

My name is Tara Johnson-Noem. I am Director of Government Relations at United Way of Greater Cincinnati. We raised more than \$50 million last year through the generous support of more than 90,000 local donors and community partners. We fund about 140 agency partners, and also work to leverage their collective impact, helping the clients we all serve move on a path out of poverty.

Our Success by 6 initiative also provides funding and resources for early childhood education because we know 90% of brain development occurs by age 5. Kindergarten Readiness is a key indicator for future success in school and life. Otherwise, those who start behind tend to stay behind without significant intervention. We also know these investments have a multi-generational impact: helping children as well as their parents and caregivers.

Let's consider that working parents need childcare and therefore many of tomorrow's workers are *in* childcare.

Two-thirds of children under age six now have all residential parents in the workforce – my own kids included. Therefore, 2/3 of American children are spending roughly 11,700 hours in childcare before they enter Kindergarten. Contrast that with approximately 1,080 hours that would be spent in a full-time pre-K or Head Start programⁱ. And since foundational development and social-emotional skills occur in these early years, having Ohio's children in high-quality learning environments is critical to their long-term success in school, career and life.

Parents need reliable child care options so they can work – often needing to rely on private childcare providers, but the cost is prohibitive for many. In 33 states, it's now more expensive to put a baby in childcare than it is to send a kid to public college. Perhaps that's why in Greater Cincinnati, 42% of children under the age of 2 are cared for by a relative or friend of familyⁱⁱ. While this can be a great option for some families, in other cases, without the health and safety standards certified through licensing, some of our children are spending time in environments not set up for age-appropriate learning or even in places that are unsafe.

Informal arrangements for childcare are also more prone to inconsistency. A study sponsored by the U.S Chamber of Commerce Foundation estimates breakdown in childcare for parents costs the U.S. economy over \$3 Billion per year. In a U.S. Chamber survey, 74% of working parents said their jobs have been affected by childcare problemsⁱⁱⁱ.

Today, only 50% of Ohio's children eligible for publicly-funded early childhood programs (child care and home visitation) are receiving services. Only 6.3% of the state education budget is spent on children under age 5. And not surprisingly with those numbers, only 41% of Ohio children come to school ready for Kindergarten^{iv}.

At the local level, we work with many of our agency and community partners to increase the capacity of child care providers. One such partner is the Cincinnati Preschool Promise. In 2016,

Cincinnati Public Schools passed the Preschool Promise levy. In its first year of operation, Cincinnati Preschool Promise served 1,341 preschool-aged students with tuition assistance dollars to attend high-quality, 3, 4 or 5-star rated programs throughout the city during the school year.^v The program supports families living up to 200% of the federal poverty line (around \$50,000 for a family of four). This summer, United Way will partner with Preschool Promise on a pilot, offering summer tuition to approximately 40 preschoolers. After the pilot period, we will measure both the children's development and the family's economic stability to determine if the year-round support allowed the parents to pursue additional employment opportunities.

Other strategies funded by United Way complement one another to increase local provider capacity as well. In 2017, only about 7% of the 500 licensed family child care providers in Hamilton County had a quality rating of any kind. In the last 15 months, 4C for Children has put into place a new cohort training program to help providers prepare for a quality rating. As a result of the work of 4C, Preschool Promise and many others, now 38% of Hamilton County family child care providers are now quality rated! United Way of Greater Cincinnati will be funding two additional 4C cohorts to help expand this training model into our high-priority communities.

Make no mistake, private philanthropy cannot solve our quality childcare crisis alone. Private philanthropy can serve as a partner to state government, testing models and showing what works. But we must have the continued support of the State of Ohio to help providers reach quality ratings and year-round eligibility for Ohio's working families to access that high-quality childcare.

Thank you.

Sources

ⁱ Stevens, Katharine: *Workforce of Today, Workforce of Tomorrow: A Business Case*. U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation Center for Education and Workforce. Page 5. June 2017
https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Workforce%20of%20Today%2CWorkforce%20of%20Tomorrow%20Report_0.pdf

ⁱⁱ *Child Well Being Survey 2017*, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and Interact for Health. August 2017.
https://www.interactforhealth.org/upl/media/cwbschildcare_final_070618.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Center for Education and Workforce:
<https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/early-childhood-education>

^{iv} *Case for Support*, Groundwork Ohio:
https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/d2fbfd_e5522b94a9c5447ea47a618c5d049e27.pdf

^v *Strong Start, Strong Future: 2017-2018 Report to the Community*, Cincinnati Preschool Promise:
http://www.cincy-promise.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/CPP-Annual-Report-2018_Interactive.pdf