



Building a Stronger Economic Future by Investing in Minnesota's Youngest Children

When we prioritize our youngest children, we invest in Minnesota's future economic prosperity.

Despite recent advancements, nearly **35,000 children in Minnesota still do not have access to high-quality early care and education**. These numbers are expected to grow as COVID-19 continues to strain struggling child care providers due to increased safety costs and lost revenue.

Early care and learning are critical to a child's development.

STRONG BEGINNINGS: Access to quality care and positive, stable relationships have long-term benefits, building important social skills and improving academic success.

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT: From birth to age three, a child's brain produces more than one million connections each second. Up to 90% of a child's brain development occurs by age five.

Improving access to quality early care supports a vibrant economy.

THE OPPORTUNITY GAP: Lack of affordable early care disproportionately affects Families of Color, contributing to Minnesota's unacceptable opportunity gap.

CHILD CARE SHORTAGE: Minnesota has one of the most severe child care shortages in the nation, losing 12,000 net child care slots in recent years. This impacts parents – most often mothers – from finding care, often causing them to leave their jobs or reduce hours worked.

Minnesota's early childhood workforce faces instability.

LOW WAGES: In 2020, the median wage of a Minnesota child care worker was approximately \$12/hour, resulting in an unstable workforce and high turnover rates.

UNSUSTAINABLE IMPACTS: Early care providers often operate on very slim margins and are unable to weather even small fluctuations in revenue. COVID-related expenses along with shrinking revenues have increased early childhood program operating costs as much as 47%.



We ask legislators to support families and Minnesota's economy by increasing early care and learning investments to ensure a robust early childhood system.

Increase reimbursement rates for early care providers that serve children from low-wealth households to promote and increase workforce stability.

Expand opportunities for high-quality early learning and care through increased investments in existing programs that meet the needs of families.

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