

Children and families: Improve federal compliance, stability

Minnesota made investments in the 2017 session to support children's safety, well-being and early education, and to help struggling families. However, several critical efforts were not funded, including a proposal to raise rates for child care providers that would have stabilized services for Minnesota families.

The legislation that did pass will help the child protection system provide timely, culturally appropriate help to more than 31,600 vulnerable children and families and support 13,600 children in out-of-home care, primarily family foster care. It also will improve access to high-quality early childhood programs for 30,000 young children, while improving the integrity of the Child Care Assistance Program for low-income families. The funding will support licensing requirements to meet new federal rules, including annual inspections of child care centers.

Other improvements needed for the Child Care Assistance Program to meet federal requirements were not approved. Significant federal resources for child care depend in part on these changes being adopted. Other changes to help children under age 6 move from foster care to permanent families were also not approved.

2017 legislation

Child Care Assistance Program. Extending the eligibility redetermination timeframe from six to 12 months will give children more consistent child care. Annual inspections of child care centers, fingerprint-based background studies for providers and certification of license-exempt centers in the Child Care Assistance Program will improve program integrity. *SFY 2018-19: \$18.6 million for extended eligibility, \$6.4 million for licensing and quality provisions; \$15.3 million savings from program integrity improvements*

Child safety and permanency. The needs of older homeless youth who lack parental support are recognized through improved child safety assessments and standards for foster care and permanency, as well as a pilot project for a coordinated response system. *SFY 2018-19: \$1.4 million*

Sexually exploited youth. The legislation will provide emergency shelter, long-term housing beds and housing outreach workers for sexually exploited youth and youth at risk of sexual exploitation. *SFY 2018-19: \$1 million*

Child protection. More of the White Earth Nation's costs are covered for providing child protection services to children living on the White Earth Reservation who are eligible to participate in the American Indian Child Welfare Initiative. *SFY 2018-19: \$1 million*

Community Action programs. Community action councils will receive additional resources from a one-time funding increase and a change in the base funding formula. *SFY 2018-19: \$1.5 million*

Food shelves. One-time funding will help food shelf programs purchase proteins, fruits, vegetables and, for the first time, diapers. *SFY 2018-19: \$750,000*

Minnesotans with low incomes. For people served by the Minnesota Family Investment Program, a new spouse's income will be excluded for 12 months when eligibility is re-determined. One-time funding goes to Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota, a matched savings program. *SFY 2018-19: \$651,000 for MFIP eligibility change, \$500,000 for Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota*

Child support services. A North Minneapolis organization will receive support to offer co-parenting services to unmarried parents who are in the process of establishing paternity. *SFY 2018-19: \$300,000*