

Concern for HF628
Minnesota House Children and Families Committee
February 25, 2025



Dear Chair West and Committee Members,

I write on behalf of the Minnesota Child Care Association (MCCA) with numerous concerns about HF628. As a statewide association representing licensed child care providers, we stand for quality and affordability for children and families and respect and compensation for the professionals who serve them.

Our concerns include the following:

- Allowing *unsupervised volunteer* experience to count towards the experience required by the MN Department of Human Services in order to qualify for certain roles in a child care center. An unsupervised volunteer in previous roles does not have the same documented level of accountability, training, or education required to appropriately care for and educate young children, and does not provide sufficient preparation to gain unsupervised access to large numbers of young and vulnerable children.
- Allowing nearly all substitutes or staff persons to be 16 years of age. As written, the bill would allow a 16 year old to substitute for a *lead teacher*. The early care and education of young children is skilled and high-risk work that requires significant training and education to do effectively. It would be a dangerous mistake to leave multiple infants as young as six weeks of age alone with a 16 year old for all hours of the day.
- Allowing *unsupervised volunteers* to count in the adult to child ratio. Allowing someone who has little accountability, little training, and no supervision to be counted in the most important item for child health and safety would be a mistake.
- Removing the requirement that Individual Child Care Plans be documented in child files. These are individual service plans for children involving special education needs, allergies, behavioral guidance, etc. It would be another dangerous mistake to remove this requirement and would likely lead to life-threatening incidents and poor care.

It is well documented that child care across Minnesota is inaccessible and unaffordable for too many families. Rather than this approach, this Committee should find ways to give providers the resources necessary (including compensation) to hire better-qualified teachers, and to ensure families have the additional resources required to access programs offering these higher-quality services. A race to the bottom is not the solution for the early education and safety of our youngest Minnesotans.

Thank you,

Clare Sanford
MN Child Care Association, Government Relations Chair