



Q: How do we create economic prosperity for women in Ohio??



A: Ohio must invest to provide affordable, accessible child care options.

Unaffordable, inaccessible child care in Ohio is holding back women and young children. The child care crisis is a women's economic prosperity crisis.

Women, specifically mothers, pay the price.

Female-headed households are more than three times as likely as all Ohio households to live in poverty, and having children in the household increases the likelihood of living in poverty by four-fold.¹

Female-headed households make up

32%

of all Ohio households...



YET account for

59%

of the households in poverty.

Child care challenges hold women back from workforce participation.

Child care challenges hold women back from workforce participation. 61% of Ohio mothers with children under five who do not currently work full time say they would go back to work if they had access to high quality and affordable child care.² Labor force participation of mothers with children under six was 68%.³



60%

Ohio mothers want to go back to work if they had access to high quality and affordable child care.

Gender wage gap + unaffordable child care = women cannot thrive.

The average annual cost for one infant's child care in Ohio is \$14,000 annually—nearly \$1,200/month.⁴ However, median earnings for women in the labor force full-time year-round in Ohio is \$52,286.⁵

On average, child care for an infant is



25% of the median earnings

of a mom **working full time.**

Ohio provides a low level of support to families compared to other states in the U.S.

Ohio ranks among the lowest for eligibility for Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) for kids 0 to 5 at 145% of the Federal Poverty Level.⁶ In 2025, that was \$38,652/year for a family of three. Nearly every other state has raised funding levels to support more families.⁷

Ohio:

rank among the **LOWEST** in the nation for child care support to low-income households.



I haven't been able to return to work because I cannot find suitable child care."

– Mom from West Central Ohio

For many Ohioans, child care is simply unavailable.

More than half of Ohio families live in a child care desert, where the number of young children far exceeds the available licensed child care slots. In Ohio, child care deserts are most prevalent in rural areas.⁸



55%

of Ohio children have inadequate access to child care.

To put this all into perspective...

We know increased state investments in child care is a game-changer for both women and Ohio's economy.⁹ That money helps children and families, and in turn contributes to the state's economic growth.¹⁰

Reliable access to child care can generate an additional

\$79,000

in lifetime earnings for mothers.

INSTEAD:

Ohio loses approx. **\$5.48 Billion** ↓
per year due to child care issues.

Investing in child care is an investment in women.

EMPOWERING WOMEN:

Quality child care enables mothers to further their education, pursue careers, and achieve financial independence and provide for their families. This empowerment leads to more diverse and innovative workplaces.

SUPPORTING CHILD DEVELOPMENT:

Early childhood is a critical period for cognitive, social, and emotional development. Access to quality child care ensures that children receive nurturing and stimulating care to thrive.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES:

When women and children flourish, so do our communities. Higher employment rates, increased productivity, and stronger family units contribute to the overall well-being and resilience of our society.

SOURCES:

- ^{1.} [The Center for Community Solutions, the Status of Women, 2023](#)
- ^{2.} [Groundwork Ohio Child Care Poll, 2024](#)
- ^{3.} [Current Population Survey \(CPS\) Annual Social and Economic Supplement \(ASEC\), sponsored jointly by U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024](#)
- ^{4.} [Child Care Aware, Child Care in America: Price and Supply, 2025](#)
- ^{5.} [Neilsberg Research, Ohio Income by Gender, 2025](#)
- ^{6.} [National Women's Law Center, Warning Signs: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2025, pg 32, May 2026](#)
- ^{7.} [Ohio Department of Children & Youth, Early Care & Education Technical Assistance](#)
- ^{8.} [Center for American Progress, America's Licensed Child Care Deserts, 2026](#)
- ^{9.} [The First Five Years Fund, The Child Care Crisis, 2022](#)
- ^{10.} [U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2025](#)

Q:

How can you help address the child care crisis?

A:

We need you to be part of the solution, not just for your family, but for every family in Ohio. Your support is crucial. By investing in child care, you are not only supporting individual families but also contributing to a larger movement for societal change.

JOIN THE WOMEN'S COALITION



ADVOCATE

Use your voice to advocate for policies that support affordable and accessible child care.

We know you don't need yet another job, so Groundwork will make it easy to amplify your voice by bringing advocacy opportunities your way.



ENGAGE

Get involved with Groundwork and local organizations dedicated to child care and early education.

We can help you make these connections, share your expertise, and help raise awareness about the importance of this issue.



INVEST

Consider directing philanthropic efforts towards child care initiatives.

Your financial support can provide critical advocacy dollars to ensure that Ohio's policymakers are held accountable to solving the child care crisis.

This is the opportunity to come together as a coalition of women-serving organizations committed to addressing the child care crisis.

We'll do the following:

- Collaborate with women-serving organizations and initiatives from around the state to identify shared priorities.
- Exchange valuable insights and experiences to address child care needs.
- Be part of the policy agenda conversation with a combined voice.
- Increase visibility of the child care crisis's impact on women in Ohio.
- Raise the urgency of this issue to policymakers.

Learn More & Join the Coalition:

Together, we can raise the volume on the call for public policy that invests in child care.



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Learn More at
GroundworkOhio.org



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