

Investing in Ohio's Children and Families

Governor Mike DeWine has committed his career to protecting Ohio's children and families. As Governor, he wants to create an Ohio that works for all Ohio families, especially those most in need.

Through no fault of their own, too many young Ohioans reach adulthood without the tools to be self-sufficient, the skills to get a good-paying job, or the opportunity to seek better education. Tragically, many of these children started behind and stayed behind. Just 41 percent of Ohio children begin kindergarten with the skills they need to be successful in school, and only 44 percent of Ohioans have a post-secondary certification or degree.

Brain science is clear that the most important time to invest in a child's life is in their first 1,000 days. These early days create the foundation for a strong future and demonstrate a significant return on investment both for the child and the state.

Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted are ready to invest in an Ohio that works for all our families and provides opportunities for every child in Ohio. The Executive Budget supports this priority by:

Investing in evidence-based home visiting programs to give children the best possible start in life. Evidence-based home visiting is proven to help lower infant mortality rates, increase kindergarten readiness, and improve parenting skills. The executive budget proposes investing an additional \$30 million over the biennium, bringing the total state funding for evidence-based home visiting to nearly \$50 million. For every dollar invested in Home Visiting Programs, there is up to six dollars in return. The executive budget also creates Pay for Success pilots, a public-private partnership aimed at increasing the availability of home visiting programs.

Investing \$46.5 million in Early Intervention programs through the Department of Developmental Disabilities to provide more children – including those with toxic lead exposure and children born with neonatal abstinence syndrome – with the services and supports they need to grow into strong adults. These additional funds provide expanded eligibility for Early Intervention services and care coordination for eligible children.

Investing \$22 million to make more of Ohio's homes lead safe for children and families. It is wrong that in 2019, there are still children whose opportunities and whose dreams are stifled because they live in homes where they are exposed to lead paint. This includes annual investments of \$5.8 million to advertise lead-free homes to families, abate and remediate lead contamination, and demolish lead-blighted homes; \$225,000 to increase the supply of lead hazard control workers, which has historically impeded lead abatement in Ohio; and \$5 million to create a lead abatement tax credit, allowing eligible individuals to receive an income tax credit worth up to \$10,000 for costs related to home lead abatement.

Investing \$198 million in additional federal funding to improve quality in Ohio's publicly funded child care system. The Governor's proposed budget will invest more than \$99 million annually to improve the quality of Ohio's child care system. This funding will be targeted to help providers recruit qualified educators and offer equal access to quality child care settings for more of Ohio's children to access high quality care. This initial investment will provide a strong base for Ohio's child care providers to first achieve quality, before Governor DeWine expand access up to 150% of federal poverty level.

Investing \$5 million to create the Ohio Books from Birth Foundation to provide all Ohio children with a monthly book for the first five years of their life. One of the best ways to prepare children for kindergarten and future success is by reading to them every day. However, too many Ohio children lack access to books. The Ohio Books from Birth program will ensure that every Ohio child receives a monthly book to help spur their development and kindergarten readiness.

Nearly doubling the state's investment in children services agencies with more than \$140 million in additional funding over the biennium. These funds will include \$30 million in additional funding to the State Child Protective Allocation – which represents a 50 percent increase over current funding levels – bringing Ohio's annual investment to \$90 million in direct-to-county support. Governor Mike DeWine also proposes annual investments of \$25 million to provide care coordination for Ohio's highest need children; \$5 million for foster care and family recruitment and engagement efforts; \$3.5 million to establish a Kinship Navigator Program in Ohio; and fully funding Ohio's Bridges program.

Investing \$12 million to expand the Ohio START (Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma) program, which Governor DeWine started while serving as Attorney General. The program helps local governments offer concentrated, critical services to parents struggling with substance use disorder. Support is also provided to children who are traumatized due to parental addiction

Investing new, targeted funding of \$550 million over the biennium to support student wellness and success in schools. Schools will receive additional funding for mental health counseling, wraparound supports, mentoring, after school programs, and more. Schools will be encouraged to partner with local organizations including Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Boards; Educational Service Centers; County Boards of Developmental Disabilities; community-based mental health treatment providers; local health departments; local departments of Job and Family Services; and non-profits with experience serving children. By addressing barriers to success, we can give all our students the opportunity for a brighter future.

Investing \$20 million to provide Ohio's schools with free, evidence-based prevention curricula and professional development for school personnel. Ohio's local Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Boards, in partnership with their local school districts, will receive \$18 million in fiscal year 2020 to purchase evidence-based prevention curricula that provides students with the social and emotional skills they need to make healthy decisions throughout their lives. An additional \$2 million will be provided to Ohio's Educational Service Centers over the biennium to conduct professional development for teachers on prevention education.

Investing in child nutrition with a \$60 million increase in federal funding for the Federal School Lunch, Federal School Breakfast, and Child and Adult Food Programs. These programs reimburse schools, child care centers, after school programs, and adult day cares for providing nutritious meals and snacks that contribute to the health and wellness of children, older adults, and chronically disabled persons.

Offering school safety option by increasing support for the Ohio Homeland Security Safer Schools Tip Line and investing in analytical tools that can proactively alert local officials to threats. The tip line collected 362 tips last year and is a valuable tool in protecting schools.

