



Family Empowerment Kit

Welcome to your Family Empowerment Kit! The Parent Mentors at the Ohio School for the Deaf and the Ohio State School for the Blind understand some of the unique experiences you have had raising and educating a child with a diagnosed hearing loss, vision loss, or combined hearing and vision loss. Based on our past experiences, we have worked with partners at the Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness, the Ohio Center for Deafblind Education, and a committee of family representatives to collate some of the resources we have found helpful in our parenting journey. Remember, you are an essential member of your child's team; we hope the information in this kit helps build the foundation of knowledge needed to better support your student.

Our goal was to create a “one-stop-shop” of information. A place where you can find essential disability-specific resources and information, record key events in your child's life, and your child's important educational and medical documents to share with your child's school support team. You will find three kinds of resources and information in the **Family Empowerment Kit (FEK)**:

- FEK Educational Binder (includes space to keep Individualized Education Programs, Evaluation Team Reports, progress notes, and more)
- Electronic Resources
- Books (marked with a * in this table of contents)

The **Family Empowerment Kit (FEK)** Binder for students who are deafblind is divided into sections to help you find resources quickly:

- [Understanding Your Child's Disability](#)
- [How to Engage in Your Child's Education, School, and School Systems](#)
- [Advocacy and Support](#)
- [Assessments & Evaluations](#)
- [Individualized Education Programs \(IEPs\)](#)
- [Language and Communication](#)
- [Expanded Core Curriculum](#)
- [Pre-K Transition](#)
- [Post-Secondary Transition](#)
- [Reading/Literacy](#)
- [Additional Resources We Love: Federal, State, Local](#)
- Space for Your Child's Educational Records

“Parent participation is the leading predictor that supports students’ academic success, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or cultural background.”

-Karen Mapp, Senior Lecturer, Harvard Graduate School of Education

We hope this **Family Empowerment Kit** gives you the information you need to develop your skills and knowledge to help enhance your child’s learning. The binder is divided into two major sections: Resources & Information *and* Record-Keeping. **We have included an electronic table of contents with links** to carefully selected websites and documents and **copies of information and resources** that we believe may be relevant and helpful for your family and child’s success.

The **Record-Keeping tab** is for you to organize and store important medical and educational information about your child. It is a way for you to have all their documents in one place. Everyone organizes information differently, so there is no right or wrong approach to how you organize your documents. Do what works best for you but keep all the information together. At your student’s annual IEP (Individualized Education Program) meeting, you will want to share new information with your team and review old documents before the IEP. Ideas of materials to file and share may include audiograms, medical tests and assessment results, IEPs, progress reports, ETRs (Evaluation Team Reports), and more.

The **Electronic Resource** list included in this binder has links to some of our favorite organizations, agencies, and documents to help you learn and support your child and family. Conveniently, the links are available online. Please look for the **complete online resource listing coming later this fall**. Our goal is to keep this resource list updated in real-time and create an ever-improving, comprehensive list of supports for you and other Ohio families supporting students who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. You may want to bookmark this location and check back often!

Several books have been provided to you that are engaging, easy to read, and educational. We encourage you to read the books at your own pace. Our goal is for you to know that these books are a wealth of easily accessible information - check back when you are in need, at an educational transition, or if you just have a question.

We hope you find these materials helpful on your educational journey with your child!

Sincerely,

Ohio Deaf and Blind Education Services Team

With special thanks to Lauri Kaplan and Tabitha Palmer



Deafblind

Understanding your child's disability

- o * [Making Sense of Early Intervention](#) guide from the Ohio Center for Deafblind Education designed to highlight ways to meet the unique needs of children under the age of three with hearing or vision loss.
- o * [MedEd Resource Guide](#) booklet from the Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness to support families as they manage, access, and share medical and educational information concerning their child.
- o * [Parent & Families Guide for the Identification of Children with Deafblindness](#) provides information on combined vision-hearing loss based on the degree of each sensory loss, behaviors of the child that may indicate a vision and/or hearing loss, and services offered by the Ohio Center for Deafblind Education.

How to Engage in Your Child's Education, School, and School Systems

- o [Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities \(OCECD\)](#) OCECD works with parents to help them obtain the special education assistance they need
- o [Ohio Department of Education-Families of Students with Disabilities - *New](#) Families are essential partners with teachers in supporting their child's educational progress. This page offers resources for family members as they navigate the educational process for students with disabilities
- o [Wrightslaw File/Report Organization](#) helpful tips and a video on suggestions for organizing your child's special education file
- o [A Guide to Parents Rights in Special Education](#) guide for parents to help them understand their rights and their child's rights according to IDEA and Ohio Operating Standards (see below). This guide serves as the required parent notice of procedural safeguards and families should be offered a copy of this document multiple times throughout their child's school career.
- o [Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities](#) revised July 1, 2021. This document summarizes the state-imposed rule requirements but does not identify the rule requirements that are based on the federal Part B IDEA requirements.
- o [Parent Filing System Ideas for Special Education Documents](#) Parenting Special Needs magazine provides tips for organizing your child's educational records
- o [Wrightslaw File/Report Organization](#) helpful tips and a video on suggestions for organizing your child's special education file

Advocacy and Support

- o [Ohio Center for Deafblind Education](#) provides services in Ohio for individuals birth through 21 years with deafblindness including free collaborative technical assistance to families, education personnel, and service providers through training and information dissemination.
- o [IEP Check List](#) Accommodations and Modifications checklist
- o [The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities \(OCECD\)](#) OCECD works with parents to help them obtain the special education assistance they need.
- o [Ohio Department of Education-Families of Students with Disabilities - *New](#) Families are essential partners with teachers in supporting their child's educational progress. This is especially true for families of students with disabilities. This page offers resources for you as a family member as you navigate the educational process for students with disabilities.
- o [Ohio Parent Mentor Project](#) There are Parent Mentors, district representatives, schools, and agencies across the state of Ohio dedicated to helping families navigate the special education process. Find a Parent Mentor or resource near you with this interactive map.
- o [Ocali.org -Teaching Diverse Learners Center](#) OCALI inspires change and promotes access to opportunities for people with disabilities
- o [National Federation of the Blind of Ohio](#) an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind: Advocating for the rights of blind Ohioans, Educating the sighted public about what it means to be blind, Working together for a brighter tomorrow
- O [American Council of the Blind of Ohio](#) strives to increase independence, security, equality of opportunity, and quality of life for all blind and visually impaired Ohioans.
- O [National Center on Accessible Educational Materials \(AEM\) Website](#) AEM serves as a resource for stakeholders, including educators, parents, students, publishers, conversion houses, accessible media producers, and others interested in learning more about accessible educational materials.

Assessments & Evaluations

- o **** All about Tests and Assessments – physical book included in this Family Empowerment Kit***
- o [EI Decision Tree chart only Final2022.pdf](#) Early Intervention Decision Tree to provide guidance and program planning for children with vision and hearing loss

- o [Decision Tree -WEB revised2022.pdf](#)- Decision Tree: Risk Factors and Behaviors Suggesting Possible Vision and/or Hearing Concerns in Young and School-aged children
- o [A School Psychologist's Guide to Deafblindness: Identifying and Supporting Students with Combined Hearing-Vision Loss](#) This guide supports the work of school psychologists by presenting research-based knowledge that informs effective assessment and educational planning for students with deafblindness.
- o [Functional Vision Assessment – Family Connect](#) The functional vision assessment is a pivotal assessment for children who have low vision
- o [Functional Vision Assessment 101 – Paths to Literacy](#) Functional Vision Assessment 101 is a self-paced teacher training module to help you understand how your student uses his or her vision in various environments.
- o [Learning Media Assessment – Paths to Literacy](#) Overview of Learning Media Assessment, which is designed to help determine the best access to literacy for a student who is blind or visually impaired

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

- o * *All about IEP's -physical book included in this Family Empowerment Kit*
- o * *From Emotions to Advocacy – physical book included in this Family Empowerment Kit*
- o * *Special Education Law, Second Edition – physical book included in this Family Empowerment Kit*
- o [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - Part 300 \(Part B\)](#) Part B of IDEA is the section that lays out the educational guidelines for school children 3-21 years of age. By law, states are required to educate students with disabilities (Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996). IDEA provides financial support for state and local school districts.
- o [What Is An IEP? \(OCECD\)](#) This booklet explains that an IEP is an Individualized Education Program. When a child is identified with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) a child has a right to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). For a child to receive FAPE, an IEP must be developed for the child to progress in the general education curriculum.
- o [Sample IEP – Ohio Department of Education](#) sample of an Individualized Education Program from Ohio. Pay careful attention to Section 16, the Section on children with visual impairments.

Language and Communication

- o [Development Open Hand, Open Access \(OHOA\): Deaf-Blind Intervener Learning Modules](#) Product: free, online modules focusing on an overview

of deaf-blindness, instructional strategies, learning, touch, concept development, sensory system, building relationships, and orientation and mobility.

- o [Reading/Literacy Paths to Literacy](#) This site is designed for teachers, families, and others interested in literacy for children and youth with visual impairments, including those who are deafblind and/or have multiple disabilities.
- o [Design to Learn](#) Products: free/low-cost materials for communication development, concept development, learning environment, and assessment. Some materials are available in Spanish.
- o [Lilliworks](#) Products: active learning equipment, books, videos.
- o [National Braille Press](#) Products: Braille and print books for adults and children, textbooks, and related products.
- o [Bookshare](#) Products: Read Aloud Books, books for elementary, high school, and adults; timekeeping, housewares, travel, low vision, toys, and games.
- o [APH \(American Printing House\) Store](#) Products: materials for low vision, tactile graphics, early childhood, core curriculum software videos, custom accessible media
- o [American Printing House for the Blind \(APH\)](#) Products: materials for early childhood, curriculum, and accessibility.
- o [State Library of Ohio](#) (and local libraries) offer the Talking Book Program that provides free recorded books, magazines, and playback equipment. Catalogs, large-type books, and books on tape are available.
- o [Speech Banana](#) visual tool for sounds and phonemes.

Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) -Deafblind

- o **Social-Emotional Learning**
 - [Flaghouse Products](#): aids for daily living, furniture, social, communication, motor, positioning, mobility, recreation, and sports.
- o **Audiology**
- o **Career Education**
- o **Communication**
 - [Hands and Voices \(H&V\)](#) Hands & Voices is a non-profit, parent-driven organization dedicated to supporting families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing to improve: the quality of life for children and their families, improve educational outcomes for children through deaf education reform, and improve educational advocacy efforts through parent/professional training regardless of communication philosophy.

- o **Functional Skills**
 - [Braille Through Remote Learning](#) offers information on Braille courses, Braille code, and other relevant information.
- o **Family Education**
 - [Ohio Coalition for Education of Children with Disabilities](#) working with families to help them obtain special education assistance.
 - [OCALI-Family and Community Outreach Center](#)
 - [Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\)](#) The Center for Parent Information and Resources is a central hub of information and products created for the network of Parent Centers serving families of children with disabilities.
 - [Family Connect](#) a service offered by the American Printing House for the Blind, gives parents and family members of visually impaired children and professionals a place for sharing and resources on raising their children from birth to adulthood.
- o **Assistive Technology**
 - [Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials \(AT & AEM\) Center](#) The center promotes accessibility and personalization, creates and disseminates accessible materials, and offers specialized training and technical assistance.
 - [ICanConnect](#) free equipment and training for individuals with significant vision and hearing loss.
 - [Weitbrecht Communication Products](#) telephones, text telephones, captioned telephones, assistive devices, alert & signal devices.
- o **Compensatory skills**
- o **Orientation & Mobility**
 - [Maxiaids Products](#): aids for vision impairments & blind, deaf & hearing impaired, mobility.
 - [Perkins eLearning – O&M](#) These sites explain the techniques, general importance, and necessity of Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training for people who are blind or visually impaired.
- o **Social Interaction**
- o **Independent Living**
 - [Independent Living Aids Products](#): aids for vision, hearing, daily living, healthcare, mobility, and assistive technology.
- o **Recreation & Leisure**
 - [Move United](#): mission is to provide national leadership and opportunities for individuals with disabilities to develop independence, confidence, and fitness through participation in community sports, competition, recreation, high-performance sports, and educational programs.

- o **Sensory Efficiency**
- o **Self-Determination and Advocacy**
 - [Lifespan Transitions Center at OCAL](#) Lifespan Transition. Center works to equip communities to support the successful and unique transition of individuals with disabilities to ensure they can live their best lives for their whole lives.

Pre-K Transition

- o [Preparing Learning Environments. NCDB \(National Center on Deaf-Blindness\)](#) Documents and checklists that support engaging environments at home and school
- o [Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities.](#) Resources for Preschool 3-5 years.
- o [Ohio Department of Education, Preschool Universal Supports.](#) Guidance for completing the Evaluation Team Report (ETR) and Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Post-Secondary Transition

- o [Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities/Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired \(BSVI\)](#) Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) provides counseling and guidance to individuals with disabilities who are seeking employment.

[Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities](#) Offering support across the lifespan of people with developmental disabilities, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities oversees a statewide system of supportive services that focus on ensuring health and safety, supporting access to community participation, and increasing opportunities for meaningful employment.

- o [Social Security – Supplemental Security Income](#) (SSI) is a Federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people, who have little or no income; and it provides cash to meet basic need for food, clothing, and shelter.
- o [Post-secondary Transition Consultation for Students with Combined Hearing-Vision Loss](#) OCDBE's Deafblind Technical Assistance Program (DBTAP) offers consultation services for children, birth through age 21 years, their families, and the educators who serve them. A DBTAP postsecondary transition consultation may be requested to provide the IEP team with information to support a student's needs when planning for postsecondary transition services.
- o [Post-secondary Transition Manual for Students Who Are Deafblind](#) Focusing on post-secondary planning, the manual offers information and advice on how students with deafblindness and their families can work with teachers

and other professionals to plan a student's successful transition from high school to adult life.

- o [OCDBE \(Ohio Center for Deafblind Education\) Transition Toolkit](#) This downloadable transition toolkit provides federal, national, Ohio and professional resources to assist IEP Post-Secondary Planning and IEP development and Transition to Adulthood
- o [Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youth and Adults \(HKC\)](#). The Helen Keller National Center is to enable deafblind individuals to live and work in the community of their choice. This Helen Keller Center provides diagnostic evaluation, short-term comprehensive vocational rehabilitation and assistance with jobs, and residential placement for individuals who are deafblind.

Reading & Literacy

- o [Strategies for Parents to Use in Developing a Foundation for Literacy](#) This booklet provides strategies in the areas of concept development, touch, play, and communication to provide parents with techniques to enhance the development of their child's pre-literacy skills.

Additional Resources We Love: Federal, State, Local

- o [Red Tree House](#) Information on organizations, events, and health care needs for children with disabilities.
- o [Washington Sensory Disability Services](#): Our Mission: WSDS partners with districts and families to support deaf/hard of hearing, blind/low vision, or deafblind students.
- o [Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness](#) Extensive resources and tools to support learners who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired.
- o [OCALI Lending Library](#) The OCALI Lending Library is available to any person over the age of 18 residing or working in the state of Ohio. Assistive Technology Devices, Assessments, and curriculum kits, etc.
- o [Ohio Association of County Boards – LifeMap](#) The OACB Life Map (Fourth Edition, 2019) is a comprehensive guide to help readers understand how people with developmental disabilities access services and supports in Ohio's DD service delivery system.
- o [American Printing House for the Blind](#) Your child can dream big and achieve anything she sets her mind to. As accessibility awareness and technology continue to grow, so do opportunities for children with vision loss. From education and reading to games and sports, your child's future is full of possibilities.

- o [Ohio Department of Education and Workforce – Special Education](#)

Ohio Department of Education’s comprehensive website on Special Education resources.

- o [PACER Center](#) With assistance to individual families, workshops, materials for parents and professionals, and leadership in securing a free and appropriate public education for all children, PACER's work affects and encourages families in Minnesota and across the nation. Also, see the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities – Ohio’s Parent Training and Information Center.

- o [“Ohio Guidelines for Working with Students Who are Blind or Visually Impaired”](#) A guidance document from the Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness for families, staff, and districts to ensure successful learning environments for students who are blind or visually impaired.

*** This book is included with the Family Empowerment Kits given to families in person**