



# PRE4CLE

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*Testimony*

*Katie Kelly, Executive Director, PRE4CLE*

*Ohio House Finance Health and Human Services Subcommittee*

*March 14, 2023*



PRE**4**CLE

*When our smallest students shine, Cleveland thrives.*

## Summary of PRE4CLE

- Initiative to expand access to high-quality preschool to all 3- and 4-year-olds in Cleveland
- Launched in 2014
- Led by city, county, school district, early learning, and community partners
- Approximately \$25 million/year in local funding toward preschool in Cleveland



# Urgent Challenges in Ohio's Child Care System

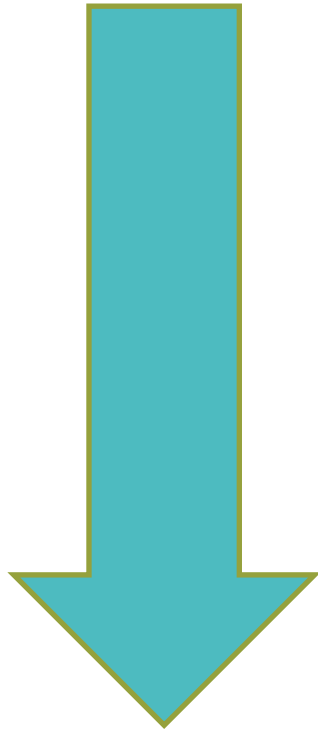
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- **Staffing shortages** are severely reducing child care availability for working families.
- **Ohio's low child care eligibility** leaves many families without options.
- **Ohio's underfunded childcare system** is driving low wages and system instability.



## Ohio's Child Care Workforce

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- Overall, in Ohio, **62% of child care programs are reporting a staffing shortage** (NAEYC, 2022)
- Shortages are a result of **low wages** and a **lack of qualified applicants**.

### Examples from regional surveys:

- **2,500 vacant child care positions in Northeast Ohio** (December 2022, Starting Point)
- **1,985 vacant child care positions in Central Ohio** (November 2022, Action for Children)



## Child Care Wages in Ohio: Actual Wages in March 2022

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Average Ohio Child Care Teacher: **\$11-\$13/Hour, few or no benefits**

Amazon starting wage: **\$16-18/hour, full benefits**

Target starting wage: **\$15/hour, health care, PTO, tuition reimbursement**

Car Wash Assistant: **\$15/hour, some benefits**



## Budget Request: \$100 million to Support Ohio's Child Care Workforce

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- **\$75 million-** continue child care stabilization grants to attract and retain teachers and staff
- **\$25 million-** funding for community colleges and child care resource and referral organizations to rapidly rebuild Ohio's child care workforce



## Raising Ohio's Child Care Eligibility

- Ohio's low child care eligibility level leaves **tens of thousands of families** under 200% of the federal poverty level without affordable child care options
- Average cost of child care in Ohio is **\$9,700 for infants and \$7,900 for preschoolers**
- A family of four at **200% of poverty** makes **\$55,000/year**



Many Ohio children from families with low incomes **did not have access to early learning opportunities** in 2020-2022.



Source: Groundwork Ohio

## Budget Request: Raise Ohio's Child Care Eligibility Level to 200% FPL

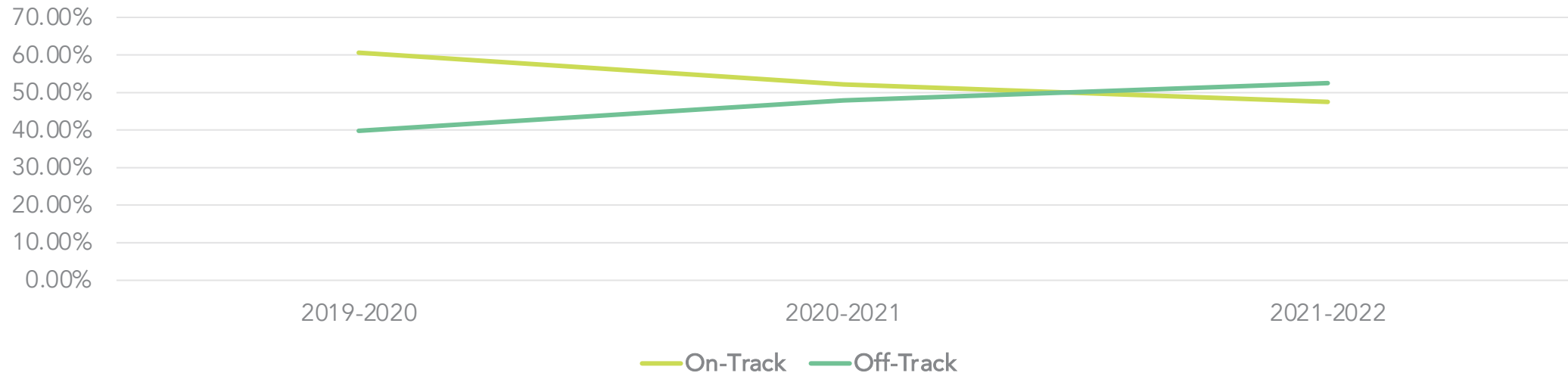
- **Invest \$75 million** to raise Ohio's child care eligibility level from proposed 160% to 200% of the federal poverty level
- Continue to support **lower co-payments** for working families





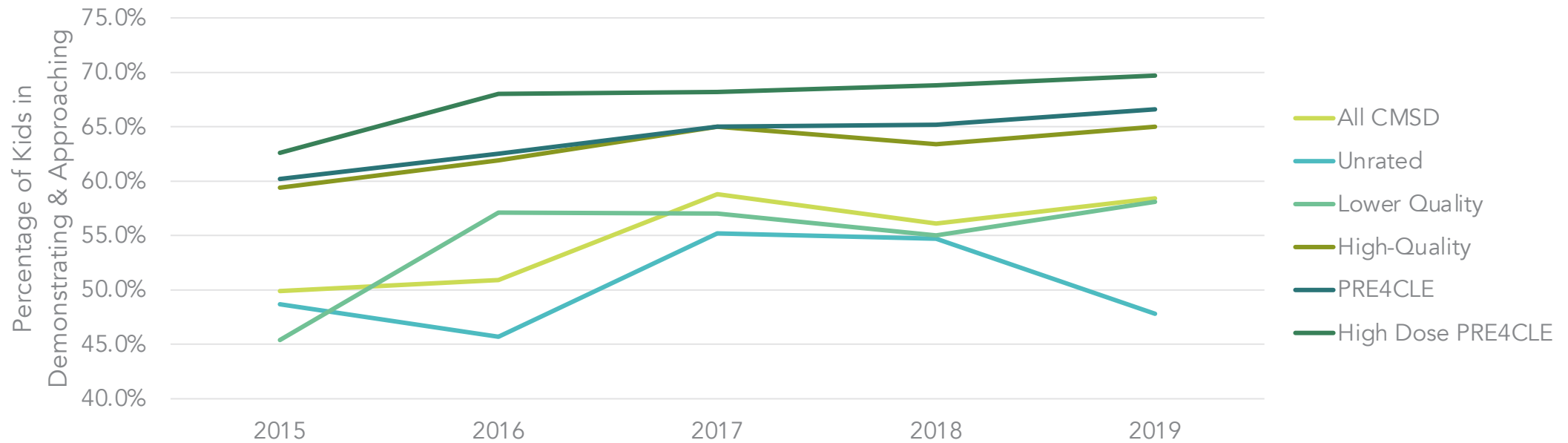
# Building the Workforce of Tomorrow: Kindergarten Readiness

Percent of Kindergarteners On-Track for Literacy and Language



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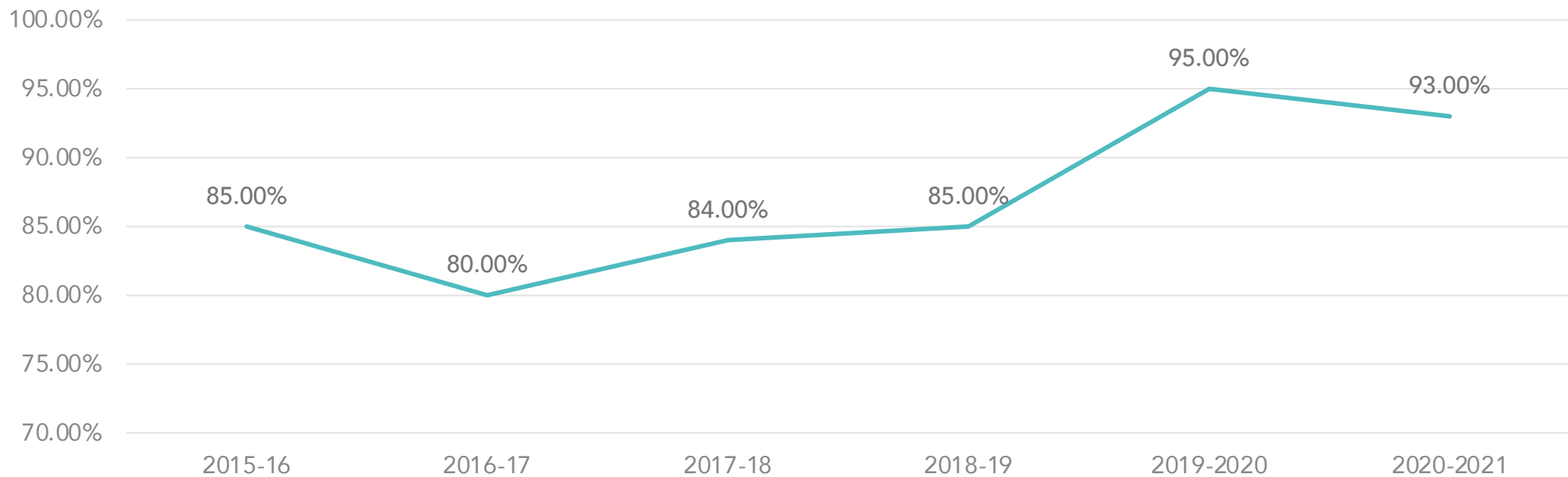
# Percent of Kindergarteners in Approaching & Demonstrating Bands of KRA in Cleveland



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# K-3 Literacy Improvement in Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Percent of Third Graders Passing the Third Grade Reading Guarantee



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## Contact

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