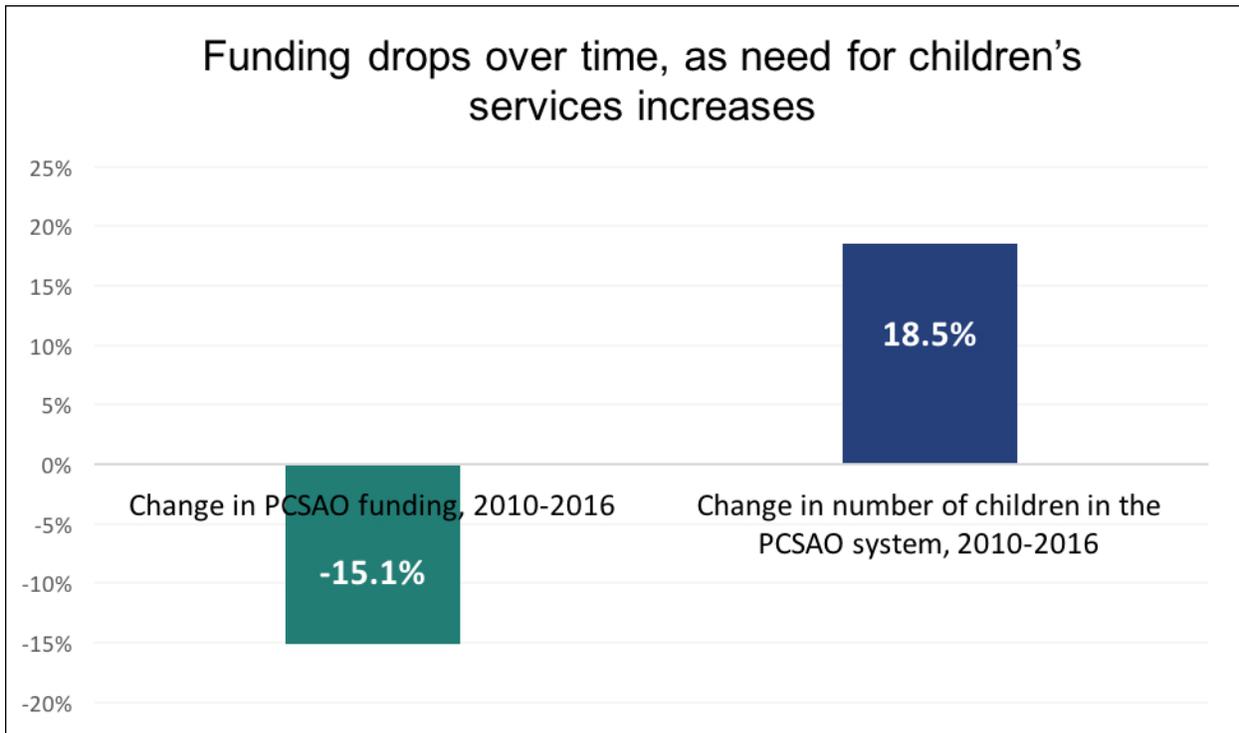


## Children's Services

Ohio's support for children's services through the state budget is the lowest in the nation. If we want all of Ohio's children to grow up with the best chance to thrive and contribute, we need to improve funding for this crucial service. Increased drug addiction means that Ohio's public children's services agencies now care for more children than they used to. Despite growing caseloads, Governor John Kasich's 2018-2019 budget plan flat funds the program, which actually loses money when accounting for inflation.

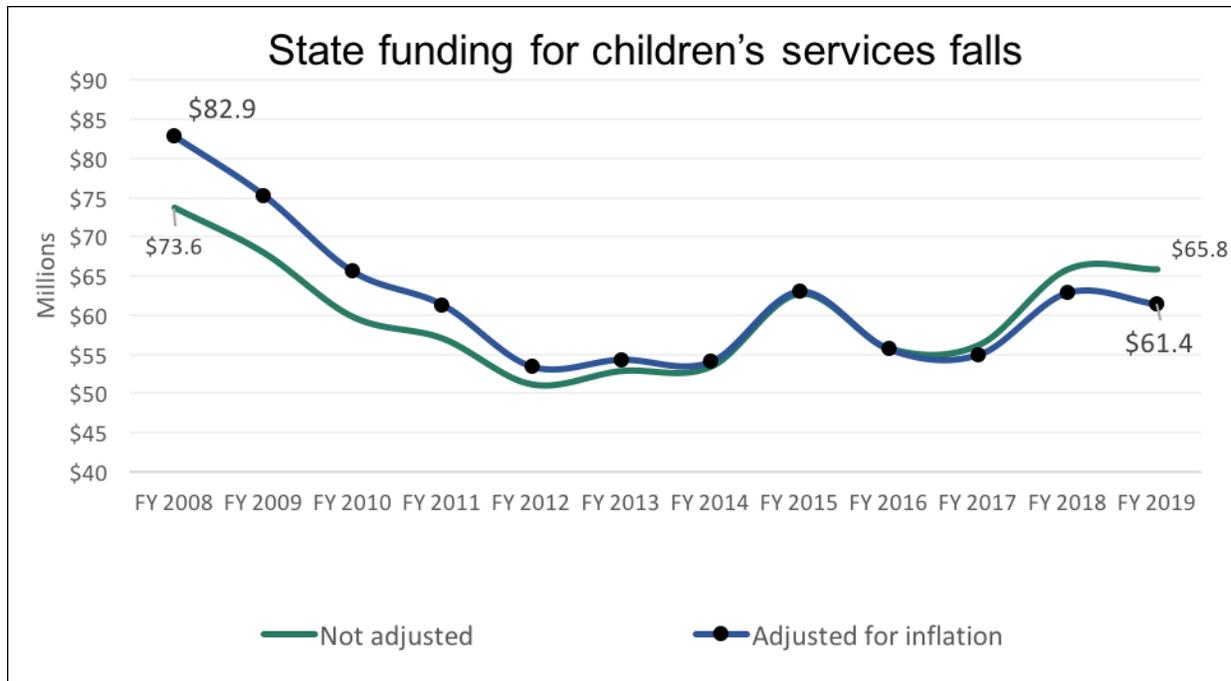
During the recession of 2008, Ohio's public children's services agencies served 14,282 children. In 2010, the number of children in the system fell to 11,721. Now it's climbing again, and in 2016, there were 13,895 children in the system – an 18.5 percent increase since 2010. Yet funding has fallen by 15.1 percent, adjusted for inflation, over that time period.



Source: Policy Matters Ohio, based on data provided by the Public Children's Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). Adjusted for inflation (2016 dollars).

The decline is part of a long-term trend: state funding for the primary children's services line

item will fall by \$21 million (adjusted for inflation) between 2008 and proposed 2019 funding.



Source: Policy Matters Ohio, based on data provided by the Public Children's Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). Adjusted for inflation (2016 dollars).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed budget actually increases the primary budget line children's services line by \$10 million a year, but this supports a previously unfunded mandate. It does not restore funding lost to children's services, increase funding to meet growing needs, or offset other, ongoing state cuts. For example, the elimination of tax reimbursements takes another \$12 million a year out of local children's services levies between 2014 and 2018.

Today, children's services agencies report increasing demand due to the drug epidemic – when parents struggle with addiction children's services have to provide care. Much stronger restoration is therefore needed today.

Children's services have always been essential to start all Ohio kids off on the right track. The state has mostly left funding up to local levies and federal dollars. Now, with increased drug addiction among parents, it's more essential than ever.