

Early Learning Council

Guiding Principles

Vision Statement: Every child deserves the opportunity to thrive. It is essential – for the child and the long-term prosperity of Minnesota – that young children are supported by their families and communities in achieving their maximum potential. In Minnesota, too many children start school unhealthy and not academically and socially ready to learn; too many start behind and don't catch up. The opportunity gap in Minnesota is growing. Fortunately, research shows that investing in high-quality early childhood programs and services can close the gap and yield an extraordinary return.

Purpose Statement: We share responsibility to provide a broad range of effective programs, services, family support and partnerships across Minnesota that promote the health and social, emotional and academic development of each child. In our efforts, we will reach across systems, cultures and geography to provide equal access to programs, services and support for all children and families, especially our most vulnerable children.

The council will provide direction and advice to Governor Dayton, the legislature and other state leaders on early childhood issues including defining a unified network of public and private support services that prepare young children for success in school and life. The council acknowledges the complexity of the lives of children and families and recognizes that all children and families benefit from strong and healthy systems of family, community and public support.

Based on considerable research, we believe that:

Families have an enormous impact on a child's development. It is essential that children have strong, nurturing relationships with the adults in their lives, especially with their primary caregivers.

A child's healthy development begins prenatally. Early experiences affect the development of a child's brain and impacts a child's lifelong learning and emotional well-being.

Responsibility for a child's success rests primarily with parents, families and caregivers. Families and caregivers need to be involved in every level of decision making and have access to resources to help them make the best decisions for their child.

A healthy environment is critical for a child's development and benefits the health and productivity of the entire community.

Children need engaged and empowered parents and caregivers to sustain their development. These parents and caregivers in turn help create thriving communities and early childhood systems that benefit everyone.

Children, parents and families prosper within a thriving community. Communities that support families benefit when children are safe, healthy and thriving.

Children and families are best served when research and evaluation shape programs and policies that are effectively implemented and accessible.

Therefore, the council is committed to:

Supporting the healthy development of all young children including; physical and oral health, and cognitive, social and emotional development.

Providing parents and caregivers with information and support to help them make the best decisions for their child and access health and early learning services that ensure their child's success.

Providing culturally appropriate services.

Ensuring children are ready for school and schools are ready for children.

Prioritizing public funds for children who are most vulnerable so they have the best opportunity to thrive.

The council will advocate for and provide recommendations that will:

Ensure every Minnesotan understands of the importance of high quality, accessible and culturally appropriate healthcare and early learning programs and practices.

Empower parents and caregivers of all children, especially vulnerable children, to make informed decisions and access the high-quality programs and services available in local communities across Minnesota.

Provide tools and resources to parents, families and communities to support them in fostering the healthy development of children.

Support early identification of a child's health and learning needs and ensure access to the appropriate programs and services to address those needs as early as possible for the best outcomes for the child and community.

Establish a range of early education programs, family support services, and care options that are high-quality and user-friendly.

Establish a system of professional development, training and technical assistance for early childhood professionals that supports programs and services that are respectful of and responsive to each child and family.

Ensure services and supports that are provided by people who reflect the diversity of the community, are well educated and are well compensated.

Engage parents in the development of public policy recommendations that promote strong and resilient children, families and communities.

Rely on research and evaluation of health and education outcomes in developing recommendations.