

# groundWork™

## A Firm Footing for Children, Schools, Families and Communities



The Latest News from groundWork™, the Ohio Early Care & Education Campaign

*Dear Friends:*

It's 2007 at last! After so many months of hard work bringing people together, energizing thousands of supporters, and building a realistic initial platform for early care and education in Ohio, it is time to create real change. Our state's budget process for the next biennium is beginning, and we are ready to bring our message directly to the legislature. Already more than 3,000 volunteers have signed up to call their legislators, write letters to the editors of their local newspapers, or testify in Columbus during the budget process. It is during the budget process that local early care and education providers need to be trained, willing, and able to advocate for our affordable, reasonable early childhood platform.

### **groundWork™ SFY 2008-09 Recommendations**

- Make voluntary, full-day kindergarten available to at least 150,000 children.
- Make high-quality early education opportunities available to an additional 5,500 children ages three and four.
- Increase the quality of early care and education settings statewide by:
  - o Providing adequate resources to support the expansion of Ohio's quality rating system — Step Up To Quality — for all early care and education providers statewide
  - o Increasing the number of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Ohio higher education scholarships available to early education teachers across the state
  - o Increasing the market rate reimbursement for child care providers.
  - o Begin implementing a funding system that would assist providers with a percentage of their overall costs as recommended by the School Readiness Solutions Group.
- Provide 10,000 additional children ages birth to six with access to necessary, voluntary behavioral health screening, assessment, and treatment.

Ohio Representatives and Senators, Governor Strickland, and the new governor's cabinet and administrative team need to be assured of the strong and certain support of their own constituents for action on this issue. Now is the time to spread the word to as many people as possible. Get them to add their name to our list of supporters on the website ([www.groundworkohio.org](http://www.groundworkohio.org)) and find out how they can let their elected officials understand their commitment to this issue.

Thank you for all you do. Working together, we can make great progress in 2007.

Sincerely,

  
Lori McClung, groundWork™ director

## No “Reason” to Back Down *groundWork™ is Important*

As demand for early care and education grows nationwide, so does opposition from libertarians like the Reason Foundation. Unfortunately, arguments like those in their 2006 report, *Assessing Proposals for Preschool and Kindergarten: Essential information for parents, taxpayers and policymakers*, can be convincing to those who don't realize that their facts are obsolete, skewed, or sometimes just wrong.

Now, the NIEER (National Institute for Early Education Research) has published a useful review of the arguments and provided clear and compelling information that explains why it makes sense to make the groundwork for school success-high quality early care and education-available to all children.

The following key facts appear within detailed responses to key charges and assumptions you too may encounter:

- Middle-income children lag as far behind their high-income peers in both academic and social skills as low-income children do behind middle-income youngsters.
- Although the Reason report tries to prove that pre-k is unnecessary by saying most children start kindergarten with “Level One” quantitative skills, this merely indicates only the ability to count to ten.
- In fact, only 58% of today's kindergartners can count past ten, and just 29% recognize beginning word sounds.
- Reason points to improvement through remediation in the early grades, in fact this only masks the deficits of unprepared youngsters. Long term, children who benefit from quality early education are more likely to graduate from high school, earn higher incomes and are less likely to wind up in trouble.

If you would like to find out more information about the Reason Foundation report or other early education research, please go to [www.groundworkohio.org](http://www.groundworkohio.org), and click on the “resources” section. 🍏

## A Few Reminders

Some people get uncomfortable if they think you want to require all children to attend pre-school or even full-day kindergarten, or intend to tell parents how to raise their children. And that's NOT what groundWork™ is all about!

When you talk to anyone, be sure they realize that groundWork™ is a campaign to provide parents with choices and children with opportunities to learn and grow.

It's also worthwhile to remind people that one benefit of early education will be to help our schools at every level. When children come prepared, schools will be better able to teach.

---

## Behind groundWork™ *Sixteen Practical Visionaries*

Some people are “practical” and others are “visionary,” but few are both. At least sixteen Ohioans fit that description—the groundWork™ Steering Committee. Members come from every section of the state, both major political parties, and a unique array of government, philanthropic, educational and non-profit organizations. They came together because they share a vision: a fair chance for every Ohio child to grow and develop in the early years.

It's the “practical” side of the equation that is truly remarkable, however. According to committee member Jacqui Romer-Sensky of the JRS Group, the original impetus for the creation of groundWork™ was a shared sense of frustration felt by professionals who were working through different channels to meet similar goals. “We kept running into each other in meetings, legislative offices, all over, and we knew we shared a purpose, yet somehow we seemed to be working at cross purposes,” Sensky explains. “We realized that we could get a lot more done working together than separately.”

Joining forces was the practical thing to do, an approach reflected in the sharply-defined groundWork™ mission: to build “political will” for state funding of early care and education.

Committee member Amy Swanson, Executive Director of Voices for Ohio's Children, believes that the true power of groundWork™ is the “immense, intense concentration of expertise and practical political experience in this group. groundWork™ members know how to transform innovative thinking into political fact.” And that, Swanson says, is what groundWork™ will do.

Campaign Director Lori McClung adds another very practical point, citing the fact that sixteen committee members, no matter how excellent, can't build the needed level of public pressure for change on their own. “It's the activists in the field who ultimately will create the environment for change. They have already spread the word to thousands of people who have signed on to the groundWork™ effort, and we are just beginning,” she says.

For full information about the groundWork™ steering committee, or to join the effort, visit [www.groundworkohio.org](http://www.groundworkohio.org). 🍏

# Activists Gearing Up and Getting It Done!

With a new legislature and a supportive governor starting budget development, the impact of every phone call and visit is magnified. And Groundwork is ready, with an expanding army of supporters organizing to put the groundWork™ platform in the budget.

Today, 18 local committees are working very effectively to educate their legislators: all Senators and 93 of our 99 House members are scheduled to meet with local advocates. In most cases, these legislators will have the opportunity to visit child care, health care or behavioral health facilities, and get to know more of the people on the front lines of early childhood. In addition, legislators are learning about the long-term positive effects of early care and education from law enforcement officials as well, through Fight Crime, Invest in Kids.

To help so many groups as effectively as we possibly can, we've added a new member to the groundWork™ staff. We're pleased to welcome Mike McMeans, a highly-experienced organizer with years of statewide experience growing strong grassroots campaigns. He'll be working directly with committees in Athens, Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, Clermont, Warren, Butler, and Montgomery Counties.

We also are proud of the more than 600 organizations and individuals that have endorsed the Groundwork campaign, letting our legislators know that there is deep support for the Groundwork platform throughout the community, among businesses as well as not-for-profit organizations. Find out more about endorsing Groundwork at [www.groundworkohio.org](http://www.groundworkohio.org), or call David Howard at 216-781-2944.

## Action Opportunities

**Generate mail:** Write a letter to your legislator urging them to support early care and education in the budget, or write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

**Attend an event:** See the [groundworkohio.org](http://groundworkohio.org) website for a calendar. Add your name as a supporter of Groundwork-and get even more action information.

**Learn more:** Participate in the conference calls described in the box below. 🍏

## Spring Phone Conferences: Keep Up with Budget Strategy and Campaign Progress

Call in for strategy training, news of our progress through the budget process and more in a lively series of phone conferences. Find details at [www.groundworkohio.org](http://www.groundworkohio.org), or sign up by email to [dhoward@groundworkohio.org](mailto:dhoward@groundworkohio.org).

March 7, 9 a.m.	May 18, 9 a.m.
March 22, 2 p.m.	June 4, 10 a.m.
April 13, 9 a.m.	June 22, 9 a.m.
May 4, 9 a.m.	

## Limited live training sessions in advocacy and budget process.

For larger groups, Groundwork can provide in-depth trainings to make your efforts more productive. To schedule a session, please contact David Howard, [dhoward@groundworkohio.org](mailto:dhoward@groundworkohio.org), for information. Include your phone number!



Early care and education providers across the state are opening up their facilities to educate policymakers on the importance of an increased commitment to early childhood issues. Here, Representative Tim DeGeeter (L) visits with a home-visiting nurse at the Cuyahoga County Department of Health (CCDH). Through its Early Childhood Initiative, CCDH seeks to eliminate service gaps and barriers for families with children from birth to age five by improving service coordination and interagency communication.

# Early Education Is Essential to Ohio's Future

*By Governor Ted Strickland*

Over the past year, as Ohioans shared their hopes for turning Ohio around, I heard one word repeated more often than any other. Education. Ohioans want schools that work because we understand that our future depends on it. Most of us understand, as well, that funding is only one of the challenges we must meet so every Ohio child can have a fair chance to succeed in school and in life.

Good 21st century jobs require more from workers; our public schools must produce graduates who are ready for advanced education and life-long learning. Such competence doesn't start to develop in high school, or even in grade school. Academic success must be built from the very beginning, with the social, emotional and academic tools our youngest children need in order to master basic skills.

In other words, we can't improve any single level of education alone. We need to see learning as the unified process that it is, a continuum of growth and achievement from early childhood through college.

That is why I am asking my administration to treat the earliest years as the crucial first step in learning that they are.

I look forward to working with groundWork™ and others committed to funding quality pre- kindergarten, full day kindergarten, and necessary health and behavioral care for our youngest children. Together, we can make education work for our children again.

## Ohio Early Care and Education Campaign

1226 Huron Road  
Cleveland, OH 44115

[www.ohioearlycare.org](http://www.ohioearlycare.org)

Nonprofit org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Cleveland, OH  
Permit No. 3099



### Contents

Letter from the Executive Director.....	1
No "Reason" to Back Down.....	2
A Few Reminders.....	2
Behind groundWork™ .....	2
Activists Gearing Up and Getting It Done .....	3
Phone Conferences .....	3
Early Education Is Essential to Ohio's Future.....	4