

We All Agree on Child Care. Let's Do Something About It

The Problem. Minnesota's economy can't recover from the COVID-19 pandemic without access to child care for working parents, and the pandemic has seriously aggravated a pre-existing child care shortage. Until we address this, Minnesota parents (particularly women) can't get back into the workforce, mostly women-owned child care businesses will continue to disappear from the landscape, and the economy that we all depend on will not unleash its full potential. The child care shortage is at the core of our economic crisis.

At the same time, Minnesota faces indefensible academic, social, and economic inequalities exacerbated by the fact that an estimated 35,000 low-income children under age five can't access high-quality early learning to shape their fast-developing brains. The brain undergoes more rapid development in the first five years than in any other period, yet we continue to underinvest in this time of a child's life. Research confirms that we suffer the consequences of this underinvestment in our economy, health care, criminal justice, education, and other systems.

The Solution. Therefore, and especially in light of the state's improved budget picture, a broad group of Minnesota civic, children's, and business organizations has come together to work to ensure that whatever new resources are available in 2021 be disproportionately dedicated to two programs that help low-income children under age five access a variety of types of child care programs. A recent Data for Progress poll found that 72% of Minnesota voters support such investments.

Early Learning Scholarships & Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

The Advocates. We are a broad coalition that doesn't agree on everything, but we do concur that investment in these two proven programs will yield a tremendous return-on-investment for Minnesota's parents, early educators, economy, communities, taxpayers, and most vulnerable children. We respectfully urge the Minnesota Legislature to put these investments at the very top of their priorities for this session.

