



**While children make up 22% of Ohio's population, they represent 100% of Ohio's future. The budget is a moral document that reflects our priorities as a state - we must do right by the children of Ohio.**

Children do not come in pieces, and neither should our policy and budget decisions. We must maintain, protect, and strengthen the public resources dedicated to ensuring the wellbeing of our children in the 24-25 biennial budget.

To support the potential of each child, they must be cared for, healthy, educated, fed, and nurtured. Unfortunately, too many Ohio children are not adequately supported in all areas of their wellbeing.

**The Ohio Children's Budget Coalition (OCBC), a partnership of organizations across the state committed to the health and well-being of children, was established to advocate for the needs of the "whole child" in Ohio's budget decisions. Together, we are fighting for a fair and just children's agenda that elevates equitable opportunities for all children to thrive. OCBC's recommendations represent effective investments of taxpayer dollars that help children across our great state.**

State lawmakers and Governor DeWine's Administration must:

- Prioritize the whole child, including the communities they call home and the systems they depend on.
- Improve outcomes and eliminate silos by building a comprehensive, coordinated continuum of services and programs to address issues beyond the artificial boundaries of agencies and funding streams.
- Protect essential programs that promote whole child well-being. Maintain and build on previous investments that promote health, nutrition, housing security, quality child care, economic stability, strong families, quality education, and critical infrastructure, like broadband, that connects children and families to the services and supports needed during the pandemic and beyond.
- Advance budget solutions that prioritize racial equity and combat the effects of structural racism in our communities, which negatively impact child outcomes.
- Support the transition to adulthood. Childhood is a continuum and adolescent development continues through the early 20s. Many youth need additional support to successfully transition to adulthood.
- Ensure all investments go toward data and research-driven best practices, approaches, programs, and services that maximize benefits for children and families and represent an effective use of taxpayer investments.

**The Ohio Children's Budget Coalition wrote the following issue briefs outlining critical opportunities to improve child well-being in this budget.**