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Monday, April 11, 2011

Kasich Defends Early Childhood Budget

VIDEO: <http://www.10tv.com/live/content/video/onn.html?videoUrl=/sites/10tv/videos/2011/04/11/kasich-talks-budget.xml>

COLUMBUS, Ohio — In these tough budget times, Gov. John Kasich visited a Columbus early childhood, education and family center to make it clear that his priorities do not include big cuts to certain children's programs.

"Nobody, as a result of what we've done in the budget, is being dropped from the rolls. They'll all be able to get childcare," said Kasich.

That's music to ears of Linda Day-Mackessy, vice president of the Columbus YMCA, reported ONN's Jim Heath.

"All the childcare providers were bracing for a 15 percent cut so we are very thankful that none of the children who are on the state subsidy program will be cut from the program," said Day-Mackessy.

Mackessy said Kasich's budget does call for a 7 percent cut, but she said that it's manageable.

"We are working with the department to try to minimize the cut to providers and look at some rules and regulations that are just paperwork and may save the providers money," she said.

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Director Michael Colbert said the administration made his agency a priority.

"The childhood care program is smaller, but with those fewer dollars we are able to maintain all children that are on childcare will be able to stay on childcare," said Colbert.

While children already on the program will not be affected, future eligibility will be reduced. The nearly 4,000 statewide providers will be paid 7 percent less in the Kasich budget.

The total state funding drops from \$134 million to \$123 million.

Still, Mackessy said it could have been worse.

"There was a lot of relief when we heard families could stay on the program, absolutely," she told ONN-TV.

While there is a 7 percent cut overall, representatives of the YMCA point out no child currently on the program will be affected.

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