



# Ohio Children's Alliance

*Leading change for child and family service providers*

## SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

During the week of May 15-19, 2023, consider sending a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Be sure to look up the paper's specific submission guidelines for important details. DO NOT SEND THIS DOCUMENT. Personalize the letter as you see fit. This template is for our members and partners only; not for the general public.

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To the editor:

Ohio is experiencing a children's mental health crisis. As a provider, I'm on the front lines. And I know that families need support now more than ever before.

In our work, we see children struggling with anxiety, depression, and other issues that were exacerbated by the global pandemic. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among ages 10-14. The situation is dire.

While a strong children's services framework exists, our challenges are numerous. Community behavioral health direct care workforce shortages – including an insufficient number of licensed foster homes and staffed group care settings – result in delays and placement shortages. Without proper assistance, kids continue to suffer.

Ohioans have a collective responsibility to prioritize our children's wellbeing. **Now is the time to invest in their mental health.**

The State of Ohio budget bill includes two important children's mental components under consideration. We urge legislators to support:

- An increase for Medicaid payment rates for community behavioral health services by a total of 20% to stabilize the behavioral health workforce.
- The advancement of the Student Wellness and Success Fund, which provides funding for schools and community agencies to provide wraparound services for kids in need.

With appropriate investment, we will strengthen community-based behavioral health services, ensure availability and continuity of care for kids, and bring new resources to schools. Our children are worth it.

[YOUR NAME HERE]