



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE | January 31, 2022

Introduction to the 2022 Legislative Session

Welcome to the first Child Care Aware Legislative update for 2022. The updates from the full session, along with our Bill Trackers, can be found on the [Child Care Aware of Minnesota Website](#).

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 to recommend for the bill tracker, please contact [Ann McCully](#).

OVERVIEW

The 2022 Minnesota Legislative session begins at noon on **Monday, January 31**, and must end by **Monday, May 23**. Since this is the second year of the biennium, bills from last year are still “alive” for consideration, and the same House and Senate Committee structure and schedule are in place.

Most of this year’s session will continue to be conducted remotely or in hybrid committee and floor sessions. The State Office Building, which hosts the offices for members of the House of Representatives, will remain closed, and there may be limited access to offices in both the Senate Office Building and the Capitol.

In December, state finance officials showed an expected [\\$7.7 billion surplus](#) for the biennium that ends June 30, 2023. And there could be more federal stimulus money, too. This means that what is generally thought of as a bonding session (focused on bricks and mortar and infrastructure) will likely include a focus on changes/increases to the state’s budget.

Given this additional funding, the Governor has released several proposals for new spending, including a broad package of supports for children and families. More details and specific bills will be released as the session gets rolling, but a high-level overview of these proposals is included below.

GOVERNOR’S 2022 BUDGET PROPOSAL: Early Education elements

Support Child Care Providers Affected by the Pandemic

Proposes funding for direct grants to support child care providers and programs experiencing financial hardship to help stabilize them as they continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposal also extends several initiatives funded by American Rescue Plan Act child care development funds, including the Child Care One-Stop Assistance Network, Workforce Development Grants to train and recruit qualified staff to work in the child care sector, child care shared services alliances, and support for technology access. The total package is \$103 million over three years, including more than \$90 million in direct grants to providers.

Investments in Child Care Assistance Program and Eliminating the Waiting List

These proposals total over \$900 million over three years:

- Increase provider payment rates to the 75th percentile of market rates, which is the federal benchmark for equal access. This would cover more of the costs of providing care and would lower costs for approximately 15,000 families and 30,000 children.
- Fully fund the Basic Sliding Fee Child Care Assistance Program, which would eliminate waiting lists and improve access to child care for about 16,000 additional Minnesota families, including 32,000 children.
- The Governor is also recommending changing the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) definition of family to include foster care families and relative custodians and successor custodians or guardians receiving Northstar Kinship Assistance (NKA).

Expand Early Learning Scholarships

The proposal shifts the focus of the scholarships to prioritize 0–3-year-olds in the highest need populations. The proposal invests in Pathway I Early Learning Scholarships by nearly tripling the current amount spent per year on direct scholarships for families to use in eligible child care and early education programs they choose. With this proposal, Pathway I Early Learning Scholarships could reach an additional 10,000 children per year with \$225 million over three years.

Mixed Delivery Prekindergarten for Eligible 4-Year-Olds

This proposal provides access to high-quality prekindergarten that benefits children from all backgrounds, especially low-income families. This is not a universal Pre-K program but an expansion of 6,000 seats to serve children through a mixed delivery system, allowing for family choice and supporting access to various program types.

The investment would fund extended programming for existing Pre-K programs and new seats, utilize mixed delivery requiring a combination of child care centers and family child care programs (30%), Head Start (30%), and school-based programs (40%). The new approach to providing high-quality mixed delivery prekindergarten integrates School-Readiness Plus, Voluntary Pre-K, and Early Learning Scholarship Pathway II into one cohesive program that is easier for families to access and more manageable for providers to administer.

This proposal also leverages Early Childhood Screening and Kindergarten Entry Assessment funding to collect impact data on implementing a single set of high-quality Pre-K program standards known to close opportunity gaps and support student and family success. The total package is \$525 million over three years.

BILL INTRODUCTIONS

This list includes topics, numbers, authors, and general committee referrals for bills filed prior to the start of the Legislative session. For more information about each bill, or to see all of the bills introduced, please download our weekly [Bill Tracker](#).

- Voluntary prekindergarten and school readiness plus program expansion made permanent, and money appropriated (HF 2655-Bernardy)
- Education partnership program grant awards specified, education partnership program funding increased, and money appropriated (HF2658-Wolgamott)
- Head Start appropriation distribution modified, and money appropriated (HF 2660-Kotyza-Witthuhn)
- Child care center staffing and group size rules amended, and report required (HF 2817-Rasmusson)
- Child care; commissioner of human services required to award minimum base grant amount to eligible family and group family child care home and legal nonlicensed child care providers (HF 2842-Quam)
- COVID-19 frontline workers payments authorization (SF 2650-Murphy)

TIMELINES

Friday, March 25 - Committees must act favorably on bills in the house of origin

Friday, April 1 - Committees must act favorably on bills, or companions of bills, that met the first deadline in the other body

Friday, April 8 - Committees must act favorably on major appropriation and finance bills

Saturday, April 9-Monday, April 18 - Legislative Break

Monday, May 23 - Last day of session