

Action for Children



# PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS

FY23 IMPACT REPORT



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## DEAR SUPPORTER

As I reflect on my tenure as Board President at Action for Children, I'm reminded of the profound impact of partnering for success. Collaborating with this incredible organization has been transformative, both personally and professionally. Witnessing firsthand the dedication and passion of the team, and the tangible difference they make in the lives of children and families, has been a constant source of inspiration for me.

Action for Children believes the key to success lies in partnering with those closest to children — parents, caregivers, educators, and the broader community — all of whom advocate for that mission with a passion. Through collective efforts and forward thinking, this organization has pioneered innovative programs and initiatives that effectively address the changing needs of families and communities across central Ohio.

But our impact doesn't stop there. It extends to every individual and organization who chooses to partner with us. Your support is not just a donation; it's a partnership that invests in the future of our children and our community. Together, we have the power to change lives, to create opportunities, and to build a brighter tomorrow for generations to come. I urge you to continue your partnership with Action for Children, knowing that together, we can truly make a difference.

Sincerely,



**Lisa Cochran**  
Action for Children  
Board President  
(FY 2023)



## Action for Children



## FISCAL YEAR 2023 BOARD

### PRESIDENT

Lisa Cochran  
*Vice President,  
Wealth Strategist, PNC*

### PRESIDENT-ELECT

Mary Kay Irwin  
*Director, School Health  
Services, Nationwide  
Children's Hospital*

### TREASURER

Matt Sharp  
*Senior Finance Officer,  
Grange Insurance*

### SECRETARY

Rebecca Love  
*Director, Early Childhood Education,  
Franklin County Board of MR/DD*

### MEMBERS

Alex Anthony  
Daniel Bauer  
Matthew Bell  
Karen Betancourt  
Lynn Blashford  
Rebecca Ciminillo  
Laura Hult  
Ernie Sullivan  
Jennifer Halas  
Muriel Tice, *Emeritus*  
Robert E. White II  
Tamar Williamson

Dr. Eric Karolak  
*CEO, Action for  
Children*

*\*This list is inclusive of  
members who served on  
our board July 1, 2022 -  
June 30, 2023.*

## OUR MISSION

To transform the lives of children by supporting, empowering, and advocating for the adults who make the biggest impact on children's lives—their parents, caregivers and teachers.

## OUR VISION

All children, nurtured by strong families and vibrant communities, have opportunities for quality early learning experiences that prepare them for success in school and life.

## OUR CORE VALUES

### ADVOCACY

We commit to lead the charge for increasing access to quality early childhood experiences and achieving outcomes that provide the strongest foundation for all members of our community. We cannot do this alone, and the best advocates are the adults who care for and educate our children: their parents, other caregivers, and early childhood practitioners. We will use our influence directly, and we will work to activate the power of other networks to fuel efforts to address this urgent need.

### RESPECT AND COMPASSION

We believe that achieving results is essential and the way in which we go about doing so is equally important. We take a strengths-based approach in our interactions, meeting others where they are and understanding together how to move forward. Ours will be a conscious effort to be inclusive of and to support the rich diversity of our community.

### COLLABORATION

Our children deserve a community that works together. We can foster and sustain partnerships among child care and early learning providers, and within the wider nonprofit ecosystem and our community as a whole. We know that we are stronger when we partner with others to embrace a shared commitment toward enriching the lives of children, caregivers and families.

### ADAPTABILITY

The needs of the community will change. We must be responsive to these changes, drawing on our considerable collective expertise. To be successful today, and in the future, we must be continuous learners and encourage creativity and new ways of problem-solving.





## IT TAKES **ALL OF US**

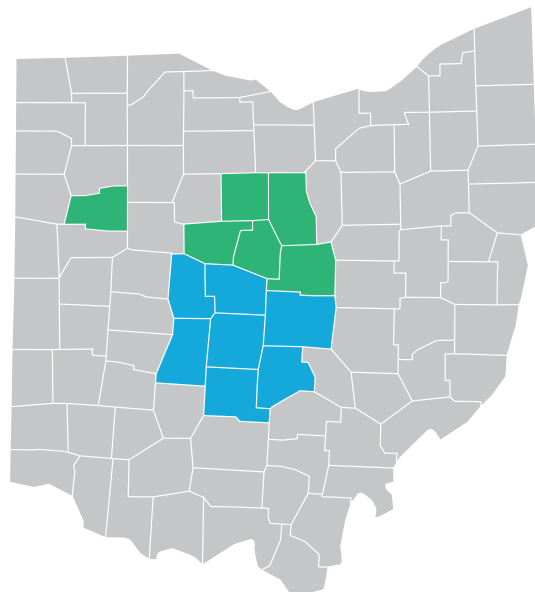
At Action for Children, we are committed to a culture of practice that encourages each person to be their best, authentic self. We value the evolving diversity of our community, and we affirm that our staff and board will represent the community we serve and be culturally responsive in their roles. Wherever we work, and whomever we work with, we will offer services in ways that recognize the rich assets and specific needs of all the clients and partners we serve. It takes all of us to ensure that all families are supported, and all children are prepared for success in school and beyond.

## WHERE WE **SERVE**

**Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union counties.**

PROGRAMS ALSO AVAILABLE IN:

**Allen, Crawford, Knox, Marion, Morrow, and Richland counties.**



# OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

*These numbers reflect  
July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023*



## \$10,228,542



awarded in  
Franklin County  
RISE scholarships

## \$499,500

in Empower Awards paid out to

**159** child care programs  
for reaching quality milestones

**4,600** hours  
of ongoing technical  
assistance and  
coaching sessions  
provided to child care  
professionals



**129** business-focused  
trainings, networking, and  
coaching sessions offered  
to child care program  
owners through The BOSS

**413,773**  
nutritious meals and  
snacks served through  
the Child and Adult  
Care Food Program



**51** Family Child Care  
professionals served through  
The Village Shared Services

**1,759** professional  
development trainings offered

**2,219** hours of Step Up  
To Quality technical assistance  
provided to ensure  
quality child care  
standards

**88** professionals completed  
Action for Children's Child  
Development Associate  
preparatory course





**3,894**  
families assisted  
in finding quality  
child care

**877** kindergarten readiness home visits completed,  
**1,765** parents & guardians served through parent education  
and workshops, impacting over **2,668** children in their households



**27** mothers &  
mother figures  
empowered through  
case management  
and support programs

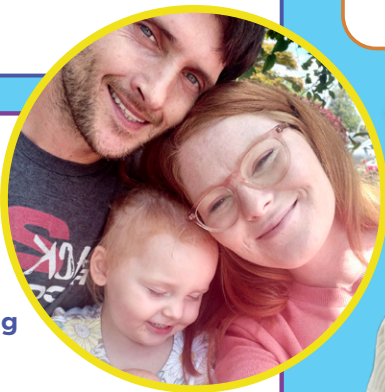


**510** fathers  
& father figures  
empowered  
through case  
management and  
support programs

**591** counseling sessions  
provided to at-risk families  
looking for special needs care

**14,348** parents connected  
to Help Me Grow statewide services,  
improving maternal and infant outcomes

**1,298**  
Help Me Grow  
home visits  
completed, impacting  
**111** families



**356** families  
connected to foster  
and adoption  
agencies

## OUR ADVOCACY

These numbers reflect July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023



### Back To School Family Fair

(August 2022)

Hosted a community event that provided over 700 attendees with resources from Action for Children and 28 vendors in addition to 400 free backpacks of school supplies.



### The Village Founders

(Fall 2022)

"Established a group of leaders in Family Child Care that would provide direction and mentorship for The Village at Action for Children, Ohio's first Staffed Family Child Care Network (SFCN).



### Reckoning, Not Recovery

CENTRAL OHIO CHILD CARE  
PROVIDER SURVEY REPORT  
November 2022



### Reckoning Not Recovery Report

(November 2022)

Published the *Reckoning, Not Recovery* Report, providing an update to previous AFC reports and critical information to the community on the state of child care in central Ohio.



## Step Up To Quality Advocacy

(December 2022)

Provided information to providers around the state's changes to Step Up To Quality requirements, reminding FCCs and Centers of our commitment to supporting programs of types and sizes to reach their quality goals.



## Advocacy Week

(March 2023)

Engaged in a variety of advocacy activities, including sharing fact sheets, blog posts, and talking to state policymakers about the importance of child care during Groundwork Ohio's Advocacy Day on March 8th.

## CHIPS and Child Care Report

(April 2023)

Published a report following the passage of the federal CHIPS act on how businesses can invest in the child care ecosystem and support the needs of working families.



## Step Out for Step Up

(May 2023)

Visited 128 child care programs to encourage providers to complete their biennium training requirements and register them for trainings to assist them in meeting their quality goals.



## Ohio Budget Advocacy

(June-July 2023)

Shared regular updates on the Ohio budget process and its impact on child care via email and blog posts.

## PARENT & FAMILY SPOTLIGHT: CHILDREN SERVICES HUB

Foster, adoptive, and kinship caregivers have always played an important part in making sure all children have nurturing homes to grow up in. Action for Children's Children Services Hub is becoming a trusted partner to find interested families, and guide them through the process.

### **Nikki and Nicholas**

For Nikki and Nicholas, the path to adoption was more overwhelming than they expected. Jenny, an Action for Children Family and Community Support Specialist, became a vital advocate, quickly clearing communication barriers to keep them on track. "With Jenny's help, we were able to get past the challenges and stay with the agency we selected," Nikki said. Action for Children's support instilled confidence in her and her husband and helped them power through the speedbumps. "Knowing that we have someone to support us is a big help. Get somebody on your side like Action for Children." Nikki affirmed.

### **Bethany**

After spending two years struggling to navigate the adoption system, Bethany felt like she was running out of options until she connected with Linnae, another Action for Children Specialist. "Linnae has been not only

a mentor, but also a friend to lean on," Bethany shared. With Linnae's guidance, Bethany and her husband were able to expand their options and find a reliable agency to continue pursuing fostering and adoption to grow their blended family.

### **Matt and Laura**

Matt and Laura were also looking to expand their family through foster care or adoption when they found Action for Children. Jenny's support addressed their anxieties and helped them focus on the core purpose: providing a safe, loving environment for children. "With Action for Children, we received reassurance and connections to resources to prepare us above and beyond what we could've expected," Matt concluded. Matt and Laura have since accepted a foster placement and welcomed two little girls into their home, alongside their biological son. "We've gotten to be supportive and create a fun environment for them. It's a privilege to play a part in their journey and create a somewhat redemptive experience," Matt said.

When Action for Children partners with families like these, the future is bright for children in central Ohio!



## PARENT & FAMILY SERVICES

**Accessing Quality Child Care:** Our Information and Referral team helps families in central Ohio locate the best child care and early education programs for their children by increasing their knowledge of quality indicators, financial assistance, and other resources. Action for Children maintains a database of more than 1,500 regulated child care and early education programs in central Ohio, including nonprofit and for-profit child care centers, family child care homes, preschool programs, Head Start programs, and school age programs. Families may also use our online search tool to access the database.

**Help Me Grow:** Action for Children serves as the single point of entry for Help Me Grow Home Visiting and Early Intervention services in central Ohio. Our Central Intake and Referral (CIR) team connects pregnant women, caregivers with new babies, and families with young children with developmental delays or disabilities with services that will provide tools and information to nurture the healthy growth of their child through their earliest years. Action for Children also offers its own Help Me Grow home visiting services, which provide critical prenatal and postnatal support to families in Franklin County.

**Children Services Hub:** Every child deserves a safe, consistent, and loving home. Becoming a kinship, foster, or adoptive parent offers a safe space for children to continue to learn and grow. Action for Children provides support, guidance, and answers to questions families may have as they consider starting this rewarding journey. Our services, including individualized planning and preparation for pre-screening and home study inspections, help families navigate their options, the licensing process, and more.

**FatherUp:** Action for Children recognizes the unique qualities, strengths and talents of fathers that make them critical to their child's healthy growth and development. Our fatherhood programming offers hands-on parenting and co-parenting skills, and provides job-readiness and workforce development services to help fathers find and keep stable jobs. We serve fathers who meet any of the following criteria: are unengaged or under engaged with their children, are living in poverty, are unemployed or underemployed, have child custody, visitation or support issues and/or involved with the courts, are incarcerated fathers, or are fathers who desire to enhance their parenting skills.

**Mothers Matter:** Mothers play a special role in their children's lives. But some mothers in central Ohio have extra circumstances that make it challenging to give their children the best. Our Mothers Matter program serves mothers who meet one or more of the following criteria: teen mothers, single, divorced, separated mothers, non-custodial mothers, living in poverty,

minority population, involved with the courts, child welfare, or penal system. These classes are also open to any mother interested in parenting skills enrichment. In this program, mothers gain skills and knowledge that lead to healthy relationships with their children and co-parents and teach them new ways of communicating that can strengthen those bonds.

**Positive Parenting Program:** Raising children isn't always easy and many parents feel they've run out of ways to engage their children. The Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) gives parents fresh new ideas and a chance to meet other parents. We provide simple, practical strategies parents can adapt to suit their family's values, beliefs and needs.

**Putting the Children First:** Navigating divorce, dissolution and legal separation can be stressful for parents and children. Action for Children's Putting The Children First program (PTCF) understands that each situation is unique and helps parents in Franklin County (and parents in outlying counties via the online course) by giving them new knowledge and skills that can help them co-parent successfully and help children feel secure during the separation process.

### **Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids:**

At Action for Children, we believe parents are a child's first and best teachers. Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids (SPARK) is a family-focused intervention program that collaborates with parents to help them prepare their 3- and 4-year-old children for school by building reading, language and social skills to create a seamless transition into school. While 33% of children entering the program were below average in their skills readiness, post screening showed that 85% of children were average or above average at the end of the SPARK program year.

### **The Art of Positive**

**Parenting:** Seeking coaching and advice, parents have been coming to Action for Children for over 20 years to learn new knowledge and skills that help them create a healthy, mutually respectful family life for children. The Art of Positive Parenting (TAPP) provides three- and six-week interactive education classes designed to help parents and guardians listen to children's problems, effectively engage children's cooperation, encourage responsibility, and manage stress.



# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT: THE BOSS AND THE VILLAGE

When Action for Children introduced The BOSS and The Village in early 2022, it marked a significant milestone in addressing the evolving landscape of child care. In today's world, running a program while contending with rising operating costs, staffing shortages, and increased demand for care requires increasingly specialized expertise in taxes, operating strategies, and more to be able to keep serving young children - and that's exactly what The BOSS and The Village offer professionals!

Annie Burden, who owns and operates a family child care program, faced unexpected challenges when she was diagnosed with cancer in December 2021. However, when her friend Rhonda introduced her to The Village by inviting her to their first gardening event, it proved to be a turning point. Enrolling in The Village's All Our Kin business series for Family Child Care owners provided Annie not only with technical expertise but also with a supportive community that uplifted her through her battle with cancer. "They supported me both as a human going through cancer AND a business," Annie shared gratefully. Her resilience and determination, along with AFC's support saw her through, and she graduated in December, empowered by the knowledge that "Action for Children knows the quality of child care and the value of FCCs."

Alia Jaradat, a seasoned educator and center-based Preschool Director, also found support and empowerment in Action for Children's resources. Despite the challenges of juggling multiple roles and responsibilities, Alia found guidance and assistance in The BOSS and the one-on-one coaching it provided. With the partnership of her BOSS Coaches, Arielle and Madeleine, Alia navigated hurdles and found the support she needed to stretch to achieve her dreams. "The free resources that Action for Children provided encouraged me to start my own child care center," Alia expressed proudly.

Annie and Alia's experiences in The Village and The BOSS exemplify Action for Children's commitment to partnership, support, and collaboration. As Alia aptly puts it, "No matter what you need, Action for Children is here for you!" With Action for Children by their side, providers like Annie and Alia are empowered to pursue their dreams and create a brighter future for the children they serve.



# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

**Child and Adult Care Food Program:** More than two-third of families have all parents working, and children are in child care for more than 35 hours per week. Yet not all families can assure their children have access to nutritious snacks and meals. Much like the school lunch program, Action for Children's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) helps Family Child Care professionals in central Ohio receive annual nutrition training and reimbursement for the nutritious meals and snacks they serve at their programs.

**Child Development Associate Program:** Since our inception, AFC has prioritized supporting the early childhood workforce. One aspect of our training and professional development services is preparing central Ohio early learning educators to earn a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™. The CDA is the national para-professional credential in early childhood education, and is an important means of strengthening and professionalizing the early childhood workforce. In acquiring a CDA credential, participants invest significant time and effort to become more skilled in their interactions with children, and thus enhance the overall quality of their program. Through Action for Children's CDA program, students also have access to on-site, personalized coaching, helping them to better understand and apply the concepts acquired in their coursework.

**Empower Awards:** Child care professionals in central Ohio go above and beyond every day for our community. Action for Children's Empower Awards provide support for programs as they care for children and families. By paying providers for achieving goals such as signing a new PFCC agreement, meeting SUTQ goals, becoming licensed by ODJFS, or opening child care classrooms, AFC is helping to strengthen child care businesses while simultaneously improving the quality of child care available to families and young children in central Ohio.

**Family Child Care Services:** Family Child Care professionals serve their community by providing child care services within their homes. These educators are often challenged to connect with a professional network, as they typically care for and educate small groups of children independently. Our services help Family Child Care professionals in central Ohio become licensed, maintain mandatory training requirements, connect with other providers, improve the quality of their programming and meet state quality-rating requirements.

**Franklin County RISE:** Action for Children is helping to make child care and early education experiences more accessible to families in Franklin County with child care affordability scholarships. Through Franklin County RISE, many families have been able to enroll their children in child care for the first time, setting their little ones up for success in school and beyond. In addition to child care scholarships, Franklin County RISE also provides incentive grants for child care programs, signing bonus funds, and Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) for early childhood educators to help programs recruit educators, enroll new families, and maintain and grow their businesses.

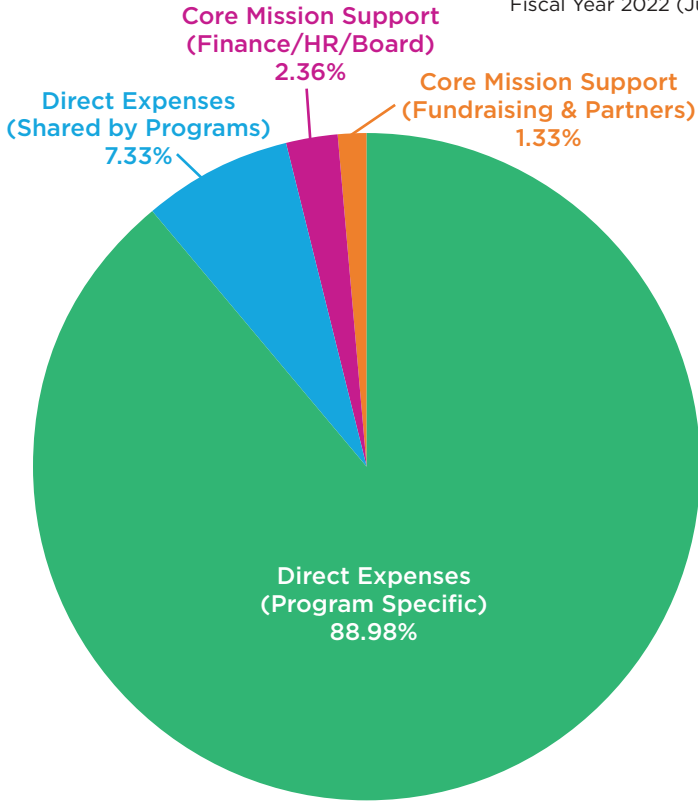
**Professional Development:** AFC provides a wide variety of professional development opportunities through classes, special training events, networking opportunities, study groups, and more. We offer required health and safety trainings, as well as specialized training for quality improvement on a range of topics, including language & literacy, classroom management, promoting child and teacher resilience, leadership development, equity & inclusion, relationships with families, and more. In FY 2023, Action for Children also used LENA technology to improve the quality and quantity of teacher-child interactions. This program provided coaching to 89 teachers in 44 classrooms, impacting 384 children.

**Step Up To Quality:** The availability and quality of child care varies widely in central Ohio. The Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) rating system creates a continuous quality improvement path for providers. SUTQ star-rated programs have demonstrated a commitment to meet stronger standards for staff, environments and curricula, which have been validated to improve children's Kindergarten readiness. Our Technical Assistance coaches help child care programs obtain, maintain, and increase their star-ratings through free on-site and virtual coaching, continuing education and professional development training, and by hosting events to encourage community support.



# FACTS & FIGURES

Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)



## Expenses

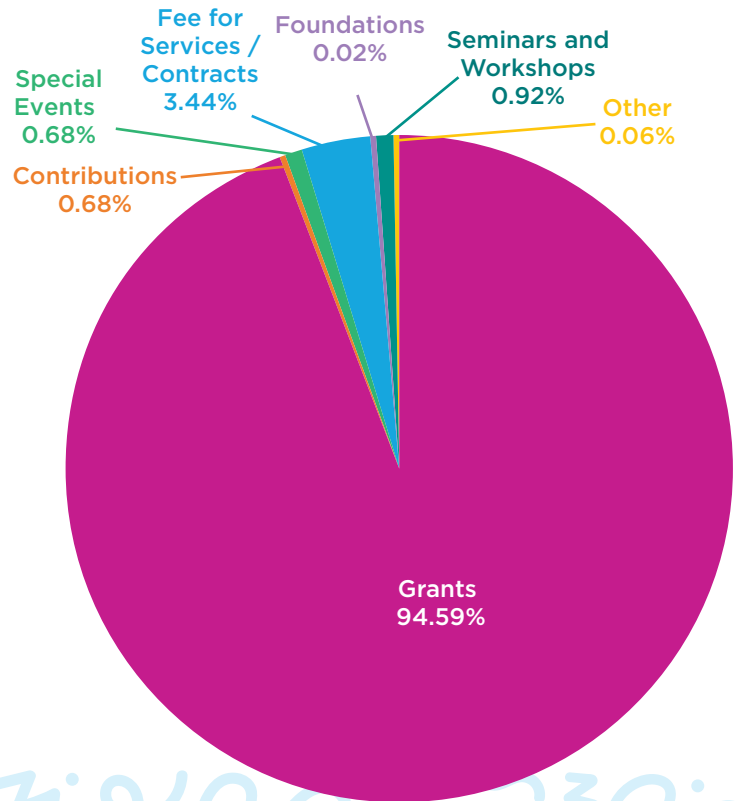
**Direct Expenses (Program Specific)**  
Direct Expense \$14,155,471

**Direct Expenses (Shared by Programs)**  
Shared Cost \$1,166,579

**Core Mission Support (Finance/HR/Board)**  
Finance \$375,167

**Core Mission Support (Fundraising & Partners)**  
Fundraising \$211,536

**Total** **\$15,908,753**



## Public Support and Revenues

Grants	\$15,172,021
Contributions	\$47,403
Special Events	\$108,405
Fee for Services / Contracts	\$551,536
Foundations	\$3,500
Seminars and Workshops	\$146,846
Other	\$9,635
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,039,346</b>

# THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR DONORS WHO HELP TO MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE.

## FUNDING PARTNERS



SCAN TO DONATE TO ACTION FOR CHILDREN



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