

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Attorney General Mike DeWine

- 1. BACKGROUND:** Quality child care is both a vital support for working families and a crucial opportunity to provide young children with the enriching early learning environments they need at a time when the brain science and social science dictates most effective. Unfortunately, quality child care is not accessible to many working parents. The average cost of child care in Ohio ranges from about \$8,000 and \$11,000 per year based on the child's age and the quality of care, making it practically inaccessible to many Ohio families. In FY 2017, 115,000 children in Ohio received some publicly funded child care (PFCC) subsidy, which translates to 49% of all kids living at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The PFCC program is vital to allowing parents to participate in the workforce and at the same time provides the opportunity to positively impact children during their most critical period of development—the first five years of life. In order to achieve the high return on investment and positive outcomes that child care programs can offer, Ohio needs to improve the quality of programs offered to our most at-risk kids and consider making it accessible to more Ohio families. Ohio is not on track to reach its statutory deadline of 100% of Ohio child care providers being rated high quality by 2025. Currently only 20% of Ohio's providers are high quality.

QUESTION: If elected, what are your plans to improve Ohio's publicly-funded child care for low-income working families in Ohio?

ANSWER: High-quality early childhood education is proven to improve long-term outcomes for children. Yet, only 20% of centers are high-quality rated.

The DeWine-Husted administration will first invest in elevating all of Ohio's publically-funded child care centers to high-quality. This will require investments in workforce, training, facilities, and evidence-based curricula. Not only will this improve outcomes for Ohio's most disadvantaged children who qualify for child care subsidies, but it will also improve outcomes for other children who attend these centers. Second, we will raise the eligibility level for publicly funded early childhood programs for working families from 130% of the federal poverty level to 150% of the federal poverty level, which will expand access to at least 20,000 more children. To accomplish this, the DeWine Husted Administration will invest \$150 million over our first biennial budget. Not only will this financial investment help children, but it will also encourage more parental participation in the workforce.

- 2. BACKGROUND:** Ohio offers quality school-based preschool opportunities to 4-year olds whose families are living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. State-funded preschool programming is offered for 12.5 hours each week throughout the school year and is often supplemented by additional child care services outside of the school setting. These programs provide essential development of social, emotional, and cognitive skills for kids as they prepare to enter kindergarten. Local communities recognize the importance of preschool and are working to supplement the state’s funding with their own support of local programs to increase the number of children served and the quality of programs—but these local dollars are limited.

QUESTION: If elected, what are your plans to improve Ohio’s publicly funded preschool to ensure Ohio’s most at-risk kids are ready for kindergarten?

ANSWER: Over the past 8 years, Governor Kasich has dramatically increased funding for publicly funded preschool seats. The DeWine Husted Administration would continue to grow Ohio’s public preschool system, distributing seats based on economic and access needs.

- 3. BACKGROUND:** Voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs allow motivated parents of Ohio’s most at-risk children to learn how to succeed in their new role and provide children a healthy start with their first and most important teachers — parents. During this critical period of physical, emotional, and cognitive development for babies and young children, evidence-based home visiting provides parents with support and guidance on how to create a safe, stimulating environment that promotes growth and learning. Extensive research has shown that evidence-based home visiting programs reduce rates of infant mortality and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), while increasing school readiness and family health and self-sufficiency. Currently, Ohio’s voluntary, evidence-based home visiting program, Help Me Grow, reaches only 9,131 participants each year (3.4% of eligible families).

QUESTION: If elected, what are your plans to improve Ohio’s voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs?

ANSWER: I recognize that Ohio’s evidence-based home visiting programs are grossly underfunded, reaching less than 4 percent of eligible families. The DeWine-Husted administration will make state investments to triple the number of families served through home-visiting programs. These programs can reduce infant mortality and improve school-readiness, as well as help parents develop the skills they need to support their child’s development.

4. BACKGROUND: More than 47% of Ohio’s children do not receive coordinated, ongoing, comprehensive care within a medical home. Ohio is trending down, being ranked 24th in the country in Access to Care and percentage of children with a Medical home. That means that Ohio kids do not have access to a personal doctor or nurse practitioner or have a regular source for sick and well care. Without a regular primary care provider, they may have problems getting the needed referrals and may not have access to effective care coordination when needed. Despite more than 96% of Ohio’s kids being insured, only 25% of Ohio parents state that their child’s current insurance coverage usually/always adequately meets his/her needs.

QUESTION: If elected, what are your plans to improve access to quality healthcare coverage and preventative services?

ANSWER: A child’s health and educational success are closely intertwined, making access to high quality healthcare absolutely critical to a child’s long-term success. Medicaid is a valuable tool in ensuring the health and wellness of Ohio’s most at-risk children. A DeWine Husted Administration will protect the coverage of children under Medicaid. We will also leverage the state’s existing Medicaid funding to bring healthcare services to children, through school-based healthcare and evidence-based home visiting programs. To achieve this, the state must better collaborate with our children’s hospitals.

Additionally, a DeWine Husted administration will look at every single state policy through the prism of how it impacts Ohio’s children. Currently, children’s programs are scattered among many different state agencies, including the Departments of Health and Medicaid. Our administration will have in place a Director of Children’s Initiatives, someone who will report directly to the Governor and whose sole focus will be to coordinate children’s programs across all state agencies so that they work better for the people they serve.

5. BACKGROUND: Supporting children’s overall health means integrating mental and behavioral health. Research indicates half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, only 20% of those youth get the treatment they need. Ohio is among five states with the highest share of children — as many as one in seven — who had faced three or more of the potential trauma measures known to researchers as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Childhood trauma plays a critical role in shaping the future of the adult health population. Kids who are subjected to ACEs are more likely to develop chronic diseases and engage in at-risk behavior.

QUESTION: If elected, what are your plans to improve access to behavioral health prevention services, screenings, and treatment referral options for Ohio kids?

ANSWER: Suicide has become an epidemic in our country, and some children are experiencing trauma in their home lives, making school their most safe haven. The DeWine-Husted administration will ensure every Ohio school has access to a mental health professional. Now, more than ever, we need to find ways to talk to our children and get them the help they need.

6. BACKGROUND: Research shows us social determinants of health have an overwhelming impact on a child’s well-being, largely distinct from medical care. Given the influence social and economic factors have on child health, pediatric providers and advocates are fully committed to supporting child health and wellness through preventative measures outside the walls of a medical facility. School-based healthcare, housing safety interventions, behavioral health community education, and foster support are just a few examples of proactive engagement strategies.

QUESTION: *How would you work with pediatric providers to support communities in addressing social determinants of health?*

ANSWER: Ohioans deserve opportunities to make choices that lead to good health, but many Ohio families and children have few high-quality options when it comes to health care, education, childcare, housing, work, and transportation—all of which impact their overall health. Unfortunately, there is no single individual at the state level who has the authority to look across agencies and systems to coordinate services that improve outcomes in these domains. That will change with the DeWine Husted administration. Our administration’s Director of Children’s Initiatives will work closely with children’s hospitals, providers, health plans, and other partners to improve children’s health in Ohio. Ohio is home to many innovative programs—like Partners for Kids—that improve health outcomes, reduce overall costs, and break down economic barriers that lead to poor health. We believe that our six-point, Opportunity for Every Ohio Child plan provides a solid framework Ohio can build from. Child health can be promoted through evidence-based home visiting for at-risk mothers, improving our foster care system, and increasing the quality of early childhood learning in our state.

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Together, we
are driving a
powerful agenda
that puts
Ohio kids
front & center.

FOUNDING PARTNERS:

Groundwork Ohio is a committed, nonpartisan advocacy organization formed in 2004 that believes quality early learning and development is the most transformative strategy to improve school outcomes, increase the life-long success of Ohio's children, and lay a strong foundation for economic prosperity in the state of Ohio.

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The Ohio Children's Hospital Association

is the voice of Ohio's youngest patients, their families and healthcare providers. Our six member hospitals and their nearly 40,000 employees are dedicated to saving, protecting and enhancing children's lives. Nothing matters more to the future of our state, nation and world than protecting the health and well-being of our children. Sustaining and growing Ohio's investment in saving, protecting and enhancing the lives of children is both good medicine and sound public policy.

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Saving, protecting and enhancing children's lives

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