A restoration of $47 million in Senate cuts

Medicaid

THE FY 24-25 STATE BUDGET & THE PATH AHEAD

Thanks to YOUR efforts, the final budget included:

• A restoration of $47 million in Senate cuts to the investments proposed by the Governor and Ohio House of Representatives, ending state budget deliberations with $287 million in new investments:

1. $50 million for child care infrastructure grants to increase infant and toddler child care capacity in communities with high infant mortality rates.
2. $124 million for preschool, a strong commitment led by the Governor and bolstered by the House that will serve more than 11,525 additional children.
3. A line item veto by Governor DeWine that preserves Ohio's quality child care system by preventing the exception of most licensed, publicly funded child care programs from meeting Step Up to Quality rating requirements.
4. $101.5 million to support Help Me Grow home visiting and $32.2 million to support infant vitality efforts.
5. Continuous Medicaid coverage for babies and toddlers, birth through age three, keeping Ohio's youngest Medicaid-eligible children accessing consistent health care services.
6. A path forward for Medicaid reimbursement of doula services so Medicaid-eligible pregnant women and their babies can benefit from this critical, non-clinical support.

For a full list of budget details, visit groundworkohio.org/voices

THE FY 24-25 STATE BUDGET & THE PATH AHEAD

Small Steps BIG MOMENTUM

On the path to making Ohio the best place to be a child

In the past year, more people than ever joined together to push for increased investment in young children and families.

Access to support and care enables children to be healthy and ready to learn, and it empowers parents and professionals to work and earn.

This strengthens Ohio and its workforce, today and tomorrow.

Ohio kids and families need us to keep going. Let’s keep pushing this momentum forward, TOGETHER.

SAVE THE DATE!

Join us on Thursday, November 2nd

MOMENTUM

A Movement-Building Institute
A restoration of $47 million in Senate cuts to Medicaid.

The FY 24-25 State Budget & the Path Ahead:

Thanks to investments in young children and families.

It’s a step forward and a lot to build on. Together, we will push for investments in children, families, and the state’s workforce.

On the path to making Ohio the best place to be a child...

Small Steps

Policy Progress Report

Dear Friends,

Now that I’ve had some time to reflect on (and recover from!) the grueling budget process, I am genuinely invigorated by what we accomplished together. Yes, the final version of our state’s operating budget falls short of what Ohio’s young children and the families that care for them need. Yes, it falls short of what early childhood professionals deserve. And yes, it falls short of what our business and community leadership demands. But the progress I’m talking about is so much bigger than the hard-fought— albeit incremental—budget “wins” we rightfully celebrate. What this budget process showed me is that Ohioans both understand and wholeheartedly support the evidence-informed policies necessary to make Ohio the best place to be a young child.

Simply put, together we have been on a journey to build a movement on behalf of all children, our families, and our communities, and the evidence of its growth is everywhere.

The Governor’s proposed budget included many new policies and investments to benefit young children. The Ohio House’s version of the budget also included thoughtful, child-centered input. And although frustrating that many of those ideas didn’t make it into the final budget, it is evidence that our legislative education efforts are working.

We also saw an increase in professional and business organizations including child care and early learning in their own policy priorities, thereby lending their trusted influence to our cause. Further, Ohio saw an increase in press coverage on child care, early learning, mental health, and the unique needs of pregnant women, infants, and toddlers. And we saw a substantial increase in the engagement of parents who desire to share their real-life challenges, as well as their hopes and dreams for their children. People from all walks of life are using their collective voices.

To everyone who worked with us on this budget—thank you. We know it wasn’t easy, but you did make a difference! And no matter what, please don’t stop speaking out, speaking up, and engaging with us. Rest assured, we are here to support you and are already preparing for the next steps. In the meantime, our growing momentum will become a galvanizing movement on behalf of all children that cannot be denied.

Warm personal regards,

Shannon Jones
President & CEO, Groundwork Ohio

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Creating change in our state requires coordination with a single focus. Our role is to collaborate with partners like you to ensure that policymakers and leaders act on behalf of babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families.

Groundwork Ohio orchestrates these 5 components of advancing change to empower advocates of young children.

1. CONTEXT
   Accurate data and expert insights provide a comprehensive view of gaps and opportunities.

2. CONNECTION
   Programs that bring people together to increase engagement and amplify calls to action.

3. COMMUNICATION
   Media and outreach to elevate the issues.

4. COALITION
   Partnerships with organizations and businesses to elevate shared priorities.

5. CHAMPIONS
   Voices representing young children to shape the policies that will directly impact them, including parents, child care providers and early childhood educators, businesses, and health care leaders.
For 18 months, Groundwork Ohio worked across the 5 components of change to inform the conversation as policymakers deliberated on the Ohio biennial budget. Every step was part of building a movement on behalf of young children and families in Ohio. The efforts of our staff, together with partners, stakeholders, families, and advocates, resulted in higher-than-ever press coverage, outreach to policymakers, and convening to show diverse, wide-reaching support.

**2022**

**AMPLIFIED THE VOICES OF PARENTS, FAMILIES, & EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS**
- Filled the Statehouse with 700 CHILDREN & FAMILIES to launch the Family Action Network.
- Convened experts, practitioners, and passionate advocates for advisory councils as part of each of our Centers of Excellence: Early Learning, Family Voice, Maternal & Young Child Health.

**CONVOKED ADVOCATES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN FROM ACROSS OHIO INDUSTRIES**
- Hosted the Vote for Ohio Kids Leadership Forum: Moving from Crisis to Prevention with 800 ATTENDEES and the only statewide forum featuring both gubernatorial candidates to hear their proposals for addressing the needs of young children in Ohio.

**2022 MEDIA NEWS ARTICLE COVERAGE:**
- **March 29**
  - Columbus Dispatch Op-ed: "Investment in child care key to economic growth"  
- **June 18**
  - Columbus Dispatch Op-ed: "7-in-10 parents worry about kids’ mental health, boosting the crisis is crucial"  
- **October 30**
  - Cleveland.com Op-Ed: "As you mark your ballot, consider Ohio’s children, the key to Ohio’s future"

**PROVIDED INSIGHTS TO POLICYMAKERS ON WHAT YOUNG CHILDREN & FAMILIES NEED TO THRIVE**
- Distributed five issue-based fact sheets illuminating challenges facing Ohio’s families and 88 FACT SHEETS (one per county) on early childhood stats.
- Published a first-of-its-kind Early Childhood Dashboard creating a thorough analysis of more than 60 METRICS ACROSS SIX DOMAINS.
- Created fact sheets on the State of Babies, Kindergarten Readiness, and WIC accessibility.

**ENSURED OHIO POLICYMAKERS HEARD THE LIVED EXPERIENCES & EXPERT INSIGHTS TO CALL FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD INVESTMENTS**
- Provided & Coordinated public testimony from staff, family advocates, and partners 59 TIMES.

**2023**

**AMPHLIFIED THE VOICES OF PARENTS, FAMILIES, & EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS**
- Orchestrated Big Voices for Little Kids Advisory Day at the Statehouse with 400 ADVOCATES featuring legislative awards, a legislative panel, and meetings with nearly 80 STATE LEGISLATORS.
- Presented advocacy training curriculum and materials to hundreds of participants at our annual advocacy day.
- Reached 43,925 OHIOANS with advocacy alert messaging.
- Engaged our network to send 5,202 MESSAGES to policymakers.
- Rallied with hundreds of Ohioans and dozens of health and human service agencies during budget deliberations.

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**2023 MEDIA NEWS ARTICLE COVERAGE:**
- **January 25**
  - Released Early Childhood Dashboard
- **February 15**
  - Budget Bill entered the Ohio House as House Bill 33
- **March 2**
  - Released poll data showing child care funding as key to Ohio’s economic strength; attained media coverage on needs of Ohio’s children and families
- **March 8**
  - Held Big Voices for Little Kids Advocacy Day event
- **March 14**
  - Early Childhood Educator panel convened to testify in the House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
- **March 21**
  - Testified at the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary & Secondary Education
- **March 23**
  - Testified at the House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
- **March 28**
  - Testified at the House Finance Committee
- **March 29**
  - Released open letter to call for investment in child care signed by nearly 40 business leaders and organizations
- **April 19**
  - Testified at the House Finance Committee
- **April 26**
  - House Bill 33 passed the House
- **May 3**
  - Sub-House Bill 33 Recommended to the Senate Finance Committee
- **May 11**
  - Released open letter to legislators signed by dozens of child care organizations
- **May 12**
  - Testified at the Senate Medicaid Committee
- **May 16**
  - Testified at the Senate Finance Committee
- **May 19**
  - Ohio Chamber of Commerce: "Down to Business" podium on child care affordability & availability
- **May 24**
  - Spoke on child care at Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce’s Legislative Day
- **June 7**
  - Released open letter to legislators signed by 1000+ parents and advocates
- **June 8**
  - Testified at the Senate Finance Committee
- **June 14**
  - Delivered recap of the three open letters to General Assembly
- **June 15**
  - Sub-House Bill 33 passed by Ohio Senate
- **June 16**
  - The State of Ohio: Childcare panel discussion
- **June 20**
  - Delivered fact sheet on State of Ohio Babies to General Assembly
- **June 21**
  - Ohio House voted not to concur with the Senate budget; bill moved to conference committee
- **June 21**
  - Co-organizer in Dayton for Ohio’s Future with hundreds of advocates at the Statehouse
- **June 22**
  - Delivered fact sheet on Kindergarten Readiness in Ohio to General Assembly
- **June 29**
  - Final Budget approved by General Assembly
- **July 3**
  - Governor DeWine signs FY24-25 budget

**GROUNDWORK OHIO’S MEDIA STRATEGY RAISED THE PROFILE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD & CHILD CARE ISSUES**
- Cataloged 36 MEDIA STORIES
- Published op-eds in major metropolitan newspapers on recommendations for the FY24-25 budget, current poll data, and workforce issues—engaging policymakers and business leaders as co-authors.

**2023 CHALLENGE**

**WHAT YOUNG CHILDREN, POLICYMAKERS ON PROVIDE INSIGHTS TO MEDIA & COMMUNICATION**
- Engaged policymakers on what young children, families need to thrive
- Provided & Coordinated public testimony from staff, family advocates, and partners 59 TIMES.

**2023 CONTEXT**

**WHAT YOUNG CHILDREN, POLICYMAKERS ON PROVIDE INSIGHTS TO POLICYMAKERS ON WHAT YOUNG CHILDREN & FAMILIES NEED TO THRIVE**
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**2023 COMMUNICATION**

**CHALLENGE**

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**2022**

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**2023**

**CHILDREN CANNOT ADVOCATE FOR THEMSELVES**
- Orchestrated Big Voices for Little Kids Advocacy Day at the Statehouse with 400 ADVOCATES featuring legislative awards, a legislative panel, and meetings with nearly 80 STATE LEGISLATORS.
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**SHOWED ALIGNMENT BETWEEN BUSINESSES, EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS, & FAMILIES TO INVEST IN CHILD CARE**
- Delivered letter in person to ALL POLICYMAKERS with nearly 40 STATEWIDE business leaders and organizations urging the legislature to prioritize investments in child care. (Also a full-page ad in the Columbus Dispatch.)
- Provided another full-page ad and letter to the legislature signed by three dozen child care organizations and an additional 700 CHILD CARE PROVIDERS online.
- Concluded an impactful series with a final letter and ad signed by nearly 1,000 OHIO PARENTS IN PRINT and 800 ONLINE, asking policymakers to stand up for Ohio’s children and families.

**2023 MEDIA NEWS ARTICLE COVERAGE:**
- May 31: Columbus Dispatch Op-Ed: "Ohio’s parent to Ohio’s kid: Mike DeWine can change that.
- March 15: Cleveland.com: "DeWine budget calls for $150M in childcare grants and $1.2B in work and early education funding.
- June 16: Cleveland.com: "OhioCare: $150M in childcare grants.

**TRAVELED TO ALL CORNERS OF OHIO MEETING WITH PARTNERS, FAMILIES, & POLICYMAKERS**
- Held and supported over 100 MEETINGS WITH POLICYMAKERS to provide issue expertise, and experiences from families, professionals, and businesses.

**2023 PROVIDE INSIGHTS TO POLICYMAKERS ON WHAT YOUNG CHILDREN & FAMILIES NEED TO THRIVE**
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**2023 COALITION**
- Created 105 TIMES.
- 59 TIMES.
- 36 TIMES.

**COMMUNICATION**
- 105 TIMES.
- 36 TIMES.
- 59 TIMES.

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**CONNECTED**
- 105 TIMES.
- 36 TIMES.
- 59 TIMES.

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**2022 CONCLUSION**
- 105 TIMES.
- 36 TIMES.
- 59 TIMES.

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**2022 CHAMPIONS**
- 105 TIMES.
- 36 TIMES.
- 59 TIMES.

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**2022 POLICYMAKERS**
- 105 TIMES.
- 36 TIMES.
- 59 TIMES.

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**2022 MEDIA**
- 105 TIMES.
- 36 TIMES.
- 59 TIMES.
A restoration of $47 million in Senate cuts to Medicaid & THE PATH AHEAD

Your efforts, included in the final budget, have resulted in significant investments in children, families, and the state’s workforce. It’s a step forward and a lot to build on. Together, we will push for investments and reforms that will directly impact them, children to shape the policies, systems and opportunities.

For a full list of budget details, visit groundworkohio.org/voices

Accurate data and expert knowledge. The Governor and Ohio House of Representatives bolstered by the strong commitment led by the Governor and DeWine that will serve more than 1.1 million children in communities with limited resources and capacity in infant and toddler child care programs.

A path forward for increased investment in young children and families.

In the past year, more people than ever joined together to push for increased investment in young children and families.

Access to support and care enables children to be healthy and ready to learn, and it empowers parents and professionals to work and earn.

This strengthens Ohio and its workforce, today and tomorrow.

Ohio kids and families need us to keep going. Let’s keep pushing this momentum forward, TOGETHER.

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Dear Friends,

Much bigger than the hard-fought state’s operating budget falls short of the progress I’m talking about is so clear to me. Yes, the final version of our budget process, I am genuinely inspired by what we accomplished—albeit incremental—rightfully celebrate. What this budget process showed me is that Ohioans both understand and wildly support the evidence-informed policies and priorities we advocate for. It is time to celebrate with pride to inspire our growing and ever-growing movement on behalf of all children.

I know it wasn’t easy, but you did make a difference! And no matter what, the momentum will become a galvanizing force. For a full list of budget details, visit groundworkohio.org/voices

Simply put, together we have been on a long journey to build a movement for early childhood leaders. Our role is to collaborate with partners like you to ensure that policymakers and leaders act on behalf of babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. We also saw in action in in our growing partnerships and coalitions.

To everyone who worked with us on this budget “wins” we thank you. We know—

Warm personal regards,

Shannon Jones
President & CEO, Groundwork Ohio