

Ali Marks
Children's Resource Center
1045 Klotz Road
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402

2/25/2025

Ohio House/Senate Finance Committee

Chairperson Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and Members of the House/Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Ali Marks, and I am an Infant and Early Care Mental Health Consultant from Bowling Green. My office is housed in Bowling Green, Ohio, but I have the privilege of serving families, children, and early learning professionals in eight different counties in Ohio. I am here today to urge you to prioritize critical investments in early childhood programs in Ohio's FY2026-27 state budget, House Bill 96.

As someone whose family benefitted from Early Intervention, I know firsthand how important it is to support young children and working families. My little sister from the age of a few months old until the age of three was enrolled in Early Intervention. She was described by doctors as like a "rag doll". The EI staff worked with her for many months for her to be able to crawl and move on her own. She eventually was able to strengthen her core enough to be able to stand and then walk on her own. This year she will graduate from college!

There are several priorities that Groundwork Ohio outlines but the one that is dear to my heart is **SUPPORTING QUALITY EARLY LEARNING EXPERIENCES THAT PREPARE CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN**. The reason that I feel this is so important is because of what I do for my job. As an Infant and Early Care Mental Health Consultant, my job is under the prevention label. I go into preschools, family childcare settings, and bring strategies that will aid caregivers in dealing with challenging behaviors.

I urge you to fully fund these initiatives to ensure every child gets the best start in life. Thank you for your time and commitment to Ohio's children and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ali Marks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ali Marks

