

Investing in Minnesota's Future Through Early Education



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 affordable high-quality early care and education. Compounding these challenges, **12,000 3-year-olds** in the Greater Twin Cities have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience; without intervention, as adults they will incur a total of **\$210 million per year** in trauma-related medical costs. This is why we need a solution that ensures every child gets a "GreatStartMN."

HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING SUPPORTS FAMILIES AND THE ECONOMY

Early care and learning are critical to a child's development. From birth to age three, a child's brain produces more than one million connections each second, and up to 90% of a child's brain development occurs by age five. Access to quality care and positive, stable relationships have long-term benefits, building important social skills and improving academic success.

Improving access to quality early childhood care and education supports a vibrant economy. Lack of affordable early care disproportionately affects Families of Color, contributing to Minnesota's economic, health and education disparities. Additionally, Minnesota has one of the most severe childcare shortages in the nation, losing 12,000 net child care slots in recent years. This impacts parents — most often mothers — from finding adequate childcare, often causing them to leave their jobs or reduce hours worked.

Minnesota's early childhood education workforce faces instability. In 2020, the median wage of a Minnesota early childhood care and education professional was approximately \$12/hour, resulting in an unstable workforce and high turnover rates. Additionally, early education programs often operate on very slim margins and are unable to weather even small fluctuations in revenue.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

Increase long-term investments to stabilize the early child care and education workforce, so children and families have access to affordable high-quality care and early childhood care and education professionals are compensated with livable wages and benefits packages.

Expand access to culturally responsive, trauma-sensitive early childhood care and education for all children prenatal to age five, so all children can receive the support they need to thrive today and into the future.



Greater Twin Cities
United Way