



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE | February 11, 2020

Welcome to the first Child Care Aware Legislative Update of the 2020 legislative session. This narrative update, along with our Bill Tracker, will be posted on the [Child Care Aware of Minnesota website](#) each Tuesday (reflecting activity through the previous Friday).

Each week, we will provide a brief overview of bills that have been introduced, action that has been taken at the committee level or on the floor, and any other pertinent news related to early care and education and school-age care issues.

If you have additions for the bill tracker, please [contact Ann McCully](#).

OVERVIEW

The new legislative session kicks off at noon today! While this is the “short” session (primarily focused on bonding and policy, not budgets), there is already a whirlwind of activity related to early childhood issues. See the bill introductions section below for insights into a comprehensive early childhood education proposal ([HF 3071](#)).

The current state budget is already set through June 2021, but news of a \$1.3 billion surplus has allowed lawmakers to discuss potential additions. The next budget forecast later this month will be used to update this amount and guide final budget decisions.

Top of the list across many advocacy coalitions is increasing the reimbursement rate for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Not only has this rate been woefully low since it was cut in 2003, but also Minnesota is now out of compliance with the federal government for not meeting the minimum threshold. We know that these low rates harm recruitment and retention of early childhood educators and limit child care access for families.

Because it is a bonding year, the Governor has proposed \$10 million to build and sustain early education facilities. This is another important way to grow and stabilize the child care system.

Finally, the interim report of the Family Child Care Task Force will be delivered to the Legislature next month. While this task force will continue to work on its assigned duties, there are some initial steps related to child care licensing that are likely to be recommended for action.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

The first meeting of the House Early Childhood Division will take place on Thursday, February 13 at 8:00 a.m. and will feature an update by the Minnesota Department of Human Services on their work to strengthen CCAP program integrity.

To find out about any other upcoming hearings, visit the Minnesota State Legislature's [Combined Legislative Meeting Calendar page](#).

To see the committees that are served by your Legislators, view the [House Committee roster](#) and the [Senate Committee roster](#).

BILL INTRODUCTIONS

While most bills will be introduced after session convenes today, there was an opportunity for the House to pre-file their bills, which are outlined below. For more information about each bill, please download our weekly Bill Tracker starting February 18.

- Early childhood; children ages birth to three additional funding and opportunities created; home visiting, early childhood education, and child care assistance programs governed; and money appropriated (**HF 3071-Pinto**)
 - Increased CCAP reimbursement rates and added funds to move families off of the waiting list
 - Increased funding for home visiting
 - Continued funds at the current level for the Voluntary Pre-K program
 - Increased funds to Early Learning Scholarship program; shifting them to serve children 0-3
 - Extension of the requirement for scholarships awarded to Three and Four-Star Rated programs only to July 1, 2022
 - Funds for workforce supports, including community grants through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, and funding for First Children's Finance, the Minnesota Initiative Foundations, and the REETAIn grant program, which directly support the people currently in the workforce
 - Implementation/evaluation of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment
 - Evaluation of Parent Aware

COMMITTEE DEADLINES

- **March 13:** Committees must act favorably on bills in the house of origin
- **March 20:** Committees must act favorably on bills, or companion bills, that met the first deadline
- **April 3:** Committees must act favorably on major appropriation and finance bills

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **March 26:** Advocacy for Children Day
- **April 4 – April 13:** Legislative recess
- **May 18:** Last day of the session