

## 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 three counties with the largest number of child care programs (Clark, Greene and Montgomery) all saw drops in the number of programs, the number of programs accepting PFCC, and the number of children benefiting from PFCC funding. In total, 7 of 10 counties served by 4C for Children saw a drop in programs accepting PFCC dollars. The region as a whole saw a net loss of 48 programs with PFCC agreements.

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 Montgomery County in 2020 is 6%, yet there is an 11% overall loss in programs maintaining PFCC agreements.

Causes for this decrease 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.

In total, the decrease in the number of children receiving PFCC funding (21%) outpaces the decrease in overall enrollment (16%). This is likely due to several factors including parents who became unemployed during the pandemic. The challenges to find care for low-income working parents will get worse as families begin to regain employment and could be a critical factor stalling the economic recovery in this region.

### Regaining PFCC Seats by Starting New Programs

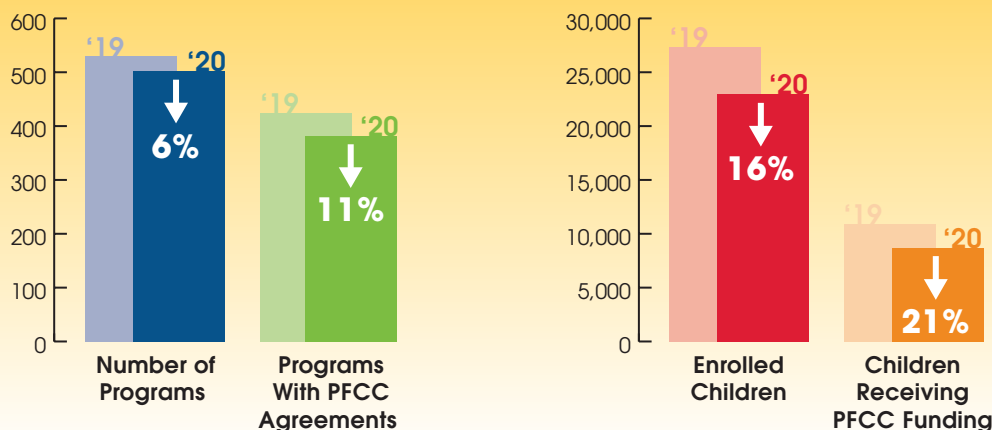
Looking to our community's future, it's imperative that the lost PFCC seats be reestablished so all children have the opportunity to access and receive the early education they need to build their futures.

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.

Miami Valley Child Care Programs 2019-2020



## Child Care Programs by County 2019-2020

