

to whom it may concern,

I want to sincerely thank you for your ongoing efforts to improve the foster care system in Ohio. Your commitment to strengthening child protective services, supporting foster parents, and streamlining the adoption process is truly commendable and has a meaningful impact on the lives of vulnerable children.

As we recognize these positive strides, I'd like to bring attention to an additional opportunity to further support foster children and their caregivers. I urge your consideration of providing free **Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) daycare** for all foster children. Access to high-quality childcare is essential for their development, stability, and future success.

Additionally, increasing the availability of foster homes for infants and children under five remains a pressing need. One significant barrier preventing families from fostering these young children is the **lack of affordable childcare**, including daytime, before-school, and after-school care. Without adequate childcare options, many potential foster parents are unable to open their homes to this vulnerable age group.

The average per diem is \$30.00 A day with a private agency. which equals \$900.00 a month. With that comes clothes because children come into care with absolutely nothing, shoes, school supplies, sometimes lice treatment which costs over \$180.00. Food, extra formula or formula until you get a wic apt, the increase in household bills. Glasses, (not all glasses are covered at 100% and if you have an aggressive child it adds up. My one child has been through 12 pairs of glasses since Jan 2025.) missed work for apts a lot of these children come from neglect and have multiple apts a month. With all of those expenses there is no room for the price of daycare.

I am a single mom, I work full time and I have 5 foster children in my care. I just took placement of 2 new children and their caseworker did not give me the paperwork I needed to be able to apply for welfare child care vouchers which I do qualify for. It's been 6 weeks I have been paying out of pocket for childcare and it has cost me 1800.00. Older child came with matted hair and lice. Lice treatment cost me 220. She came with nothing her shoes were thrown away at the county building, I didn't get her clothing voucher for 3 weeks. Clothing voucher was only 200.00 when it did come. Right now I am in the hole over 3000.00 for these 2 children and I will only receive 900. A month each. They will not reimburse me for the lice treatment because they say that's our expense which is another issue. This is a lot of money I have put out for children that are not mine. I have been a foster parent for 8 years I love taking care of children but it should not be my expense. Luckily I do qualify for daycare vouchers with a small copay but I do know a lot of people will not become foster parents because everyone in today's society has to work.

To address this, I encourage the implementation of **SUTQ daycare vouchers for all foster children**, while also removing income qualifications for foster parents. By taking these

steps, Ohio can expand the number of available foster homes while ensuring young children in care receive the structured, nurturing environment they need during their formative years. Programs like **WIC and free school lunches** already operate without income restrictions for foster families, demonstrating the effectiveness of such an approach.

I understand the complexities involved in policy changes, but I firmly believe that these enhancements would greatly benefit Ohio's foster care system and the children it serves.

Thank you again for your dedication to the well-being of Ohio's children. I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to the positive changes we can achieve together.

Thank you for your time

Sincerely,

Melissa Murphy  
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