

May 2, 2023

Conference Committee Members,

On behalf of the Start Early Funders Coalition, we would like to share our support for many of the provisions that support children and families. Our vision as a Coalition is that every child in Minnesota is physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively prepared for school and lifelong success. Our coalition is committed to supporting policies that will benefit low-income, rural and Black, Indigenous and children of color and their families; and the programs that serve them.

In addition to the incredible need to invest in programs that help children access child care and early learning (increasing the CCAP rates, wage scale recommendations, one stop assistance network, we were particularly excited to see the creation of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families). Additionally, in the Senate omnibus bill we were very excited to see the inclusion of the family, friend and neighbor grant program funded at a higher level, the significant increase to home visiting programs for priority populations, the increase to REETAIN and TEACH grants. In the House omnibus, we were excited to see the additional funding for the CCAP Basic Sliding Fee and the significant funding for Community Solutions, which we courage you to fund at \$10B a biennium.

We also urge the conference committee to fund child care provider retention payments at the level the Governor has recommended. We are so appreciative of the work of this conference committee to support families with young children experiencing homelessness. The combination of all of these priorities moves us towards seeing in full the recommendations of the Great Start Task Force, and sets us on a path where children and families receive the support they need, and the child care and early learning workforce is compensated at the level we need to stabilize the sector.

We support a robust system of policies that gives children and families access to a continuum of programs that promote healthy childhood development. We must maintain and continue to grow equitable investments in critical programs based on ongoing community feedback and guidance.

Sincerely,

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