

FACT SHEET | Supporting Children and Families

2015 Budget for a Better Minnesota

Children are Minnesota's future. Ensuring every child gets a great start in life is crucial to their long-term success. That is why Governor Dayton's budget would invest in essential services for Minnesota children and families. To better protect Minnesota children from harm, the Governor's budget invests in improvements to child protection services and provides support for families at risk. Helping families support the development of their children will help ensure every child is ready to get a great education and have a bright future.

Investing in Minnesota Families

- **Investing in Quality, Affordable Child Care** – The Governor's budget invests \$17.5 million to improve access to quality child care for low-income working families. This investment would provide child care for an additional 1,375 children and enable 8,000 children to enroll in highly-rated ParentAware programs. The proposal provides incentives for providers to improve quality while also simplifying paperwork for the Child Care Assistance Program.
- **Helping Minnesota Children Start Strong** – The Parent Support Outreach Program provides early intervention, outreach and supportive services for families with children at risk of maltreatment. Governor Dayton's budget proposes funding to expand this program to tribes so that culturally appropriate and effective services are available to American Indian children.

Bolstering Services for Mothers and Kids

- **Supporting At-Risk Mothers and Children** – The Governor's proposal would expand access to home visiting services for high-risk mothers and infants, benefitting an additional 300 pregnant or parenting teens, at-risk pregnant women, or at-risk families with children under age five. Home visiting programs have been shown to prevent child abuse and neglect, encourage positive parenting, promote child development and school readiness, and improve economic stability.
- **Investing in Children's Mental Health Services** – Access to mental health services helps children live healthier and more productive lives. In 2013, Governor Dayton doubled funding for school-linked mental health services. The Governor's 2015 budget proposal would build on that investment and provide more than \$8 million in new funds to further-improve children's mental health care. These investments include early intervention for children in crisis, intensive services for children with serious mental illness, and training for community partners, parents, and providers statewide.

Reforming Child Protection Services

- **Additional Oversight from Child Protection Experts** – To help county child abuse screeners and develop safety guidelines, Governor Dayton proposes increasing funding for the Department of Human Services' child protection services. The Governor's budget would allocate an additional \$2.5 million – allowing the department to hire 11 additional child protection professionals. This funding marks only a first step. The Governor will work with the Legislature on additional changes to child protection services in conjunction with his Task Force on the Protection of Children, which submits its final recommendations in March.