

THE STATEHOUSE REPORT

September 30, 2022

A publication of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio

[Printer Friendly Version](#)

Gov. DeWine announces expansion of Bold Beginning Initiative to assist families and children



On Friday, Governor Mike DeWine announced an expansion to his administration's [Bold Beginning Initiative](#), aimed at supporting families and children across the state. Thus far, the initiative has already invested \$1 billion in Ohio's children and families. The governor's announced expansion to the program include initiatives to address access to health care and easing the financial burden on families.

Components of the governor's initiative include the following:

Healthcare

- Increase eligibility for Medicaid-sponsored health care to pregnant women and children in families earning up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Implementing standard of evidence-based clinical practices at Ohio hospitals and birthing centers to reduce complications and improve outcomes.
- Make the Electronic Pregnancy Risk Assessment Form easier to complete for providers to better connect moms with services and supports.
- Expand perinatal depression screening tools to help connect mothers with necessary care and mental wellness.
- Expand Medicaid access to more adopted youth.

Family Stability

- Exempt diapers, car seats, wipes, safety gear, and other baby supplies from state and local sales taxes.
- Expand the Healthy Beginnings at Home program to more Ohio communities to connect more housing-unstable pregnant women with housing and wrap-around services.
- Establish a pilot program to cross enroll women in both the federal WIC and SNAP programs.
- Increase state funding for programs to provide cribs, car seats and play yards to families.
- Increasing safe sleep education programs.
- Assist more fathers with workforce development skills to help them provide for their families.
- Increase the eligibility to for publicly funded child care to 150 percent of the federal poverty level and provide child care startup grants.
- Provide additional funding for public children services agencies.
- Provide assistance to lessen the cost of private adoptions.

State Employment Practices

- The state has eliminated all insurance co-pays related to prenatal care, labor and delivery for state employees.
- Extended maternity leave from six to twelve weeks for state employees and eliminating the two-week waiting period for state employees to access paid parental leave.

"I have a vision for Ohio to be the best place in the nation to have a baby and raise a family," said Governor DeWine. "As a father of eight and grandfather of 26, I know that each pregnancy is different, and each family is unique. With [Bold Beginnings: Healthy, Supported Families](#), Ohio will provide even more options and supports that can be tailored to each family's needs, while providing assistance to mothers most at-risk for poor outcomes, to help them as they begin or add to their family."

Additional detail's about the governor's expanded initiative can be accessed [here](#).

Support for community-based interventions for violent crime prevention now available



This week, Gov. DeWine announced that \$20 million in state funding is available through the new Community Violence Prevention Grant Program. The program is available to non-profit and governmental agencies to establish or enhance community-based interventions to prevent violence and connect crime victims to recovery services. Funding for the program is drawn from the \$250 million in state ARPA funds the Governor and General Assembly dedicated to first responders.

Examples of eligible projects include:

- Wrap-around services for child victims of violence and their families.
- Peer and community support programs that target immediate violence reduction and provide resources for those most likely to be involved in violence.
- Civilian-based crisis response teams that support individuals undergoing behavioral crises.
- Focused-deterrence programs that discourage specific high-risk offenders from committing crimes while also offering resources and support.
- Hospital-based violence intervention programs that focus on reducing retaliatory violence and preventing re-injury by engaging injured victims of violent crime while they are recovering in the hospital.
- Trauma recovery programs that address the needs of underserved crime survivors.

Grant applications are due by November 1, 2022. Applicants can apply through the [Office of Criminal Justice Services](#) under the Ohio Department of Public Safety.

Study committee on Step Up to Quality releases preliminary recommendations



The Study Committee on Publicly Funded Child Care and Step Up To Quality Program released a preliminary list of ten categories of recommendations this week. The study group, created out of the most recent biennial budget bill, is tasked with issuing a report with recommendations for the quality rating system and for increasing access to child care across the state. The committee is slated to release a final report prior to Dec. 1, 2022.

The preliminary committee report included the following recommendations:

1. Complete a thorough review of all existing SUTQ standards to identify areas of improvement and make changes to enhance child outcomes, while removing unnecessary administrative barriers to system participants. ODJFS and ODE should continue to reduce administrative burdens and enhance/streamline efficiencies to attract and retain a strong sector of quality early learning and child care providers.
2. Create an exemption for child care providers enrolling a low number of children receiving PFCC from being required to be rated under SUTQ.
3. Align baseline PFCC licensing and provider agreements with one star rating under SUTQ.
4. Permit providers to be paid based on a PFCC-eligible child's enrollment with that provider, rather than upon attendance. Guidelines for an enrollment-based system should link continued and future eligibility and copay rates to actual attendance to incentivize parent/child participation.
5. Provide shared services and business development resources to enable child care providers to develop a sustainable business model and benefit from business and entrepreneurial supports.
6. Urgent action is needed to increase professionals entering the field, not only to fill the available PFCC slots, but to enable all families to access quality, affordable child care. Address the early care and education workforce crisis through a comprehensive strategy involving Ohio departments of development [and] higher education, local colleges and universities, and high schools to build pathways with a pipeline to fill critical jobs.
7. Identify and develop business strategies specifically designed to address identified child care provider "deserts" and, in general, consider more provider incentives and supports to help providers remain, re-enter, or enter the field. Continue to engage the business community and others in local partnerships to support and expand child care programs in underserved areas.
8. Continue to engage the business community and others in local partnerships to support and expand child care programs, particularly in underserved areas.
9. Create an interactive data system that drives policy decisions, while better supporting families seeking access to PFCC child care slots, and ensuring families meet attendance expectations."
10. Continued focus will be needed on improving access, increasing workforce participation and sustainability over time. ODJFS and ODE should continue to model and share long-term financial projections on anticipated revenue and expenditures for the state's child care system, with consideration toward ensuring reimbursements cover providers' costs of doing business, while continuing to incentivize providers reaching a higher quality rating.

Additional details on each of these recommendations and the full preliminary report can be accessed [here](#).

