



Bold Beginning: Ohio Mothers and Children First

**The DeWine-Husted Administration
is dedicated to the health and success
of Ohio's mothers and children.**

Bold Beginning: Ohio Mothers and Children First provides supportive services to pregnant mothers and their families, ensuring that every child gets the very best possible start in life.

■ Including

- prenatal care and programming
- parenting education and mentoring
- education and employment supports
- material assistance, such as cribs and car seats
- enrollment in nutrition and other social support programs
- childcare
- and so much more

Bold Beginning: Ohio Mothers and Children First invests nearly \$1 billion into essential supports to ensure that Ohio is the best state in the nation to start and raise a family.



Pre- and Postnatal Care

Under Governor Mike DeWine's leadership, the Department of Medicaid has expanded prenatal and postnatal services to ensure more Ohio mothers have healthy, full-term births and quality care post-birth.

- Established and expanded services – in targeted communities and designed to improve birth outcomes for black women and babies – including community health workers and navigators to connect women to care; doulas and trauma-informed peer supporters to support women through pregnancy and motherhood; legal aid services and fatherhood supports to help families thrive; and other interventions chosen by communities themselves.
- Made evidence-based group prenatal courses reimbursable through Medicaid, providing more women with access to critical prenatal medical care, education, and support while building community.
- Introduced new Medicaid coverage for community-based nursing services consistent with the Nurse Family Partnership home visiting model. Implementing this service through Medicaid contributes to Governor DeWine's goal of tripling home visiting for Ohio families and children. Nurse home visits are shown to reduce parent stress, improve parenting skills, and help families overcome challenges. These services are available for women in Medicaid who are at risk for pre-term birth complications.
- Expanded access to and funding for lactation consultation services and breastfeeding supplies, helping more mothers start and continue to breastfeed their newborns.
- Started continuous health care coverage for Medicaid enrolled mothers for one year after the birth of their child. Previously, coverage ended roughly two months after birth.
- In partnership with the Ohio Department of Health and the Governor's Children's Initiative, invested \$5 million in 44 community and faith-based organizations, such as Brigid's Path and Moms2Be, to improve infant and maternal health outcomes.
- Expanded access to substance use disorder treatment for pregnant and parenting mothers, in partnership with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.
- The Maternal Opiate Medical Supports (MOMS) program, funded by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, serves pregnant and postpartum women with opioid use and stimulant use disorders, using a holistic care model. Participants receive medication assisted treatment, case management, counseling, peer support, parenting education, and more. The 12 MOMS sites, such as Moms2Be, across the state serve 300 women each day.



Parenting Support, Education, Employment and Mentoring



To support parents, the DeWine-Husted Administration has increased investment in programs designed to equip parents with essential skills, provide ongoing support, and mentoring.

■ Under Governor DeWine's leadership, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has more than doubled its investment in evidence-based home visiting programs and streamlined eligibility, making enrollment available to any family under 200% of the federal poverty line; that's \$36,620 or less for a family of two, and serving children up to 5 years of age. These completely voluntary programs currently serve more than 9,000 families across all 88 counties helping parents set and achieve goals; training them in parenting techniques to help their child achieve developmental milestones; connecting them to mental and physical healthcare and social services; and so much more.

These programs are proven to work – reducing parenting stress, improving skills, and making children more ready for kindergarten. In addition, the program helps parents achieve financial independence through education and work. In fact, roughly 7,500 family goals relate to adult education, employment, and training, such as these real-life examples:

■ Assisting a new mother struggling with opioid use disorder achieve sustained recovery and work toward her bachelor's degree, while also supporting the child overcome behavioral and speech challenges that resulted in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Today, the child has made significant advancements, no longer requiring an IEP.

■ Supporting a teen-mom achieve stability after her relationship with her family was severed. The mom was able to graduate from high school, enroll in college on a full academic scholarship, and is on-track to graduate with a bachelor's degree in education.

■ As Attorney General, now-Governor DeWine created the Ohio Sobriety, Treatment, Addiction, and Reducing Trauma pilot program to help families involved with children's services who are struggling with substance abuse issues receive the treatment and supports for both parents and the impacted children. As governor, the program has expanded to serve families in 52 counties.



The Ohio Governor's Imagination Library provides a free book mailed monthly to all participating children up to age five. With the help of the state legislature, Governor DeWine and First Lady Fran DeWine expanded the program statewide and now more than 316,000 young children receive a book each month encouraging early literacy skills and promoting kindergarten readiness.



■ The Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) jointly invest \$15.5 million to support mentoring, parent education, marriage counseling, ultrasound services, and tangible supports such as baby showers, diapers, cribs, car seats and more. Through more than 54 faith- and community-based groups, women across the state have access to these valuable services.

■ The Governor's Children's Initiative, in partnership with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, is expanding the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) statewide for all families. Triple P is an evidence-based program that equips parents with strategies to address challenging behaviors, build healthy relationships, and thrive as parents. The program is completely free and offered online and in-person.

■ ODH trains community members and new and expectant mothers on ways to promote safe environments for their children, through smoking cessation – which can reduce preterm births, the greatest driver of infant mortality – and safe sleep programs.

Did you know?

Home visiting programs in Ohio currently serve

**more than 9,000 families
across all 88 counties.**



Connections to Nutrition and Other Social Supports

The Ohio Departments of Health (ODH) and Job and Family Services (ODJFS) actively work to enroll eligible families into nutrition benefit programs, including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

WIC benefits include healthy, fresh, and shelf-stable foods, infant formula, and baby foods, as well as access to health screenings, nutrition counseling, breast feeding support and much more. SNAP helps Ohioans stretch their food budgets and purchase healthy foods through the Ohio Direction Card, similar to a debit card. Collectively, these programs can help improve maternal health and reduce infant mortality.

These two fully-federally funded programs have different enrollment processes, meaning that many eligible moms aren't enrolled in both. Through a pilot with the InnovateOhio Platform, ODH and ODJFS are actively collaborating to cross-enroll moms receiving SNAP into the WIC program, to ensure they receive the maximum supports possible for themselves and their children. Using program enrollment data, InnovateOhio notifies ODH of women who are enrolled in SNAP but not WIC. ODH then engages moms to help them enroll in WIC as well. This program has helped to connect more than 1,600 new Ohioans to WIC nutritional support services.

The DeWine-Husted Administration also prioritized connecting homeless and housing unstable mothers to housing in two Ohio counties – Franklin and Summit. Through a \$2.25 million grant, the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio will help connect vulnerable moms to housing and other wraparound supports that will provide long-term financial stability.



Material Assistance

Preparing for and raising a child is costly. For those without means and support, acquiring the supplies needed to protect and care for a baby can be challenging.

That is why Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Ohio Children's Trust Fund, within the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, provide at-risk, expectant and new mothers with material assistance, such as cribs, play yards, and car seats. These supports help keep children safe and can reduce infant mortality. Since the inception of the program, ODH has distributed more than 17,000 cribs to families in need.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the ODH leveraged existing funding to meet the needs of the families they served through home visiting by safely delivering cleaning supplies; personal protective equipment; diapers and wipes; formula; baby gates, smoke detectors, and other safety supplies; and cell phone cards to ensure participants could call their home visitor with any needs. These supports resulted in some of the highest retention rates. Help Me Grow, Ohio's evidence-based parent support program, has seen since its inception.

Did you know?

The Ohio Department of Health has distributed more than

17,000 cribs to Ohio families in need.

Child Care and Development

Access to quality child care can empower parents to take on meaningful work opportunities, while also helping children learn, grow, and achieve developmental milestones, placing them on a pathway for kindergarten readiness. Governor DeWine has worked to improve the quality of childcare across the state and expand access.

- Upon coming into office, less than 40% of Ohio's publicly funded child care providers were quality rated by the State. In just 20 months, all child care providers receiving public funds were quality rated to help parents when making care decisions.
- Governor DeWine worked to expand access to quality child care for more working class families. Today, families with incomes up to 142% of the Federal Poverty Level can receive child care benefits – that's up to \$32,700 per year for a family of three, or nearly \$16 per hour for an adult working full-time, full-year.
- Governor DeWine, in partnership with the General Assembly, also expanded access for families of children with developmental delays up to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level – that's up to \$34,545 per year, or nearly \$17 per hour for an adult working full-time, full-year.

Under Governor DeWine's leadership, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) have also expanded access to mental health supports in child care facilities for children, their families, and staff.



- OhioMHAS has increased – by nearly 200 professionals – the number of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants deployed across the state to provide direct supports to child care providers in addressing challenging student behaviors, reducing the risk of suspension or expulsion.
- Under Governor DeWine's leadership, OhioMHAS also created the Infant Mental Health Credential to promote emotional wellness by educating early childhood professionals on identifying, responding to, and treating trauma and other mental health challenges. More than 500 Ohioans are credentialed in infant mental health.
- ODJFS is also investing in a brand-new Mental Health Bridge, which will build out mental health telehealth services in child care centers across the state, connecting them with providers to serve children, families, and staff.



Foster and Adoptive Support



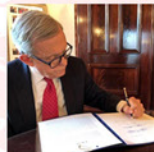
Every year families open their homes and their hearts to children through adoption. Thousands of Ohio families also care for foster children, offering them a home when it isn't safe to stay with their families. The safety of a child must always be the top priority. When it is not safe for a child to remain with his or her biological family, Governor DeWine has worked to ensure every foster youth has a safe, loving, skilled family to care

- In 2019, Governor DeWine launched the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council to conduct a top-down review of Ohio's child welfare system. The Council developed 37 recommendations, of which 36 are underway or completed.
- In partnership with the General Assembly, Governor DeWine has worked to modernize training for foster families to better align with technology and their experiences. The Governor also signed legislation to ensure youth do not languish in foster care by placing loving foster families who wish to adopt their foster child on a level playing field with kin.

- Governor DeWine is also creating Youth and Family Ombudsmen to accept and investigate complaints from foster youth and families.
- To ensure all foster youth who are eligible for adoption find a loving home, Governor DeWine has expanded the Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) program statewide. WWK is a child-centered recruitment program that finds the right family for children in care, promoting long-term family success.
- For youth placed with kin, the new Kinship and Adoption Navigator will help connect kinship caregivers to resources they need to thrive.

Did you know?

Protecting mothers and young families from discrimination



Among the first executive orders Governor DeWine signed after being sworn into office was an order that prohibited discrimination in state government against Ohioans for their status as a parent during pregnancy and immediately after the birth of a child, their status as a parent of a young child, or their status as a foster parent.