



March 14, 2016

Commissioner Emily Johnson Piper
Elmer L. Anderson Human Services Building
540 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Commissioner Johnson Piper,

On behalf of the MinneMinds coalition, I am writing to ask for your leadership, and the Minnesota Department of Human Services' leadership, on an important issue related to ensuring every child receives the best possible start to life.

Due to the federal reauthorization of the Child Care Assistance Program, Minnesota not only has a great opportunity to make positive changes to our local administration of this critical program for in-need families, but we must pass legislation this legislative session to help the state remain compliant with new federal regulations. To not do this would put much of our progress in developing a nation-leading early childhood development system at risk.

The Department of Human Services is uniquely positioned to be a leader on articulating and championing these needed changes. Only your team has the knowledge and experience to craft the policy required to be compliant with new federal regulations and take advantage of this moment to make the Child Care Assistance Program work better for families and children.

Our coalition looks to you for leadership on outlining the legislation for the following policies for the Child Care Assistance Program, and we pledge our support to assist you in passing them this session, consistent with our coalition's vision that all Minnesota families have equitable access to high quality, culturally competent early childhood programs that support the needs of both parents and children from pre-natal to third grade.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Minnesota's CCDF Plan include the following elements which will require legislative support:

- **WORKING BETTER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:** including 12 month eligibility for families, reauthorization requirements that do not disrupt care of the child, and a priority for serving homeless families
- **IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF CHILD CARE:** including efforts to improve provider skills and knowledge, and continued support for Parent Aware as Minnesota's quality framework
- **INCREASE SUPPLY OF HIGH-QUALITY PROVIDERS:** including strategies for increasing supply and quality of services for children in underserved areas, infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children in non-traditional hour care
- **BETTER INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES:** including expanded access to quality information (including health and safety data) as a means to empower families
- **HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS:** including funding to support new licensing visit requirements that align with the state's quality efforts, and expanded health and safety training for all providers



We hope to continue our strong partnership in working with you to pass these priorities this session and continue to make Minnesota a better place for all our children.

Sincerely,

Frank Forsberg
Chair, MinneMinds Coalition
Greater Twin Cities United Way

Co-signers: MinneMinds Executive Committee

Barb Fabre
White Earth Tribal Council

Luz Maria Frias
The Minneapolis Foundation

Daniel Gumnit
People Serving People

Ericca Maas
Parent Aware for School Readiness

Denise Mayotte
The Sheltering Arms Foundation

Barbara Milon
Phyllis Wheatley Community Center

Ann Mulholland
The Saint Paul Foundation

Carolyn Smallwood
Way To Grow

Bev Turner
Twin Cities Catholic Charities

Kelly Wolfe
Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota

Barb Yates
Think Small

Cc:

Jim Koppel, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Jaime Tincher, Office of Governor Mark Dayton