

Early Care and Education Crisis Work Group Recommendations Summary

INVEST IN FIXING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS AND SHORTAGE.

To help close achievement gaps and jump-start consumer demand to incentivize quality early care and education (ECE) program retention and expansion, fund more Early Learning Scholarships, first meeting the needs of the 35,000 low-income Minnesota children under age 5 whose families can't access quality programs on their own.

• **Phase to Full Funding**

- **First Priority:** 0- to 2-year-olds in the following circumstances: experiencing homelessness, in foster care placement, or child protection system involved and 3- to 4-year-olds in families up to 185% of federal poverty guidelines (FPG).
- **Second Priority:** 0- to 2-year-olds up to 100% FPG.
- **Third Priority:** 0- to 2-year-olds 101% to 185% FPG.
- **Final Priority:** 0- to 5-year-olds 186 to 300% FPG.

REFORM EXISTING PUBLIC INVESTMENTS. Better coordinate the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and Early Learning Scholarships.

- **Coordinate.** Coordinate the programs to ensure the application process, eligibility standards and quality standards are aligned for efficiency.
- **Phase-in Best Practices Requirement.** Increase the rates for programs receiving CCAP if they volunteer to adopt kindergarten-readiness best practices, as measured by the Parent Aware Ratings.
 - In short-term, give bonuses to 1-Star (5%) and 2-Star (10%) rated programs.
 - Over five years, phase-in a requirement that all children in programs receiving CCAP be benefiting from best practices use.



CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE PARENT AWARE STANDARDS.

Require and empower DHS to regularly conduct an independent, third-party evaluation of Parent Aware standards to ensure they are as effective and efficient as possible. Disaggregate the evaluation data by program type and child characteristics, among other things. Be fully transparent with the data. Use it to inform improvements to the Parent Aware system.

INVEST IN INCREASING SUPPLY OF QUALITY ECE PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS SHORTAGE.

- **DEED Grants.** Adjust the DEED grant program to ensure it can help stimulate expansion of quality ECE programs.
- **Quality Improvement Supports.** Provide more grants and coaching to help new and existing programs adopt kindergarten-readiness and sustainable business practices.

The full report is available at www.thinksmall.org/crisis