



## 2019 Legislative Session Summary

May 2019

Minnesota's 2019 Legislative Session ended in Special Session after Governor Walz, Speaker Hortman and Senate Majority Leader Gazelka agreed upon budget targets and major policy issues. The Prenatal to Three (PN-3) Coalition supported a number of advocacy efforts and groups and collectively we saw a number of important successes this year.

### 1. Prenatal & Infant Health

- Increased **Medicaid Reimbursement rates for Doulas** will provide culturally responsive care to assist women and families through pregnancy and help position families for a health start.
- Continued support and funding (\$2 Million) of the **Integrated Care for High-Risk Pregnant Women (ICHRP)** will help identify Medicaid-funded strategies to address high maternal death rates and high infant mortality rates among African American and American Indian women and children.

### 2. Family Supports

- **\$21 Million increase in state funding for Evidence-Based Home Visiting Services.** This increases state base funding to \$33 Million each biennium. The requested policy changes were NOT adopted this session.

#### Other relevant Family Support policies:

- Home Visiting grants to prevent **Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (\$1 Million)** will require regional collaboration between community based organizations and local government.
- **Parent-Child Home**, a literacy-focused home visiting program, did not receive expansion funding as requested.
- **Reach Out and Read** literacy program received state support (\$150,000) to encourage reading, singing and early literacy skills as a part of early child check ups with pediatricians.
- **\$100 increase in cash grants** to Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) recipients passed this session. This is the first increase in 33 years to families and will provide families additional resources to meet their needs.

### 3. Stable, Nurturing Relationships

- **Paid Family and Medical Leave** this proposed insurance program did NOT pass this session. While this was a priority for the Governor and House, it was not included in the final negotiations with the Senate. We expect this policy issue to remain an active discussion next session.

#### 4. Infant, Toddler and Early Childhood Care

- A complete “freeze” of the **Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)** was *prevented* this year, which was a response by the Senate after some fraud was reported in the program by the Office of the Legislative Auditor during the Legislative Session. After four years of consistent efforts by advocates, several family friendly federal conformity policy measures passed. Unfortunately, increases in provider rates and efforts to “buy down” the wait list did NOT move forward this year. Finally a number of program integrity measures were agreed upon to ensure the focus of the program was not jeopardized in the future.
- **Early Learning Scholarships** provide flexible learning opportunities for children but did NOT see any increases in funding this session even though the House and Senate called for increases in their own budgets. These decisions were made in final negotiations.
  - A number of policy changes were proposed this session to the Early Learning Scholarships, including making them available to children as early as 0-2 (currently they are targeted for children ages 3 to 5 or kindergarten entrance). None of these changes were made to the scholarship program.
  - A special revenue fund was created to help maximize the resources that go to families who receive scholarships.
- **Voluntary Pre-K** funding for 4,000 was continued through the next biennium.

#### 5. Community Supports

- **Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grant Program** was funded (\$4 Million over two biennium) after several years of effort. This new program is focused on improving health outcomes for children of color and American Indian children, which is an important way to recognize that communities of color, American Indian communities, and geographically dispersed communities have invaluable knowledge, and must be active and valued participants within the creation of solutions for themselves.

#### 6. A Quality Early Care and Education Workforce

- Funding (\$750,000) for **Child Care Grants** will be available through the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to help address the lack of child care services.
- Funding to the **Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIFs)** will receive \$750,000 to assist their communities address the lack of quality **child care**.
- Child care workforce development scholarships, **REETAIN** and **funding to assist child providers through Children’s First Finance** did NOT pass this session.