resources, and a network of support to provide developmental experiences that are interactive and stimulating to help infants and toddlers build the strong foundation needed for future success in school, the workforce, and life.

Early Learning Scholarships [MS 124D.165] Article 9. Sec. 1. Subd. 5. Line 232.8

Early Learning Scholarships empower parents and caregivers to decide what is best for their family's unique situation by bridging funding gaps for low-income families to access quality early education and care programs and improve school readiness in populations with the highest needs. Scholarships provide flexibility and predictability to families, allowing them to focus on supporting their families' economic viability in the future.

Early Childhood Family Educators [124D.13 to 124D.135] Art. 9. Sec 1. Subd. 8-9. Line 233.2

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) is a voluntary program for pregnant people and all families with children between the ages of birth to kindergarten enrollment and works with families to empower caregivers and support the growth and development of young children in Minnesota. ECFE works to strengthen families and enhance the ability of all parents to provide the best possible environment for the healthy growth and development of their children by using evidence-informed practices and individualizing curriculum to address the local needs of the community and families in the state of Minnesota.

Grants for Grow Your Own Early Childhood Educator Programs [122A.731] Art. 9. Sec. 1. 231.18

Investing in "Grow your Own" programs will allow for greater cultural responsiveness to address racial disparities in early education outcomes as well as address the shortage of early education providers—a statewide issue that disproportionately impacts families of color. Expanding investment in the perinatal, infant, and early childhood care workforce to increase capacity and improve retention in the field.

Thank you for prioritizing and thinking about infants and toddlers and for your continued support of young children and their families.

Thank you,

Deb Fitzpatrick,
Children's Defense Funds-MN,
Co-Chair

Nancy Jost,
West Central Initiative,
Co-Chair

Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn,
MN Prenatal to Three (PN-3) Coalition,
Coalition Coordinator