

STRATEGY FOR A STRONGER FUTURE

Invest in Ohio's Early Childhood Professionals

Qianna Tidmore

Executive Director

ohioaeyc Ohio Association for the
Education of Young Children

Support the Educators Who Make it All Possible

Restore and expand workforce investments that recognize early childhood educators as essential professionals. Nearly all early educators are women, and many are women of color.

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They deserve fair compensation, benefits, and respect for the critical work they do every day.

Fund Child Care for Child Care Workers



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This innovative support helps recruit and retain staff, keeps classrooms open, and ensures families have access to care.



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- This shift ensures financial stability for programs, strengthens staffing, and keeps quality learning environments open for children.



Invest in Child Care and Restore Governor's Funding



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- Restore the Governor's proposed child care investments to stabilize and strengthen the entire child care system.
- This includes restoring funding for the Child Care Choice Voucher Program and increasing access to publicly funded child care.



Adopt the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Profession



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- Advance long-term progress by aligning educator roles, qualifications, and compensation.



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- Advance long-term progress by aligning educator roles, qualifications, and compensation.
- A consistent, well-prepared, and fairly paid workforce improves quality across all settings and helps stabilize the field.



58,600



Number of educators working with children birth through 5.

23%

Percentage Of
Educators That Rely On
Public Benefits To
Make Ends Meet



A row of matches is shown against a dark background. The match on the left is lit, with a bright orange and yellow flame rising from it. The other matches are unlit, with red tips and light-colored wooden bodies.

46%

Educators Indicating They
Are Burned Out

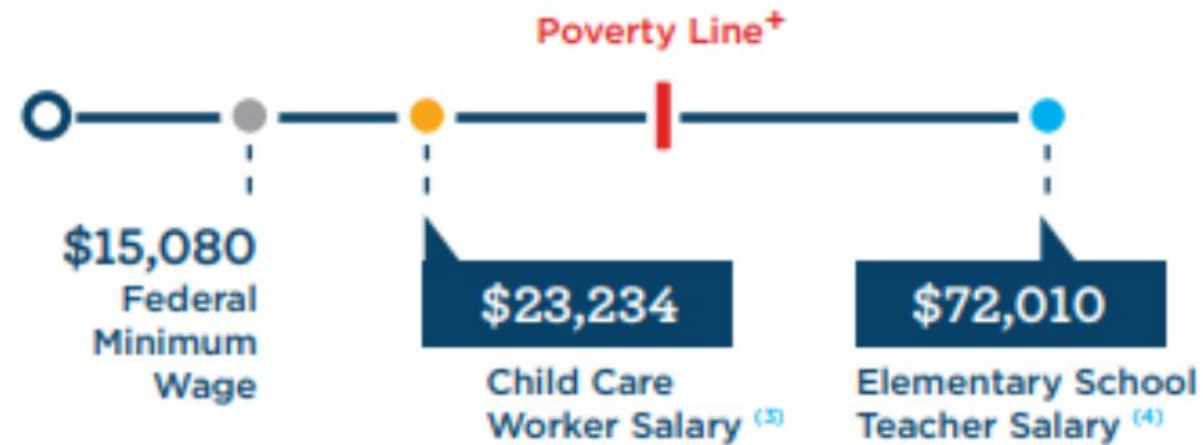
\$23,234

Est. Annual Salary

\$11.17

Child Care Workers

Hourly Rate



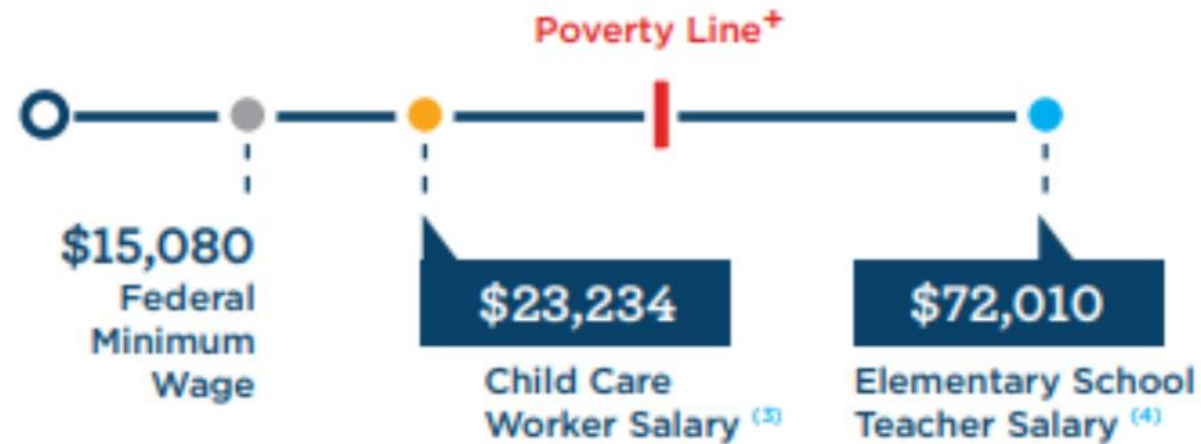
\$23,234

Est. Annual Salary

\$11.17

Child Care Workers

Hourly Rate



\$13.25

“The program’s expenses have consistently increased and caused for increases in tuition, as well as alternate ways of meeting expenses (such as credit cards).”

-- Family Child Care Owner/Operator



Head Start

Foundation of Ohio's
Early Care Ecosystem

Julie Stone
Executive Director



Head Start

Child-centered

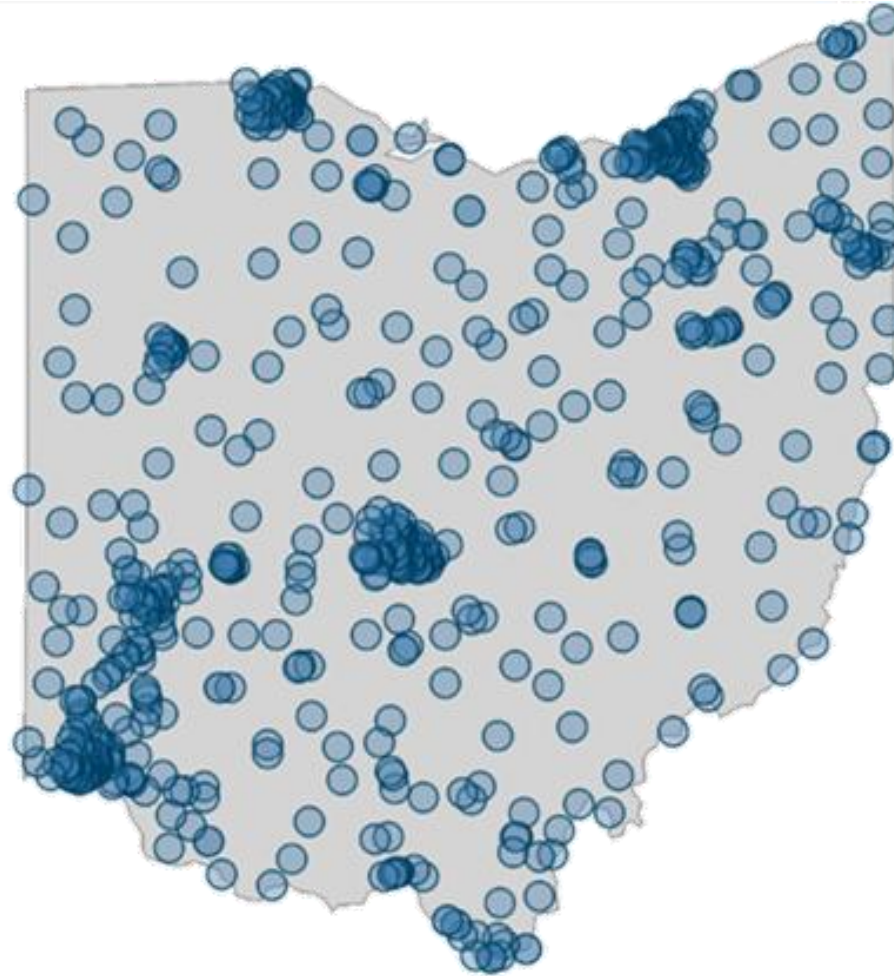
Family focused

Comprehensive

Community-based



Head Start in Ohio



Head Start in Ohio

7,609 Employees

+

21,242 Head Start Parents working

=

28,851 Ohio Jobs



Head Start In Ohio

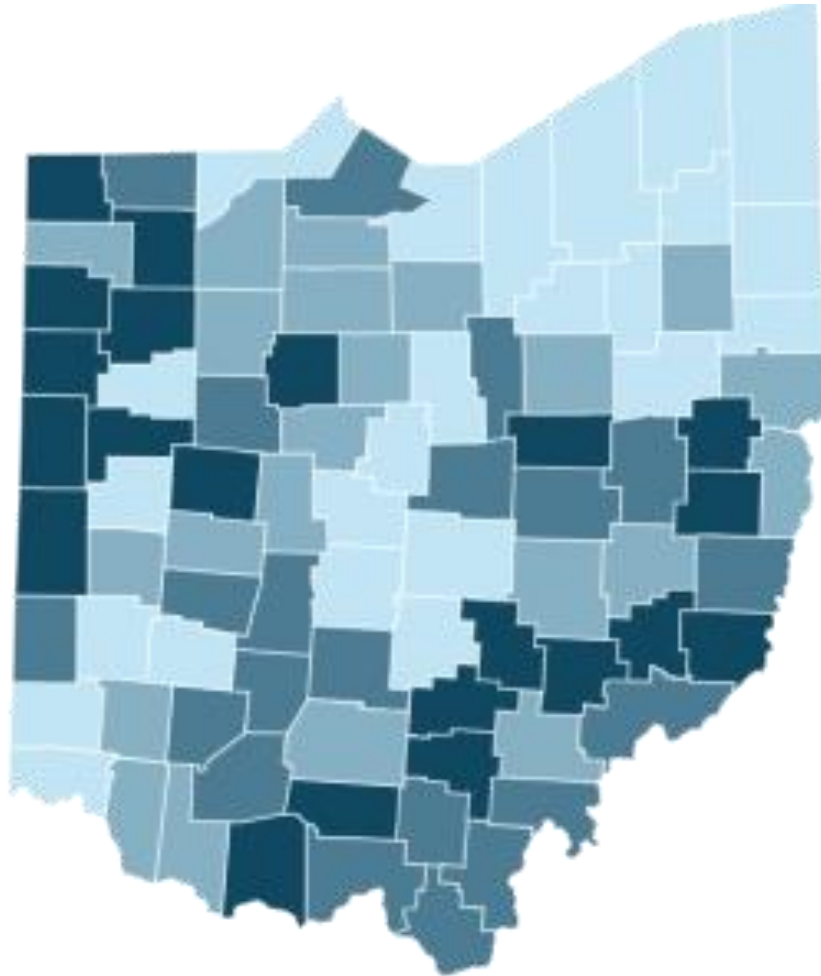
Serving Ohio's Most Vulnerable Children

Provides nearly **one-third** of all publicly
funded early-care slots

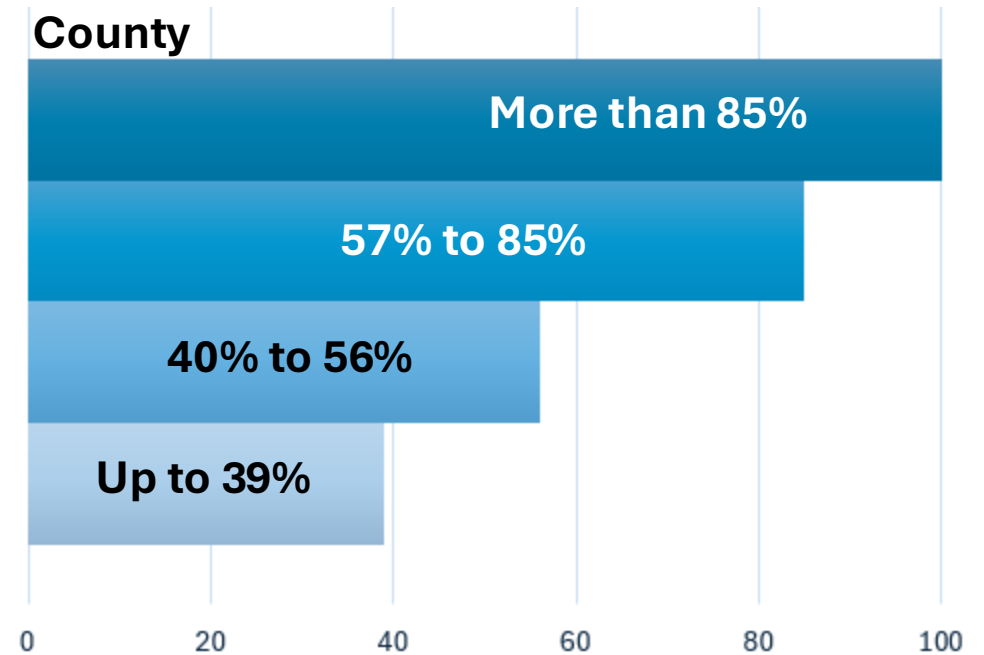
Essential for families with
limited child care options



Head Start In Ohio



Percentage of Subsidized Care per County



Head Start

Broad Public Support

79% of voters support Head Start

73% Republicans

76% Independents

86% Democrats



Head Start In Ohio

Protect Head Start's Foundational Role

**Secure Continued Investment
Role in Workforce Development
Services to Underserved Communities**





SETTING THE STAGE:
Why Are Business Leaders Talking About Child Care?

Lynanne Gutierrez, Esq.
President & CEO



Business Coalition for Child Care



OHIO CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE



Open Letter to Ohio Legislature



May 2025

Re: Statewide Business Community Child Care Priorities for the 136th Ohio General Assembly

On behalf of thousands of Ohio families and businesses, our organizations write to elevate childcare as a policy priority for both the upcoming state operating budget and throughout the 136th Ohio General Assembly. Child care is a key workforce participation barrier for Ohio parents and caregivers, who often make the difficult decision to disengage partially or completely from the labor market due to high costs or lack of availability. As all industries struggle to attract and retain talent, the costs and scarcity of childcare services are robbing our labor force of an entire demographic of skilled, educated, and hardworking Ohioans.

In an economic study just released by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the direct financial impact to Ohio of insufficient child care coverage is **\$5.48 billion annually**. This number includes \$1.52 billion in missed annual tax revenue, and \$3.97 billion in child care-related employee turnover and absenteeism costs to Ohio employers. 70% of Ohio parents of young children missed work or class at least once in the past three months for child care reasons, and 33% of parents that experienced disruptions to their employment in the past year reported leaving the workforce as a direct result of child care issues. Finally, in 75% of states child care now costs more than in-state university tuition.

The complexities surrounding Ohio's child care crisis are rivaled by the costs involved in greater investments. We understand that these burdens must be shared with the employer community, local governments, and non-profit organizations. As we support innovation in those spaces, ***we are unified behind supporting core, structural investments in Ohio's child care system proposed in the "as introduced" budget that supports working families, employers, child care providers and the state including:***

- 1. Increase access to affordable, quality child care for working families at or below 200% FPL**

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Q: Why are business leaders from all around Ohio and the nation sounding the alarm about the child care crisis?


A:

**Because Ohio's businesses need a reliable,
growing, & diverse workforce to succeed
and businesses simply can't get it.**

Lack of Child Care Leads to Unemployment/ Underemployment



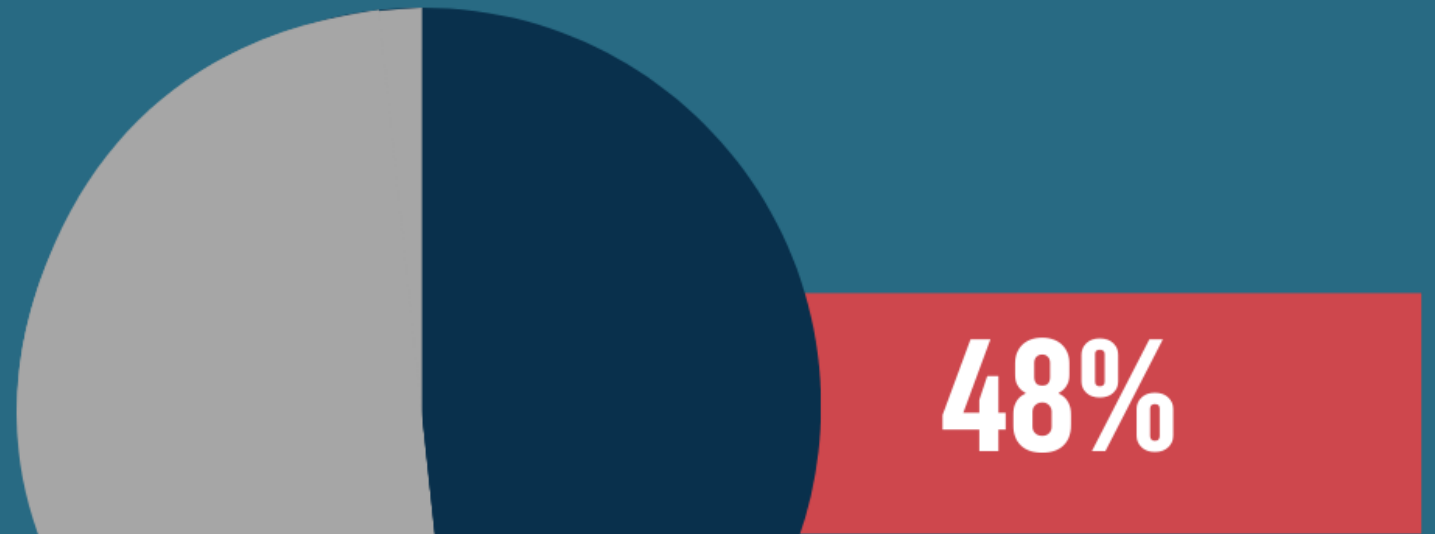
Nearly **50%**
of working parents

have **cut back their work hours**
to care for their children.²

1 MILLION

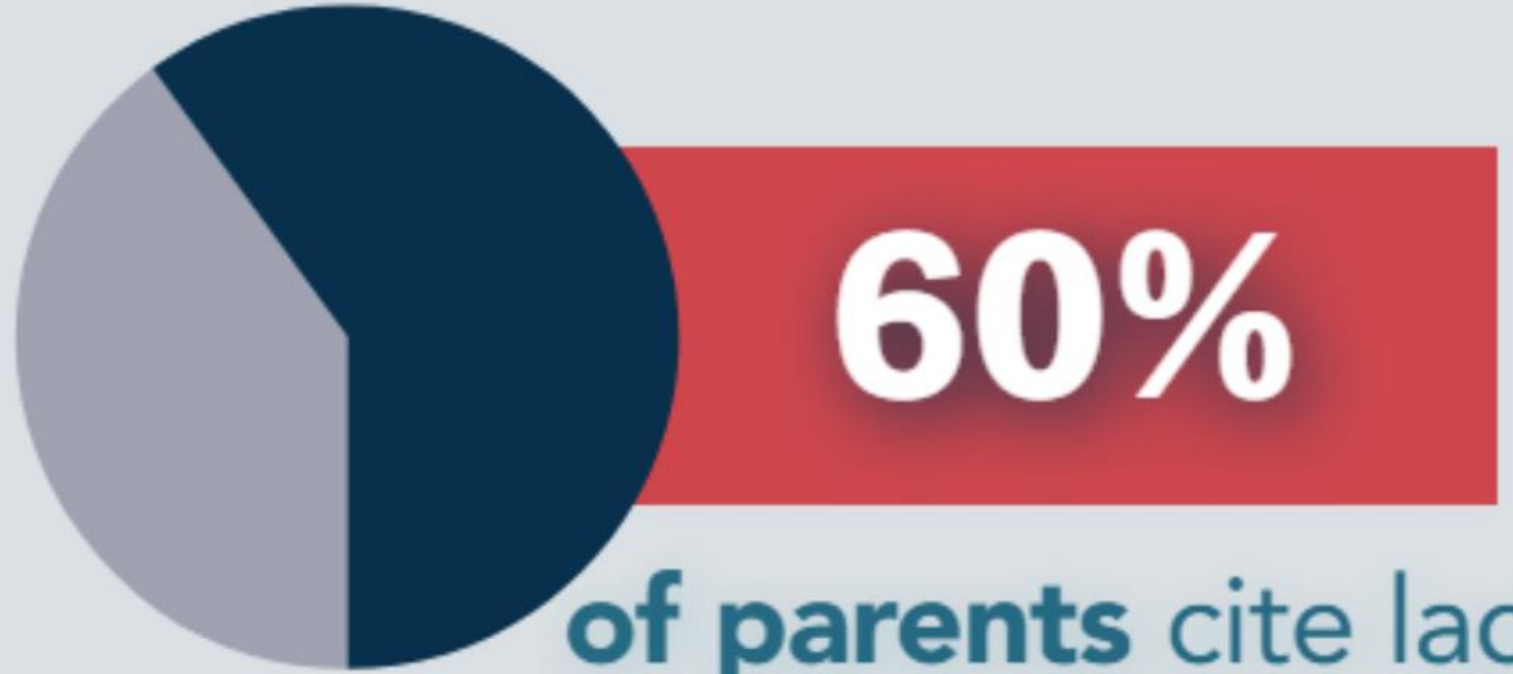
of Ohio working parents cut back work
hours **due to child care barriers.**³

Child Care Crisis Significantly Hampers Recruitment/ Retention



of small business owners
say lack of available or affordable child
care affected their ability to recruit and
retain employees.

Parents Identify Child Care as a Barrier to Work



of parents cite lack
of child care as their reason for
leaving the workforce.

Child Care is Unaffordable



Annual Child Care Expenses in Ohio (avg)

Infant care:

\$13,780

Toddler care:

\$12,376

Preschooler care:

\$11,752

Source: Child Care Aware of America - Child Care in America: 2024 Price & Supply

Child Care is Unaffordable



**Child Care Expenses
= \$10.54/hr worked**

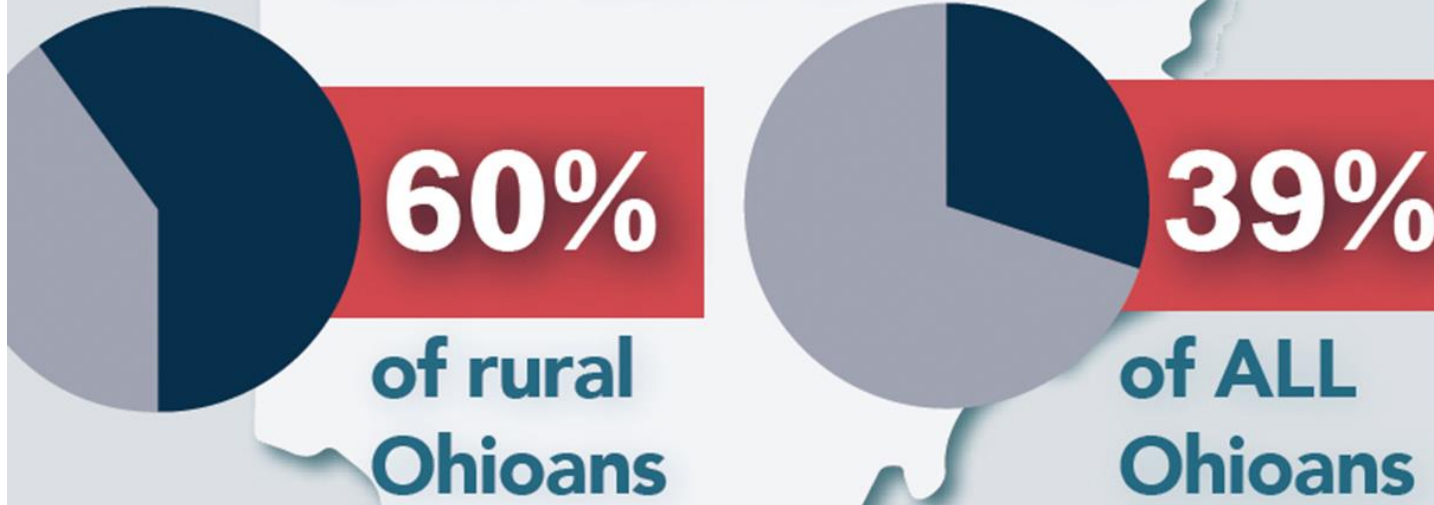
If paid \$20/hr

**\$9.46/hr
remains**

Child Care is Hard to Find



Ohioans Living in Child Care Deserts:



The Child Care Crisis Impacts Us All



Ohio
loses
approx.

\$5.48

Billion

per year due to
child care issues.

What Working Parents
AKA Your Employees, Constituents, Community Members
Tell Us...



25%

of parents say their
work performance has declined
because of child care issues.



Groundwork
OHIO

24%

of parents say they have
**refused a job opportunity,
promotion, or change**
because it would increase
child care expenses.



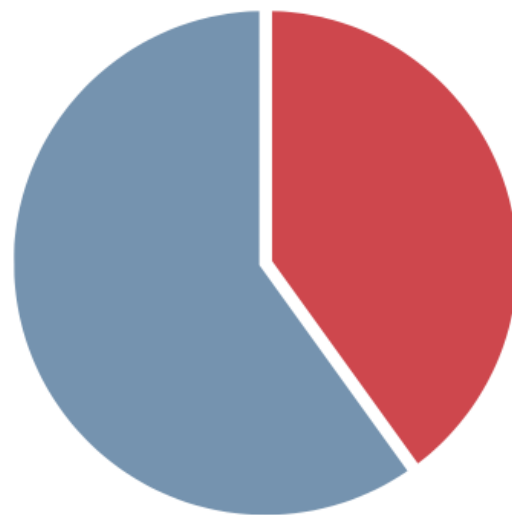
Groundwork
OHIO

HALF

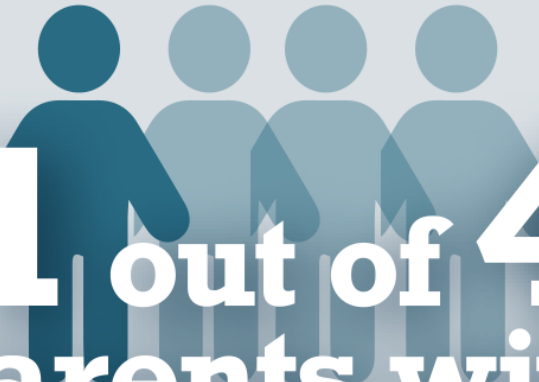
of working parents say that
over the last couple of months,
they have had to cut back on their work hours
to care for their children.



Groundwork
OHIO



More than 40% of parents
of young children have had to
call off or miss a shift at work
because of child care issues.



**1 out of 4
parents with
young children**

**have had to leave the workforce
because of an inability to find
affordable child care.**



**Groundwork
OHIO**

68%

of Ohio parents with children under 6
identify at least **ONE** of these factors in
their work lives.



Groundwork
OHIO

30%

of Ohio parents with children under 6
have identified **TWO-to-THREE** of these factors.

When stay-at-home parents of young children are asked
what would having child care allow them to do,
there is one response that stands out:

“Work”

And, when parents of young children
with child care are asked
what having child care allows them to do:

“Work”

61%

of non-full-time working moms say
they would go back to work
if their child had access to
quality child care at a reasonable cost.



Groundwork
OHIO

Untapped Potential in Ohio

**5.48
BILLION**

Child care issues result in an estimated \$5.48 billion annual loss for Ohio's economy.

NEW DATA FROM: "UNTAPPED POTENTIAL IN OHIO"



U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Foundation



OHIO CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE



Groundwork
OHIO

**1.52
BILLION**

Ohio misses an estimated \$1.52 billion annually in tax revenue due to child care issues.

NEW DATA FROM: "UNTAPPED POTENTIAL IN OHIO"



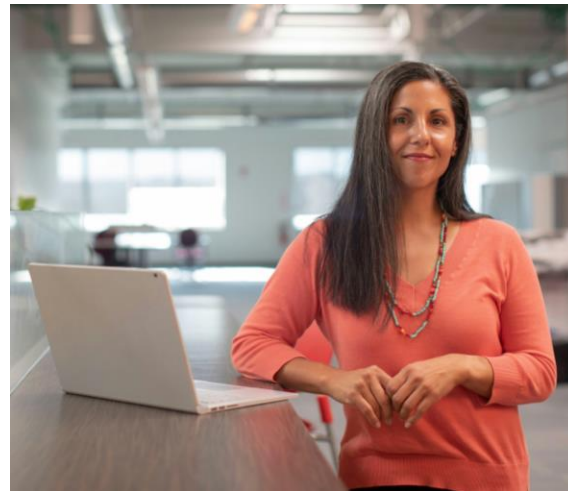
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Foundation



OHIO CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE



Groundwork
OHIO



**No wonder businesses are talking
about child care.**

Budget Priority: Publicly Funded Child Care

EXECUTIVE:

Increases maximum income for a family's initial eligibility for PFCC at 160% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and 300% FPL for continued eligibility. Currently, the eligibility is 145% for initial eligibility unless the child has special needs, then the initial eligibility is 150% FPL. This increase would allow a family of three with an annual income of \$42,640 to qualify for initial eligibility and serve 11,000 more children.

HOUSE:

Maintains initial PFCC eligibility at 145% Federal Poverty Line (FPL) and 150% for special needs child care. (According to DCY, the estimated cost to increase eligibility to 160% FPL is approximately \$76.3M in FY 2026 and \$101.8M in FY 2027.)

ASK TO SENATE:

RESTORE the Governor's budget proposal.

Budget Priority: Child Care Choice Voucher Program

EXECUTIVE:

Maintains and expands the Child Care Choice Voucher Program to serve an additional 29,000 families with child care costs in the form of vouchers.

HOUSE:

Restricts the Child Care Choice Voucher program to \$100M/FY (According to DCY, the proposed voucher program in the executive bill was projected to cost \$75M in FY 2026 and \$150M in FY 2027; Due to changes in federal line item amounts, the substitute bill instead provides a budget of approximately \$50M in each fiscal year for the voucher program.) Serving approximately 10,000 less children.

ASK TO SENATE:

RESTORE the Governor's budget proposal.

Budget Priority: TANF Block Grant

EXECUTIVE:

Allocates \$427,850,000 for FY 26 & 27 from the TANF Block Grant

HOUSE:

Proposed cuts of \$200,000,000 from TANF funds over the biennium. This means 20,000 total less children will have access to child care under the House proposal AND the ongoing investment of federal funds in child care shrinks dramatically.

ASK TO SENATE:

RESTORE the Governor's budget proposal. We cannot shrink the existing system in terms of the overall spend at a time when family's needs far outweigh the current investment.



Learn More & Join the National Conversation:

Join our Business Coalition to connect
with other statewide business leaders.

Support the Workforce of Today & Tomorrow.



Learn More at

GroundworkOhio.org



@GroundworkOhio