# Chapter 11: Finding Support for Your Family

## Introduction:

Families whose children have disabilities will need help as they work to support their child’s growth and development. Many families can find support in their local community or through a state agency or other organization that provides disability services. There is a broad range of support available in Ohio. This chapter will highlight some of the types of support that may be helpful to you and give you some guidance on how to find the support that is right for you.

## Definitions:

**Family support** helps promote the well-being of families whose children have disabilities by helping them access a broad range of community supports and services, including formal supports (such as case management) and informal supports (such as parent support groups).

## What Families Should Expect:

* You can find support in a variety of ways. Some agencies that provide services to your child will have social workersor other staff who can help you find needed resources. During your journey you may meet other parents who have been on the same path. Those parents can be a good source of information about resources and support. Your child’s pediatrician may refer you to a specialist for support. You can find information on the internet. Reach out to any of these sources of support as you work to find help for your child and family. If you are feeling overwhelmed with the challenges of having a child with a disability, look for a support group that may be able to help you.
* The resources in this chapter will give you ideas for where you can find support. Here are some general ideas of where you might need to find support.
  + **Education-** You may need an advocate to help you through the special education process for your child, or sources of information about your rights. You can reach out to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, your regional State Support Team, The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, Disability Rights Ohio, a Parent Mentor if available in your school district or educational service center, or Ohio Early Intervention if your child is very young.
  + **Healthcare-**You may need help finding the right medical provider or other sources of healthcare. For a referral, you can contact your managed care plan if you receive Medicaid, a hospital social worker, or your pediatrician.
  + **Childcare-**You may need childcare that can provide the care that your child with a disability needs. You can reach out to the Ohio Department of Children and Youth for information about special needs childcare in your area.
  + **Benefits-**You might need help getting benefits like Medicaid or food stamps. You can reach out to your local legal aid, Ohio Benefit Bank, or the Ohio Department of Medicaid.
  + **Legal-**You might need legal help to access services. You can reach out to your local legal aid or find a private attorney through the Ohio State Bar Association.
  + **Emotional-**You might need help dealing with personal or family stress. You can reach out to a support group, your local church, a counselor or trusted friend.
  + **Social-**You might need help finding fun activities and recreation that is accessible to your whole family. You can reach out to Cap4Kids, your county board of developmental disabilities, and other parents.

## What Families Want Their Team Members to Know:

* I am overwhelmed trying to find support for my family. Many times when I reach out for support, I am referred somewhere that is not able to help us. This is exhausting. You can be the best source of information and support to me by learning about available community supports, the eligibility process, and refer me to the supports that can really help us. If you can, connect me directly with a person who can assist us through the application process. This will lessen the burden on me of making another call.
* Sometimes, I may not follow through with a recommendation or referral. This is because I may not yet be emotionally ready to hear or accept the concern. I might need extra support to follow through with a referral like extra reminders, or an offer to make the call with me. Please support me in this process rather than criticizing me for not following through.
* Please think about my language and culture when helping me find support. It does not help me to get a referral to an organization that cannot provide me information in a language I understand or is unsupportive of my culture or parenting decisions.

## What Team Members Want Families to Know:

* One of the best ways to find support for your child and family is to get involved. Being involved can help you have input into the support you are able to get and have a better understanding of how the service works and ways it could be improved for your specific needs. Being involved also gives you an opportunity to meet other parents who can tell you about the support that has been helpful to them. Being involved by volunteering, sitting on a committee, or helping with a fundraiser can also help you learn new skills to help you and your child.
* We can help you find the best support for your family if you communicate with us about what you need. Community supports include early intervention services such as screening children for delays, and services that focus on families, like programs to support parent involvement in early literacy with their child. Community-based services also include medical and dental care, early childhood mental health consultation, parent education programs, public library services, public housing assistance, and job assistance programs. We can better help you find support if you let us know your needs.

## Family Checklist:

* Have I researched what supports are available?
* Do I find ways to meet other parents?
* Do I participate in decision-making about supports?
* Have I effectively communicated our support needs?
* Have I learned how to be a good advocate?
* Have I worked with my team to make sure we are on the same page about support needs?

## Team Member Checklist:

* Do we know what community resources are available?
* Do we know the eligibility standards for various program supports?
* Do we connect families directly with services or make them reach out?
* Do we know what supports are culturally competent?
* Do we ensure that families have language access to the supports?
* Do we provide extra help to families if needed to access supports?

## Resources:

[A Kid Again- Non-profit for families with children with special healthcare needs](https://akidagain.org/)

[Children with Medical Handicaps Program](https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/children-with-medical-handicaps/)

[Disability Rights Ohio](https://www.disabilityrightsohio.org/)

[Flying Horse Farms- Non-Profit for families with children with special healthcare needs](https://flyinghorsefarms.org/)

[Ohio Coalition for the Education Of Children with Disabilities](https://www.ocecd.org/)

[Parent Consultants- Ohio Department of Health](https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/children-with-medical-handicaps/resources/odh-parent-consultants)

[Ohio’s Parent Mentor Project](https://parentmentor.osu.edu/)

[The University of Cincinnati Center for Excellence in Developmental Disability](https://www.ucucedd.org/family-support/)

[Ohio Parent 2 Parent (P2P) Support](https://www.ohiof2f.org/ohiop2p/#:~:text=Ohio%20Parent%20to%20Parent%20(Ohio,%2C%20trained%2C%20volunteer%20support%20parent.), UCCEDD F2F

[OCALI](https://www.ocali.org/)

[Ohio: Bold Beginning!](https://boldbeginning.ohio.gov/)

[Ohio Family Network](https://dodd.ohio.gov/your-family/social-connections/resource-ohio-family-network)

[RedTreehouse.org](https://www.redtreehouse.org/)

[ODE: Integrated Student Supports](https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports)

[ODE: Social Emotional Development in Young Children](https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Early-Learning-Family-Resources/Social-Emotional-Development-in-Young-Children)