



December 11, 2020

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Early Childhood Finance and Policy Division,

The Minnesota Child Care Association (MCCA) appreciates your partnership in working to keep providers available now and in the future. Child care is the backbone of our current and future economy. Without a robust child care industry, we will not be able to accelerate the economic recovery so greatly needed as we look to come out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Without accessible quality child care we also lose out on investing in the most important years of brain development for our future workforce. We must ensure we are paying attention to both issues now and in the future.

MCCA supports both proposals being heard today for public health support funds for child care programs and for the temporary reprioritization of the Basic Sliding Fee program waitlist.

**COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care Programs**

MCCA supports the continuation of grants to child care programs to help cover the higher costs providers have incurred while operating during the pandemic. Providers are experiencing higher costs in the form of additional PPE purchases, creation of smaller class sizes to minimize transmission risk, distance learning supports to school aged children and temporary closures of classrooms/loss of revenue in order to comply with quarantine periods, just to name a few.

These funds are a lifeline to providers who receive them- something stable and predictable when little else is. Many of our members say they would not be operating today without the supports received, and that their immediate future depends on their continuation.

**Basic Sliding Fee Waitlist Reprioritization and Appropriation**

MCCA supports increasing child care access for families through reprioritization of the Basic Sliding Fee program waitlist. The combination of an appropriation with reprioritization means that funds can pull new families off current child care assistance waitlists. Our state demographer reports that 82% of families on the Basic Sliding Fee waitlist would be in essential occupations. We need them in the workforce *now*.

This proposal builds in continuing child care needs after temporary reprioritization ends, so no one stands to lose child care assistance benefits. Those currently eligible for/receiving this assistance via either the Minnesota Family Investment Program/Transition Year or by Basic Sliding Fee will continue to do so during and after the time of reprioritization, as will families newly accessing child care assistance.

Thank you on behalf of MCCA for considering the above proposals in support of young children, their families, and the professionals who support them.

Sincerely,

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