



8 February 2019

Senator Sara Howard, Chair
Members of the Health and Human Services Committee
Nebraska Legislature

RE: LB341

Madam Chair and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

On behalf of First Five Nebraska, I would like to submit our testimony in support of LB341.

As I previously mentioned, our organization works to effect sustainable and fiscally responsible solutions for closing the achievement gap affecting young children in need. The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) plays a vital role in this effort. The child care subsidy supports families who are working, looking for jobs, or continuing their education to improve their futures and meet specific income guidelines. These are the families who have children in need. It is important that we do not create obstacles for these families that prevent them from working more hours or making more money.

LB341 supports this goal by implementing a graduated phase-out, removing the 24-month limit on transitional assistance and changes the ceiling within an eligibility year to 85% of state median income. These changes help ensure working parents and caregivers will not turn down much-needed work hours or salary increases for fear of losing financial assistance that helps them afford care for their children.

LB341 will bring Nebraska into compliance with the graduated phase-out component of the Child Care and Development Block Grant reauthorization. This is crucial, as a failure to do so could result in a 4% penalty. It is also important in supporting high-quality early childhood education, because it promotes continuity of care, which is a necessary ingredient of high-quality early child care.

Changing the point at which a family is no longer eligible for transitional assistance within an eligibility year to 85% of state median income and removing the 24-month cap on transitional assistance will prevent children in need from bouncing between different care settings. Supporting continuity of care will help close the achievement gap.

First Five Nebraska is grateful to the committee for its work in supporting the well-being of Nebraska's youngest children. We also commend Nebraska's Child Care and Development Fund Administrator—Nicole Vint—for her efforts to ensure Nebraska does not incur unnecessary fiscal penalties for noncompliance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant reauthorization. We hope you will see fit to move LB341 to General File.

Sincerely,

Adam Feser
Policy Associate
First Five Nebraska