

Investing in Ohio's Children and Families

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine has committed his career to protecting Ohio's children and families. As Governor, he wants to create an Ohio that works for all Ohio families, especially those most in need.

Through no fault of their own, too many young Ohioans reach adulthood without the tools to be self-sufficient, the skills to get a good-paying job, or the opportunity to seek better education. Tragically, many of these children started behind and stayed behind. Just 41 percent of Ohio children begin kindergarten with the skills they need to be successful in school, and only 44 percent of Ohioans have a post-secondary certification or degree.

Brain science is clear that the most important time to invest in a child's life is in their first 1,000 days. These early days create the foundation for a strong future and demonstrate a significant return on investment both for the child and the state.

Ohio's operating budget supports Governor DeWine's priority of protecting Ohio's children and families by:

Promoting home visiting programs to give children the best possible start in life. Home visiting is proven to help lower infant mortality rates, increase kindergarten readiness, and improve parenting skills. Ohio's operating budget invests an additional \$20 million in FY 2021, bringing the total state funding for evidence-based home visiting to nearly \$70 million over the biennium. For every dollar invested in home visiting programs, there are up to six dollars in return.

Providing more children with early intervention programs through the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. Through an additional \$24.4 million investment over the biennium, Ohio will expand eligibility to provide more children with Early Intervention services and care coordination. Children – including those with toxic lead exposure and children born with neonatal abstinence syndrome – will now have access to the services and supports they need to grow into strong adults.

Making more of Ohio's homes lead-safe for children and families through an investment of \$25 million over the biennium. It is wrong that in 2019, there are still children whose opportunities are stifled because they live in homes where they are exposed to lead paint. The budget includes annual investments of more than \$4.8 million to advertise lead-free homes to families, abate, and remediate lead contamination, and demolish lead-blighted homes; \$225,000 to increase the supply of lead hazard control workers; and \$5 million per year to provide a lead abatement tax credit, allowing eligible individuals to receive an income tax credit worth up to \$10,000 for costs related to home lead abatement.

Improving the quality of Ohio's publicly funded childcare system through more than \$208 million in additional state and federal funding. The Ohio operating budget will invest more than \$99 million annually to improve the quality of Ohio's childcare system. This funding will be targeted to help providers recruit qualified educators and offer equal access to quality childcare settings for more of Ohio's children. An additional, one-time \$10 million investment will help childcare providers access the capital, services, and resources they need to become quality-rated and better serve children.

Creating the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library to provide all Ohio children with a monthly book for the first five years of their lives. Through a \$5 million investment, the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library program will help ensure that every Ohio child receives a monthly book to help spur their development and kindergarten readiness.

More than doubling the state's investment in children services, with an additional \$220 million in funding over the biennium. These funds will include \$70 million in additional funding to the State Child Protective Allocation – which doubles current funding levels – bringing Ohio's annual investment to \$125 million in direct-to-county supports. Annual investments also include \$25 million to prevent custody relinquishment for Ohio's highest-need children; \$5 million for foster and kinship family recruitment and engagement efforts; and \$8.5 million to establish a Kinship Navigator Program in Ohio.

Expanding the Ohio START (Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma) program, which Governor DeWine started while serving as Attorney General. A \$12 million investment over the biennium will help expand Ohio START to 30 additional counties. The program helps local governments offer targeted, critical services to parents

struggling with substance use disorder. Support is also provided to children who are traumatized due to parental addiction.

Investing \$675 million to establish the new Student Wellness and Success fund.

These brand-new dollars will help support student health, mental wellbeing, and academic success by providing mental health counseling, physical health services, mentoring, after-school programs, and more. Schools are encouraged to partner with local organizations to develop programming that meets the social and emotional needs of their students. By addressing barriers to success, we can give all students the opportunity for a brighter future.

Preventing the next drug epidemic, with a \$20 million investment to provide Ohio's schools with free, evidence-based prevention curricula and professional development for school personnel. Ohio's local Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Boards, in partnership with their local school districts, will receive \$18 million in fiscal year 2020 to purchase evidence-based prevention curricula that provide students with the social and emotional skills they need to make healthy decisions throughout their lives. An additional \$2 million will be provided to Ohio's Educational Service Centers over the biennium to conduct professional development for teachers on prevention education.

Investing an additional \$60 million in federal funds to improve the nutrition of Ohio's children and adults, by expanding Ohio's Federal School Lunch, Federal School Breakfast, and Child and Adult Food Programs. These programs reimburse schools, childcare centers, after-school programs, and adult day centers for providing nutritious meals and snacks that contribute to the health and wellness of children, older adults, and chronically disabled persons.

Providing all Ohio schools with a free, school safety tip line, the Ohio Homeland Security Safer Schools Tip Line. The Safer Schools Tip Line, along with additional investments in social media analytics tools, can help make Ohio's schools safer for students, teachers, and staff.

