

2022 Public Policy Priorities



A strong, equitable child-care 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 economic vitality of Minnesota is tied to the economic vitality of our child care programs.

Minnesota is experiencing two crises – a global pandemic and systemic racism. In addition, the state has one of the largest K-12 achievement gaps in the nation when comparing white children to children of color. Even before the crisis, families struggled to find and afford high quality child-care that supported their child’s development, and too many in the child-care sector were struggling to stay in business. Therefore, it is critical for our state’s economic recovery to build back a better, more equitable child care system that works for children, families, educators, and employers. Doing so will require immediate and sustained investments along with equitable policies.

Think Small’s state and federal advocacy will continue to build upon the momentum of significant investments in early care and education while addressing the immediate needs of parents and educators affected by the two crises by supporting policies that: **1** Prioritize increased access to quality early care and education for children with high needs, **2** Increase support for child care programs by working to:

- **Expand access for children, birth to kindergarten entry, from families with low incomes to quality early care and education programs by advocating funding for flexible, parent-directed scholarships**
- **Increase the number of financially sustainable Parent Aware rated programs and allow programs to maintain or improve their Parent Aware ratings**
- **Support the sustainable career pathways of early learning educators**
- **Improve tracking and data collection of children’s program participation and outcomes**