



Representative Dave Pinto
Chair, Health and Human Services Finance & Policy Committee
503 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 28, 2022

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Start Early Funders Coalition, we express our support for HF 4120 to support the Farm to School & Early Care proposal 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 advancing racial equity in our early childhood systems and advocating for policies that benefit Black, Indigenous and other children of color, their families and the programs that serve them.

HF 4120 recognizes the significance access to fresh, healthy foods to our youngest children in early childhood programs has on early childhood development. Reaching our youngest children during the most critical window of brain development has the potential to impact both immediate and long-term health outcomes for children and families across our state. We know that hunger delays development on the cognitive, social and emotional level – children cannot learn when they experience food insecurity. One in eight children in Minnesota experience hunger, and at times, the most nutritious meal of the day comes from an educational program. The Farm to School bill expansion to include early childhood providers is a critical step in ensuring all children across the the state have access to fresh, local and nutritious food.

The Start Early Funders Coalition supports a robust early childhood system that gives children and families access to a continuum of high-quality early care and education programs. A broad range of program types, including initiatives such as the Farm to School & Early Care program is required to support the families, children and our state's economic recovery. We must maintain and continue to grow investments in critical early childhood programs based on ongoing community feedback and guidance.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Carrie Zelin Johnson".

Carrie Zelin Johnson
Start Early Funders Coalition Coordinator
Start Early Funders Coalition

The Start Early Funders Coalition for Children and Minnesota's Future is a collaboration of more than 15 members of Minnesota's philanthropic community. The Coalition provides critical leadership and funding for research, program development, public policy and grant making to improve early childhood efforts in Minnesota. We are working together to ensure every child in Minnesota is physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively prepared for school and lifelong success.