



# Ohio KIDS COUNT 2018

Understanding and Addressing the Changing Needs  
of Ohio's Families and their Children

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**2018 Data & Policy Report**

Published December 2018



Ohio KIDS COUNT is a Project of Children's Defense Fund-Ohio



## About Children's Defense Fund

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start, and a Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

CDF provides a strong, effective, and independent voice for all the children of America, who cannot vote, lobby, or speak for themselves. We pay particular attention to the needs of poor children, children of color, and those with disabilities. CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventive investments before they get sick, drop out of school, get into trouble, or suffer family breakdown.

CDF began in 1973 and is a private, nonprofit organization supported by individual donations, and foundation, corporate, and government grants. The Children's Defense Fund-Ohio (CDF-Ohio) is a state office of the Children's Defense Fund and was established in 1981 to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children and place all Ohio children on a path to successful adulthood.

### KIDS COUNT

KIDS COUNT is a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a national and state-by-state effort to track the well-being of children in the United States. KIDS COUNT seeks to inform local, state, and national conversations on the future of all children through the use of accurate and timely data on child well-being in the domains of health, education, economic well-being, and families and communities.

As the Ohio KIDS COUNT grantee for nearly 30 years, Children's Defense Fund-Ohio releases reports and an annual data report regarding the well-being of Ohio's children and families. Please visit our website at [cdfohio.org](http://cdfohio.org) to download an electronic version of this data and policy report.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has been a valuable resource to CDF-Ohio in the production of this report. Please note that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of CDF-Ohio alone, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Foundation. Any or all portions of this report may be reproduced without prior permission, provided the source is cited. Questions about the content of this report can be directed to Dr. Nicole Thomas at [nthomas@childrensdefense.org](mailto:nthomas@childrensdefense.org) or 614-221-2244.

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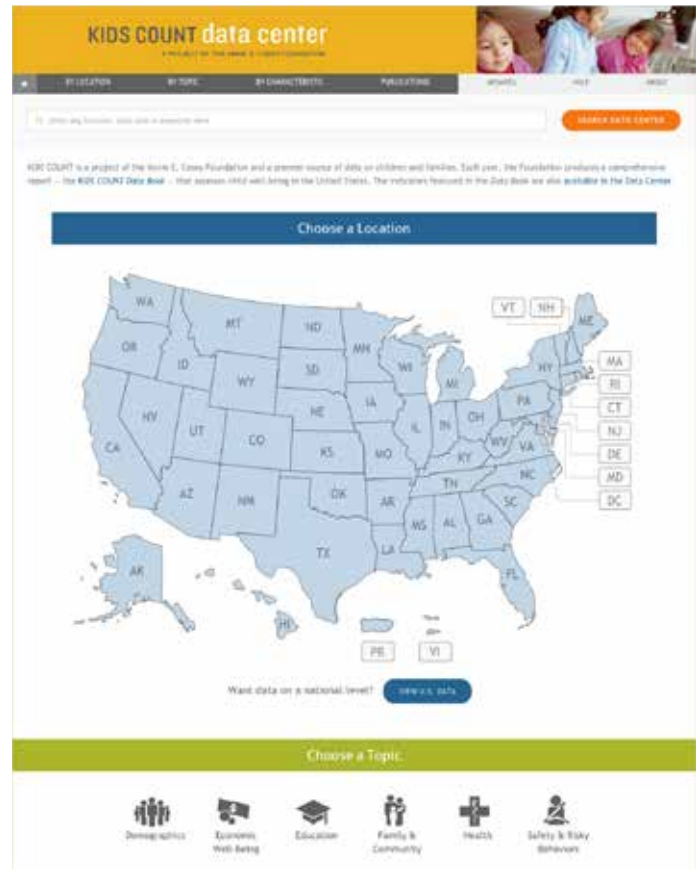
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## Using Data to Inform Critical Conversations: The KIDS COUNT Data Center

The KIDS COUNT Data Center provides a comprehensive tool for comparing national, state, county, and city-level data regarding trends in child well-being. The Data Center provides users with the ability to explore hundreds of indicators in the four domains of health, education, economic well-being, and families and communities. Further, several years of data are housed in the Center allowing users to examine trends of child well-being over time.



The website allows users to:

- Create custom reports for a specific county or state;
- Compare and rank data for different counties and states; and
- Create graphics that help tell stories using maps, trend lines, and other visuals for presentations and publications.

Please note, some data displayed in the Data Center for Ohio are collected by the KIDS COUNT Grantees, including CDF-Ohio.

Learn more at [datacenter.kidscount.org](https://datacenter.kidscount.org).

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# Introduction

## Letter from CDF-Ohio

Children don't come in pieces. Raising a child is hard work and parenting goes beyond providing the basic necessities of nutrition, health, economic well-being, and safe housing. Children must also live in loving and caring families, be free from violence and trauma-inducing circumstances, and benefit from asset-rich neighborhoods and communities. A holistic approach to childhood is needed to support all children as they transition into successful adulthood.


This report provides a snapshot of the challenges facing Ohio's children and their parents across Ohio. In the most recent national *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, Ohio ranked 25<sup>th</sup> across four domains of child well-being: education, health, economic well-being, and family & community; this places Ohio in the middle of the pack compared to other states when these factors are indexed into a single composite score. More detail is needed to understand Ohio's performance on the specific areas of child well-being, including poverty, housing insecurity, and educational attainment. Ohio's performance in these key areas and others is a reflection of our local and state investments in programs and services that support children and families.

Research suggests that an Ohio child's educational attainment, health outcomes, and economic mobility can generally be predicted based on the neighborhood where they were born and raised.<sup>1</sup> Thousands of our state's children are born into conditions where the raw materials for well-being are scarce. This report highlights the challenges facing all Ohio children, as well as the disproportionate barriers faced by children of color. These deep-rooted inequities in opportunity and outcomes are the result of historic, inequitable policies and investments, as well as structural barriers and unconscious bias still present in many of our systems today. This should motivate all of us to explore these data more deeply and to further understand the disparities in outcomes by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geography. We must dig deeper to understand the root causes of these disparities in order to make recommendations and investments in policy, funding, and coordination of services.

There is no question that parents play the most important role in their children's development. However, many Ohio parents struggle daily to provide life's essentials to their children. Research shows that the status and circumstances of parents greatly influence the future outcomes of their children. This report focuses on a two-generational approach by examining not only the well-being of children directly, but also that of their parents.

Ohio's policymakers, community leaders, and business leaders must recognize the importance of these findings and focus on improving outcomes for all children and families. Ohio's future prosperity depends on having healthy, educated children and young adults ready for the world of work and to fully participate in our communities. This means that we must ensure that the needs of all Ohio children, particularly those most vulnerable, are met. Given these obstacles and opportunities, CDF-Ohio presents our policymakers, community leaders, social service community, and non-profit partners with this report to further our shared goal of ensuring all children are ready for school, the world of work, civic participation, and life.

This data and policy report highlights a few of the stories that show how the indicators from the domains of education, health, economic well-being, and family & community interconnect. CDF-Ohio will also be releasing a comprehensive data profile for each of Ohio's 88 counties to provide detailed information on each of the four domains of child well-being. Together, we can make Ohio a place where all children and families can thrive.

A photograph showing a close-up of two hands shaking. One hand is larger and appears to be from an adult, while the other is smaller and appears to be from a child. The background is blurred, showing other people in a group setting.

*Tracy Nájera*

**Tracy Nájera**, PhD, MPA | Executive Director

## Executive Summary

Improving the lives of Ohio children requires an understanding of the barriers they and their families encounter on the road to success, many of which disproportionately affect families and children of color. Common barriers include limited opportunities for parents to advance their education, obtain family-sustaining jobs, and secure housing (which is unattainable for many parents working full-time in Ohio); disparities in access to health services; and complicated systems that place critical resources out of reach for many children and families.

Improving the lives of Ohio children requires a two-generational approach that reduces barriers to services and opportunities faced by parents and caregivers and simultaneously reduces barriers faced by their children. This approach provides community members with a starting point for conversation and a model for disrupting and dismantling the cycle of poverty in Ohio communities.

This report provides a snapshot of the challenges facing Ohio's children and their parents, highlighting how they interconnect through data and stories around the topics and relevant recommendations below.

### 6 TOPICS



#### OHIO'S CHANGING COMMUNITIES

**We must understand Ohio's shifting demographics and ensure that Ohio policies are responsive to our state's growing diversity.**

Ohio's overall population is changing—it's getting older; growing more racially and ethnically diverse; and experiencing slower population growth compared to other states—which is offset partly by our growing immigrant and new American population.

##### Recommendations:

- Analyze the disparate impact of policies on diverse groups of Ohioans.
- Engage minority and vulnerable communities and integrate cultural competence in data collection and policy research, analysis, and development.
- Build inclusive and welcoming communities for immigrants across Ohio.



#### EDUCATION & FAMILY SUSTAINABILITY

**We must improve parents' access to educational opportunities and family-sustaining jobs by providing access to high-quality child care and wrap-around services.**

Ohio children's educational attainment and success are influenced by their parents' level of education, but many Ohio parents face barriers to returning to school and being successful.

##### Recommendations:

- Provide accessible and affordable infant and child care.
- Invest in wrap-around services that address the holistic needs of the growing number of adult and non-traditional students.
- Provide school-based wrap-around services that address the holistic needs of children whose families lack access to resources.



#### ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

**We must prioritize housing for families and understand that it is a first and necessary step to helping parents attain stability and helping children feel secure.**

Too many Ohio children are in poverty, and too many Ohio families earn insufficient wages to provide housing for their children.

##### Recommendations:

- Create vital pathways to economic stability and family-sustaining wages for Ohio parents.
- Strengthen state policies and expand local programs that prioritize housing stability for families with children.



## HEALTH

### **We must focus on reducing the preventable risks of childhood exposure to lead.**

Lead poisoning continues to affect urban and rural children throughout Ohio, and more detection and treatment can ensure that every child thrives.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Partner with school districts to expand lead screening for children.
- Incentivize lead testing for owners of rental properties and the families who rent them.
- Provide funding for early intervention and treatment of children poisoned by lead.



## FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

### **We must invest in better outreach and coordination to support the growing number of children who live with relatives or in foster care as a result of Ohio's opioid crisis.**

A growing number of Ohioans volunteer to care for Ohio children affected by the opioid crisis, but many are grandparents who provide kinship care for their grandchildren on a fixed income. Too many of these families are stressed financially because they are unaware of the services and programs available to support them and their children.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Address the funding needed to support the foster care system.
- Evaluate and expand policies and practices that support kinship families.
- Improve coordination across agencies to support kinship families.



## SPECIAL FOCUS: GENDER & EQUITY:

### **We must create high-quality economic opportunities for single parents.**

Many Ohio children are raised by single mothers who face barriers to earning wages to support and provide housing for their families.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Increase access to high-quality child care for working parents in every Ohio county in order to support single parents.
- Increase accessibility to family-sustaining jobs for single mothers.
- Address the holistic needs of single mothers and their children.

# Child & Family Well-Being— A Two-Generational Approach

## Ohio's Changing Communities



Ohio's population is getting older. Ohio children are poorer and more diverse than Ohio's overall population. Policymakers must create more inclusive policies and ensure critical programs and services reach families in need.

### Ohio's overall population is getting older and this trend is expected to continue through 2030.

Children are becoming a smaller proportion of Ohio's population, partly due to declining fertility rates and a growing aging population of Ohioans 65 and up.<sup>2</sup> In 2017, Ohio's estimated 2.6 million children made up 22% of Ohio's total population (11.7 million people), marking a decrease from 2010 when children made up 24% of the state's population.<sup>3</sup>

The decline in child population is projected to continue through 2030, while Ohioans overall are expected to live longer lives. In 2010, Ohio had 721,000 children between the ages of 0–4; this number is expected to decrease to 707,000 by 2030. On the other end of the spectrum, Ohio will become increasingly older. In 2010, 1.6 million Ohioans were ages 65 and older and this population is expected to increase 50% by 2030.<sup>4</sup>

### Ohio children and young adults experience the highest rates of poverty in the state.

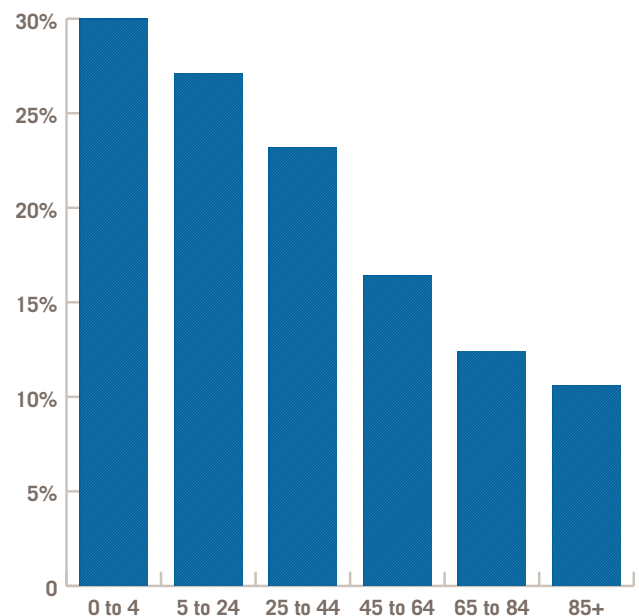
In 2015 and 2016, Ohio children and young adults had higher poverty rates when compared to working-age adults. Ohio children ages 0–11 and Ohio young adults ages 18–24 had poverty rates exceeding 21%, while poverty rates of working adults were between 10–16%.<sup>5</sup> The poverty rate for all groups of Ohio children decreased to 20% in 2017 from 24% in 2011; although the decreasing poverty rate is moving in the right direction, Ohio still trails the national average by 2 percentage points.<sup>6</sup>

### Ohio is growing increasingly diverse as Ohio's child population becomes more diverse.

In 2017, close to 30% of Ohio children between the ages of 0–4 were children of color and over half of this group were Black children. These percentages are much smaller for groups of Ohioans older than 35. For example, while Ohio has more 55–59 year olds than any other age category, only 1 out of every 8 is categorized as a racial or ethnic minority.<sup>7</sup>



Distribution of Minorities Among Ohio's Population, by Age, 2017.<sup>8</sup>

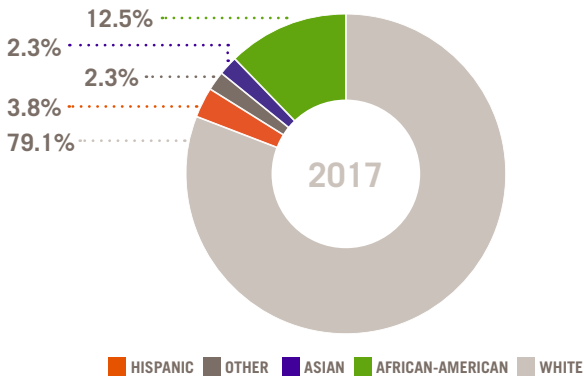


\*Minority is the difference of the total population minus non-Hispanic whites.

The population of Ohio children and adults combined looks different than Ohio's children. However, Ohio's population of children and adults of color has become a slightly larger share of Ohio's population.<sup>9 10</sup>

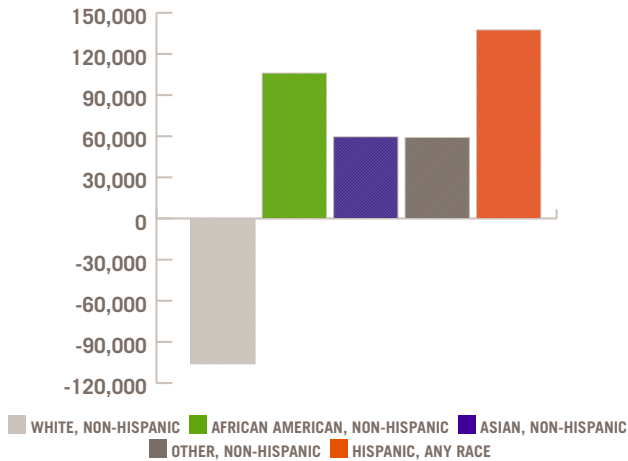


Distribution of Minorities Among Ohio's Population<sup>8</sup>



Ohio minority groups are driving Ohio's population growth. From 2000–2010, Ohio's Hispanic population had a higher net growth than other groups.<sup>11</sup>

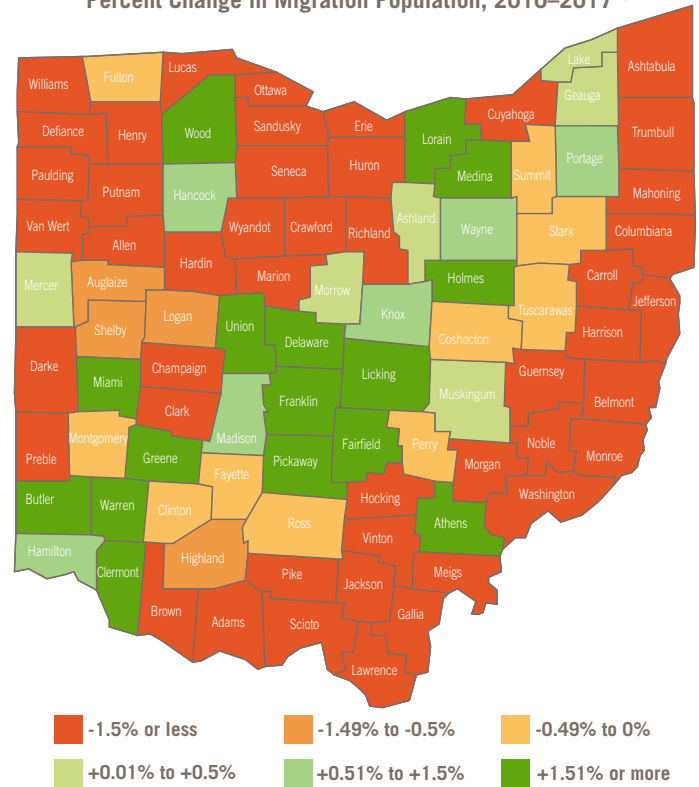
Net Change in Ohio's Minority Population, 2000–2010<sup>12</sup>



## Where are the geographic shifts in Ohio's population?

Population movements within the United States contribute to an increase in central Ohio's population. However, Ohio has experienced decreases in population throughout the state.<sup>13</sup> From 2010–2017, the Cleveland-Elyria metropolitan area lost an estimated 33,000 people, ranking it fifth in the nation for population loss.<sup>14</sup>

Percent Change in Migration Population, 2010–2017<sup>15</sup>



Ohio's immigrant and new American population has offset some of these county losses. Over the past six years, approximately 113,000 more immigrants and new Americans chose to move to and stay in Ohio than those who left the state.<sup>16</sup>

## KEY TAKE AWAYS

Ohio's demographics are shifting and will continue to change into the foreseeable future. Understanding these changes now will allow us to address the unique challenges they represent and better position Ohio for the future.

**Key Fact:** Ohio children and young adults are poorer and more diverse than working-age and older Ohioans. Immigrants and new Americans are mitigating population losses across the state.

### Recommendations:

- **Analyze the disparate impact of policies on diverse groups of Ohioans.** Policymakers must consider the disparate impact of policies on every Ohio child. This involves collecting and analyzing racial and ethnic data.
- **Engage minority and vulnerable communities and integrate cultural competence in data collection and policy research, analysis, and development.** Who collects data and what is measured are influenced by culture and background. Policymakers must continue to involve minority and vulnerable populations in exploring community issues and researching and developing possible solutions.
- **Build inclusive and welcoming communities for immigrants across Ohio.** With Ohio's growing immigrant population, our policies and communities must be welcoming and inclusive for children and their families and continue to attract new Americans to put down roots in our state.

## Education & Family Sustainability



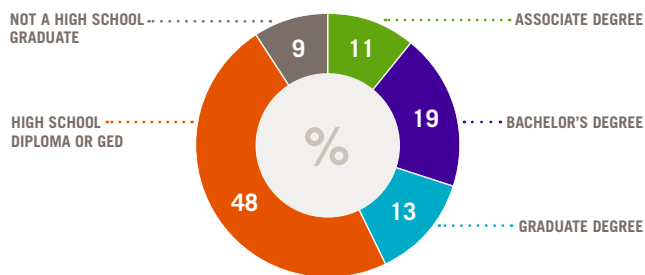
Increasing children's educational attainment improves their health, future earnings, and life expectancy. But children's educational attainment is influenced by that of their parents, elevating the need for a two-generational approach focused on parents and their children.

### A generational cycle of limited educational attainment and poverty persists.

Ohio needs a two-generational approach to increasing education and prosperity, as detailed in the recent *Opening Doors for Young Parents* report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.<sup>17</sup> Research shows that children's educational attainment is influenced by that of their parents. Many barriers, including income, housing, and child care, keep parents from accessing education, reducing resources that help their children succeed.<sup>18 19 20</sup>

### Nearly 1 in 10 Ohio children have parents who have not received a high school degree

Ohio Children by Household Head's Educational Attainment, 2016<sup>21</sup>



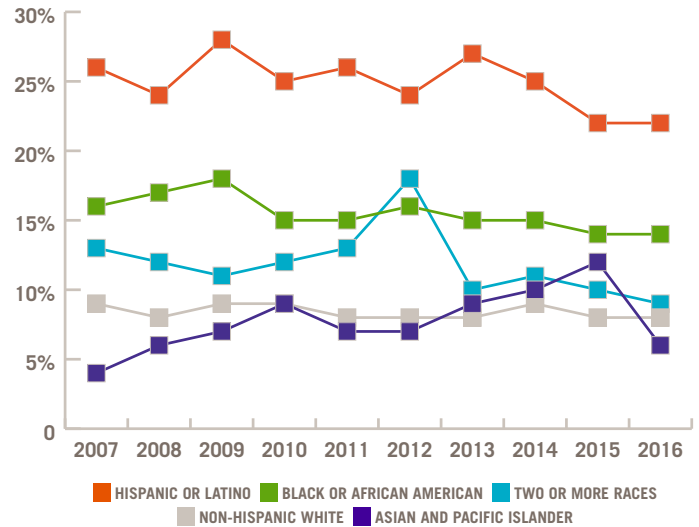
Nine percent of children in Ohio have parents who lack a high school degree, and nearly half (48%) of Ohio children have parents whose education stopped with a high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED).<sup>22</sup>

Many young parents (ages 18–24) are still pursuing additional education. Only 11% of Ohio's young parents have earned an associate degree or more, and 73% of young parents have only a high school diploma or GED. Sixteen percent have less than a high school degree.<sup>23</sup>

Minority parents face additional barriers to accessing education.<sup>24 25 26</sup> The rate of Latino children whose parents lack a high school degree is nearly three times the rate of White children. The rate for Black children is almost double the rate of White children.<sup>27</sup>

Researchers have identified a number of additional barriers faced by minority children and parents that reduce their access to education, including financial limitations, unconscious biases, school discipline policies, and a lack of access to high-quality teachers that are responsive to their unique needs and assets.

Ohio Children for Whom Neither Parent Has A High School Diploma or Equivalent, by Race and Ethnicity, 2007–2016<sup>28</sup>  
(which, for all children combined, has decreased from 11% to 9% over the past 7 years)



As a result of these (and other) barriers, Ohio children of color are less likely to have a parent who has received a high school diploma. More than 20% of Hispanic or Latino children do not have a parent with a high school diploma or GED, compared to 8% of non-Hispanic White children and 14% of Black children. Finally, the rate for children in immigrant families is 13% compared to 7% for children in U.S.-born families.<sup>29</sup>

### Ohio parents' educational attainment affects children throughout their lives.

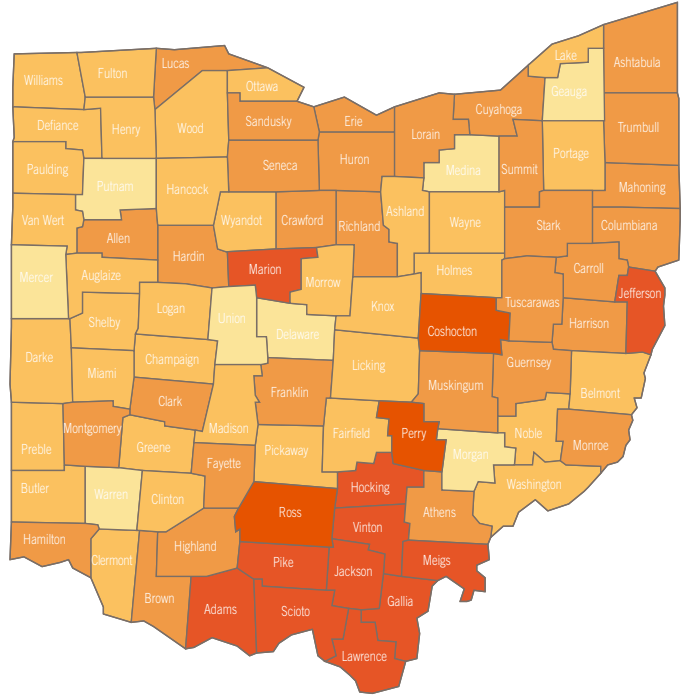
A mother's educational attainment has been identified as one of the most important factors in reducing infant mortality. More education improves women's employment opportunities and environment, as well as knowledge of nutrition and prenatal care.<sup>30 31 32</sup> This is particularly relevant as Ohio continues to address its near-bottom ranking for Black infant mortality.<sup>33</sup>

Ohio parents with bachelor's degrees earn nearly \$20,000 more per year compared to parents without high school degrees.<sup>34</sup>

Barriers that keep Black and Latino parents from obtaining high school degrees also impact their employment opportunities and ability to provide for their children. For example, 17% of Ohioans without a high school degree were unemployed between 2011 and 2015 compared to 3% of Ohioans with bachelor's degrees.<sup>35</sup>

Parents' educational attainment directly affects their children's economic well-being and access to resources while in school. According to the Ohio Department of Education, more than half (50.3%) of Ohio students were economically disadvantaged during the 2017–2018 school year, similar to the 2016–2017 school year and with variation by region.<sup>36</sup>

Percent of Students Economically Disadvantaged, 2017–2018<sup>36</sup>

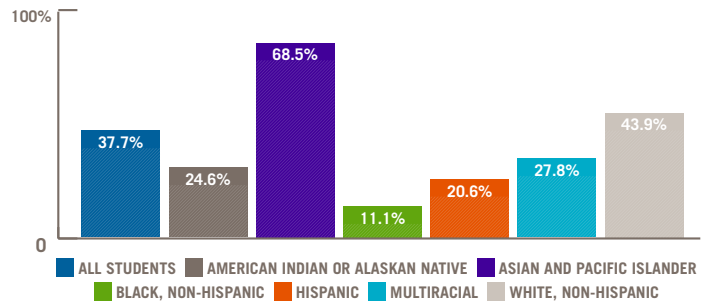


Children who start behind in school oftentimes fall further behind without the proper support. However, research shows that children with more educated parents are more likely to encounter literacy activities and be prepared for school.<sup>37</sup>

During the 2017–2018 school year, less than half (41.5%) of Ohio children starting school were kindergarten-ready. For Black and Latino children, only 1 in 4 demonstrated kindergarten readiness.<sup>38</sup> Children who start behind in school oftentimes fall further behind without the proper support. These disparities can persist without deliberate intervention. Today in Ohio, students of color are less likely to graduate from high school in four years compared to their White peers.<sup>39</sup>

Ohio must prepare parents and future parents for success throughout their lives.

Percent of Ohio Students Prepared for Success, 2017–2018<sup>40</sup>

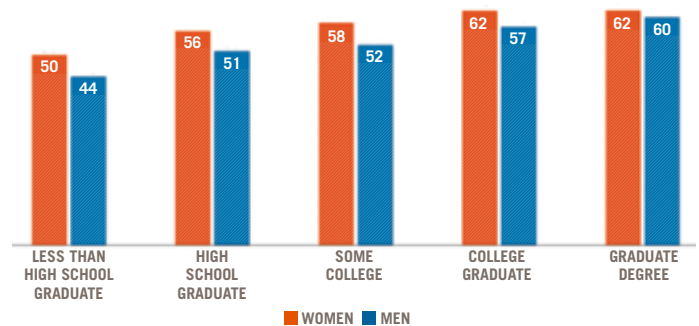


Similarly, Ohio prepares fewer Black and Latino students for success. Ohio students are considered “prepared for success” at the end of high school by earning an honors diploma, industry credential, or remediation-free score on the SAT or ACT. Fewer than half of all Ohio students are prepared for success (37.7%). These results are even worse for Black and Latino students. Only 1 in 10 Black students and 1 in 5 Latino students are prepared for success. And only 16.5% of economically disadvantaged students are prepared for success.<sup>41</sup> In addition, 30% of Ohio students who entered college in 2016 were required to complete remedial math or English coursework.<sup>42</sup>

Reducing educational disparities can improve children's life expectancies.

Parents and children who are more educated live longer lives.<sup>43 44</sup> Improving parents', and thus children's, education can help address the large gap in life expectancy rates among Ohio's communities.<sup>45 46</sup> In Ohio, life expectancy ranges from 89 years in the Stow area of Summit County to 60 years in Columbus' Franklinton neighborhood, a 29-year gap.<sup>47</sup>

Remaining Years of Life for U.S. Adults at Age 25 by Educational Attainment, 2005<sup>48</sup>



Unless we disrupt Ohio's multigenerational cycle of poverty, it will be repeated. Ohio's parents and their children need access to education in order to be healthy, secure, and to thrive.



## WHAT WE CAN DO

### Help Ohio’s young parents acquire the educational foundation needed to support their young families and lift them out of poverty.

Child care is an important support to help parents succeed in school, but many struggle to find affordable, high-quality child care. Rural parents, in particular, face significant child care challenges. According to a 2018 report, rural areas in the U.S. are more likely to be “child care deserts.”<sup>49</sup> One in four Ohioans live in rural areas and nearly 70% of rural Ohio children live in an area lacking sufficient child care. It is estimated that 100,000 children under age 5 living in rural Ohio do not have access to child care.

### Increase accessibility to education for Ohio parents.

Many parents throughout Ohio want and need opportunities to advance their education, but struggle to find child care, flexible employment opportunities, affordable tuition, and reliable transportation. With the demographic shifts in who our college students are today compared with 20 years ago, many institutions of higher education need to prepare their faculty and staff to serve the shifting needs of the growing, non-traditional student population.

### Increase educational attainment for Ohio children whose parents have low levels of educational attainment.

We must provide a real pathway to higher education for every Ohio child, regardless of family circumstances. This is especially true for first-generation students who struggle to navigate the complexities of the higher education system. Programs, such as College Credit Plus (CCP), allow students to enroll in college coursework for credit. These types of programs have been shown to improve college-going rates and success for first-generation students. The unique role of teachers and mentors is critical in a student’s decision to choose higher education.

Many families across Ohio lack financial resources to provide adequate nutrition, housing, and other necessities for their children. A child’s financial circumstances can have a significant effect on their ability to perform academically. Recognizing these circumstances, many school districts provide services and opportunities to lessen the effects of these economic challenges and other types of adverse childhood experiences that interfere with a child’s educational progress. Ultimately, equitable access to a high-quality education for all children will make the most significant difference for our most vulnerable.



**THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION

— PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT —

The Ohio State University (OSU) ACCESS Collaborative Program assists low-income, single-parent college students enrolled at OSU. The program offers students evening child care, housing assistance, mentoring, and scholarship opportunities, as well as programs on parenting skills and financial planning.

### Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs)

Childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on lifelong health and opportunity.

ACEs include:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Physical neglect
- Emotional neglect
- Intimate partner violence
- Mother treated violently
- Substance misuse within household
- Household mental illness
- Parental separation or divorce
- Incarcerated household member

Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC).

[cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about\\_ace.html](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about_ace.html)



## KEY TAKE AWAYS

A parent's educational success has a direct impact on not only on their own economic well-being and health outcomes, but that of their children as well. We must support young parents and recognize their unique needs as non-traditional college students as they work toward improving their family's economic well-being through education.

**Key Fact:** Parents who are continuing their education have unique needs, in addition to child care, that differ from those of traditional students. Similarly, many children who are economically disadvantaged need easier access to non-instructional health and wellness services to support their educational success.

### Recommendations:

- **Provide accessible and affordable infant and child care.** Every county in Ohio must provide affordable and subsidized infant and child care during traditional and non-traditional hours, supporting parents who work or continue their education.
- **Invest in wrap-around services that address the holistic needs of the growing number of adult and non-traditional students.** Many parents who are raising children while going to school are struggling, and they need services and programs that also address their non-instructional needs.
- **Provide school-based wrap-around services that address the holistic needs of children whose families lack access to resources.** Many Ohio children are economically disadvantaged and may require additional non-instructional resources to succeed in school. This includes support with chronic illnesses, nutritional programs, after school care, and other programs and services. Moving services to where the students are supports families who face barriers in accessibility and utilization.

# Economic Well-Being



Financial stability and housing keep Ohio children healthy and promote education. But access to housing is limited for poor families with children.



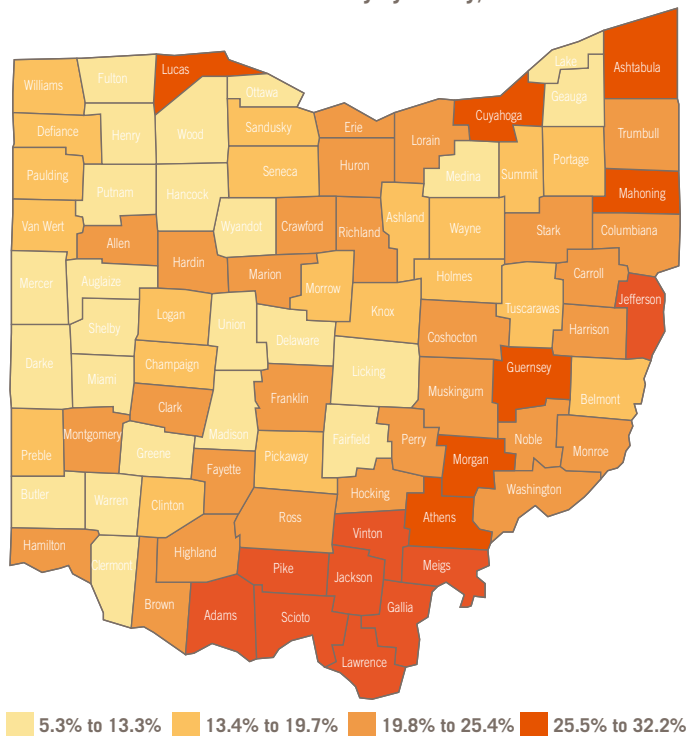
## One in five Ohio children live in poverty.

In 2017, 1 in 5 Ohio children lived in poverty, defined as an annual income below \$25,283 for an average family of four. Nearly 1 in 10 Ohio children lived in extreme poverty, defined as half of that level.<sup>50 51</sup> However, the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) Project shows that a family of just one adult and one school-aged child in Franklin County needs to earn \$32,736 each year to cover expenses for basic necessities.<sup>52</sup>

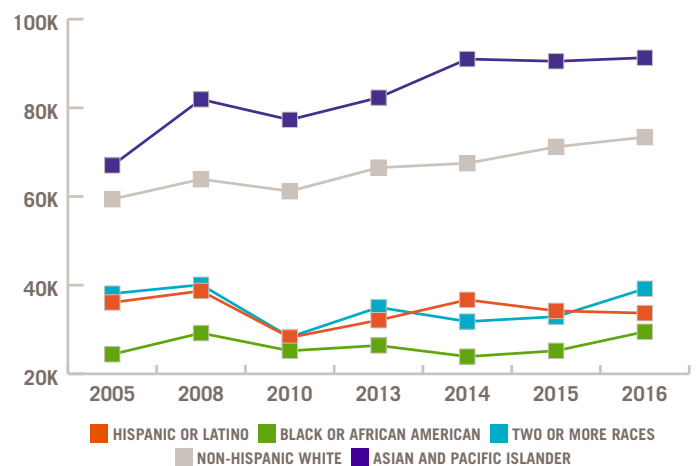
## Ohio's multiracial childhood poverty rate ranks worst in the nation.

Ohio currently ranks worst in the nation with its multiracial childhood poverty rate of 34%; in addition, 42% of Black children and 34% of Latino children lived in poverty in 2017. In 2017, Appalachian Ohio saw the highest rates of child poverty.<sup>54</sup>

Ohio Children in Poverty by County, 2017<sup>53</sup>



Median Annual Income Among Families with Children in Ohio, by Race and Ethnicity, 2005–2016<sup>55</sup>



The median annual income for Black families with children in 2016 was just \$29,500 dollars, and it was \$33,700 dollars for Hispanic or Latino families. The median annual income for non-Hispanic White families was \$73,400.<sup>56</sup>

## Almost 1 in 3 Ohio children have parents who lack secure employment.

The unemployment rate for all parents has decreased over the past decade. During the Great Recession, the unemployment rate for parents was 10%, and it has decreased to 5% in 2017.<sup>57</sup> However, in 2016, almost 30% of Ohio children lacked a parent with secure employment, meaning neither parent worked at least 35 hours per week for at least 50 weeks in the 12 months prior to the survey.<sup>58</sup>

ALICE Household Stability Budget<sup>59</sup>

	Single Adult	Married Couple	1 Adult, 1 School-Age Child	1 Adult, 1 Infant	2 Adults, 2 School-Age Children	2 Adults, 1 Infant, 1 Preschooler
Housing	\$798	\$1,039	\$1,039	\$1,039	\$1,090	\$1,090
Childcare	\$-	\$-	\$275	\$1,117	\$551	\$2,022
Food	\$352	\$759	\$663	\$497	\$1,334	\$1,150
Transportation	\$360	\$721	\$721	\$721	\$1,201	\$1,201
Health Care	\$285	\$633	\$857	\$857	\$1,107	\$1,107
Misc.	\$190	\$328	\$366	\$434	\$541	\$670
Savings	\$190	\$328	\$366	\$434	\$541	\$670
Technology	\$109	\$129	\$109	\$109	\$129	\$129
Taxes	\$488	\$782	\$722	\$905	\$1,337	\$1,938
Monthly Total	\$2,772	\$4,719	\$5,118	\$6,113	\$7,831	\$9,977
Annual Total	\$33,264	\$56,628	\$61,416	\$73,356	\$93,972	\$119,724
Hourly Wage	\$16.63	\$28.31	\$30.71	\$36.68	\$46.99	\$59.86

## On average, Ohio parents need to earn \$15.25 per hour to afford housing.<sup>60</sup>

However, Ohio's minimum wage in 2018 is \$8.30 per hour for employees at larger companies and will increase to just \$8.55 per hour in 2019. A single parent working full time at minimum wage would spend over 60% of pre-tax wages on housing, with little left over to cover food, child care, transportation, and other family necessities.

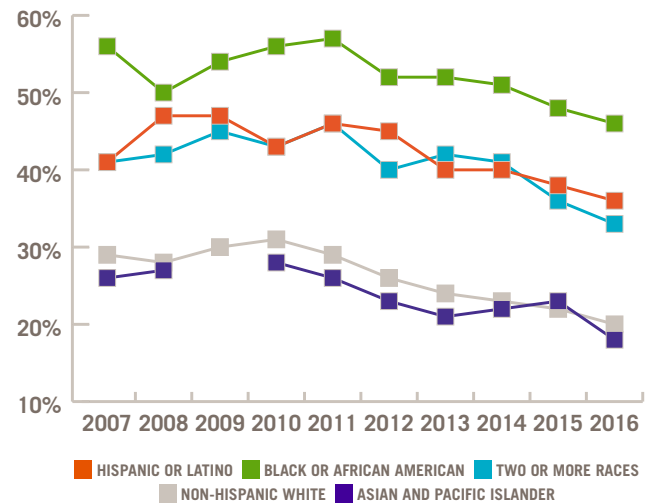
Of Ohio's 10 most common jobs between 2014 and 2017, only three (registered nurses, office clerks, and customer service representatives) paid more than \$15.00 per hour.<sup>61</sup>

Ohio parents in Franklin County, for example, need \$1,039 per month just to provide stable housing for their children, according to The United Way ALICE Project, and over \$5,000 per month to achieve household stability, which includes living in housing that is not crowded, infrequently relocating, and avoiding spending the bulk of household income on housing.<sup>62</sup> And this is not an isolated urban issue. In 2017, some of the highest gaps between renters' earnings and the cost of housing were in Ohio's Appalachian counties.<sup>63</sup>

## Nearly 50% of Black children in Ohio live in families with a high housing cost burden. This is more than twice the rate for White children.<sup>64</sup>

Despite the declining rate of Ohio children with insecure housing, too many are living on the edge of homelessness with a disproportionate number of children of color being affected. Poverty rates in Ohio mean children face housing insecurity and additional challenges.

Children Living in a Household with a High Housing Cost Burden (more than 30% of income) by Race and Ethnicity, 2007–2016<sup>65</sup>



According to 2015 Census Bureau data, Ohio ranks 44<sup>th</sup> nationally for affordable housing, and for every 100 extremely low-income families in need of housing, 42 affordable homes exist, representing a significant needs gap.<sup>66</sup> This means that 227,304 extremely low-income families with children cannot find housing they can reasonably afford.

## Research indicates that children who are housing secure have better educational outcomes.

Low-quality housing can expose children to health risks that affect their educational attainment.<sup>67</sup> And children with insecure housing or those who face foreclosure are more likely to move, making them more likely to switch schools and, in turn, lag academically behind their peers.<sup>68 69 70</sup> This is particularly true for children living in high poverty, and for any individual, losing a home, changing schools, or being uprooted from friends and neighborhoods can be traumatic.<sup>71</sup>



## WHAT WE CAN DO

### Advocate for family-sustaining wages to provide basic necessities of raising children.

Ohio parents need a family-sustaining wage to provide basic necessities, such as homes and food for their children. This means that Ohio parents need pathways toward economic stability through education opportunities and workforce training to secure higher-paying jobs.

### Increase access to stable housing.

Safe and secure housing is critical to the success of children and their parents. Permanent housing is important to children's health, their sense of stability, and educational achievement.



## KEY TAKE AWAYS

Ohio children need resources and stable homes in order to prosper and thrive. Too many Ohio children, particularly those of color, live in poverty. As a result, many children live in families who spend significant portions of their income on housing and are therefore at a high risk of losing their homes.

**Key Fact:** Many Ohio working families earn minimum wage, which is significantly less than the wage needed to comfortably afford housing. Safe and secure housing is essential to children's health and sense of stability, and it supports families as they strive to provide for their children.

#### Recommendations:

- **Create vital pathways to economic stability and family-sustaining wages for Ohio parents.** More families need better access to economic mobility and family-sustaining wages. Supporting these families includes improving access to high-quality child care, transportation, and workforce training.
- **Strengthen state policies and expand local programs that prioritize housing stability for families with children.** Ohio lacks affordable housing and the need is greater in some parts of the state than others. Increasing the housing inventory available for low-income families is a critical first step.



# Health



Healthy children are better prepared to transition into successful adults. However, Ohio children exposed to lead face serious health challenges.

## Research shows that lead poisoning affects children’s development, cognitive abilities, and impulse control.

Lead-contaminated paint or dust are the primary culprits in childhood lead poisoning<sup>72</sup> and children can also be exposed through contaminated water, air, or soil. Lead poisoning in children has significant effects on child health and development, including heart and kidney problems, cognitive delays, anti-social behavior, and lower IQs, with lasting effects that continue into adulthood.<sup>74 75 76</sup>

## Tests of children in Cleveland, Ohio show that they have higher rates of lead poisoning than children in Flint, Michigan, yet many at-risk Ohio children are not tested.

The Ohio Department of Health estimates that 3.7 million Ohio housing units contain lead-based paint, a primary source of lead poisoning in children. Children living in houses built before 1978 are at high risk of lead poisoning, meaning that about 42% of all housing units in Ohio likely contain lead hazards.<sup>77 78</sup> Though the risks are high, more can be done to mitigate risks to children. Cleveland’s *The Plain Dealer* found that only one-third of the Cleveland children at risk for lead poisoning were tested in 2015.<sup>79</sup>

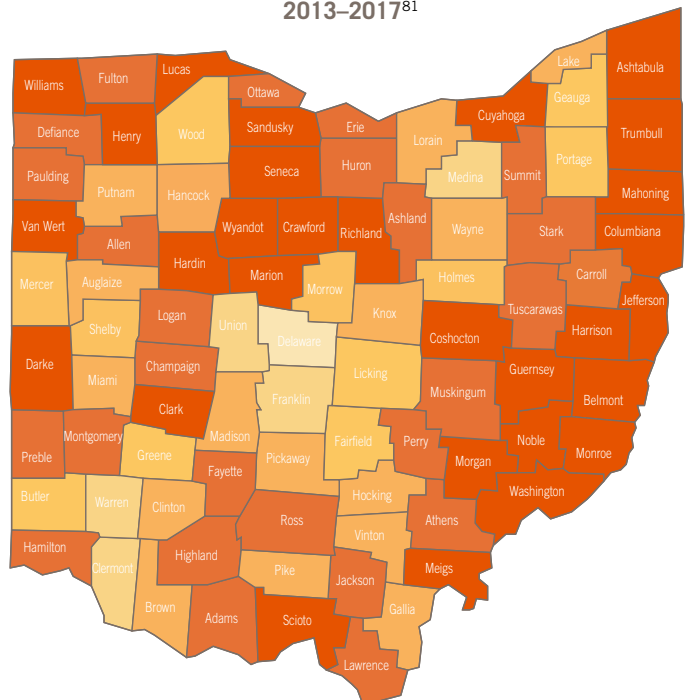
No level of lead in children’s blood is considered safe, but levels higher than 5 micrograms legally require the Ohio Department of Health to investigate the source of the lead and remove the hazard. In fact, the Cleveland children who were tested had lead poisoning at more than twice the rate of the children tested in Flint, Michigan at the height of its lead poisoning crisis.<sup>80</sup>

## Lead exposure is a significant health issue for Ohio’s rural children.

Researchers assess the relative risk of lead exposure by mapping poverty levels and the age of houses in census tracts around the country.<sup>81</sup> While lead poisoning is often discussed in connection with urban areas, a majority of census tracts in rural areas have relatively higher risks of lead exposure than the rest of the United States. A number of rural Ohio counties have particularly high risks of lead exposure, including Scioto, Noble, Meigs, and Wyandot.



Lead Exposure Risk by County Using Poverty and Housing Data, 2013–2017<sup>81</sup>



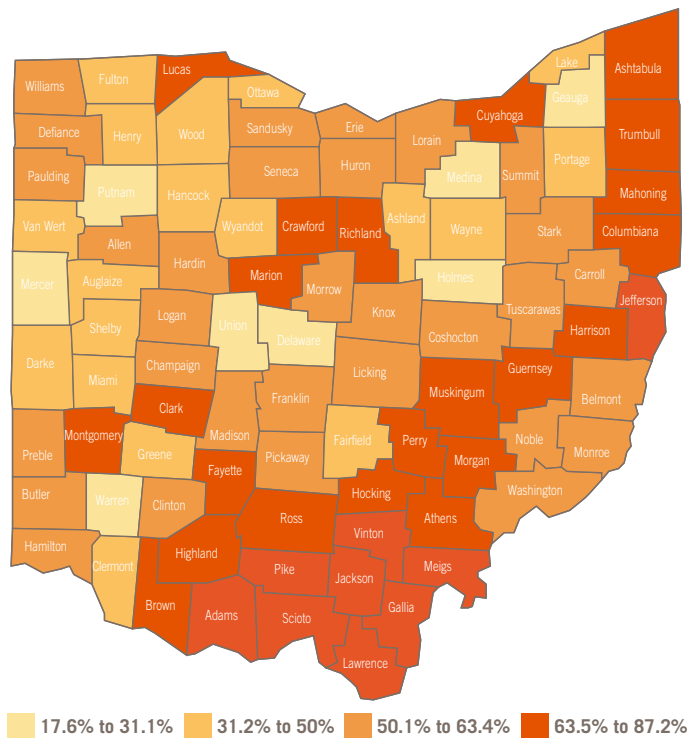
low lead exposure risk

high lead exposure risk

## Lead poisoning affects children who are already vulnerable.

Lead poisoning disproportionately affects low-income children and children of color. Lower-valued housing is less likely to have been renovated to remove lead hazards.<sup>82</sup> A report by the Kirwan Institute for Race and Ethnicity found that Black families in Toledo were concentrated in neighborhoods with older and lower-valued housing.<sup>83</sup> In addition, any child on Medicaid is considered to be at high risk for lead poisoning; this means that more than half of Ohio children are considered high risk.<sup>84 85</sup>

Children Enrolled in Public Health Care Programs by County, 2017 <sup>85</sup>



Ohio children with lead poisoning are less likely to be ready for kindergarten and more likely to be delinquent, but treatment can reduce these risks.<sup>86</sup>

Lead poisoning can contribute to delinquency, cognitive problems, and developmental delays in children.

Interventions that reduce the effects of lead poisoning on children are possible. Research has shown that treatment, which includes nutritional changes and therapy, can reduce long-term negative effects of lead poisoning in children, including childhood delinquency and poor educational achievement.<sup>87</sup>



## Ohio children lack access to screening and treatment.

There is evidence that families with insecure housing may be reluctant to test their children for lead poisoning because they fear that they will lose their homes due to the high costs associated with lead abatement or even their children.<sup>88</sup> Further, many families face transportation, time, and financial barriers to accessing healthcare for their children, including lead screenings for their children.



## WHAT WE CAN DO

### Screen all Ohio children in school.

All Ohio children who are at high risk for lead poisoning must be screened. A partnership in Cleveland ensures that all high-risk children entering preschool and kindergarten are tested. Similar programs can be implemented across Ohio.

### Make screening and early treatment a priority.

Children must be screened in order to be treated and avoid long-term consequences of lead poisoning. A study by the Pew Charitable Trust concluded that every \$1 invested in lead abatement would yield at least \$17 in societal benefits—saving billions in taxpayer dollars.<sup>89</sup>

### Identify every child who has not been screened for lead poisoning.

Some states require proof that a child has been tested for lead before entering kindergarten. In Massachusetts, for example, 73% of children between 9 months—4 years old were tested for lead exposure in 2015.<sup>90</sup>

States and counties can also create warning systems to track children, neighborhoods, and properties that are high risk.<sup>91</sup> Currently, the State of Ohio and some counties are creating registries of properties declared a lead hazard.

Efforts should be made to increase awareness among families, pediatricians, school districts, and others who come into regular contact with children regarding the dangers of lead poisoning and the need for testing.

### Improve access to lead abatement programs for property owners in high-risk neighborhoods.

Financial disincentives exist for landlords to inspect their properties for lead, and many Ohio children live in properties that are high risk. The future health of our children is too important to allow continued lead exposure. Improved access to lead abatement programs is necessary to begin tackling this public health crisis.

### State and local governments must work together to support Ohio families to make sure that every child receives healthcare screenings and appropriate interventions.

Ohio children must have access to and receive needed lead poisoning screening and healthcare. Financial assistance to help with transportation, or other needs, through local health departments can support adequate follow-up and prevention efforts when a child tests positive for lead poisoning.



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— PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT —

The Partners in Health Lead Screening Project is hoping to screen 80% of Cleveland children at risk for lead poisoning by 2019. The project involves screening preschool and kindergarten students who had not recently been tested for lead with the parents' permission. The group is also forming teams to help the families of students who test positive for lead by providing them with education, medical care, housing clean-up, and legal assistance. The project is part of a partnership between students from the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing at Case Western University, the City of Cleveland and Cleveland Metropolitan School District.



## KEY TAKE AWAYS

Lead poisoning affects Ohio children for the rest of their lives. We can limit this harm by ensuring that all Ohio children who are at risk of lead poisoning are tested and receive adequate treatment. We must also take steps to prevent lead poisoning by educating parents, doctors and property owners about its dangers.

**Key Fact:** Too few Ohio children are screened for lead poisoning despite its risks and the availability of treatment. Ohio families can be hesitant to test their children for lead out of fear of losing their housing, and owners may be hesitant to test their properties due to costs of abatement. Research shows that early treatment of lead poisoning can reduce long-term health and behavior consequences for children. In fact, a study by the Pew Charitable Trust concluded that society realized \$17 of positive benefits for every dollar invested in lead abatement.

### Recommendations:

- **Partner with school districts to expand lead screening for children.** Local health departments and school districts must create partnerships to ensure that every child at high risk for lead poisoning is screened.
- **Incentivize lead testing for owners of rental properties and the families who rent them.** State and local governments must support families and landlords; provide incentives to test children and the housing they live in; and build awareness of local, state, and federal programs that fund lead abatement.
- **Provide funding for early intervention and treatment of children poisoned by lead.** Funding must be made available at the local level to provide early intervention treatment for children who test positive for lead poisoning/exposure. This investment will yield savings and offer children greater opportunities for success in school and in life.





### Kinship caregivers are stepping up for children in response to Ohio's opioid crisis.





Kinship caregivers—grandparents, aunts, uncles, older siblings, and others—are friends and relatives who step up to raise children in voluntary arrangements when their parents can no longer care for them. In 2016, one out of every 20 Ohio children (6%) lived with neither parent.<sup>99</sup> At least 100,000 grandparents in Ohio are raising grandchildren, and this number is likely higher due to informal kinship arrangements that do not involve legal documents or child welfare agencies.<sup>100</sup> Some research has shown that kinship care is even more common among Black and African American children and that they make up the largest share of children in kinship care.<sup>101</sup> These kinship caregivers are easing the strain on Ohio's foster care system. A number of Ohio agencies have seen a drop in the number of children in foster care over the past two years, but an increase in kinship caregivers.<sup>102</sup>

### Research suggests that children raised by kinship caregivers struggle to access healthcare and financial stability.

Many kinship-caretaking relationships are unplanned and do not involve the courts or child welfare agencies.<sup>103</sup> Due to the informal caregiving arrangement, many of these children are less likely to have access to healthcare.<sup>104</sup> Many kinship caregivers do not have legal consenting authority, which can complicate their ability to provide the children with medical care, including routine care such as immunizations, as well as mental health treatment and surgeries.<sup>105</sup> In addition, children in kinship care are less likely to be financially stable than children in foster care because many kinship caregivers were not planning on supporting additional children and are unfamiliar with the complicated policies and processes that they must navigate to obtain much needed resources and support.<sup>106</sup> Many grandparents who are raising their grandchildren are retired and on fixed incomes.<sup>107</sup> In 2012, 44% of children in kinship care lived below the federal poverty level (FPL), compared to 21% of children living with biological parents. Many kinship caregivers do not receive benefits that are traditionally received by foster parents and depend on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).



**Comparison of Children in Kinship Care, Foster Care, and Care of Biological Parents<sup>108 109 110</sup>**

Child Well-Being	Kinship Care	Foster Care	Care of Biological Parents
 Family & Community	Less likely to be adopted or considered for adoption	More likely to be adopted or considered for adoption	
	More likely to have a caregiver older than 70	Less likely to have a caregiver older than 70	
 Economics	44% live below FPL in 2012		21% live below FPL in 2012
	More likely to be in higher income categories	Less likely to be in higher income categories	
	Do not receive foster care benefits	Receive foster care benefits	
	More likely to be a single-parent household	Less likely to be a single-parent household	
 Health	Less likely to receive routine and diagnostic care	More likely to receive routine and diagnostic care	
	Less access to mental health services	More access to mental health services	
	21% had no health insurance coverage in 2012	More likely than children in kinship care to have appropriate health insurance	9% had no health insurance coverage in 2012
 Education	Parent less likely to have high school diploma	Parent more likely to have high school diploma	



## WHAT WE CAN DO

### Continue to support Ohio's stressed foster care system.

The number of Ohio children in foster care continues to increase, especially in response to the opioid crisis. Policymakers must ensure that our foster system is supported as it responds to increasing placement costs and recruits and assists foster families.

### Focus on developing evidence-based practices supported by the Family First Prevention Services Act.

The Family First Prevention Services Act, passed in 2018, provides an opportunity for states to keep families together and prevent children from entering foster care. The program, which previously limited assistance to foster care and adoptive assistance, is now expanded to help families and prevent children from entering the child welfare system. The Act prioritizes investments in evidence-based interventions. Ohio leaders must come together to find, develop, and evaluate best practices in order to receive federal investments that support Ohio families and children affected by addiction.

### Find ways to educate and support kinship families.

The Family First Prevention Services Act may be an opportunity to help states fund kinship navigator programs. These programs support grandparents and other family members who need assistance to navigate complicated systems to secure resources for the children they are raising.



## — PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT —

The Kinship Navigator Program in Muskingum County serves as an important system of support for families who have changed their lives to support Ohio children. The program staff educate and advocate for kinship families to ensure that they have support as they navigate complicated local and state systems and policies. For example, staff ensure that children in kinship care have a medical card and health insurance. They work with agencies to be more responsive to families' unique needs. Many kinship caregivers are older than typical parents (in Muskingum County, the average is 51), and many have never applied for or needed government assistance to help their families until now.

Muskingum County's program also assists grandparents with gaining temporary authority to make decisions about their grandchildren's care; moreover, they attend programs designed to meet the individual educational needs of children in kinship care, perform outreach, assist families with rent and clothing, and help families receive respite care when needed and feasible.





## KEY TAKE AWAYS

A child's caregiver is the most direct way to influence a child's access to healthcare, education, and resources. Ohio's foster care system is strained and many Ohio children live with older kinship caregivers who are not prepared to raise more children. They must be supported to ensure that children in their care receive the support they need to be successful.

**Key Fact:** The number of Ohio children in foster care continues to increase, stressing Ohio's foster system as it works to alleviate the effects of the opioid crisis on children and families. Kinship families are an important support to Ohio's foster system, but they struggle to obtain services and support. Typical kinship caregivers are older and may struggle financially or have chronic health issues.

### Recommendations:

- **Address the funding needed to support the foster care system.** Increase funding and support for the foster care system to handle the additional children and address their needs.
- **Evaluate and expand policies and practices that support kinship families.** It is imperative to examine Ohio's policies and practices to ensure that families who need support are receiving it. For example, relax Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) work requirements for kinship providers, especially when kinship providers are elderly retirees raising grandchildren.
- **Improve coordination across agencies to support kinship families.** Encourage coordination among entities that support kinship families and engage in an education and awareness campaign to introduce kinship families to available resources, including "child only" TANF Cash Assistance, Medicaid Coverage, child care subsidies, and grandparent power of attorney.

## Special Focus: Gender & Equity



Countless women work hard to prepare their children for success. But many in Ohio are single parents who face significant barriers to provide for their children.

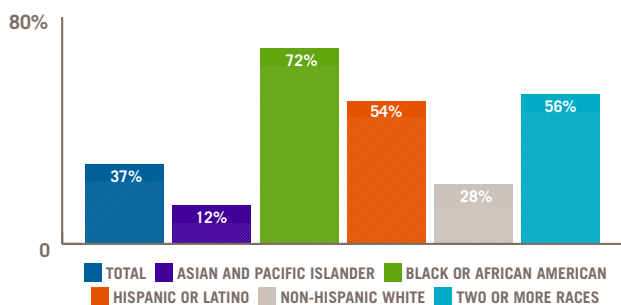


Being a champion for Ohio children, particularly children of color, means supporting single parents, most of whom are women.

More than 1 in 3 Ohio children (37%) were raised in single-parent families in 2017; this has remained stable for the past decade.<sup>111</sup> An estimated 70,000 Ohio children (27%) lived in mother-only households, while 9% of Ohio children lived in father-only households.<sup>112</sup>

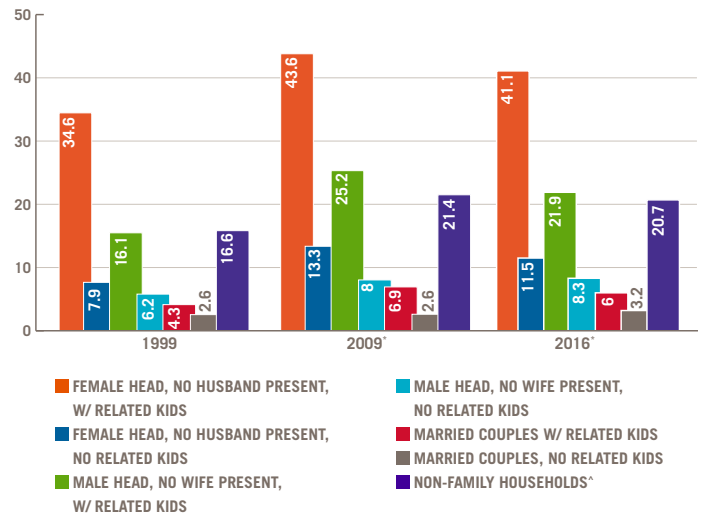
Children of color are much more likely to live in single-parent families; almost 3 out of 4 Black children and more than half of Latino children and multi-racial children lived in a single-parent family.

Percent of Children in Single-Parent Families by Race, 2016<sup>113</sup>



Between 1999 and 2016, female-headed families in Ohio were more likely than other families to be in poverty. Almost half of households with children that were led by a female without a spouse (husband) present were in poverty.<sup>114</sup>

Poverty Rates in Ohio and Presence of Related Children by Household Type, 1999–2016<sup>115</sup>

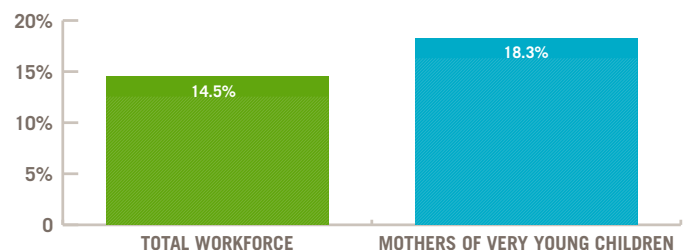


Notes: \*ACS estimates cover January of the prior year through November of the listed year. ^Actually the poverty status of the householder.

Research shows that 1 out of every 5 working mothers of very young children are in a low-wage job.<sup>116</sup>

Nationally, 1.3 million mothers of children who are 3 and under work at jobs that pay \$10.50 or less per hour, and more than half of them are women of color.<sup>117</sup>

Share of Workers in Low-Wage Occupations, 2016<sup>118</sup>



Source: NWLC calculation based on Current Population Survey 2016 using Sarah Flood, et. Al., IPUMS-CPS. Mothers of very young children are those who have at least one child age 3 or younger at home. Figures are for all employed workers.

In fact, full-time, year-round working women earn just 80% of what men earn.<sup>119</sup> While some of this gap can be explained by educational attainment, work experience or other factors, 42% of working women report gender discrimination at work.<sup>120</sup> In fact, 1 in 4 women report earning less than a man performing the same job.<sup>121</sup>



### Many children in women-led families face housing barriers.

Researchers in Milwaukee found that almost half of evictions take place in predominantly Black neighborhoods, and that female renters in those neighborhoods were twice as likely as male renters to be evicted through the court system.<sup>122</sup> Moreover, people with children were more likely to be evicted from their homes.<sup>123</sup>

## KEY TAKE AWAYS

Single mothers raise a large proportion of Ohio children, especially children of color. However, many live in poverty and work in low-wage jobs.

**Key Fact:** Almost 1 in 3 Ohio children live in a mother-only household, and 7 out of 10 Black children live in a single-parent family. Single mothers raising young children are more likely to be in low-wage occupations, and women and renters with children are more likely to be evicted from their homes.

### Recommendations:

- **Increase access to high-quality child care for working parents in every Ohio county in order to support single parents.** Providing parents with infant and child care in a quality setting allows them to further their education attainment and advance in their careers.
- **Increase accessibility to family-sustaining jobs for single mothers.** In order to obtain higher wages and better support their families, single mothers need affordable and accessible infant and child care, workforce training, and educational opportunities. As a society, we must also address gender discrimination in the workplace.
- **Address the holistic needs of single mothers and their children.** Safe and stable housing are essential to the well-being of mothers and their children.

# Conclusion

Parents play the most important role in their children's development. However, when parents struggle to provide life's basic essentials—nutrition, health, and safe housing—the current and future well-being of Ohio's children is at stake. A two-generational approach, which examines the barriers faced by Ohio's children and their parents, is a critical step to improve the outcomes of children and their parents.

A two-generational approach begins by exploring the changing needs of Ohio's families and their children and by recognizing disparities in outcomes by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geography. Too many Ohio parents face barriers to access education, jobs, housing, and other supports, which further challenges their ability to provide supportive environments where their children can live, learn, and grow.

Some Ohio communities and leaders are taking steps in the right direction to support Ohio parents and their children. OSU's ACCESS program supports holistic needs of students who are parents, including child care and housing. Muskingum County's Kinship Navigator Program demonstrates many important ways in which Ohioans can provide more support to struggling kinship families and help them obtain or navigate services. The Partners in Health Lead Screening Project provides a great example of bringing essential services to children in schools, including lead screening. By understanding more about these programs and what's working well, we have the opportunity to expand needed services and supports that positively impact Ohio's children and their families.

## What You Can Do

Sustainable change requires support at the local, regional and national levels. As policymakers and community and business leaders, we must use these data to explore the root causes of poverty, health disparities, housing instability, and low education attainment levels facing Ohio's children and families. With greater understanding and a holistic approach to supporting Ohio's children, we will be able to make better informed policy, funding, and services decisions.

We encourage readers of this report to dive deeper into the information and data presented and initiate conversations around these topics with your colleagues and others. Community leaders must work together to improve pathways to family-sustaining jobs, to holistically support parents in school, to ensure all children have stable housing, to provide systems navigation for kinship families, and to evaluate policies and programs in light of Ohio's changing and diverse families. These efforts require each and every one of us working together to identify, test, implement, and support potential solutions.

How can we help ensure that the needs of Ohio's most vulnerable families are met?

- **Ensure that all parents have access to high-quality child care.** This allows parents to obtain the education or training necessary for family-sustaining jobs. Access to child care also supports kinship caregivers, many of whom are older and must return to work to support the children they are raising.
- **Explore potential partnerships between schools and needed direct service programs for children where it makes sense.** Schools can serve as a one-stop-shop to provide children, especially those in poverty, with resources, including nutritious meals, lead screenings, and health care.
- **Help families, especially those with older caregivers, learn about and access support services.** Kinship navigator programs provide essential support to kinship families who have changed their lives to help Ohio children.

# Endnotes

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