

Budget for a Better Minnesota: What's in it for Children?

This session, Governor Dayton and the legislature worked to improve the lives of Minnesota children. The budget enacted this session makes crucial investments and reforms focused on:

- ✓ Improving Minnesota schools
- ✓ Providing better child care and health care
- ✓ Addressing child homelessness and hunger
- ✓ Keeping kids safe and out of trouble

These investments and improvements will help Minnesota children get a great start in life with the education they need for future success.

Improving Minnesota schools

Needed Resources for Minnesota Schools. The budget provides \$485 million for schools.

Early Learning Scholarships for 8,000 Kids. The budget invests \$40 million in scholarships that will help thousands more children high-quality child care and preschool. Families will be eligible for up to \$5,000 in scholarships.

All Day Kindergarten for Every Child. The budget invests \$134 million to help Minnesota school districts provide optional All Day Kindergarten to every student, free of charge. Currently, only 54% of Minnesota's Kindergarten students have access to free all day Kindergarten, with thousands of families having to pay out of pocket.

Reforming Special Education Funding. The budget invests \$40 million in special education reforms.

Student Assessment Improvements. The budget implements a new assessment test based on college entrance exams to better prepare Minnesota students for college and career.

Providing better child care and health care

Improving Child Care for High Needs Kids. Providing all kids with access to affordable, high-quality child care programs is essential to child development and helping parents to stay employed. The budget provides an additional \$23.9 million to ensure Minnesota kids get the best possible care.

Increasing Infant Safety. The budget invests \$1.2 million in infant safe-sleep training for family child care providers and licensing inspectors, and improves consistency in enforcement of standards. It also improves child care licensing requirements and training in order to reduce child mortality in child care settings.

Mental Health Services in Schools. Children suffering from untreated mental illness are unlikely to be successful in school. The budget expands access to mental health services for children. This additional \$7.4 million will allow 35 percent of Minnesota schools to provide these services – more than double the previous total.

High-Quality Treatment for Children with Autism. The budget provides access to high-quality intervention treatment for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Providing Health Coverage for Kids with Autism. The Governor's budget requires large insurers to cover treatment for people with autism.

Addressing child homelessness and hunger

Reducing Youth Homelessness. On any given night, it is estimated Minnesota has 600 homeless children, who are living on their own. This budget invests \$4 million in services dedicated to reducing youth homelessness.

Improving Minnesota's Family Investment Program. Children are most successful when they have a stable home environment. The budget provides new resources and improvements to the Minnesota Family Investment Program to help parents find jobs that can support their families.

Rental Assistance for Low-Income Families. Improving school stability for Minnesota's kids will help to improve academic performance. The Governor's budget invests \$2 million in rental assistance to help students and their families stay in their homes.

Supporting Permanent Homes for Children. The budget invests \$3 million to reduce the costs that families face when considering adoption and will increase the percentage of children who are adopted from foster care into permanent families.

Alleviating Hunger in Minnesota. The budget invests \$750,000 in food shelves that assist one in ten Minnesotans to ensure that children have access to healthy food.

Increasing School Lunch Aid. The budget includes an additional \$1 million for the school lunch program to keep Minnesota kids from going hungry.

Keeping kids safe and out of trouble

Reducing Child Maltreatment. Protecting children from abuse is a central priority for public safety. The Governor's budget invests \$4.5 million in prevention and early identification of child abuse and neglect by expanding proven statewide outreach strategies for at-risk youth.

Protecting Sexually Exploited Youth. Minnesota has the 13th highest incidence of sex trafficking according to the FBI and more than 50% of individuals sold for sex are younger than 18. To better protect our state's children, the budget invests \$3 million in programs that will help child victims of sex trafficking. It includes funds to train prosecutors and law enforcement officers working with victims.

Improving Protections Against School Bullying. This budget requires that the Department of Education develop standards for prevention, intervention and support around issues of school bullying, harassment and intimidation.

Increasing School Safety. The budget provides \$860,000 for the Minnesota School Safety Center to help keep our schools safe and deal with emergencies effectively.

Safe Routes to Schools. The budget provides grants and assistance to local community groups working to create an environment where children can walk or bike to school safely.

Monitoring Air Pollution. Exposure to air pollution and harmful chemicals can be detrimental – particularly for children and newborns. The budget includes \$900,000 to examine air pollution, chronic respiratory disease, and mercury levels in newborns and children in the east metro.

Making Children’s Products Safer. This session legislation was passed to ban formaldehyde and BPA in children’s products.

Keeping At-Risk Youth Out of Trouble. Spending time in jail or juvenile detention reduces the chance a child will graduate from high school and increase likelihood they will commit another crime later in life. The Governor’s budget provides provide grants to help keep at-risk youth out of trouble. The budget also invests in initiatives designed to keep youth from being detained in “adult” jails that might “harden” them.

Improving the Juvenile Justice System. The National Alliance on Mental Illness will conduct a short term taskforce, along with the Commissioners of Human Services, Corrections and Education to address issues concerning the juvenile justice system and create a report to the legislature by February 15, 2014. This taskforce will look at a number of problems facing young people in the juvenile justice system.