

# **Q: Why are local policymakers all around Ohio & the nation sounding an alarm about the child care crisis?**



**A:** Because they understand from the ground level that a lack of affordable, accessible child care is detrimental to the development of our youngest children, the strength of our local businesses and economies, and the future of our communities.

Ohio's lack of affordable child care results in → **an estimated \$5.48 BILLION** → **ANNUAL LOSS** for Ohio's economy.<sup>1</sup>

## Why local governments should invest in and prioritize child care:

### Return on Investment

For every dollar spent on early childhood programs, cities and counties see a return of \$4 to \$9 in social and economic benefits. Benefits include increased tax revenue, reduced spending on social services, and long-term gains in workforce productivity.<sup>2</sup>

**ROI:**

**\$4 - \$9**

for every dollar spent on early childhood programs

### Business Attraction and Retention

Cities and counties with access to affordable, reliable, quality child care are more attractive to businesses, which seek to locate in areas where their employees can find quality care. This is especially critical for attracting and retaining younger workers and families in your community.<sup>3</sup>



### Sources:

1. Untapped Potential in Ohio: How Child Care Impacts Ohio's Workforce Productivity and The State's Economy, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2025

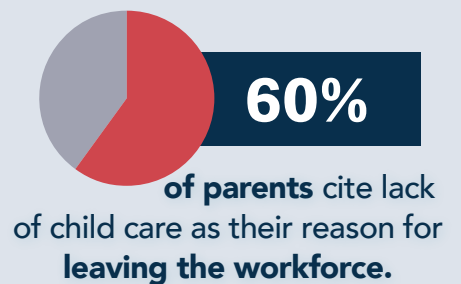
2. In Brief: Early Childhood Program Effectiveness, Harvard University Center on the Developing Child, 2007

“What we have found is that 48% of small businesses have difficulty recruiting workers because they can’t find the child care that they need. Child care is one of the building blocks of our economy.”  
– Commissioner Carolyn Rice, Montgomery County

“...what we spend down the road in lost workers and lost time and not having...the talent we need in the workforce with women. We pay far more than what we’re going to pay for good child care.”  
– Mayor Peggy Lehner, City of Kettering

## Workforce Participation

We know that the economic success of cities and counties is linked to a productive workforce. However, the gap between needed and available child care options is creating a workforce crisis that presents intense challenges to businesses on which local economies and communities rely. Affordable, accessible child care allows parents and guardians to enter and remain in the workforce.<sup>4</sup>



## Strengthening Communities Today and in the Future.

Local governments shoulder the costs when children and families are left behind. The impact hits line items in your city, county, and school budgets. Kids who are less likely to be kindergarten-ready are more likely to need special education and intervention services in school—which is governed by your elected school boards. Children who are less likely to graduate high school are more likely to rely on public assistance or be involved in the juvenile justice system—which counties fund and administer. Young people who are less likely to thrive are more likely to require human services, engage with the criminal justice system, or put increased pressure on public safety budgets—costs that fall squarely on local taxpayers.

High-quality early childhood programs are not just good for kids and families—they’re fiscally responsible. Investments in young children are some of the most effective tools local leaders have to stabilize long-term budgets and strengthen the community for generations.

When children are supported with **high-quality early childhood programs...**

### **MORE likely to:**

- Be kindergarten ready
- Graduate from high school
- Earn more over their lifetime
- Enjoy better health

### **LESS likely to:**

- Be held back a grade
- Rely on public services
- Engage in criminal behavior

# Q: How can local leaders increase access to affordable, quality child care?

## A:

**WE NEED YOU TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION.**

By taking action to solve the child care crisis, Ohio's businesses—and our economy—can grow and children and families can thrive.



### ACT LOCAL

*Local governments have the power to create environments where families can thrive, economies can grow, and children can reach their fullest potential.*

*Explore investment of locally-held resources into systems that support child care.*

*Bring a multisector group of people together to discuss challenges and opportunities.*



### ADVOCATE STATEWIDE

*Families can't do it alone. Cities and counties need the state of Ohio to step up and embrace the importance of investments in child care.*

*Fortunately, mayors, county commissioners, and other local government leaders can help influence state government and the upcoming budget process, which will determine child care funding in our state.*

Groundwork Ohio is growing its coalition of local policymakers committed to solving the child care crisis.

Together, we will collaborate on local solutions and join forces to ensure the needs of cities and counties are understood at the state level.

**Join the National Conversation:**

Connect with other local policymakers to benefit YOUNG CHILDREN and FAMILIES.  
Build Stronger Communities.



Learn More at  
[GroundworkOhio.org](https://GroundworkOhio.org)



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