



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Expand opportunity and stabilize families with support for higher education, child care and kinship care

Policy Matters releases three “Budget Bites” with targeted recommendations

Policy Matters Ohio released three “[Budget Bites](#)” today that point the way to expanding opportunity and creating stability for all Ohioans by increasing support for public higher education, child care and kinship care.

During each state budget cycle, Policy Matters Ohio releases Budget Bites that analyze discrete sections of the state budget. The latest explain how to [help more students pursue and complete advanced degrees](#), [provide working families with safe places to care for their children](#), and [stabilize families in crisis](#).

“We all deserve to live in a state that sets us up for success, no matter what we look like or the size of our bank accounts,” said Policy Matters Communications Director Caitlin Johnson. “Certain politicians want to send our public resources to their corporate and ultra-wealthy backers at the expense of our families and our communities. We can use our state budget to make sure our children grow up in healthy homes and have support to go where their dreams and abilities take them.”

Policy Matters outlined a plan to expand opportunity for Ohioans who want to pursue their educational aspirations. Lawmakers can increase funding for public colleges and universities and for need-based aid. They can also use the budget to break barriers that hold students back by reforming some of the state’s punitive debt collection practices and restructuring need-based aid to fully include students at community colleges and lower-cost universities, who are more likely to be Black, brown or come from families with lower incomes.

Another bite shows how lawmakers can provide more working parents with safe, nurturing places to care for their children. Only two states make it harder for families to qualify for child care assistance. While the 2022-23 state budget proposal would slightly boost eligibility, it leaves out tens of thousands of children and families. Policy Matters calls for lawmakers to support working families by boosting eligibility to 200% of the federal poverty line, or \$43,900 a year for a family of three. That would extend child care aid to roughly 37,000 children.

Policy Matters also called for lawmakers to stabilize families in crisis by increasing support for the state’s kinship care program. In many cases, children who are

*Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.*

removed from their biological parents do best with a trusted friend or relative instead of foster care. But the state shortchanges kinship families, who are more likely to be Black. Despite a federal court ruling, the state provides kinship families with less support than licensed foster care providers. Policy Matters recommends lawmakers provide kinship families \$600 a month per child and increase funding for the kinship caregiver program to \$15 million per year to help kinship caregivers with short-term expenses.