



**THE CENTERS**  
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**Written Testimony submitted to the Senate Finance Committee  
May 27, 2025**

**Carole Beaty, MPOD  
Chief Program Officer, Family & Workforce  
The Centers**

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on House Bill 96. My name is Carole Beaty, and I serve as the Chief Program Officer at The Centers, Inc. The Centers serves nearly 21,000 people at 11 locations throughout Greater Cleveland, providing access to integrated healthcare services, early childhood education, family support, workforce development, and youth residential treatment.

I will focus my testimony on early childhood issues in the State Budget that impact the more than 1,500 children we serve in our six gold-rated early learning centers in Cuyahoga County, OH. Our CEO, Eric Morse, is testifying before the Committee later in person on budget issues impacting The Center's other program areas.

From birth to age five, 90% of a child's brain development occurs [\[1\]](#). High-quality early childhood education leads to better performance in STEM subjects through high school. However, accessing high quality early childhood education is increasingly challenging. In Cuyahoga County, there are six children for every one seat in a quality-rated early learning center. Organizations that provide early childhood education services today struggle to keep classrooms open because finding qualified candidates to fill vacancies is extremely difficult. In recent years, nearly one in five early childhood educators left the field, and more than half of Ohio child care programs report staffing shortages that limit available slots for families [\[2\]](#).

Child care is one of the largest expenses families face. The limited supply of affordable, quality care may force parents to miss work or exit the workforce entirely, leaving families financially unstable, employers scrambling to fill jobs, and young children missing opportunities to learn and grow.

To address these urgent gaps in access, The Centers, Inc. joins Groundwork Ohio and other early childhood advocates in urging the Senate to make meaningful investments in early childhood education in H.B. 96 through the following measures:

- Restore the \$100 million in TANF funds removed by the House from Governor DeWine's proposed budget for Child Care to support working families up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- Restore the Governor's proposal to raise Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) initial eligibility to 160% FPL.
- Restore the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, Ohio's only statewide measure of early learning



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impact.

The costs of these proposals are justified as they will help parents work, businesses retain employees, and children succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

I urge you to support these critical measures in House Bill 96. Together, we can ensure that Ohio's children have the foundation they need to thrive, our families are financially stable, and our economy is strong. Thank you.

## References

- [1] [Child Development Data and Statistics - CDC](#)
- [2] [Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics](#)