



**For Immediate Release:** March 28, 2019

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## ***Governor Mike DeWine Proclaims April “Month of the Young Child”***

COLUMBUS, OH – The Ohio Early Childhood Equitable Access Coalition today announced Governor Mike DeWine has [proclaimed](#) April 2019, as “[MONTH OF THE YOUNG CHILD](#)” and April 8-12, 2019, as “[WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD](#).” The proclamation coincides with a broader celebration of the [Week of the Young Child™](#) sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which aims to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

“We are excited to join early educators and child advocates across the country in recognizing the critical foundation that must be laid in the early years of a child’s development and working to better meet the needs of all young children and their families,” said Kimberly Tice, Executive Director of the Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children, an affiliate of NAEYC and member of the Early Childhood Equitable Access Coalition. “We applaud the governor in further elevating early education issues by proclaiming the *Week* and *Month of the Young Child* here in Ohio.”

Governor DeWine’s priorities for young children were recently detailed in his Executive Budget Proposal, including increased federal investments in Ohio’s early care and education, increased state funding to support the tripling of families served in evidence-based home visiting, increased state funding for early intervention services to support babies with neonatal abstinence syndrome and children poisoned by lead, and increased state funding for children’s services.

“We look forward to working with Governor DeWine’s early childhood system cabinet agencies, the General Assembly, and statewide child-focused organizations to increase access for all children to quality education and services, especially for our most at-risk children,” said OCCRRA Chief Executive Director Todd Barnhouse. “The proposed funding increases in Governor DeWine’s executive budget proposal show his commitment towards the success of Ohio’s children and families.”

The coalition remains committed to advancing its shared policy priorities throughout the legislative budget process to increase access to and improve the quality of early childhood education in Ohio. Their priorities include:

- Increasing rates for quality-rated providers to align with the federal guidance that recommends publicly funded child care providers be reimbursed at or above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the most recent market rate to provide sufficient access for publicly funded children to quality care.
- Expanding the eligibility criteria from 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 150% FPL to serve more at-risk children in a quality rated program that positions them for success early and drives outcomes throughout the lifespan.
- Increasing investments to support the early childhood education workforce in order to recruit and retain qualified professionals.
- Targeting quality center-based and home-based early childhood programs to open locations in areas of the state identified as “quality deserts” with little to no access for children to receive quality programming.

The Ohio Early Childhood Equitable Access Coalition includes the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA), Groundwork Ohio, the Ohio Association of Child Care Providers (OACCP), the Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (Ohio AEYC), the Ohio Head Start Association, Inc. (OHSAI), and the Southwest Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (SWOAEYC). The coalition seeks to unify early childhood educators behind a common policy agenda and mobilize stakeholders behind shared priorities to advocate for increased quality and access to early education programs in the FY20-21 state budget and beyond.

*Groundwork Ohio is a committed, nonpartisan advocacy organization formed in 2004 that advances quality early learning and development as the most transformative strategy to improve school outcomes, increase the life-long success of Ohio's children, and lay a strong foundation for economic prosperity in the state of Ohio. To learn more about Groundwork Ohio visit [www.GroundworkOhio.org](http://www.GroundworkOhio.org) and follow us on Twitter @GroundworkOhio and Facebook, [www.facebook.com/GroundworkOhio](http://www.facebook.com/GroundworkOhio).*

*The Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA) and the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) network is a proven high functioning public-private partnership. Seven private non-profit CCR&R agencies serve as regional hubs throughout Ohio's 88 counties. These agencies provide professional development and technical assistance to local child care, early learning, and out of school time programs. In addition, these agencies provide support to providers, parents and the community. OCCRRA coordinates and ensures consistency among the seven CCR&R agencies, and is responsible for managing several statewide quality initiatives. To learn more about OCCRRA, visit [www.occrra.org](http://www.occrra.org) and follow us on Twitter @OhioCCRRA and Facebook, [www.facebook.com/OhioCCRRA](http://www.facebook.com/OhioCCRRA).*

*The Ohio Association of Child Care Providers (OACCP) represents the Directors and Business Owners of over 600 licensed child care centers. Our members educate and care for over 50,000 of Ohio's youngest citizens, including private pay and publicly funded children, who are served in faith-based, for-profit and non-profit programs. To learn more about OACCP, visit [www.oaccp.org](http://www.oaccp.org) and follow us on Twitter @OHOACCP and Facebook, [www.facebook.com/OACCP](http://www.facebook.com/OACCP).*

*The Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (Ohio AEYC) is state affiliate of NAEYC. We are a diverse community of professionals who are passionate about serving children age 0-8 including center directors & administrators, teachers (public, private & homeschool), state agency employees, family care providers, social workers, school administrators, early intervention specialists, college faculty & students. To learn more about Ohio AEYC, visit [www.oaeyc.org](http://www.oaeyc.org) and follow us on Twitter @OhioAEYC\_ECE and Facebook, [www.facebook.com/oaeyc%20](http://www.facebook.com/oaeyc%20)*

*The Ohio Head Start Association, Inc. is a professional membership organization whose work is dedicated to Leadership, Professional Development, Research and Advocacy. We are committed to high quality services for the most vulnerable children and families and foster positive change in our early childhood endeavors at the local, state and national levels. To learn more about the Ohio Head Start Association, Inc., visit [www.ohsai.org](http://www.ohsai.org) and follow us on Twitter @OhioHeadStart and Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/headstartohio>.*

*The Southwest Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (SWOAEYC) is a state affiliate of NAEYC who promotes high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, by*

*connecting practice, policy, and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children. To learn more about Southwest Ohio AEYC, visit [www.swoaeyc.org](http://www.swoaeyc.org) and follow us on Twitter @swoaeyc and Facebook, [www.facebook.com/Southwest-Ohio-AEYC-229890060304](https://www.facebook.com/Southwest-Ohio-AEYC-229890060304).*

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