

## **2015 Priority Issue: Education**



United Way of Greater Dayton Area (UWGDA) advocates for policies that promote academic success for all children in our community. Therefore, the UWGDA would like to ask our legislators to support legislation that will promote the following initiatives:

- **Access to Quality Preschool Programs:** It is necessary for families to have access to affordable and quality preschool programs in our community. When young children attend quality preschool they are more likely to be prepared for kindergarten, which will help them to succeed as they continue their academic career. UWGDA asks our legislators to consider the following:
  - Title XX Child Care - UWGDA encourages legislators to broaden the eligibility criteria, as well as address the child care “cliff” that occurs when families just barely are above the eligibility criteria and lose their child care assistance. The difference in income does not support child care, therefore forcing families to choose between a raise and continued child care.
  - Title XX Reimbursement Rates – Currently, the state of Ohio uses reimbursement rates that vary county to county. Preble County childcare centers currently receive \$96.39 a week per pre-school aged child, Montgomery receives \$147.07 a week per pre-school aged child, and Greene receives \$131.57 per week. [2] This discrepancy must be addressed. When child care centers do not receive a fare amount in reimbursement then they do not have the money to invest in better qualified staff and training opportunities, which is necessary to increase their star rating.
  
- **Kindergarten Readiness:** In 2012, only 37.6% of children tested as “ready for kindergarten” in Montgomery County. [1] When children do not have the necessary skills from the start this can cause them to be less likely to excel academically in the years to come. UWGDA asks that our legislators continue funding that will support programs such as:
  - Early Head Start, Head Start, and Pre-K – Ensuring all children have access to consistent, high quality, and affordable early learning and care opportunities.
  - Step Up to Quality Preschool Programs - Step Up To Quality provides parents with a tool to help identify levels of quality when seeking a child care setting outside of their home. Child care programs participating in SUTQ demonstrate a commitment toward providing quality care and education.
  - Preschool Promise - This pilot program, which is being funded by Kettering Schools, the City of Kettering, the City of Moraine and Montgomery County, is the first step to ensuring low-income families, countywide, have the choice of sending their child to preschool.
  
- **Middle Grade Success and On-Time Graduation:** Children that drop out of high school are more likely to experience chronic unemployment, poor health, poverty, and reliance on public assistance. In 2014, according to the U.S. Department of Education only 65% of economically disadvantaged students in Ohio graduated from high school. UWGDA will advocate for programs that support:
  - Early Warning and Intervention Systems - Incentivizing school districts to identify students at risk of dropping out and providing those students with tailored school, family, and community supports.
  - CDF Freedom Schools - Freedom schools help to minimize “summer slide” by providing summer and after-school reading enrichment for children who might otherwise not have access to books, as well as empowering children to make a difference in themselves, their families, and their communities.

[1] Learn to Earn Dayton. (2014). How our Kids are Doing. Retrieved from <http://learntoearndayton.org/kids/>

[2] Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. (2014). Payment Rates for Providers of Publicly Funded Child Care. Retrieved from [http://codes.ohio.gov/pdf/oh/admin/2015/5101\\$2-16-41\\_PH\\_FF\\_A\\_APP1\\_20130919\\_0911.pdf](http://codes.ohio.gov/pdf/oh/admin/2015/5101$2-16-41_PH_FF_A_APP1_20130919_0911.pdf), accessed May 18, 2015.