



OHIO VOTER POLL

September 30, 2025

On behalf of Groundwork Ohio and the Ohio Head Start Association, Inc., and in partnership with First Five Years Fund, UpONE Insights completed a statewide survey of 600 registered voters in Ohio. The survey was conducted September 8-13, 2025 and has a credibility interval of 4%.

Key Findings:

1. **Nearly 80% of Ohio voters and voters across the nation say the ability of working parents to find and afford quality child care is either in a “state of crisis” or is a “major problem.”**
2. **The child care crisis drives the workforce crisis.** More than one-third (34%) of Ohioans say they or someone they know would consider entering the workforce if quality child care were available. Among Ohio parents, 56% would consider entering the workforce if quality child care were available.
3. **Affordability tops the issue agenda in Ohio.** Over half (54%) of Ohio voters say they want to see a lower cost of living. Everyday things—like gas, energy, utility costs (63%) and the price of food (62%) are the most concerning to Ohioans.

Ohioans report the following financial challenges:

	OHIO VOTERS
Unable to pay their complete credit card bill every month	44%
Struggling to pay their rent or mortgage	33%
Struggling to feed their family	25%
Putting off expanding or starting a family because of the cost of child care	20%

Among Ohio *parents*:

	OHIO PARENTS
Not able to save money or get ahead financially due to child care costs	34%
Struggling to pay for child care costs	26%
Cutting back on other household essentials to afford child care	25%
Having trouble finding or keeping a job due to child care issues	11%

In 2024, for center-based care, annual infant care in Ohio averaged \$13,780 and annual toddler care averaged \$12,376.¹

4. **Most Ohioans believe federal funding for child care programs is a good public investment and would like to see it increase.** Fully two-thirds or 66% of Ohioans and 69% of voters across the nation believe federal funding for child care and early learning programs for low-income working families is a good investment of taxpayer money. Among Ohio parents, 74% believe this is a good investment. A strong majority (54%) of Ohio voters would like to see federal funding for quality child care programs for working families increase. Among Ohio parents, 69% support increased federal funding.
5. **Most Ohio voters support the expansion of federal child tax credits in the OBBB and they want Congress to go further to help working families find and afford quality child care.** 60% of Ohio voters and 72% of voters across the nation support the expansion of federal child care tax credits that were recently included in the One Big Beautiful Bill. But voters want Congress to go further. There's strong support among Ohio voters (69%) and voters across the nation (74%), for taking further steps to help working families find and afford quality child care.
6. **Ohio voters strongly support Head Start and oppose the elimination of Head Start funding.**
 - Nearly 80% of Ohio voters support Head Start.
 - Two-thirds (66%) of Ohioans oppose eliminating funding for Head Start.
 - Half (50%) of Ohio voters and voters across the nation say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate for Congress who voted to eliminate funding or reduce the amount of children in Head Start.
7. **There is also strong support for child care proposals being talked about at the state level in Ohio:**
 - 70% support an increased state investment in publicly funded child care so that more working families have access.
 - 68% support investing state dollars to expand access to Head Start programs to low-income working families.
 - 83% support providing tax incentives and other benefits to Ohio businesses which provide or help their employees find and afford quality child care programs.
 - 73% support creating a new state refundable Child Tax Credit, a tax benefit for families with children which can be used on any household expense.
 - 76% support creating a state-funded paid leave program in Ohio so that working parents have paid leave for the first six weeks of the baby's life since children cannot enter licensed child care until they are at least 6 weeks of age.
8. **These beliefs influence the decisions of Ohio voters.** By more than a two-to-one margin (36%), Ohioans say they'd be more likely to vote for a candidate of the opposite political party if they advanced policies to help working families afford quality child care.

¹ Child Care Aware of America (2024): [Child Care Affordability in Ohio](#).

About Groundwork Ohio

Groundwork Ohio is a nonpartisan public-policy research and advocacy organization that champions high-quality early learning and healthy development strategies from the prenatal period to age 5, that lay a strong foundation for Ohio kids, families, and communities. We advance quality early childhood systems in Ohio by engaging, educating, and mobilizing diverse stakeholders and strategic partners to promote data driven and evidence-based early childhood policies. Learn more at groundworkohio.org.

About the Ohio Head Start Association, Inc.

Head Start—the nation’s premier early learning program—is child-centered, family-focused, comprehensive, and community-based. In Ohio, it helps parents participate in the workforce while preparing children to succeed in school and beyond. The Ohio Head Start Association, Inc. (OHSAI) represents Ohio’s Head Start grantees, staff, and families. OHSAI works to keep the Head Start community informed, build collaborative partnerships, and engage with state and federal coalitions to support this proven investment in children and families that promotes healthy development, strengthens family stability, and contributes to Ohio’s economic vitality. Learn more at ohsai.org.

About First Five Years Fund

The first five years last forever. At First Five Years Fund, we work to protect, prioritize, and build bipartisan support for early learning and child care programs at the federal level. Reliable, affordable, and high-quality early learning and child care can be transformative, not only enhancing a child’s prospects for a brighter future but also bolstering working parents and fostering economic stability nationwide. Learn more at www.ffyf.org.

About UpONE Insights

UpONE Insights is a leader in providing both quantitative and qualitative research to shape tomorrow’s narratives through understanding data. Founded by Robert Blizzard, UpONE Insights is at the forefront of modern polling and research. Learn more at upONEinsights.com.