



First Children's Finance



Funders Coalition for Children & Minnesota's Future



LEADERS IN EARLY LEARNING



Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children



February 20, 2023

Dear Members of the Senate E12 Finance Committee:

On behalf of the Early Care and Education Crisis Work Group, we are writing to express our support of S.F. 1276. The Crisis Work Group is a broad group of organizations that came together in 2018 to address two crises impacting Minnesota's young children: 1) Worst-in-the-nation opportunity gaps, stemming in part from lack of access to quality early care and learning; and 2) a shortage of quality early care and education supply for children statewide. We understand these crises are intertwined and must be addressed in a coordinated way.

As you begin making decisions for how to prioritize investments this year, please consider that investments in the early care and education area are necessary, but that they won't be sufficient unless the investment strategy is aligned with kindergarten-readiness effectiveness research. For this reason, our Work Group supports increasing state investment in Early Learning Scholarships, which 1) start early in life before gaps grow intractable; 2) are targeted in support of low-income children; 3) ensure children are benefitting from kindergarten readiness best practices; and 4) are flexible to meet the needs of families.

We encourage the committee to make investments in the area of early care and education with the intent of ensuring more children arrive at kindergarten with the skills they need for success. Early Learning Scholarships do that. We urge your support for the maximum possible investment in this critical area.

Thank you,

Members of the MN Early Care and Education Crisis Workgroup

