



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

DHS Initiative: 2013 Legislative Session

Safe and healthy development of children

Healthy children and families are a cornerstone of what makes Minnesota a great place to live, and working to make sure that every child in Minnesota has an opportunity to succeed is a core part of the mission of the Department of Human Services. The Minnesota Legislature approved changes proposed by Gov. Mark Dayton that will help prevent child abuse and neglect, support families' efforts to safely care for their children, help parents complete their education, support homeless youth and reduce infant deaths in family child care settings.

Minnesota's ability to address these issues depends, in part, on the effectiveness of its programs. That's why legislation approved in 2013 does more than just add additional resources, it seeks to increase the impact of programs by making them more driven by outcomes and performance.

2013 legislation for children

- **Increase access to quality child care.** Increase access to quality child care for children with high needs, simplify and increase some rates, and incentivize higher quality care through the quality rating system, Parent Aware. (*\$19.4 million investment*)
- **Support permanent homes for children.** Encourage adoption of children under the state's guardianship through a new program, Northstar Care for Children, effective January 2015. The program reduces financial obstacles some families face when considering adoption by equalizing adoption, foster care and relative custody care rates for all families. (*\$3.2 million investment*)
- **Expand the Parent Support Outreach Program.** Expand statewide this successful pilot, which is operating in 38 counties. The program focuses on early intervention to prevent child abuse and neglect to keep children safe in their homes. (*\$4.5 million investment*)
- **Improve mental health services for children.** Double the number of schools receiving mental health grants so children can get help where it is convenient, soon after problems become apparent. (*\$7.4 million investment*)
- **Rebuild the Minnesota Family Investment Program.** Make the program work more effective for low-income families, including allowing them to keep more of the income they earn, providing more supports for teen parents and reducing administrative complexity. (*\$6.7 million investment.*)
- **Enhance services for homeless youth.** Work with communities to develop additional capacity to address unmet needs in their areas, and improve services, including street outreach; drop-in center programs; safe temporary shelter; support for moves from transitional living programs to stable housing; and maintenance of stable housing in supportive housing programs. (*\$4 million investment*)
- **Make child care safer for infants.** Increase infant safe-sleep training for family child care providers and licensing inspectors, and improve consistency in enforcement of standards. (*\$1.2 million investment*)

Other human services legislation affecting children:

- **New intensive services for children with autism:** Creates a new benefit set that includes high-quality, medically necessary, evidenced-based intervention treatments and associated services for children with autism spectrum disorder. Covered services will seek to improve a child's communications skills, increase their capacity for social interaction and reduce maladaptive behaviors at a critical time in the child's development.
- **Protects exploited children.** Provides safe harbor for sexually exploited youth to keep them safe. (*\$1 million investment*)
- **Provides additional homeless services.** This includes long-term housing supports, transitional housing and emergency services grants for homeless individuals. (*\$3 million investment*)
- **Helps stabilize child care.** Pays for up to 25 absent days of child care for children in the Child Care Assistance Program, enabling them to remain in stable, consistent care. (*\$2.8 million investment*)
- **Repeals family cap** of the Minnesota Family Investment Program, helping more low-income families receive the financial help they need for their families. (*\$1.5 million investment*)

Related information:

- Omnibus Health and Human Services bill: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/?id=108&doctype=Chapter&type=0&year=2013>
- DHS fact sheet page: <http://mn.gov/dhs/media/fact-sheets/>

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