

Number of Child Care Programs Accepting State Subsidy Decreasing

Low-income families and children have less access to quality early learning opportunities

Subsidized Child Care Is a Lifeline

Subsidized child care is a lifeline for many working families to maintain employment and build economic security. And most importantly, it's a lifeline for children to ensure they receive the early education critical to their development and future success.

Today, as the number of child care programs that accept child care subsidy (known in Ohio as Publicly Funded Child Care or PFCC) continues to decrease in this region, the ability for these working families who earn 130% of the federal poverty level or less to find reliable, affordable child care is becoming increasingly challenging.

Decline in Local Programs Accepting PFCC

Data collected by 4C for Children show that the number of Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton and Warren county child care programs with state PFCC agreements decreased 11% from December 2019 to December 2020 while the total number of programs overall only decreased by 3%. So while we have been able to maintain the number of child care programs serving the community, fewer of those programs are available to low-income, working families.

In addition, the data also show a decline of 21% of children whose care is supported by PFCC funding.

Is this large decrease in child care programs with PFCC agreements directly related to programs going out of business due to the pandemic? That's not supported by the data. For instance, the net loss of programs in Hamilton County in 2020 is one child care program, yet there is a 9% overall loss in programs maintaining PFCC agreements.

Causes for this significant drop in programs that serve working families and children eligible for PFCC include: programs not having the quality rating required by the state to be eligible for participation, the overall financial impact of the pandemic

on programs that serve low-income families on razor-thin profit margins and programs that opened in 2020 chose to solely serve private-pay families.

The drop in the number of PFCC children in care outpaces the overall drop in the number of children in care. This is likely due to several factors including parents who became unemployed during the pandemic. As the economy rebounds and out-of-work families find jobs, the loss of PFCC programs will become a critical barrier to re-employment.

Regaining PFCC Seats by Starting New Programs

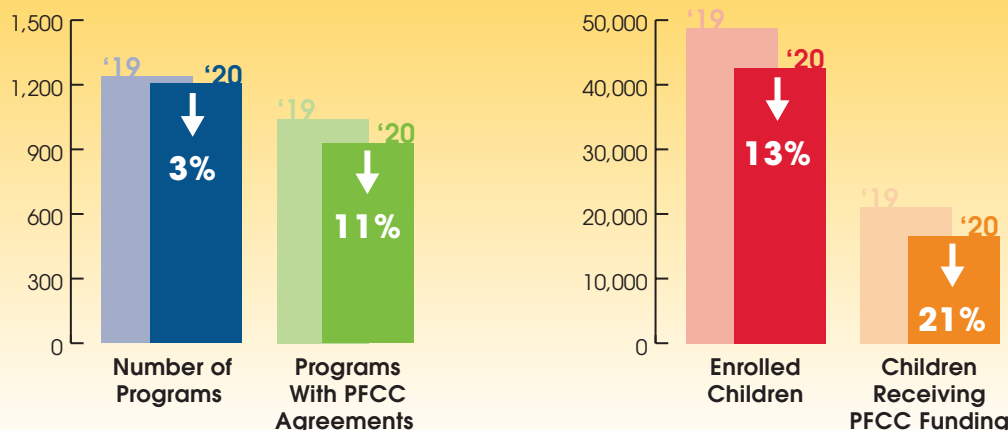
Looking to our community's future, it's imperative that the lost PFCC seats be reestablished so all children have the opportunity to access and receive the early education they need to build their futures.

The decrease in child care programs that accept PFCC funding isn't just impacting these families. The ripple effect will spread through our community, impacting our local businesses and our community as a whole. Families need reliable child care options so they can work and their children don't miss out on getting the educational building blocks they need to create strong academic and developmental foundations that help them become kindergarten ready.

Key to reversing this trend is redoubling efforts in the community to support establishing new child care programs that meet the criteria needed to serve children, are accessible to low-income families and are able to support these families by accepting PFCC funds.

Helping kick start efforts to create new PFCC eligible child care programs in this community is an investment in the future. That investment will create dividends for generations to come as our community's youngest children are given every opportunity to grow and flourish so they not only succeed, but thrive.

Southwest Ohio Child Care Programs 2019-2020



Child Care Programs by County 2019-2020

