

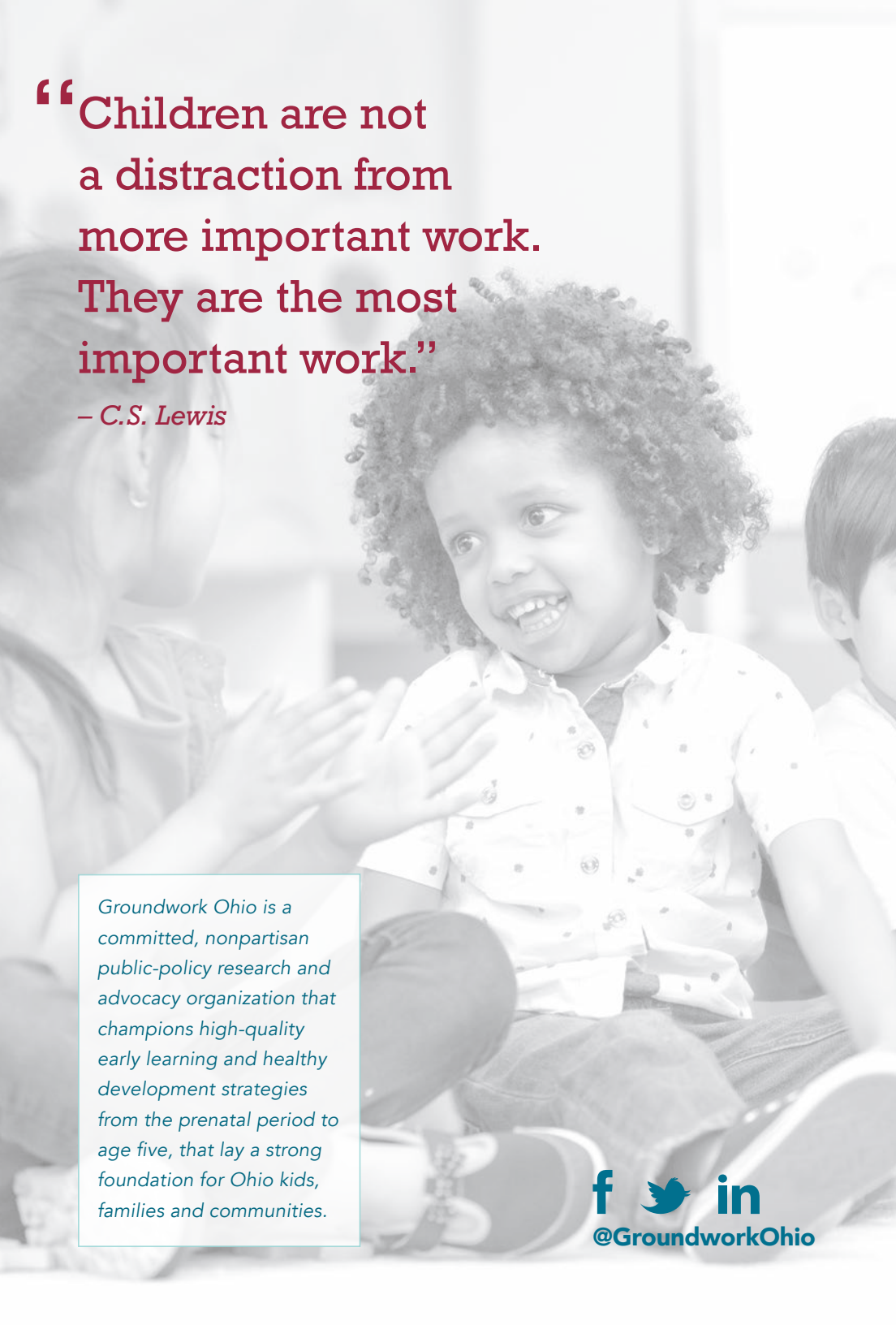
Groundwork
OHIO



2021 State Budget Impact Report

Quality Early Learning & Healthy Development
in Ohio's FY 22-23 State Operating Budget

July 2021



“Children are not
a distraction from
more important work.
They are the most
important work.”

– C.S. Lewis

Groundwork Ohio is a committed, nonpartisan public-policy research and advocacy organization that champions high-quality early learning and healthy development strategies from the prenatal period to age five, that lay a strong foundation for Ohio kids, families and communities.

  
@GroundworkOhio



Dear Friends,

Just last month, the state's biennial operating budget was signed by Governor DeWine, marking the conclusion of a very challenging process. The last three months were filled with differing opinions and vigorous—if not heated at times—debate. Notwithstanding notable areas of disagreement, significant progress was indeed made towards our coalition's shared policy agenda.

To be sure, this budget process was like a frightening roller coaster ride that relentlessly whips through the track at a high rate of speed, leaving many of its riders with a queasy feeling. Yet through all the harrowing twists and turns, Team Groundwork and

our entire network of dedicated stakeholders calmly and with tremendous resolve did what they needed to do... fearlessly launched a robust education and advocacy effort that ensured Ohio's pregnant mothers, infants, and toddlers remained a priority. Kudos to everyone who made it happen.

While tough decisions remain, we are invigorated by the amazing commitment of our partners who never relented. We are also grateful to those in state government who had an open ear and mind on behalf young children and their families. Thank you all for your passion and diligence on behalf of Ohio's youngest children.

Sincerely,



Shannon Jones

President & CEO, Groundwork Ohio

And the Groundwork Ohio Team

Healthy Development

Children who are born in healthy environments and have access to quality health care services have better physical, emotional, and mental health throughout their lives. Ohio's state biennial budget for FY 22-23 makes the following changes and investments in healthy development:

Maternal & Infant Health

- **Extends** postpartum coverage for Medicaid-eligible pregnant women from 60 days to 12 months to support Ohio's ongoing commitment to improve infant and maternal health outcomes. By leveraging this extension, as provided in the federal American Rescue Plan Act, approximately 10,000 additional women will maintain access to critical health services.
- **Appropriates** \$29 million over the biennium for implementing infant vitality initiatives at the state and local level, increasing awareness, and collecting data. This investment includes \$500,000 to allow the Department of Medicaid and Department of Health to develop a universal needs assessment for vulnerable women.
- **Invests** \$2.25 million in FY 22 in Healthy Beginnings at Home—a pilot project developed in Franklin County—to support stable housing for pregnant women and new mothers.
- **Designates** the month of May as Maternal Mortality Awareness Month to increase awareness around and prevention of pregnancy associated deaths.

Evidence-Based Home Visitation

- **Increases** investment in Ohio Help Me Grow—Ohio's evidence-based home visiting program for children ages 0-3—to \$41.2 million each fiscal year.
- **Expands** access to Ohio Help Me Grow for children ages 3-5 who are in the child welfare system, in alignment with Ohio's Family First Prevention Services Plan.

Early Intervention & Prevention

- **Maintains** the historic investment of \$23.3 million in each fiscal year for early intervention services and continues automatic enrollment for children who test positive for lead and babies born with neonatal abstinence syndrome.
- **Provides** more than \$6 million over the biennium to prevent child lead poisoning and support lead poisoning prevention efforts in Cleveland and Toledo.

Quality Early Learning

When children have access to high-quality learning experiences in the earliest years, they have better long-term health, education, and economic outcomes.

Ohio's state biennial budget for FY 22-23 makes the following changes and investments in early learning:

- **Expands** access to publicly funded child care (PFCC) to families making up to 142% of the Federal Poverty Level, meaning a single mom with two children making under \$31,183 annually would qualify for PFCC.
- **Expands** access to publicly funded child care (PFCC) to families with children who have special needs making up to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level, meaning a single mom with two children making under \$32,940 annually would qualify for PFCC.
- **Provides** \$50 million in co-pay assistance for families accessing PFCC.
- **Requires** recent federal COVID-19 relief funding dedicated to child care be spent on assisting with stabilizing and sustaining the child care system, improving child care workforce recruitment, and increasing access to child care for families.
- **Preserves** the mandate requiring all child care programs to be at least 1-star rated in Step Up To Quality—Ohio's 5-star quality rating and improvement system—in order to participate in PFCC.

However, the budget dissolved the mandate requiring child care programs to be rated at least 3-stars by 2025 and requires further scrutiny of Step Up To Quality through a Joint Legislative Study Committee on child care beginning in fall 2021.

- **Doubles** the investment in the Governor's Imagination Library to \$16 million over the biennium to support early literacy efforts in all 88 counties.

Impact Recap...by the Numbers

Throughout the budget process, the Groundwork Ohio team successfully leveraged a variety of tools and tactics to engage partners, mobilize early childhood stakeholders, and communicate with policymakers. Here's a recap of Groundwork Ohio's impact by the numbers:



Nearly

40

TESTIMONIES

in support of early learning & healthy development were provided by Groundwork Ohio staff and stakeholders.



More than

100

MEETINGS

were held with Groundwork staff & legislative offices during the budget process.



Groundwork Ohio
HOSTED

41

stakeholder events with nearly
5,000 TOTAL PARTICIPANTS.

Two of these events included our virtual **Advocacy Day** featuring guest speakers Governor Mike DeWine, members of House and Senate leadership, and the CEO National Association for the Education of Young Children.



More than

18,000

MESSAGES

were sent to state legislators and Governor Mike DeWine in support of early childhood investments in the state budget, including
17,547 MESSAGES TO SAVE STEP UP TO QUALITY.

Groundwork OHIO



More than **45 PRESS ARTICLES**
were published covering our budget advocacy.



• **9 op-eds** from Groundwork Ohio & stakeholders • **7 editorials**

Newark Advocate.



"Opinion: Investing in childcare supports our workforce, now and for the future"

AKRON BEACON JOURNAL



"Opinion: Rolling back child care quality system would be major mistake"

THE BLADE



"Ohio urged to spend surplus on children, pregnant women"

Groundwork produced nearly **50 resources** supporting early childhood education & healthy development policy initiatives during the state budget process.



More than **1.96 million impressions** and nearly **430 new followers** on our social media channels throughout the budget.



OUR TEAM



Shannon Jones

President & CEO

SJones@GroundworkOhio.org



Lynanne Gutierrez

Assistant Director & Legal Counsel

LGutierrez@GroundworkOhio.org



Melissa Bacon

Policy & Advocacy Director

MBacon@GroundworkOhio.org



Chelsea Kiene

*Director of Communications
& Stakeholder Engagement*

CKiene@GroundworkOhio.org



Julia Jackels

Policy Associate

JJackels@GroundworkOhio.org



Kelsey Hopkins

Policy Associate

KHopkins@GroundworkOhio.org



Ali Yogmour

Operations Manager

AYogmour@GroundworkOhio.org

f **t** **in**
@GroundworkOhio

GroundworkOhio.org

4041 N. High Street, Suite 204 • Columbus, Ohio 43214