

VOTE for OHIO KIDS

Amplifying Family Voice

KNOW
THE ISSUES



Amplifying family voice is vital to supporting and maintaining a child's overall mental health and well-being and contributes to the long-term vitality of our state. Parents and caregivers are experts of their own experiences and know what their children need to thrive. Research indicates that increasing family engagement in policymaking yields substantial returns for children, their families, and the systems that seek to serve them. When families are engaged and their voices are elevated, authentic partnerships can be created between professionals, parents, and caregivers to develop, advocate for, and implement policies and practices that meet the unique and diverse needs of children.



The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fragility of our systems in both responding to and preventing a behavioral health crisis, including exposing how child-serving leaders and professionals have failed to engage families in decisions that deeply impact the lives of their children.

What are families telling us?

“Mental health is important to the whole family: Moms, dads, children. When a caregiver’s mental health suffers, the family suffers.”

~ Groundwork Ohio Family Action Network Ambassador

A [statewide poll](#) commissioned by Groundwork Ohio in 2021 found that among voters surveyed:



87%

believe the pandemic had put a **strain on kids' mental health and the mental health** of parents in the state.

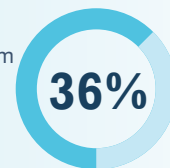


More than two-thirds of parents with children under the age of 5 said they were worried about the mental or emotional health of their children.







86% of Ohio parents with children under 5

said they have undergone stress from the COVID-19 pandemic, including



who said it has caused “a lot” of stress.

*To improve mental health and well-being,
Ohio's next governor should amplify
family voices by:*

-  Authentically engaging and communicating with families to build trust within communities.
-  Embedding and resourcing family voice infrastructure into statewide policy development through participation on commissions, advisory councils, and boards.
-  Recognizing families as experts in the lives of their children and listening to families for real-time feedback on state policy decisions and investments.
-  Investing and supporting strategic partnerships that strengthen family engagement in state-level policymaking.

Presented by:




#Vote4OhioKids