

## Testimony to HB 166, House Finance Health and Human Services Sub-Committee

April 10, 2019

### Supporting ODJFS provisions on early education and quality child care

Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Minority Member West and members of the Committee: My name is Vanessa Freytag, here today on behalf of the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association. I am the President and CEO of 4C for Children. We are the state designated Child Care Resource and Referral agency for Service Delivery Areas 6 and 8 – Greater Cincinnati and Miami Valley. In total, we have the responsibility for over 1,500 child care providers who serve over 30,000 children from families who use Publicly Funded Child Care.

We support the ODJFS provisions of the introduced budget that support early education and childcare. While we support expanding eligibility, it can only be done successfully by providing a stable foundation of quality programming first.

4C has three core parts of its work.

- Help licensed child care programs attain and then maintain the state's Step Up To Quality standards.
- Help parents connect with child care that meets their needs. These are primarily low-income families and a large proportion are families in poverty.
- We also administer the Federal Child Nutrition Program for several hundred of the child care providers. I know you have heard many times that 90% of brain growth happens between ages 0-5. The child nutrition program ensures that those brains have the fuel to grow.

You have heard testimony about the foundational formation of a human brain. Getting the first 5 years of life off to an educationally sound start is a major predictor of the contribution each and every one of our youngest Ohio citizens will make when they become adults. You have heard testimony from several people about the link between quality child care and kindergarten readiness.

I am here today to share our support and convey the impact of the proposed budget on the success of the Step Up To Quality directive. The state has set July 1, 2020 as the deadline for every child care program serving publicly funded children to reach, at a minimum, the first level of quality – the first star. If they do not reach that first star they will no longer be allowed to care for publicly funded children.

There are stacks of research that validate the important role that quality child care plays in the education system. Today I'd like to add another lens to the urgency of quality child care in our state.

When we think about the economic growth of our state, the reality is that child care is one of the most fundamental components of our business infrastructure. A parent cannot go to work without a place for their child to be cared for. We are thrilled that the reimbursement rates for

child care programs will improve with the additional funding from the Federal Block Grant. However, we are concerned that there is no significant growth in the things that directly assist those programs to reach quality – coaching and training in particular.

In less than 15 months just in the two regions, we are responsible for the 10-12,000 parents using publicly funded child care whose 13,000 children are currently in unrated programs may or may not show up at their job on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. Whether they show up will be impacted by whether the program their child is in has reached the first level of quality. There are no “extra” quality seats. As a state, we must get those existing unrated programs to quality.

We support the state’s imperative. We support leaving the deadline in place. Our concern is that there are inadequate resources to assist the remaining programs who have not yet attained a quality rating. In the two regions we serve there are about 850 unrated child care programs who serve about 13,000 children on public funding.

I would like to start by showing you three different counties in the regions we support. They illustrate the issues that our communities are facing.

We will start with Hamilton County. It is the largest county in the Greater Cincinnati region and it contains the main urban core – the City of Cincinnati. As you can see from the map, more than 500 of the 800+ programs are unrated and they care for over 7,300 children on public funding. Our agency has worked over the past 3 years to drastically innovate the delivery of Step Up To Quality coaching and training. We have developed a cohort model that is helping dozens of programs reach the first star faster – in a matter of months or even weeks depending on the breadth of barriers a program faces. In addition, these cohort models are using the state funding more efficiently than ever. The cost of a program that successfully uses the cohort model is one-third to one-quarter the cost of the previous process that had been used for years. Our 2017 versus 2018 work shows we doubled the number of programs we helped. It is likely we will triple that in 2019.

However – there simply aren’t enough resources to help all 500 programs in Hamilton County in time.

I know that you have heard about Preschool Promise initiatives and there is one in this county – I think it is important to put that in perspective. You may be aware that the voters of the City of Cincinnati approved a Preschool Promise about 2 years ago. Cincinnati’s is one of a number of local initiatives that voters have approved and I think that shows how important affordable quality child care is to most people – they are willing to tax themselves to improve it. However, it is important for the state to understand these local initiatives cannot fill the funding gap for quality improvement. Our agency conducts the majority of that quality improvement work for the Preschool Promise. However, in Cincinnati the local funding touches fewer than 1 in 4 unrated programs in the city and it only assists programs with Preschool rooms which leaves infant, toddler and after-school rooms with no help to learn quality standards other than what the state funding can provide.

One other thing I would like to point out on this slide is the Type B child care. Type B is licensed Family Child Care – up to 6 children in their home. Note that the licensed capacity is approximately 1,800 but the number of children on vouchers they serve is over 2,200 (and there are several hundred children not on vouchers that they also serve). What's going on here? Most of these programs do 2 shifts of child care every day and many provide child care on the weekends. These Family Child Care are the programs that predominantly help parents who work in manufacturing, call centers, health care aides, construction or the retail and restaurant industries. In Greater Cincinnati Type B are the largest portion of unrated programs.

Let's look at Butler County. Butler County represents massive job and economic growth in our regions. Call centers, manufacturers, fulfillment centers and many other companies have chosen to locate in Butler County. Although Butler has a larger proportion of centers versus Type B Family Child Care, it is also facing a huge impact if the unrated programs are unable to reach a quality rating. There is no Preschool Promise here. They are completely reliant on the ability of state dollars to help get these programs to the deadline. One thing to realize about this county's situation is that each one of those centers represents many classrooms – from 4 or 5 to as many as a dozen or more. So the number of programs needing help is a bit deceptive – it's really a multiple of that number because every teacher in every room as well as the administration must learn and implement the state's standards. Moreover, the numbers on the map represent this moment in time – but the businesses are growing and therefore the employees needing child care are growing as we sit here today.

Finally, we will look at Preble County. In this county there are just 11 child care programs left. This is typical of a rural county – there are almost no child care programs, they have been closing rapidly. This county had 13 providers a little over a year ago. The counties have very few resources. Most of our rural counties are facing the possibility of little or no child care for the families that live there.

I lead just one of the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies in the state but I represent what we are all working on. Every day we work on ensuring that every young child in Ohio gets the educational grounding that will help those children enter school ready to learn. If they are ready to learn, they are likely to thrive and become successful adults who become parents, work at businesses, and maybe even run for office. The disturbing reality is that by the time a child is age 5 the deck is stacked for or against them.

What I hope I have added to your lens on early childhood education is that there is another compelling reality that shows we need to address this right now. It is the reality of our working parents – the reality of the businesses that employ those parents. Child care is part of our business infrastructure and the future of Ohio's economy will be affected by the future of our child care programs.



Quality Rating  
All

County  
Butler

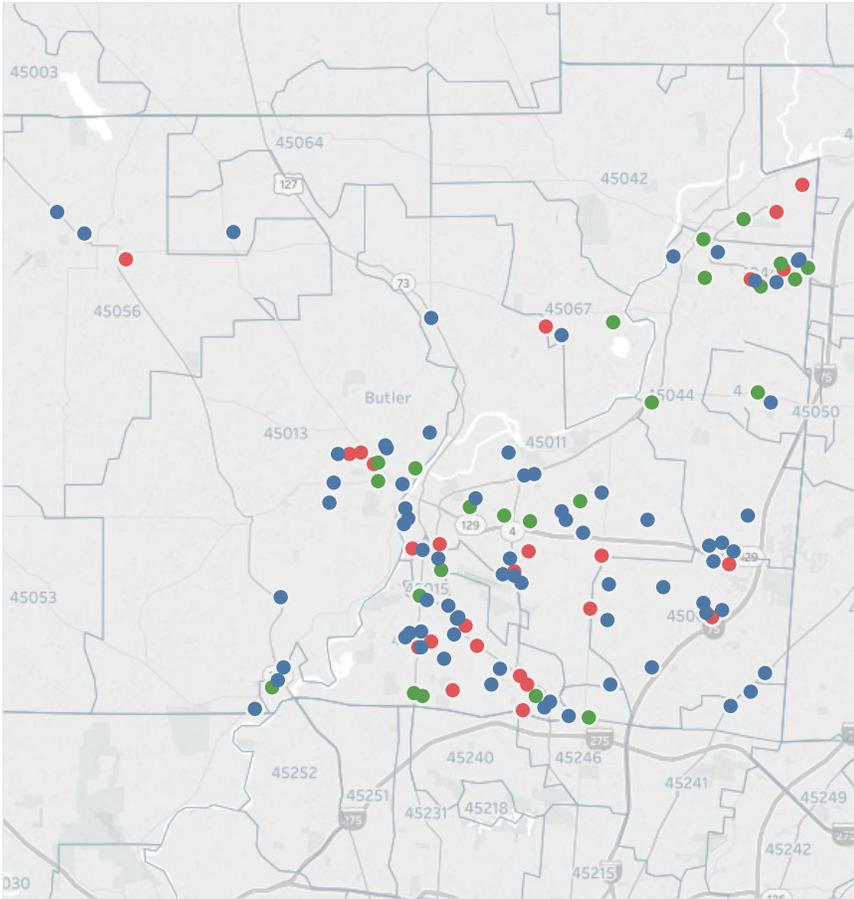
Zip  
All

Type of Care  
All

Accepts Vouchers  
True

### ODJFS Licensed Child Care Programs

Filters: Type of Care: All | Zip Codes: All | Quality Rating: All | County: Butler |  
Vouchers: True



Star Rating	Type of Care	Programs	Capacity	Children on Vouch..
Unrated	Center	34	3,596	940
	School Age ..	17	780	64
	Type B	23	138	124
One star	Center	7	879	355
	Type A	1	12	8
	Type B	11	66	77
Two star	Center	5	404	206
Three star	Center	7	1,021	481
	School Age ..	3	144	37
	Type B	1	6	7
Four star	Center	7	698	226
	School Age ..	1	60	15
	Type B	1	6	10
Five star	Center	5	480	137
	Type B	1	6	3
Grand Total		124	8,296	2,690

Star Rating  
■ Unrated  
■ Rated  
■ Highly Rated



Using data from 2/28/2019

Quality Rating  
All

County  
Preble

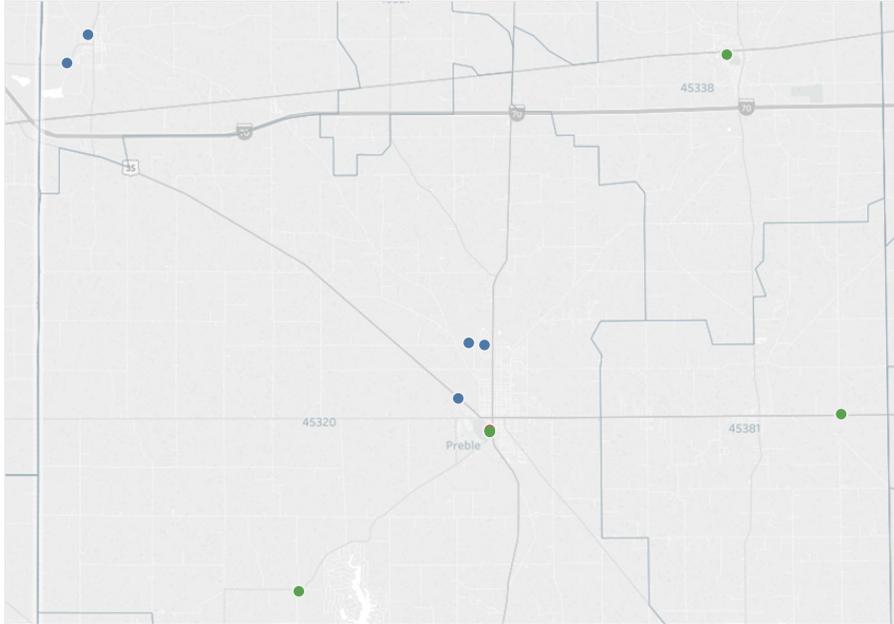
Zip  
All

Type of Care  
All

Accepts Vouchers  
True

### ODJFS Licensed Child Care Programs

Filters: Type of Care: Center, School Age Program, Type A and 1 more | Zip Codes: All | Quality Rating: All | County: Preble | Vouchers:



Star Rating	Type of Care	Programs	Children on Vouchers
Unrated	Center	2	33
	School Age Program	1	7
	Type B	2	8
One star	Center	3	71
Two star	Center	2	67
Three star	Center	1	24
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>210</b>

Star Rating  
Unrated  
Rated  
Highly Rated



Using data from 2/28/2019

Quality Rating  
All

County  
Hamilton

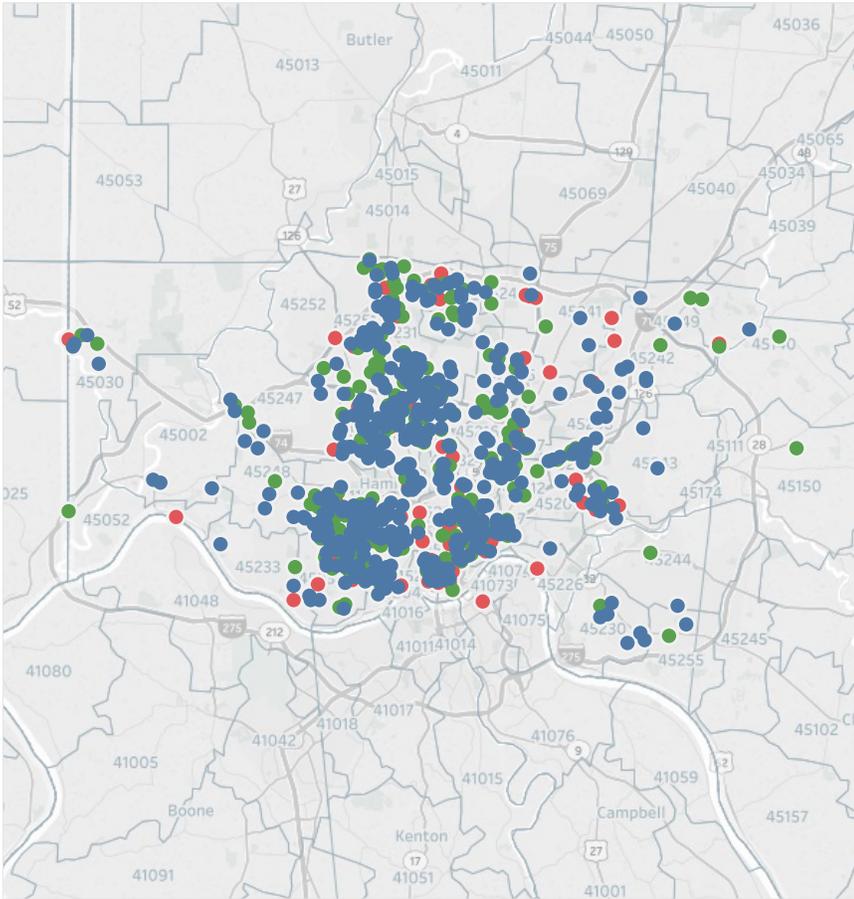
Zip  
All

Type of Care  
All

Accepts Vouchers  
True

## ODJFS Licensed Child Care Programs

Filters: Type of Care: All | Zip Codes: All | Quality Rating: All | County: Hamilton | Vouchers: True



Star Rating	Type of Care	Programs	Capacity	Children on Vouch..
Unrated	Center	109	9,158	4,058
	School Age ..	50	3,546	678
	Type A	27	323	455
	Type B	314	1,884	2,254
One star	Center	41	4,135	2,246
	School Age ..	7	383	71
	Type A	24	288	356
	Type B	157	942	1,374
Two star	Center	13	1,662	843
	School Age ..	1	100	22
	Type A	2	24	9
	Type B	9	54	104
Three star	Center	15	2,141	1,265
	School Age ..	1	72	13
	Type A	3	36	54
	Type B	16	96	123
Four star	Center	12	1,404	819
	Type A	1	12	21
	Type B	1	6	14
Five star	Center	39	4,175	1,493
	Type A	1	12	14
	Type B	6	36	39
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>849</b>	<b>30,489</b>	<b>16,325</b>

Star Rating  
■ Unrated  
■ Rated  
■ Highly Rated



Using data from 2/28/2019