



JOHN R. KASICH
GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

MAKING THE YOUNGEST OHIOANS A PRIORITY

The Kasich Administration Set Ambitious Goals to Strengthen Early Childhood Care and Education

Knowing that a child's earliest years are critical to their future wellbeing, Governor John R. Kasich made it a priority to improve and expand Ohio's early childhood programs. His administration has consistently supported resources for early childhood programs across Ohio; expanding preschool opportunities for children who are economically disadvantaged, assisting families and reducing employment barriers by expanding eligibility for publicly funded child care, and incentivizing providers to be at the highest levels of quality. Administration programs worked to increase access to high-quality settings for Ohio's most vulnerable children, while serving them in a safe and healthy environment.

- **Increased Funding for High Quality Preschool Opportunities:** Since 2011, Ohio has invested millions of dollars in new resources to reward quality pre-school options for Ohio children. Gov. Kasich doubled the number of preschool opportunities in his first term for economically disadvantaged children by expanding the program from 5,700 to 11,090 children. Today, that number has grown to over 18,000 children served.
- **Improving the Quality of Early Childcare Services:** Based on national research identifying standards that lead to improved outcomes for children, the State of Ohio implemented a new quality rating system. As part of these enhancements, children who attend quality-rated childcare facilities, have access to at least 12.5 hours of educational instruction each week, which aligns childcare standards with preschool education standards. Providers are given weekly incentive payments as well as other support resources to encourage them to continue to improve quality for Ohio's children.
- **New Behavioral Health Resources for Young Children:** The impact of poverty and trauma on young children can have a lasting effect on their emotional and academic wellbeing. To help address these issues, Ohio has invested funds to make early childhood mental health counselors available to children, teachers and early childcare staff; create a hotline for acute problems; and made an early childhood counselor available for site visits within 48 hours of a request to conduct observations, train staff or develop support plans for children in need.
- **Removing Barriers to Moving Up:** The lack of access to affordable, quality childcare has been one of the top employment barriers challenging low-income parents, leaving many families below 100 percent of the federal poverty level unable to afford the current copays for childcare and thus keeping them from getting a job. The state allocated funding to cover the copays for families earning less than 100 percent of the federal poverty level making it easier for low-income families to get childcare while they go to work.
- **Helping Families and Stabilizing Providers:** To provide consistency for children and reduce the turnover of childcare providers, the Kasich Administration updated state policies to allow families to receive an additional 13 weeks of

childcare after they have lost their qualifying activity to assist them with job search. Further, the Administration reduced provider risk by allowing providers to be paid for services while eligibility is being determined, even if the applicant is denied, so long as the family submitted a complete application.

- **Ending the Childcare "Cliff."** The sudden loss of subsidized childcare if a parent's or family's income exceeds 200 percent of the federal poverty level (approximately \$3,400 a month for a family of three) prevented some parents from taking a better-paying job and moving up the economic ladder. The Kasich Administration softened this barrier to economic advancement by allowing families to keep subsidized child care on a gradually reduced scale as their earning increase, up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level (approximately \$5,200 a month for a family of three). The Administration also raised initial eligibility of the program from 125 percent of the federal poverty level to 130 percent, aligning with other support services programs.
- **Using Technology to Support Teachers and Enhance Classroom Learning:** The Early Learning Portal was developed for parents and educators of children ages three through five, and provides websites and apps that are linked back to Ohio's early learning and development standards to help our youngest learners prepare for school and their futures. Further, a pilot has been implemented with early childhood providers to better understand how technology can enhance and support teacher instruction.



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