



Ohio PROMISE is the statewide initiative to **P**romote **R**esources, **O**pportunities, and **M**eaningful **I**nclusion through **S**upport and **E**ducation (PROMISE) so that all young children can learn and play wherever they live and grow. In Ohio, families who have a child with a disability struggle with finding and keeping high-quality early care and education access.³ We also know that providers do not feel equipped to support children with special needs, but that most are willing to serve children if they felt more knowledgeable, skilled and confident in caring for children with special needs.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF OHIO PROMISE

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIAL	CENTER OF EXCELLENCE	PROGRAM DESIGNATION	ADVISORY COUNCIL	CHILD CARE CHOICE VOUCHER
				

- Today, **2,005 children being served** in Publicly Funded Child Care have a disability
 - Of those, 834 are accessing the Special Needs Subsidy, which provides a doubled payment to their early care and education provider to offset costs of meeting the child's needs
 - And, 1,171 children are accessing a 5% enhanced payment that helps their provider meet the child's needs while in their setting for care and education
- **425 children** with disabilities are/have been served in Ohio PROMISE Designated programs
- **Since the Child Care Choice Voucher began in April 2024, 179 children with a disability have gained access to child care assistance who were not financially eligible before**



Over 1,000 Ohio early care and education programs have earned the Ohio PROMISE designation, meaning at least two staff in the program have completed 7.5 hours of specialized training on increasing awareness of meeting the needs of all Ohio children. This designation requires one lead teacher and one administrator to complete Level 1 of the professional credential. Designations are valid for one year from issuance and must be renewed annually.



Over 4,200 professionals have earned the **Professional Early Childhood Credential** at Level 1 (Awareness), Level 2 (Knowledge), or Level 3 (Implementation). At the time of publication, 600 Ohio professionals had completed all three levels, completing over 20 hours of specialized training to meet the needs of children spending time in an early care and education setting.



With increased access to early care and education, **the number of children with disabilities being served has increased by 38%**. In April 2024, the Ohio Department of Children & Youth started the **Child Care Choice Voucher**, which made child care subsidies available for children living in households with incomes up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This has been a significant support to families living just beyond the existing state eligibility requirements of 150% FPL when a child has a disability. Being eligible for child care help is one of the most impactful ways families raising a child with a disability can stay employed and provide for the needs of their family, further their education, and help their child with developmental support and learning with their peers.^{1,2,3}

In the fall of 2023, Ohio PROMISE launched an Early Childhood Center of Excellence (ECCE), the information and resource hub for the state's early care and education workforce to ensure that all young children have access to and can meaningfully participate in early care and education programming, wherever they live, learn, and play.

Professional Development



Early childhood professionals have access to free, on-demand webinars, training, and resources. From January 2024 through April 2025, **2,495 early care and education teachers** have attended training offered by the ECCE and 93 early care and education professionals have received on-site practice-based coaching and consultation. Technical assistance and support via phone, email or in person is provided to **more than 8,000 Ohioans** each year. Access these at <https://ohiopromise.org/>



"It has really helped me to become a better teacher, even though I've been in this game for about 20 years."

Equipment & Materials



Anyone can explore and borrow equipment, materials, and assistive technology; generate ideas for utilizing these resources with our SPARK guides. Since the launch of the Early Childhood Center of Excellence in October 2023, **8,561 total materials** that help early care and education providers make education accessible have been disseminated to support consultations and coaching, professional development, and outreach services. Since April 2024, the OCALI Lending Library has sent out **82 Early Childhood Assistive Technology kits**. These kits are essential to supporting our teachers and business owners in helping Ohio children with differences thrive in their local, neighborhood settings. Things like communication tools, picture schedules or tactile books.



Early Development and Learning Support

Early Development and Learning Specialists (ELDS) can connect you with resources and materials to facilitate universal practices in your early care setting. Since October 2023, EDLSs have received and responded to service requests in **80 out of 88 counties** (91% of the state).

A Family Support Specialist was added to the ECCE in January 2025 to support families navigating early identification of, and entry into, early childhood services and intervention. In the first 5 months, **54 contacts with families connected them with more than 32 different Ohio agencies and services!**

What We Are Working on Next

A 2025 survey of providers shows that we are having a **positive impact** on helping providers of early care & education feel more confident in their abilities to serve a child with a disability. We also know where they want more help: learning opportunities for low incidence disabilities that are not as common, including when a child needs medical or specialty equipment during their day, assistive technology for communication, and awareness of community resources that can be accessed to help a child or family.

And we won't stop there! With the Ohio Department of Children & Youth providing early care and education curriculum and professional development, we aim to serve more children with disabilities where they live, learn, and play! We also endeavor to reach more professionals through coaching and consultation; inform more parents and families of the supports available; and increase the number of Ohio early care and education providers maintaining the Ohio PROMISE designation. Together, we will **make Ohio the best place to start and raise a family!**

Thank you to the professionals and family members who serve and give of their time in our Advisory Council:

- [Burbank Early Childhood School](#)
- [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center](#)
- [Groundwork Ohio](#)
- [Disability Rights Ohio](#)
- [Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence \(OCALI\)](#)
- [Ohio Head Start Association, Inc.](#)
- [Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities \(OCECD\)](#)
- [Ohio Department of Education and Workforce](#)
- [Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities](#)
- [Ohio Department of Job & Family Services](#)
- [Ohio Department of Medicaid](#)
- [Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#)
- [Ohio Department of Health](#)
- [State Support Team Region 4](#)
- [University of Toledo](#)
- [Ohio Parent Mentor Project](#)
- [ElevatedDD](#)

Citations

¹ Costanzo & Magnuson (2024). *Child care access for families raising children with disabilities*. *Children and Youth Services Review* 156.

² Anderson D, Dumont S, Jacobs P, Azzaria L. 2007. *The personal costs of caring for a child with a disability: a review of the literature*. *Public Health Rep*. Jan-Feb;122(1):3-16.

³ *Families of Children with Developmental Disabilities Face More Challenges Finding and Keeping Services*. Family Voices Project, Groundwork Ohio. November 21, 2024.