

Transforming Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce Newsletter



Building a Better System

We are in full support of emergency measures to make sure that health care and other essential workers have continued child care. And we also need to think long-term. We need an effective financing infrastructure with strategic investments in order to build a system that is adequate, equitable and sustainable. Just as we as a society have chosen to invest in other public goods such as our food and agricultural infrastructure (e.g. farm subsidies) and K-12 education (e.g. per pupil funding), we need an early care and education financing structure that supports access for all families as well as institutional supports to early care and education providers.

Now is the time to double down on the agenda that Transforming Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce and others have been developing and refining. The childcare industry was broken and unsustainable long before COVID-19 came along. But the pandemic has greatly exposed the problems that the early childhood system has been facing for years.

COVID-19 has created chaos. When everything subsides and we reopen the economy, many businesses will not make it, childcare centers and homes included. Leaders must create a pathway for an early childhood system that is strategic and focused on ensuring that high-quality programs, especially those serving vulnerable children and families, not only survive, but thrive.

In the midst of these trials, Senators Tina Smith and Elizabeth Warren unveiled their plans for a \$50 Billion Child Care Bailout. This plan would help our childcare providers stay afloat and keep them in business in this unprecedented time. However, only \$7 billion dollars has been set aside for childcare and early learning centers through the newly created HEROES Act. This is a step in the right direction but more must be done to effectively support our early childhood workforce.

Child care was essential before, it is essential now, and it is going to be essential in our future. It is important that we give our workforce a fighting chance to do what they do best: educate and care for our youngest citizens.

Quick Updates:

- The Legislature adjourned on May 18. They did *not* act on the federal conformity measures for CCAP. Nor did they pass the extension for Early Learning Scholarships to be used at all Parent Aware-rated programs.
- The Governor is slowly “turning up the dials” to safely reopen the economy. Child care programs continue to be critical sector and allowed to be open as long as they are in compliance with public health guidance.
- Minnesota received \$48.1 million in CCDBG funding from the federal CARES Act. The Governor intends to use part of the funds to support child care access for families, increase funding for Peacetime Emergency Child Care grants and provide flexibility for CCAP funds.



A note from our team regarding the tragic death of George Floyd:

Our hearts mourn the wrongful murder of George Floyd. George was known as a gentle, friendly man to all who knew him. Sadly his life was taken too soon by those sworn to protect us. We know that this is a stark and painful reality for black men and women throughout our country. We stand with our communities as we look to rebuild a just and fair system. Our work is dedicated to removing the inequities we see in the early childhood system. We know that these are one of the many inequities that black and brown people face every single day. We will continue to fight for equity in early childhood education and stand with the many organizations fighting for racial justice at a larger scale.



There is More Work That Needs to be Done

Our recommendations are not wishful thinking. They are consistent with the recommendations from Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education report, which was conducted by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. You can read more here: [Transforming ECE](#)

What We Have:

Early care and education (ECE) programs receive child care assistance payments that cover only a small fraction of the actual costs of providing care. In Minnesota, this reimbursement is based on the 25th percentile of market rates from 2011.

Only a limited number of children and families have access to high quality early care and education.

Early care and education professionals spend significant amounts of time managing the various funding streams which each have different eligibility thresholds and requirements.

Significant underinvestment in a broken and fragmented early childhood system.

Many families are priced out of high quality care or often pay an unreasonable percentage of their income for early care and education.

Increased qualifications and credentials of the early childhood workforce do not result in increased compensation.

There is no unified system of higher education for early childhood care and education. Faculty are mostly white women who make do with inadequate funding and support.

We don't evaluate outcomes for our youngest children and have limited data to show that our investments are making a difference.

The early childhood system is inequitable and yields inequitable results.

What We Need:

ECE providers receive payments that are sufficient to cover the total cost of high-quality early care and education. Those costs not covered by family contributions are covered by institutional support to providers and assistance directly to families.

All children and families have access to high quality, affordable, early care and education.

A state level entity coordinates the various state and federal financing mechanisms.

Federal and state governments increase funding levels to ensure adequate, equitable and sustainable funding for a unified, high-quality system of early care and education for all children.

All families can access high-quality care. Families' contributions towards the cost of care are affordable and reasonable.

Existing early childhood workforce members who want to increase their credentials are supported with financial resources and receive pay commensurate with their qualifications.

All higher education programs in Minnesota are aligned with the science of child development, the core competencies needed and the principles of high quality practice. Early childhood programs at institutes of higher education are all high quality and have resources to develop and promote diverse faculty and programs.

Resources are available for research and evaluation to ensure that efforts to improve the ECE system result in positive outcomes for children.

Equity is centered: the needs of historically marginalized children will be prioritized and the gender and racial justice issues of the early childhood workforce must be addressed.