



To: Representative Dave Pinto, Chair, & Children & Families Finance & Policy Committee Members

From: Minnesota Association for Family & Early Education (MNAFEE) representing
Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)

Subject: **HF1698**

Date: March 8, 2023

The Minnesota Association for Family and Early Education (MNAFEE) requests your support for HF 1698, which provides continued support and funding for family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) care. A significant number of Minnesota families with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers depend upon FFN providers to care for their children. The need for them increased during the past three years of the pandemic due to the loss of licensed childcare providers and the ongoing challenges of balancing care for young children and maintaining work. Families with children who have special needs, low-income families, immigrant and refugee families, single parents, parents working non-traditional hours, and families in rural communities often turn to family members, friends, and neighbors to help care for their babies and young children because licensed family care or center care is out of reach financially or geographically.

During the pandemic, Minnesota dedicated one-time funding for FFN care to support FFN providers. This ends in October 2023. These time limited resources have been used to identify and support FFN providers across the state, increase awareness of available educational resources, and provide access to training for providers. Early Childhood Family Education, a public-school program providing parenting education for all families in Minnesota with children 0-5 years of age, has a history of including FFN providers and the children they care for in their two-generation parenting education programs. The grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, and friends who are FFN providers caring for children are functioning in a parenting role. The grants in HF1698 will continue to provide critical resources to these caregivers who do not always have access to learning and education materials and experiences. ECFE can continue to partner with FFN providers through these grants and increase their role in providing resources and parenting information to them.

MNAFEE believes that all Minnesota children deserve high quality care and learning regardless of the care provider and setting. We believe that HF1698 provides FFN caregivers access to important caregiving resources and information and helps ensure that our youngest children throughout Minnesota are getting the best care possible. We urge your approval of HF1698.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

MNAFEE Advocacy Committee Members
Minnesota Association for Family and Early Education