March 17, 2026

Health & Human Services Committee
SF4388: Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Grants, home and community-based services protection-related rights & day treatment program requirements modified.

Dear Chair Wiklund & Members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

Minnesota's Prenatal to Three Coalition (PN-3) is writing to express our support for SF4388, to establish an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Grant program. By investing infant and early childhood consultation, Minnesota has the opportunity to move upstream and invest in early intervention strategies to support the wellbeing of young children and promote family stability.

The mental health of infants and toddlers is a clear indicator of their overall health and wellbeing. Secure Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation is a preventative and early intervention practice where parents and caregivers work with mental health providers to build capacity to support the social, emotional, and overall brain development of young children. Infant and early childhood mental health consultation is shown to improve social and emotional functioning in young children, reduce school suspensions, and—most importantly—promote healthy parent-child relationships, the basis that all future learning is dependent on.[1]

Too many families in Minnesota are placed on waitlists for weeks—sometimes months—before they are able to access critical mental health care for their young children. The establishment of the Children's Mental Health Grant Program will allow more families to access critical mental health support for their young family, earlier in their children's development. Please join us in supporting SF4388, so infants and young children may have a better chance of growing up healthy and being prepared for a full life of learning.

Thank you for prioritizing the mental health and wellness of Minnesota's babies, toddlers, and families.

Alisha Porter,
Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota, Director
Minnesota Prenatal to Three Coalition, Chair

Nancy Jost,
Early Childhood Advisor
Minnesota Prenatal to Three Coalition, Chair

[1]Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (2024). Annotated Bibliography: The Evidence Base for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC). http://www.iecmhc.org/documents/CoE-Annotated-Bibliography.pdf