



## Legislation Text

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Mayor Ginther's vision for Columbus, America's Opportunity City, is that all children are ready for kindergarten. Addressing early childhood learning means bringing awareness and resources to a critical learning stage in childhood development. Children who come to school ready to learn are more likely to succeed academically and in life.

Children who participate in high-quality early learning experiences significantly improve their early literacy, language, and math skills. Ample evidence shows that children who enter school unprepared fall farther and farther behind. Students who get a poor start in their earliest years are likely to struggle in high school and subsequently, fail to graduate.

Child care and early learning programs also fulfill a critical need for our community's workforce. The availability of safe, nurturing environments for children, provides parents, family members, and caregivers the opportunity to attend their jobs or pursue their education.

During the COVID 19 Pandemic, many Columbus child care teachers and staff left the industry to stay at home or pursue other employment options. According to data provided by Action for Children at the time, over one-third of child care providers did not have enough teachers to staff their classrooms. Action for Children also projected that Franklin County had a deficit of nearly 1,000 child care teachers and staff.

In addition, numerous studies showed that women left the workforce in great numbers, both nationally and in Ohio - reversing years of progress. The high price of non-subsidized child care tuition for working families is one of the reasons.

To help support families and teachers, City Council approved ordinance 2901-2021 to provide scholarships of up to \$10,000.00 for working families and signing bonuses of \$1,000.00 for new early educators through Action for Children. Though this work was successful, more needs to be done. Recent data from Action for Children shows that while child care capacity is back to pre-pandemic levels, enrollment still lacks, partially due to a lack of teachers.

Therefore, the Executive Director, Office of Education requests the authority to extend the contract through June 30, 2024, authorized by ordinance 2901-2021 with Action for Children to continue to provide one-time signing bonuses to new teachers, to increase the amount of the signing bonuses up to \$2,500.00, and to provide affordable scholarships to working families.

**Fiscal Impact:** No additional funding is associated with this ordinance.

**Emergency Designation:** Emergency designation is requested to ensure that Action for Children can continue this work before the contract expires

To authorize the Executive Director, Office of Education to extend a contract with Action for Children through June 30, 2024 for the purpose of continuing the implementation of a plan to recruit child care teachers and staff, including providing new teacher signing bonuses of up to \$2,500.00 and to provide affordable scholarships for working families; and to declare an emergency. (\$0.00)

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Ginther's vision for Columbus, America's Opportunity City, is that all children are ready for kindergarten; and

**WHEREAS**, children who participate in high-quality early learning experiences significantly improve their early literacy,

language, and math skills; and

**WHEREAS**, child care and early learning programs also fulfill a critical need for our community's workforce; and

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in almost 1,000 child care teacher and staff vacancies; and

**WHEREAS**, the high price of non-subsidized child care is a detriment for working families; and

**WHEREAS** Action for Children is already engaged in this work, authorized by ordinance 2901-2021 and this will allow their work through June 30, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, no new funding is associated with this ordinance; and

**WHEREAS**, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Office of Education in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Director to extend an existing contract, prior to its expiration, with Action For Children to recruit child care teachers and staff as soon as possible, all for the preservation of public health, peace, property, and safety; and **NOW, THEREFORE**,

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:**

**SECTION 1.** That the Director of the Office of Education is hereby authorized to extend an existing contract through June 30, 2024 with Action for Children to recruit child care teachers and staff and provide affordable scholarships for working families in Franklin County.

**SECTION 2.** That the City Auditor is authorized to make any accounting changes to revise the funding source for all contracts or contract modifications associated with this ordinance.

**SECTION 3.** That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated, and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

**SECTION 4.** That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or 10 days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.