

HF 33/SF 27 -Omnibus Health and Human Services Bill

Signed by Governor Walz on June 29, 2021

Article 14, Miscellaneous, Section 18. Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force

Sec. 18. AFFORDABLE, HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION FOR ALL FAMILIES.

Subdivision 1. Goal.

It is the goal of the state for all families to have access to affordable, high-quality early care and education that enriches, nurtures, and supports children and their families. The goal will be achieved by:

- (1) creating a system in which family costs for early care and education are affordable;
- (2) ensuring that a child's access to high-quality early care and education is not determined by the child's race, family income, or zip code; and
- (3) ensuring that Minnesota's early childhood educators are qualified, diverse, supported, and equitably compensated regardless of setting.

Subd. 2. Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force; establishment.

The Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force is established to develop strategies that will meet the goal identified in subdivision 1.

Subd. 3. Membership.

(a) The task force shall consist of the following 15 voting members, appointed by the governor, except as otherwise specified:

(1) two members of the house of representatives, one appointed from the majority party by the speaker of the house and one appointed from the minority party by the minority leader;

(2) two members of the senate, one appointed from the majority party by the majority leader and one appointed from the minority party by the minority leader;

(3) two individuals who are directors of a licensed child care center, one from greater Minnesota and one from the seven-county metropolitan area;

(4) two individuals who are license holders of family child care programs, one from greater Minnesota and one from the seven-county metropolitan area;

(5) three individuals who are early childhood educators, one who works in a licensed child care center, one who works in a public school-based early childhood program, and one who works in a Head Start program or a community education program;

(6) two parents of children under five years of age, one parent whose child attends a private early care and education program and one parent whose child attends a public program, and one parent from greater Minnesota and one parent from the seven-county metropolitan area;

(7) one representative of a federally recognized tribe who has expertise in the early care and education system; and

(8) one representative from the Children's Cabinet.

(b) The task force shall have nonvoting members who participate in meetings and provide data and information to the task force upon request. One person appointed by each of the commissioners of the following state agencies, one person appointed by the board of each of the following organizations, and persons appointed by the governor as specified, shall serve as nonvoting members of the task force:

- (1) the Department of Education;
- (2) the Department of Employment and Economic Development;
- (3) the Department of Health;
- (4) the Department of Human Services;
- (5) the Department of Labor and Industry;
- (6) the Department of Management and Budget;
- (7) the Department of Revenue;
- (8) the Minnesota Business Partnership;
- (9) the Minnesota Community Education Association;
- (10) the Minnesota Child Care Association;
- (11) the statewide child care resource and referral network, known as Child Care

Aware:

- (12) the Minnesota Head Start Association;
- (13) the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators;
- (14) the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce;
- (15) a member of a statewide advocacy organization that supports and promotes early childhood education and welfare, appointed by the governor;
- (16) a faculty representative who teaches early childhood education in a Minnesota institution of higher education, appointed by the governor;
- (17) the Minnesota Initiative Foundations;
- (18) a member of the Kids Count on Us Coalition, appointed by the governor;
- (19) the Minnesota Child Care Provider Information Network;
- (20) the Minnesota Association of Child Care Professionals;
- (21) a member of Indigenous Visioning, appointed by the governor; and
- (22) a nationally recognized expert in early care and education financing, appointed by the governor.

Subd. 4. Administration.

(a) The governor must select a chair or cochairs for the task force from among the voting members. The first task force meeting shall be convened by the chair or cochairs and held no later than December 1, 2021. Thereafter, the chair or cochairs shall convene the task force at least monthly and may convene other meetings as necessary. The chair or cochairs shall convene meetings in a manner to allow for access from diverse geographic locations in Minnesota.

(b) Compensation of task force members, filling of task force vacancies, and removal of task force members shall be governed by Minnesota Statutes, section 15.059, except that nonvoting members of the task force shall serve without compensation.

(c) The commissioner of management and budget shall provide staff and administrative services for the task force.

(d) The task force shall expire upon submission of the final report required under subdivision 9.

(e) The duties of the task force in this section shall be transferred to an applicable state agency if specifically authorized under law to carry out such duties.

(f) The task force is subject to Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13D.

Subd. 5. Plan development.

(a) The task force must develop strategies and a plan to achieve the goal outlined in subdivision 1 by July 2031.

(b) The plan must include an affordability standard that clearly identifies the maximum percentage of income that a family must pay for early care and education. The standard must take into account all relevant factors, including but not limited to:

(1) the annual income of the family;

(2) the recommended maximum of income spent on child care expenses from the United States Department of Health and Human Services;

(3) the average cost of private child care for children under the age of five; and

(4) geographic disparities in child care costs.

Subd. 6. Affordable, high-quality early care and education.

In developing the plan under subdivision 5, the task force must:

(1) identify the most efficient infrastructure, benefit mechanisms, and financing mechanisms under which families will access financial assistance so that early care and education is affordable, high-quality, and easy to access;

(2) consider how payment rates for child care will be determined and updated;

(3) describe how the plan will be administered, including the roles for state agencies, local government agencies, and community-based organizations and how that plan will streamline funding and reduce complexity and fragmentation in the administration of early childhood programs; and

(4) identify how to maintain and encourage the further development of Minnesota's mixed-delivery system for early care and education, including licensed family child care, to match family preferences.

Subd. 7. Workforce compensation.

In developing the plan under subdivision 5, the task force must:

(1) include strategies to increase racial and ethnic equity and diversity in the early care and education workforce and recognize the value of cultural competency and multilingualism;

(2) include a compensation framework that supports recruitment and retention of a qualified workforce in every early care and education setting;

(3) consider the need for and development of a mechanism that ties child care reimbursement rates to employee compensation;

(4) develop affordable, accessible, and aligned pathways to support early childhood educators' career and educational advancement;

(5) set compensation for early childhood educators by reference to compensation for elementary school teachers; and

(6) consider the recommendations from previous work including the Transforming Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce project and other statewide reports on systemic issues in early care and education.

Subd. 8. Implementation timeline.

The task force must develop an implementation timeline that phases in the plan over a period of no more than six years, beginning in July 2025 and finishing no later than July 2031. In developing the implementation timeline, the task force must consider:

(1) how to simultaneously ensure that child care is affordable to as many families as possible while minimizing disruptions in the availability and cost of currently available early care and education arrangements;

(2) the capacity for the state to increase the availability of different types of early care and education settings from which a family may choose;

(3) how the inability to afford and access early care and education settings disproportionately affects certain populations; and

(4) how to provide additional targeted investments for early childhood educators serving a high proportion of families currently eligible for or receiving public assistance for early care and education.

Subd. 9. Required reports.

By December 15, 2022, the task force must submit to the governor and legislative committees with jurisdiction over early childhood programs preliminary findings and draft implementation plans. By February 1, 2023, the task force must submit to the governor and legislative committees with jurisdiction over early childhood programs final recommendations and implementation plans pursuant to subdivision 5.