



Ohio's APPALACHIAN CHILDREN at a Crossroads: A Roadmap for Action

Children's Defense Fund-Ohio began our investigation into Appalachian Ohio with our 2001 report, which provided a first-ever comprehensive look into the well-being of the region's children. Now, fifteen years later, we've found that the region continues to suffer many of the same challenges, outlined in the data snapshot below.



450,000 CHILDREN in Appalachian Ohio

ECONOMIC STABILITY

Unemployment	Child Poverty
2000: 5.5%	2000: 17.8%
vs.	vs.
2013: 6.7%	2013: 26.7%

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE

14 / **32** Appalachian counties have NO Early Head Start services



There are **38,795** early education/licensed child care spaces but **146,121** children under age 6 to serve

ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY ED

280,875 Appalachian students attend public school



3rd Grade: **97.3%** met or exceeded required reading score

By Grades 4-8: Students fall behind Ohio peers in reading and math

Bachelor's Degrees or higher completed



Appalachia **15.9%**
Statewide **25.2%**

BIRTH AND BABIES

Babies Born Exposed to Drugs  **2004-2008: 2.3** **2009-2013: 15.4**
Per 1,000 live births

Infant Mortality 7.6 Per 1,000 births
Ohio and Appalachia exceed the national average, have similar rates

Good News:  **40%** since 2000
Teen Birth Rate

HEALTH & NUTRITION

 Ohio has **6** children's hospitals. **NONE** are in Appalachia.

28 of 32 counties are dental and mental health shortage areas

Appalachian children are **1.5X's** more likely to have **untreated tooth decay** than Ohio children statewide



of Appalachian children face **FOOD INSECURITY**

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Children are the future of Appalachian Ohio. We need to act now to ensure that they grow and develop into productive adults who will be the region's future community and business leaders, workers, teachers, health care providers, and parents. To accomplish this, businesses, policymakers, community groups, educators, faith leaders, and families must unite and work together as partners in creating change for children.

ECONOMIC STABILITY

Promising solutions to allow children and families to gain economic stability are grounded in local partnerships.

1. Ohio's 32 Appalachian Counties should join the **Rural Impact County Challenge (RICC)** to reduce poverty.
2. Implement **two-generation strategies** to launch thriving families.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

Children in Appalachian Ohio need high-quality and affordable early childhood care and education to set them on a course for success in school and in life.

1. Early learning and public school systems **must work in unison**.
2. Build an **early childhood education hub**.
3. **Improve financial sustainability** of early childhood education and invest in its workforce development.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Improving educational outcomes for students in Ohio's Appalachian region involves multiple strategies and collaborations.

1. **Strengthen connections** between early childhood programs and the school districts to support children's readiness for learning.
2. **Use multiple data points** such as growth and achievement data to understand the performance and progress context.
3. Focus on **place-based strategies** that provide value to students and their future.
4. Pursue **collaborative solutions** through collective action.

BIRTH AND BABIES

Babies born in our Appalachian communities face challenges of low birthweight and exposure to drugs, leading many not to reach their first birthday. Our goal is for Appalachian Ohio babies to survive and thrive and begin childhood safe and strong.

1. Reduce infant mortality rates through **improving prenatal care systems and supports**.
2. Reduce infant mortality rates **through lowering the rates of maternal and household smoking**.
3. Focus on the **neonatal abstinence syndrome crisis** in Appalachian Ohio.

CHILD HEALTH

Of the numerous health challenges in Appalachia, a lack of access to health care is a recurring theme at the root of the problem.

1. **Assist providers and health systems** as Patient Centered Medical Home transformation continues.
2. Integrate **use of community health workers** into health care systems.
3. **Expand the reach of health care** at existing facilities.
4. **Modernize the dental care workforce** to expand access in Appalachian Ohio.
5. **Overcome barriers to telehealth** and utilize its services more widely.

FOOD INSECURITY/NUTRITION

Food insecurity is a serious problem across Appalachia; our babies, toddlers, preschoolers and school-aged children are going hungry.

1. Increase participation in **Summer Food Service programs**.
2. Ease cost burden for **summer feeding sites**.
3. Encourage public-private partnerships to **overcome food deserts**.
4. Expand **food education programs**.

Read the full report at

<http://www.cdfohio.org/research-library/2016/OH-appalachian-children-crossroads.pdf>