Understanding the Ohio Autism Scholarship Program

MILESTONES AUTISM RESOURCES

Intro: What This Toolkit Covers & Why It Matters

The Ohio Autism Scholarship Program (ASP) helps families of children with autism get access to specialized education and services outside of the public school system. It provides up to **$32,445 per year** to use with approved private providers. This toolkit explains how the program works, who qualifies, how to apply, and what to watch out for.

Step-by-Step Guidance

1. **Check Eligibility**
    - Child must be between **ages 3–22**
    - Must live in **Ohio**
    - Must have a **formal autism diagnosis**
    - Must have an **IEP or Autism Education Plan (AEP)** from the local public school district
2. **Choose a Provider**
    - Pick a private provider that is **approved** by the Ohio Department of Education
3. **Apply Through the Provider**
    - Work with the chosen provider to complete and submit the application
4. **Submit Documentation**
    - Required documents include the child's IEP or AEP, proof of residency, birth certificate, and application form
5. **Wait for Approval**
    - The state reviews your application and notifies you of approval or denial
6. **Use the Funds**
    - If approved, the funds go directly to your chosen provider to cover services

Tips or Common Mistakes

- **Start Early**: Gathering documents and finding the right provider takes time
- **Double-Check Eligibility**: Missing even one requirement can lead to disqualification
- **Keep Records Organized**: Make sure documents are current, accurate, and easy to access
- **Stay in Touch with Providers**: Communication helps avoid misunderstandings or delays
- **Proofread Your Application**: Errors or missing info can slow things down
- **Follow Up**: Check on your application status and respond quickly if the state needs more information
- **Services:** You cannot use the ASP and have your child attend public school. If you choose to use the ASP, you must withdraw your child from public school and you may

lose protections and rights provided under IDEA

What to Ask / Advocate For

- **Ask Providers**:
  - Are they officially approved by the state? You can also check on the ODEW website
  - What services do they offer under the scholarship? Do they provide educational services as well as therapy?
    - The scholarship covers educational services, including specialized therapies, one-on-one instruction, and curriculum adaptations from approved providers.
  - Will the full cost be covered by the scholarship, or will you owe more?
- **Ask the School District**:
  - Can they help develop or update an IEP or AEP that includes autism-specific services?
  - What documentation can they provide to support your application?
- **Advocate For**:
  - A thorough and updated IEP or AEP that accurately reflects your child's needs
  - Transparency from providers about services and costs
  - Timely communication from both providers and the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce

Key resources

- Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW): The official ODEW website provides detailed instructions, eligibility criteria, and a comprehensive FAQ section.
- Local School Districts: District offices can assist in navigating the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Autism Education Plan (AEP) process and understanding application steps.
- Advocacy Organizations: Groups such as the Autism Society of Ohio and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities offer workshops, support networks, and one-on-one assistance for parents.
- Licensed Providers: Approved service providers often help parents with scholarship requirements, including program selection and documentation.