



December 10, 2020

Chair Dave Pinto  
Early Childhood Finance and Policy Division  
439 State Office Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Pinto:

I write today on behalf of the Greater Minnesota Partnership to offer our support for the proposed appropriation for the COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care Programs.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic taking hold in Minnesota, the child care industry was already in crisis. In Greater Minnesota, we were short more than 40,000 child care slots before COVID-19 came on the scene. This shortage negatively impacts our employers' abilities to hire and retain the workers they need to be successful and it makes it difficult for young families to choose to live in communities that do not have an adequate supply of child care providers.

Although we have yet to grasp the full impact on the child care industry as a result of the pandemic, we know the shortage will be worse. We know many providers have decided to leave the industry to find different work or closed their businesses when families pulled their children out of child care. Even though the pandemic is temporary, the impacts on Minnesota's child care industry will be long-lasting.

While some providers have left the industry, the state's investment over the past nine months in emergency grants for child care providers has likely staved off a collapse of the industry. Knowing that families will once again need child care as the pandemic comes under control, these emergency grants have served as a bridge, allowing providers to replace a portion of their lost revenue and keep their businesses in operation so that they are available when our families need them again. Unfortunately, those funds are now exhausted.

The funding in this bill will help get our providers through the next three months, when we hope the COVID-19 vaccines will allow the state, and our economy, to return to normal. We look forward to a time when thousands of Minnesotans will once again go back to work and when our families—and our employees—will once again need child care. Without this funding, we will see a significant number of child care providers leave the marketplace, which will have a major impact on the economic recovery that our state, our businesses and our families are counting on.

With Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Heidi Omerza".

Heidi Omerza  
President  
Greater Minnesota Partnership