

LOCAL INFORMATION

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Parent Mentors of Ohio Web site:
<http://www.thelinkto.org/parentmentor/>



STUDENTS
FAMILIES
&
COMMUNITIES
CENTER FOR

OHIO'S PARENT MENTOR PROGRAM



*Guiding Families Through
the Special Education Process*

DEFINITION

A Parent Mentor is the parent of a child with a disability employed by a local education agency to help school districts and families by providing training, support and information services.

VISION

Districts have a responsibility to develop, support and implement a system of education services for all students.

The basis of the Parent Mentor Program is the expectation that students with disabilities be ensured appropriate and meaningful education when parents and educators communicate effectively and operationalize the partnership planning required by the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act*.

Districts choose to implement the Parent Mentor Program to promote this necessary and effective communication by providing information and support to families about special education issues and by providing a mechanism to convey the family perspective back to the system.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Ohio Parent Mentors is to provide the necessary support and resources to families of children with disabilities and the professionals who serve them.

NO COST FOR SERVICES

Ohio Parent Mentor projects are funded through grants from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). All Parent Mentor services are provided to families free of charge.

HISTORY

In regional meetings, parents of children with disabilities in the state of Ohio voiced the need for a person at the school district level who could best relate to their family's experiences.

In response to this need, the Parent Mentor Program was created through the combined efforts of ODE and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities.

In 1990, 10 pilot sites were selected, representing school districts in urban, suburban, and rural areas. The overwhelming success of these sites prompted a request to the Ohio General Assembly for additional funds. Parent Mentors now serve families of children with disabilities in approximately one-third of Ohio's school districts.



PROGRAM SERVICES

Parent Mentors:

- ❑ Guide families through the special education process, including rights and responsibilities;
 - ❑ Listen and provide support to families and educators on an individual basis;
 - ❑ Provide information and resources to families and school personnel on education laws, district programs and services, and community resources;
 - ❑ Attend Individualized Education Program meetings and other meetings at parent or staff request;
 - ❑ Organize and conduct information sessions or workshops based on the needs of families and professionals; and
 - ❑ Build collaborative partnerships between families, schools and committees to benefit students with disabilities.
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