



**Invest in Children/Office of Early Childhood
Budget Presentation to Cuyahoga County Council
by Dr. Rebekah Dorman
October 21, 2021
(for Budget 2022-2023)**

Good afternoon. I am Rebekah Dorman, Director of Invest in Children, and the County Office of Early Childhood. Thank you for this opportunity to come before Council today and for your support of the work we do. I will begin with a quick review of our mission:

The mission of Invest in Children is to mobilize resources and research to ensure the well-being of all young children in Cuyahoga County. We provide a continuum of targeted services, prenatal to kindergarten, for children and their families; build awareness; advocate; and measure our impact. We aim to achieve equity in access to services and eliminate racial/ethnic disparities in child and family outcomes.

With your support and investment, we are extremely proud of the outcomes we have achieved for children and families in Cuyahoga County. For this brief budget presentation, I will focus on two topics: Our staffing and significant positive changes in our programming in the coming budget cycle which also include a change in our funding approach to both enhance and expand our early childhood system.

PERSONNEL

First, our staffing. As you can see in the organizational chart (below), we have a staff of nine, with three positions currently vacant. We are currently moving forward to fill all of these positions. Through shared services, we also have a Fiscal Specialist assigned to our office.

PROGRAM CHANGES

Now I am pleased to tell you about some exciting programming and funding changes that we are planning within our home visiting programs and our Early Childhood Mental Health Program.

The Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program, an evidence-based home visiting program that we have funded for the past eight years, has been administered by Bright Beginnings and implemented via subcontracts with three community agencies. The state has recently made additional funding available for home visiting and specifically for PAT. Thus, Invest in Children, in collaboration with Bright Beginnings, has determined that Invest in Children will no longer fund PAT and instead put our dollars into expanding our program offerings. What does this mean exactly?

The agencies which have been receiving Invest in Children funding to deliver PAT will receive direct funding from the state. In addition, Bright Beginnings, itself, has decided to become a home visiting provider and will also be funded via a state contract. We anticipate that service capacity will increase by about 150 families per year with this new arrangement, all funded by the state of Ohio.

Therefore, this allows us to strategically repurpose the \$1,000,000 that we had been using to fund PAT annually. We plan to use those funds to enhance and expand Parent Support Programs, our Newborn Home Visit Program, and our Early Childhood Mental Health Program. I will describe each in more detail:

PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

While Invest in Children has very robust family support services in Cuyahoga County, we still see ways to offer families more choices in services and to widen our impact. Bright Beginnings will receive \$609,000 in 2022 and \$748,000 in 2023 to expand and enhance our continuum of family support services. This includes

- an expansion of Parents Connect, our curated Facebook group for parents
- a program to support parents of children ages three-five years with elevated blood lead levels
- Triple-P: a group format evidence-based program (available both in person and virtually)

PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAM NUMBERS SERVED:

In terms of numbers served, Bright Beginnings estimates an increase to 1000 families served via Parents Connect (from about 400 currently); 300 families served over the two years with the new Lead Support program; and 650 families served over the two years with the creation of the Triple P groups.

WELCOME HOME: NEWBORN HOME VISIT PROGRAM

Welcome Home, our Newborn Home Visit Program, provides a one-time visit from a Cuyahoga County Board of Health public health nurse to families who, during the perinatal period, are on Medicaid or have other high-risk conditions such as domestic violence. The program currently recruits new parents from Metro and UH and serves approximately 1,300-1500 families (in a typical year). We plan to increase the number of families who get a newborn home visit by about 875 families, by adding \$250,000 per year to the contract to support expansion to the two other major birthing hospitals with significant numbers of mothers on Medicaid: Fairview and Hillcrest.

EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH

We plan to increase funding by \$150,000 for the Early Childhood Mental Health Program that is administered by the ADAMHS Board: increasing funding from \$670,000 to \$820,000 per year. Agencies are selected via an RFP process managed by the ADAMHS Board and with increased funding we expect to be able to fund a larger number of agencies to meet the significant community needs for these services. We estimate that an additional 150 children will receive services. In addition, via the RFP we will identify several agencies to employ Emergency Response positions which are fully funded positions to handle emergent/trauma cases so that they

are not stuck on a waiting list. Every day is precious in the life of a young child who has experienced trauma.

I also want to mention that in collaboration with the ADAMHS Board, we are seeking foundation funding for Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) training. CPP is the preferred treatment for young children who have experienced trauma and is the preferred mode of treatment for children served by our county’s new Safe Babies Court Team, which we want to support in their work with children in the child welfare system. This training would be available to the contracted ECMH agency staff as well as to independent therapists in the community, with priority given to therapists of color.

We are very pleased with both the expansion of Invest in Children Service Continuum both in terms of the types of programs offered, as well as the number of families to be served.

Our Universal Pre K program, other child care related programs, SPARK home visiting, as well as Child Fatality Review contracts, have no significant programmatic changes/or funding changes and will continue as before.

That concludes my presentation. At this time, I am prepared to take your questions.

Invest In Children Organizational Chart

