



Polling Memo: Ohio Voters on Child Care Challenges, Workforce Impact, and Need for Action

On behalf of the Groundwork Ohio and in partnership with First Five Years Fund, UpONE Insights conducted a statewide survey of registered voters in Ohio. The survey found that Ohio voters believe child care is both a family necessity and an economic driver. Nearly half of young voters would enter the workforce if quality care were available, and young parents are cutting back on basics, struggling to pay bills, and delaying having children because of the high cost. Voters across party lines see child care as key to strengthening the economy and supporting working families, and they strongly back state and federal action to expand access. **Below are key findings:**

Ohio voters are worried about money. Child care challenges add to that stress.

Ohio voters are feeling financial strain.

Nearly half of the voters surveyed say their personal finances are “only fair” or even “poor.” And 68% say they anticipate their financial situation will stay the same or get worse over the next year.

Child care expenses are hitting young Ohio parents (ages 18-34) hard.

- Nearly half of young Ohio parents (48%) say they’re putting off having more children because child care is so expensive.
- And one in three are struggling to get ahead financially or save due to child care costs.
- Nearly 80% of Ohio voters say the ability of working parents to find and afford quality child care is either in a “state of crisis” or is a “major problem.”

Voters also see broader benefits of child care like driving workforce participation.

- More than one-third (34%) of Ohioans – and 56% of Ohio parents – say they or someone they know would consider entering the workforce if quality child care were available.

Federal support for child care is overwhelmingly popular with Ohio voters.

Voters want state and federal action to expand options for affordable, quality child care.

- Fully two-thirds of Ohioans believe federal funding for child care and early learning is a good investment of taxpayer money.
- A strong majority of Ohio voters (54%) would like to see federal funding for quality child care programs for working families increase.
- And by more than a two-to-one margin (36%), Ohioans say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate of the opposite political party if that candidate advanced policies to help working families afford quality child care.

There is strong support for Head Start.

- Nearly 80% of voters statewide support Head Start, including 66% of Republicans, 84% of Independents, and 89% of Democrats.
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of voters **oppose** eliminating Head Start funding. Importantly, over half of voters say they would be less likely to vote for a congressional candidate who supported cuts.

The expansion of child care tax credits is very popular.

- 60% of Ohio voters support the expansion of the child care tax credits included in this year's tax package..

But Ohio wants Congress to go further.

- 69% of Ohio voters want Congress to take additional steps to help working families find and afford quality child care, including 61% of Republicans, 86% of Independents, 74% of Democrats.

About Groundwork Ohio: Groundwork Ohio is a nonpartisan public-policy research and advocacy organization that champions high-quality early learning and healthy development strategies from the prenatal period to age 5, that lay a strong foundation for Ohio kids, families, and communities. We advance quality early childhood systems in Ohio by engaging, educating, and mobilizing diverse stakeholders and strategic partners to promote data driven and evidence-based early childhood policies. Learn more at groundworkohio.org.

About First Five Years Fund: The first five years last forever. At First Five Years Fund, we work to protect, prioritize, and build bipartisan support for quality child care and early learning programs at the federal level. Reliable, affordable, and high-quality early learning and child care can be transformative, not only enhancing a child's prospects for a brighter future but also bolstering working parents and fostering economic stability nationwide. Join us at www.ffyf.org.