



BIG VOICES for Little Kids



Expand Access to Mental Health Services for Mothers & Children

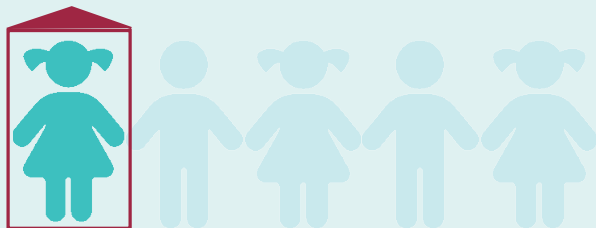
Ohio's youngest children and their families have been facing a mental health crisis, exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is crucial for our state leaders to advance policies that ensure children and the families that care for them have the services and supports that they need to address their mental and behavioral health.

What does the data tell us?¹

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are impacting healthy development: Ohio children who have been exposed to ACEs, such as abuse, neglect, or have a member of their household incarcerated, can face immediate and long-term negative mental and physical health outcomes as a result.

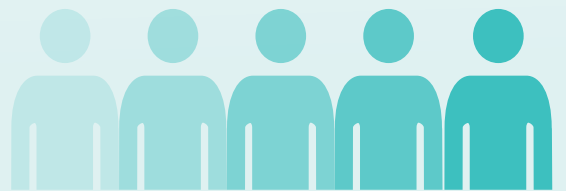
In 2019, nearly 1 in 5 Ohio children ages 0-5 were exposed to two or more ACEs. Black, non-Hispanic and Hispanic/Latino children faced moderate disparities compared to white, non-Hispanic children in their exposure to ACEs, and children in families living below the Federal Poverty Level faced large disparities in their exposure to ACEs as compared to children from families across other socioeconomic statuses.

2+
ACEs



Ohio children ages 0-5

There are not enough mental health service providers for young children: Between 2020 – 2022, there were only 6.4 mental health service providers who were credentialed providers per 10,000 children, serving children ages 0-5.



10,000 : 6.4

Home visiting is limited: There are also challenges existing for pregnant women, new mothers, and infants in accessing community-based programs that support maternal and infant health outcomes, such as voluntary evidence-based home visiting. For example, in 2019, only 17% of families who needed home visiting services received them.



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“ We need trainings and classes to educate facility and home caregivers on how to care for children efficiently and with the mental health of the child as a number one priority.”

– Groundwork Ohio Family Action Network Parent

To improve access to mental health services for mothers and children, policymakers should:



Expand access to **Help Me Grow** evidence-based home visiting programs.



Expand the reach of **depression screening tools** helping mothers connect to necessary care and improving their mental wellness.



Improve care coordination for babies with complex needs including **creating access to new and enhanced evidence-based mental health services** for babies and their caregivers.



Expand access to **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation** that contribute to positive outcomes for children facing mental health challenges and promote better mental health into adulthood.



Expand supports for **infant vitality** including crib distribution, smoking cessation programming, behavioral health peer to peer model and implementation of the Alliance for Innovation for Maternal (AIM) health safety bundles.

Sources

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

