



Senator Roger Chamberlain  
Chair, Education Finance and Policy Committee  
3225 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3215  
St. Paul, MN 55155

April 5, 2021

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Start Early Funders Coalition, we express our support for increasing the Early Learning Scholarship funding proposal in the Senate Education Omnibus bill. While we appreciate there are no cuts to this program in this bill, we encourage the Senate Education Committee to increase spending over the base to reach more children. Our vision is that every child in Minnesota is physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively prepared for school and lifelong success.

We know that investment into this critical program is necessary to prepare our children for the workforce and stabilize our families. Early Learning Scholarships provide greater access to quality care for our Black, Indigenous and children of color and their families that have been historically left behind. We know that increased investments, including early learning scholarships can ease the child care shortage, support parents to get back to work, particularly in rural communities and is a key strategy for achieving more equitable outcomes for young children. Minnesota's economy will not recover from the Covid-19 pandemic without access to child care for working adults. We must ensure all children birth to kindergarten from low-income families have access to these programs.

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 Early Learning Scholarships, supported with prioritized state and federal funding are required to support the ECE business model and for 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.