

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Kenisha Johnson

GroundWork Campaign

Good Morning Chairman Sykes and members of the House Finance Committee, my name is Kenisha Johnson. I currently reside here in Columbus, Ohio with my three children, Asha 9, Kendall 5, and Ashton 2. I am employed by Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services.

While pregnant with my last child I lost my job with JP Morgan Chase. As a single mother with two children at home and one on the way I went in and applied for Ohio Works First. An eligibility requirement was that I participate in a work experience program at Franklin County Job and Family Services, South Opportunity Center. In order to participate in my work experience program I needed quality and affordable childcare for my children. I was initially approved for publically funded childcare so that I could attend my work program. My work assignment, at the South Opportunity Center lead me to my current position with Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services.

My children benefit not only from the quality childcare while I work but Kendall my 5 year old, is also participating in the Early Learning Initiative program. I have noticed since he began the preschool program that his speech has improved, he can count to 50, his cognitive skills have enhanced tremendously. I feel like Kendall is more prepared for kindergarten since starting this program.

My youngest child, Ashton, participates in the publically funded childcare program while I am working. Aston benefits by socializing with other children his age. This is also preparing him for preschool by giving him structure and stability.

I would also like to share that since becoming employed I have also enrolled in college and I am working on attaining my Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. I also utilize publically funded childcare so that I can attend class in the evenings.

So in closing, you can see, if it wasn't for the childcare programs available to me here in the state of Ohio I would not be where I am today. As a single mother with three children I would not be able to afford the \$150/week per child that it would cost to put my children in a daycare center. I feel the program is an asset to all working families single and two parent homes that are trying to make it.