

February 28, 2023

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

On behalf of Think Small, we are writing in support of S.F. 53. We appreciate this effort early in session to address some of the most pressing and urgent needs of the childcare field.

At Think Small we believe that a strong, equitable childcare and early learning system not only benefits children, families, and early educators, but also keeps parents in the workforce, increases racial equity and strengthens the economy for everyone. The targeted funding included in S.F. 53 will support more children to access quality early learning experiences to prepare them for kindergarten and life.

We especially appreciate the increased investments in Early Learning Scholarships. Think Small administers Scholarships in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties where 85% of the current recipient population fall into priority groups such as experiencing homelessness, in foster care, or receiving protective services; and 80% identify as children of color. Think Small has 800 children on its waitlist. Thousands more children are on waiting lists for this kind of support statewide. S.F. 53 will help more children access quality early care and education right now.

We must also take this opportunity to remind you that while this funding is critical it is only a fraction of what is needed to address the childcare crisis in Minnesota. We look forward to continuing to work with you throughout the session on long-term, sustainable solutions to support quality childcare and get our children off to a Great Start. We appreciate this crucial first step and thank you for your work to support young children and families in Minnesota. Please contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Barbara Yates
President and CEO, Think Small