



Representative Dave Pinto
Chair, Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee
503 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

April 5, 2022

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Committee:

Minnesota's Prenatal to Three Coalition (PN-3) writes in support of HF 4735 DE2 Amendment. The PN-3 Coalition is excited to see significant investments in Minnesota's youngest children, their families, and their caregivers. We believe public investments aimed at supporting healthy growth, development and learning will positively position children and families for a lifetime of prosperity. Below we highlight some key provisions we hope the Committee will support this Legislative Session:

1. Support for child care and early learning, through a mix-delivery system of private and public programs is essential to keep families working and businesses operating. There are number of great policies in this bill.
 - Additional funding for **early learning scholarship** and amending definitions to prioritize all **children aged 0-4** and adding children of incarcerated parents to the priority category, will increase continuity of care for children. These changes recognize the importance of accessing quality care early.
 - Increasing the **Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) rates** to 75th percentile will help increase reimbursement rates for child care providers working with families eligible for child care assistance; and meet the federal minimum reimbursement rates. Amending **definitions of family** to include foster care families, relative custodian, and guardians helps families access care and support as they transition and move toward stability.
 - Providing base funding for **child care stabilization grants** and **child care workforce development grants** recognizes the dynamic nature of child care and supports caregivers.
 - Funding the **Brain Builder Bonuses** recognizes the importance of continuity of care and attempts to find solutions to financial challenges that exist in the child care system.
 - Funding for **Family, Friend and Neighbor Care** honors family choice and supports learning and development for all children regardless of their caregiver.
 - Increased access through **Head Start Tribal Program set aside** and **Early Head Start programming**
 - Establishing the **Grow your Own early childhood education** program
 - Funding to support statewide **Early Childhood Family Education** staff.
2. Increased funding for **mental health services and early childhood social workers** and increased funding for **Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Services and Consultation** to assist in identifying and addressing early developmental concerns and opportunities to connect families to early supports.

Please join us in supporting HF 4735 DE2 Amendment.

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

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