



# **Child Care Access & Capacity in Ohio**

## Ohio County Commissioners Association of Ohio

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December 4, 2024



# ABOUT US

Groundwork Ohio is a committed, **nonpartisan public-policy research and advocacy organization** formed in 2004 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.

[GroundworkOhio.org](https://GroundworkOhio.org)



# Our Policy Framework

## FACTORS

that build a strong foundation for young children:

Early Learning & Child Care

Healthcare Access & Quality

Early Childhood Trauma Prevention

Economic Stability

## OUTCOMES

that indicate Ohio provides a strong foundation for young children:

Young children in Ohio are healthy and ready to learn.

## VISION:

Ohio is the best place to be a young child, and every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

## APPROACH:

Investments are made at a young age to achieve equity and lay a strong foundation for every child.

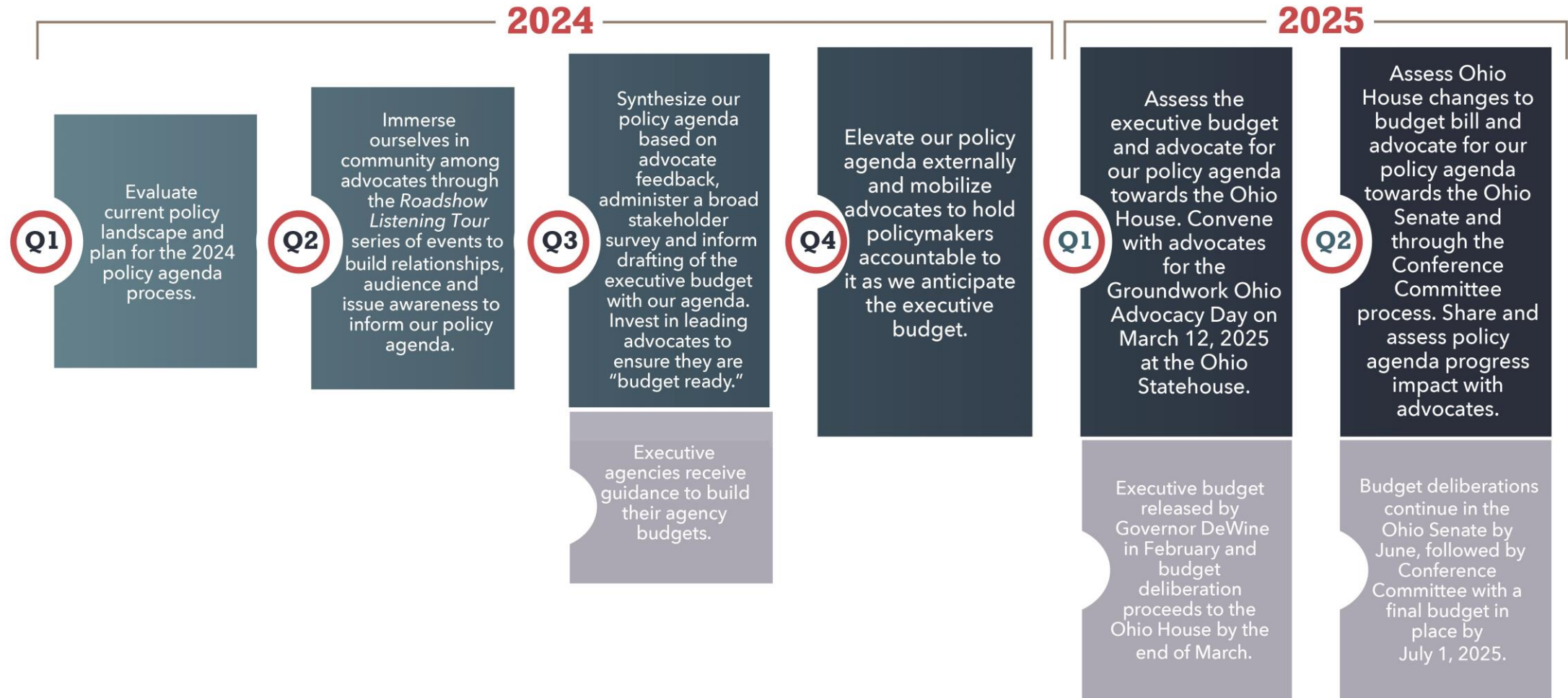
## Groundwork Ohio's Prenatal-to-5 State Policy Agenda Process



When it comes to *how* we determine policies to advance our mission, Groundwork deploys a robust and adaptable process to craft our policy agenda, uniquely unfolding every two years. This flexibility allows us to respond swiftly to challenges and seize opportunities.



# WHAT DOES OUR POLICY PROCESS LOOK LIKE IN 2024?

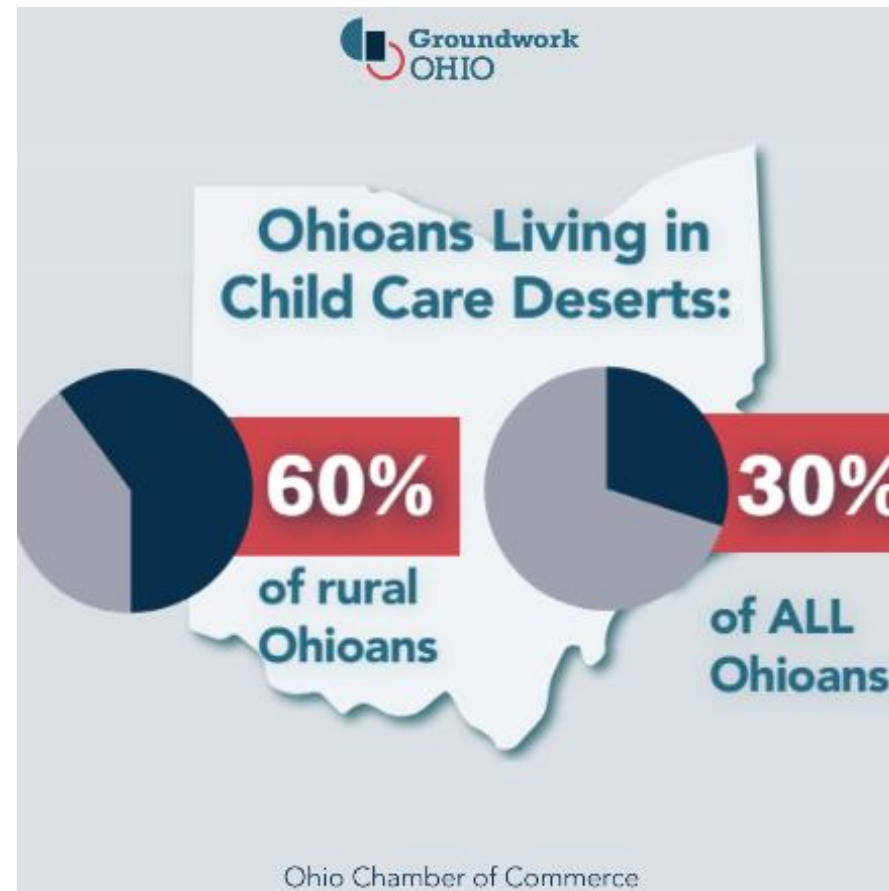


# Early Learning & Child Care

79%

of Kindergartners with low  
incomes are not ready to learn.

# Access to Affordable, Quality Child Care is Limited



# POLICY AGENDA OVERVIEW

## Our Policy Agenda:

1. **Increase eligibility for Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) to at least 200% of the federal poverty level and increase access to full-time public preschool slots comparable to fulltime PFCC subsidies to ensure young children are ready for kindergarten and working families are supported.**
2. **Improve payment practices that better support a child care program's ability to deliver quality learning, increase teacher pay by making progress towards paying the actual cost of quality care while not overburdening families. We recommend increasing PFCC rates to the 75th percentile of the 2024 Market Rate Survey for base rates as the next benchmark while maintaining tiered rates for providing higher levels of quality; paying programs based on enrollment of children versus attendance; and limit family copays to 7% of a family's income.**
3. Invest in local infant mortality collaborative models in communities with high rates of infant mortality and racial disparities that require health systems, managed care plans, impacted communities, and Black moms to co-create and implement a plan of action to reduce infant and maternal mortality.
4. Expand access to evidence-based home visiting programs (ex. Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Families America, Parents as Teachers) including scaling Family Connects statewide, utilizing Medicaid to leverage access and impact, to support the healthy development of Ohio's youngest and reduce child abuse and neglect.

## Our FY 26-7 Policy Agenda reflects priorities that impact these domains:

1. **Increase eligibility for PFCC to 200% FPL**
2. **Increase PFCC base rates, transition to payment based on enrollment, limit co-pays for families**
3. Invest in local infant mortality collaborative models
4. Expand access to home visiting programs, including scaling Family Connects





# SPOTLIGHT ON KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

## Early Learning

1. Increase access to affordable, quality child care.
2. Support quality early learning experiences that prepare children for kindergarten.
3. Support effective early childhood educators to meet the growing needs of children.



# THE MORNING MEETING

Thursdays at 9:30 am

## WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- State policy-makers, local elected officials, business leaders, families, early childhood professionals, community leaders, maternal and young child health practitioners, and advocates to raise their voice for Ohio's young children!

## WHY SHOULD I ATTEND?

- Access Ohio's policy-makers.
- Learn real-time updates about policy changes impacting Ohio families.
- Deepen relationships with other advocates.
- Build the power of Ohio's early childhood movement.

Register at [groundworkohio.org/events](https://groundworkohio.org/events)



# ADVOCACY DAY



## BIG VOICES for Little Kids

Groundwork Ohio's Advocacy Day

Save the Date  
March 12, 2025





June 20, 2024

# Portsmouth

## Scioto County

### Summary

#### Transportation Needs in Rural Ohio

Transportation is essential everywhere, but it is especially critical in rural Ohio. Access to health care providers is a significant challenge in southern Ohio, particularly for obstetric services. Many residents lack reliable transportation, making it difficult to travel out of county for health care services. For example, Scioto County has not had a dental provider who accepts Medicaid patients since the last provider retired three years ago, and the community has struggled to recruit a new one. Providers need incentives to locate in underserved areas and accept Medicaid patients, and collaborate with Ohio's medical and dental schools to retain practitioners in these communities.

#### Social Needs and Service Gaps

While the overall lack of health care providers is a challenge, many pregnant clients face even more pressing social needs. There are insufficient services to meet these needs, and in most of southeastern Ohio, the only agency offering services is the local Community Action Agency. These agencies require reliable funding sources to ensure continuous service availability. However, many programs rely on short-term grant funding, and services are discontinued when funding ends. State solutions have been temporary fixes. In order for communities in Scioto County and the region to serve as viable areas for families to live and thrive, they must be able to offer reliable services, including affordable transportation and housing options.

#### Impact of Substance Use

Substance use continues to affect the community. While policymakers have secured funding for substance use treatment centers, there is insufficient attention to the wellbeing of the children of people in treatment. These children, often exposed to trauma and multiple placements in the child welfare system, need support from ages 0 to 5 to prevent them from facing similar challenges to what their parents and caregivers have experienced.



#### Challenges in Early Childhood Education

Panelists reported that 31% of children in Head Start (ages 3 to 5) have a parent struggling with substance use, and 13% have lost a parent due to substance use. Some parents of preschool children also lost a parent to opiates during their childhood, making parenting particularly challenging for them. Many experienced multiple foster care placements and lacked parenting role models, leading centers to report the need to "parent the parents."

#### Child Care and Employment Issues

Many parents struggle to find child care for non-traditional work schedules. Private pay parents face difficulties affording child care and feel left out due to the lack of assistance. More families are falling through the gaps, with no support for children of low-income parents who do not qualify for Head Start.

Infants and toddlers often become sick, and many low-income parents do not have paid sick leave, resulting in lost income or job loss when they take time off to care for their sick child. Some parents have had to forgo promotions to retain child care subsidies, which is counterproductive.

#### Innovative Solutions

To prevent destabilizing families, efforts are being made to keep children in the classroom, addressing issues from head lice to behavioral problems. In direct response to the needs of local families, one panelist is developing a sick room to care for ill children whose parents need to work. However, she noted that state subsidies do not cover the cost of providing care, let alone the additional requirements for providing sick care.

### Speakers/Panelists

Bryan Davis, Scioto County Commissioner - Moderator

Paul Isherwood, Director of Pathways HUB

Jennifer Martin, Manager of Healthcare Services, Molina Healthcare of Ohio

Andrea Price, Director of Health Equity & Cultural Competency, Molina Healthcare of Ohio

Caroline King, Director of Temple Tots

Sarah Sloan, Head Start Director

Kelsea Swords, Scioto County Safe Babies Program

"For young families in our region, getting pregnant becomes a crisis, and that shouldn't be the case."

- Paul Isherwood

"We understand that when an infant is born, the first thing that they need is bonding with a parent. That bonding is so important for their mental health."

- Kelsey Swords

"You have parents that are barely surviving but they still don't qualify for services."

- Carla Womack

"We want to get rid of the stigma around development delays."

- Caroline King



### Fast Facts • Scioto

COUNTY	Lucas		
Young Children Living in Poverty	33.7%	Young Children in protective custody	13.9%
Kindergarten readiness	28.3%	Infant Mortality Rate	10.4%

### Thanks to Our Community Partners



# ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## Join the Movement

- Targeting Stakeholders
  - Business Leaders
  - Women-Serving Organizations
  - Local Elected Officials
- Partnership Development
- Measuring/Monitoring Engagement

Women's Coalition | Groundwork Ohio

groundworkohio.org/womens-coalition

Groundwork OHIO

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Women's Coalition for Child Care Solutions

How do we create economic prosperity for women in Ohio?

JOIN OUR COALITION!

"I haven't been able to return to work because I cannot find suitable child care."  
— Mom from West Central Ohio

Ohio must invest to provide

Q: How can you help address the child care crisis?





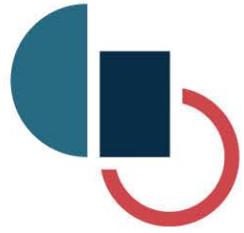


# SOCIAL MEDIA

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**Thank  
You.**

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