



March 28, 2022
Representative Dave Pinto
Chair, House Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee

Chair Pinto and Members of the House Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee:

Think Small would like to offer support for HF 4497, which would improve Information Technology and data practices across early childhood programs. At Think Small our nonprofit organization's Strategic Plan goal is that all children in Minnesota are ready for kindergarten. We work toward this goal in a variety of ways, and one of our biggest barriers is outdated and uncoordinated data and technology.

I know from my time working for and with state agencies that one of the challenges to a better system is the technology systems. The age of the systems and the lack of communication between them makes it difficult for administrators and parents alike. Improving data and technology for early childhood programs will not solve all the problems in our field—financial investments are still urgently needed. However, this is a step in the right direction.

We strongly encourage you to support HF 4497. We appreciate the important efforts that the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) have already undertaken to better coordinate. And we greatly appreciate the efforts for the Governor's Children's Cabinet to better communicate and collaborate across all state agencies. This would help that work continue and deepen, which is critical. We appreciate the work done by the Committee to improve critical issues within the field and we look forward to continued collaboration. Please contact me if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barbara Yates".

Barbara Yates
President and CEO, Think Small