

Action for Children



Action for Children is the advocate in Central Ohio for child development and early learning, serving as a trusted resource and partner to the adults in a child's life.



DEAR FRIENDS

OF ACTION FOR CHILDREN

In every child's life, there are only about 2,000 days from birth to school entry, and every one of those days holds a promise for the future: a chance to grow, to learn, and to develop socially and emotionally. Fulfilling those promises depends on the opportunities each child has. For too many children, opportunity is limited by the circumstances of their birth; race, gender, ethnicity, and even the zip code in which they live, can limit rather than just inform the life they lead. We know from research, once children fall behind, odds are they will stay behind.

So, the question isn't, is there an opportunity; it's what are we going to do to make sure all of our children have an opportunity for a level start and a firm foundation in life? That's why Action for Children focuses on the everyday heroes who most influence our children's growth and development: parents, guardians, caregivers and early educators. When we help caregivers deepen and diversify skills and strategies, they can better answer our children's needs. When we offer guidance

to a first-time mom, a dad returning from incarceration, or a divorcing couple, they're better prepared to show our children the way. And when we help early educators develop and hone their expertise, they have more to teach.

For more than four decades, Action for Children has been a champion of quality, affordable child care and early learning. Standing with parents and providers deepens our understanding of their needs, and reaffirms our core beliefs: that every child, regardless of background or financial status, deserves quality care and education, and every provider deserves respect and resources.

Thank you for taking a moment to read more about our programs and impact. We accomplished so much in Fiscal Year 2019 and there is much more to do for all of the children in Central Ohio. We're counting on your continued support to make the most of every child's first 2,000 days.

Sincerely,

Eric J. Karolak, Ph.D. CAE
Chief Executive Officer



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OUR MISSION

To transform the lives of children by supporting, empowering, and advocating for the adults who make the biggest impact on children's lives—their parents, caregivers and teachers.

OUR VISION

All children, nurtured by strong families and vibrant communities, have opportunities for quality early learning experiences that prepare them for success in school and life.

OUR CORE VALUES

Advocacy

We commit to lead the charge for increasing access to quality early childhood experiences, achieving outcomes that provide the strongest foundation for all members of our community. We cannot do this alone, and the best advocates are the adults who care for and educate our children: their parents, other caregivers, and early childhood practitioners. We will use our influence directly, and we will work to activate the power of other networks to fuel efforts to address this urgent need.

Collaboration

Our children deserve a community that works together. We can foster and sustain partnerships among child care and early learning providers, and within the wider nonprofit ecosystem and our community as a whole. We know that we are stronger when we partner with others to embrace a shared commitment toward enriching the lives of children, caregivers and families.

Adaptability

The needs of the community will change. We must be responsive to these changes, drawing on our considerable collective expertise. To be successful today, and in the future, we must be continuous learners and encourage creativity and new ways of problem-solving.

Respect and Compassion

We believe that achieving results is essential and the way in which we go about doing so is equally important. We take a strengths-based approach in our interactions, meeting others where they are and understanding together how to move forward. Ours will be a conscious effort to be inclusive of and to support the rich diversity of our community.

WHERE WE WORK

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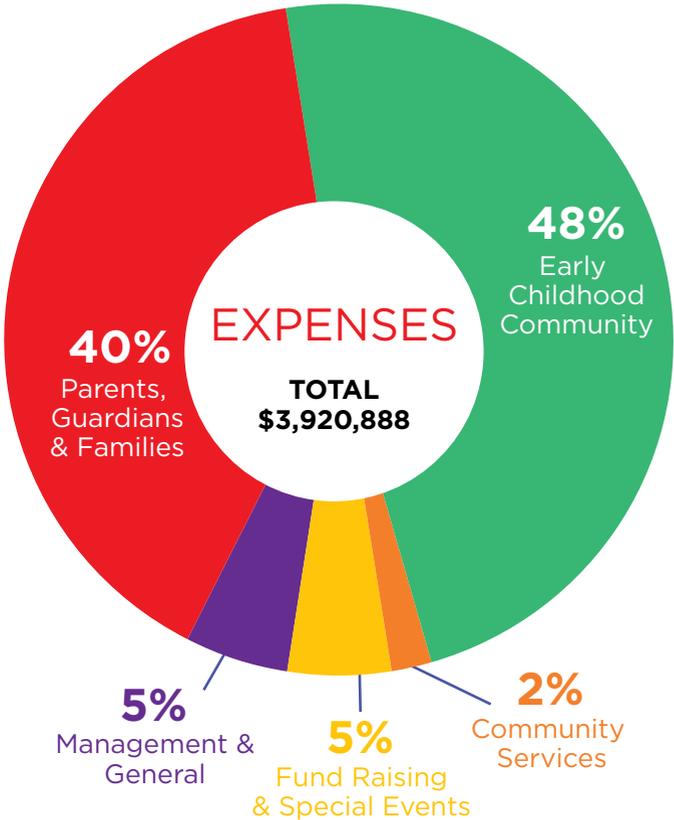
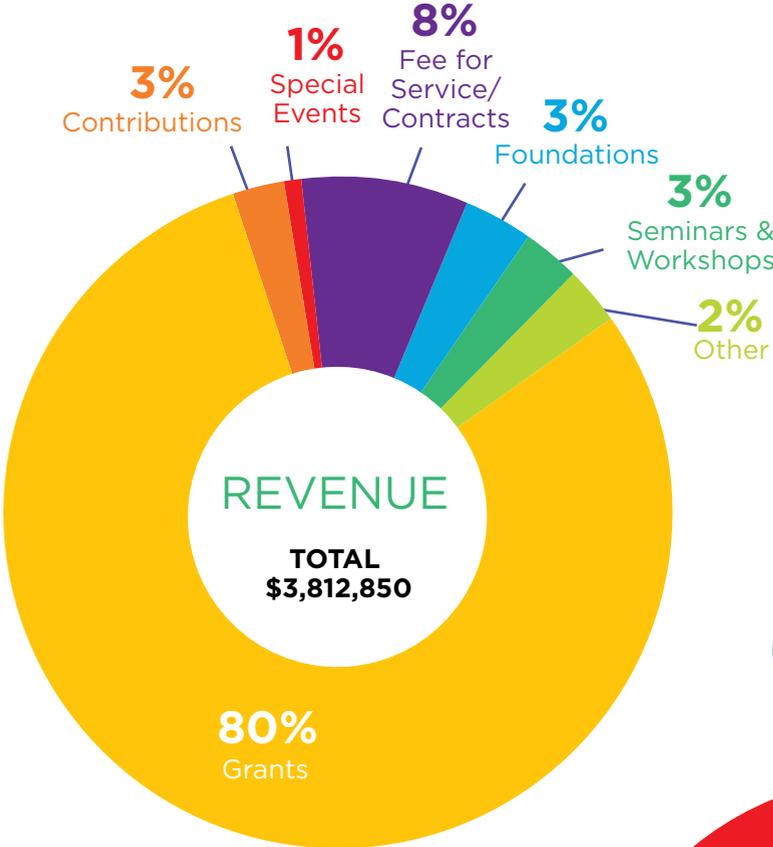
www.actionforchildren.org

Serving Delaware, Fairfield,
Franklin, Knox, Licking,
Madison, Marion, Morrow,
Pickaway, and Union Counties



FACTS & FIGURES

Financial information for the period beginning in July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019 (Fiscal Year 2019).



NUMBERS SERVED

BY PROGRAM AND OUTCOMES

Early Child Care Initiatives

Child and Adult Care Food Program

588,446

meals and snacks served

Professional development, instruction and assistance

7,522

participants served

Child Development Associate Credential Program

87

professionals completed course

Parenting and Family Services

SPARK

1,080

in-home visits

Parent Coaching Sessions

1,628

parents/guardians served

The Art of Positive Parenting Workshops

3,205

parents/guardians served

Parents Assisted in Finding Quality Care

3,689

families served



SUTQ 1-Star Award Winner Kishia Hale with a few of her students

Step Up To Quality

These numbers reflect July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

93%

of providers received their star-rating through our services

592

programs served

1,863

site visits

80

attendees to SUTQ events

www.actionforchildren.org/SUTQ

EARLY CHILD CARE INITIATIVES

Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA):

On average, more than two-third of families have all parents working, and children are in child care for more than 35 hours per week. Yet, not all families can assure their children have access to nutritious snacks and meals. Much like the school lunch program, CACFP helps child care providers in Central Ohio receive annual nutrition training and reimbursement for nutritious meals and snacks - nearly 600,000 this year - every day in their licensed home-based provider setting.

Family Child Care Services: Family Child Care providers are licensed to provide child care in their homes. These providers are often challenged to connect with a professional network as they care and educate groups of up to six children at one time within their homes. Our services help Family Child Care providers in Franklin County become licensed, maintain mandatory training requirements,

connect with other providers, improve the quality of their programming and meet state quality-rating requirements.

Child Development Associate (CDA): Since our inception, AFC has prioritized supporting the early childhood workforce. One aspect of our training and professional development services is preparing Central Ohio early learning educators to earn a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™. The CDA is the national para-professional credential in early childhood education, and is an important means of strengthening and professionalizing the early childhood workforce. In acquiring a CDA credential, participants invest significant time and effort to become more skilled in their interactions with children, and thus enhance the overall quality of their program. AFC was one of the first training organizations in Ohio to be recognized as a Gold Standard provider of CDA preparation.

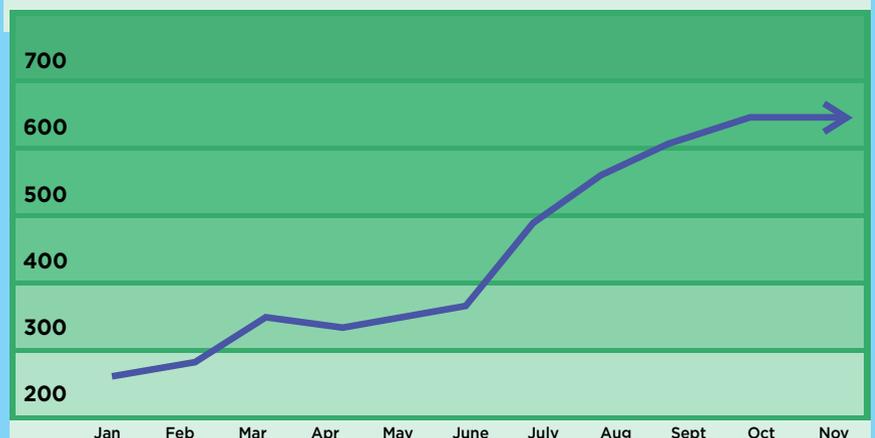
2019 PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Step Up To Quality: The availability and quality of child care varies widely in Central Ohio. The Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) rating system creates a continuous quality improvement path for providers. SUTQ star-rated programs have demonstrated a commitment to meet stronger standards for staff, environments and curricula, which have been validated to improve children's Kindergarten readiness. The State of Ohio has mandated that providers with children enrolled in Ohio's Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) program must become star-rated by July 1, 2020. Our Technical Assistance Coaches help child care programs obtain, maintain, and/or increase their star-ratings through free on-site coaching, continuing education and professional development training, and by hosting events to encourage community support.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

In January 2019, just 32% of child care providers were quality-rated in the Central Ohio region (including Franklin, Delaware, Fairfield, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union counties). Through the hard work of our Step Up To Quality team and growing community support, that number doubled by July. Going into 2020, 72% of the programs in the region have a Step Up To Quality rating and we are working round-the-clock to make sure every child has quality care by July 1, 2020. Follow along on our SUTQ journey by visiting www.actionforchildren.org/SUTQ

CENTRAL OHIO PROVIDERS WITH A STAR-RATING



PARENTING & FAMILY SERVICES



Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids (SPARK):

At Action for Children, we believe parents are a child's first and best teacher. SPARK is a family-focused intervention program that collaborates with parents to help them prepare their children, ages 3-4 years old, for school by building reading, language and social skills to create a seamless transition into school. While 33% of children entering the program were below average in their skills readiness, post screening showed that 85% of children were average or above average at the end of the SPARK program year.

The Art of Positive Parenting (TAPP):

Children don't come with a user manual and many parents in Central Ohio feel underprepared to give their children what they need. Seeking coaching and advice, parents have been coming to AFC for nearly 20 years to learn new knowledge and skills that help them create a healthy, mutually respectful family life for children. TAPP provides three- and six-week interactive education classes designed to help parents/guardians listen to children's problems, effectively engage children's cooperation, encourage responsibility, and manage stress.

Positive Parenting Program (Triple P): Raising children isn't always easy and many parents feel they've run out of ways to engage their children. The Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) gives parents fresh new ideas and a chance to meet other parents. We provide simple, practical strategies parents can adapt to suit their family's values, beliefs and needs.

Putting the Children First: Navigating divorce, dissolution and legal separation can be stressful for parents and children. The Putting the Children First program understands that each situation is unique and helps parents in Franklin County (and serves non-Franklin County parents via the online course) by giving them new knowledge and skills that can help them co-parent successfully and help children feel secure during the separation process.

Mothers Matter: Mothers play a special role in their children's lives. But, some mothers in Central Ohio have extra circumstances that make it challenging to give their children the best. Our Mothers Matter program serves mothers who meet one or more of the following criteria: teen mothers,

single/divorced/separated mothers, noncustodial mothers, living in poverty, minority population, involved with the courts, child welfare, or penal system. These classes are also open to any mother interested in parenting skills enrichment. In this program, mothers gain skills and knowledge that lead to healthy relationships with their children and co-parents and teach them new ways of communicating that can strengthen those bonds.

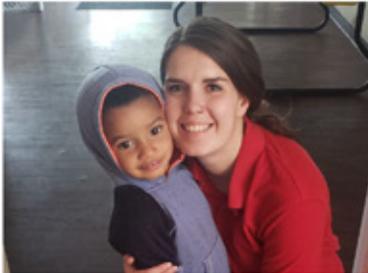
Father Factor: When dads are under engaged, their children miss out on a special relationship. In our Father Factor program, we recognize the unique qualities, strengths and talents of fathers that make them critical to their child's healthy growth and development. The classes support fathers who meet any of the following criteria: are unengaged or under engaged with their children, are living in poverty, are unemployed or underemployed, have child custody/visitation or support issues and/or involved with the courts, are incarcerated fathers, or are fathers who desire to enhance their parenting skills.

The Journey: Our fatherhood programming meets dads where they are so they can form meaningful relationships with their children. In The Journey, we help fathers in a group setting where they gain hands-on parenting skills and co-parenting strategies. Fathers also attend job-readiness classes and receive workforce development services to help them find and keep stable jobs. The Journey is a collaborative program with Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency, Jewish Family Services and Goodwill Columbus.

Accessing Quality Child Care: Our Information and Referral team helps families in Central Ohio locate the best child care and early education programs for their children by increasing their knowledge of quality indicators, financial assistance, and other resources. AFC maintains a database of more than 1,600 regulated child care and early education programs in Central Ohio, including nonprofit and for-profit child care centers, family child care homes, preschool programs, Head Start programs, and school age programs. Families may also use our online search tool to access the database. In addition to helping families find child care, we also provide referral services for Early Intervention programs for children with development delays and Home Visiting for new and expecting mothers.

Attendees enjoying SPARK Family Night

SHINING STARS IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY



Donyette Dunlap is the proud owner of two child care locations, Daystarz Childcare in Grove City and another location in Canal Winchester and she is determined the children in her centers experience the best quality care, no matter their background.

Between her two centers, more than 90 percent of her children receive publicly funded child care (PFCC). So, when she first heard about Step Up To Quality—Ohio's 5-star rating system that recognizes and promotes quality learning and development programs—and the July 1, 2020 deadline to get a star rating, she knew she needed to make a decision about her businesses: go through the SUTQ process and earn her stars, or stop serving children with PFCC.

For Donyette, the decision was clear; she knew she needed to earn her stars.

"I know my purpose is to serve my community and I do that by caring for children," she said. "When you serve children, you serve the entire family. By offering quality care to families, who may not be able to afford it otherwise, I am helping young mothers and fathers keep their jobs, I'm giving them the peace of mind that their children are going to succeed in school, and I'm uplifting my entire community by being a much needed resource."



The SUTQ process requires a lot of time, but Donyette utilized Action for Children's SUTQ Coordinator, Brittany Jackson, to make the process easier and less confusing. Brittany helped Donyette stay organized as they worked step-by-step to make sure she understood the requirements and had all the paperwork filled out correctly and completely. Brittany, like all of our Technical Assistance Coaches, also supported Donyette by visiting her on-site for consultation and mock quality reviews, and by making herself available outside of business hours.

"The best thing I learned is that if you have what it takes to open a child care center, you can do Step Up To Quality," Donyette said. "You just have to know your purpose."



Daystarz teachers and students

With Action for Children's help, Donyette got her 1-Star SUTQ rating for both her centers and is well on her way to earning all 5 stars. This means the children in her centers' care not only have a quality learning environment but the reassurance that her program will be able to continue to serve all families in her community for years to come.

It's providers like Donyette that exemplify the passion and drive of Central Ohio's providers, and why we're proud to be a trusted resource for them—offering professional development training, quality coaching, and pre-licensing assistance and a nutrition program for family child care providers.

To learn more about our work with providers, go to www.actionforchildren.org/professionals-providers



A **FATHER** EMPOWERED TO BE THE BEST DAD HE CAN BE



Tavon Morris wanted to be more engaged in his son's life. He hadn't seen his son, Graysen, in over five weeks and didn't know how to get rights to see him. Then he began attending our Father Factor program and it changed his life.

"I thought it was just going to be about how to change diapers," Tavon said. "I wasn't expecting to learn so much."

In the program, Tavon met other dads who were in similar situations. Hearing their experiences helped Tavon feel less alone and provided him with a more positive outlook on fatherhood. Now, because of the program, Tavon is able to remain calm when he gets frustrated with co-parenting and he has the skills to reinforce his desire to have an equal share in raising his son.

"I want to be the best dad I can be," Tavon said. "I didn't have a dad growing up and I want to give him what I didn't have."



Tavon has taught Graysen how to crawl and walk and is currently working on teaching him how to go up and down the stairs and clean up after himself. He is proud of his son's accomplishments and is excited that he has the chance to teach him so many important things, which he admits, he didn't think was possible.

"When I went to court to get rights to see my son, I didn't have a lawyer and I didn't know how to navigate the system. I felt like I was at a disadvantage, it wasn't fair."



Father Factor Program Manager Ashiko Hudson wrote a recommendation letter for Tavon for the courts and reviewed the paperwork with him. With Ashiko's help, Tavon was able to regain partial custody and now sees his son regularly. He hopes that with time, he can fully share custody of his son one day.

Tavon Morris with his son Graysen

"Ashiko has helped me out a lot," said Tavon. "Even now that I'm done with the program, I still call him and ask for advice and wisdom."

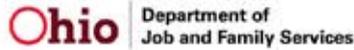
We are overjoyed to see Tavon and Graysen reunited and it's stories like theirs that motivate us to provide all the resources we can to empower parents.

When parents have what they need—whether it's skills training, finding quality child care, support when working with the courts, or a sense of community and mentorship—they are able to raise healthy, happy children, and that benefits our entire community and the future of Central Ohio.

To learn more about our work with parents, go to www.actionforchildren.org/parents

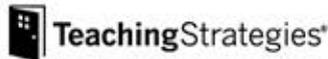


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