

# Ohio's Parent Mentor Project

Ohio's Parent Mentor Project works with the families of students with disabilities and their schools to support educational success for students in the special education system. Since Parent Mentors themselves have children with disabilities, they are familiar with the special education system and can use their knowledge to help others.

## What is a Parent Mentor?

Parent Mentors provide free support and resources to families of children with disabilities and school staff members. Parent Mentors typically work within designated school districts or educational service center areas.

Parent Mentors can provide information and resources for:

- Improving student success, especially in literacy;
- Planning transitions from preschool to school and from high school and beyond;
- Understanding the rights and responsibilities of families and students.

Parent Mentors also can:

- Attend individualized education program (IEP) meetings and other meetings at the request of families or staff members;
- Host information sessions for families and staff members;
- Connect families, schools and communities by providing links to local services and organizations that support students with disabilities;
- Provide information about federal, state and local special education laws and policies;
- Share updated information about special education, such as timelines and deadlines, eligibility processes, informed consent, prior written notice and other requirements.

## How are Parent Mentors Funded?

The Ohio Department of Education provides federal and state funds for the Ohio Parent Mentor Project. Currently, there are more than 70 Parent Mentor Projects with more than 90 Parent Mentors in Ohio.

Additionally, several school districts and educational service centers have chosen to fund their own Parent Mentor Projects. Self-funded Parent Mentors have access to the supports provided by the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities.

## How are Parent Mentors Supported?

The Office for Exceptional Children at the Ohio Department of Education provides ongoing support and oversight of the project to ensure continuity and program development through quarterly and annual reviews. In addition, members of the Office for Exceptional Children participate in statewide Parent Mentor programming, attend selected regional meetings and make site visits to Parent Mentor projects.

The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities supports Parent Mentors with professional development, resources, technology and technical assistance. This helps Parent Mentors as they connect families and school staff to local resources, highlight the importance of literacy and pave the way to success for students with disabilities.

For More Information:

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