

# Stop the Crisis Where it Begins

SHINING A LIGHT ON THE INVISIBLE VICTIMS OF OHIO'S OPIOID EPIDEMIC

The United States is facing an opioid epidemic and Ohio has been hit hard. In 2017, more than 5,000 Ohioans died from drug overdose—putting Ohio at the third highest rate of overdose deaths nationwide.<sup>1</sup> But the impact of the opioid crisis extends far beyond those experiencing addiction—the mental and physical health, social-emotional well-being, and potential for long-term success of Ohio kids affected by the opioid epidemic are severely at risk. Investing in quality early childhood programs for our youngest Ohioans can increase their resiliency, buffer the trauma caused by the epidemic, and reduce their likelihood of using drugs as an adult. Caring for the youngest and most vulnerable victims of the opioid epidemic must be prioritized as our state responds to this crisis.

**1 out of every 14 opioid deaths in the U.S.  
happens in Ohio<sup>2</sup>**



## PROTECT OHIO'S YOUNGEST VICTIMS NOW

Without consistent, quality programs that support mental and physical health, social-emotional well-being, and cognitive development, our youngest victims of the opioid crisis will be dealing with its negative for the rest of their lives.

**12%** of children in Ohio  
live with a parent or guardian who  
**ABUSES DRUGS/ALCOHOL<sup>3</sup>**

**50%** of children  
**TAKEN INTO STATE CUSTODY**  
have a parent using drugs<sup>4</sup>

During a child's early years, the toxic stress of living with a parent addicted to drugs can have a profound impact on development. This trauma, especially when confounded by other adverse childhood experiences, has the potential to negatively impact long-term mental health, physical health, and behavior. Quality early childhood programs like evidence-based home visiting, child care, and preschool can buffer the impact of toxic stress by helping struggling families achieve and maintain consistency and by creating stable, nurturing environments that promote healthy development.

# Stop the Crisis Where it Begins:

## Shining a Light on the Invisible Victims of Ohio's Opioid Epidemic

### PREPARE OHIO FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Studies have shown that high-quality early childhood education decrease rates of drug use, especially among males who account for 66% of Ohio's opioid overdose deaths each year.<sup>5</sup> Compared to a control group, males who received a high-quality early childhood education were

**HALF AS LIKELY**  
to be arrested for  
**DRUG-RELATED OFFENSES<sup>6</sup>**

Furthermore, home visiting programs, which are an integral part of Ohio's early childhood education system have been proven to decrease rates of maternal drug abuse, reduce the effect of parental addiction on children, and improve family economic self-sufficiency.<sup>7</sup> These links, along with quality early childhood education's positive impact on attainment levels and employment outcomes, suggest that an investment in quality early childhood education in Ohio would have a significant long-term impact on the opioid crisis.

### PREVENT NOW OR PAY LATER

In addition to the emotional toll this crisis has had on the state, the opioid epidemic has cost Ohio an estimated \$6.6 billion per year—\$2.8 billion in spending on medical care, treatment, and criminal justice costs and an additional \$3.8 billion in lost productivity annually.<sup>8</sup> Current state spending on early childhood education is nearly 300% less than state spending in response to the opioid crisis. By increasing state investments in early childhood education, we can provide access to quality programs for Ohio's most at-risk kids and reduce state spending down the road.

Cost of the  
Opioid Crisis



Early Education  
Spending<sup>9</sup>



### SOURCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>)
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>)
3. "Adverse Childhood Experiences: National and State-Level Prevalence." Child Trends. ([https://childtrends-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Brief-adverse-childhood-experiences\\_FINAL.pdf](https://childtrends-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Brief-adverse-childhood-experiences_FINAL.pdf))
4. "PCSAO Factbook: 13th Edition." Public Children Services Association of Ohio. (<http://www.pcsao.org/factbook>)
5. "Opioid Overdose Deaths by Gender." Kaiser Family Foundation. (<https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/opioid-overdose-deaths-by-gender/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22collid%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>)
6. "The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40." Schweinhart, Lawrence J. (<https://highscope.org/documents/20147/43324/perry-preschool-summary-40.pdf/f09ff063-ecfc-c266-f8b8-5ef0ee164a39>)
7. "Nurse-Family Partnership and Substance Abuse." Nurse-Family Partnership. ([https://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NFP-and-Substance-Abuse\\_final.pdf](https://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NFP-and-Substance-Abuse_final.pdf))
8. "Taking Measure of Ohio's Opioid Crisis." C. William Swank Program in Rural-Urban Policy. (<https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/u.osu.edu/dist/2/14548/files/2017/10/SWANK-Taking-Measure-of-Ohios-Opioid-Crisis-1vtx548.pdf>)
9. State-source actual FY2017 Spending