



Solving for child care

**The solution to Ohio's
child care crisis: Innovative
initiatives, consistent
supports, and you.**

Action for Children



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Action for Children is focused on the everyday heroes who most influence our children's early growth.

Parents and caregivers, child care providers, and educators—they carry the responsibility for ensuring that Ohio's children get the best start in life.

In their first 2,000 days, children learn to learn, to process emotions, and to socialize. It's critical for the adults who care for them to provide nurturing environments, enriching experiences, and high-quality education during this time.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we all saw just how essential child care is for families. Without access to affordable, quality child care, children's learning is disrupted and parents face greater obstacles in their own work and learning. We also saw that delivering child care is complex, and especially during an extended emergency.

At Action for Children, we're determined to ensure that quality child care is accessible and affordable, every day, no matter what is happening in the world.

We support those who support our children; our goal is to help adults be the best parents and caregivers, child care providers, and educators they can be. We enable the success of those who prepare our children for success.

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.



Calling on decades of experience, data, and research, Action for Children is taking bold steps to bolster Central Ohio's child care landscape:

- 1.** We're executing **INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES** designed to benefit parents and caregivers, child care providers, and other educators, helping them expand their abilities and move toward a stronger, smarter future with greater security.
- 2.** We're continuing to provide **CONSISTENT SUPPORT** to the adults who are most essential to the growth of Central Ohio's youngest citizens. Our services include tools, guidance, and resources to help these adults develop personally and professionally, and build on success.

To help the heroes who help our children thrive, Action for Children needs you. It takes a community effort to raise happy, healthy children. With your contribution, we can do just that.

In an average year in central Ohio, Action for Children supports:

- **7 counties in the central Ohio Service District Area**
- **2,000+ parents and guardians through parenting workshops that impact 4,700+ children**
- **Approximately 7,800 early childhood professionals with coaching and on-going technical assistance**
- **1,200 child care programs to meet licensing, Step Up To Quality, and professional development requirements.**

**Data from
July 1, 2020-
June 30, 2021*



INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES

As the leading Central Ohio resource for the adults who most impact our children, Action for Children has spent decades advocating for and addressing the issues parents and caregivers, child care providers, and educators confront regularly. Action for Children continues to lead the charge, to be there for our child care heroes through any—and every—challenge.

Since the pandemic hit, child care providers lost staff, clients, and income; shouldered rigorous safety measures and higher risks and costs; and many had no alternative but to shut down for good. Parents—mostly women—were forced to leave their jobs to care for children full-time. Action for Children is working to confront the child care crisis with the full weight of our expertise and experience. In addition to the consistent supports we already offer, we are undertaking four bold initiatives that will close the gaps in the existing child care landscape and advance it for the future.

Initiative 1: We will make the balancing act of raising young children easier by giving parents and caregivers access to tools, resources, and supports. We will extend our outreach efforts to help educate more parents about the importance of the earliest days in their children's lives. We'll offer easy-to-implement advice for enhancing common activities with learning experiences. And we'll help parents understand how to navigate processes and steps for transitioning their children to kindergarten, opening the path to education for all.

Initiative 2: We will help child care providers hone their business skills, so they have the knowledge to run efficient, profitable, and stable enterprises. This initiative is designed to foster savvy owners, managers, and administrators through training, small-group cohorts, and expert coaching. By partnering with providers, Action for Children mitigates the pressures of trying to run a business independently. Providers can turn to us as a trusted resource to learn how to maintain their child care facility at a level that allows them to earn, save, and compensate employees well; and weather operational challenges like those the pandemic caused. Most importantly, when providers have the business side of their operations running smoothly, they have more time to focus on delivering high-quality services, retaining valuable staff members, and increasing enrollment.

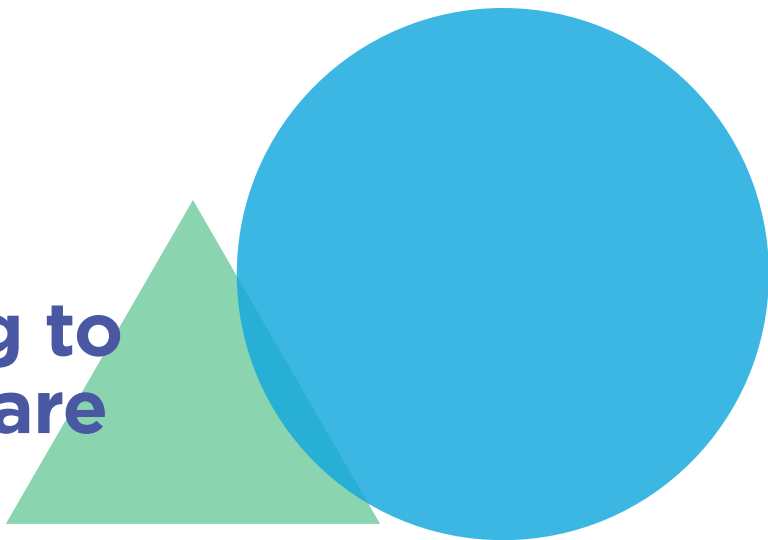
Initiative 3: We will expand our coaching program to provide early learning educators with the latest training and information, so they're always at the forefront of the field. Through coaching, educators will learn research-based practices and approaches that expand the tools they can use to inspire and enrich young minds. Our coaching program takes place in the classroom, making it immediate and convenient for educators, and focuses on specific issues—such as behavior management, math, classroom organization, and more—customized to the children and programs with which educators work. As coaching progresses, we will help them refine their skills with assessments, building their professional capabilities at every stage.

Initiative 4: We will launch a tool that tracks child care in our seven-county service area, so our community can understand current conditions in the early learning landscape. Action for Children has a rich and complex set of administrative, survey, and caseload data, already used by families, employers, and civic leaders to stay up to date and guide child care decisions. Our index will build on our existing assets by collecting extensive data on enrollment, employment, pricing, and financial status, allowing us to develop better insights, anticipate trends, and identify local child care needs. Likewise, the index will deepen the level of statistically significant information we can share with the legislators, nonprofit partners, civic leaders, and advocates who make policy and practical decisions that affect our children.

Each of these bold initiatives brings us closer to a child care system in which every parent, caregiver, provider, and educator has the support, resources, and tools they need to create high-quality early learning experiences.

These new initiatives are additions to Action for Children's services. While we've tested that these initiatives yield positive results in special projects with national partners such as MDRC, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, now is the time to fully implement these solutions to scale right here in Central Ohio. That means we need your contributions to fund and launch them. Just as we undertake these plans to protect and evolve child care for our community, it will take the combined effort of our community to advance our efforts.

Join Action for Children and invest in innovation. Invest in the opportunity to help every child in Ohio thrive.



Responding to the Child Care Crisis

We have adapted our services and extended our outreach, quickly responding to changing circumstances and emerging issues in our community.

Action for Children prioritized keeping providers up to date and in business. From the onset of the pandemic, we helped programs navigate state mandates and reopen. And we addressed the many complications COVID-19 posed, compiling useful information and guidance about maintaining safety and hygiene, communicating with parents, obtaining vaccines, and receiving Hero Pay and other relief funding.

Action for Children insisted that child care be a priority in the state's testing and vaccination plans during the pandemic. We rallied our community to ask

Congress for dedicated flexible funding to keep child care providers open and to fuel their recovery. When local government developed plans in 2020 and again in 2021 to use relief funding to address child care, it turned to Action for Children for help because of our authentic relationships with providers, families, and our data.

Action for Children has always kept reliable data on programming, but the pandemic called for more immediate information about the community and the challenges facing child care programs and the families and businesses that

rely on them. We launched an ongoing statistically reliable survey of Central Ohio providers — the only one of its kind in Ohio — to understand current conditions in local child care. The critical data and qualitative feedback we received then informed our recommendations to policy and decision makers. We also used this information to refine our services, as well as to drive advocacy and tools to best support child care programs in crisis, which resulted in more than \$30 million in local investment since the July 2020.



CONSISTENT SUPPORTS

Over the last five decades of Action for Children's work with parents, families, early childhood educators, and child care programs, we have seen first-hand that child care is essential. That's exactly why we will continue to offer consistent supports for all the adults who nurture, care for, and educate children. When these heroes have what they need, they have the ability to positively impact Ohio's youngest—and our entire community.



CONSISTENT SUPPORTS/ For Nurturing Parents and Caregivers

Action for Children regularly expands and improves our services for parents and caregivers, so that they can care for children in ways that are positive, responsive, effective, and enriching.

Action for Children began in 1972 as a Central Ohio nonprofit resource and referral agency to assist parents and caregivers with finding child care in our area. We continue to fulfill this important role so adults have greater access to high-quality, affordable child care and early learning programs that meet their needs and encourage their children's growth.

Over the years, we've extended our services to offer parents and caregivers a wide range of supports that help them nurture their children. Our advice, tools, and guidance are specific both to the parent—whether they're pregnant, a single mom or dad, or juggling work and child care—and to the child—whether they're an infant or transitioning into kindergarten, elementary and beyond.

Every day, Action for Children stands with parents and caregivers, offering them the resources they need to be their children's first and best teachers, including:

- Access to tools and resources to enhance at-home learning
- Access to child care scholarships
- Kindergarten-readiness programs and support services
- Home visitation programs to assist parents at every stage, from pregnancy through their children's school entry
- Tools and advice for choosing quality child care
- Workshops and group sessions to enrich parenting skills
- Classes specific to separated or divorced parents
- FatherUp programs that focus on the role fathers play in their children's lives
- Resources for parents working with legal or social services



FatherUp empowers dads to be the hero in their child's life story by helping them navigate barriers and unlock opportunities throughout each unique stage of their parenting journey.

Al-Subor's Father Up Story

"What you go through is not who you are. Wherever you start at, it's a building block. And that's what this program is."

Scan the QR code below to hear more from Al-Subor.





CONSISTENT SUPPORTS/ For Well-Equipped Child Care Providers and Educators

Action for Children believes that child care professionals deserve respect, recognition, and reward for their everyday efforts on behalf of Ohio's children. We equip these heroes to flourish not only as care providers and educators, but as business managers and skilled experts who should be amply celebrated and compensated for their work.

For child care providers and early learning educators, Action for Children acts as a coach, partner, and guide. Our ability to provide up-to-date information, subject-matter expertise, and challenging training enables professionals to create safer and more stimulating environments for the children in their care.

Action for Children serves providers and educators of all kinds and sizes, including those in school districts, child care facilities, and family child care homes. Because providers work with children from different age groups, neighborhoods, and with diverse needs, Action for Children tailors our support and services so they're simple for professionals in any situation or zip code to access and implement. With personalized assistance, providers and educators can focus on doing what they do best: caring for and inspiring Ohio's children.

By serving as a reliable resource and advocate for providers and educators, we help them pursue success in their day-to-day and long-term goals through:

- Tools and training for starting and managing a child care program
- Quality-improvement coaching to help providers elevate curriculum, assessment, and classroom instruction
- Professional development opportunities across a range of topics and formats
- A high-quality program, coaching, and scholarships leading to a national Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential
- Incentive payments for increased quality ratings and serving families during non-traditional hours
- Technical assistance and training to maintain and increase their Step Up To Quality star rating
- A bi-monthly forum for providers to learn from each other and guests about current issues that affect them most



“Action for Children helped me become a better professional by helping me become more knowledgeable in child development. I have the knowledge to create a curriculum and learning environment that builds the children’s knowledge and skills in the early learning domains.”

**– Nitoriya Goff, Owner of
The Color of Love Childcare Place**

**Scan the QR code below to hear
more from Tori .**





CONSISTENT SUPPORTS/ For Impactful Advocacy and Action

Central Ohio's children deserve a community that works together—aligned around common goals, informed about what's at stake, and passionate about making change. Through partnerships, research, and advocacy, Action for Children activates everyone with an interest in positively impacting our children's environments, experiences, and education.

As part of our commitment to continuous learning and innovative problem-solving, we respond to how systemic inequities affect the communities we serve, and issue policy papers to inform how we and other advocates can enhance the lives and learning of Ohio's youngest.



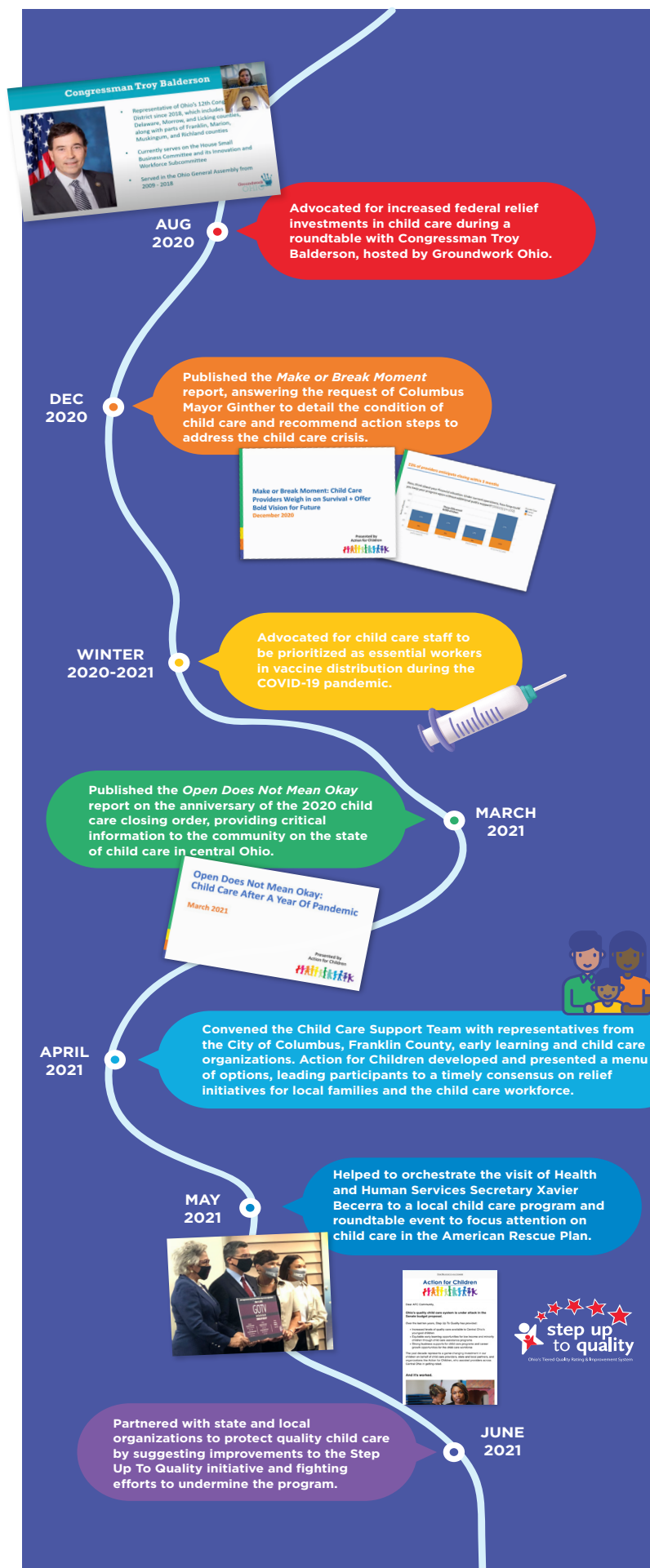
Advocacy Timeline

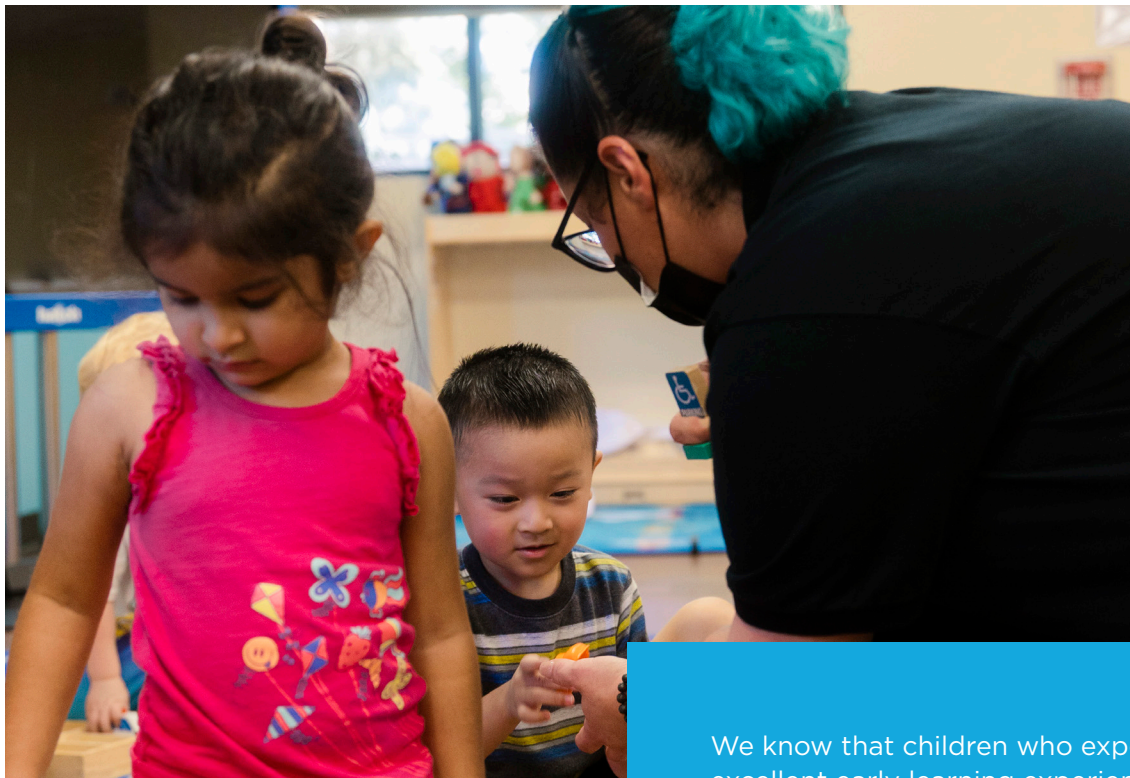
We listen carefully to the parents and professionals we serve in order to understand the factors that influence child care delivery: how racial, geographic, and income inequities can affect parents' access to quality care; how technical and training hurdles can impact providers; and how our education system can better support children's growth. Armed with this information, we use it to inform and influence the decisions of elected officials, policymakers, and other child advocates. Our data-driven approach reinforces the importance of access to affordable, quality child care and early learning—so all of Ohio's children have the opportunity for a strong start.

Likewise, we share our research with parents, caregivers, providers, and educators. We invite them to back policies that focus on finance reform, quality early learning environments, positive parenting, family child care provider supports, and worthy wages for the early childhood workforce.

To extend our knowledge and reach, Action for Children partners with other organizations both in Ohio and across the country to impact the child care system, women's ability to work and earn, and public funding for high-quality early childhood programming.

By expanding awareness and leading actions around issues that impact our children, we rally the community to ensure that Ohio's youngest receive the high-quality experiences they deserve.

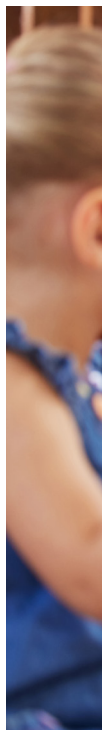




CONSISTENT SUPPORTS/ For Transformed Communities

Positive early childhood experiences foster happy, healthy, kindergarten-ready children. But the benefits don't stop there. High-quality care and education have the potential to transform our entire community.

We know that children who experience excellent early learning experiences with responsive, sensitive caregivers are more likely to be successful in school, college, and life. They are less likely to receive remedial education services, be involved with the court system, or drop out of school, and they are more likely to do well on achievement tests, maintain a job, and stay married. Benefits even appear to extend to the next generation. Yet we also know that all children don't start out with the same advantages. More than one in four children live in poverty, with even higher rates in Central Ohio's rural areas and among Black and brown children. By supporting quality child care and early education among under-resourced communities, Action for Children helps level the playing field in two ways: First, a person who completes college or a skilled trade school will be more likely to land a job that pays a better-than-living wage. In turn, their lifetime earning potential increases, allowing them to save and pass down wealth to their children—which, in turn, ends a cycle of intergenerational poverty.



Second, when parents can access and afford child care, they're better able to pursue their career. In fact, when child care is more available, more parents, particularly moms, stay in or re-enter the workforce. Whether they're providing for their family independently or along with a partner's income, parents who can pursue careers can also pursue improved quality of life and resources for their children.

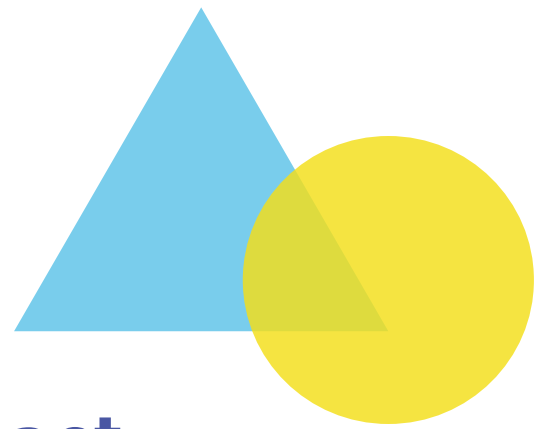
In these ways, Action for Children's work has the potential to address issues that go beyond child care and education, contributing to widespread social change for our entire area.



Spreading Equity

One of the consequences of Action for Children's work is its impact on the women who comprise the majority of child care providers. By serving businesses that are primarily owned and operated by women, 28% of whom are women of color, and fostering their professional well-being, we help them grow the financial success of their businesses. Supporting these professionals is how we break down wage inequities between women and men, and between people of color and their white counterparts.





Give today to impact the tomorrows for young children, and for us all.

Contribute to Innovative Initiatives and Consistent Supports:

When you invest in Action for Children, you participate in an organization that has the potential to impact every child in our community. You enable us to proactively address urgent issues in the child care landscape through innovative initiatives, and maintain steady services to all the adult heroes who enrich our children's early days.

Your generosity to Action for Children helps us:

- Empower parents and caregivers to prepare their children to thrive in school and in life, to create safe and nurturing homes, and to pursue careers that support their families.
- Offer training, guidance, and professional development for child care providers and other educators so they can provide children with high-quality early learning environments and instruction.
- Expand advocacy efforts to keep children's development a priority in policies, practices, and budget decisions.
- Most of all, your gift helps ensure that Ohio's youngest grow up secure and loved. Safe and stimulated. Curious and confident. Raising our children well requires a combined effort from us all. And the positive effects touch us all. It's a gift we give to our community today, and a legacy we create for tomorrow.

Support Action for Children by donating today. Because that's how we support the success of Ohio's children now and for the future.

To learn more and donate, please visit actionforchildren.org

Photo Credits: Asa Featherstone

We would also like to thank Kiddie Academy, Color of Love Child Care Place, and the many families who allowed us to be in their spaces and share their stories.





Action for Children



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