



BIG VOICES for Little Kids



Expand Access & Better Connect Families with Critical Resources that Improve the Health of Mothers & Babies

Ohio families are strong; however, they are held back from reaching their full potential due to weakness in the systems that serve them. As a state, we have an opportunity to better connect families with young children, particularly those most at risk of poor outcomes, to the critical resources and programs that aim to improve maternal and infant health.

What does the data tell us? ¹

Far too many children are living in poverty.

And Ohio's youngest children of color, ages 0-5, are much more likely to experience poverty than their white peers.

In 2019, 1 in 5 Ohio children, ages 0-5, lived in poverty...



21% below 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL)

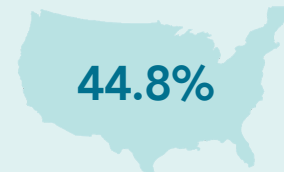
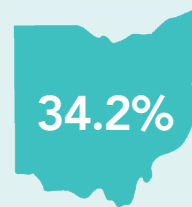
...1 in 10 lived in extreme poverty.



10.2% below 50% of the FPL

Children are going hungry: 3 in 10 young children in Ohio live in a household where nutritious food is not always affordable. These percentages are higher for children of color.

Only 34% of eligible children, ages 1-4, received WIC benefits in 2019.



Families of color are disproportionately impacted by the cost of housing.

Families of color with children ages 0-5 are more likely than white families to spend 30% or more of their monthly income on rent.

46.7%



Black, non-Hispanic

Percent of children, ages 0-5, who lived in households where 30% or more of monthly income is spent on rent

29.0%



Hispanic

9.4%



White, non-Hispanic

Ohio overall 17.1%



“ I am unable to work due to my child’s needs. So, we will always be in poverty because we will always be a one-income family.”

– Groundwork Ohio Family Action Network Parent

“ I am now stuck in the vicious cycle of wanting to work and wanting to be productive, but without access to affordable healthcare and child care, I will not be able to cater to my children.”

– Groundwork Ohio Family Action Network Parent

To improve connection of families with critical resources that improve the health of mothers and babies, policymakers should:



Expand access to **safe, stable housing** for pregnant and new mothers through expanding Healthy Beginnings at Home.



Invest in strategies to increase participation in and expand WIC and SNAP.



Lessen the tax burden on families through eliminating sales tax on **critical infant supplies**.

Sources

1. [Groundwork Ohio’s Early Childhood Dashboard \(2023\)](#)

