

March 15, 2022

Representative Dave Pinto
Chair, House Early Childhood Finance
and Policy Committee

Chair Pinto and Members of the Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee:

Think Small would like to offer support for the Early Childhood Education Workforce Study (HF 4278/ SF 3986). At Think Small we believe that a strong, equitable child care and early learning system not only benefits children, families, and early educators, but also keeps parents in the workforce, increases racial equity and strengthens the economy for everyone. That is why our nonprofit organization's Strategic Plan goal is that all children in Minnesota are ready for kindergarten.

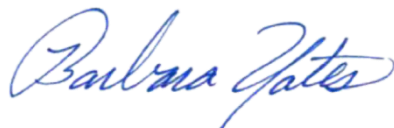
Part of our work in advancing this goal is to support early childhood educators. Understanding the makeup of the early childhood education workforce is essential to understanding how the workforce can be best supported. Early childhood educators are the building blocks that many parents rely on to provide healthy development during the early years of life. We need to support these essential caregivers and teachers in order to support our children.

The COVID-19 pandemic has threatened the already underfunded child care industry. Recruitment and retention of qualified educators is even more challenging. Having a comprehensive report of the early childhood education workforce in Minnesota would allow legislators, employers, and communities to more accurately address its needs.

We strongly encourage you to support HF 4278/ SF 3986. Understanding changes within the early care and education workforce is critical to our state's growth. We appreciate the work done by the Committee to improve critical issues within the field and we look forward to continued collaboration.

Please let us know, at Think Small, if we can assist with any information, you may need in regard to early childhood.

Sincerely,



Barbara Yates
President and CEO, Think Small