



Minnesota 2025 Legislative Session – Highlights in Early Childhood Education and Child Care

First, we want to express our most sincere condolences to the Hortman family. Speaker Emeritus Hortman and Mark Hortman were deeply committed to the well-being of our state's children and families. We will continue to support that legacy. We also want to extend our wishes for healing to the Hoffman family and thank them for their work supporting Minnesota kids, too.

The 2025 session was historic and tumultuous. We saw House floor standoffs, power-sharing breakthroughs, legal battles, special elections, a challenging budget process and unprecedented violence. Despite this, issues in early learning and child care were discussed and debated, and there was some movement on the following areas of policy:

Early Learning Education and Child Care Funding (Health and Human Services/Department of Children Youth and Families Omnibus Bill)

The legislature passed the following bills:

- \$97.3 million over two years for **early learning scholarships** to help families access high-quality preschool options. This is a slight increase, but does not match inflation.
- Nearly \$130 million to support **Great Start Compensation Payments**, ensuring child care professionals receive better pay. This is a slight increase, but also does not match inflation.
- **Technology and Infrastructure:**
 - \$174,000 for technology grants (available through 2029)
 - \$300,000 for child care improvement grants
 - Over \$7 million to build an electronic attendance and record-keeping system for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- **Head Start** received \$24.4 million to continue providing school-readiness support to young children in low-income families.
- **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)** funding included:
 - More improvement and modernization grants
 - Millions in funding for **sliding fee child care assistance** and **MFIP child care programs**, meeting federal compliance standards.

Policy Changes for Child Care Centers

Some updates were made to support operations in licensed child care centers:

- **Morning and Afternoon Relief:** Child care aides can now temporarily sub for teachers during arrival/departure times (up to 25% of the day), if they're at least 18, have worked 30 days, and completed training.
- **Security Cameras Required** for centers with a maltreatment investigation notice posted. Grants of up to \$4,000 will help centers comply.
- **Modernization Push:**
 - Standardized licensing timelines and better tools for county licensors
 - Interpretive guidance available for correction orders
 - New Office of the Ombudsperson for Family Child Care created to support providers
- **Transparency:** Centers must publicly post licensing and maltreatment actions for four years.

Workforce and Community Support (Workforce Omnibus)

Recognizing that the child care workforce is vital, the legislature added:

- \$250,000/year to **WomenVenture** for workforce initiatives.
- \$1.5 million/year in **local grants** to grow the number of child care providers, with half of the funds earmarked for Greater Minnesota.
- \$500,000 to strengthen the **Office of Child Care Community Partnerships**.
- \$1 million to the **Minnesota Initiative Foundation** to engage private sector support for local child care in economic development.
- \$466,000/year to **Greater Twin Cities United Way** to help subsidize child care for providers not covered by scholarships or CCAP.

Farm to School Expansion (Agriculture Bill)

Children in early childhood programs will now have more access to fresh, local food.

- \$1.6 million in FY26 and \$1.5 million in FY27 going to the **Farm to School Program**, expanding its reach into early childhood settings

Here is a brief summary of the other major events from this session:

1. Open-session conflict and DFL boycott (mid-January)

- The House was tied between DFL and Republican representatives (67-67) after the 2024 election led to legal disputes over quorum and speaker authority.
- On January 14, House Democrats boycotted the opening session to prevent Republicans from seating Brad Tabke and electing their own speaker.

- Republicans proceeded to elect Lisa Demuth as speaker. Democrats filed a lawsuit; the Minnesota Supreme Court later ruled a quorum requires 68 members.

2. Power-sharing deal and Lisa Demuth's election (early February)

- In early February, both parties reached a power-sharing agreement, ending the boycott.
- On Feb 6, Lisa Demuth (R) was officially sworn in as Speaker, the first Black and biracial speaker in the state's history.

3. Special elections and Senate shake-ups.

- **On January 28, a special** election for Senate District 60 restored DFL control (34-33).
- GOP Sen. Justin Eichorn resigned after solicitation charges on March 20th, triggering a special election set for April 29th.
- **On March 11, the** House District 40B special election was won by Democrat David Gottfried, restoring the 67-67 House tie.

4. Committee deadlines and budget gridlock

- Committee deadlines were April 4 for bills originating in the House,, and April 11 for appropriation and finance bills.
- In **May**, criticism arose that much of the **\$66 billion budget negotiations** took place behind closed doors, limiting public accountability.
- The Legislature met its May 19 adjournment **deadline**, but only passed part of the budget. A short special session was required to complete the rest.

5. Major legislation passed

According to the 94th Legislature overview, key laws enacted include:

- Closure of Stillwater prison.
- Cutting funding for Northern Lights Express rail.
- Election law changes (absentee deadlines, safeguards).
- Enhanced public retirement pensions.
- Expanded DWI ignition interlock requirements.
- Omnibus veterans & military affairs act.
- Full budget and \$700 million bonding bill (water/sewer, roads, housing, flood mitigation, tree grants, etc.)

6. Tragic end — June shooting of legislators

On June 14, a politically motivated shooting targeted two Democratic legislators: former House Speaker Melissa Hortman with her husband were killed, and State Senator John Hoffman and his wife were wounded.

This session was - once again - historic. An overall assessment of the session for Early Childhood is that no major investments were made, and no major cuts happened. There was very little new money for existing programs. If you have any questions, please contact caral@childcareawaremn.org.