



INVESTING IN THE YOUNGEST MINNESOTANS

Investing in the littlest Minnesotans benefits us all. House DFLers have created a plan to support vulnerable children, make early care and learning more affordable for families, and stabilize this critical sector. In addition to getting tens of thousands of children off to the great start they deserve, this plan will ensure parents can work, employers can hire, and communities can thrive.

Ensuring Vulnerable Children Get the Great Start They Deserve

Our state's huge opportunity gaps start well before school. But low-income and vulnerable children are the least likely to have access to high-quality early care and learning. Our budget will award early learning scholarships to more than 20,000 vulnerable infants, toddlers, and preschoolers – those from low-income families, in foster care, homeless or highly mobile, or with a teen or incarcerated parent. Once these children turn four, our budget will give them access to a statewide, voluntary pre-K program through schools, Head Start, and licensed child care providers. Along the way, our bill significantly increases reimbursement rates for the Child Care Assistance Program, helping more than 30,000 children from low-income families access and afford care. Finally, our bill makes more vulnerable families eligible for CCAP, including foster parents, custodians, and guardians. Together, these initiatives will help put thousands of children on the path to success in kindergarten, school, and life.

Helping Middle-Income Families Afford Child Care and Early Learning

Many Minnesota families struggle greatly to afford early care and learning, including those who aren't eligible for child care assistance or early learning scholarships. Unaffordable child care plays a central role in workforce shortages throughout the state. Our plan establishes a Great Start Tax Credit to provide families with up to \$3,000 for each child under five years of age, with a cap of \$7,500. Making early care and learning more affordable will allow parents to work and employers and communities to thrive.

Supporting Caregivers and Early Educators

Early care and learning was in crisis even before the pandemic. When those doing this critical work receive poverty-level wages, this cannot help but have an impact on the children in their care. Our proposal includes many provisions aimed at supporting this sector, including more than \$200 million to continue the monthly grants that have kept providers operating for the past two years. Our budget recognizes that ongoing public support is necessary to meet this ongoing public need.