



Dear Members of the House Early Childhood Committee:

Kids Can't Wait -- a coalition of nonprofit, faith, child care, and business advocates -- strongly supports HF 1747 which would create a Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program that meets the needs of our providers and families, as well as federal recommendations. It is a wise investment that brings us back to where we were as a state two decades ago on provider reimbursements and reaps dividends for Minnesota families, children, employers, and our economy.

The Child Care Assistance Program is the largest form of child care support for low-income working families with infants and toddlers in Minnesota (and remains available to eligible children up to age 13 for before/after school and summer care). Child Care Assistance helps families secure stable child care while they work toward financial stability via employment or education. HF 1747 provides the ongoing funding necessary to ensure every child and working family that is eligible for the basic sliding fee program receives the support they need to flourish. Decreased state investments in the CCAP Basic Sliding Fee program have resulted in children and families ending up on waitlists, sometimes for years. Without increased CCAP Basic Sliding Fee investments, waitlists will inevitably grow along with the need for child care as our economy recovers. These waitlists are not just bad for children and workers, they are bad for our businesses and our economic recovery.

HF 1747 returns Minnesota to the provider reimbursement rates in place before the Great Recession, a provider reimbursement rate recommended by the federal government. Child Care Assistance provider reimbursement rates that are well below market rates for far too many providers jeopardize child care professionals' ability to accept children using CCAP, to expand or even remain in business and provide the high quality care and education every Minnesota child needs and deserves.

Kids Can't Wait is pleased to see the Minnesota House consider the investments needed to address the critical shortage of quality child care and early learning opportunities throughout the state, and hopes the Governor and Senate will support similarly robust plans. At a time when our state economy is beginning to turn the corner on COVID, many families cannot enter or re-enter the workforce because they cannot find or afford child care.

We hope you will join us and 72% of Minnesota voters in supporting the significant ongoing investments needed in childcare to give children, families and businesses the best chance possible to succeed.

**Children's Defense Fund – Minnesota
Elders for Infants
ISAIAH
Joint Religious Legislative Coalition
Main Street Alliance Minnesota
Minnesota Budget Project**

**Minnesota Child Care Association
Minnesota Prenatal to 3 Coalition
Minnesota Alliance of YMCAs
People Serving People
Voices & Choices for Children
Coalition**