

For Immediate Release

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## **LOCAL PARENTS DON STICKERS TO DEMONSTRATE NEED FOR CHILD CARE SUPPORT IN STATE BUDGET**

July 9, 2009 -- An estimated 30,000 children are facing the loss of state subsidized child care in the current state budget proposal that is undergoing discussion in Joint Conference Committee. If these cuts are made, many parents will have difficulty continuing to work if their children no longer have quality child care.

Tomorrow, July 10, parents with children in some local child centers will receive stickers when they drop off their children in the morning and will wear those stickers to work to demonstrate how many working parents will be affected if the Early Learning Initiative (ELI) and state subsidized child care are cut in the budget.

There are two versions of the stickers. One says "I'm at work today because I have child care," and the other says "Child care preserves jobs." The main purpose of this sticker campaign is to emphasize the economic support that comes with having reliable care for children so parents can go to work.

"We recognize that this is a very difficult budget cycle for our state, and we admire the dedication of our legislators to doing the right thing as they wade through the process. But as we try to revive and support our state's economy, this is the time to preserve jobs, not make it harder for parents to go to work. It's a simple fact that parents can't work without child care," Susan Stai, YMCA early child development services executive director, said.

"More than 7,000 early childhood education jobs will be eliminated. Parents of the 30,000 children who lose care may not be able to keep their jobs if they cannot find quality care, and approximately 1,000 of the 4,000 child care centers in Ohio will close over the biennium," she said.

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Currently, ELI provides more than 14,000 Ohio children from low-income families with quality childcare services including the critical educational experiences and health screenings that will effectively prepare them to enter kindergarten. To close the \$3.2 billion budget gap, the Governor recently proposed eliminating the ELI program and cutting other subsidized childcare services will make it financially more difficult for centers to remain open. As a result, more than 30,000 of Ohio's at-risk children will not have the opportunity to develop the literacy, speech and problem solving skills to succeed in school.

As the area's largest youth and family-focused not-for-profit, the YMCA reinforces character values through assets-based programs and services to more than 143,000 individuals, kids and families annually. Adult mentors encourage young people to be caring, responsible, respectful, and honest through sports, summer camps, structured child and afterschool care, and leadership building programs. Branches offer quality time for families, resources for parents, and a variety of opportunities for seniors to be active. The Membership for All sliding scale fee structure means everyone, no matter their ability to pay, can always benefit from the YMCA. Last year alone more than 17,400 families and individuals enjoyed healthier and happier lives because generous partners helped the YMCA in its vision to be accessible to all.