



READY, SET SOAR OHIO

Early Investments, A Lifetime of Success.

**Because investing *early*
pays off for kids—and Ohio.**

 **Visit** ReadySetSoarOH.org

Giving children a strong start is a down payment on Ohio's future!



Our Children's Future—and Ohio's—Depend on What We Do Today.

- Too many children are not surviving until their first birthday.
- Too many are not getting the early intervention that can prevent later problems—first in school, then on the job and in life.
- Too many are starting kindergarten woefully behind.
- Families are being denied the chance to succeed at work and become self-sufficient because they can't afford quality child care, or it's just not available.
- We can give kids a better childhood—and ultimately better lives—if we invest when it matters most, when their brains are developing the fastest, when supporting families and treating health issues can have the most impact and be done most cost-effectively.

Groundwork Ohio's *Ready Set Soar* campaign is making the case for smart investments and doing right by all of Ohio's children. **Together, we can make Ohio the best place in the country to be a young child.**

Ready Set Soar is a statewide coalition of early childhood, education, health, civic, philanthropic and business organizations, community leaders, policymakers and families committed to ensuring every young child has the foundation for success. Our goals include ensuring that more pregnant women, infants, toddlers and their families have access to the support they need to soar, starting before birth and continuing through the early years.



We all want the same thing for kids and Ohio!
Join us by supporting this work that lifts up proven best practices.

What the data tell us:

The First Years Are the Most Important.

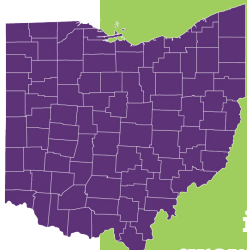
The most rapid period of brain development is in the first years of life, when a baby's brain forms more than a million neural connections every second. Brains are built by early enriching experiences.

Ohio's Children Are Behind.

Children's early experiences promote cognitive, social and emotional growth. Not all children have healthy, positive early experiences. When they enter kindergarten, low-income learners are up to 2 years behind their higher-income peers.

80% of brain growth happens by age 3.

By kindergarten, Ohio kids are up to 2 years behind.



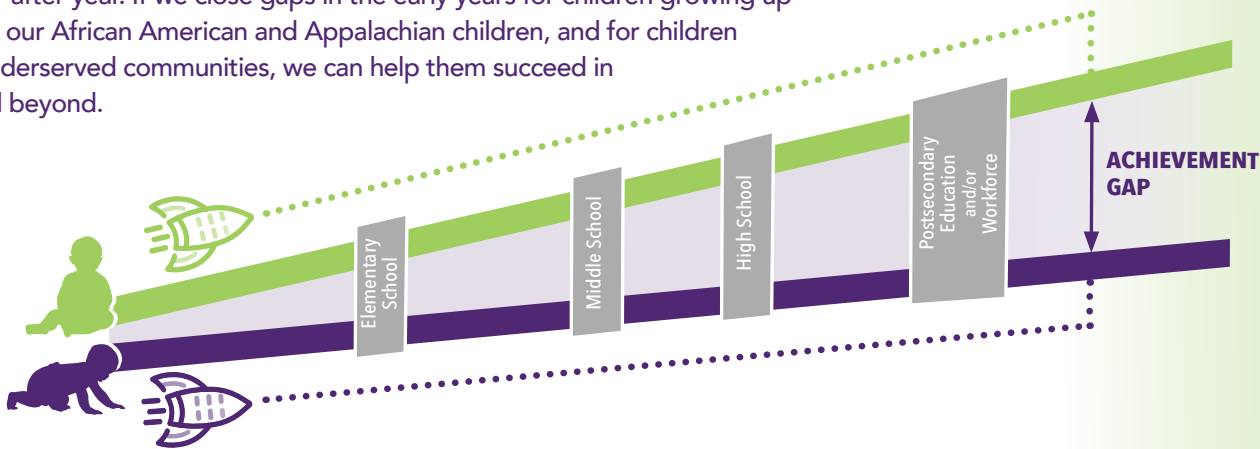
Ohio has nearly 546,000 infants & toddlers growing up each year.

1 in 4 lives in poverty.

And that's: 1 in 3 Appalachian babies and more than 1 in 2 African American babies.

Children who start behind, stay behind.

Too often a child's race, their family's income or the zip code they live in determines how they'll do in life. Gaps that show up even before a child starts school too often widen year after year. If we close gaps in the early years for children growing up in poverty, our African American and Appalachian children, and for children living in underserved communities, we can help them succeed in school and beyond.



Invest Now or Pay Later.

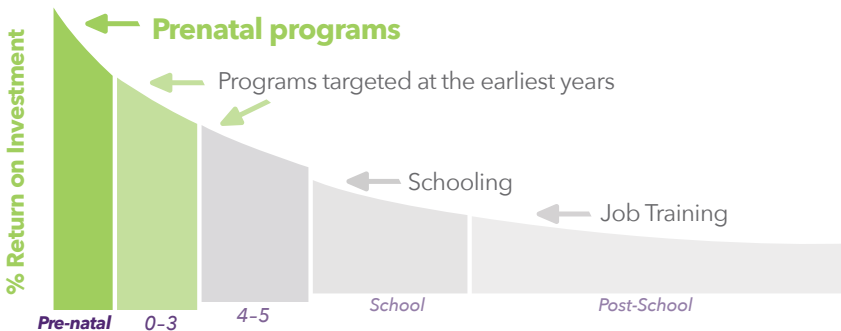
Investing in evidence-based interventions during the earliest years of a child's life—prenatally to age 3—can close gaps that are impacting low-income children, children of color and children in underserved communities. **Supporting early high-quality interventions results in:**

- ★ Better birth outcomes
- ★ Stronger families
- ★ A more prepared workforce
- ★ More children reaching their first birthday
- ★ Higher high-school graduation rates
- ★ Healthier adults with greater life-time earnings
- ★ Improved kindergarten readiness rates

Beyond these outcomes:

Public investments in high-quality, prenatal to 3 interventions for Ohio children deliver a **13% ROI.**

The highest return comes from investments in the earliest years because that work reduces later spending on special education, health care and the criminal justice system and leverages dollars spent later.





Our Countdown to Success for Kids

3... Ready to Thrive

Infants and toddlers who are born healthy, grow and develop in healthy environments, and have access to quality healthcare services have better physical, emotional, and mental health throughout their lives.

- Increase access to timely and comprehensive quality prenatal care and extend postpartum coverage for pregnant women and mothers covered by Medicaid.
- Ensure and expand coverage and access to high-quality healthcare through Medicaid and CHIP programs for infants, toddlers and their families.
- Support early identification, diagnosis and treatment for infants and toddlers to meet their mental health and developmental needs—including ensuring timely developmental screenings and early intervention services.
- Support access for infants, toddlers and pregnant women to nutrition support programs.
- Protect infants and toddlers from lead hazards where they live and learn.

2... Setting Families Up for Success

Families are the first and most important teachers, playing a critical role in a child's development during the first three years of life. When families have the resources and support to provide adequate care and enrichment during the earliest years, children can grow and thrive.

- Empower parents of infants and toddlers by increasing access to Help Me Grow voluntary evidence-based home visiting services, Early Head Start and other parent support services.
- Reduce the incidence and impact of trauma among infants and toddlers by increasing access to programs that build resilience and mitigate its impact.
- Stabilize families so that there are fewer infants and toddlers engaged in the foster care system and ensure that babies in state custody, living in foster or kinship placements, experience developmentally appropriate supports, a continuum of care and supported transitions.
- Foster economic stability for families with infants and toddlers.
- Expand broadband access to connect families with infants and toddlers to their communities and services that support their health, education and economic stability.

1... Soaring to Kindergarten—and Beyond

Babies are born learning. High-quality child care gives children the opportunity for social, emotional, and intellectual development to be ready for school. If ready for kindergarten, children are positioned for success in school and life.

- Expand access to quality publicly funded child care for infants and toddlers by increasing eligibility to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Ensure that infants and toddlers have access to high-quality learning environments where programs meet their unique needs.
- Expand access to high-quality preschool and Head Start.
- Support a quality early education workforce that is highly qualified, well-compensated, and prepared to support the development of infants and toddlers.