

Child Care and Early Childhood Education

For parents to work outside the home, child care and early education must be available and accessible. Yet quality, affordable child care remains out of reach for many. In addition, pay for child care workers must rise. For child care workers, wages are so low, they themselves struggle to make ends meet.

The state should provide enough resources to localities and school districts to ensure that all children, particularly black and Latino children, have access to at least two years of high quality pre-K so that they are ready for kindergarten.

Child care and early education workers shouldn't be paid poverty-level wages. These women – and they are predominately women (95.6 percent) and disproportionately women of color – are not paid enough to make ends meet. Increasing their pay will reduce poverty and greatly improve the quality of care and education that our children receive.

POLLING

62 percent of voters think child care is unaffordable. Voters see roles for both government and employers in making child care more affordable for parents.

92 percent of base supporters and 75 percent of persuadable voters favor having government “Expand early childhood education, creating jobs, raising wages and improving working conditions for child care providers and ensuring affordable child care.”

How to Talk About Child Care and Early Childhood Education

Lead with Values

Every working parent in Ohio should have access to quality affordable child care and early education for their children. And every child care provider should get paid enough to be able to do the same for their kids and families.

Emphasize the Ends

Child care is not only an essential ingredient to workforce participation for parents, high-quality child care and pre-K programs are also critical for children. Research has demonstrated the benefits of robust early care and education for children and the long-term effects on their development.

We need to dramatically expand access to full day pre-K for families. Ohio's child care assistance program is a key mechanism to help low-income families afford to work and we must increase eligibility and make it easier for low-wage families to climb out of poverty.

Focus on Lived Experience

Every parent wants the best for their child. And parents know that early experiences and education make a tremendous difference later in their child's life.

Name the Causes

Skyrocketing child care costs force families to make huge sacrifices to afford the care they need to simply earn a living. It costs almost as much to send a baby to daycare as it does to send an adult to college. Too many working parents have to choose the cheapest available option, putting their children's safety and well-being at risk.

At the same time, the people who care for our kids are paid a pittance to do such incredibly important – and hard – work.

Despite the training and licensing required and the importance of their task, the people who care for our youngest children are some of the lowest paid professionals in the entire workforce. It's not a coincidence that working conditions and wages among care providers are low and that this work is overwhelmingly done by women.

Link the Problem to the Solution

We need quality, affordable care because parents should always be able to head to work knowing their children are in good hands. We all have a stake in ensuring the next generation has a bright future, and it's time Ohio's policies reflect this by supporting children, families and caregivers, and giving parents affordable child care that gives kids a stable and loving environment.

Hannah Lebovits, 23, of University Heights, says quality childcare is financially out of reach for many low- and middle-income families. She struggles with paying off graduate school loans and affording quality childcare for her one-year-old daughter.

Hannah is assistant director of SCAYL Ohio, a grassroots organization advocating for 12 months of continuous eligibility for childcare assistance (SCAYL stands for Stable Childcare All Year Long). Quality programs for young children help set them up for success later in life. But too often, children are hurt when families lose eligibility for assistance because of legal technicalities.

“When it comes to childcare and we know how important it is, how can we tell families that they can't enroll their kids in quality childcare centers?”

