



# children's defense fund minnesota

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Senate file 2995 moves us forward on achieving a shared goal of making Minnesota the best state in the country to be a child – and includes many of the priorities expressed by families involved in our partnerships throughout the state.

We would like to start by acknowledging **some of the most transformational sections:**

- **Increased, ongoing investments in the Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development grant program allow us to tap into the many strengths and significant wisdom in our Black, Indigenous and other communities of color** to better address Minnesota's opportunity gaps that are among the worst in the nation. As the process moves forward, we hope these investments can match the Governor & House.
- **A new Department of Children, Youth and Families will increase coordination, reduce the time tax and provide improved support** for children, families and those that provide services to them.
- **The unprecedented investments in childcare and early learning** make a significant downpayment on the Great Start for All Minnesota Children north star vision of ensuring affordability for parents, quality for children and living wages for providers. These include **CCAP improvements; retention payments** and workforce supports; **Family, Friend, and Neighbor grants**; IT investments among others); we suggest leveraging *these investments by adding the Great Start Scholarship provisions included in SF 2229.*
- **Finally, the bill turns proven pandemic era innovations that better support children and families into long-term change**, including: reductions in red-tape and improved economic stability for the 43,000 children on **MFIP, continuous MA coverage** to age six, a **MNCare buy-in for undocumented children** and the **Homeless Youth Stipend pilot.**

In addition, there are so many other important investments that will get children off to the best start possible, some of these include the **African American Babies Coalition**; children's mental health grants such as **Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation; Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Families; Home Visiting; Help Me Connect** and several other studies, offices, rate increases and efforts to address **maternal and infant mortality.**

**Thank you for your commitment to the children of Minnesota.**

Debra Fitzpatrick, Policy and Research Director