

## **3323.01 Education of children with disabilities definitions.**

As used in this chapter:

(A) "Child with a disability" means a child who is at least three years of age and less than twenty-two years of age; who has an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability (including dyslexia), deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

A "child with a disability" may include a child who is at least three years of age and less than six years of age; who is experiencing developmental delays, as defined by standards adopted by the state board of education and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

(B)

"Free appropriate public education" means special education and related services that meet all of the following:

- (1) Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge;
- (2) Meet the standards of the state board of education;
- (3) Include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary education as otherwise provided by the law of this state;
- (4) Are provided for each child with a disability in conformity with the child's individualized education program.

(C) "Homeless children" means "homeless children and youths" as defined in section 725 of the "McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act," 42 U.S.C. 11434a.

(D) "Individualized education program" or "IEP" means the written statement described in section 3323.011 of the Revised Code.

(E) "Individualized education program team" or "IEP team" means a group of individuals composed of:

- (1) The parents of a child with a disability;
- (2) At least one regular education teacher of the child, if the child is or may be participating in the regular education environment;
- (3) At least one special education teacher, or where appropriate, at least one special education provider of the child;
- (4) A representative of the school district who meets all of the following:
  - (a) Is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities;
  - (b) Is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum;
  - (c) Is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the school district.
- (5) An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a member of the team as described in divisions (E)(2) to (4) of this section;

(6) At the discretion of the parent or the school district, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate;

(7) Whenever appropriate, the child with a disability.

(F) "Instruction in braille reading and writing" means the teaching of the system of reading and writing through touch commonly known as standard English braille.

(G) "Other educational agency" means a department, division, bureau, office, institution, board, commission, committee, authority, or other state or local agency, which is not a city, local, or exempted village school district or an agency administered by the department of developmental disabilities, that provides or seeks to provide special education or related services to children with disabilities. The term "other educational agency" includes a joint vocational school district.

(H) "Parent" of a child with a disability, except as used in sections 3323.09 and 3323.141 of the Revised Code, means:

(1) A natural or adoptive parent of a child but not a foster parent of a child;

(2) A guardian, but not the state if the child is a ward of the state;

(3) An individual acting in the place of a natural or adoptive parent, including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative, with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare;

(4) An individual assigned to be a surrogate parent, provided the individual is not prohibited by this chapter from serving as a surrogate parent for a child.

(I) "Preschool child with a disability" means a child with a disability who is at least three years of age but is not of compulsory school age, as defined under section 3321.01 of the Revised Code, and who is not currently enrolled in kindergarten.

(J) "Related services" means transportation, and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services (including speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, school nurse services designed to enable a child with a disability to receive a free appropriate public education as described in the individualized education program of the child, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, school health services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training, and medical services, except that such medical services shall be for diagnostic and evaluation purposes only) as may be required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes the early identification and assessment of disabling conditions in children. "Related services" does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such device.

(K) "School district" means a city, local, or exempted village school district.

(L) "School district of residence," as used in sections 3323.09, 3323.091, 3323.13, and 3323.14 of the Revised Code, means:

(1) The school district in which the child's natural or adoptive parents reside;

(2) If the school district specified in division (L)(1) of this section cannot be determined, the last school district in which the child's natural or adoptive parents are known to have resided if the parents' whereabouts are unknown;

(3) If the school district specified in division (M)(2) of this section cannot be determined, the school district determined under section 2151.362 of the Revised Code, or if no district has been so determined, the school district as determined by the probate court of the county in which the child resides.

(4) Notwithstanding divisions (M)(1) to (3) of this section, if a school district is required by section 3313.65 of the Revised Code to pay tuition for a child, that district shall be the child's school district of residence.

(M) "Special education" means specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. "Special education" includes instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings, including an early childhood education setting, and instruction in physical education.

(N) "Student with a visual impairment" means any person who is less than twenty-two years of age and who has a visual impairment as that term is defined in this section.

(O) "Transition services" means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that meet all of the following:

(1) Is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education; vocational education; integrated employment (including supported employment); continuing and adult education; adult services; independent living; or community participation;

(2) Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests;

(3) Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

"Transition services" for children with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or may be a related service, if required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education.

(P) "Visual impairment" for any individual means that one of the following applies to the individual:

(1) The individual has a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting lenses or has a limited field of vision in the better eye such that the widest diameter subtends an angular distance of no greater than twenty degrees.

(2) The individual has a medically indicated expectation of meeting the requirements of division (P)(1) of this section over a period of time.

(3) The individual has a medically diagnosed and medically uncorrectable limitation in visual functioning that adversely affects the individual's ability to read and write standard print at levels expected of the individual's peers of comparable ability and grade level.

(Q) "Ward of the state" has the same meaning as in section 602(36) of the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004," 20 U.S.C. 1401(36).

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## **3323.011 Individualized education program.**

As used in this chapter, "individualized education program" or "IEP" means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with this definition and that includes:

- (A) A statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including:
- (1) How the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum;
  - (2) For a preschool child with a disability, as appropriate, how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities;
  - (3) For a child with a disability who is not a preschool child and who will take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards, a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives.
- (B) A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals and, at the discretion of the department of education, short-term instructional objectives that are designed to:
- (1) Meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability so as to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum;
  - (2) Meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability.
- (C) A description of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals described pursuant to division (B) of this section will be measured and when periodic reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals will be provided. Such reports may be quarterly or other periodic reports that are issued concurrent with the issuance of regular report cards.
- (D) A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child so that the child may:
- (1) Advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals described pursuant to division (B) of this section;
  - (2) Be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum and participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities;
  - (3) Be educated with and participate with both other children with disabilities and nondisabled children in the specific activities described pursuant to division (D) of this section.
- (E) An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class, including an early childhood education setting, and in the activities described pursuant to division (D) of this section;
- (F) A statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on state and districtwide assessments consistent with section 612(a)(16) of the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004," 20 U.S.C. 1412(a) (16). If the IEP team determines that the child shall take an alternate assessment on a particular state or districtwide assessment of student achievement, the IEP shall contain a statement of why the child cannot participate in the regular assessment and why the particular alternate assessment selected is appropriate for the child.
- (G) The projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications described pursuant to division (D) of this section and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and modifications;
- (H) Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child is fourteen years of age, and updated annually thereafter, a statement describing:

- (1) Appropriate measurable post-secondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, and independent living skills;
  - (2) Appropriate measurable post-secondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessments related to employment in a competitive environment in which workers are integrated regardless of disability;
  - (3) The transition services, including courses of study, needed to assist the child in reaching the goals described in divisions (H)(1) and (2) of this section.
- (I) Beginning not later than one year before the child reaches eighteen years of age, a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights under Title XX of the United States Code that will transfer to the child on reaching eighteen years of age in accordance with section 615(m) of the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004," 20 U.S.C. 1415(m).

Nothing in this section shall be construed to require that additional information be included in a child's IEP beyond the items explicitly required by this section and that the IEP team include information under one component of a child's IEP that is already contained under another component of the IEP.

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## **3323.02 Appropriate public education program.**

As used in this section, "IDEIA" means the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004," Pub. L. No. 108-446.

It is the purpose of this chapter to ensure that all children with disabilities residing in this state who are at least three years of age and less than twenty-two years of age, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school, have available to them a free appropriate public education. No school district, county board of developmental disabilities, or other educational agency shall receive state or federal funds for special education and related services unless those services for children with disabilities are provided in accordance with IDEIA and related provisions of the Code of Federal Regulations, the provisions of this chapter, rules and standards adopted by the state board of education, and any procedures or guidelines issued by the superintendent of public instruction. Any options or discretion provided to the state by IDEIA may be exercised in state law or in rules or standards adopted by the state board of education.

The state board of education shall establish rules or standards for the provision of special education and related services for all children with disabilities who are at least three years of age and less than twenty-two years of age residing in the state, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school. The state law and the rules or standards of the state board of education may impose requirements that are not required by IDEIA or related provisions of the Code of Federal Regulations. The school district of residence is responsible, in all instances, for ensuring that the requirements of Part B of IDEIA are met for every eligible child in its jurisdiction, regardless of whether services are provided by another school district, other educational agency, or other agency, department, or entity, unless IDEIA or related provisions of the Code of Federal Regulations, another section of this chapter, or a rule adopted by the state board of education specifies that another school district, other educational agency, or other agency, department, or entity is responsible for ensuring compliance with Part B of IDEIA.

Notwithstanding division (A)(4) of section 3301.53 of the Revised Code and any rules adopted pursuant to that section and division (A) of section 3313.646 of the Revised Code, a board of education of a school district may provide special education and related services for preschool children with disabilities in accordance with this chapter and section 3301.52, divisions (A)(1) to (3) and (A)(5) and (6) of section 3301.53, and sections 3301.54 to 3301.59 of the Revised Code.

The superintendent of public instruction may require any state or local agency to provide documentation that special education and related services for children with disabilities provided by the agency are in compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

Not later than the first day of February of each year the superintendent of public instruction shall furnish the chairpersons of the education committees of the house of representatives and the senate with a report on the status of implementation of special education and related services for children with disabilities required by this chapter. The report shall include but shall not be limited to the following items: the most recent available figures on the number of children identified as children with disabilities and the number of identified children receiving special education and related services. The information contained in these reports shall be public information.

### **Cite as R.C. § 3323.02**

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### **3323.03 Standards and procedures for identification, location, and evaluation of children with disabilities.**

The state board of education shall, in consultation with the department of health, the department of mental health and addiction services, and the department of developmental disabilities, establish standards and procedures for the identification, location, and evaluation of all children with disabilities residing in the state, including children with disabilities who are homeless children or are wards of the state and children with disabilities attending nonpublic schools, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, and who are in need of special education and related services. The state board shall develop and implement a practical method to determine which children with disabilities are currently receiving needed special education and related services.

In conducting the evaluation, the board of education of each school district shall use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the child's parent. The board of education of each school district, in consultation with the county board of developmental disabilities, the county family and children first council, and the board of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services of each county in which the school district has territory, shall identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities residing within the district to determine which children with disabilities are not receiving appropriate special education and related services. In addition, the board of education of each school district, in consultation with such county boards or council, shall identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities who are enrolled by their parents in nonpublic elementary and secondary schools located within the public school district, without regard to where those children reside in accordance with rules of the state board of education or guidelines of the superintendent of public instruction.

Each county board of developmental disabilities, county family and children first council, and board of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services and the board's or council's contract agencies may transmit to boards of education the names and addresses of children with disabilities who are not receiving appropriate special education and related services.

#### **Cite as R.C. § 3323.03**

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## **3323.04 Procedures and standards for placement in educational programs.**

The state board of education, in consultation with the department of mental health and addiction services and the department of developmental disabilities, shall establish procedures and standards for the development of individualized education programs for children with disabilities.

The state board shall require the board of education of each school district to develop an individualized education program for each child with a disability who is at least three years of age and less than twenty-two years of age residing in the district in a manner that is in accordance with rules of the state board.

Prior to the placement of a child with a disability in a program operated under section 3323.09 of the Revised Code, the district board of education shall consult the county board of developmental disabilities of the county in which the child resides regarding the proposed placement.

A child with a disability enrolled in a nonpublic school or facility shall be provided special education and related services, in accordance with an individualized education program, at no cost for those services, if the child is placed in, or referred to, that nonpublic school or facility by the department of education or a school district.

The IEP team shall review the individualized education program of each child with a disability periodically, but at least annually, to determine whether the annual goals for the child are being achieved, and shall revise the individualized education program as appropriate.

The state board shall establish procedures and standards to assure that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, shall be educated with children who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schools, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment shall be used only when the nature or severity of a child's disability is such that education in regular classes with supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

If an agency directly affected by a placement decision objects to such decision, an impartial hearing officer, appointed by the department of education from a list prepared by the department, shall conduct a hearing to review the placement decision. The agencies that are parties to a hearing shall divide the costs of such hearing equally. The decision of the hearing officer shall be final, except that any party to the hearing who is aggrieved by the findings or the decision of the hearing officer may appeal the findings or decision in accordance with division (H) of section 3323.05 of the Revised Code or the parent of any child affected by such decision may present a complaint in accordance with that section.

### **Cite as R.C. § 3323.04**

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## **3323.05 Procedures to assure guaranteed procedural safeguards in decisions.**

The state board of education shall establish procedures to ensure that children with disabilities and their parents are guaranteed procedural safeguards under this chapter with respect to a free appropriate public education.

The procedures shall include, but need not be limited to:

(A) An opportunity for the parents of a child with a disability to examine all records related to the child and to participate in meetings with respect to identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child, and to obtain an independent educational evaluation of the child;

(B) Procedures to protect the rights of the child whenever the parents of the child are not known, an agency after making reasonable efforts cannot find the parents, or the child is a ward of the state, including the assignment of an individual to act as a surrogate for the parents made by the school district or other educational agency responsible for educating the child or by the court with jurisdiction over the child's custody. Such assignment shall be made in accordance with section 3323.051 of the Revised Code.

(C) Prior written notice to the child's parents of a school district's proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of a free appropriate education for the child. The procedures established under this division shall:

(1) Be designed to ensure that the written prior notice is in the native language of the parents, unless it clearly is not feasible to do so.

(2) Specify that the prior written notice shall include:

(a) A description of the action proposed or refused by the district;

(b) An explanation of why the district proposes or refuses to take the action and a description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the district used as a basis for the proposed or refused action;

(c) A statement that the parents of a child with a disability have protection under the procedural safeguards and, if the notice is not in regard to an initial referral for evaluation, the means by which a copy of a description of the procedural safeguards can be obtained;

(d) Sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of Part B of the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004";

(e) A description of other options considered by the IEP team and the reason why those options were rejected;

(f) A description of the factors that are relevant to the agency's proposal or refusal.

(D) An opportunity for the child's parents to present complaints to the superintendent of the child's school district of residence with respect to any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child, or the provision of a free appropriate public education under this chapter.

Within twenty school days after receipt of a complaint, the district superintendent or the superintendent's designee, without undue delay and at a time and place convenient to all parties, shall review the case, may conduct an administrative review, and shall notify all parties in writing of the superintendent's or designee's decision. Where the child is placed in a program operated by a county board of developmental disabilities or other educational agency, the superintendent shall consult with the administrator of that board or agency.

Any party aggrieved by the decision of the district superintendent or the superintendent's designee may file a complaint with the state board as provided under division (E) of this section, request mediation as provided under division (F) of this section, or present a due process complaint notice and request for a due process hearing in

writing to the superintendent of the district, with a copy to the state board, as provided under division (G) of this section.

(E) An opportunity for a party to file a complaint with the state board of education with respect to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child, or the provision of a free appropriate public education to such child. The department of education shall review and, where appropriate, investigate the complaint and issue findings.

(F) An opportunity for parents and a school district to resolve through mediation disputes involving any matter.

(1) The procedures established under this section shall ensure that the mediation process is voluntary on the part of the parties, is not used to deny or delay a parent's right to a due process hearing or to deny any other rights afforded under this chapter, and is conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who is trained in effective mediation techniques.

(2) A school district may establish procedures to offer to parents and schools that choose not to use the mediation process, an opportunity to meet, at a time and location convenient to the parents, with a disinterested party to encourage the use, and explain the benefits, of the mediation process to the parents. The disinterested party shall be an individual who is under contract with a parent training and information center or community parent resource center in the state or is under contract with an appropriate alternative dispute resolution entity.

(3) The department shall maintain a list of individuals who are qualified mediators and knowledgeable in laws and regulations relating to the provision of special education and related services.

(4) The department shall bear the cost of the mediation process, including the costs of meetings described in division (F)(2) of this section.

(5) Each session in the mediation process shall be scheduled in a timely manner and shall be held in a location that is convenient to the parties to the dispute.

(6) Discussions that occur during the mediation process shall be confidential and shall not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceeding.

(7) In the case that a resolution is reached to resolve the complaint through the mediation process, the parties shall execute a legally binding agreement that sets forth the resolution and that:

(a) States that all discussions that occurred during the mediation process shall be confidential and shall not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceeding;

(b) Is signed by both the parent and a representative for the school district who has the authority to bind the district;

(c) Is enforceable in any state court of competent jurisdiction or in a district court of the United States.

(G)

(1) An opportunity for parents or a school district to present a due process complaint and request for a due process hearing to the superintendent of the school district of the child's residence with respect to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child, or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child. The party presenting the due process complaint and request for a due process hearing shall provide due process complaint notice to the other party and forward a copy of the notice to the state board. The due process complaint notice shall include:

(a) The name of the child, the address of the residence of the child, or the available contact information in the case of a homeless child, and the name of the school the child is attending;

(b) A description of the nature of the problem of the child relating to the proposed initiation or change, including facts relating to the problem;

(c) A proposed resolution of the problem to the extent known and available to the party at the time.

A party shall not have a due process hearing until the party, or the attorney representing the party, files a notice that meets the requirement for filing a due process complaint notice.

A due process hearing shall be conducted by an impartial hearing officer in accordance with standards and procedures adopted by the state board. A hearing officer shall not be an employee of the state board or any agency involved in the education or care of the child or a person having a personal or professional interest that conflicts with the person's objectivity in the hearing. A hearing officer shall possess knowledge of, and the ability to understand, the provisions of the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004," federal and state regulations pertaining to that act, and legal interpretations of that act by federal and state courts; possess the knowledge and ability to conduct hearings in accordance with appropriate standard legal practice; and possess the knowledge and ability to render and write decisions in accordance with appropriate standard legal practice. The due process requirements of section 615 of the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004," 20 U.S.C. 1415, apply to due process complaint notices and requests for due process hearings and to due process hearings held under division (G) of this section, including, but not limited to, timelines for requesting hearings, requirements for sufficient complaint notices, resolution sessions, and sufficiency and hearing decisions.

(2) Discussions that occur during a resolution session shall be confidential and shall not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceeding. If a resolution to the dispute is reached at a resolution session, the parties must execute a legally binding written settlement agreement which shall state that all discussions that occurred during the resolution process shall be confidential and shall not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceeding.

(3) A party to a hearing under division (G) of this section shall be accorded:

(a) The right to be accompanied and advised by counsel and by individuals with special knowledge or training with respect to the problems of children with disabilities;

(b) The right to present evidence and confront, cross-examine, and compel the attendance of witnesses;

(c) The right to a written or electronic verbatim record of the hearing;

(d) The right to written findings of fact and decisions, which findings of fact and decisions shall be made available to the public consistent with the requirements relating to the confidentiality of personally identifiable data, information, and records collected and maintained by state educational agencies and local educational agencies; and shall be transmitted to the advisory panel established and maintained by the department for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the state.

(H) An opportunity for any party aggrieved by the findings and decision rendered in a hearing under division (G) of this section to appeal within forty-five days of notification of the decision to the state board, which shall appoint a state level officer who shall review the case and issue a final order. The state level officer shall be appointed and shall review the case in accordance with standards and procedures adopted by the state board.

Any party aggrieved by the final order of the state level officer may appeal the final order, in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, within forty-five days after notification of the order to the court of common pleas of the county in which the child's school district of residence is located, or to a district court of the United States within ninety days after the date of the decision of the state level review officer, as provided in section 615(i)(2) of the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004," 20U.S.C. 1415(i)(2).

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