



# Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities

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## 2023 Annual Report



***We believe all children have a right  
to a meaningful and relevant education.***



### **Vision Statement:**

To ensure Ohioans receive quality public education so their future is not limited by their disability.

### **Mission Statement:**

The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities is a collaboration of parents, professionals, and partners advocating for children with disabilities to receive the educational services, experiences, and supports they need to reach their fullest potential.

### **Values Statements:**

We value:

- the dignity of each individual.
- the right of each child with a disability to be an authentic, included, and respected member of the community.
- the development of each child with a disability in the areas of self-advocacy and self-determination.
- the engagement of empowered families and dedicated professionals in the processes of developing and delivering high quality free and appropriate public education for children with disabilities, including child-find, transition, and 504/ADA.
- the power of our collective voice in advocating for the resources needed for high quality education for children with disabilities.
- the strength of our partnerships with families, professionals and organizations in ensuring positive outcomes for children with disabilities.
- the impact of considering the needs of children with disabilities in all educational decision-making.
- the impact and effectiveness of both quantitative and qualitative data.
- the commitment to a culture of respect, diversity, integrity, and transparency for both those for whom and with whom we work.

### **Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities**

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## Dear Parents, Policymakers, and other Professionals,

I am pleased to present the 2023 Annual Report for the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD). During 2023, OCECD continued the practice we began in 2022 of utilizing both old and new methods, by providing both in-person offerings and virtual offerings in abundance to best meet the needs of our families, youth, and professionals. As we see it, this process of pivoting, adapting, adjusting, and then permanency in our operations demonstrates how much our staff care about those they serve and the work they do.

OCECD continued to offer support and services in a variety of ways throughout 2023. In addition to our in-person and virtual trainings to families and professionals in areas throughout the state, we continued to offer strong statewide trainings to increase knowledge in the special education process. We increased our selection of on-demand offerings available for individuals to participate in, at their convenience. Coalition staff connected and met with families through various modalities, offering support, resources, information, assistance, and attendance at meetings. We released four high quality newsletters, on the topics of Transition, Mental Health, a two-part series on Back-to-School Tips, and Behavior. We also issued a tip sheet on Medical Diagnosis vs. Educational Eligibility. And, OCECD joined the 21<sup>st</sup> century and now has an app! Throughout this year, as always, our staff continued to meet the needs of parents, families, students, and professionals in the most effective ways possible. Our staff are committed to always working to ensure that families in their area receive the support that they need, and for their efforts I am grateful.

Throughout this report, you will read and learn about the hard work of our staff, demonstrated by the activities and support OCECD provided to parents, family members, students, and professionals during the 2023 year. Our staff had contact, including direct contact, and provided services to 452,486 parents, family members, professionals, and others. OCECD provided training workshops to 8,511 individuals. In 2023, 39,725 individuals reached us through social media posts and engagement. The 251,390 page views of the OCECD website this year continue to show that the Coalition is a known and trusted source of information. In addition, staff processed 138,793 contacts through calls, letters, text, and emails. Just like other years, 2023 was an active and dynamic year for Coalition staff!

As always, the support and guidance of the OCECD Governing Board have been central to our staff's success in their service and assistance to families and professionals. In 2023, the Coalition staff were supported by 35 member organizations, individual members, parents, families, and professionals. We are grateful for the strength and encouragement of our Board, which allows our staff to do the work that they do. Through engagement and collaboration with our families, schools, and professionals we strive to bring good outcomes for Ohio's students with disabilities. [From my perspective, based on our numbers this year which are shared in this report, the activities we have undertaken, and the feedback we have received, we have made significant strides in advancing our mission and enhancing the impact of our programs and support to families.](#) As I stated last year in my letter, collaboration is essential to OCECD's success. This group of committed and dedicated individuals, comprised of staff, board members, stakeholders, parents, and others, makes possible the continued strength of our organization in its untiring work with families and professionals, so that every child with disabilities in Ohio is provided a free and appropriate public education.

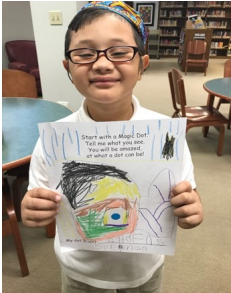
With gratitude, we thank all who support us, and we continue to be committed to serving those who need us, in the manner that best meets their needs. I invite you to review our 2023 Annual Report and reflect on the collective efforts to support our parents, families, students, and professionals, engaged in day-in and day-out throughout the year. Once again, we are humbled by the trust put in OCECD and will continue with our efforts, looking toward 2024 and the future beyond.

Sincerely,



Lisa Hickman  
Executive Director, OCECD

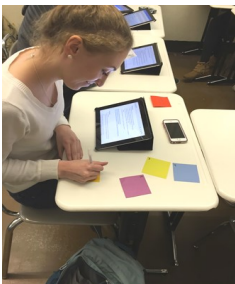
# About OCECD



Established in 1972, the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD) is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the educational interests of children with disabilities. OCECD promotes efforts to provide appropriate quality education for children and youth with disabilities, and to insure that public policy and school reform efforts always consider best practices for students with disabilities.

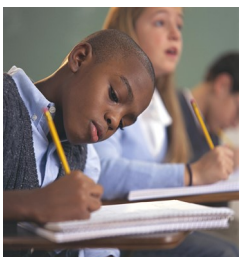


OCECD is composed of over 35 parent and professional organizations representing over 50,000 individuals, as well as individual members. Staff across Ohio collaborate with local parent support organizations to offer information, training and support to parents of children with any disability ages birth through 26.



OCECD's experienced staff, many of whom have children or other family members with disabilities, are available to assist individuals or groups with information about:

- Early intervention for infants and toddlers to age 3
- Preschool special education services for ages 3 through 5
- Family support systems
- Special Education in public and community schools
- Resources for parents and professionals
- Free trainings for parents and professionals in Ohio on educational topics
- Teamwork between family members of children with disabilities and service providers
- Community-based services
- Transition from high school to employment/college in the community



Tools used by OCECD to provide assistance include:

- Phone support
- One-on-one consultation
- Individual presentations and trainings
- Group presentations and training/workshop sessions
- "It's My Turn" and Goals Planning Success (GPS) are self-determination transition trainings. These student focused trainings are designed to increase the capacity of youth with disabilities to make choices and to advocate for themselves.
- Bilingual OCECD materials including booklets about Evaluation, IEP, 504, ADHD, Rights, Transition, etc.
- Mentoring 4 Reading Achievement Program (M4RA): 1:1 Reading Mentoring for students reading below grade level
- All About Reading Mentoring Training – train family members/childcare providers how to mentor children in reading
- Quarterly newsletter on various special education topics
- An informational website describing OCECD's services, schedule of trainings and conferences, resources and links to other helpful special education resources and organizations
- Parent training modules on our website
- Facebook page and Facebook Live presentations on special education topics
- An informational website describing OCECD's services, schedule of trainings and conferences, resources and links to other helpful special education resources and organizations.

As a state-level organization, OCECD is an important policy development organization deeply committed to working with the state legislature, the Office of the Governor, and state agencies on legislative and policy issues of importance to Ohio's children with disabilities.

OCECD is a non-profit organization and has 501 (c) 3 tax-exempt status.

# Ohio Coalition Membership Profile

OCECD serves multiple audiences, and is at the intersection between ***Parents, Pupils, Policymakers and Professionals***. As a federally funded Parent Training and Information Center, OCECD is responsible for providing information, training and assistance to parents of children with disabilities throughout Ohio.

OCECD has 3 types of members: statewide member organizations, regional member organizations and individual members. Corporate patrons also support the organization.

**Statewide Member Organizations:** Organizations whose membership and activities encompass the State of Ohio, and whose goals and purposes are harmonious with those of the OCECD, may be Statewide Member Organizations.

## **Statewide Member Organizations include:**

Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (OACBDD)

Ohio Association of Pupil Services Administrators (OAPSA)

Ohio Educational Service Center Association (OESCA)

Ohio Occupational Therapy Association (OOTA)

Ohio School Psychologists Association (OSPA)

Ohio School Speech Pathology Educational Audiology Coalition (OSSPEAC)

The ARC of Ohio

**Regional Member Organizations:** Organizations functioning within the State of Ohio (but not statewide), whose goals and purposes are harmonious with those of OCECD, and the majority of whose members are parents of children and youth

with disabilities, persons with disabilities or professionals involved in related areas, may be Regional Member Organizations.

## **Regional Member Organizations include:**

Achievement Centers for Children

Allen County Educational Service Center

Autism Society Central Ohio

Brown County Educational Service Center

International Dyslexia Association Central Ohio

Center for Disability Empowerment

Central Ohio Region Parent Mentors

Down Syndrome Association Central Ohio

Mercer County Educational Service Center

Milestones Autism Resources

Montgomery County Educational Service Center

NAMI Franklin County, Inc.

North Central Ohio Educational Service Center

Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center

Northwest Ohio Parent Mentors

North Point Educational Service Center

State Support Team (SST) Region 1

State Support Team (SST) Region 2

Warren County Educational Service Center

Western Buckeye Educational Service Center

In addition to these organizational members, over 400 parent and professional individuals, whose goals and purposes are harmonious with those of OCECD, are full members of OCECD and may attend Governing Board meetings and receive publications and other services.

All members and member organizations support the organization both fiscally and through volunteer efforts.



# How is OCECD Organized?



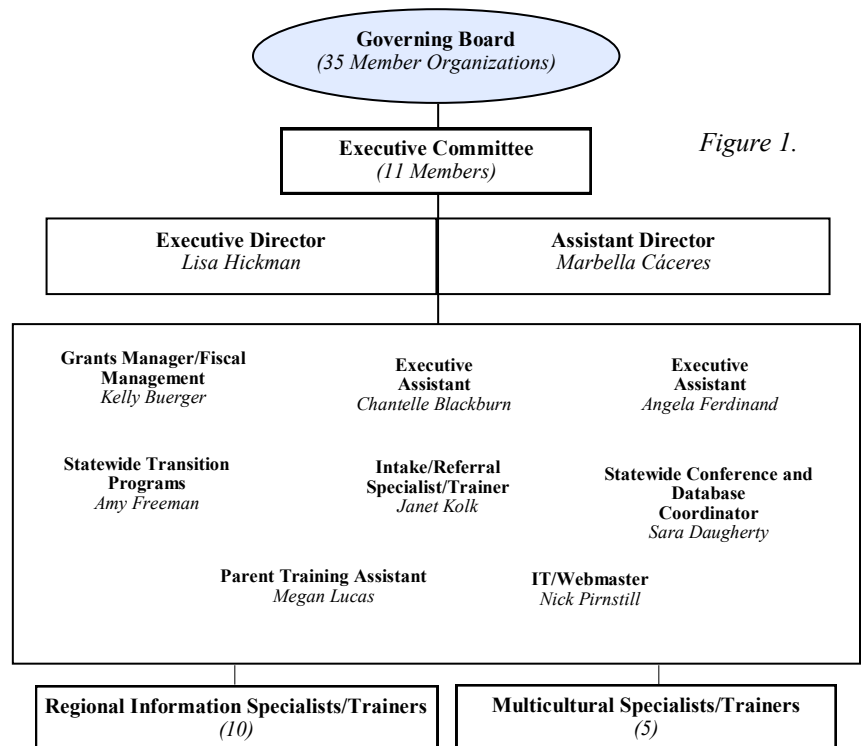
**Dr. Lisa Hickman, Executive Director**

## Governance and Management

OCECD is overseen by a Governing Board composed of representatives of 35 organizations. The Governing Board is the policy making body of OCECD, with each statewide member organization having two representatives, and each regional organization having one representative. Each representative has one vote. An Executive Committee comprised of eleven members elected by the Governing Board reviews and directs fiscal and personnel matters (see Figure 1).

The following individuals served on the OCECD Executive Committee in 2023:

William Bagnola, President  
 Dee Marks, Vice-President  
 Jack Brownley, Past President  
 Christine France, Treasurer  
 Frances Bauer Morrow, Secretary  
 Donna Stelzer, Statewide Organization  
 Lindsey Campbell-Althaus, Regional  
 Organization  
 Ginny Bryan, Parent Representative  
 Mia Buchwald Gelles, Parent  
 Representative  
 Cathy Ruiz, Parent Repr.  
 Judson Dunham, Parent Repr.  
 Lisa Hickman, OCECD  
 Marbella Cáceres, OCECD



## OCECD Staff, Programs, and Services

In addition to its governance structure, OCECD is managed on a daily basis by an Executive Director. Additionally, the Coalition is served by experienced staff comprised of parents, family members of children or adults with disabilities, educators, and medical personnel.

OCECD's experienced staff members are available to assist individuals or groups with such areas as:

**Public Policy in Education** – OCECD serves a voice for professionals, families and, most importantly, children with disabilities at the federal, state and local levels,.

**Educational Resources and Informational Materials** – OCECD provides the latest information and resources for families and professionals through the OCECD website, training and issue-related seminars, and more.

**Family Support Services** – OCECD's experienced staff provides a broad array of family support services from disability identification and intervention to one-on-one consultation, trainings and community based services and transition.



### 2023 Policy and Program Analysis, Education and Advocacy

OCECD supports federal, state, and local educational policies and practices that improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

**Federal Level** – OCECD followed efforts at the federal level on the following educational issues, providing input and information regarding how these affected Ohio parents and students with disabilities:

- Mandatory full funding of IDEA
- Parents' rights
- Improved educational results
- Early Childhood Education
- School Discipline
- Disproportionality

**State Level** – During the past year, OCECD closely followed state education policy priorities, providing information and input on bills and the impact on students with disabilities.

## **Special Education Policy Recap: 2023 and the 135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. (CY 2023-2024)**

### **National Trends**

State Government is responsible for carrying out a number of important functions. Chief among them is the appropriation of resources to support the delivery of essential services like primary and secondary education, including special education. This is an authority vested in state legislatures, and legislature across the country have been busy in 2023. According to data from the Education Commission of the States, 176 K-12 education finance bills were introduced and passed in state legislatures across the country in the 2023 legislative session year. Of those bills, 31 (18%) were passed and enacted dealing with special populations including students with disabilities.

Seventeen states passed one measure (Arkansas, California, Connecticut, D.C., Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, and Wyoming). Five states passed two bills each (Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Washington). And Nevada passed four separate appropriations measures impacting special populations.

In Connecticut, for example, the budget included \$25 million in additional Special Education funding in each year, \$48 million in fiscal 2024 and \$96 million in fiscal 2025 to continue the Education Cost Sharing formula phase-in, and \$150 million in fiscal 2025 for Education Finance Reform. Similarly, the state of Nevada budget allocated \$6.1 billion in fiscal 2024 and \$6.3 billion in fiscal 2025 for K-12 education and fully funds the weights of the funding formula, increasing per pupil funding for English language learners, at-risk students, and gifted and talented students, while allocating an additional \$23 million in special education funding.





Finance bills can also serve as vehicles for substantive policy changes. This was evident in both Michigan and Washington states as leading examples. In Michigan, Senate Bill 173 increased special education funding by \$310.3 million. This substantial increase was due, in large part, to changing the calculation for special education cost estimates and reducing the amount of special education students' foundation allowance counts towards special education costs. The budget also increased funding for economically disadvantaged students by \$204.5 million by revising the opportunity index weights to range between an additional 35% to 47%. Lastly, the Michigan legislature increased funding for English language learners by approximately \$13.3 million.

Likewise, Washington state made significant policy changes, via House Bill 1436, that increased special education excess cost multipliers in the state funding formula for preschool through age 21 beginning in the 2023-2024 school year. The weights were increased for K-21 students who spend at least 80% of the school day in general education setting to 1.12; for K-21 students who spend less than 80% of the school day in general education setting to 1.06; and for pre-kindergarten students to 1.2. The bill also increased the enrollment limit from 13.5% to 15% of students who can be identified a special education. Importantly, the bill reduced the threshold for high-need individuals to access a special education "safety net" to 2.2 times the average per pupil expenditure for districts with more than 1,000 students and 2.0 times the average for districts with less than 1,000 students. These changes were estimated to increase special education funding by an additional \$177 million from the state and \$177 million from local districts in 2023 to 2025.

So, how does Ohio compare?

## **Ohio Budget Changes for Special Education**

In 2023, Ohio implemented significant changes in state policy and funding that directly affect students with disabilities receiving special education services. These changes encompass legislative adjustments, funding modifications, and program developments aimed at enhancing educational opportunities and support for this student population.

HB 33, the FY 2024-2025 state operating budget passed in 2023, increases state spending on public k-12 education to \$8.06 billion in fiscal year 2024 and nearly \$8.3 billion in fiscal year 2025. This represents a continued "phase-in" of the previous budget's "Fair School Funding Plan." By advancing and updating the state's school funding formula, HB 33 produces a significant collective increase in funding for Traditional School Districts, Joint Vocational School Districts, Community schools, and STEM schools, totaling approximately \$1.18 billion from fiscal year 2023 to fiscal year 2024.

Other significant policy and funding changes in H.B. 33 impacting special education included the following:

***Autism Scholarship Program Expansion.*** The Ohio Autism Scholarship Program has been expanded to allow more students to qualify for the scholarship. Starting October 3, 2023, students can qualify for the Autism Scholarship, per Ohio Revised Code 3310.41, if they are identified as autistic by their school district, diagnosed with pervasive developmental disorder—not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), or have an IEP that includes services related to autism. The budget updates the program to allow schools to utilize behavior analysts as providers for intervention services, and expands student eligibility to students without an Autism-related IEP—as long as the student has an Autism diagnosis or their school district has identified them with Autism per the Department of Education and Workforce.

***JPSN scholarship maximum amounts.*** The Jon Peterson Scholarship provides families with special needs students that have an IEP with a scholarship that helps cover the cost of tuition at private schools, along with the services the student’s IEP requires. In general, a JPSN scholarship is calculated as the sum of a base amount and an amount for the student’s disability category, subject to a cap. The budget increases the base amount from \$6,414 to \$7,190 in FY 2024 and FY 2025 and increases the amounts for each disability category and the capped amount in each fiscal year of the biennium so that a scholarship may not exceed \$30,000 in FY 2024 and \$32,445 in FY 2025, up from \$27,000 in FY 2023.

***Choice Accountability.*** Prevents schools from mandating income verification for families receiving traditional EdChoice, Jon Peterson, Autism, or Cleveland scholarships.

***Student Health and Wellness.*** The state budget bill provides for additional parameters related to student wellness and success funds, and includes several new student health and wellness initiatives including a requirement that districts spend 50% of their student wellness and success funds on physical or mental health-based initiatives and must develop a plan to use these funds. Any funds from fiscal year 2020 to fiscal year 2023 must be spent by the end of fiscal year 2025 or these funds will need to be repaid to ODEW.

***Seizure plans.*** School districts are now required to create an individualized seizure action plan for each student with an active seizure disorder diagnosis. Designated school employees must develop a seizure action plan for affected students and provide training on the plan to relevant staff. Likewise, Districts must ensure that at least one staff person in each building is trained in such plans every two years. Additionally, district administrators, school counselors, teachers and bus drivers must complete training in the bill’s new requirements.

***Special Education Transportation.*** School districts are required to provide transportation as a related service to students with disabilities who live in the district but attend a nonpublic school if transportation is provided for in the student’s IEP.

***Reading & English Language Arts.*** A significant focus of the state budget bill in terms of student learning addresses student reading and the implementation of the science of reading. Below is a summary of key provisions:

- The student retention portion of the third grade reading guarantee has been removed. A student may be promoted to 4th grade if the parent/guardian consults with the reading teacher and principal, but the student must continue to receive reading intervention services.
- ODEW is required to compile a list of high-quality core curriculum and instructional materials in English language arts and evidence-based reading intervention programs that are aligned with the science of reading.
- The required completion date for dyslexia professional development for all teachers has been clarified in the bill. Teachers hired after April 12, 2021, must complete the required training by the later of two years after the date of hire or the dates prescribed for teachers hired before April 12, 2021, unless the training was already completed while employed by a different school district.
- Also included in the bill are additional clarifications of when a tier one dyslexia screening needs to be administered based upon the student's history and the timing of their enrollment in the school district. Specifically, screening must be completed for transfer students enrolled in kindergarten during the regular scheduled screening or within 30 days after the student's enrollment or a parent/guardian requests or grants permission for the screening. Additionally, screening must be completed for transfer students enrolled in grades 1-6 within 30 days after a student's enrollment, if so required, or a parent/guardian requests or grants permission for the screening.

***Funding for Special Education.*** Ohio's funding formula for special education has been updated to provide increased funding for specific categories of students, including those with disabilities. The formula retained multipliers applied to the base amount for students with disabilities, ranging from 1.2535 to 4.9554, depending on the category of disability. Catastrophic aid is also available for certain high-cost special education needs. How catastrophic aid is funded changed in the budget. "Catastrophic" costs are no longer reflected in the special education budget. Rather, 10% of the total special education funding amount is held back for these purposes. Schools can continue to seek additional costs of services that exceed the category's funding threshold, but they will no longer be identified as "catastrophic" costs. It is anticipated that this change is more in the name than in the actual amount of funding received.

***Transfer of early childhood programs to Department of Children and Youth.*** The budget creates the new Department of Children and Youth (DCY), pulling together several child-focused programs and services from various state agencies into a single cabinet department. Among these are ODEW's Office of Early Learning and School Readiness, which administers state and federal funding for early childhood education (ECE) and childcare licensing. The Ohio Department of Children and Youth Services will assume most of the oversight of preschool education. A full transfer of duties is expected by January 1, 2025.

## Other Legislative & Administrative Developments

Other, non-budgetary, policy changes in 2023 included the implementation of Dyslexia Screening and Education Requirements. Ohio has introduced new requirements for the screening and education of students with dyslexia. Starting in the 2023-2024 school year, all school districts are mandated to develop a structured literacy program that includes explicit, systematic, research-based reading instruction methods. Additionally, there will be a requirement for universal dyslexia screening for all students in kindergarten through third grade, with provisions for screening students in grades 4-6 upon request. Professional development related to dyslexia will be required for literacy teachers and special education teachers as well.

## Other Education Bills in 2023

Overall, 71 education-focused bills have been introduced thus far in the 2023-2024 legislative session. Of those, only 3, including the biennial state operating budget discussed above, have been passed into law. Those bills include the following:

***SB 17*** – To incorporate free market capitalism content into the high school financial literacy and entrepreneurship standards and model curriculum and with regard to financial literacy course credit and license validation.

***HB 68*** – To enact the Saving Ohio Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act regarding gender transition services for minors, and to enact the Save Women's Sports Act to require schools, state institutions of higher education, and private colleges to designate separate single-sex teams and sports for each sex.

***HB 33*** – The biennial state operating budget, which funds state government operations including education for FY 2024-2026.

Of the bills introduced in 2023, that are still pending action, one included provisions directly impacting students with disabilities:

***HB 266*** – the bill would require school districts and schools to update emergency management plans to include evacuation procedures for individuals with disabilities

Also of note is a bill that was passed in the last General Assembly in 2022, but became effective in 2023. The Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill (HB) 554 in the final days of the last General Assembly. Among other things, the bill changed the definition of “child with a disability” under Ohio law, increasing the maximum age of students who are eligible for services under that category. One of the categories of students who are entitled to special education is students with developmental delays. The law formerly included any “child who is at least three years of age and less than six years of age” who was experiencing developmental delays as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures. These delays can occur in a child’s physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development. Children with developmental delays may qualify for special education and related services. Under the new law, effective April 6, 2023, a child with a developmental delay can qualify as a child with a disability under that category until their tenth birthday.

## OHIO COALITION FOR THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES TRAINING DESCRIPTIONS

### **Early Childhood and School Age Trainings – Designed for Families of Children Ages Birth to 26**

**A Cultural Perspective on Special Education** – Participants will gain an understanding about various cultures, and how to communicate effectively.

**A Guide for Parents and Educators of Deaf or Hearing Impaired Children** – Participants will learn the different types of hearing loss and how they affect individuals in their educational and social environments. Early detection screening, audiograms and technology used to identify and support those with hearing loss will be presented. Parents will learn strategies to work with their deaf/hearing impaired children and suggestions for accommodations that can be written into their child's IEP.

**All About Reading** – Participants will learn the basic foundational steps needed to learn to read. Rhyme, rhythm, pictures, phonemic awareness are discussed and applied with a hands-on approach. Story telling techniques will be demonstrated. How to recognize if a child is having difficulty reading and what some of the warning signs of a possible disability will also be discussed.

**All About Reading Mentoring** – Participants will gain a better understanding and knowledge of the foundation of literacy skills and be trained to use evidence-based materials to mentor their child or student. 30-minute mentoring session through role play and learning to use materials from M4RA.org and Readinga-z.com websites.

**Autism Awareness** – Participants will be informed about the current diagnostic criteria for the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Discussion will address Individual Education Program (IEP) goals along with strategies and possible methodologies for educating children identified on the Autistic Spectrum. A comparison between services received through the Autism Scholarship Program and public school IEP programs also will be discussed.

**Children Transitioning from Early Intervention to Preschool: What Parents Need to Know, Part 1** – Participants will be provided with information designed to prepare families for the change that takes place as their child leaves early intervention services for preschool services, upon turning three years of age. An overview of the differences between early intervention and preschool services, transition planning, timelines, evaluation process, and tips to help families have a smooth transition.

**Children Transitioning from Early Intervention to Preschool: What Parents Need to Know, Part 2** – Participants will learn about the eligibility determination process for preschool special education services, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for a preschooler, and the information considered when determining a child's placement in the least restrictive environment.

**Dispute Resolution** – Exploring Options to Resolve Concerns with your Child's School District - Participants will be provided with basic information about Ohio's Dispute Resolution Processes. Both formal and informal options will be reviewed. Information will be provided about Facilitation, Mediation, and Administrative Review. Basic differences between a state complaint and a due process complaint will be explored.

**Enriching the Learning Environment** – Participants will develop an awareness of the need and importance of a stimulating, rich environment for children. Discussion will include Howard Gardner's Eight Intelligences Theory, with examples of how to develop the various intelligences in children. (Written for parents of children ages 0 – 9)

**IEP Clinics** – Parents bring their child's IEP for an OCECD representative to review. Pre-registration appointments are scheduled to ensure sufficient time to review and discuss questions and concerns parents may have about their child's IEP. Parents will leave with a better understanding of their child's IEP and a plan on how to work with their schools in developing future IEPs.

**Individual Development** – Participants will review the developmental stages of a child's growth, with common characteristics and traits being discussed. Stages of brain development and how to stimulate dendrite growth are addressed along with the emotional and temperamental needs of children.

**It's My Turn** – It's My Turn training is a self-determination curriculum for students with disabilities in middle school through high school. Students will learn about themselves, the choices they have, becoming better self-advocates and how to be better prepared to enter the adult world as they transition from school to the community. Training is usually a 2- or 3-day event, on-site in the host school district building.

**Mentoring 4 Reading Achievement (M4RA)** – M4RA trains teachers and administrators to implement 1:1 reading mentoring for all students reading below a beginning 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. M4RA offers 1 full day of a free reading mentoring instruction session, 2 Resource Guide Books per school, and ongoing professional development. All public schools, private schools and organizations are eligible.

**My Child's Rights to FAPE & A System for Organizing Records** – This make-it and take-it workshop will assist participants in organizing records and documentation that pertain to their child's education and health needs. Discussion of parents' rights under IDEA 2004 and how the documentation can be used to assist parents in developing an IEP and how to work with other agencies will be presented.



**Parent/Professional Communication** – Participants will review basic communication methods, techniques, and styles to utilize when communicating with parents and professionals. Hands on activities will aid participants in gaining an understanding of the various types of communication, as well as developing listening skills and how they relate to good communication skills.

**Parent's Rights in the Special Education Process** – Participants will gain a functional knowledge of parent's rights under IDEA 2004. The six components of FAPE will be discussed and explained. Timelines under IDEA, as well as, the evaluation, referral and testing process will be covered. Participants also will learn the basic facts about mediation, ODE complaint procedures, resolution meetings and due process procedures.

**Positive Behavioral Interventions and IDEA 2004: Opportunities for Parenting and Teaching** – Participants will be informed of basic IDEA concepts and FAPE, discuss challenging behaviors, learn the fundamentals of addressing behaviors in IEPs, positive behavior services, supports and interventions. Parents and professionals will gain an understanding of what may cause undesirable behaviors, how to manage behaviors and interventions that really work to help make the child happier and more productive at home and in the learning environment.

**Postsecondary Transition** – Participants will gain an understanding of the importance of transition planning for youth with special needs. Discussion will focus on the requirements under IDEA 2004 for writing a transition plan, when the process should begin, timelines, and who is involved in writing the transition plan.

**Reducing Barriers Through Advocacy – Tips for Parents** – Participants will learn strategies that will enable them to become confident advocates for their child's special education needs. The parent's role before, during, and after the IEP meeting will be explored. Suggestions for recordkeeping and for effectively communicating with school district personnel will be discussed in detail.

**Section 504** – Participants will gain a functional knowledge of parents' rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and how this can assist children with disabilities in the educational environment. Participants will review the history behind Section 504, learn the requirements of writing a Section 504 Accommodation Plan, and learn the differences between an IEP and a Section 504 Accommodation Plan.

**Services and Supports** – Participants will gain an awareness of services and supports that are available to families of children with disabilities from local schools and from state and local agencies and how to determine what services and supports their child may need by developing an individualized education program (IEP).

**Taking the Sting Out of Behavior** – Participants will learn how to work with children to eliminate inappropriate behaviors and how to teach children skills necessary to self-monitor their actions. The difference between punishment and discipline will be discussed. The various types of behaviors and the techniques and methods for working with these behaviors will be presented.

**The Bull Stops Here: Understanding Bullying and What You Can Do to Help** – Participants will gain an understanding of the dynamics of bullying. The various types of bullying and common characteristics of children who are targeted and children who exhibit bullying behaviors will be explored. There will be discussion about ways to help a child who is a target, children who are bystanders, and the child who is exhibiting bully behavior. Cooperative approaches for parents and educators to address and prevent bullying will be discussed.

**Understanding AD/HD** – Participants will gain an understanding of the history of AD/HD and some statistics on the prevalence of AD/HD in the general population. Discussion about who is qualified to diagnose AD/HD, how it affects children in school and life, and various techniques and accommodations to support children at home and at school will be presented.

**Understanding the Evaluation Process Under IDEA 2004** – Participants will work through a step-by-step process to gain an understanding of the special education evaluation process under IDEA 2004. Participants will learn commonly used terminology. They will learn what an evaluation is, how to request an evaluation, and how to use the information included in the Evaluation Team Report. Frequently used evaluation tools will be discussed.

**Understanding and Writing an IEP** – Participants will gain an understanding of the IEP components and the documentation necessary to develop an IEP. Discussion will focus on who is required to be involved in the development of an IEP and what the parent and school roles are in the process. Each section of the IEP will be reviewed with an explanation of what information is required by IDEA 2004 and what needs to be recorded in the various IEP sections.

**Who We Are and What We Do** – Participants will gain an understanding of the history of the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities and what services and supports are offered to parents and professionals throughout the State of Ohio. Available OCECD trainings, materials and publications also are addressed.

**If you would like to schedule a training, contact:**  
**OCECD, 125 Executive Dr., Suite 200, Marion, OH 43302 • 1-844-382-5452**  
**1-740-382-5452 • FAX: 1-740-383-6421**

## Program Activities and Accomplishments

In an effort to actively guide development of its programs and services, OCECD is involved in data collection efforts that yielded the following results over the past year:

*In 2023, OCECD had contact, including direct contact, and provided services to 452,486 parents, professionals and others.*

- 8,511** Individuals attended OCECD training workshops – **1,936** were parents, **5,916** were professionals, and **659** were students.
- 138,793** Calls, letters, texts or e-mails were processed by OCECD – **91,558** were parents, **47,235** were professionals or others.
- 251,390** Page views of the OCECD website this year reveal the Coalition is a known and trusted source of information.
- 39,725** Families reached through social media posts and engagement.
- 14,067** Views, Likes, Follows of the OCECD Social Media pages.

OCECD staff has also attended **796 IEP/IFSP/Section 504 meetings**, **72 Facilitated IEP meetings**, **1,261 meetings with parents**, **6,649 meetings with professionals**, and **18 Mediation meetings**, **23 Manifestation Determinations**, **55 Resolutions**, and **20 Suspension/Expulsion meetings with families**.

Additionally, OCECD provided consultative services to individuals and families in the following disability categories:

Disability Category	Number Served
ADD/ADHD	3,068
Autism	4,681
Deaf-Blindness	99
Deaf-Hearing Impairment	1,739
Developmental Delay (Early Childhood)	573
Emotional Disturbance	1,214
Intellectual Disability	903
Multiple Disabilities	1,644
Orthopedic Impairment	26
Other Health Impairment	1,221
Specific Learning Disability	2,637
Speech or Language Impairment	1,066
Traumatic Brain Injury	93
Visual Impairment including Blindness	82
Suspected Disability/No IDEA Disab.	1,031
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,077</b>

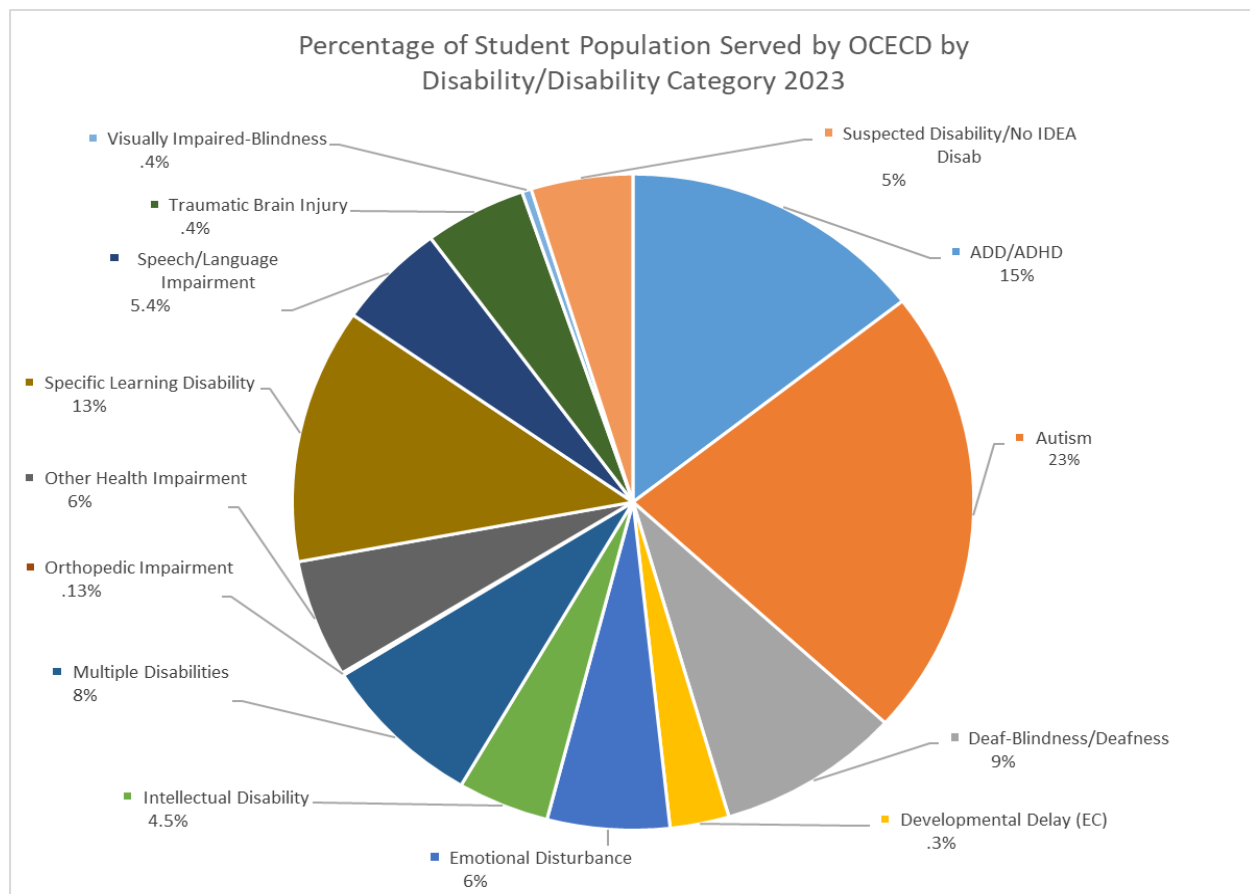
*This information is also displayed in the following chart (page 16), which highlights the individuals served by disability category.*

## Support Services

Support is provided to parents and families of children with disabilities throughout the state in the following ways:

- Information and trainings to help in the understanding of disabilities
- Early Intervention information and resources concerning infants and preschoolers
- Family support systems
- One-on-one consultation
- Special education information and training
- Connections/referrals with community-based services and agencies
- Transition trainings and information from middle school/high school to employment/college in the community
- Teamwork between persons with disabilities, their families, and service providers

***To deliver many of these services, OCECD often collaborates with an extensive network of parent mentors to assist families.*** In Ohio, there are 81 Parent Mentor Projects, which provide services to districts or Educational Service Centers across the state. Parent Mentors, who are experienced parents of a child or children with a disability, are employed by public educational entities through a grant by the Ohio Department of Education. Within the 81 funded projects, there are 90 Parent Mentors who are hired to support a specific district/s or Educational Service Center/s. Two Parent Mentors from the Ohio School for the Deaf and the Ohio State School for the Blind serve all 88 counties. In addition to these grant funded projects and Parent Mentors, there are 7 self-funded projects (district self-funded) that support 8 Parent Mentors. Parent Mentors receive technical support from The Ohio State University's Center on Education and Training for Employment (CETE). In addition to their other responsibilities, Parent Mentors also serve as liaisons between families and school district personnel to foster positive working relationships between parents and educators. OCECD works in collaboration with the network of Parent Mentors and school district representatives by providing resources/information and professional development when requested. As allied entities, with the same goal of helping parents, we collaborate when opportunities arise.



*(Information in this report does not include the many services provided throughout the year by the network of Parent Mentors. This report reflects only services provided directly by OCECD.)*

## PLANEО

### Padres Latinos Asociados por los Niños Especiales de Ohio and AMIGAS

**PLANEО** is an empowerment group for any Latino or Spanish speaking family in the state of Ohio who has a child with disabilities or who is at risk. Parents take part in trainings and workshops where they are provided information about the resources and supports which are available to them in their community. This contributes to their ability to better advocate for their children in the special education process.

**AMIGAS** is an encouragement and support group for any Latina woman who has a child with disabilities or who is at risk. This group's goal is to help women to be aware of, and bring down, the stigma of mental health conditions. The means of achieving this goal is by providing training and support to strengthen their self-esteem, resulting in the participants being better prepared to help their children and themselves. This group has been a collaboration between the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities and the NAMI Franklin County chapter since 2010.

As a result of Covid, the format of the meetings was altered to a virtual format to lessen the risks and to meet the changes that were taking place. The groups were subsequently merged into one and began to meet virtually. This format has proved to be convenient for attendees, resulting in a successful program for the Latino community. The combined groups meet via Zoom on Tuesdays at 7:00 pm, and twice every Thursday, with the choice of either a 10 am or 7 pm session, to accommodate the schedules of those who desire to participate. The focus of these sessions is on training, support, building connections with local community agencies, and helping parents improve their special education knowledge, self-esteem, motivation, organization, and empowerment. These sessions aid parents in becoming better equipped to advocate for their children, while at the same time helping them to be more self-assertive and engaged in their children's education to improve the quality of their lives. These meetings have proven to be very engaging, with over 423 people being served last year.

These weekly meetings provide participants from the multicultural community with information, education, and motivation to understand themselves, consider their family dynamics, and become more knowledgeable about their community, and thus be better equipped to help their children succeed in life. Each meeting consists of a talk followed by discussions with the participants, as well as a hands-on workshop in which the participants learn to put into practice practical applications in their lives. Those who take part in these meetings feel empowered to not only support their children, but are better equipped to deal with other challenges in their lives.

**¡TE INVITAMOS!**  
a participar a todos los padres por medio  
de **zoom** a talleres para rescatar tu  
Autoestima y ayudar a tus hijo con  
necesidades especiales.

**PRESENTADORA: SORAYA ALCALÁ**  
Periodista Multimedia, Columnista Sindical, Locutora, Escritora y Conferencista.  
Mas de 20 años de experiencia como reportera, editora, fundadora de Estilos Media,  
y autora del programa copyright A.M.O.R.

**A.M.O.R.**  
Autoestima | Motivación | Organización | Resultados

- Encuentra un balance en tu vida con Autoestima, Motivación, Organización, Resultados.
- Con A.M.O.R. podrás lograr un cambio de actitud, reforzando tu confianza.
- Atrévete a descubrir tu potencial y conviértete en una persona empoderada con A.M.O.R

**Regístrate Ahora**  
Contactar a: Iliana Martinez 614-999-6717





## Horn/Walter/Burley Awards

The **Horn/Walter/Burley Awards** are presented in honor of two outstanding Ohio educators, the late Raymond A. Horn and the late Franklin B. Walter, who supported and encouraged teachers and their students with disabilities throughout their long careers as educational leaders in Ohio. In 2018, Margaret Burley's name was added to the awards, to honor her outstanding work as Director of OCECD. For the past several years, OCECD has collaborated with partner organizations, Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA), Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (OACBDD), Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA), and Ohio Educational Service Center Association (OESCA). The Horn/Walter/Burley 2020 –2022 in-person awards banquets were cancelled due to Covid. Their awards were mailed to the SSTs to present to their nominees. All recipients received their photo/scripts by mail.

The **Franklin B. Walter Award** is given to one educator or one educator team from each of the sixteen State Support Teams in Ohio who has made extraordinary contributions to the education of students with disabilities. This award is given in honor of the late Dr. Franklin B. Walter, Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1977 until 1991, longer than any other state superintendent in Ohio history. With over 50 years of service as a teacher and administrator, Dr. Walter's leadership is evident in many of Ohio's quality educational initiatives and programs. Among these is the development of the nation's first statewide plan for children with disabilities.

The **R. A. Horn Award** is presented to one exemplary special education student from each of Ohio's sixteen State Support Team regions. This award was established twenty-six years ago by the Ohio Department of Education in honor of the late Dr. Raymond A. Horn, Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction Emeritus. This prestigious award recognizes students' remarkable performance. Acknowledged as a national leader in the field of special education, Dr. Horn devoted more than 60 years of service to improving the quality of life and learning for students with disabilities. Dr. Horn left behind a legacy and a challenge to all of us to ensure that every student with a disability be given the respect and the opportunities to which each one is entitled.

The **Margaret M. Burley Outstanding Parent Award** is given to a parent who has made a significant impact in the area of special needs through unwavering dedication and support for families. Margaret Burley is Executive Director Emeritus of the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, having served as Executive Director for 39 years. Since 1979, Margaret expanded the organization from five parent and professional organizations, working out of her home with no money or staff to assist her, to an over \$2.5 million budget. Under her leadership, the Coalition was able to attract funding through state and federal entities, as well as donations from numerous individuals and organizations. Margaret directed public policy and research for OCECD, and is known nationally for her work in the special education field since 1972. Tom, her son, the youngest of four children, has multiple disabilities from Congenital Rubella Syndrome.

### *Some of the Recipients of the 2023 Horn/Walter/Burley Awards*



***Falcon Factory Teaching  
Team SST 9 - FBW***



***Rebekah Witkowski  
SST 1 - FBW***



***Keystone Elementary  
School Team SST 2-FBW***



***Delaney Hagan  
SST 4 - RAH***



***Zayne Mammoudeh  
SST 8 - RAH***



***Gabriel Dancer  
SST 10 - RAH***



***Amya Guisinger  
SST 16 - RAH***



***Mia Buchwald Gelles  
MMB Parent Award***



## OCECD Financial Profile for Calendar Year 2023

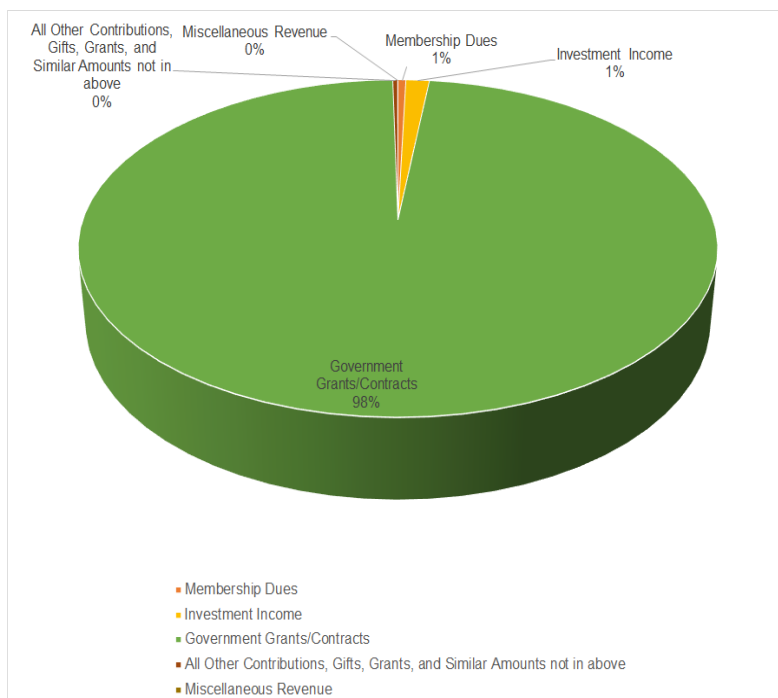
OCECD is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit organization and serves as a federally funded Parent Training and Information Center.

The organization receives its funding support through four primary sources: a) membership dues; b) investment income; c) public funds as grants/contracts; and d) other contributions, gifts, private grants, and/or donations. This section of the annual report provides a review of the revenue and expenditures for the Coalition for calendar 2023 – January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 – as reported in its draft Form 990 federal tax filing for 2023.

In calendar year 2023, OCECD generated \$2,431,981 in revenue, with \$2,379,076 coming from government grants. In addition to grant funds, the Coalition received \$11,448 in membership dues and \$33,986 in investment income. A breakdown of the calendar year 2023 revenue sources is provided in the table below.

### Total Calendar Year 2023 Revenue

Membership Dues.....	\$11,448
Investment Income.....	\$33,986
Government Grants/Contracts.....	\$2,379,076
All Other Contributions, Gifts, Grants, and Similar Amounts not in above.....	\$7,127
Asset Net Gain.....	(\$0)
Miscellaneous Revenue .....	\$344
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$2,431,981</b>



\$11,448	Membership Dues
\$33,986	Investment Income
\$2,379,076	Government Grants/Contracts
\$7,127	All Other Contributions, Gifts, Grants, and Similar Amounts not in above
\$344	Miscellaneous Revenue
\$0	Asset Net Gain

## Calendar Year 2023 Expenditure Profile

Consistent with IRS Form 990, the Coalition's expenditures all relate to the purchase of goods and services (including staff) that advance the mission of OCECD including:

- Meeting the requirements of the federal grant dollars used by the Coalition
- Delivery of member services
- Advancing an education and advocacy agenda
- Administrative purposes

The Coalition spends 97% of the dollars it receives meeting the requirements of the grants pursuant to the contracts and the law including, among other things, trainings, conferences, printing and publications. Additionally, OCECD provides membership and support services, including resource materials and advocacy services. The breakdown of the Coalition's 2023 calendar year expenses is provided in greater detail below. As a federal grantee, an audit is performed by HW & Co., CPA & Advisors as required by the Single Audit, Office of Budget and Management, Washington D.C. for federal grantees receiving more than \$750,000 per year. The 2023 Audit was presented and board approved on September 24, 2024, prior to the final audit being received by HW & Co.

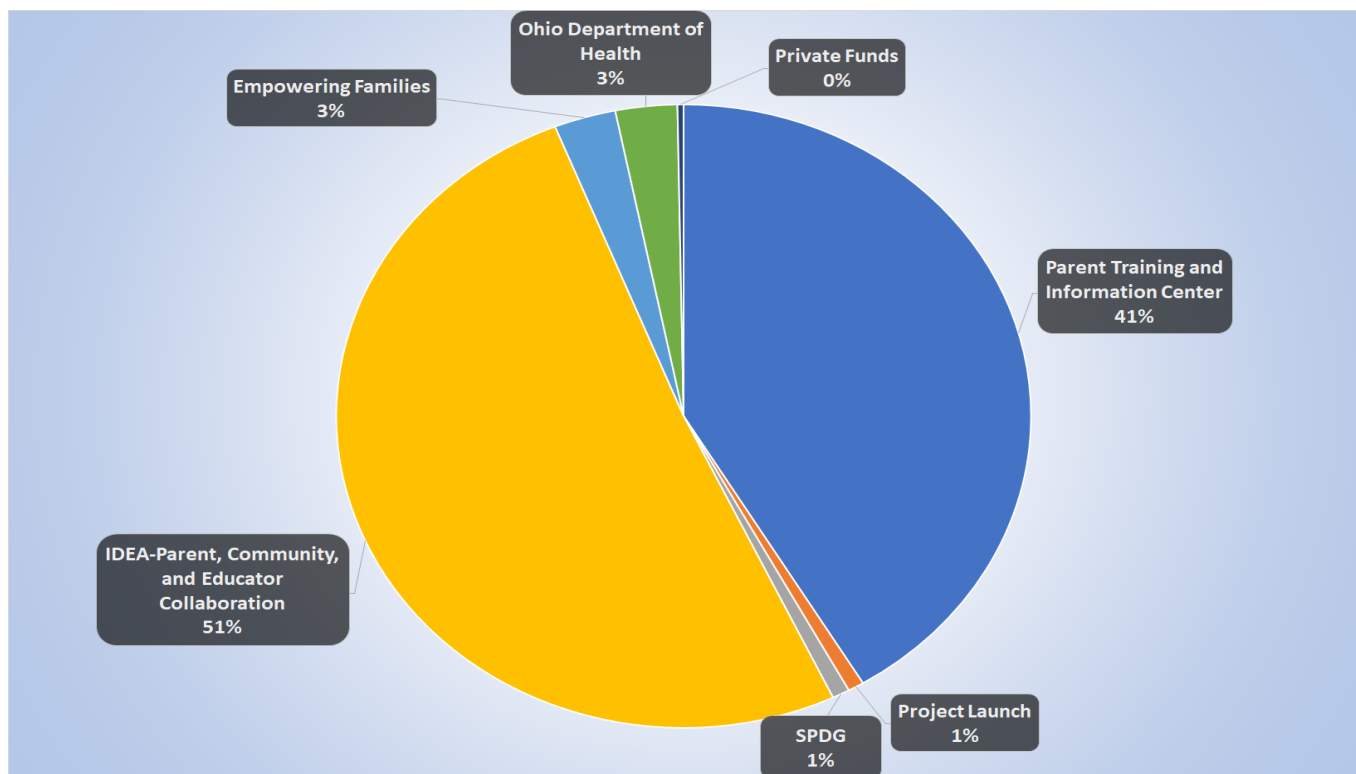
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### TOTAL 2023 CALENDAR YEAR EXPENSES

\$1,499,030	Compensation – Salaries/Wages
\$474,660	Employee Benefits
\$158	Fees for Service (non-employees)
\$120,103	Contractual Services
\$18,600	Legal and Professional Fees
\$82,990	Office Expenses
\$0.00	Occupancy
\$31,320	Travel
\$16,572	Conferences, Conventions, and Meetings
\$3,950	Depreciation, Depletion, and Amortization
\$10,930	Insurance
\$9,177	Training
\$34,480	Supplies
\$45,604	Miscellaneous
\$0	Contributions
<b>\$2,347,574</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

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**As a charitable organization with 501(c)(3) designation, OCECD is required pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code to file an annual financial report with the Ohio Attorney General. In meeting this requirement, OCECD files an online annual report with the Ohio Attorney General's Charitable Ohio site.**



Outlined below is a breakdown by project of the Coalition’s funds:

#### U.S. Department of Education

*Parent Training and Information Center* . . . . . \$873,737

#### Passed Through a Collaboration with PACER Center

*Project Launch* . . . . . \$15,771

#### Passed Through the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children

*SPDG-State Personnel Development Grant* . . . . . \$17,113

*IDEA-Parent, Community, and Educator Collaboration* . . . . . \$1,078,041

#### Passed Through the Ohio Department of Health

*Health Improvement and Wellness, Maternal & Child Health*

*Infant Hearing* . . . . . \$60,725

**Private Funding** . . . . . \$6,012

#### Private Funding Breakdown:

*Horn/Walter/Burley Awards* . . . . . \$1,200

*NAMI* . . . . . \$2,500

*Donations to OCECD* . . . . . \$2,312

**Total 2023 Coalition Funds** **\$2,051,399**

## 2023 OCECD PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS AND SCHOOLS

*OCECD held a number of grants and contracts in 2023 that allowed us to provide programming and supports to Ohio parents, families, students, and professionals. Many are highlighted in the pages below.*

**IDEA Parent, Community, and Educator Collaboration** – The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD) receives funding through the Ohio Department of Education’s Office for Exceptional Children so that our staff can provide support services to parents and families of children with a disability. Our staff respond to inquiries from school districts, the general public and, specifically, to families of children with a disability to provide information, support, and assistance regarding special education programs and services. They answer telephone inquiries, meet one-on-one with families as necessary, provide guidance in understanding IDEA, the Ohio Operating Standards, and the provision of services available in the local school district.

Additionally, OCECD staff collaborate with Ohio’s 16 State Support Teams (SSTs) to coordinate efforts to establish a consistent level and means of services. We also provide a bridge for communication between parents, schools, and the State Support Team Family Consultants.

OCECD staff provide support services to families of students with a disability through individualized, personalized information review, communication with school district staff, attendance at school team meetings as necessary, if invited by the parent or school staff, and dissemination of information related to both Parent Mentor services and special education programs.

**Ohio Department of Health** – OCECD works with the Ohio Department of Health through the Joint Commission on Infant Hearing, an early detection and intervention program. OCECD contacts all families of infants who have not passed their initial hearing screening performed at the hospital after birth. Our staff connects with each family by phone to make sure that they have scheduled a follow-up appointment with an audiologist. Another aspect of this work is to encourage the families of children who have been diagnosed as hearing impaired to give their permission for referral into Part C Early Intervention Services, which will provide the expertise and assistance available to them to address their needs and those of their child. This early connection with local resources is meant to give families assurance that there will be someone to accompany and guide them through the ongoing process of support for their child’s needs. In addition, OCECD provides financial support for a family who is currently enrolled in Ohio’s Part C program, with a child who is younger than three and is deaf or hard of hearing, to enable them to attend the Annual Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Conference. Conference keynote and session topics are presented that share the latest and newest information in this field with families. This experience additionally gives the family an opportunity to meet other families with similar needs and the professionals in this field.

**NAMI of Franklin County Support of Multicultural Families** – OCECD has long been a vibrant and strong supporter of Multicultural Families. One component of our support in Franklin County is the ongoing collaborative relationship that we have with NAMI of Franklin County. NAMI provides funds for the support of speakers and events benefitting the members of the Latino Support Group, AMIGAS. This is a women’s empowerment group for Spanish speaking mothers who have children with special needs. The purpose of this group is to help women improve their self-esteem, motivation, and organizational skills, resulting in them being better equipped to help their children with special needs. Through the weekly AMIGAS meetings, our participants have become knowledgeable about the importance of self-esteem and motivation in their mental health. Working with NAMI to help with the mental health needs of these women has proved to be an excellent way to serve this population, since this combines NAMI’s focus of improving mental health with OCECD’s support of families of children with special needs.

## 2023 OCECD PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS AND SCHOOLS

**Project Launch: Connecting Youth to Communities, Colleges, and Careers**– the PACER Center (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights in Minnesota) subcontracts with OCECD and several other states to advance efforts in ensuring that transition age youth have training, resources, and information available to them in the state in which they reside to set them up for success. OCECD participates in quarterly meetings with other states on this project to learn and share information. We offer our trainings and collaborate with agencies for other trainings for parents. OCECD additionally has a youth self-advocacy and empowerment page on its website that covers some of the work specifically for this project, including our youth infographic (in print and animated).

**Empowering Families** – OCECD has a collaborative project with the University of Cincinnati Center for Excellence in Developmental Disability (UCCEDD) and Disability Rights Ohio (DRO) that was awarded by the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (ODDC), with the focus on “empowering families” to be participants in the special education process. Collaboratively over the next few years, there will be the development of a series of empowerment-through-education-based-trainings (or curriculum) offering support in navigating the special education process. This curriculum will be designed for families, caregivers, students, individuals with disabilities, community members, in other words, any who wish to learn more so they can advocate for themselves, their child, or their family member. Supported by the three collaborators, it will also offer monthly meetings for support and education for the participants after completion of the curriculum. Currently, the trainings are being developed in English and Spanish, with the intent to eventually offer additional languages of the project work.

**State Professional Development Grant (SPDG)** – The goal of the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Program’s (OSEP) funding program is to assist state education agencies and their partners to reform early intervention, educational, and transitional service systems to improve results for students with disabilities. To achieve this goal, states receive funds from OSEP through State Personnel Development Grants (SPDG), which may be used to improve systems of professional development, technical assistance, and/or dissemination of knowledge about best practices across districts. The Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children’s SPDG is aligned with Ohio’s Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement to improve early language and literacy outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities, English learners, and other at-risk learners. SPDG activities will provide systemic supports to increase and extend evidence-based early language and literacy instruction. Ohio’s SPDG also aims to increase partnerships with institutions of higher education, professional associations, family organizations, and other agencies. Collectively, these efforts will build capacity at the regional, district, and building levels to support language and literacy learning for all students. As a result, the Ohio Department of Education’s Office for Exceptional Children is contracting with the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD) as the Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) to increase access to resources for families of students with reading difficulties through a collaboratively developed website, Reading Tips for Families, available at <https://readingtipsforfamilies.com/>.

**Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center for Ohio** – OCECD has set forth as its mission to endorse and promote efforts to provide appropriate quality education for children and youth with disabilities. We do this in the belief that all children have the right to a meaningful and relevant education. The Ohio Coalition staff are dedicated to ensuring that every child with disabilities is provided a free appropriate public education. With this in mind, OCECD continually strives to improve the quality of services for all children and youth with disabilities in Ohio. The Ohio Coalition’s vision is to safeguard that all students with disabilities are prepared for kindergarten, ready to be actively engaged in learning, and able to graduate equipped to move on to a career, or on to college and then a career.

We are committed to providing the best training and information to a variety of audiences, including underserved parents, low-income parents, parents with limited English proficiency, parents of incarcerated youth with disabilities, and parents with disabilities.



## 2023 OCECD PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS AND SCHOOLS

At this time, Ohio schools are in a period of redesign of curricular and instructional processes. Being cognizant of the specific needs of students with disabilities is central to the success of such efforts. The ultimate goal of this work is to encourage educational system redesigns and productivity improvements by an extensive review of evidenced-based practices, with the goal being the identification of the most current findings of successful school districts and the initiation of state-level implementation. Leadership at the district, school, and classroom levels emerge as the most powerful driver of significant changes needed to improve student outcomes, especially for minority and under-served populations. Our staff consistently engaged in outreach services to support school and parent leaders during the course of this grant period.

Complementing what Ohio's SSTs are doing for school personnel, the Ohio Coalition is providing comparable services to both students and parents of children with disabilities who are 14 and older. OCECD's Self Advocacy Trainings, *It's My Turn (IMT)* and *Goals, Planning, Success (GPS)*, are transition trainings that instruct and empower youth with regard to their rights and what they need in their transition plans in order to progress to their postsecondary life. Postsecondary training is geared toward parents so that they understand what their child's transition rights are and are informed that the process begins at age 14. This encourages all parties involved to look ahead to the future, for not only typical students, but also students with disabilities. The identification of interests and goals provides a focal point to complete a framework in order to reach those goals.

The connection between juvenile justice and special education in Ohio is both sobering and substantial. There are over three times as many special education students in Ohio's Department of Youth Services facilities as there are in the general school population. OCECD strives to bring services to students through reading mentoring and through our transition trainings.

We also know in Ohio far too many students either drop out of high school or graduate unprepared for postsecondary success. The populations particularly vulnerable to these outcomes include minority students, low-income students, and students with a disability, which are a focus of OCECD and its efforts. Each year, states receive ratings on their implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), known as its state determination rating. In 2022, Ohio's Special Education State Determination rating for the implementation of IDEA is in the "needs assistance" category for the third year in a row (Part B) due to high rates of students graduating by meeting modified requirements (i.e., receiving a diploma through excusal from one or more graduation requirements); and dropping out of high school.





## **It's My Turn GPS Training Goals Planning Success A Self-Determination Curriculum for Students with Disabilities**

Goals Planning Success (GPS) training is a self-determination curriculum for students with disabilities in middle school through high school to assist them in deciding upon and reaching their goals for life after high school.

This training was designed for students who can attend college but struggle in the learning process. For the students to identify strengths and where they struggle, to give them tools, skills and direction that they can use through out their life to help ensure that they reach their full potential.

GPS is ever changing and growing to meet the needs of students, it can be and is modified to each student and where they are at academically and emotionally no matter the environment they are currently placed.

This was developed by the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD) through funding from the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission now known as Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and currently supported by the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children, Project Launch, IDEA funds, and the Federally Funded Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center grant.

The workshops include four sections:

- A. Vision** – Learning about themselves, Self-advocacy, Problem Solving, writing their vision.  
Look at the 4 paths to choose from; Work, Vocational/technical school, Military, college.
- B. Transition Plan** – Learn about laws that were created to help them throughout life, IDEA, IEP, 504, ADA
- C. Building Skills** – Identify skills that they may need to learn, practice and master in the areas of; Postsecondary Education and Training, Employment, Independent Living
- D. Future Planning** – Personal Goal Setting, Backward Planning, Resources

At the conclusion of the training, the district has the option of hosting a parent night for the community, school, and parents to celebrate the students' achievements. The evening will include a collaborative focus on the student's future, student presentations, and information from service providers. The community, school district, parents, and students will develop a working collaborative relationship focused on each student's future.

We developed this training to make transitioning easier for students and to help them become better self-advocates. Due to COVID-19 in Spring 2020, we began transitioning GPS along with the IMT training, into virtual format. This means we will be able to offer more options in the future so more students can benefit.

The Goals Planning Success self determination training is currently meeting the needs of students in multiple placements, regular education classes, self-contained classrooms such as emotionally disturbed, autism, and cross category. Starting in fall of 2022, GPS is also being presented to justice involved youth that are in secured care that have been identified under IDEA.



**It's My Turn** is a self-determination curriculum for students with disabilities in middle school and high school. The workshops contain five parts: ♦**The Laws** ♦ **Employability** ♦ **Post-Secondary Options** ♦ **Living Skills** ♦ **Community Participation**



Mohawk High School



Coldwater High School



Bryan City

It is our mission to help  
make transition easier  
for students and to help  
them become  
better self-advocates.

### ***It's My Turn Provides Many Benefits:***

- ♦Students learn they have choices and the curriculum enhances self-advocacy skills
- ♦Students increase their self-esteem by realizing what they are capable of accomplishing.
- ♦Students are better prepared to enter the adult world.
- ♦Students are encouraged to participate in community events.
- ♦IEP teams may incorporate the student's newly discovered preferences, needs, strengths & goals into their IEP.
- ♦Families, communities, and schools learn the importance of their support and involvement in the transition process and develop a working collaborative relationship.
- ♦Families, communities, and schools become aware of the resources and services available to them.

### **How it Works:**

Students learn about themselves by:

***Developing a Personal Profile*** which helps them become more aware of their choices and abilities.

***Exploring Options*** best suited to the student based on his/her own personal needs.

***Setting Goals*** and learning the steps he/she must take to reach them.

***Learning*** how to locate and connect with agencies and/or persons who can help them obtain their goals.

### ***What people are saying about It's My Turn:***

*"Students didn't want to leave the training. Light bulbs were going off on the bus ride back to school. "I can go to college!", "I can be \_", "I am special." -Teacher*

*"Almost every goal and objective on the students' IEP's came from the information that they gathered at the training." -School Staff*

*"She had a wonderful day and enjoyed herself very much. She learned a lot not only about herself and her goals for her future, but how to start putting her goals into play for a bright future ahead of her." -Parent*



Parents, students, school and community, come together at parent night to celebrate the student's achievements and learn more about available resources.



Whitmer High School



Bryan City

The **It's My Turn** training has been offered to school districts *in-person*, and free of charge for many years. We are now also offering a version of **It's My Turn** *virtually* and through **on-demand modules**. ([click to learn more](#))

A teacher asked her student 6 months after the training:

"What did you do different after going to **It's My Turn**?"

The student replied,  
"I talked more at my IEP meeting."



Sylvania Northview



Sylvania Southview



**It's My Turn** is being offered to students with disabilities in middle school and high school in the state of Ohio. For more information about **It's My Turn** or to have a presentation for students in your area, please contact the Ohio Coalition at 844-382-5452 or [imtgps@ocecd.org](mailto:imtgps@ocecd.org)

OCECD, 125 Executive Drive, Suite 200, Marion, Ohio 43302  
[www.ocecd.org](http://www.ocecd.org)

## VIRTUAL LEARNING 2023



**UCCEDD**  
University of Cincinnati Center for  
Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

# FAMILY RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

Info Session for School Personnel on  
Act Early and other Resources

November 7th | 4:00 PM



Join OCECD, UCCEDD, and ACT Early for an overview of  
our services and supports to families.

November 7th | 4:00 PM

Who should come/Who would benefit-

SST's

Parent Mentor's

Agencies across the state

Home School Liason's

ELL coordinators

Headstart

Early intervention consultants





— Join us for a free webinar

### Helping students with learning and thinking differences

navigate mental health and  
emotional challenges

**Wed. Sept. 21st**

**1:00 PM - 2:00 PM**

[ocecd.org](http://ocecd.org)



Register for this training today!

**Presenter: Dr. Andrew Kahn**

Expert in Psychology and Learning, [Understood.org](http://Understood.org)

- Licensed psychologist with 20 years experience in the public school system
- Specializes in ADHD, autism spectrum disorders, anxiety, general learning and behavioral challenges, and social-emotional functioning





## VIRTUAL LEARNING 2023



### Preparing Ohio's Students for their Future

February 17th

11:00 - 12:30 PM

Please join OCECD as we host Amy Szymanski and Travis Taylor from The Ohio Department of Education to present, an overview on Ohio's graduation requirements for the class of 2023 and beyond.

### Charla para padres

Información Que Te Ayudará  
A Encontrar Balance En Tu Vida



Acompáñenos cada martes  
a las 7:30 PM via Zoom

- ✓ Gratis
- ✓ Para toda la familia

Para registración por teléfono o texto  
Contactar a Iliana Martínez

📞 614-272-7240



### Grupo de empoderamiento para el Bienestar de la Mujer.

**Cuando:** Todos los martes " Martes de Carlas"

**Dónde:** Zoom

[https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZcufuCqjggGdeMOL708jDHE\\_2S9hMPX03W](https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZcufuCqjggGdeMOL708jDHE_2S9hMPX03W)

**Contactar a:**

Iliana Martinez 614-272-7240 o Tex para registrarse.

los martes | Hora: 7:30 p.m.



# 2023

## Family Support At-A-Glance

In **2023**, OCECD continued to build upon its efforts to ensure that all Ohio children with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education by providing critical information, professional development, training, and advocacy by:

- Providing services to **452,486 parents, professionals, and others**
- Attending **796 IEP/IFSP/Section 504 meetings**
- Attending **72 Facilitated IEP meetings**
- Attending **1,261 meetings with parents** and **6,649 meetings with professionals**
- Attending **18 Mediation meetings, 23 Manifestation Determinations, 55 Resolutions**, and **20 Suspension/Expulsion meetings** on behalf of families of children with disabilities.

In the coming year and beyond, OCECD will continue to work hard to ensure that all Ohio children with special needs receive a free and appropriate public education in an environment that enables them to reach their highest potential. Since COVID-19, we have and will continue to innovate, adjust, and institute new ways to connect and provide services to the parents, families, young children, and students they serve. A particular emphasis will be placed on students making successful transitions into their community through employment or postsecondary education and training.

**Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities**  
125 Executive Dr., Suite 200 ♦ Marion, Ohio 43302-3741  
(844) 382-5452 ♦ (740) 382-5452 ♦ Fax (740) 383-6421  
[www.ocecd.org](http://www.ocecd.org)