

PRE4CLE's Statement on the Final FY26-27 Budget: Legislators Perpetuate an Anti-Life, Anti-Family State

July 1, 2025, CLEVELAND, OH- PRE4CLE and its partners had great expectations upon the release of Governor DeWine's Executive Budget proposal aimed at improving Ohio's child care system and child care tax credits for working families. We are deeply disappointed, however, by the changes made throughout the process by the Ohio General Assembly and subsequently signed into law yesterday that significantly undermine the Governor's initial proposed investments in Ohio's children and families. This budget delivers significant benefits to a few powerful interests and ultra-wealthy Ohioans at the direct expense of Ohio's children and families. This approach undermines our state's future and jeopardizes long-term prosperity.

While Ohio's child care and early learning system will benefit from new resources that support affordability for families and strengthen the child care system, the legislature failed to fully fund the proposals put forward by Governor DeWine, maintaining a child care eligibility level that is the lowest in the nation.

The \$600 million allocated to support a new stadium for the Cleveland Browns — an initiative widely viewed as unnecessary and unwanted by the Cleveland community — diverts critical resources away from Ohio's working families. These funds could have strengthened access to child care, strengthened public schools, ensured children remain covered by Medicaid, and expanded mental health services for young people. Instead, they will fund a project that threatens to undermine Cleveland's small businesses and fails to serve the broader public good.

Because of the misguided priorities of the Ohio legislature, there will be children who lose their health insurance. Parents who want to work may be forced to stay home due to the high cost and limited availability of child care. Families across Ohio will bear the burden of choices that do not reflect their needs.

Meanwhile, the people who keep our communities running—those who build our roads, patrol our neighborhoods, and teach in our schools—are left wondering how they will afford to live and raise families in Ohio.

The growing influence of big money special interests continues to shape policy decisions in our statehouse. Until our lawmakers put the needs of Ohioans above campaign contributions, we will continue to see policies that exacerbate inequality and undermine opportunity.

It's time for Ohio to return to its people. In nearly every other state, child care, health care, and mental health services are better supported. If we truly believe that Ohio is the best place to grow up, we must act like it—and invest in the programs and services that give all children and families a real chance to thrive.

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About PRE4CLE

PRE4CLE is a collaborative initiative dedicated to ensuring that every child in Cleveland has access to high-quality preschool education. By working with families, educators, and community partners, PRE4CLE advocates for equity and opportunity, helping all children build a strong foundation for academic success and lifelong learning. With a focus on empowering families and preparing children for kindergarten, PRE4CLE plays a vital role in nurturing the future of Cleveland's youngest learners, ensuring they are ready to thrive in school and beyond.