



# Drafting a New Blueprint for Success

Reflections on  
Ohio Early Childhood  
Race & Rural Equity  
2020



**This report was made possible by:**  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation (Battle Creek, MI)

Published: August, 2020  
© 2020 All Rights Reserved. Groundwork Ohio.

**About Groundwork Ohio:**

*Groundwork Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization committed to advancing quality early learning and healthy development strategies from the prenatal period to age five, that lay a strong foundation for Ohio kids, families and communities.*



# Content

**INTRODUCTION:**  
A Letter from Groundwork..... 5  
What We Know About Equity ..... 6

**1** **SECTION 1:**  
Community Engagement  
& Planning ..... 8

**2** **SECTION 2:**  
Taking Additional Measurements .... 12

**3** **SECTION 3:**  
Drafting a New  
Blueprint for Success ..... 18

**4** **SECTION 4:**  
Breaking New Ground ..... 22

**CONCLUSION:** ..... 30  
Sources..... 32  
Contributors..... 33

“*The world changes according to the way people see it, and if you alter, even by a millimeter, the way people look at reality, then you can change it.*”

– James Baldwin  
*American novelist & social critic*





# A Letter from Our Leadership

Groundwork Ohio set out to engage in an intentional equity dialogue with policymakers in 2018 and more deeply understand how Ohio's child health and education systems are addressing or failing to address the needs of our most at-risk children, specifically children of color and those who live in rural Appalachia. At the outset of this work, we could never have anticipated sharing an update on this critical work with you during a global pandemic.

Our organization had long recognized the disparities across our state and advanced early childhood investments as targeted, evidence-based strategies to try to create a fair playing field for children living in poverty, children of color and children living in Ohio's rural regions. The public facing, intentional commitment to advancing equitable outcomes for young children in 2018 began with a thorough evaluation of the data which confirmed our experience, intuition and work anecdotally in the field. The Ohio Early Childhood Race & Rural Equity Report provided a baseline for conversations to educate community stakeholders and policymakers about the stark disparities in child health and education outcomes and access to the programs that seek to eliminate these disparities. The compelling story, bolstered by 26 metrics across a child's life from prenatal care to postsecondary attainment, exposed a more complete

story of what it means to be a young child in Ohio. It illustrated how the color of your skin and where you live determine where you start in life, and often where you stay—children who start behind stay behind.

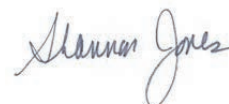
As the public health and economic devastation of COVID-19 has ravaged the State of Ohio and the nation, it has laid bare and, yet again, confirmed that the public systems that are supposed to protect the most vulnerable among us are often undermining these same children, families and citizens. The failure to view policy choices and systems building with an equity lens has resulted in our systems, affirming and even exacerbating the racial and geographic disparities that have been perpetuated for decades by institutional racism and structural inequities.

We are grateful for the learnings that have come from sharing our Report (over 2000 hard copy and countless engagement on our website!) over the past two years and conversations with more than 1,000 people about their responses to the report based upon their local work across the state. Our early childhood advocacy leaders are more prepared than ever to "Draft a New Blueprint for Success." What we have learned with you and from you over the past year has informed our work moving forward. Perhaps most

importantly, our commitment that began as a "project" is now integrated into everything we do as we advocate for equitable early childhood policies and investments in Ohio.

While COVID-19 has accelerated our work and required us to be vigilant in pivoting strategies and tactics to ensure we are doing the next right thing for kids, our foundational understanding of early childhood equity in this state over the past couple of years continues to inform everything we do. The future of Ohio's youngest children is in our hands. We are humbled by this responsibility and will continue to challenge our organization and our vast network of stakeholders to return to the drawing board, challenge our assumptions and think creatively and collaboratively. Please view this report as a reflection of our learnings and engagement thus far to advance an equity dialogue and a renewed promise to continue doing so in the future. We need your support now more than ever to ensure that we are taking responsibility for the things we can change for our youngest Ohioans.

***Warm personal regards,***



**Shannon Jones**  
Groundwork Ohio  
Executive Director



# What we know about early childhood equity in Ohio...

## OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE (and Ohio's) DEPEND ON WHAT WE DO TODAY:

Too many children are not surviving until their first birthday.

Too many children are not getting the early intervention that can prevent a lifetime of problems—first in school, then on the job and in life.

Too many children are starting kindergarten woefully behind.

Families are being denied the chance to succeed at work and become self-sufficient because they can't afford quality child care, or it's just not available.

We can give kids a better childhood—and ultimately better lives—if we invest when it matters most, when their brains are developing the fastest, when supporting families and treating health issues can have the most impact and be done the most cost-effectively.

## THE DATA TELL US:

### The first years are most important.

The most rapid period of brain development is in the first years of life, when a baby's brain forms more than a million neural connections every second. Brains are built by early enriching experiences.

**80% of brain growth happens by age 3.**

Ohio has nearly **546,000** infants & toddlers growing up yearly.

### Ohio's children are behind.

Children's early experiences promote cognitive, social and emotional growth. Not all children have healthy, positive early experiences. When they enter kindergarten, low-income learners are up to 2 years behind their higher-income peers.

**By kindergarten, Ohio kids are up to 2 years behind.**

**1 in 4 lives in poverty.**

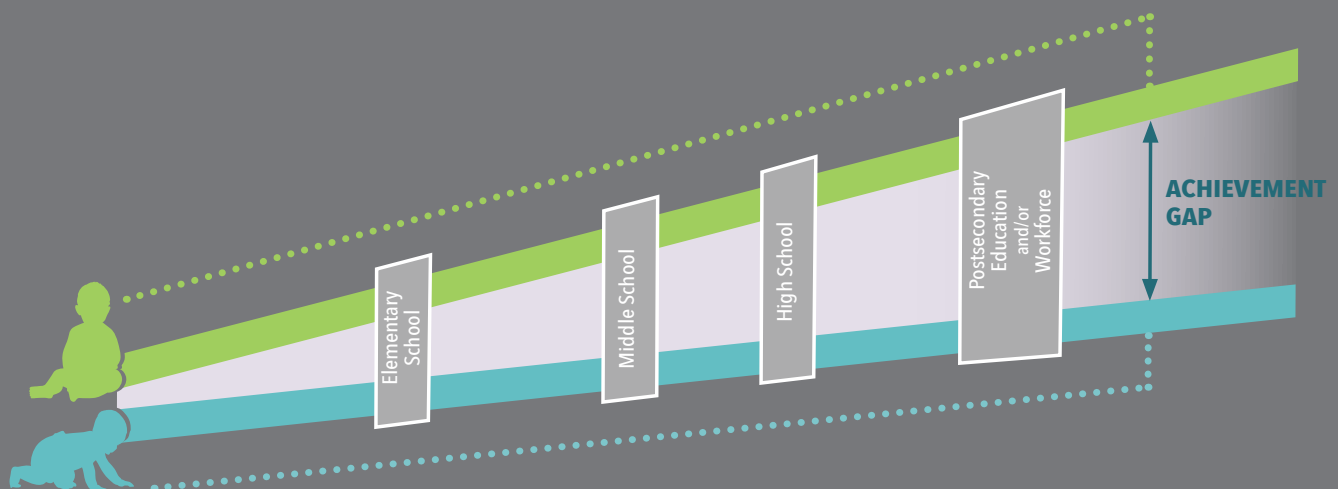
(1 in 3 Appalachian children, and more than 1 in 2 African American children)



# CHILDREN WHO START BEHIND, STAY BEHIND:

Too often a child's race, their family's income or the zip code they live in determines how they'll do in life. Gaps that show up even before a child starts school too often widen year after year. If we close gaps in the early years for children growing up in poverty, children of color and those in Ohio's rural regions, and for children living in underserved communities, we can help them succeed in school and beyond.

- **Gaps between CHILDREN IN POVERTY and their higher income peers emerge much earlier** than state and federal policy recognize and persist long into adulthood.
- **Concentrated poverty of CHILDREN IN OHIO'S RURAL APPALACHIAN REGION is obstinate and barriers to overcoming the impacts of poverty in this region are unique compared to Ohio's metropolitan areas.** The 32 county Ohio Appalachian region is racially homogenous with 86.3% of children 0-5 being white as compared to 68.7% of children statewide. Only 4.7% of children in the region are black and these young black children predominantly reside in Mahoning and neighboring Trumbull County. Children living in poverty start behind and consistently stay behind in this region even as they learn and progress throughout their schooling, rarely catching up to their higher income peers.
- **A child's race tells a distinct and critical narrative that must be examined separately to fully understand the problem, as even those BLACK CHILDREN who are not poor are too often not achieving at the rate of their white peers.** Although black children are disproportionately living in poverty, poverty alone does not tell the whole story. If this were true, we would expect black children's achievement statewide to at least be as high as children who are economically disadvantaged. Instead we see black children, regardless of economic status, falling consistently below—and the achievement gap widens as they progress through school.






# Community Engagement *and* Planning

---







*“What structures are in place that need to change in order to truly give every child an equal opportunity? What is it that we aren’t talking about that’s holding them back?”*

*– Katie Kelly  
PRE4CLE*



## ***We traveled from Columbus to Dayton, Cincinnati, Akron, Cleveland, Toledo, the Mahoning Valley and across the Appalachian region to engage in a conversation about equity for our youngest children and families with you.***

We brought with us the story our statewide and local disaggregated data tell for our most vulnerable kids. We facilitated a dialogue on what equity means for young children. You brought life to that data and shaped our understanding of equity for Ohio's youngest children with the work you do and the stories of the families you serve.



### **WHAT YOU SHARED:**

**“***I’m very concerned, certainly, about the academic achievement gaps when we begin to look at black children and white children. It is a serious issue and it has been going on too long. When we really want to consider how to make everything equitable, we have to start with our attitude. We have to start with our own biases.”*

– Billy Osborne-Fears, *Starting Point*

**“***The narrative is that families, especially black families who are struggling, don’t care—and that’s the reason they are struggling... This is simply not true. We see families of color who are going to extraordinary lengths to do the right thing for their children... working three or four jobs, taking multiple buses across the city to get to a high-quality [preschool] site. What structures are in place that need to change in order to truly give every child an equal opportunity? What is it that we aren’t talking about that’s holding them back?”*

– Katie Kelly, *PRE4CLE*

**“***Higher income black students are still behind lower-income white students.”*

– Tara C. Walker Pollock, *Community Foundation of Mahoning Valley*

**“***What’s the difference between the environment that a lot of my lower income African American students are in [versus] their white counterparts?”*

– Lita Willis, *Nonprofit Executive*

**“***We need to have everybody at the table knowing that there are gaps that have been created. And we need to attack those gaps... chomp away at them piece by piece, bit by bit.”*

– Marvin Logan, Jr., *CEO, The Logan Company*



## A COMMITMENT TO ACTION & CHANGE:

**What will YOU do to advance equitable outcomes in your community?**

We listened to your stories. You shared your experience with young children and their families. You reflected on your community. You were proud of its strengths and forthright about the barriers it has created to young children living up to their full potential. You made a sincere commitment to advance equitable outcomes in your community.

***I can address inequitable outcomes in my community by advocating for increased investment and thoughtful policymaking in the first five years of life.***

***I will begin to disaggregate my program's data.***

***I can do that.***

***Something has to change.***

***I have to change. Enough is enough.***

***I will share this information.***

***Knowledge is power, and everyone needs to understand this data.***

***We have to empower parents—they have to be part of this.***

***I will educate myself and step up to be the change.***

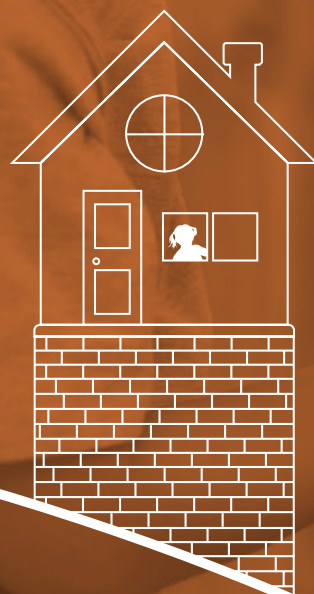
***I will respond with proactive grant making.***

***I will address barriers to equitable outcomes for kids by using my voice to vote and advocate.***


***I will commit to research and education to advance equitable early childhood systems.***

# Taking Additional Measurements

---







---

***“The social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age as well as the complex, interrelated social structures and economic systems that shape these conditions.”***

— CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL  
AND PREVENTION



# Exploring the Social Determinants of Early Childhood

The Ohio Early Childhood Race and Rural Equity Report explored 26 education and health metrics from access to prenatal care to postsecondary attainment. While we had initially committed to looking at 11 metrics, we expanded our scope substantially in the final report. Each metric we evaluated opened the door to more questions, more metrics to explore. We had to dig deeper to tell a more complete story. Our work is an ongoing exploration of what it means to be a young child, a young black child and a young child living in rural Appalachia. As the Report was shared across the state, many community discussions highlighted additional metrics that quantified the social determinants of health.



## WHAT ARE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS?

“The social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age as well as the complex, interrelated social structures and economic systems that shape these conditions.”<sup>i</sup> Social determinants of health include aspects of the social environment, the physical environment and access to services. We view these social determinants as the connective tissue among the 26-metric story we shared in the original Report—the **social determinants of early childhood**. The “bottom line” data here provide a deeper understanding of the circumstances that perpetuate disparate outcomes. They are a snapshot of how systemic racism and structural inequalities are perpetuated in every system that serves children and families in Ohio.

There are several hard-hitting indicators of social determinants—creating a web of interconnected factors that fill in the blanks of our metrics from the original report. These include:

- **Poverty**
- **Family Stability**
- **Access to Health Care**
- **Food Insecurity**
- **Transportation**
- **Broadband Access**
- **Maternal Mortality**
- **Infant Mortality**
- **Smoking**
- **Substance Abuse**
- **Access to Affordable Housing**
- **Homelessness**
- **Lead**
- **Child Abuse**
- **Child Welfare**
- **Domestic Violence**
- **Community Violence**
- **Parental Incarceration**

## Social Determinants of Early Childhood:

### Poverty

**1 in 4** Ohio children age 0-3 live in poverty. That's **1 in 3** Appalachian children. **1 in 2** African American children.<sup>1</sup>

### Family Stability

**38%** of Ohio's children are living in a **single-parent** household.<sup>2</sup>

### Access to Health Care

**Over 40,000** children under the age of 6 are **uninsured** in Ohio.<sup>3</sup>

### Food Insecurity

**1 in 5** Ohio children struggle with **hunger**.<sup>4</sup>

### Transportation

About **1/3** of Ohio counties, nearly **one million** people predominantly in rural regions, have **no access** to public transportation.

### Broadband Access

**16.5%** of Ohio children living in metropolitan areas lack access to broadband and **19.5%** of children lack access in rural areas.<sup>5</sup>

### Maternal Mortality

The rate of maternal mortality for white women is **11.5 for every 100,000** births and **29.5 for black women**, more than double that of white women. More than half of Ohio's maternal deaths are preventable.<sup>6</sup>

### Infant Mortality

For every 1,000 live births, 5.4 babies don't live to celebrate their first birthday, compared to **13.9 black babies for every 1,000** live births. **Black infants die at a rate of 2.5-3 times higher than white infants**.<sup>7</sup>

### Smoking

**22%** of children are exposed to secondhand smoke at home.<sup>8</sup>

### Substance Abuse

**11%** of children have lived with someone who is experiencing drug or alcohol **addiction**.<sup>9</sup>



## Access to Affordable Housing

**54%** of Ohio families with children living in low-income households are experiencing a high housing cost burden (i.e. over 30% of the household income goes to rent, mortgage, insurance, taxes and other related expenses).<sup>10</sup>

## Homelessness

**30%** of people accessing homelessness services are **under 18** and nearly **3,000** are under 1 year old.<sup>11</sup>

## Lead

**41%** of Ohio's housing units were built prior to 1960 and are at **risk for lead paint**.<sup>12</sup>

## Child Abuse

Nearly **1 of every 39** Ohio babies are victims of maltreatment.<sup>13</sup>

## Child Welfare

**39%** of Ohio's foster care population are young children ages 0-4.<sup>ii</sup> In 2019, this equated to 6,212 0-4 year olds.<sup>14</sup>

## Domestic Violence

Over **65,000** Ohioans have been victims of domestic violence. African American victims are disproportionately represented and accounting for nearly 30% of the reported cases.<sup>15</sup>

## Community Violence

**5%** of Ohio's children have witnessed or been a victim of violence in their neighborhood.<sup>16</sup> Over **100,000** of Ohio's children are currently living in **unsafe communities**.<sup>17</sup>

## Parental Incarceration

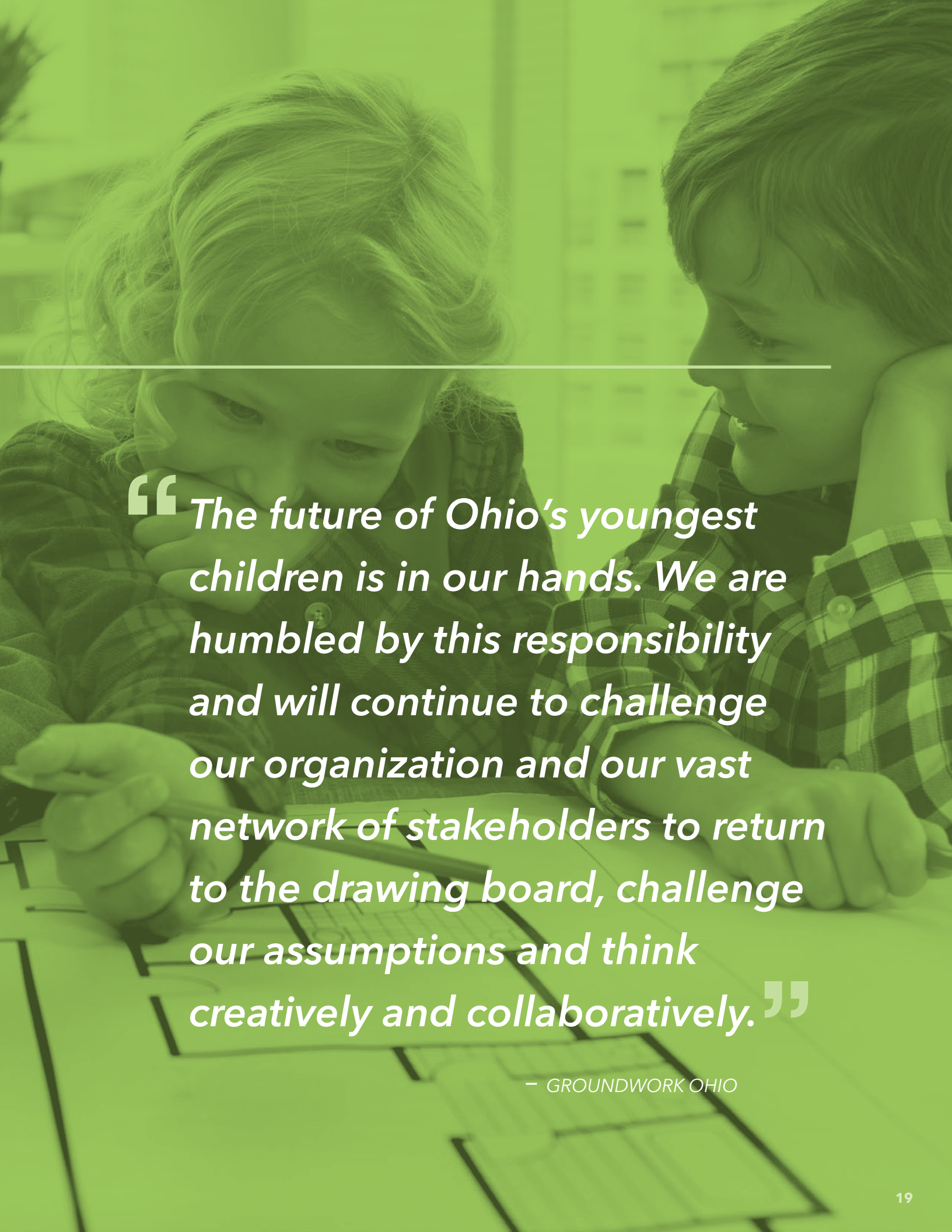
About twice as many black children as white children have experienced parental incarceration (**1 in 9** compared with **1 in 17**) in the United States.<sup>18</sup>

# Drafting a New Blueprint *for* Success

---







*“The future of Ohio’s youngest children is in our hands. We are humbled by this responsibility and will continue to challenge our organization and our vast network of stakeholders to return to the drawing board, challenge our assumptions and think creatively and collaboratively.”*

— GROUNDWORK OHIO

***While we continue to learn daily about what equity means for young children, we are taking stock of the learnings we have collected over the past couple of years.***

In renewing our promise to advance equitable outcomes for Ohio's youngest children, particularly those living in poverty, our children of color and children living in rural Ohio, we have made the following observations:

### **1 WE MUST START EARLIER.**

If we are holding ourselves accountable to the science of early childhood development, we must continue to target policy and investment in the first five years of life. High quality early childhood education is the just and smart investment to stop gaps where they begin, long before a child enters kindergarten. Our state and nation have made some incredible progress over the last decade in beginning to focus on powerful prevention policy in the earliest years, but

we have identified a critical need to focus on the prenatal to three period of a child's life. While we must continue to invest in our preschool age children on the continuum of interventions young children need to thrive, we have to intentionally focus on the deep roots of disparities we see in children's health and education. That means advancing targeted policies and investments focused on pregnant women and children during the first three years of life.

### **2 WE MUST SUPPORT THE EARLY EDUCATION & HEALTH PROFESSIONS.**

We have long focused, quite literally, on the children in the room. In recognition that nurturing, responsive relationships are the foundation of all quality early childhood interventions, we have to support the adult caregivers who make heroic efforts daily, often without the respect and resources

they deserve, to apply the best science and implement evidence-based interventions every day. Ohio's early childhood professionals are the conduit for change and we have to begin investing in them in light of their incredible and valued responsibility.

### **3 WE MUST PUT FAMILY VOICE AT THE CENTER OF OUR POLICY DEVELOPMENT.**

Family engagement and participation in decision-making is critical when it comes to improving early childhood programs and achieving better child and family outcomes. Parents are a child's first and most important caregivers—we must elevate their voices

to meet their needs and the needs of their children. Early childhood advocates have to create and support opportunities for parents to engage in decision-making given the deeply personal nature of our work.



#### ④ WE MUST BE RELENTLESS IN COLLECTING DATA & MEASURING PROGRESS.

Where data are being collected, we must continue to use it to measure and hold our state accountable to progress. Where data are not available, we must work to support the collection of metrics that reflect the experience of our youngest children—if they aren't being measured, progress is not being made. When we communicate progress or lack of progress, we will do so wherever possible utilizing disaggregated data by race

and geography. Success cannot be celebrated unless it is shared equitably among our youngest and most vulnerable children. Regional-level data have been helpful to informing local efforts that leverage state and federal early childhood policy. The more granular and community-specific data that are available (i.e. county or city level data), the better we can inform leaders across the state.

#### ⑤ WE MUST ENGAGE IN CROSS-SECTOR WORK & INVEST IN NEW PARTNERSHIPS TO DEEPEN OUR UNDERSTANDING & INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL DETERMINANTS.

We will engage and expand our relationships with stakeholders and allies that can collaborate in meaningful cross-sector work. In order to serve the whole child and their family we have to actively model our advocacy and policy development to

reflect what we want to see in our systems—collaboration and the recognition that regardless of metric or program, we are so often serving the same children who have complex needs.

#### ⑥ WE MUST MODEL INTERNALLY THE OUTCOMES & BEHAVIOR WE SEEK EXTERNALLY.

James Baldwin said, *"I can't believe what you say, because I see what you do."* Our internal governance and staff in addition to our policy and advocacy initiatives must transparently reflect the principle of equity. It

is not sufficient to demand our policymakers view their work through an equity lens if we are unwilling to constantly challenge our own organizational biases and practice allyship.




# Breaking New Ground

---







---

*“Groundwork Ohio is building out our blueprint for success and taking action on our learnings. In addition to our ongoing prenatal to five advocacy work across Ohio, we are applying our learnings and focusing our efforts on two key initiatives to advance equitable outcomes for for young children.”*

— GROUNDWORK OHIO

# READY, SET SOAR OHIO



**Early Investments, A Lifetime of Success.**

***Brains are built by early experiences with 80% of brain growth happening in the first three years of a child's life.***

The trajectory of development during the earliest years positions children for future success and a foundation of lifelong positive education and health outcomes. Not all children, however, have the same early experiences. By age 3, low income learners have half the vocabulary as their high-income peers leading them to be up to two years behind when they enter the kindergarten classroom.

Investing in high-quality early childhood education and health interventions during this critical period has the power to lift up all Ohio children, ensuring they are more likely to be kindergarten ready, graduate from high school, have higher earnings and better health. These prevention strategies also promise to keep Ohio children from being held back a grade, reliant on public assistance and engaging in criminal behavior. Investing in these earliest years pays dividends for children, families and the state.

But across our great state, there are too many infants and toddlers who lack the opportunity to access the high-quality programs, services, and opportunities they need to achieve lifelong success.

Ready, Set, Soar Ohio is a diverse statewide coalition of early childhood, education, health, advocacy, philanthropy and business organizations, community leaders, policymakers and families.

This coalition is committed to ensuring that more pregnant women, infants, toddlers and their families have access to the support they need to be ready, set and soar to their full potential.



# The State of Infants & Toddlers



in Ohio



**545,804 Ohio Children**  
are three years old or younger

Infants and toddlers living in poverty.  
(defined as living at or below 200% of the  
Federal Poverty Guidelines—an annual  
household income of \$51,500 for a family of 4)

**1 in 2**

**27%**

Eligible infants and toddlers living at  
130% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines  
accessing publicly funded child care

Infants and toddlers receiving  
health coverage through  
Medicaid and Healthy Start

**49%**

Of  
the

**46,727**

accessing publicly funded child care,

**35%**

are in high-quality programs  
(rated a 3- to 5-star in Ohio's  
quality rating and improvement  
system, Step Up to Quality)

Families with infants and toddlers  
receiving evidence-based home visiting  
services through the state funded  
Help Me Grow program

**6,453**

**4,646**

infants and toddlers age three  
and under are in state custody...

This accounts for **29%** of all kids in custody.

0-3 year olds receiving  
Early Intervention services

**23,438**

Kindergartners entering the  
classroom ready to learn

**41%**

**27%**

Economically disadvantaged  
kindergartners entering the  
classroom ready to learn

# Our Countdown to Success for Kids:

## 3... Ready to Thrive

*Infants and toddlers who are born healthy, grow and develop in healthy environments, and have access to quality healthcare services have better physical, emotional, and mental health throughout their lives.*

- Increase access to timely and comprehensive quality prenatal care.
- Ensure and expand coverage and access to high-quality healthcare through Medicaid and CHIP programs for infants, toddlers and their families.
- Support early identification and treatment for infants and toddlers experiencing developmental delays—including ensuring timely developmental screenings and early intervention services.
- Reduce the incidence and impact of trauma among infants and toddlers by increasing access to programs that build resilience and mitigate its impact.
- Protect infants and toddlers from lead hazards where they live and learn.

## 2... Setting Families Up for Success

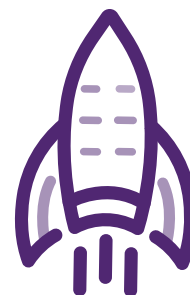
*Families are the first and most important teachers, playing a critical role in a child's development during the first three years of life. When families have the resources and supports to provide adequate care and enrichment during the earliest years, children can grow and thrive.*

- Empower parents of infants and toddlers by increasing access to voluntary evidence-based home visiting services.
- Stabilize families so that there are fewer infants and toddlers engaged in the foster care system and ensure that babies in state custody, living in foster or kinship placements, experience a continuum of care and supported transitions.
- Foster economic stability for families with infants and toddlers.

## 1... Soaring to Kindergarten—and Beyond

*Babies are born learning. High-quality child care gives children the opportunity for social, emotional, and intellectual development to be ready for school. If ready for kindergarten, children are positioned for success in school and life.*

- Expand access to quality publicly funded child care for infants and toddlers by increasing eligibility to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Ensure that infants and toddlers have access to high-quality learning environments where programs meet their unique needs.
- Expand access to high-quality preschool.
- Support a quality early education workforce that is highly qualified, well compensated, and prepared to support the development of infants and toddlers.



**Thank you to our coalition members!**  
**These organizations serve as a strong,**  
**unified voice for young children in**  
**the state of Ohio.**

4C for Children	Every Child Succeeds	Ohio Children's Hospital Association
Action for Children	Fight Crime, Invest in Kids	Ohio Early Childhood Health Network
Advocates for Ohio's Future	Great Start to Great Futures Coalition	Ohio Excels
Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority	Hand In Hand Early Learning Center	Ohio Head Start Association, Inc
All Nestled Inn	Heavenly Kids Center for Learning	Ohio Healthy Homes Network
American Academy of Pediatrics, Ohio Chapter	Horizon Education Centers	Ohio PTA
AmeriHealth Caritas	Human Service Chamber	OhioHealth
Ashley Scott Daycare	Institute of Family & Community Impact	Oppenheim Consulting
Boys and Girls Clubs of Ohio Alliance	Invest in Children	Policy Matters
Buckeye Health Plan	Kiddie Academy of Reynoldsburg	PRE4CLE
Butler County Educational Service Center	Knight Consulting Group	Public Children Services Association of Ohio
CCS Construction	Learn to Earn Dayton	Reach Out and Read Ohio
CelebrateOne	Learning Grove	Ready Nation
Center for Community Solutions	Literacy Cooperative	South Side Early Learning Center
Centers for Families and Children	Little Miracles EDC	Southwest Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children
Child Care Resource Center	Lynda A. Cohen Center for the Study of Child Development	SPARK Ohio
Child Focus, Inc.	Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition	St. Vincent Family Center
Childhood League Center	Mental Health America of Ohio	Stark Education Partnership
Children's Hunger Alliance	Moms2B	Starting Point
Children's Defense Fund-Ohio	More Precious Than Rubies	Strive Partnership
Cincinnati Public Schools	National Association of Social Workers, Ohio Chapter	Summit Education Initiative
Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center	Nurse-Family Partnership	Toledo Public Schools
Columbus Early Learning Center	OCALI	United Way of Central Ohio
Columbus Speech & Hearing Center	Ohio Association for Infant Mental Health	United Way of Greater Cincinnati / Success by 6
Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development	Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children	Warren County Foundation
Cradle Cincinnati	Ohio Association of Child Care Providers	Wesley Education Center for Children & Families
Crane Center	Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators	Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation
Dayton/Montgomery County Preschool Promise	Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association	YWCA-Columbus
Early Ages Healthy Stages	Ohio Children's Alliance	YWCA-Toledo
Early Childhood Education Alliance		
Early Childhood Resource Center		



# Supporting Ohio's Early Education Profession

***Ohio's early education professionals are one of our state's most critical assets as we seek to promote high-quality early learning and close gaps among children based on race, geography, and socioeconomic status in the first five years.***

During the critical early years of development, highly-qualified early education professionals shape children's social, emotional, and cognitive growth to prepare them for school and beyond.

In Ohio, more than 53,000 early educators have dedicated their careers to ensuring our young children—our state's future—receive the nurturing care and early learning experiences that lead to healthy development and lifelong success.

## ***Challenges Within the Workforce***

Despite the high-demand for quality child care and an increased understanding of the importance of early educator qualifications, Ohio's child care profession faces many challenges, including:

- **high turnover**
- **low wages**
- **lack of benefits**
- **secondary trauma**

***On average, Ohio's child care professionals earn \$10.67 per hour, despite nearly half of child care teachers having a degree or credential beyond a high school diploma.***

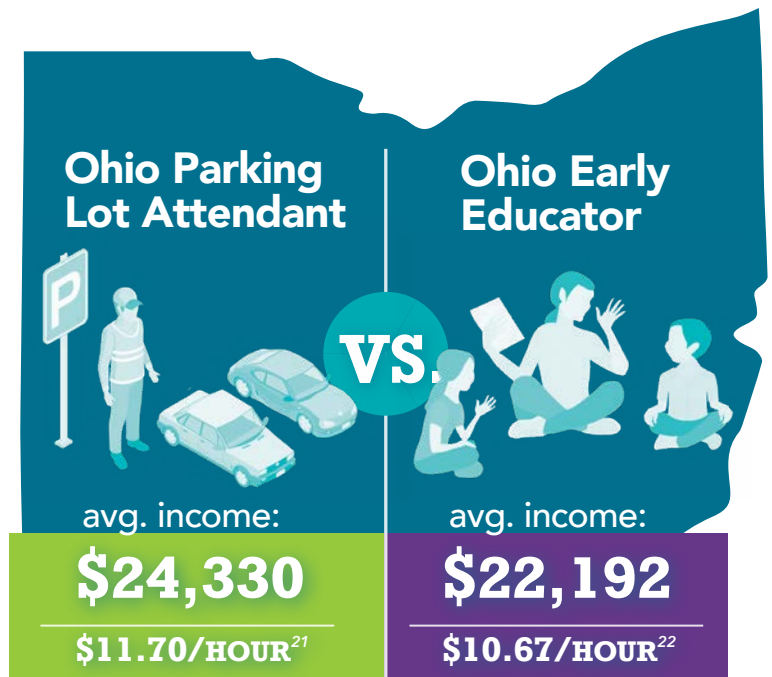
This puts them toward the bottom of the wage-earning percentile across all occupations and makes it extremely challenging to recruit, support, and retain program staff.



**Over 90% of  
educators are female.** <sup>19</sup>

**Black women are  
disproportionately  
represented in the child  
care profession and are  
more than twice as likely  
to be working in the field  
as their white peers.** <sup>20</sup>

**Ohio's child care professionals currently make less on average than parking lot attendants in Ohio.**



## Advancing Ohio's Child Care Profession

*Ohio can continue to invest in child care professionals and improve outcomes for our youngest children by:*

- Investing state funds to support programs in increasing compensation and improving benefits for employees.
- Supporting statewide career pathways that provide a road map for early childhood professionals to advance in their careers through increasing levels of education, experience, demonstrated competencies, and compensation.
- Maintaining and improving a comprehensive professional development system with stable funding and measures for quality assurance.
- Promoting data-driven policies and programs for the workforce through a statewide workforce registry.
- Bolstering scholarship programs for early educators.
- Rewarding degree completion with wage supplements or tax credits.



# Conclusion

When we began our intentional work to advance equitable outcomes for Ohio's youngest children, we led with one of our strengths—the ability to tell a complete and objective story with data. With a data story demonstrating compelling disparities in urban and rural communities alike, we created an opportunity to elevate a conversation about equity across the state.

We had an open mind, without preconceived notions of what we may learn from communities. We invited them to respond to the data and participate in a dialogue about the experience of our most vulnerable children and what it would take to realize equitable outcomes for the youngest Ohioans.

We were overwhelmed with the engagement we had among stakeholders across the state and are grateful for the courage with which they shared their stories and experiences to inform our work. While

we are proud of this collective work, we are still only at the very beginning of realizing the commitment and priority that must be given to creating equitable opportunities for Ohio children to thrive.

In order to create real, substantive change in the systems serving Ohio children and families, we know we cannot do this work alone. The commitment of our small staff, no matter how strong, is only a small piece of a much larger effort that must exist to advance equitable outcomes for children in our state. We need advocates, early childhood professionals, business leaders, community leaders, private philanthropy, and policymakers in all levels of government to take responsibility for the things that they have the ability to change.

We are resolved in our ongoing commitment to advancing equitable outcomes for children in Ohio and once again ask you to join us!





“

Too many Ohioans are still living at the margins. Still there is racism in Ohio and across our country... I seek dialogue with every Ohioan to solve these problems. I'm seeking strategies for the implementation of the changes that we need. And I'm looking for real answers to the real problems of the structural impediments to equality in the State of Ohio. Whether it is in the urban core of our cities or the hills of Appalachia, we have Ohioans, frankly, in every county who are not living up to their God given potential because they simply do not have the same opportunity as other Ohioans do. And that is wrong. And we have a moral obligation to strive every day to do something about it.... We must come together to try to solve these historic injustices. ”

– Governor Mike DeWine



# Sources

## SECTION 2

### Taking Additional Measurements

- i. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, *Social Determinants of Health*.
- ii. The National KIDS COUNT Data Center.  
*Children who are confirmed by child protective services as victims of maltreatment by age group in the United States*. (2017).
1. Groundwork Ohio, *Ohio Early Childhood Race & Rural Equity Project-Executive Summary*. (July 2020)
2. The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, *Children in single-parent families in Ohio*. (June 2020)
3. Georgetown University Health Policy Institute Center for Children and Families, *Nation's Youngest Children Lose Health Coverage at an Alarming Rate*. (December 2019)
4. Feeding America, *Hunger in Ohio*. (June 2020)
5. Ohio Housing Finance Agency, *Limited Internet Access is a Challenge for Ohio Children*. (May 2020)
6. Ohio Department of Health, *A Report on Pregnancy-Associated Deaths in Ohio 2008-2016*. (November 2019)
7. Ohio Department of Health, *2018 Infant Mortality Annual Report*. (June 2020)
8. Ohio Department of Health, *Tobacco Data and Statistics: Youth Exposure to Secondhand Smoke*. (August 2018)
9. Child Trends, *The prevalence of adverse childhood experiences, nationally, by state, and by race or ethnicity*. (February 2018)
10. The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, *Children in low-income households with a high housing cost burden in Ohio*. (June 2020)
11. Ohio Housing Finance Agency, *A Picture of Ohio's Homeless in 2017: More Children, Aging Adults and Families*. (January 2019)
12. Ohio Healthy Homes Network, *Ohio's Lead Paint Hazards*. (June 2020)
13. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *Child Maltreatment*. (2017).
14. Public Children Services Association of Ohio. *PCSAO Factbook, 14th Edition 2019, State of Ohio*. (2019)
15. Ohio Attorney General, *Domestic Violence Report 2018*. (June 2020)
16. Child Trends, *The prevalence of adverse childhood experiences, nationally, by state, and by race or ethnicity*. (February 2018)
17. The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, *Children who live in unsafe communities in Ohio*. (June 2020)
18. Child Trends, *Parents Behind Bars: What Happens to their Children?* (October 2015)

## SECTION 4

### Breaking New Ground

19. 2013 ECAC Workforce Study conducted through the Ohio Child Care Resource & Referral Association (OCCRRA) in partnership with the Ohio Education Research Center (OERC) and OERC partner Strategic Research Group. Surveys were sent to 3,600 randomly selected early learning and development programs in March 2013 to both Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and Ohio Department of Education (ODE) licensed programs.
20. *Ohio Professional Registry*. October 2019.
21. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: <https://www.bls.gov/oes/2017/may/oes536021.htm>
22. *Ohio Professional Registry*. October 2019.

# Contributors

## **Shannon Jones**

### *Executive Director*

As Executive Director, Shannon leads Groundwork Ohio's statewide effort to advance quality early care and education so every Ohio child has the best chance for lifelong success. Prior to joining Groundwork, Shannon served in the Ohio General Assembly for a decade as a state representative and a state senator, where she was chosen by her colleagues for key leadership posts in both chambers. She is the only woman in her party, and first in Ohio history, ever to achieve the distinction of election to the leadership teams in both chambers. Known as a leader who is willing to tackle the most difficult and complex issues, Shannon used her trusted influence to put kids at the top of the legislative agenda. Her efforts resulted in a renewed focus by the state on policies that support the health and educational opportunities of Ohio's most vulnerable children. Shannon's most significant legislative effort led to a statewide bipartisan mandate to improve Ohio's abysmal infant mortality epidemic. She has continued to provide this same spirit of leadership at Groundwork with her fierce commitment to tell the full story of racial and geographic disparities experienced by Ohio's youngest children through the Ohio Race and Rural Equity Report. Shannon earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Cincinnati, and in 2008 was selected for the Rodel Fellowship by the prestigious Aspen Global Leadership Institute. She also currently serves as a Warren County Commissioner and as a board member for the Health Policy Institute of Ohio and the YWCA of Dayton.

## **Lynanne Gutierrez**

### *Policy Director & Legal Counsel*

Lynanne Gutierrez supports Groundwork Ohio's statewide effort to advance quality early learning and healthy development strategies during the prenatal through five period of life that lay a strong foundation for Ohio kids, families and communities by leading the development and implementation of Groundwork's policy agenda, priorities and strategies through effective communication, advocacy, research and data analysis. Lynanne manages the Groundwork Ohio policy team and key policy initiatives supported by state and national partnerships and coalitions. A dedicated child advocate committed to equitable outcomes for all Ohio children, Lynanne has been the project lead for the Ohio Early Childhood Race & Rural Equity project and Groundwork's new coalition driven prenatal-to-three focused initiative, Ready, Set, Soar Ohio. Lynanne previously worked as a Policy Associate for Voices for Ohio Children. Prior to her advocacy work at Voices, Lynanne was in private law practice for five years. She specialized in child and family law, serving some of central Ohio's most vulnerable children and families. It was during this time that it became clear to her that in order to best serve children and families, more emphasis must be placed on prevention and systemic change. Before becoming an attorney, Lynanne served as a Senior Legislative Aide in the Ohio Senate. Lynanne has a bachelor's degree from The Ohio State University and a Juris Doctorate from Capital Law School.



## Julia Hohner

### *Communications & Development Director*

Julia Hohner supports Groundwork by advancing its mission through strategic communication and development initiatives. Julia has significantly developed Groundwork's digital footprint including its website, social media and a robust and growing list of weekly and monthly external communications. Julia also works to enhance Groundwork's communications efforts through the development of print and digital resources to further engage child advocates, legislators, and the press in Groundwork's advocacy efforts. Julia leads Groundwork's body of work focused on Ohio's early childhood workforce. She also contributes to Groundwork's development efforts through grant research, project impact reporting, and ongoing organizational efforts to ensure long-term sustainability and efficiency for Groundwork Ohio. Before Groundwork, Julia worked as a Graduate Assistant in John Carroll University's Center for Service and Social Action. Her efforts focused on managing several service learning opportunities for John Carroll students including the Carroll Reads Early Literacy, We the People, and Youth for Justice programs facilitated at schools in Cleveland and East Cleveland, as well as a social emotional learning program facilitated with residents of the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center. Prior to her time at John Carroll, Julia worked as a Retreat Associate at CrossRoads Ministry, an urban justice-based retreat center in Louisville, Kentucky. Julia holds a B.S. and an M.A. in Nonprofit Administration from John Carroll University.

## Julia Jackels

### *Policy Associate*

Julia supports the development and implementation of Groundwork's policy agenda, priorities and strategies through effective communication, advocacy, research, and data analysis. Prior to joining Groundwork Ohio, Julia served as the Legislative Assistant to the Government Relations team at Roetzel & Andress where she provided legislative support on state-level issues impacting clients. Previously, Julia served as an intern in the District Office of Former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, John Boehner. Julia holds a B.A. in Political Science from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

## JP Design

### *(Jennifer Peters)*

Jennifer brings design implementation to briefs and marketing materials for Groundwork. Her designs for the Ohio Early Childhood Race & Rural Equity Report helped to translate the massive amount of data into a cohesive and impactful advocacy story through her graphic and organizational expertise for quality communication. With a diverse background of marketing and design experiences, she utilizes inherent passion and energy combined with industry expertise to produce a variety of projects. Jen received a BFA from Miami University in 2003 and has also been an instructor of visual communication courses at Columbus College of Art & Design. JP's mission is to provide visual and verbal solutions that meet the appropriate creative and strategic objectives of each, unique client.

## Special thanks to Groundwork Ohio's Advisory Committee

*for representing the broad and  
diverse needs of children among  
the communities, professions and  
experiences across the state of Ohio.*



*Groundwork Ohio Advisory Committee participating in Implicit Bias Training facilitated by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University.*

A faint, light green architectural floor plan is visible in the upper right corner of the page. It shows various rooms, corridors, and structural elements, including labels like 'MASTER BED', 'BATH', and 'KITCHEN'.

**Join Us.**

# Reflections on Ohio Early Childhood Race & Rural Equity 2020

Groundwork  
OHIO



[GroundworkOhio.org](https://GroundworkOhio.org)



@GroundworkOhio

**SHANNON JONES**  
*Executive Director*  
[SJones@GroundworkOhio.org](mailto:SJones@GroundworkOhio.org)

**LYNANNE GUTIERREZ**  
*Policy Director & Legal Counsel*  
[LYolf@GroundworkOhio.org](mailto:LYolf@GroundworkOhio.org)

**JULIA HOHNER**  
*Communications & Policy Associate*  
[JHohner@GroundworkOhio.org](mailto:JHohner@GroundworkOhio.org)

**172 E. State Street, Suite 400 • Columbus, Ohio 43215**  
*Groundwork Ohio is a fiscally-sponsored project of Community Initiatives*