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Ohio House of Representatives  
House Children and Human Services Committee  
House Bill 96

Chairperson White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and members of the House Children and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the as-introduced version of House Bill 96, the FY 2026-2027 state operating budget.

My name is Robyn Lightcap and I am the Executive Director of Preschool Promise, Inc., in Dayton/Montgomery County, Ohio. Preschool Promise is a nonprofit with the vision that every child in our County is ready for success in kindergarten so they are set up for success in school and life. We are fortunate to have local investment that allows us to provide tuition assistance for families to pay for preschool. However, we do not have adequate funding to help all working parents afford high quality child care and preschool for their children.

**I ask for your support of the Child Care Assistance and Child Tax Credit as introduced in House Bill 96.**

- 1. Please provide child care assistance for families up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level by increasing the eligibility for Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) to 160% and continuing the Child Care Choice Voucher to cover families from 160% to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.**

Child care is expensive. The cost of full time, year round child care ranges from \$10,000 to over \$15,000 a year, and many parents cannot afford to pay for child care on their own. The table below provides the 2025 Federal Poverty Levels of the current 145% of the Federal Poverty Level, and then what the household income would be if we increase Publicly Funded Child Care to 160% of the Federal Poverty Level and maintain up to 200% for the Child Care Choice Voucher.

As an example, a single mom with one child would be considered a Household Size of 2, and if she earns \$43,000 a year she would be over the proposed threshold. *The*

proposed eligibility thresholds are still extremely low, underscoring the need for the changes. Parents need help paying for child care so they can work.

Annual Household Income - 2025 Federal Poverty Levels			
Household Size	145% Current PFCC Cap	160% Proposed PFCC Cap	200% Proposed Choice Voucher Limit
2	\$30,668	\$33,840	\$42,300
3	\$38,643	\$42,640	\$53,300
4	\$46,618	\$51,440	\$64,300

**2. Implement the partially refundable Child Tax Credit for working parents with young children.**

The proposed Child Tax Credit supports working parents who are juggling the start of their careers as they care for their young families. The Child Tax Credit offers up to \$1,000 per child is an effective way to help parents from low- and middle-income households as they manage the expenses of young children.

Additionally, in order to move our State in the direction of being the very best place to raise a young child, I ask you to support:

- **Increases for Early Intervention** so that young children receive timely evaluations and services to help them with any developmental delays.
- **Changes to payment practices for Publicly Funded Child Care** reimbursement so that child care providers are able to cover operational costs and keep classrooms open.
- **Expansion of the Family Connects home visiting model** that has proven effective in other states. This program will help Ohio’s babies get connected to any services they need in the first months of life.
- **Expansion of the Cradle Cincinnati model** to other areas of the state so we can reduce infant and maternal mortality.

Please maintain these proposals in House Bill 96 that will help parents be able to work, and ensure that Ohio’s children have the support they need to reach their full potential.