

Ohio's Children

Investing in high-quality early care and education can help cut crime

Ohio's and our nation's jails are full of people serving time for serious and costly crimes. But it doesn't have to be that way. Providing disadvantaged kids with high-quality early learning opportunities through pre-K, Head Start, and child care programs can reduce the human and fiscal costs of crime in the future.

Children in Ohio¹

- 2,578,019 children (under the age of 18) live in the state;
- 466,000 children (18 percent) live in poverty (about \$26,000 or less for a family of four);
- 208,000 children (8 percent) live in extreme poverty (about \$13,000 or less for a family of four);
- 38 percent of children live in a household with only one parent.

Early Childhood

- 69 percent of Ohio children under the age of 6 have both or their only parent in the workforce;²
- Only 14 percent of 3-year-olds and 26 percent of 4-year-olds are enrolled in state-funded pre-kindergarten, Head Start or a special education preschool program;³
- 39 percent of Ohio's population lives in a child care desert where there are more



than three children under age 5 for every licensed child care slot.⁴

School Age

- More than half of Ohio fourth and eighth graders score below proficient in both math and reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).⁵

18 percent of Ohio students do not graduate on time with a high school diploma.

- In Ohio, juvenile crime peaks between 2-6 p.m. on school days, with about 28 percent of all juvenile crime on those days occurring during the hours following the last school bell.⁶

College & Career Readiness

- 18 percent of Ohio students do not graduate on time with a high school diploma;⁷
- Graduation rates are worse for youth of color:⁸
 - 31 percent of African-American students do not graduate on time;
 - 27 percent of Hispanic students do not graduate on time.
- Economists have studied the relationship over time between changes in graduation

rates and crime. They concluded that a 10 percentage-point increase in graduation rates reduces murder and assault rates by about 20 percent.⁹

The best and least expensive way to stop crime going forward is to prevent as many young children as possible from growing up to become involved in crime in the first place. When we support what works for disadvantaged children, we put them—and our country—on a safer path. High-quality child care, Head Start, and state pre-K programs are critical to ensuring our kids get the best start possible. State and federal policymakers should invest in early care and education programs as a matter of public safety.

¹ KIDS COUNT data center. (2019). <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>

² *ibid.*

³ Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Barnett, W. S., Garver, K. A., Hodges, K. S., Weisenfeld, G. G., & Gardiner, B. A. (2020). The state of preschool 2019. http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Ohio_YB2019.pdf

⁴ Jessen-Howard, S., & Workman, S., (2019, September 16). Early learning in the United States 2019. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2019/09/16/474487/early-learning-united-states-2019/>

⁵ National Center on Education Statistics (2019). The nation's report card. <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile?chort=1&sub=MAT&sj=&sfj=NP&st=MN&year=2019R3>

⁶ Fight Crime: Invest in Kids (2019). From risk to opportunity: Afterschool programs keep kids safe when juvenile crime peaks. <https://www.strongnation.org/articles/965-after-school-still-the-prime-time-for-juvenile-crime-in-ohio>

⁷ U.S. Department of Education (2019). Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by selected student characteristics and state: 2010-11 through 2017-18. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_219.46.asp

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Lochner, L., & Moretti, E. (2004). The effect of education on crime. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3592774?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

Thousands of police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors and violence survivors protecting public safety by promoting solutions that steer kids away from crime.

Council for a Strong America is a national, bipartisan nonprofit that unites five organizations comprised of law enforcement leaders, retired admirals and generals, business executives, pastors, and prominent coaches and athletes who promote solutions that ensure our next generation of Americans will be successful, productive members of society.

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