

**Project Abstract**

Project Title: Ohio's BOLD Beginning: Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five

Applicant Name: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

ATTN: Kara B. Wente, Deputy Director

Address: 4020 E. Fifth Avenue, Columbus OH 43219

Contact Phone Number: (614) 752-0747

Email: Kara.Bertke-Wente@jfs.ohio.gov

Website, if applicable: <http://jfs.ohio.gov>

Project Summary/Abstract. Children under age five are the largest group of Ohioans living in poverty, with 25.5% of 0–5-year-old children at or below the FPL. The percentage of children under age six living in poverty doubles to 50% when we include those living at or below 200% of the FPL (2017 Ohio Poverty Report). Among children, 49.4% in large urban cities and 27.7% in rural areas live at or below 200% FPL (2017 Ohio Poverty Report). We know that poverty correlates with a child's initial reading competence in that the home literacy environment and number of books owned is correlated with socio-economic status of the parent(s) (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). In Ohio, this gap is present in early childhood and persists throughout the school-age years, such that correlation between poverty and educational attainment is significant. Without intervention, the disparities evident early on widen and impact every aspect of a child's trajectory in literacy competency, academic, and ultimately, economic success. Through the 2017 Ohio Step Up To Quality Validation Study, Ohio found that practices required through Ohio's tiered quality rating system (TQRIS), Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) led to statistically significant results for Kindergarten readiness.

With this grant, Ohio will ensure adequate access to quality early childhood care and education programs for Ohio's vulnerable children living at or below 200% FPL. Ohio has defined quality early childhood care and education as programs rated through SUTQ, which represents all available programs (e.g., Head Start, Local Education Agencies, and private providers). Building on the success of Ohio's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant (ELCG) and the two years of continued multi-organization collaboration since, Ohio will meaningfully engage families, communities, and early childhood care and education providers in the continuous improvement by implementing our strategic plan.

During the 12-month grant period, Ohio will make measurable progress achieving our vision that *Each child in Ohio will engage in quality early learning and healthy development experiences that prepare that child for school and build a solid foundation for lifelong success.* To advance this vision, we have three goals: (1) All of Ohio's children, especially those from low-income and disadvantaged families both urban and rural, have access to quality early childhood care and education programs and are ready for Kindergarten; (2) Ohio's families understand the importance of early childhood care and education, and have the necessary resources and information to make an informed choice about their child's early childhood care and education setting; and (3) Ohio's early childhood delivery system increases the participation of children in quality settings through more efficient alignment of resources (federal, state and local) and better outreach coordination among state and local agencies.

Ohio is requesting \$14,812,000 to advance five strategies. Our application details the planned strategies and activities to realize Ohio's vision and goals, as well as the timelines, performance evaluation, proposed budget, and public reporting.