



## **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 healthy development of all children is vital to the future prosperity of Minnesota, as our aging population will require a productive and innovative workforce to carry our state forward. Investing in our children today is the best way to guarantee our security tomorrow.

Right now tens of thousands of Minnesota children are at risk of getting knocked off the track of healthy development before they even have a chance to get started. Poverty, domestic abuse, substance abuse and mental health concerns create unsafe and unhealthy living conditions for too many children. Without help, they face the possibility of homelessness, continued poverty, maltreatment, poor performance in school and incarceration.

DHS' ability to address these issues depends upon the effectiveness of its programs. This is why proposals from DHS in the upcoming legislative session do more than just add additional resources, but seek to increase the impact of programs by making them more driven by outcomes and performance.

Specifically, DHS' 2013 proposals will help prevent child abuse and neglect, and support families' efforts to safely care for their children, help parents, particularly teenage parents, complete their education and reduce infant deaths in family child care settings.

Implementing this vision will make Minnesota stronger by helping ensure families are safe, healthy and have the promise of bright futures.

### **Legislative proposals**

To achieve this vision of the safe and healthy development of children, Gov. Mark Dayton moved forward these budget proposals for the FY 2014-2015 biennium:

- Increase access to quality child care for children with high needs and incentivize higher quality care.
- Support permanent families through Northstar Care for Children.
- Expand the Parent Support Outreach Program statewide.
- Double the number of schools receiving mental health grants.
- Rebuild an effective Minnesota Family Investment Program for low-income families.
- Increase infant safe-sleep training for family child care providers and licensing inspectors, and improve consistency in enforcement of standards.