

## **Parents Get Ahead of Lead with New Supports**

*Families of preschool age children minimize the legacy of lead with Bright Beginnings*

**Independence, OH (Cuyahoga) January 19, 2023** — Parents of preschool age children with elevated blood lead levels do not have to face the challenge alone. Bright Beginnings' new [Parent Support Lead Program](#) empowers parents of children 3 to 5 years old with education, cleaning supplies, nutrition aids, developmental screenings, school preparedness information, and linkages to services to mitigate the impact of lead exposure. Children under age three can get services through the Early Intervention program.

“Because of rapid growth and brain development occurring in early childhood, children under the age of 6 are the most vulnerable to the detrimental impacts of lead on the body. While there may be a feeling that ‘lead poisoning’ is a problem of the past, it remains a reality for many Cuyahoga families,” said Maggie VanDyne MA, LPCC, Parent Support Supervisor at Bright Beginnings.

In 2021, JAMA Pediatrics reported that children in Cuyahoga County are exposed to lead at twice the rate of the national average. Case Western Reserve University's 2019 study found 25% of kindergarteners in Cleveland public schools had elevated lead exposure, with some classes having over 40% of the students affected. Individuals living in the City of Cleveland are at some of the greatest risk as a vast majority of housing stock was built prior to 1978, when lead paints were outlawed for use. Exposure to lead may result in life long impacts on an individual's health, behavioral functioning and learning abilities.

The Parent Support Lead Program at Bright Beginnings addresses the specific concerns of parents with personalized service plans. Service plans focus on supporting the families'

understanding of the developmental impact of lead and outline service offerings to reduce ongoing lead exposure and encourage strategies known to promote positive child development. Service offerings may include special efforts around nutritional changes to mitigate the absorption of lead into a child's blood stream, aiding families in maintaining lead safe spaces in their homes or providing families with developmental activities for children and helping with access to early education.

Individualized supports and early action are hallmarks of the Parent Support Lead Program that serves the residents of Cuyahoga County. Those concerned about potential lead exposure or wondering how to react to a positive test, can access support through the [program's webpage](#) where they can refer themselves or someone they know. They can also contact Bright Beginnings by phone at 216-798-7500. Families of eligible children under 3 years of age may also receive these supports through Early Intervention services at Bright Beginnings.

The Parent Support Lead Program at Bright Beginnings is supported by the Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood/Invest in Children. Bright Beginnings supports families of young children through Parent Support and Early Intervention services in Cuyahoga County, and provides connections to the Help Me Grow system of supports and community resources throughout Ohio.

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**For more information, press only:**

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**For more information on Product:** <http://www.escneo.org/ParentSupportLeadProgram>