

Senator Mary Kunesch
Chair, Education Finance Committee
1150 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 7, 2023

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Start Early Funders Coalition, we express our support for SF 1240, to support a robust system of Early Childhood Family Education across the state before your committee. 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 supporting policies that will benefit low-income, rural and Black, Indigenous and children of color and their families; and the programs that serve them.

Program such as Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) are critical to the health and wellbeing of Minnesota's youngest children by supporting both the young children and their caregiver with the tools they need to promote healthy brain development. 90% of brain development happens before the age of five. A positive, healthy relationship with a parent or caregiving figure is the single most important determinant for successful development during the first three years of life. ECFE is provided at no cost to families and available to all Minnesota expectant parents, new parents and relatives of children from birth to kindergarten, and is often a lifeline for parents to build relationships with other families and access additional community resources in addition to better understanding child development and the needs of their children. Access to consistent and ongoing staff oversight within the Department of Education will provide greater continuity and quality of programming, and better connections between other state programs.

We support a robust early childhood system that gives children and families access to a continuum of high-quality child care and early learning programs. We must maintain and continue to grow equitable investments in critical early childhood programs based on ongoing community feedback and guidance.

Sincerely,

Carrie Zelin Johnson
Start Early Funder
Coalition Coordinator

Allison Corrado
Public Policy
Committee

Denise Mayotte
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Nancy Jost
Public Policy Committee