

135th Ohio GA State & Local Public Policy Issues & Priorities

(January 2023-December 2025)

The Schubert Center for Child Studies seeks to ensure that public policy reforms, primarily state and local, reflect an understanding of the principles of child and adolescent development, credible research and data, and best practices. The Center works through collaborative partnerships to engage in and shape policy to advance child well-being. Our Center's policy work seeks to reduce structural and racial inequities in child-serving systems and includes efforts in the child welfare, behavioral health and youth justice systems, K-12 student supports and discipline alternatives, youth in crisis supports, and childhood lead poisoning prevention. Specific state and local policy priorities include the following.

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

1. Work with partners to create and advance the Ohio Lead-Free Kids Coalition (OLFKC) policy priorities for public investments focused on primary prevention of lead poisoning, that are informed by families and others directly impacted by lead poisoning, and to build long-term strategies and structures for eliminating childhood lead exposure.
2. Work with partners in the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition (LSCC) to support the effective implementation of the Cleveland lead safe law and to help elevate the LSCC/Cleveland approach as a model for the state of Ohio.

Child Welfare & Well-Being

1. Sustain and expand the adoption of youth-specific, mobile community care response and stabilization supports for children and youth in crisis without law enforcement.
2. Support caring connections, housing stability and other resources for youth transitioning out of foster care.
3. Support Family First Prevention Services Act implementation to prioritize prevention services, including kinship support, that protect and keep children out of formal child welfare/foster care system.
4. Support Multi-System Youth efforts to reduce institutionalization (and parental custody relinquishment) of children and increase effective crisis stabilization and other community-based supports for children and youth with complex needs.

Education and Student Supports

1. Reduce the use of disciplinary student removal from school and educational opportunities, and increase options for healthy connection, culturally responsive learning/teaching and social and emotional well-being.
2. Increase student wellness supports in schools, including the use of school safety funding to support student connection and restorative approaches, rather than increased policing and hard security measures.

Youth Justice

1. Work with partners to advance policies and practices that are developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, and racially-equitable, and explicitly eliminate the adultification and criminalization of childhood, especially for Black and Brown children; this includes bindover/transfer to adult systems and excessive sentencing.
2. Advance policies and practices that effectively divert children and youth from the criminal justice system and provide community-based, restorative, culturally responsive, positive youth development and healing supports.
3. Sustain the adoption and implementation of developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, racially-equitable policies and practices (locally and statewide) concerning police interactions with children and youth in order to appropriately divert youth from justice system involvement.
4. Reduce the overuse of detention locally and incarceration of children through the Ohio Department of Youth Services and work with local and state juvenile justice systems to hold systems accountable and to foster youth access to trauma-informed, educational, recreational, family, and health and emotional supports.