

# What If We Expanded Child Care Eligibility in Ohio?

What if all Ohio families with incomes below 150% of the federal poverty level who meet the conditions for eligibility and want access to quality child care actually get it?

➔ **ABOUT 67,400**  
**ADDITIONAL CHILDREN COULD**  
receive access to child care in an average month.

➔ **ROUGHLY 12,100**  
**CHILDREN COULD BE**  
lifted out of poverty.

➔ **ABOUT 16,900**  
**ADDITIONAL INFANTS & TODDLERS**  
could receive access to child care in an average month.

➔ **ROUGHLY 2,800**  
**INFANTS & TODDLERS COULD BE**  
lifted out of poverty.

Child care is a critical family need, allowing parents to work while keeping children safe and supporting their healthy development. But quality child care is expensive and difficult to find, particularly for low-income parents, who face additional challenges affording and finding care while they work.

Increasing access to quality child care can help low-income families with children younger than age 13 (or older children with special needs) pay for child care, yet the current child care system offers care to only a fraction of low-income families. What if the system were funded so all Ohio families with incomes below 150 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) who meet the other eligibility criteria and want access to quality child care received it?

New research from the Urban Institute, a Washington, DC based research organization, demonstrates that **in Ohio:**

- An additional 23,400 families with incomes below 150 percent of FPL who already meet the other eligibility rules (e.g. are working or engaged in qualifying activity) could receive access to child care in an average month;
- Approximately 8,600 additional mothers would be able to join the workforce because they would get access to child care;
- About 67,400 additional children could receive access to child care in an average month, including those whose parents are already in eligible activities and those whose parents would join the workforce; and
- These changes would raise incomes for many affected families and lift 12,100 children out of poverty, primarily because of the estimated increase in parental employment.

## What does this mean for children and families?

Research shows that giving parents access to child care can allow them to choose higher-quality child care, which can help children's healthy growth and development. Child care also helps parents remain in the workforce, thus boosting their lifetime earnings and improving their long-term financial health. Higher family incomes and reduced time in poverty are both associated with better long-term outcomes for children.



# Spotlight on Ohio Infants & Toddlers



## Parents of infants and toddlers (children younger than age 3) face unique challenges in finding and affording quality child care.

Care for younger children is more expensive and harder to find than care for school-age children. Child care barriers can be particularly difficult to surmount for low-income parents with young children, making it harder for these parents to work.

Quality child care is especially important for infants and toddlers, whose brains and bodies are developing with astonishing speed. Adverse circumstances or inadequate care can jeopardize this critical period of growth and development.

Access to publicly funded quality child care can help low-income families with infants and toddlers, yet the current child care system offers care to only a fraction of families who need it.

But what if the system were funded so all Ohio families with incomes below 150 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) who meet the other eligibility criteria and want access to quality child care received it?

## New research from the Urban Institute estimates that in Ohio:

- **An additional 11,800 families with children under age 3 and with incomes below 150 percent of FPL who meet the state's other eligibility rules** (for example, are working or engaged in other activities that qualify for CCDF help) could receive access to child care in an average month;
- **Nearly 3,900 additional mothers would be able to join the workforce**, knowing access to child care would be available;
- **About 16,900 additional infants and toddlers could receive access to child care in an average month**, including those whose parents are already in eligible activities and those whose parents would join the workforce; and
- **The changes would raise family incomes and lift 2,800 additional infants and toddlers out of poverty**, primarily because of the estimated increase in parental employment.

This fact sheet summarizes findings from "What If We Expanded Child Care Subsidies? A National and State Perspective" by Linda Giannarelli, Gina Adams, Sarah Minton, and Kelly Dwyer (<https://urban.is/2HxHVqq>). The brief describes the methodology in more detail and includes citations for the supporting research.

Fact sheet notes: The analysis uses the ATTIS model together with the 2016 American Community Survey public-use data. Under 2019 annual poverty guidelines, 150 percent of FPL for a family of three is \$31,995 in Ohio. Poverty changes are assessed by subtracting out-of-pocket child care expenses from family cash income and comparing with the applicable official poverty threshold. This exercise included raising the income eligibility limits in Ohio to 150 percent of FPL for all family sizes. Estimates are rounded to the nearest 100.

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