

Lower Parental Fees, Provide Relief to Families

➤ **The Arc Minnesota Position**

Minnesota legislators should support a reduction in the fees families pay for services that keep their children with disabilities healthy, keep them with their families, and keep them in the community.

➤ **Why Parental Fees Should Be Reduced**

- Parental fees that families pay for their in-home supports and medical services through Medical Assistance have often been unaffordable for families.
- Families with children with disabilities often pay more of their income on medical care than families without. They pay both for medical care for their child with disabilities and for private insurance coverage for the rest of the family.
- High fees can cause great financial stress to families and even prevent them from applying for crucial services that would meet their children's needs.
- Minnesota has made a substantial commitment to support children with disabilities in their family homes. Parental fees can create an obstacle to meeting this commitment.



➤ **Background**

Parents whose incomes would normally be too high to qualify for Medical Assistance (MA) can receive coverage for in-home supports and medical services through MA. These services and supports are available through programs that are technically called TEFRA and waived services. Families accessing these programs pay a fee on a sliding scale. For some middle-class families, this fee can be several hundred dollars a month.

To help balance the state budget over the past decade, lawmakers at times increased parental fees. This increased the burden for Minnesota families and made fees unaffordable for many of them. In some cases, fees equaled a family's mortgage payment or the amount of state taxes it paid. Some families drained their savings accounts or drew down retirement accounts as a result of unaffordable fees.

➤ **Legislative Action**

There has been some progress in providing parental fee relief over the past decade, thanks to actions taken by Minnesota lawmakers and disability advocates. As a result, a number of families have seen their financial burden reduced. However, many families still face fees that are unaffordable. These families and their children need further financial relief. The Arc Minnesota supports significant reductions in parental fees, including the eventual elimination of all parental fees.

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