

MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: NEIL NEWHOUSE/JARRETT LEWIS/TOMMY DOW
PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES
CC: LYNANNE GUTIERREZ, PRESIDENT & CEO, GROUNDWORK OHIO
SUBJECT: OHIO STATEWIDE SURVEY: KEY FINDINGS
DATE: JANUARY 23, 2025

On behalf of Groundwork Ohio, Public Opinion Strategies completed a statewide survey of 800 registered voters and an oversample of 484 parents with children ages five and younger in Ohio. The survey was conducted December 5-15, 2024, and has a credibility interval of $\pm 3.95\%$ for the registered voter sample and $\pm 5.08\%$ for the parent oversample.

KEY FINDINGS

- 1. The economic issues faced by Americans over the last several years have hit parents of young children especially hard.***

Approximately one-half of Ohioans (51%) and parents with children five and younger (44%) rate their own financial situation as only fair or poor. And, over a third of parents with children five and younger (34%) share they have been having serious problems paying their rent or mortgage. Nearly half of parents with children five and younger (47%) share they are having serious problems paying their credit card bills over the last few months.
- 2. For Ohio parents, child care is difficult to access and afford.***

Almost half of parents with children five and younger (49%) believe child care is difficult to find. Further, most parents with children five and younger (51%) believe the availability of high quality and affordable child care has gotten worse over the last few years. When it comes to the cost of child care, these parents (73%) overwhelmingly believe child care is expensive.
- 3. To most Ohioans – especially parents – the linkage between child care and the state’s economy is undeniable.***

Overwhelming majorities of Ohio voters (86%) and parents with young children (90%) agree that increasing access to high-quality childcare will help strengthen the state’s economy and workers. Similarly, majorities of voters (53%) and parents (79%) agree that the labor shortages permeating throughout the state are in part due to the lack of quality and affordable child care.

4. *Problems with child care are having an economic impact.*

More than 4-in-10 working parents with children five and younger (44%) say they have had to miss work, leave early or lose focus because of challenges with child care. Further, more than one-third of working parents (41%) say they have lost more than five days of work in the past two years because of a lack of child care. And, among all Ohio working parents, nearly 5-in-10 (49%) have cut back on their work hours to care for their children. Putting this into real numbers using Census data, this means over 1,000,000 working parents in Ohio have cut back their work hours.

5. *There is a clear connection between the state's economy and child care.*

When parents without child care are asked what would they be able to do if they had it, the dominant responses are “work more” and “get a job.” And, parents who have child care agree that child care allows them to “work more.” Further, more than 6-in-10 Ohio moms with children five and younger who do not currently work full time (61%) say they would go back to work if they had access to high quality and affordable child care. Clearly, parents believe that child care allows them to work more, provide for their families and be productive members of Ohio’s economy.

6. *With support extending cross party lines, Ohio voters are overwhelmingly in favor of increasing funding for child care “in order to increase access, affordability, and quality.”*

Nearly 9-in-10 Ohioans (84%) believe the state should increase funding for child care to increase access, affordability, and quality. Notably, this support includes 77% of Republicans, 84% of Independents, and 92% of Democrats.

7. *The support for a Child Tax Credit is wide-ranging and deep.*

By an overwhelming margin, Ohio voters (84%) support creating a Child Tax Credit to provide tax relief to working families, with 83% of Republicans, 78% of Independents, and 94% of Democrats in favor of the relief efforts. The support of these voters edges even higher (87%) when they are informed that both Biden and Trump support expanding the Child Tax Credit.

BOTTOM LINE

The survey results paint a clear picture: Ohio's child care crisis is hitting families hard and voters across the political spectrum recognize both the problem and potential solutions. Parents of young children are facing significant financial strain, with many struggling to pay basic expenses while simultaneously dealing with the high costs and limited availability of quality child care. The overwhelming, bipartisan support for both increased child care funding and a Child Tax Credit suggests Ohioans understand this isn't just a family issue – it's an economic one. There is a clear mandate for state action on child care accessibility and affordability.

Looking ahead, state policymakers have an opportunity to address these challenges with strong public backing. The cross-party consensus on solutions, combined with voters' understanding of child care's role in economic growth, creates a favorable environment for policy change. Ohioans clearly understand and see the need for child care from an economic standpoint. They make the link between increasing access to child care and improving the state's economy – and they support policy changes to make that increased access a reality.