



PRESS RELEASE

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CHILDCARE PROVIDER VIDEOS REFLECT STRUGGLES TO REMAIN OPEN AND SUPPORT FAMILIES Federal Relief Must Be Released to Address Ongoing Pandemic Challenges

CLEVELAND, OHIO – The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated Ohio's child care crisis, with many child care providers struggling to remain open due to the high cost of providing care, low enrollment, and the inability to find early childhood educators. In a series of video interviews produced by PRE4CLE, Cleveland's providers share how they're struggling to stay open so parents can have quality child care as they return to work.

Zshavina Kennedy, owner, Little Critter Learning Centers in Cleveland, said her center has been at a 20% deficit during the past 18 months and has taken out \$500,000 in EIDL loans, but she keeps pushing through to keep the doors open so she can serve her children. "We are failing our childcare industry, which means we're failing our working-class people. They need us to watch their children and to keep them safe, and we need the money to do that," she said. "We need enough money to pay enough staff to keep the children safe – and I don't want to just keep them safe. I want to teach them; I want to help them thrive. I want to make sure they have everything they need."

The federal government passed [The America Rescue Plan Act, which provided \\$24 billion in Child Care Stabilization Grants](#) to states. These funds are required to be distributed to child care providers to cover their operating expenses. Ohio received \$800 million in Child Care Stabilization Grants in the spring of 2021 to be used over two years.

Ohio still has \$638 million non-discretionary APRA federal funding to appropriate to child care providers. As of today, only \$161 million has been appropriated to be released. If at least 50% of the Stabilization Grant funding is not allocated by the end of 2021, those funds must be returned and will be re-allocated to another state for their child care providers. Ohio lawmakers must act by December 11, 2021, to pass legislation in order to meet that deadline.

Katie Kelly, executive director of PRE4CLE, said early childhood advocates are asking legislators to act quickly to allocate the funds so they aren't returned to the federal government. "As these child care providers tell us in their own words, there has never been a more urgent need to provide immediate relief to Ohio child care programs nor has there ever been such significant funding available to do so. We urge the governor's office and the state legislature to release this funding so that programs remain open during this incredibly difficult period to ensure Ohio families can return to work and children can continue to have access to safe, quality child care settings," Kelly said.

David Smith, executive director of Horizon Education Centers in Northeast Ohio, said the ARPA funds are the key to retaining quality staff and helping the centers stay open. "The ARPA funds really need to be released and put out into the community. There are many centers closing across the state and in the Cleveland area because they can't just hang on any more," he said. "Release that aid that was put out there at the federal level to help bail out the centers that are struggling so hard. We are all at that critical recovery point. Supply costs are going up. Labor costs are going up. We don't want to see the entire industry destroyed. Let's do whatever we can to keep it around. You've got the money there. Just release it please."

The following videos are available to download and share with the public:

| Video Name | Link |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Daycare for Future Scholars | https://animoto.com/play/jBDjOjsKlfbPLGeKkxJkQ |
| Lexington Bell | https://animoto.com/play/d1eWxS0wutS7k86BcQHf1Q |
| Care A Lot Daycare | https://animoto.com/play/iNpFdjk1f6S1jwylr0Ci1g |
| Horizon | https://animoto.com/play/H37OJgnM4Jm4qI5IpAwKMg |
| Little Critters | https://animoto.com/play/pUrMXq1uldcVK1NL5wwAwA |
| Short Full Version | https://animoto.com/play/UnHiDQ11SdPpz0gc0yn25g |
| ARPA Kids and Families | https://animoto.com/play/nj0U1ri3yeMRLOnmZQU3fg |
| ARPA Provider 1A Video | https://animoto.com/play/U4N6hFsowqkT8SlfhDquNg |
| ARPA Provider 1B Video | https://animoto.com/play/7VYiH0x4XXry14bQ5y71Hg |
| ARPA Provider 2 Video | https://animoto.com/play/H0mjdHLEIPeROJpMWmNOWQ |
| ARPA Video | https://animoto.com/play/vHW3tMi03vezSdBPEvmFBg |

About PRE4CLE: PRE4CLE is Cleveland's plan to expand access to high-quality preschool to all 3- and 4-year-olds in the city. PRE4CLE helps families find and enroll in high-quality preschool programs, connects preschool providers to tools and resources to increase their quality and serve more children, and provides strategic leadership and advocacy to accelerate the availability of high-quality preschool in Cleveland. PRE4CLE fulfills a core priority of *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools* and is led by the Cleveland Early Childhood Compact. For a copy of the Annual Report and to view video interviews demonstrating PRE4CLE's impact, visit www.PRE4CLE.org.