



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Learning Problems

If you are worried about your child's development, learning, attention, thinking or social skills, you are not alone. Many families struggle with these problems. Below are tips and resources to help your family find ways to assist your child.

Tips and resources

- Schedule a meeting with your child's teacher(s) to discuss your concerns.
- If your child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, ask for a meeting with their educational team.
- If your child does not have one, ask the school if an evaluation for special education services or a Section 504 Plan may be the next step for your child.
- Schools may use Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) before starting special education. This is a way to help struggling students. The first tier involves making sure *all* students get high-quality instruction. Students who continue to struggle then move through tiers of more in-depth help as needed. The school carefully tracks the child's progress along the way. This support may include small group instruction followed by more intensive help.
- Ask for a parent mentor. Parent mentors help advocate for your child's education needs. More information about parent mentors can be found at:
 - Ohio's Parent Mentor Project – <https://parentmentor.osu.edu>.
- A Multifactorial Evaluation (MFE) is a tool used by the public school system to decide if your child qualifies for special education services.
- If your child attends a private school, the school does not have to provide these services. Some do and some do not.
- Your child may qualify for special education services starting at age 3.

- Put your request for special education evaluation in writing. Keep a copy for your files. Here are some tips from the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities: Evaluation and Reevaluation Tips <http://www.occde.org/Downloads/Evaluation%20and%20Reeval%20Tips.pdf>.
 - Bring any paperwork back to your child’s healthcare provider if their school does not feel an evaluation is needed. This may help with next steps.
- School staff who may help:
 - School psychologist may be part of the team that evaluates if your child qualifies for special education services.
 - Guidance counselor, principal, or assistant principal may help write a Section 504 Plan.
 - School nurse works with you and your child’s health care providers to make a health plan while at school.
- Schedule an appointment with your child’s health care provider if you have concerns with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). They may be able to help decide if your child has ADHD. If they do, talk with them about treatment options.
 - Nationwide Children’s Hospital offers an ADHD Academy and other classes for parents and children. You can find upcoming classes by going to: www.nationwidechildrens.org/edu or calling (614) 355-0589.
- Talk with your child’s health care provider to decide if a referral for an evaluation through Nationwide Children’s may be helpful.
 - We encourage families to follow the steps above to begin problem solving while waiting to be seen at Nationwide Children’s.
 - Information from a Nationwide Children’s evaluation can be shared with your child’s school to consider results and recommendations.

More information

- The Ohio Department of Special Education: A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education:
 - <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Special-Education/A-Guide-to-Parent-Rights-in-Special-Education>
- The Ohio Department of Education Parent Resources:
 - <https://education.ohio.gov/Parents>
- The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities:
 - <https://www.occde.org/>
- Cap4Kids has a range of developmental, education, literacy, and other resources:
 - <https://cap4kids.org/columbus/>