



Senator Rich Draheim
Chair, Housing Finance and Policy
3227 Minnesota Senate Bldg
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 23, 2022

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Start Early Funders Coalition, we express our support for SF 3944 to include an expansion of the Homework Starts with Home initiative to begin to serve families with very young children. Our vision as a Coalition is that every child in Minnesota is physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively prepared for school and lifelong success. Our coalition is committed to advancing racial equity in our early childhood systems and advocating for policies that benefit Black, Indigenous and other children of color, their families and the programs that serve them.

The *Homework Starts with Home* initiative in SF 3944 recognizes the significant impact stable housing has on young children, families and our communities broadly. 32% of those who are homeless are children under the age of 17, and children that have been homeless are significantly more likely to experience homelessness as an adult. A recent survey from the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank found that access to affordable housing and access to quality affordable early childhood care were the top two reasons given for why individuals were unable to join the workforce. As our State continues to experience a significant labor market shortage, investing in programs that work, such as Homework Starts with Home, are critical. We know that investment in these programs is necessary to support children and families both in their immediate needs, while having lasting impacts on their lives.

The Start Early Funders Coalition supports a robust early childhood system that gives children and families access to a wide continuum of programs. A broad range of program types, including initiatives such as Homework Starts with Home is required to support the families, children and our state's economic recovery. We must maintain and continue to grow investments in critical early childhood programs based on ongoing community feedback and guidance.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Carrie Zelin Johnson".

Carrie Zelin Johnson
Start Early Funders Coalition Coordinator
Start Early Funders Coalition

The Start Early Funders Coalition for Children and Minnesota's Future is a collaboration of more than 15 members of Minnesota's philanthropic community. The Coalition provides critical leadership and funding for research, program development, public policy and grant making to improve early childhood efforts in Minnesota. We are working together to ensure every child in Minnesota is physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively prepared for school and lifelong success.