

Resource Guide for Guardianship Ad Litem and Developmental Disabilities

Prepared by Andrea Witwer, PhD*; Kristen Hildebrant*

Special Education Law and regulations

See the **Ohio Department of Education** website for information about special education. *A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education* https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Special-Education/Federal-and-State-Requirements/Operational-Standards-and-Guidance/ODE_ParentRights_041217.pdf.aspx and *Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities* <https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Special-Education/Federal-and-State-Requirements/Operational-Standards-and-Guidance/2014-Ohio-Operating-Standards-for-the-Education-of-Children-with-Disabilities.pdf.aspx> provide good information about the law and parent rights for children with IEPs.

See the **U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights** website <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/frontpage/pro-students/disability-pr.html> for information on protecting the rights of students with 504 plans.

Special Education Parent advocacy

The **Disability Rights Ohio (DRO)** website provides self-advocacy resources to help parents with their special education issues <http://www.disabilityrightsohio.org/special-education> Disability Rights Ohio will also provide direct advocacy services to parents. To access services, parents should contact the intake department at 614-466-7264 or 1-800-282-9181.

See the **Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD)** website <https://www.ocecd.org/> for information about parent mentors and information specialists who help school district and families by providing training, support, and information to help resolve disputes, or contact them at 740-382-5452 or 844-382-5452.

For a private attorney, contact Disability Rights Ohio for a list of private attorneys who represent parents in special education cases, or contact the **Ohio State Bar Association attorney referral service** <https://www.ohioabar.org/ForPublic/AboutLawyers/Pages/StaticPage-72.aspx>

Some **Legal Aid offices** provide special education advocacy to parents. See their website for information about eligibility and services offered. <https://www.ohiolegalaid.org/>

Estate Planning and Guardianship

Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council website (<http://ddc.ohio.gov/guardianship-estate-planning>) has a link to a booklet offering a brief yet comprehensive, non-legalistic overview of guardianship and

*Andrea Witwer, PhD

Nisonger Center, UCEDD

The Ohio State University

*Kristin Hildebrant, Senior Attorney

Disability Rights Ohio

alternatives to guardianship in Ohio, especially for adults with a developmental disability. The website also includes links to other resources

STABLE accounts offer a tax-free savings plan for disability-related expenses. More information is available at <https://www.stableaccount.com/>

Community and other services

Ohio Family and Children First Council can provide wraparound services for students with complex needs who are involved in multiple systems (such as education and mental health). A plan can be developed to help coordinate and provide necessary services and connections to supports. See the FCFC website <http://www.fcf.ohio.gov/Home.aspx> for information on finding your county FCFC and making a referral.

County board of developmental disabilities can provide service coordination and funding for services for students with developmental disabilities. Services include service coordination, transition services, and waiver services. See the Ohio Association of County Boards of DD website: <http://www.oacbdd.org/>

Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities website includes additional information related to specific county boards of DD and contains a wealth of other resources. <http://dodd.ohio.gov/>

ARC of Ohio provides information and advocacy services to families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. <https://www.thearcofohio.org/>

The **University of Cincinnati Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)** provides support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their family members in managing and understanding state and local systems, including medical, educational and community systems. UCEDD also provides community trainings for caregivers and professionals on advocacy and navigating service system, and provides 1:1 short-term support via phone and email. https://www.ucucedd.org/?page_id=123

The Ohio State University Nisonger Center, a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities provides a number of services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout the lifespan. In addition, they provide technical assistance and training on issues related to developmental disabilities to partners in the community. They can be available for brief consultation on a case-by-case basis (<http://nisonger.osu.edu/>)

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) is the State of Ohio agency that partners with Ohioans with disabilities to achieve quality employment and independence. OOD also makes determinations on Social Security disability. OOD can provide assistance with transition services for older students who are looking for help with getting and keeping a job, or help with going to college. For more information, see the website <http://www.ood.ohio.gov/Core-Services/BVR>

The Family Center at the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) connects families to the information they need regarding services, supports, training and resources, including the free OCALI Lending Library. It offers training and products to help families and to support agencies serving them. <https://www.ocali.org/center/family>

The Family Resource Network of Ohio (FRNO) is a website where families visit to discover various types of resources. Those resources include listings for agencies and providers, therapists, books, webinars, programs, calendar of events. This includes various trainings, such as Charting the LifeCourse. <https://www.frnohio.org/>

The **Autism Speaks** website contains a number of information toolkits addressing issues relevant to those with autism spectrum disorders and their families. <https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits>

Mental Health

Local **ADMH (Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board)** websites can provide list of resources and supports in the individual's area.

Red Tree House. Redtreehouse.org is Ohio's online resource supporting the well-being of Ohio's families and children with challenges, disabilities, and health care needs. It was created to provide a welcoming and vibrant online community for families and professionals to explore and connect to resources and supports for children and young adults. <https://www.redtreehouse.org/>

Health/Healthcare Transition

Access to Healthcare: **Medical-Legal Partnerships** are projects where medical providers and lawyers work together to help children and families access necessary healthcare. For a list of medical-legal partnerships in Ohio, visit <http://medical-legalpartnership.org/>

Comprehensive Adolescent/Adult Transitional Care Home (CATCH) Program Ohio State's (CATCH) Program aims to improve the lives of adolescents and young adults with chronic childhood medical conditions by assisting with the transition to adult healthcare. The multidisciplinary team ensures a sensitive, personalized transition to adult primary and specialty care for individuals 17 and older. They serve as consultants and as a medical home depending on what our patients need. <https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/primary-care/catch>

Center for Autism Services and Transition (CAST), headquartered in The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center's Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at Hilliard, offers clinical services for adult and transition-age-youth patients with autism.

Nisonger Center Dental Clinic The Dental Program at the Nisonger Center provides a complete range of oral health services to children and adults with developmental disabilities and other special needs.

People with developmental disabilities throughout Ohio are eligible to receive diagnostic services.
<http://nisonger.osu.edu/clinics-services/child/dental-program/>

Special Education Dispute resolution

The **Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children** maintains a complaint and hearing process to help families resolve disputes with their schools. For more information on the type of procedures available, visit the website <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Special-Education/Dispute-Resolution>

The **U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights** has a process to file a complaint regarding disability discrimination or disputes over services under Section 504. For more information on this process, visit the website <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html?src=rt>

Other Resources

Cap4kids.org is a website that provides reliable, up-to-date information about resources in the Columbus area for children and families.

Housing issues: The **Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO)** supports Ohio residents and organizations seeking guidance on a variety of housing issues: landlord-tenant law, the Fair Housing Act, tenant organization and affordable housing preservation. If you are seeking advice on how to deal with a specific issue, email COHHIO at: rentinfo@cohhio.org or call the Housing Information Line: 888-485-7999. Your local legal aid agency can provide legal assistance with housing issues.

Immigration issues: **Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS)** provides services to refugees, asylees, and immigrants, including:

- Free employment counseling, skills training and job placement help.
- Services for new refugees for the first 3 months of their arrival in the U.S.
- ESOL (English) classes and translation services.
- Immigration legal programs, including help with citizenship applications, notary services, visa extensions, green card applications, immigration photos and work authorization.
- Counseling and support to limited English proficient (LEP) people who are victims of crimes or trafficking.

Cultural competency

For Autism Spectrum Disorder, see LEND Brief on ASD and Culture at https://lend.umn.edu/docs/ASD_and_Culture_FINAL.pdf This brief provides a good explanation of how cultural differences influence the way families cope with ASD and seek services for their children with ASD.

http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPiSE/b.6367927/k.1D9A/Cultural_Competence_Diversity_Inclusion.htm contains valuable resources on cultural competency and diversity and covers topics including working with: rural families, families of color, multi-racial youth, and LGBTQ populations.

The Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization (BRAVO) provides comprehensive individual and community programs for survivor advocacy and support to LGBTQI survivors of hate and bias violence, discrimination, intimate partner violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault. You can find resources to support this population at their website www.bravo-ohio.org