

Molly Pollick

Children's Resource Center

February 25, 2025

Ohio House Children and Human Services Committee

Chairperson White and Members of the House Children and Human Services Committee,

My name is Molly Pollick, and I am writing as an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant from Bowling Green to urge you to prioritize critical investments in early childhood programs in Ohio's FY2026-27 state budget, House Bill 96. These programs provide essential mental health services that support young children, families, and educators, fostering emotional well-being and long-term success.

You have likely heard compelling testimonies about the positive impact of early childhood programs and mental health consultations. These services help our youngest Buckeyes develop protective factors, build secure attachments with safe adults, and acquire essential emotional regulation skills—all of which contribute to their success in school and beyond. While these successes are undeniable, I want to highlight why continued funding is crucial.

Before stepping into my current role, I spent nearly a decade working in a childcare center. There were many times I felt overwhelmed and unsupported, which affected my ability to provide the best care and education for my students. I lacked the tools and knowledge to effectively address challenging behaviors. As a parent, I also experienced this struggle firsthand when my own child received behavioral notes from school, leaving me unsure of how to support her. These experiences drive my passion for the IECMH field and reinforce the necessity of these services.

Just today, I spoke with a teacher who felt exhausted and powerless due to the behavioral challenges in her classroom. She was visibly weary and discouraged. Together, we

identified practical strategies and resources to support her students and help her feel more equipped and hopeful. This kind of consultation is transformative, it strengthens teachers' ability to manage classroom challenges and fosters healthier learning environments for children.

By funding early childhood mental health programs, we can improve kindergarten readiness, reduce teacher burnout, and retain skilled educators. Investing in these services is an investment in the future of Ohio's children, families, and educational workforce. I urge you to prioritize this critical funding to ensure that every child has access to the support they need to thrive.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Ohio's youngest residents. I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to your continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Molly M. Pollick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Molly M. Pollick