

# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 25, 2016

## Ohio Voters Unite in Supporting Greater Investments in Early Education

**Cincinnati, OH** – In every region and across the political spectrum a majority of Ohio voters support increasing federal investment in early childhood education. [A bipartisan poll released today](#) by PRE4CLE in Cleveland, the United Ways of Central Ohio and Greater Cincinnati, Learn to Earn Dayton, and Washington, DC-based First Five Years Fund found that 74 percent of Ohio voters – including 50 percent of Republicans, 76 percent of Independents, and 94 percent of Democrats – want Congress to provide funding to help state and local communities improve early learning programs for children from birth to age five.

PRE4CLE, Learn to Earn Dayton, and the United Ways of Central Ohio and Greater Cincinnati all work in their local communities to expand high-quality learning opportunities for young children, especially low-income children. Each community invests significant business and philanthropic funds to increase the quality of early education programs, and to increase the number of children who receive them.

"There is no doubt that investing in high-quality early care and education produces significant results in child well-being and school success, especially for children from struggling families," says Julia Poston, Managing Partner at EY and Cincinnati Office and United Way of Greater Cincinnati board member. "Business leaders understand the significant return quality programs have in both human and financial terms. High-quality programs can change the trajectory of children's lives."

As Ohioans prepare to head to the polls, 83 percent of voters rank ensuring children get a strong start in life through quality education as extremely important or very important. This makes early education a top priority for Ohio voters, along with jobs (86 percent) and health care (83 percent).

"Candidates and elected leaders seeking to help Ohio and the nation should look no further than improving access to quality early learning opportunities," said Kris Perry, Executive Director of the First Five Years Fund. "Seven in 10 Ohio voters say birth to age five is the most important time to develop a child's capacity to learn. Today's poll makes clear the need for – and support of – affordable, quality early education programs."

Additional findings from the poll are highlighted below:

- Only 20 percent of Ohio voters feel that there are high-quality and affordable early education programs available to low- and middle-class families in their area.
- Voters care more about ensuring there is sufficient funding for state needs, such as education (53 percent), than trying to keep taxes and spending at their current level (43 percent).
- Sixty-eight percent of Ohio voters want us to do more to improve education, an 11 percent increase from 2014.

The poll was commissioned by the First Five Years Fund in conjunction with a bipartisan polling team of Public Opinion Strategies (R) and Hart Research (D). The sample was distributed proportionately throughout the state and is demographically representative of the electorate.

###

**About the First Five Years Fund:** The First Five Years Fund helps America achieve better results in education, health and economic productivity through investments in quality early childhood education programs for disadvantaged children. FFYF provides knowledge, data, and advocacy – persuading federal policymakers to make investments in the first five years of a child’s life that create greater returns for all. <http://www.ffyf.org>

**For further information, please contact:**

**Cleveland:** Katie Kelly, PRE4CLE, 216-224-9554

**Columbus:** Nancy Nestor-Baker, United Way of Central Ohio, 614-227-2765

**Cincinnati:** Stephanie Byrd, United Way of Greater Cincinnati and United Way Success by 6, 513-762-7144

**Dayton:** Robyn Lightcap, Learn to Earn, 937-236-9965

**First Five Years Fund:** Stratton Kirton, 202-822-1205