

Representative Gomez
Chair, Taxes Committee
503 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

January 23, 2023

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Start Early Funders Coalition, we express our support for HF9, establishing the Great Start child care and dependent care credit. We are a coalition of funders with a shared vision 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 children, rural children and families as well as Black, Indigenous and children of color and their families; and the programs that serve them.

The cost of child care is unaffordable to most families in Minnesota, with out of pocket costs reaching upwards of \$20,000 per year for a single child. Parents are forced to make difficult decisions to cover these costs, and many women in particular have chosen to leave the workforce specifically because of the cost of child care. As cities across the state look to worker shortages, and record low unemployment rates, we must think critically about how we support parents and caregivers of young children if they're choosing to work. This is particularly important at a time when Minnesotans are at a breaking point as they struggle to find and afford care for their children. It is critical that we invest in a mixed delivery early childhood system that meets the needs of all families, and providing funding directly to families to ease the cost of child care is essential. We must ensure all children, in particular our children from families that are low-income birth to kindergarten have access to these programs.

We support a robust early childhood system that gives children and families access to a continuum of high-quality child care and early learning programs. We must maintain and continue to grow equitable investments in critical early childhood programs based on ongoing community feedback and guidance.

Thank you,

Carrie Zelin Johnson
Start Early Funders Coalition
Coordinator

Allison Corrado
Start Early Funders Coalition,
Public Policy Co-Chair

Denise Mayotte
Start Early Funders Coalition,
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