



**Greater Twin Cities
United Way**
gtcuw.org

April 4, 2022

Dear Members of the Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee:

We write in support of expanding access to high-quality, affordable, culturally competent early care and education for children prenatal to five through early learning scholarships, voluntary family home visiting services, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), and stabilization grants.

At Greater Twin Cities United Way, our mission is to unite changemakers, advocate for social good and develop solutions to address the challenges no one can solve alone. Together with our partners, we touched over 500,000 lives across the nine-county metro area last year. We fund over 100 nonprofits and coalitions through multi-year general operations grants, innovation initiatives and supportive funds directed toward our partners' most pressing needs in the areas of Household Stability, Educational Success and Economic Opportunity.

Early care and learning start at birth and are critical to supporting a child's healthy development. Paired with stable relationships, high quality early care and education has been documented to have long-term benefits that build strong social skills, improved academic success and healthy brain development. From birth to age three, a child's brain produces more than one million connections each second, with up to 90 percent of development occurring by age five.

Despite these important benefits, nearly 31,000 children in Minnesota still do not have access to quality early care and learning opportunities. Increased investments in early learning scholarships, CCAP, and voluntary family home visiting services will expand access to high quality, culturally competent, early care and education to all families with children prenatal to age five. Stabilization grants will support and sustain the early childcare sector's workforce.

We know that one of the biggest drivers of economic stability and overall well-being for families is their children's access to quality care, learning and socialization opportunities at an early age. Each of these measures represent an important step toward building a more stable, accessible, and robust early childhood system in Minnesota.

Thank you,

Kristen Rosenberger
Director, Advocacy & External Engagement
Greater Twin Cities United Way