



preschool
PROMISE

Dayton & Montgomery County, Ohio

Ohio House of Representatives
Finance Subcommittee
Substitute House Bill 33
April 19, 2023

Chair Edwards, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the Finance Committee, my name is Robyn Lightcap. I serve as the Executive Director of Preschool Promise, a nonprofit focused on supporting young children and the early care and education system in the Dayton Region.

Every week child care is in the news. Fox News. The Washington Post. The New York Times. The last three days the Dayton Daily News ran a three-day in-depth report on the child care crisis. I do not believe there has ever been this much media coverage about child care in our country. We desperately need the State to invest in building a stronger child care system.

In Montgomery County I surveyed the child care administrators and found that they have 300 open positions - which equates to 2,000 children on waiting lists because there are no child care teachers to staff classrooms so parents could actually go to work. The disinvestment in child care creates a vicious cycle of inadequate child care to insufficient workers.

The child care crisis is not going away on its own. I appreciate that the Governor acknowledged this reality by proposing increased eligibility for Publicly Funded Child Care so more parents can afford to work - and I am glad to see that you maintained that increase to 160% of the FPL in your Substitute Bill. However, that only gets us to a place of helping people who make less than \$15.16 an hour - which is still pathetically low. If I am a single mom with one child and I make \$16 an hour, I would not qualify for any help paying for child care, making it next to impossible for me to go to work.

The Governor acknowledged this reality by proposing that \$150M of state ARPA funds also be included in the State budget to support parents who work in critical care jobs and earn less than 200% of the FPL. This means that a single mom with one child who works in a critical care occupation and makes less than \$19 an hour would qualify for help. **However, your Substitute House Bill 33 eliminates this critical part of the Governor's proposal. Please restore it so parents can actually work in the critical front line jobs that have sat vacant for far too long.**

In addition to restoring the \$150M in ARPA (HC2022), I ask that you invest in the entire child care system so that we actually have enough capacity to meet the needs of working parents. There are two amendments, already drafted and ready for your adoption, that will expand capacity for infant and toddler child care and preschool seats. Please include these two amendments in your budget:

1. HC2020: Address the shortage of infant and toddler seats by investing an additional \$30M in grants. In Montgomery County and across the state, infant and toddler child care is most in demand.
2. HC2021: Address the shortage of preschool capacity by investing an additional \$46M in the Ohio Department of Education's early childhood education preschool funding to serve more preschoolers in low-income households. Right now we are missing an estimated one-third to one-half of low-income preschoolers in Ohio's state and federal funded preschool programs. Therefore, it is no surprise that our children are not ready for kindergarten.

I am hopeful you will act with a great sense of urgency on these issues. Then our parents who could actually fill thousands of vacant positions across the state will be able to go to work.

Reference: Dayton Daily News Articles from this week

'Child care crisis' holds back children, parents, economy

<https://www.daytondailynews.com/business/child-care-crisis-holds-back-children-parents-economy/AN3H232XJ5G2LBNW5XCABD2RPY/>

New public money helping child care crisis; Advocates say more is needed

https://www.daytondailynews.com/community/new-public-money-is-helping-child-care-crisis-but-advocates-say-more-is-needed/LNH376JGVNFUHH6UYKCF023H5M/?utm_source=lterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ddn_AfternoonUpdate_6645725

Riverside working mom says daughter is thriving in preschool

<https://www.daytondailynews.com/local/riverside-working-mom-says-daughter-is-thriving-in-preschool/OZZ3KDAU45BMDGFYJDYTYCYEQ/>

'Workforce behind the workforce' challenged by low pay even as child care becomes less affordable

<https://www.daytondailynews.com/business/workforce-behind-the-workforce-challenged-by-low-pay-even-as-child-care-becomes-less-affordable/DHMS7KF4OBFGZH57JHCBIHTOKE/>

