

Synamon Rosemond
The Village of Sarah
February 27, 2025
Testimony on House Bill 96

Chair White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and committee members,

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today about HB 96. My name is Synamon, and I'm the Director of The Village of Sarah Learning Center and the Owner of Off The Block Program Inc. I also represent the CEO Project. I'm here today to ask for your support in helping Ohio kids, families, and childcare providers by including the childcare improvements outlined in Governor DeWine's executive budget. Specifically, I'm asking for a raise in eligibility for childcare assistance and for more investment in childcare, which is truly the backbone of our workforce.

As both a childcare provider and a case manager working with low-income families facing mental health challenges in the Hamilton County, Cincinnati, OH area, I've seen firsthand the difference that child care assistance can make for families trying to improve their situations. The resources available to these families are already very limited, and one of the biggest challenges I see is the struggle to find qualified help and support for parents with young children.

For the past three years, I've worked with children and families, providing mental health services, residential support, community resources, and managing the daily operations of a childcare center. I currently work with almost 150 clients, 80% of whom are single parents with young children.

Increasing the eligibility for childcare assistance in Ohio from 145% of the federal poverty level would have a profound impact on low-income families across the state. For many parents struggling to make ends meet, the inability to afford reliable childcare is a significant barrier to gaining or maintaining employment. By raising the eligibility threshold, more families would have access to the support they need to balance work and childcare responsibilities, leading to greater financial stability. This would not only reduce the stress of finding affordable care but also open up more opportunities for parents to pursue stable, long-term employment, ultimately breaking the cycle of poverty. Supporting these families through expanded childcare assistance would also help strengthen the workforce, allowing parents to contribute to the economy while ensuring that their children receive the care and attention they deserve.

Childcare—whether center-based, home-based, —is essential for parents who want to work. Without it, many parents simply can't go to work, which makes their financial and emotional stress even worse.

I can personally relate to these challenges. Having grown up in foster care and facing the difficulties of navigating a broken system, I know what it feels like to be unable to work because

I couldn't access the right childcare or resources. I also understand how emotional it can be for parents who are just trying to find support and a break. Childcare is often the support many families need, especially when they don't have extended family to rely on.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.