

CHILD WELFARE

All children, regardless of their circumstances, deserve to be safe, cared for, and have their needs met. However, this is not a reality for many children in Ohio. In 2018, over 27,000 children were placed in care out of their home as a result of findings for abuse and/or neglect and nearly 100,000 children are being raised by their grandparents and other kin.

Too many children and their families are plagued by the poverty, economic instability, addiction, and many other challenges that leave emotional and physical scars and add to the adverse childhood experiences that children carry with them into adulthood.

As adults, it's our job to protect children and the child welfare system's purpose is to ensure the well-being of children within their care.



FAST FACTS

Every year, approximately 1,000 Ohio youth age out of foster care and too often they lack the tools and support to transition into adulthood on their own.

In 2018, over 26,000 children were placed out of home and 12% of those were in group or residential care. The need for caregivers trained to meet the emotional and behavioral needs of children who have experienced trauma has only increased.

Over 100,000 grandparents are raising their grandchildren in Ohio.

Children's Defense Fund-Ohio recommends the following steps to protect and enhance the health of all Ohio families:

1. **Flexibility for Foster Caregivers.** Increase the number of caregivers certified to provide care for foster youth by offering flexibility in training requirements, including allowing some training to be conducted online while maintaining high quality placements.
2. **Independence into Adulthood.** Support additional resources for foster youth emancipating from care so they can have their basic needs met while transitioning to adulthood (BRIDGES Program).
3. **Accountability to Keep Children Safe.** Explore the creation of a statewide ombudsman office to advocate for youth in the foster care system.
4. **Resources for Kinship Caregivers.** Support providing kinship providers with payment parity for providing care for their kin.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

1. With so many children being raised by grandparents and other relatives in Ohio, what is your plan for making sure they receive the support they need to ensure the children in their care have their basic needs met?
2. What is your plan to increase the number of high quality caregiver placements for the growing number of children with complex behavioral health needs?