

Action for Children



Yesterday, Governor DeWine signed Ohio's two-year state budget into law. It touches on all aspects of state government and includes provisions affecting child care and early learning.

The final budget:

- Increases family income eligibility for Publicly Funded Child Care from 130% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 142% FPL (150% FPL for families of children with special needs)
- Restores Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) requirements that providers accepting Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) subsidies be star-rated
- Eliminates the requirement that all child care centers with PFCC must be at least three-star rated by 2025
- Establishes a study committee to evaluate PFCC and SUTQ, specifically issues of access, eligibility, reimbursement rates, funding and sustainability, as well as to explore an alternative criteria to 1-star rating for programs "with a low census of children receiving PFCC"
- Requires ODJFS to use additional federal resources for stabilizing and sustaining the child care system, improving workforce recruitment and retention, and increasing access for families
- Adds \$2 million to Help Me Grow home visiting, Ohio's evidence-based parent support program

Thank you! By taking action to support quality child care and early learning for all, the Senate's bid to dismantle Step Up To Quality – and reverse the hard work of so many providers and advocates over the last decade – was defeated in just a few short weeks.

We did this together. Action for Children, along with the other local Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies around the state and every statewide early childhood organization, united in a campaign guided by Groundwork Ohio. A [press conference](#), [guest columns](#), numerous letters to the editor and countless meetings with elected officials followed. Together, you and other **Ohioans sent more than 17,500 messages** to say that eliminating quality in child care is a harmful mistake for children, families, and our economy.

We're not out of the woods yet. Sadly, there are still legislators who think of child care as little more than babysitting, and would require providers to meet only the minimum health and safety standards. They're likely to continue the effort to cut child care spending by throwing away SUTQ. The new study committee presents an opportunity to engage and educate them about what quality child care is, why it's important, and that it can't be done on the cheap.

As we move forward, it is important that each of us stays alert and continues to engage in the conversations and policy decisions that determine the future of our children. It's never too late or too early.

Here are just a few ways you can continue to stay engaged right now.

- [Update your newsletter subscription](#) to include Action for Children's advocacy emails. You can also follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#) to receive updates.
- Attend Groundwork's upcoming Center for Family Voice Event: Amplifying Family Voice to Advance Equitable Outcomes for Young Children on **Wednesday, July 7th from 10:00am-11:00am**. [RSVP HERE](#)
- [Make a donation](#) to support our advocacy efforts, so we can continue to help everyone Take Action to increase access to affordable quality child care.
- Share this with your network and encourage them to join you in the cause to ensure all children have access to quality early learning opportunities that prepare them for success in school and beyond.

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