

FACT SHEET | Prioritizing Children and Families

2015 Budget for a Better Minnesota

The Governor's budget proposal would invest \$488 million in children and families. Those new investments would make child care more affordable, provide additional tax relief for working families, and provide better services for low-income families and at-risk children in Minnesota. It also would provide more economic stability for low-income families, and invest in strategies to prevent the abuse and neglect of children. These efforts would help ensure all children receive the care and support they need to succeed in school and life.

Protecting Children from Abuse and Neglect

- **Protecting Children from Abuse and Neglect** – Last year, Governor Dayton convened a new Task Force on the Protection of Children to recommend strategies that would protect kids from abuse and neglect. The Governor's supplemental budget proposal sets aside \$52 million to fund the Task Force's recommendations to improve child protection efforts at the state and local levels.
- **Helping Homeless and Sexually Exploited Youth** – The Governor's budget would help vulnerable youth struggling with homelessness or who have been victims of sexual exploitation. It would provide more resources for emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, drop-in centers, and street outreach to 2,500 Minnesota youth who are homeless on any given night. His budget proposal would also invest \$4 million to provide outreach, housing, and supportive services for sexually exploited youth under the Safe Harbor Law. The Safe Harbor Law prosecutes adult traffickers, but treats youth under age 18 as victims, rather than charging them with prostitution or other crimes.

Strengthening Minnesota Families

- **Expanding the Child Care Tax Credit** – Under current law, only 38,000 Minnesota families are eligible to receive tax credits for child care. The Governor's proposal would expand eligibility for these tax credits to a total of 130,000 Minnesota families. The proposal also would increase the average credit by \$429 with some families seeing as much as a \$1,200 increase.
- **Improving the Lives of Children and Families** – The Governor's proposal would also invest an additional \$35 million to improve access to high-quality child care for low-income families, provide additional outreach to parents of at-risk children, help homeless youth, increase the state's investment in children's mental health services, and more.
- **Investing in Working Families** – The Working Family Tax Credit and the federal Earned Income Tax Credit are among the most powerful anti-poverty tools available. By incentivizing work, these tax credits supplement the wages of low and middle-income working adults with children. Governor Dayton's budget proposal would invest \$82.5 million to expand the Working Family Tax Credit to more than 257,000 working families statewide. The average family would save \$138 per year. Eligible families would receive an average total credit of \$769.
- **Covering Educational Expenses** – To help Minnesota families pay for education expenses, the Governor's budget proposal would expand the K-12 Education Tax Credit to 16,800 more middle class Minnesota families. Eligible families could receive a credit up to \$1,000 for each child enrolled in a K-12 school for educational expenses like textbooks, tutoring, and computers.
- **Minnesota Family Investment Program** – State assistance for low-income families has not increased since 1986 – leaving parents and families without the means to survive and provide adequate care for their children. The Governor's proposal would invest \$68 million to increase monthly payments for low-income families by \$100 per month, or \$1,200 per year. This measure would help an estimated 70,000 children and 29,000 adults live better, safer, healthier lives.