

Action for Children



# BUILDING A ROADMAP FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

ACTION FOR CHILDREN | FY21 IMPACT REPORT

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***Pictured on front cover:***  
TeShawn and his son, Soul. TeShawn is a FatherUp graduate who worked hard to strengthen his relationship with his son with the support of a dedicated team. Thanks to FatherUp at Action for Children, there are many more smiles and great moments to come!



# DEAR FRIENDS OF ACTION FOR CHILDREN



At Action for Children, we're all about seeing things through. This year was marked by challenges, but also by perseverance, milestones, accomplishments, and setting the foundation for stronger outcomes for families and children. Helping a new parent adjust to become their child's first and best teacher. Supporting an early childhood educator on her journey to professional excellence. Working with a child care program to meet increasingly challenging demands.

**We stick with our families and early childhood providers so they can create the best experiences for young children in central Ohio.**

After starting as a pilot in 2005, Ohio's child care quality rating and improvement system, *Step Up To Quality*, achieved a milestone: every child care and early learning program receiving public funding met the strenuous quality standards of the star-rating system in September 2020. In the midst of the pandemic, our team came alongside hundreds of child care programs, working closely with providers to create a plan for success.

Seeing things through also means innovating programming to meet emerging or persistent needs. This year we launched our fatherhood work as FatherUp, a unique fatherhood program. This work, built on a decade of experience, supports healthy father engagement and includes comprehensive case management services. Our efforts here paid off with national attention and a major grant investment in responsible fatherhood for central Ohio.

This year we also continued to address ongoing challenges facing child care, for providers and parents alike. We continued to source and supply vital personal protective equipment; to field questions and to help providers plan for reopening their closed programs; and to support parents struggling to find child care or manage the "new normal." Our unique provider surveys gave a clearer picture of the challenges facing child care throughout the pandemic. These data-driven reports elevated the priority of child care, drew media attention, and helped outline \$8 million in additional funding for child care programs in Franklin County.

Our impact — whether in the home of a newborn in Whitehall, on the quality of a home-based child care provider in Marysville, or on the professional development of a Linden child care educator and all the children she reaches — is all possible because of your enduring support. Thank you for seeing things through with us.

Sincerely,

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

## FISCAL YEAR 2021 BOARD

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*Business Strategy & Planning Manager, Retail Bank Risk, USAA*

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### MEMBERS

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Holly Stokes  
Ernie Sullivan  
Robert E. White II  
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Muriel Tice  
*Emeritus*

Dr. Eric Karolak  
*Chief Executive Officer*

*\*This list is inclusive of members who served on our board July 2020 - June 2021.*

## 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 and 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.



## IT TAKES ALL OF US

At Action for Children, we are committed to a culture of practice that encourages each person to be their best, authentic self. We value the evolving diversity of our community, and we affirm that our staff and board will represent the community we serve and be culturally responsive in their roles. Wherever we work, and whomever we work with, we will offer services in ways that recognize the rich assets and specific needs of all the clients and partners we serve. It takes all of us to ensure that all families are supported, and all children are prepared for success in school and beyond.

## WHERE WE WORK

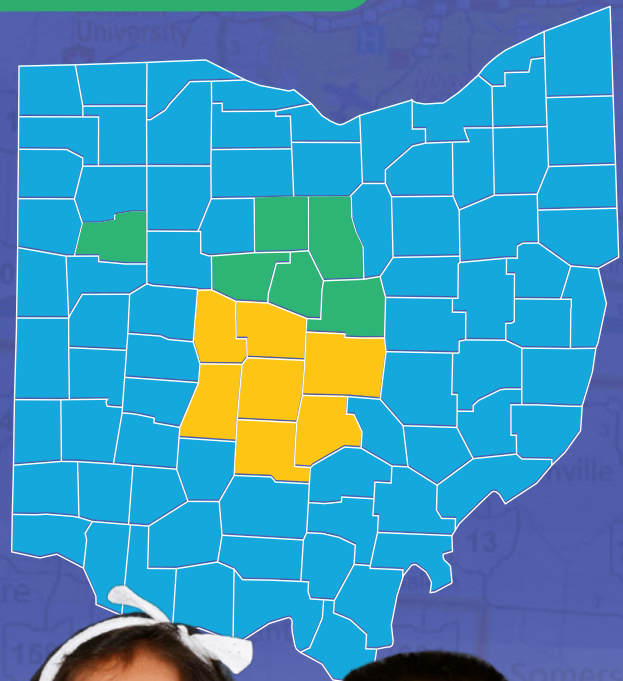
**Action for Children**  
78 Jefferson Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43215  
Phone: 614-224-0222  
[www.actionforchildren.org](http://www.actionforchildren.org)

**SERVING:**

**Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin,  
Licking, Madison, Pickaway,  
and Union counties.**

**PROGRAMS ALSO AVAILABLE IN:**

**Allen, Crawford, Knox, Marion,  
Morrow, and Richland counties.**



# NUMBERS SERVED BY PROGRAM AND OUTCOMES

*These numbers reflect July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021*

**4,213**

hours of technical assistance provided to ensure quality child care standards

**7,746**

providers attended ongoing technical assistance and coaching sessions

**443,273**

nutritious meals and snacks served to children through the Child and Adult Care Food Program

**2,161**

parents/guardians served through parenting workshops, impacting

**4,707**

children

**80**

professionals completed the Child Development Associate course

**677**

kindergarten readiness home visits

**257**

professional development trainings offered, serving

**2,102**

participants

**950**

programs assisted to meet professional development biennium requirements

**71**

families assisted in finding special needs care



**1,673**

families assisted in finding quality child care

**12,370**

parents and caregivers connected to Help Me Grow services, improving maternal and infant outcomes

**255**

parents/guardians empowered through case-management programs and support



# ADVOCACY

Click on the images to learn more!



**Congressman Troy Balderson**

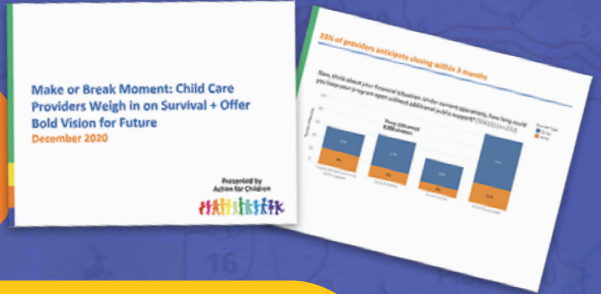
- Representative of Ohio's 12th Congressional District since 2018, which includes Delaware, Morrow, and Licking counties, along with parts of Franklin, Marion, Muskingum, and Richland counties
- Currently serves on the House Small Business Committee and its Innovation and Workforce Subcommittee
- Served in the Ohio General Assembly from 2009 - 2018

AUG 2020

Advocated for increased federal relief investments in child care during a roundtable with Congressman Troy Balderson, hosted by Groundwork Ohio.

DEC 2020

Published the *Make or Break Moment* report, answering the request of Columbus Mayor Ginter to detail the condition of child care and recommend action steps to address the child care crisis.



**Make or Break Moment: Child Care Providers Weigh In on Survival + Offer Bold Vision for Future**  
December 2020

Presented by Action for Children

23% of providers anticipate closing within 3 months

How will child care providers survive the current economic loss they face if their current programs have no federal support? COVID-19

Year	Providers	Programs
2019	1,000	1,000
2020	1,000	1,000
2021	1,000	1,000

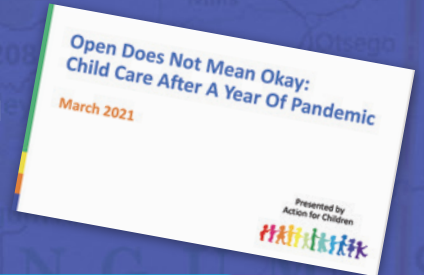
WINTER 2020-2021

Advocated for child care staff to be prioritized as essential workers in vaccine distribution during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Published the *Open Does Not Mean Okay* report on the anniversary of the 2020 child care closing order, providing critical information to the community on the state of child care in central Ohio.

MARCH 2021



**Open Does Not Mean Okay: Child Care After A Year Of Pandemic**  
March 2021

Presented by Action for Children

APRIL 2021

Convened the Child Care Support Team with representatives from the City of Columbus, Franklin County, early learning and child care organizations. Action for Children developed and presented a menu of options, leading participants to a timely consensus on relief initiatives for local families and the child care workforce.

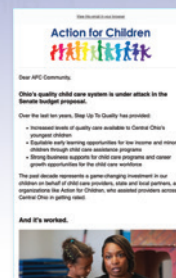


MAY 2021

Helped to orchestrate the visit of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra to a local child care program and roundtable event to focus attention on child care in the American Rescue Plan.

Partnered with state and local organizations to protect quality child care by suggesting improvements to the Step Up To Quality initiative and fighting efforts to undermine the program.

JUNE 2021



**Action for Children**

Dear AFC Community,


Ohio's quality child care system is under attack in the Senate budget proposal.

Over the last few years, Step Up To Quality has provided:

- Increased levels of quality care available to Central Ohio's youngest children
- Expanded early learning opportunities for low-income and minority children through state care assistance programs
- Strong financial supports for child care programs and career growth opportunities for the child care workforce

The past decade represents a game-changing investment in our children and their care providers, who are our partners, and organizations like Action for Children, who assisted providers across Central Ohio in getting ready.

And it's worked.




# PARENT & FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

SPARK (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids) completed over 650 virtual visits to support families and young children like Kautsar, and helped prepare them for a smooth transition to kindergarten.



**"SPARK has assisted us in transitioning Kautsar from a home learning environment to a school-like environment. SPARK also help[ed] us get to know what having a first child who would soon go to school looks like, what to expect, and what to prepare for."**

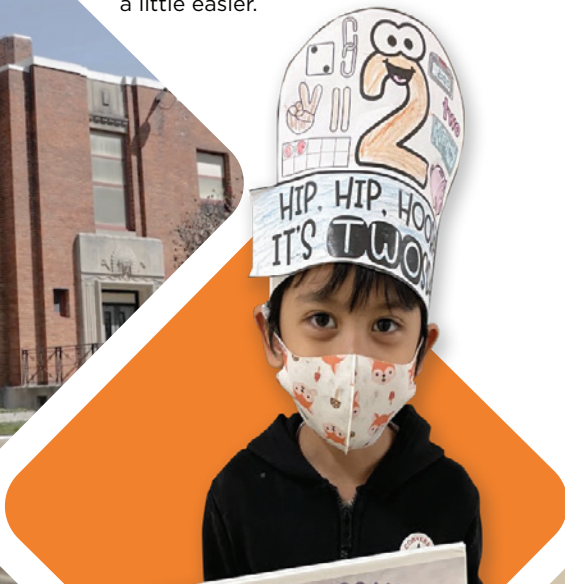
- Wahyu, Kautsar's dad

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, children like Kautsar were at risk of falling behind. Despite the best efforts of educators and families, many children had limited or no access the kind of social and education experiences they need to learn and thrive. When Kautsar's family first moved to the US from Indonesia, his parents wanted him to learn English and give him early exposure to "teachers" and new friends outside of his family circle. Adjusting to life in a new country is no small feat, and their hope was that enrolling Kautsar in SPARK would build their young son's confidence and help to make the transition a little easier.

SPARK turned out to be everything Kautsar's family had hoped for and more. "Having a SPARK teacher interact with him virtually was a blessing in the middle of the limited social interaction situation," his dad said. "SPARK has assisted us in transitioning Kautsar from a home learning environment to a school-like environment. SPARK also help[ed] us get to know what having a first child who would soon go to school looks like, what to expect, and what to prepare for."

While Kautsar's parents have always been involved in their son's learning, Kautsar's SPARK Parent Partner, Abby, provided them with monthly materials, activity ideas, support, and suggestions that enhanced their ability to be Kautsar's first and best teachers. SPARK also provided them with the practical knowledge and tools they needed to start Kautsar on his journey to school in a new country — including a school supply list and a graduation package that included many of the items Kautsar would need for his first day of kindergarten.

Since graduating from the SPARK program, Kautsar is thriving at his new school. He was deemed proficient in English by the ESL Department of Columbus City Schools, and his classroom teachers talk about how his reading and spelling abilities are well above his grade level! Kautsar has also gained a love for learning and has blossomed in his new environment. According to his parents, he likes reading all by himself and loves everything related to space and science. Kautsar is even a self-published author and illustrator of a book called *Sinking Dinosaurs*, which he has donated to the school's library and has been used by his teacher for reading times together in class. Thanks to SPARK and his parents' dedication, Kautsar is well on his way to success in school and beyond!







**Abby Alexander**  
SPARK Parent Partner

**Watch Kautsar's Impact Video above to hear more about his story!**

**Action for Children**



# PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT

Action for Children helped over 900 programs like Color of Love Child Care meet the 2020 Step Up To Quality deadline and become Star-Rated providers.



**"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."**

*- Miss Tori, Owner of 4-Star program, Color of Love Child Care Place*

When Ohio mandated all child care programs earn a Step Up To Quality rating in 2019, Miss Tori had never considered becoming rated. Her goal was simply to provide care and services "to the extent that [she] knew that [she] could." Before connecting with Action for Children, Miss Tori was running her Family Child Care program without support and describes operating out of a place of fear and concern for how others might criticize her program.

All of this changed when Miss Tori came to Action for Children for the first time to take a CPR training offered by the Professional Development program.

At Action for Children, she was connected

to Step Up To Quality, the Child Development Associate (CDA) program, the central Ohio Critical Child Care Network (COCCCN) — and most importantly, a strong support team of Technical Assistance coaches and staff. Through consistent coaching, Miss Tori grew to understand the value of Step Up To Quality, and was encouraged by her Technical Assistance coach to "Keep going for it, keep moving, don't stop!" In 2021, Miss Tori completed Action for Children's Gold Standard Child Development Associate cohort, further developing her skills and increasing the quality of care at her program.

Today, Miss Tori runs a Four-Star rated program, recently registered under the name Color of Love Childcare Place, and speaks passionately about why quality matters for young children. She is currently finishing her online degree at the University of Cincinnati and describes an incredible growth process in her goals and the way that she now runs her program.

With the help of Action for Children, Miss Tori has not only moved beyond a mindset of compliance to discover her capabilities, but she's also boosted her confidence, developed community partnerships to provide more resources for families and children, and stepped out of the fear of the unknown.

**"Action for Children is an asset to the world because the people they help go out into the world, not just the local community, and make positive differences."**





**Nitoriya "Ms. Tori" Goff**  
The Color of Love Childcare Place

**Watch Miss Tori's Impact Video above to hear more about her story!**



# PARENT & FAMILY SERVICES

**Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids:** At Action for Children, we believe parents are a child's first and best teachers. Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids (SPARK) is a family-focused intervention program that collaborates with parents to help them prepare their 3 and 4 year old children 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.

**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 1,500 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.

**Central Intake and Referral:** Action for Children serves as the single point of entry for Help Me Grow Home Visiting and Early Intervention services in central Ohio. Our Central Intake and Referral (CIR) team connects pregnant women, caregivers with new babies, and families with young children with developmental delays or disabilities with services that will provide tools and information to nurture the healthy growth of their child through their earliest years.

**The Art of Positive Parenting:** 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. The Art of Positive Parenting (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:** 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 (PTCF) understands that each situation is unique and helps parents in Franklin County (and parents in outlying counties 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: mothers who desire to enhance their parenting skills, 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.

**FatherUp:** Action for Children recognizes the unique qualities, strengths and talents of fathers that make them critical to their child's healthy growth and development. Our fatherhood programming offers hands-on parenting and co-parenting skills, and provides job-readiness classes and workforce development services to help fathers find and keep stable jobs.

We serve fathers who meet any of the following criteria: fathers who desire to enhance their parenting skills, 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, or are incarcerated fathers.



# EARLY CHILD CARE SERVICES

**Child and Adult Care Food Program:** 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, the Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP) helps Family Child Care providers in central Ohio receive annual nutrition training and reimbursement for nutritious meals and snacks. Action for Children reimbursed \$708,570 dollars for nearly 450,000 meals and snacks to family child care providers in 2021.

**Professional Development:** AFC provides a wide variety of Professional Development opportunities through classes, special training events, networking opportunities, study groups, and more. We offer required health and safety trainings, as well as specialized training for quality improvement on a range of topics, including language & literacy, classroom management, promoting child and teacher resilience, leadership development, equity & inclusion, relationships with families, and more. Action for Children filled more than 1,600 seats in virtual & in-person trainings and special events in 2021.

**Child Development Associate Program:** 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

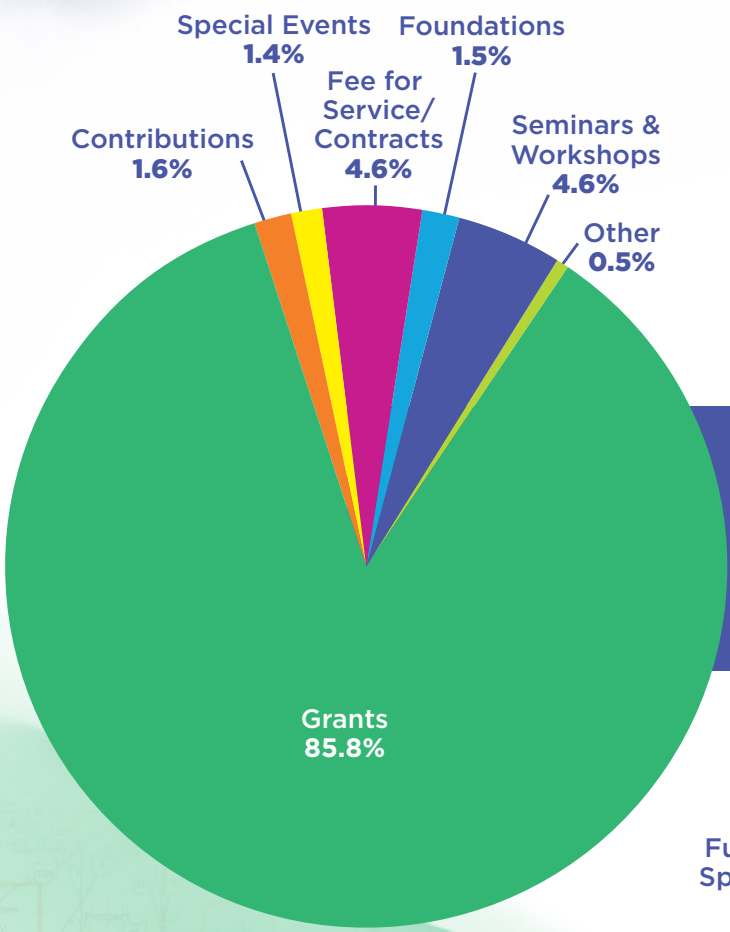
strengthening and professionalizing the early childhood workforce. In acquiring a CDA credential, participants invest significant time and effort to become more skilled in their interactions with children, and thus enhance the overall quality of their program. AFC was one of the first training organizations in Ohio to be recognized as a Gold Standard provider of CDA preparation.

**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 for and educate small groups of children within their homes. Our services help Family Child Care providers in Franklin County and surrounding counties become licensed, maintain mandatory training requirements, connect with other providers, improve the quality of their programming and meet state quality-rating requirements.

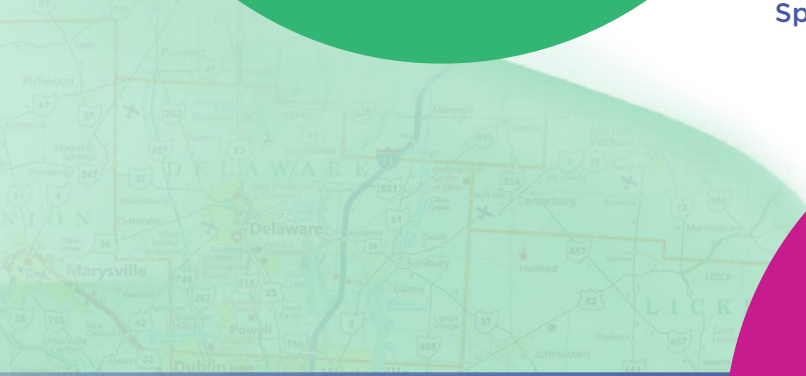
**Step Up To Quality:** The availability and quality of child care varies widely in central Ohio. The Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) rating system creates a continuous quality improvement path for providers. SUTQ star-rated programs have demonstrated a commitment to meet stronger standards for staff, environments and curricula, which have been validated to improve children's Kindergarten readiness. Our Technical Assistance coaches help child care programs obtain, maintain, and increase their star-ratings through free on-site and virtual coaching, continuing education and professional development training, and by hosting events to encourage community support.



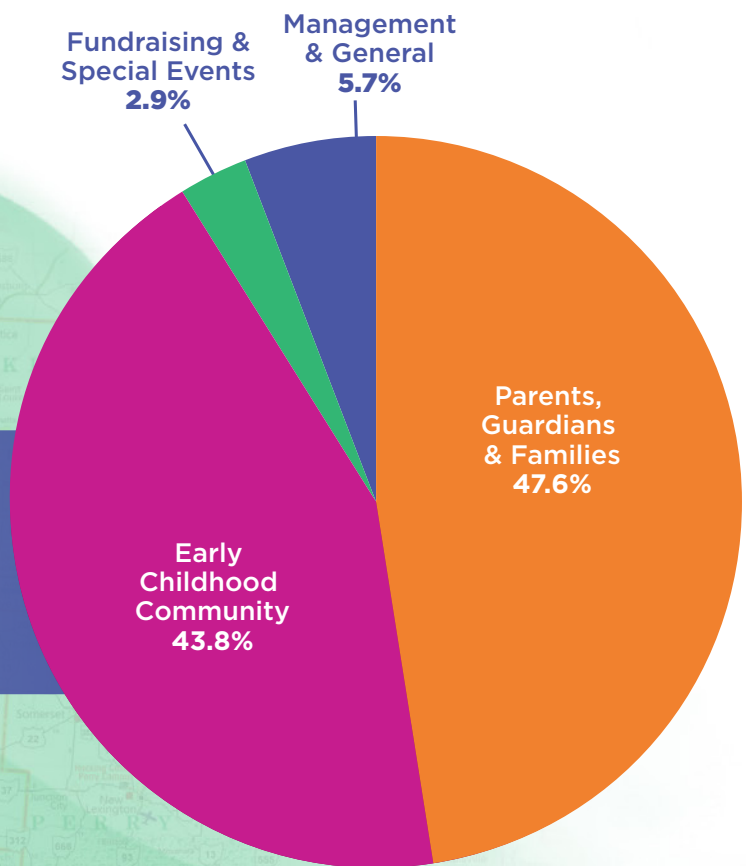
# FACTS & FIGURES



**REVENUE  
TOTAL  
\$4,306,977**



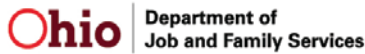
**EXPENSES  
TOTAL  
\$4,250,893**



*Fiscal Year 2021 (July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021)*

# THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR DONORS WHO HELP TO MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE.

## FUNDING PARTNERS



Harry C. Moores Foundation





Continue this roadtrip into Fiscal Year 2022 as we celebrate our 50th anniversary year!



**Action for Children**



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