STARTING POINT FOR CHILD CARE AND EARLY EDUCATION

Working with Children with Special Needs

An Invest in Children Resource Guide for child care center administrators, staff and family child care home providers.
a new solution for special needs child care

The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 ensured that children and adults with disabilities are entitled to the same rights and privileges others enjoy... including equal access to community-based child care.

To serve children with special needs, child care providers often need special expertise, training, equipment and support. Families, too, need assistance and want to locate appropriate child care centers and family child care homes for their children.

There is help for parents and providers alike...

a comprehensive Special Needs Child Care Program, developed as part of Cuyahoga County's Invest in Children and coordinated by Starting Point, the area's child care and out-of-school time resource and referral agency. This program has a three-fold purpose:

1. to support families in their efforts to locate services for children with special needs;
2. to help child care providers and programs creatively adapt routines and activities so children with special needs can participate; and
3. to enhance the quality of services for all children in Cuyahoga County.

On the following pages, we’ll tell you how the program works and how you can access services and programs in order to serve the children with special needs — while maintaining high quality programs for all the children in your care.
The Special Needs Child Care Program is centered on the belief that each and every child is a distinct individual with special strengths and needs; that kids with and without disabilities, health or emotional problems can participate in the same routines and experiences; and that they all can be enriched in the process.

Caring for a child with special needs can be exceptionally rewarding—and it can be challenging, too. The Special Needs Child Care Program pulls together a wealth of community resources to help you, as child care professionals, deal with the challenges and reap the rewards of helping these youngsters achieve their potential. You’ll have access to a comprehensive social service system for children with special needs that offers:

- telephone, electronic and on-site consultation and assistance from top area agencies in the health, disability and behavioral fields;
- special training, information and materials to help you (1) integrate children with special needs into your classroom, (2) alter your facilities and make creative modifications to routines and activities, and (3) access resources for special needs requirements;
- loans of special equipment and adaptive toys; and
- lending libraries of helpful videotapes and books.

Our agencies will be with you every step of the way. You’ll be surprised. The program’s ultimate goal is to give you the tools to make this a more rewarding and less daunting experience for you and the children you serve, whether they have special needs or not. The special needs child care experience can be a very enriching one for all.

1.800.880.0971
For information, referrals, training

Starting Point for Child Care and Early Education • 216.575.0061

As the child care resource and referral agency for Cuyahoga, Ashtabula, Geauga and Lake counties, Starting Point is an invaluable resource for child care professionals, parents and the community-at-large.

This agency addresses the vast spectrum of child care issues, develops and coordinates programs and offers a wide array of services to:

• link families with child care centers, homes and services;

• increase the number of quality child care centers and family child care homes to meet emerging needs;

• improve the quality of care;

• stimulate early education alternatives;

• advocate for children, families and professionals in the child care arena; and

• educate consumers, professionals, employers and the community-at-large on child care issues.

For child care professionals needing help for a youngster with special needs, Starting Point is a logical first step. As coordinator of this extensive special needs project, Starting Point has pulled together an impressive array of services to support and assist child care centers and homes. In addition, child care professionals can call Starting Point to:

• locate families with children with special needs who need care;

• obtain information about special needs services, training, equipment loans, lending libraries and funding available for special needs child care;

• access services for children with health, medical, emotional needs; developmental delays or physical disabilities;

• receive training and technical assistance on child development assessments; and

• obtain training and technical assistance on boy-friendly strategies.
Kenny had already been expelled from three child care centers for violent behavior when Jewel reluctantly took him into her center. Right away he began hitting the other children. Now, he was throwing chairs. Nothing she did seemed to work. Was there anything to do besides expel him again?

For developmental screening, early intervention, and coordination of services

Starting Point • 216.575.0061
Help Me Grow of Cuyahoga County • 216.698.7500

Starting Point, Help Me Grow of Cuyahoga County and Invest in Children work together to identify youngsters in child care settings who need specialized services and to link child care professionals and families to needed services.

Starting Point:

• provides technical assistance and training to child care professionals and families regarding children in child care who have special needs, such as developmental disabilities, health conditions, physical and behavioral concerns;

• consults with families and caregivers on developmental issues, parenting, health care and other community resources.

Help Me Grow of Cuyahoga County:

• conducts developmental screenings of young children, using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire—a helpful tool that assesses a child’s skills at specific age levels, monitors their development and is useful in discovering areas of concern in communication, motor skills, problem-solving, personal and social skills for children up to 3 years of age;

• determines eligibility for ongoing specialized services to help children from birth to three years of age with problems caused by premature birth, health issues or concerns about their progress in seeing, hearing, talking, thinking, playing or moving;

• links families to ongoing service coordination and family support;

• facilitates the development of individualized family service plans (IFSP) for the care of children with special needs;

• provides training to child care staff on the Help Me Grow system and child development information.
If your child care center or home cares for children with medical issues such as asthma, seizures, or a feeding tube, public health nurses from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health are available to provide technical support at no cost. They offer on-site assistance to give child care providers the skills and equipment they need to care for children with special medical needs.

They will

• Consult and train staff with respect to specific diseases, medical conditions, nutrition and feeding issues; medication and side effects, medical emergencies, medical documentation and liability, etc.

• Develop an individualized health care plan and provide ongoing follow-up for parents and child care providers.

• Coordinate services between families, healthcare providers and child care professionals.

• Provide equipment loans including items like nebulizers and feeding pumps.

If there is a child in your center or family child care home with special health care needs, it is important to take advantage of this program to ensure the child’s health and to understand your responsibilities from a legal perspective.

Other special needs team members

Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities (CCBDD) • 216.241.8230

The Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities provides a parent coaching service in the family’s home and/or child care centers for children 0-3. Early Intervention services include:

• Assistive technology
• Occupational therapy
• Physical therapy
• Psychological services
• Speech/language therapy
• Specialized Instruction
• Family supports/respite
• P.L.A.Y. Project—for children 0-3 with autism spectrum disorder or concerns.

The CCBDD also provides community-based supports to eligible preschool and school-age children.

Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County (ADAMHS) 216.241.3400

24-Hour Mental Health Crisis Hotline, 216.623.6888

24-Hour Alcohol and Other Drug Addiction Treatment Information and Referral Line, 211 or 216.436.2000

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Tracy was born with cerebral palsy and was expected to spend her young life in a wheelchair. Gloria wanted to care for her in her child care center, but she wasn’t sure how she could manage. Building alterations, special equipment and activities would be needed. Was there anyone who could help?

The Technical Assistance Program (TAP) of the Achievement Center for Children has been a pioneer since 1980 in helping child care staff include children with disabilities in community early childhood programs.

TAP helps providers successfully include children with autism, speech/language delay, cerebral palsy, sensory issues, etc. by:

• Providing information about the child’s disability and specific needs.
• Responding to questions and concerns.
• Problem solving and providing information and strategies to the teachers in order to help the child in the classroom.

TAP services also include:

• On site training with individual teachers and child.
• Environmental training with classroom teachers.
• Loan of equipment, books and other resources.
• Referral and collaboration with other area professionals as needed.
• Helping parents and teachers learn to advocate for children with special needs.

For more information about TAP please call 216.292.9700.

For children with physical/developmental disabilities

Achievement Center for Children, Technical Assistance Program (TAP)
216.292.9700

or call 1.800.880.0971 for Starting Point
Since 1997, Positive Education Program's (PEP) Early Childhood Plus program has been providing consultation services and technical assistance to child care providers, and support to families with children experiencing difficulties in the child care setting. Working with staff, parents and all agencies involved, PEP consultants develop a seamless and effective program for children with social, emotional and behavioral difficulties. The program's ultimate goal is to maintain children successfully in their child care placements.

PEP's child care consultation has three primary objectives:

• To improve the social, behavioral and emotional functioning of at-risk children in child care;
• To increase the competencies of parents and caregivers of at-risk children in child care; and
• To increase the competencies of child care staff.

Consultants provide multiple services to child care centers, Head Start, preschool programs, and family child care homes. Services can include:

• Observation and suggested interventions for preschool children in early care and education settings;
• Modeling, coaching, and classroom support;
• Training sessions and team building (Step Up to Quality approved) for child care staff and families;
• Meeting facilitation; and
• Advocacy, providing referrals, and collaborating with other agencies.

Beech Brook • 216.831.2255

Beech Brook is nationally recognized as an outstanding provider of children’s mental health services. In 2010, the agency served 21,000 children and their families, offering mental health treatment, consultation and training to children, families and providers of services to children throughout Cuyahoga County with special emphasis on the City of Cleveland. Its more than 500 employees include licensed social workers, professional counselors, psychiatrists, nurses, mental health specialists, foster care case managers and educators.
Child care-related services include:

- Education and training on childhood development, working with children with mental health needs and autism; and supporting families of these children;
- Technical assistance on appropriate child development and intervention strategies for managing social, emotional or behavioral mental health challenges of children with special needs;
- In-service training sessions for child care professionals;
- Collaboration with other agencies on maintaining quality assurance standards.

Through this program Beech Brook helps child care professionals better identify and meet the needs of children with mental health (social, emotional and behavioral) or autistic spectrum concerns and increase their understanding of the issues facing these children and their families.

Beech Brook also offers numerous parent education programs, and assists Starting Point with data collection and information-gathering.

Applewood Centers, Inc.
216.521.6511

Applewood Centers is one of Northeast Ohio's largest and most experienced providers of behavioral healthcare for children, youth and their families, providing technical assistance (TA) and training to child care centers and family child care homes in Cuyahoga County.

The agency's consultants take referrals from both teachers and parents for children who display social, emotional or behavior concerns, then work with the teacher and parent(s) to set up a plan to help the child succeed in the program.

Consultants provide child care staff and parents with written feedback and recommendations after each session. They also work with child care providers on general issues and provide the staff with a variety of activities and strategies to help the child strengthen positive behavior, enhance self-esteem, learn self-control and feelings expression and get along with peers. Parents are provided with resources and referrals if requested.

The program's ultimate goal is to give child care providers the tools to work with children who have social, emotional or behavioral concerns. We also work to ensure that pre-school children are ready for Kindergarten and facilitate that process. Applewood has Step Up to Quality approved staff and trainings for child care staff, most of which address but are not limited to issues related to children with behavior problems, working with and engaging parents and staff stress and burnout.

Guidestone Classroom Intervention Program (CIP) • 216.337.9726

The Classroom Intervention Program (CIP) offers intensive technical assistance services to early care and education providers of infants, toddlers and pre-school age children. CIP is for children who are exhibiting moderate to severe challenging behaviors in the classroom.

CIP services include:

- **INTENSIVE SERVICES.** Hands-on support, recommendations, and interventions provided to the classroom for up to 4 hours per week
- **INDIVIDUALIZATION.** CIP addresses the specific needs of the child and teacher/site through a combination of classroom interventions, teacher education, support, and curriculum building
- **SPECIALISTS.** Skilled Consultants work alongside providers and parents for on-site support that builds on existing teacher, child, and parent strengths
- **RESILIENCY.** Services aim to promote resiliency, enhance protective factors, and strengthen social-emotional skills within each child
- **RESOURCE AND REFERRAL.** Consultants can conduct team meetings to address progress and ongoing needs, as well as make referrals to additional support services as needed.

*transforming from Berea Children’s Home and Family Services
For mental health and behavioral problems continued

Hanna Perkins Center for Child Development • 216.991.4472

For over 60 years, the Hanna Perkins Center for Child Development has helped children and families lay the foundation for a lifetime of healthy emotional development. We help children via collaboration with their families, educators, pediatricians, and mental health professionals.

THE HANNA PERKINS PHILOSOPHY:
• Invest wholeheartedly in the critical years of early childhood—a short period that sets the direction of a child’s entire life;
• Development during the early years is the foundation for all later abilities to learn, work, form healthy relationships, and enjoy life;
• Caring relationships and respect for feelings are central to all other learning.

Through the SNCC Technical Assistance program, Hanna Perkins Center provides free consultation services to child care providers regarding children’s unique social-emotional needs. This is accomplished, with parents’ permission, through professional observation of the child in her/his classroom setting, followed by ongoing child-specific coaching sessions with child care staff. Parent consultations can also be included upon request.

Each consultant from Hanna Perkins Center for Child Development is highly trained and experienced in providing education to parents and early-care providers. Consultation is available for those working with children who might be experiencing:
• Separation and transition difficulty
• Withdrawn or overly passive behavior
• Aggressive behavior
• Awkwardness with peers
• Family crisis
• Medical situations
• Other concerns as presented by the parent or care provider

Murtis Taylor Human Services System • 216.283.4400

Murtis Taylor Human Services System provides community mental health, alcohol and other addiction services as well as youth, family, and senior programs to 11,000 children and adults annually. Youth and family services are provided in the Garden Valley, East Cleveland and Mt. Pleasant communities and senior services in the Mt. Pleasant community. Community mental health services are provided countywide.

Murtis Taylor Human Services System provides early intervention training and consultation services to child care providers to better serve children with special needs. Training and consultation includes behavioral interventions, child development and referral options tailored to meet the needs of children.

Murtis Taylor Human Services System works with child care providers to identify children based on classroom behavior needs. Some referral behaviors are aggressiveness, withdrawal behaviors, adjustment behaviors and developmental concerns.

Technical assistance and services are provided at no cost to the child care provider or the families they serve. Bilingual services are available.

On-site services include the following:
• Child care staff are educated in child development with instruction for utilization of social-emotional interventions.
• Group training and individual consultation are provided to child care center and home-based providers. Trainings offered are Step Up to Quality approved.
• Referrals are provided for additional supportive needs of children enrolled with the provider.
For special needs information and referrals or help in coordinating services for children with special needs, call Starting Point at 216.575.0061. The following services are available for providers serving special needs children.

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Agency and Phone


* See specific description of agency services for more information
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