



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE May 3, 2022

Welcome to the Child Care Aware Legislative update. 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 to the bill tracker, please contact [Ann McCully](#).

### OVERVIEW

On Sunday, April 24, the Governor presented his State of the State address at the State Capitol. Here are some excerpts from that speech related to early care and education and school-age care issues:

*“Child care in this country, in this state, was in crisis long before the pandemic. But during the pandemic, it was those child care workers who were the first ones on the front lines to ensure that our children had a safe place to go, and their parents, if you remember, early on when we kept those open to make sure that police and firefighters and nurses and doctors had a place to take their children safely so that they could do the work to keep the rest of us going”.*

*“I want to thank all of you, Minnesota, for clearly protecting our child care industry better than any other state in the nation, but both parents and the number of especially women who had to leave the workforce over this issue and the number of providers who can’t make the economic numbers work behind this. We have a responsibility. Business is asking us to work on this. And we have a lot of bipartisan support to build the workforce behind the workforce that makes things go. When people are thinking about where they’re going to have a business or thinking about where they are going to live, to have Minnesota be known as we were during the pandemic and come out of it a state that is committed to child care and early education, is a hiring bonus to get people here and to create lives that they want to live”.*

*“Minnesota should be the best state in the country to raise a family. And we’re working to make that a reality. We’re making sure that our early childhood education is the best in the country by investing in everything from quality child care to pre-K and early education scholarships. We’re making sure that every child has that quality start, and every parent has a safe place and knows that their child is being taken care of. We put a budget in front of you that continues to focus on that workforce, that continues to focus on those early starts. And with the capacity we’re in, I remind everyone, without raising taxes, we have the capacity right now to expand pre-K to 23,000 more children, which is going to change lives for generations to come. It is children, and once we get them on that healthy start, once we get them on that path for success, we need to make sure that we are continuing to do our best.”*

On Thursday, April 28, House and Senate leaders announced an agreement to replenish the state's unemployment trust fund and provide bonuses to frontline workers, which would authorize \$2.7 billion to fully replenish the unemployment insurance trust fund and \$500 million for workers at a greater risk of contracting COVID while on the job, including child care workers. Gov. Tim Walz signed the measure into law Friday evening.

The agreement would send an estimated 667,000 workers checks of \$750. The House will define the pool of workers eligible. Much of the funding for the agreement will come from federal American Rescue Plan dollars.

## COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

- On April 25, the Senate Finance Committee heard the Omnibus Jobs, Energy, and Commerce Bill (SF 4091-Pratt) and amended it to include additional funding for those who served as front-line workers during the pandemic. The bill was referred to the Senate floor and given its second reading.
- On April 26, the House Ways and Means Committee heard the Omnibus Workforce and Business Development Bill (HF 4355-Noor). The bill was recommended to pass as amended and referred to the General Register. The bill includes the following elements:
  - Increased funding for DEED grants to increase the number of quality child care providers to support economic development (\$4 million in additional funding for 2022-23)
  - Funding and enabling language for a Paid Family and Medical Leave benefit program in Minnesota
- On April 26, the House Ways and Means Committee also took up the Omnibus Higher Education Bill (HF 3872-Bernardy). The bill was recommended to pass as amended and referred to the General Register. The bill includes the following elements:
  - Increased funding for Aspiring Teachers of Color Scholarships (\$3 million in additional funding for 2022-23)
- On April 27, the House Ways and Means Committee heard the Omnibus Health and Human Services Bill (HF 4706-Liebling) and the Health and Human Services components of the Early Childhood Bill (HF 4735-Pinto). The will was recommended to pass as amended and referred to the General Register. The bill includes the following elements:
  - Establishes the community solutions for healthy child development grant program in statute (\$10 million in 2022-23 and \$20 million in 2024-25)
  - Establishes a grant program for remediation of lead sources in drinking water in schools and child care settings (\$2.05 million in 2022-23 and 3.08 million in 2024-25)
  - Creates the Healthy beginnings, Healthy families act (\$11.7 million in 2022-23 and 23.5 million in 2024-25)
    - Establishes a Minnesota collaborative to prevent infant mortality
    - Authorizes grants to improve infant health
    - Establishes the Help Me Connect online navigator to connect pregnant and parenting families with local services
    - Authorizes a universal screening program to identify young children at risk for developmental and behavioral concerns
    - Permits grants to implement model jail practices to benefit children of incarcerated parents
  - Community Resource Hubs & Coordination funding (\$14.8 million in 2022-23 and 37.9 million in 2024-25)
  - Increases Voluntary Family Home Visiting services (\$62.3 million in 2022-23 and \$124.7 million in 2024-25)
  - An early childhood workforce study initially included in the Education bill; allocates \$255,000 to DEED

## **CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE**

- Makes permanent the temporary changes to how families are prioritized on the Basic Sliding Fee child care assistance program waiting list
- Increases the maximum rate paid to child care providers for child care assistance to the 75th percentile of the most recent child care provider rate survey beginning October 3, 2022
- Requires child care resource and referral programs to (1) administer the child care one-stop regional assistance network to help child care providers and individuals interested in becoming providers; and (2) provide supports that enable economically challenged individuals to obtain the skills training, career counseling, and job placement assistance necessary to begin a career in child care
- Establishes a new “Brain Builder” competitive grant program for licensed family child care providers and legally non-licensed child care providers who care for infants
- Adds additional funds for Family Friend and Neighbor child care grants through DHS
- Directs the commissioner to establish a grant program to enable family child care providers to implement shared services alliances
- Directs the commissioner to provide grants to one or more organizations to offer grants or other supports to child care providers to improve their access to computers, the internet, and other technologies
- Removes the sunset date for the stabilization base grants for child care providers and removes the requirement that the grants be reduced between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023
- Directs DHS, in consultation with stakeholders, to develop a cost estimation model for providing early care and learning
- Directs DHS to develop, in consultation with stakeholders, a child care provider wage scale that (1) provides for wages that are equivalent to elementary school educators with similar credentials and experience; (2) incentivizes child care providers and staff to increase child care-related qualifications; and (3) accounts for the business structures of different types of providers

## **CHILD CARE LICENSING**

- Makes several changes related to supporting safe sleep and reducing the risk of sudden unexpected infant death in licensed programs
- Allows the commissioner to increase the maximum group size to no more than 40 children and increase the acceptable staff-to-child ratio to 1:20 for certified, license-exempt child care centers during national security, peacetime, or pandemic-related public health emergencies
- Allows the commissioner to conduct and administer pilot projects to test methods and procedures related to the projects for modernizing child care regulations
- Directs the commissioner of Information Technology Services to develop and implement a plan to modernize the information technology systems supporting programs that impact early childhood

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES- EARLY CHILDHOOD APPROPRIATIONS**

- Increase CCAP to 75<sup>th</sup> percentile - \$51,000 in 2022-23 and \$220 million in 2024-25
- One-stop assistance network - \$1.2 million in 2024-25
- Child Care Workforce Development Grants - \$1.3 million in 2024-25
- Shared Services Alliance - \$1 million in 2024-25
- Technology grants for Child Care Providers - \$300,000 in 2022-23 and \$600,000 in 2024-25
- Child Care Stabilization base grants - \$30 million in 2022-23 and \$160.8 million in 2024-25
- Child Care hardship grants - \$29 million in 2022-23
- FFN Caregiver grants - \$3.1 million in 2022-23 and \$6.7 million in 2024-25
- Brain Builder Grants - \$2.5 million in 2022-23
- Data Sharing initiative - \$10 million in 2022-23

- On April 27, the House Ways and Means Committee also took up the Omnibus Tax Bill (HF 3669-Marquart). The bill was recommended to pass as amended and referred to the General Register. The bill includes the following elements:
  - An Income Tax rebate of \$325 per child for families with children aged 16 and under (\$308 million in 2022-23)
  - An increased Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (\$196.9 million in 2022-23 and \$407 million in 2024-25)

## HOUSE AND SENATE FLOOR ACTIVITY

- On April 25, the House Floor heard the House Omnibus Agriculture Bill (HF 4366-Sundin). The bill passed as amended on a vote of 70-62.
- On April 27, the House floor heard the House Omnibus Education Bill (HF 4300-Davnie). The bill passed as amended on a vote of 69-61.
- On April 29, the House floor heard the House Omnibus Higher Education Bill (HF 3872-Bernardy). The bill passed as amended on a vote of 69-59.
- On April 26, the Senate Floor heard the Senate Omnibus Health and Human Services Bill (HF 4706-Liebling). The bill passed as amended on a vote of 61-5.
- On April 26, the Senate Floor heard the Senate Omnibus Jobs, Commerce and Energy Bill (HF 4355-Noor). The bill passed as amended on a vote of 38-27.
- On April 29, the Senate and House floors heard the Frontline worker payments Bill (HF 3166-Pelowski/SF 2677-Pratt). The bill passed the House on a vote of 124-5 and the Senate on a vote of 65-1.

## BILL INTRODUCTIONS

This list includes topics, numbers, authors, and general committee referrals for bills filed during the week of April 25-29. For more information about each bill, or to see all of the bills introduced, please download [our weekly Bill Tracker](#).

- No new bills related to early care and education or school-age care were introduced this week.

## TIMELINES

- **Monday, May 23** - Last day of session