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Action for Children Reacts to Ohio HB 49

Tough State Budget Slows Progress for Working Families

Columbus, OHIO, July 1, 2017 – Action for Children, a leader for 45 years in promoting access to quality early childhood services in our region and state, warns that HB 49, Ohio’s biennial budget bill, limits Ohio’s promise to working parents and their children. The budget cuts early childhood spending by \$11.1 million.

Action for Children’s CEO Eric Karolak says, “I’m thankful the legislature and Governor limited the cuts; this was a challenging budget and cuts could have been much worse. It took committed advocates and focused leaders in the Statehouse and Administration to keep cuts to a minimum. But we all must recognize that cuts now will only make it harder for Ohio to reach quality standards previously set by the state, restricting where parents can spend their child care assistance dollars, and that threatens chaos in 2020.”

This biennial budget is the last state budget before a key statutory requirement restricts public funding for child care and preschool to only services provided by programs – child care centers, family child care homes, day nurseries, and public preschools – that participate in *Step Up to Quality* (SUTQ), Ohio’s continuous quality improvement system for early learning. The mandate will take effect on July 1, 2020. Statewide and in central Ohio, only about one-third of programs are currently rated.

“We recognize that the General Assembly had tough decisions to make, but tens of thousands of moms and dads will have much tougher ones facing them when their childcare provider no longer is open or available to them,” adds Dr. Karolak. Citing research that connects investments in early childhood education to improved school readiness, better grades and school completion rates, less remedial education, juvenile delinquency, and incarceration, as well as increased lifetime earnings, Karolak concludes: “This is a case of pay now or pay (more) later.”

About Action for Children

Now in its 45th year, Action for Children, transforms the lives of nearly 50,000 central Ohio children each year by supporting, empowering, and advocating for the adults who make the biggest impact on their lives—their parents, caregivers, and teachers. It’s our mission and it’s built upon our vision that all children, when supported by strong families and a vibrant community, have access to early learning experiences that prepare them for success in school and in life. For more information visit:

www.ActionforChildren.org .

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