



## Opportunity for Every Ohio Kid

Mike DeWine cares deeply about families. He knows that there are kids growing up in Ohio who - because of no fault of their own - simply do not have the same chances for success in life. Today, too many young people are reaching adulthood without the tools to be self-sufficient, and some kids don't have the skills to hold jobs or the opportunity to seek better education. Mike DeWine and Jon Husted are ready to fight for an Ohio that works for *all* of our families. That's why they've introduced a bold plan to give kids the skills they need early in life to succeed. This is Mike DeWine and Jon Husted's vision for Ohio's future — to give opportunity to every kid in Ohio.

### **Improve access and increase the quality of early childhood education services**

High-quality early childhood education is proven to improve long-term outcomes for children. Yet, only 20% of centers are high-quality rated.

- The DeWine-Husted administration will raise the eligibility level for publicly funded early childhood programs for working families from 130% of the federal poverty level to 150% of the federal poverty level, which will expand access to at least 20,000 more children. Additionally, Mike DeWine will ensure all early childhood education centers are high quality. In addition to helping children, this will encourage more parental participation in the workforce.

### **Increase home visiting services for at-risk, first time mothers to give them the tools they need to promote child development and school readiness**

Evidence-based home visiting services are voluntary programs that serve at-risk, first-time mothers and children up to age three in their own homes. Ohio's programs are grossly underfunded, reaching less than 4 percent of eligible families.

- The DeWine-Husted administration will make state investments to triple the number of families served through home-visiting programs. These programs can help reduce infant mortality and improve school-readiness so that parents have the skills they need to help their children be healthy, happy and ready for kindergarten.

### **Provide a mental health professional in every Ohio school**

Suicide has become an epidemic in our country, and some children are experiencing trauma in their home lives making school their most safe haven.

- The DeWine-Husted administration will ensure every Ohio school has access to a mental health professional. Now, more than ever, we need to find ways to talk to our children and get them the help they need.

### **Reform the foster care system in Ohio**

Ohio already provides the lowest state-share for foster care in the nation, and the opioid epidemic has forced many more children into Ohio's foster care system.

- The DeWine-Husted administration will make reforming the child welfare system a top priority by initiating a top-down review of the system in Ohio, increasing the state's investment to create a minimum standard for care and by establishing an independent ombudsmen with the authority to investigate and publish findings on complaints by foster caregivers, foster children and kin.

### **Implement age-appropriate drug prevention education in K-12**

Mike DeWine has introduced a comprehensive 12-point action plan to combat the drug epidemic, and several pieces of his plan include prevention.

- The DeWine-Husted administration will work with the State School Board to implement evidence-based prevention education from Kindergarten through 12th Grade. By teaching kids age-appropriate lessons that are proven to work, we can change the culture and get ahead of the next wave of drug abuse problems.

### **Create a Director of Children's Initiatives that will report to the Governor and coordinate children's programs across all state agencies**

Currently, children's programs are scattered among many different state agencies.

- As the next Governor, Mike DeWine will have in a place a Director of Children's Initiatives, someone who will report directly to him whose sole focus will be to coordinate children's programs across all state agencies so that they work better for the people they serve. This dedicated staff person in the Governor's office will take on major priorities such as lead poisoning, hunger and child obesity — all while identifying ways that programs can work more efficiently for Ohio's children.

**BOTTOM LINE:** The failure of Ohio's children is a tragedy for them that affects all of us. Giving our children the proper development and skills to be successful when they are young so that they don't end up unemployed, involved in crime, using drugs, or even incarcerated, improves the quality of life for all Ohioans. With these investments and improvements, we can start to solve this problem for the sake of our entire state and its future.