

Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Early Child Development

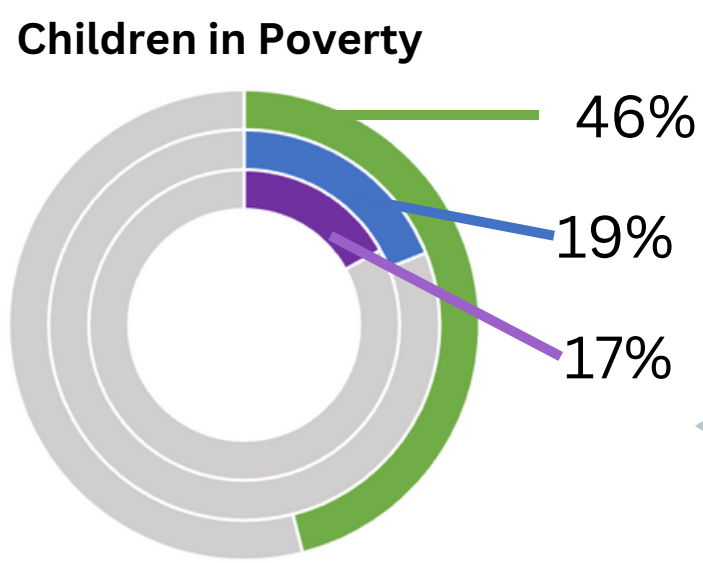


SCHUBERT CENTER FOR CHILD STUDIES

Coordinated early childhood policies, across **child care, family leave, preschool, Head Start, and direct poverty reduction**, can together reduce inequality in child outcomes.

POVERTY STATISTICS OF U.S & OHIO:¹

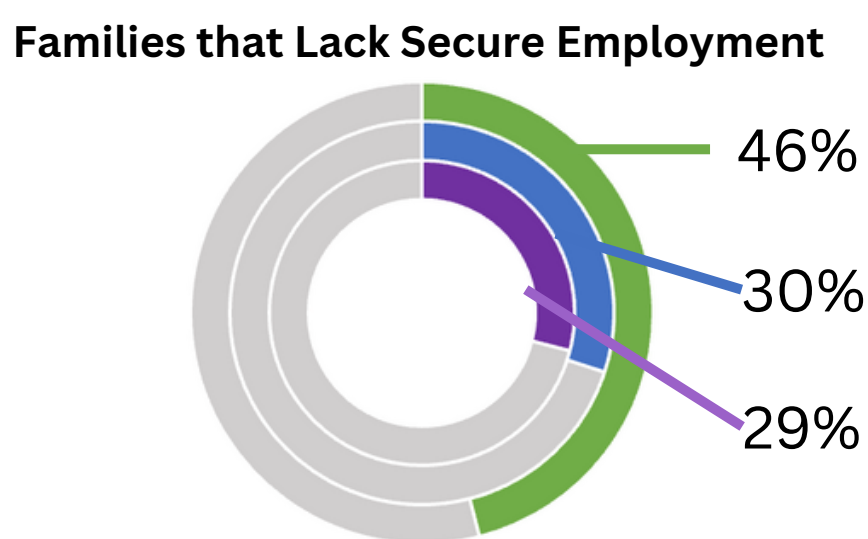
Cleveland Ohio National



Cleveland Snapshot:

78.8% of children under age 6 are **economically disadvantaged**.²

Black children have **3x the poverty rate** of White children in Cleveland.³



The **highest lead concentrations** exist in predominantly **Black neighborhoods**.⁴

Impact on low resource areas

25.7% Of kindergarteners had elevated **blood lead levels**.⁵

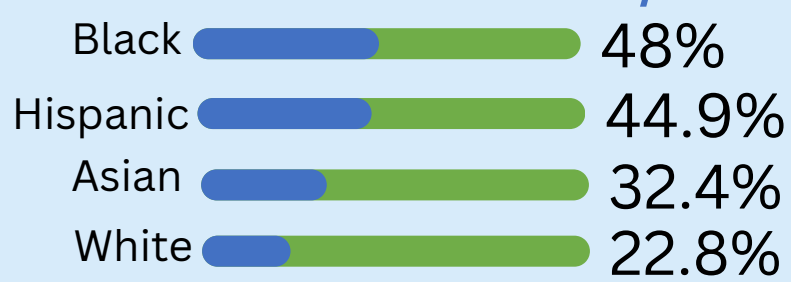
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INFLUENCES:

The **earliest years** are the foundation for lifelong thriving and skill development but are the period of the lifespan in which the **U.S. invests the least**. Socioeconomic and racial/ethnic **gaps** in families' access to and quality of **early learning opportunities** is large and growing and COVID-19 exacerbated these inequalities. **Coordinated support** in early childhood that addresses economic, environmental and family instability is crucial for healthy long-term development.^{6,7,8}

Local Snapshot:

In 2021, **24,858** children were utilizing **publicly funded childcare** in Cuyahoga County.¹

Overall Cleveland Poverty Rates⁹



20.7% of children live within a **food insecure household**, crucial for well-being.¹⁰

Head Start in Cuyahoga²

2.6% of enrolled children are under 3 years

97.4% of enrolled children are 3-5 years

CRADLE TO KINDERGARTEN EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES⁶:

AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILD CARE	UNIVERSAL QUALITY PRESCHOOL	PAID PARENTAL LEAVE	HEAD START	CHILD POVERTY REDUCTION
Only a fraction of eligible low- and even middle-income families can access affordable, quality early child care. ⁶	Universal preschool programs have been shown to increase the likelihood of attending college by 12%. ¹¹	Rapid return to work after child birth has been predictive of poorer childhood outcomes like breast feeding rates, fewer vaccinations, and increased child behavior problems. ⁶	Head Start offers intensive, early support for children and families experiencing high adversity in areas of concentrated disadvantage. With its focus on ages 3-5, earlier support is needed. ⁶	The U.S. has some of the highest child poverty rates among the rich countries of the world. The recent Baby's First Years study shows that reducing child poverty in the first year of life results in increased infant brain activity. ⁸

CRADLE TO KINDERGARTEN COORDINATED EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY PROPOSAL :

Proposed Policy Framework:

- AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILD CARE
- UNIVERSAL QUALITY PRESCHOOL
- PAID PARENTAL LEAVE
- HEAD START
- CHILD POVERTY REDUCTION

A child care guarantee to all working families combining use of a refundable tax credit for child care costs and childcare subsidies for quality child care for children under 5 and with family incomes below 150% of the state median income.

State education departments work with local departments (with aid from federal government) to develop all-day preschool for 3 and 4 year olds with structure and process quality standards.

Universal paid leave for up to 16 weeks with minimum and capped wages, built on the Social Security program, with focus on child's first year of life.

Realign and strengthen Head Start to ensure free child care for most disadvantaged and vulnerable children under 5, with focus on 0-3, using strong community ties and links to pediatric and early intervention supports.

Reinstate the Biden Administration's expanded Child Tax Credit, which reduced child poverty by over 40 percent in the United States in the second half of 2021.

Local Policy Highlights:

AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILD CARE

- **Step Up to Quality (SUTQ):**
 - Improvement in Kindergarten Readiness Assessment scores in children in higher rated programs.¹²
- **Publicly Funded Child Care through Ohio Works First**
 - Provides coverage for child care expenses for families at or below 142% of FPL until they reach 300% of FPL.¹³

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

- Ohio has **no universal or comprehensive policy for paid parental leave.** In the US, 11 states have implemented their own paid parental leave (PPL) programs.¹⁷
- **Ohio Municipal Paid Parental Leave**
The state of Ohio, 3 counties (Summit, Lucas, Montgomery) and 15 Ohio cities offer PPL to municipal employees.¹⁸ Local groups are urging Cleveland officials to enact paid family and medical leave for city employees.¹⁹

UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL

- **Invest in Children's Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program (UPK)**
 - 65.8% of program children were on track for language and literacy.¹⁴
- **PRE4CLE Initiative & Head Start**
 - 70% of regularly attending PRE4CLE preschoolers are demonstrating and approaching kindergarten readiness.¹⁵
- **Full day Kindergarten Ohio mandate (ORC 3313.48)¹⁶**

HEAD START

- **Head Start programs** in Cuyahoga County participate as **UPK sites** with quality enhancement funding to strengthen standards and help serve children with special needs.²⁰
- **Scholar House:** Two-Gen model pilot to reduce childhood poverty through providing stable family housing, parent academic support, rental services and resident services, coupled with quality child care with Head Start.²¹

POTENTIAL POLICY PRIORITIES:

Focus on most vulnerable children.

- Targeted Universalism framework to improve education/care that is equitable and accessible to all.²²
- Phase in expansion of access to quality child care and early education by starting with most disadvantaged families and connecting them with high-quality care and resources with federal funding.

Invest in critical early care and education workforce to ensure quality.

- Increase provider reimbursement rates to help recruit and retain early care workers.
- Partner with higher ed to build early care and education career pathways.
- Train child care programs and preschools to provide supports for family needs, including trauma-informed care and mental health and well-being support.

Prioritize policies that promote parent choice and flexibility.

- Support the continuation of the Child Tax Credit and unconditional direct cash transfers, with focus on early childhood for child well-being.
 - Community members urge for policy change to expand Child Tax Credit.²³
- Urge adoption of equitable paid parental leave for all working parents.

LOCAL RESOURCES:

- [Birthing Beautiful Communities](#)
- [Black Child Development Institute](#)
- [Bright Beginnings](#)
- [Groundwork Ohio](#)
- [Help Me Grow](#)
- [Invest In Children](#)
- [Starting Point](#)
- [Zero to Three](#)
- [PRE4CLE](#)

Access full list of national and local resources at <https://case.edu/schubertcenter/events/kessler-freedheim-lecture-series>

1)The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2021: KIDS COUNT Data Center, Children's Defense Fund Ohio. 2) Early Childhood Advisory Council. (2020): Cuyahoga County-Ohio Department of job and family services. 3) Ahern, J (2022): Race appears to be the greatest determinant of child poverty in Ohio. Center for Community Solutions 4) Dissel et al. (2022): Race, racism and lead poisoning: Toxic Neglect. 5) Fischer (2019): Early Childhood Lead Exposure among Cleveland Kindergarteners by Neighborhood and School Enrollment. Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development 6) Chaudry et al (2017): Cradle to Kindergarten: A New plan to combat inequality 7) Yoshikawa, et al (2020): Effects of Global Coronavirus Disease-2019 Pandemic on Early Childhood Development: Short and Long Term Risks 8) Troller-Renfree, et al (2022): The impact of a poverty reduction intervention on infant brain activity 9) U.S Census data 2020: Poverty status table S1701 10) Kids Against Hunger (2020). 2020 Hunger Statistics Cleveland 11) Gormley (2023): Universal Pre-K and College Enrollment: Is There a Link? 12) Jones, S. (2022): Ohio Department of Education, Early Learning and School Readiness Step Up To Quality Validation Study. 13) Step Up To Quality Committee. (2022). Publicly funded child care and step up to Quality Interim Report 2022. 14) Anthony (2017): Cuyahoga County's Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program: Evaluating its Effects on Kindergarten Readiness and Third Grade Reading Proficiency. 15) PRE4CLE (2020). Preschool Reimagined-PRE4CLE 2020 annual Report. 16) Ohio Revised Code. Section 3313.48 17) Williamson (2023): The State of Paid Family and Medical Leave in the U.S. in 2023. Fact sheet. Center for American Progress 2023. 18) Ohio Revised Code section 124.136 19) Policy Matters Ohio (2023). Ohio Municipal Paid Leave Initiative 2023. 20) Head Start: Cuyahoga County Head Start Programs 21) Cassano (2022): Cleveland Scholar House Planned Near Metro Campus 22) Powell (2019): Targeted universalism: policy and practice 23) Petrik (2022): increase family security and expand opportunity in Ohio

click data point superscripts to access citations

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