

# Protect Kids. Create Jobs.

## Invest in Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning



**Lead is a toxin.** There is no safe level of lead in the blood.

Child lead poisoning can cause lifelong, irreversible brain and nervous system damage which can lead to learning and behavioral challenges, lower IQ, lower academic achievement, increased hyperactivity, emotional problems and future delinquent behavior. Thousands of Ohio children have already been poisoned and many more continue to be exposed to lead.

**3 in 100**  
**Ohio children**

have tested with elevated blood lead levels (EBLLs).

**3,533 children** had EBLLs in 2019 representing 2.1% of all children tested in 2019.

Counties with the highest rates of children with EBLLs are

Crawford | **6.9%**

Harrison | **6.29%**

Cuyahoga | **5.79%**

Morgan | **4.87%**

Clark | **4.78%**



Despite the danger of lead, it can be hard to address because it is invisible and the damage to a child can be delayed. Funding generally kicks in once a child is already lead poisoned- a reactive and ineffective response to lead poisoning.

The **#1 source of child lead poisoning** is lead dust from old lead paint in houses built before 1978: 95% of the EBLL cases.

## Investing in a Primary Prevention Path Forward

To achieve a lead-free future for our children, Ohio needs to invest in primary prevention solutions for childhood lead poisoning, beginning with healthy housing. These prevention efforts save lives, increase jobs, and ultimately save taxpayer dollars.

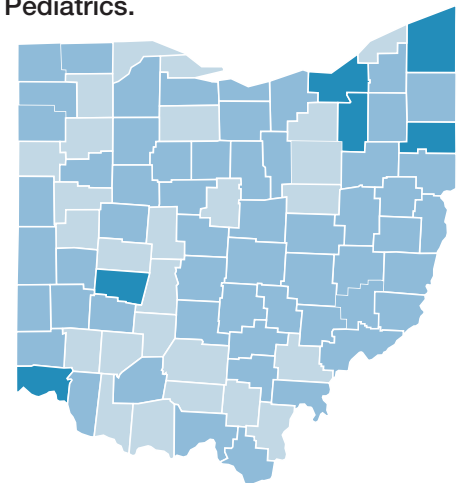
- 1 | Leverage the success of the state child health insurance program (SCHIP)** lead abatement program by increasing the current \$10 million to \$20 million over the biennium to reach more Ohioians. Require that 50% of the funding support primary prevention to remove lead hazards before a child is poisoned.
- 2 | Shift oversight authority for the RRP rule from the federal government to the state** by designating ODH authority to enforce the program, with a one-time cost of \$1.3 million in GRF for start-up expenses.
- 3 | Create dedicated GRF funding for ODH's Ohio Lead Poisoning Prevention Fund** (\$4 million) to advance Ohio priorities for primary prevention, with fiscal incentives for targeted lead abatement and local innovation.
- 4 | Sustain innovation and public-private partnership through local lead prevention efforts**, including Cleveland's Lead Safe Home Fund and Toledo's Historic South program (\$2.3 million in GRF).
- 5 | Allocate one third of H2Ohio funding to the Ohio EPA for clean, safe drinking water** and approximately \$15 million to local governments and public utilities for lead-safe and affordable water for Ohioans.

**For every dollar spent controlling lead hazards, at least \$17 would be returned (and as much as \$221) in health benefits, increased IQ, higher lifetime earnings, tax revenues, lower special education costs and reduced criminal activity.**

## Efforts to Tackle Child Lead Poisoning Making Progress

The Governor & Ohio General Assembly recognize the critical importance of primary prevention of child lead poisoning, deemed the “optimal strategy” by the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics.

- State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) lead hazard control program removed lead in homes in 61 counties.
- Middle Income Lead Program & Ohio Lead Tax Credit made funds available to families to remove lead from their homes.
- Ohio Department of Health (ODH) partnerships with other state agencies successfully supported:
  - lead worker training and covering the cost of certification and licenses to recruit workers into the lead workforce,
  - creation of a lead demolition protocol to reduce release of lead dust during demolition, and,
  - implementation of the expanded automatic eligibility of early intervention for children with EBLLs, making support services available to families across the state.
- ODH managed GRF funding to foster innovation in local lead prevention efforts, including the Lead Safe Home Fund in Cleveland and Toledo’s Historic South project.



SCHIP Abatements by County

- 10 or more properties
- less than 10 properties
- 0 properties

## BUT the Urgent Problem of Child Lead Poisoning Persists in Ohio



- Ohio still does not have a comprehensive strategy for targeting the most common source of lead: **pre-1978 homes make up 2/3 of Ohio’s housing stock.**
- The **SCHIP program is over-extended** and current funding only allows up to 150 homes to be abated a year.
- **Ohio does not require lead hazard remediation prior to children or pregnant women residing in a home.** Instead, Ohio relies mostly on increasing public awareness and lead testing to identify and abate lead hazards after a child has been lead poisoned, resulting in thousands of lead poisoned children and more being exposed to lead every day.
- The Lead Safe Rental Registry was intended to allow people to locate lead safe homes but so far is ineffective with **few pre-1978 units included in the Registry.**
- The Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) rule remains federally controlled for Ohio and has been ineffective in ensuring lead safe work practices are used in pre-1978 homes. Without ODH authority for RRP, **children continue to be inadvertently exposed to lead during home renovations.**

## INVEST IN PREVENTING CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING TO PROTECT KIDS & CREATE JOBS



The Ohio Lead-Free Kids Coalition is a collection of organizations and individuals who share a deep and urgent concern about the potentially life-long harm caused by lead poisoning and the future well-being of our state. We work collaboratively toward a meaningful public commitment and investment to ensure all Ohio children are safe from lead in their homes and communities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE  
Ohio Lead-Free Kids Coalition at: [ohleadfreekids.org](http://ohleadfreekids.org)