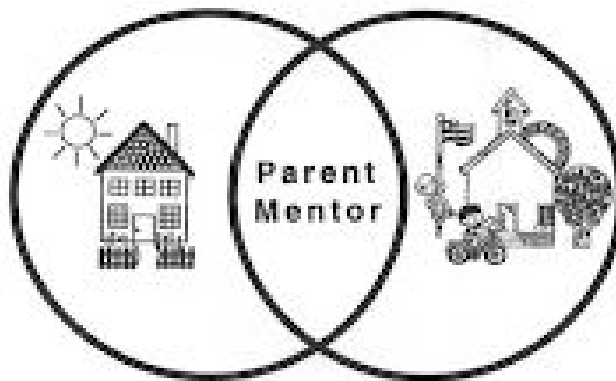


You've Got a Friend: Our Champaign County Parent Mentor

Have you ever heard someone mention a "Parent Mentor" and wondered what that meant? Like any mentor, a Parent Mentor helps and guides families through the special education process. School districts have a responsibility to develop, support and implement a system of education services for all students. The basis of the Parent Mentor Program is the expectation that students with disabilities will be ensured appropriate and meaningful education if parents and educators communicate effectively and operationalize the partnership planning required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. Districts choose to implement the Parent Mentor Program to promote this necessary and effective communication by providing information and support to families about special education issues and by providing a mechanism to convey the family perspective back to the system. The five Champaign County school districts and the have joined together to employ through the Madison-Champaign County Educational Service Center, Jacqueline Howley as the Parent Mentor for Champaign County. Mrs. Howley is the parent of two children with disabilities and has been helping families in the county as the Parent Mentor since 2000. She serves the Graham, Mechanicsburg, Triad, Urbana, and West Liberty-Salem school districts. Ohio Parent Mentor projects are funded through grants from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). All Parent Mentor services are provided to families free of charge.



Home and School

As a Parent Mentor, Mrs. Howley:

- Listens and provides support to families and educators on an individual basis.
- Guides families through the special education process, including rights and responsibilities.
- Provides information and resources to families on such subjects as education laws and community resources.

- Attends meetings at the request of parents or staff. These meetings include Individual Educational Program (IEP) meetings, Evaluation Team Report meetings (ETR), Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) meetings, Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) team meetings, and more.
- Organizes and conducts information sessions or workshops based on the needs and preferences of families and professionals in the community.
- Helps build collaborative partnerships between families, schools, and community to benefit students with disabilities.

Reasons to call the parent mentor can include situations like these:

- I'm worried about my child moving from one school to the next.
- I feel alone and wish I could talk to another parent who understands my feelings.
- I feel no one is listening to my concerns about my child.
- I have questions about my child's education, and I forgot to ask them at the school meeting.
- I'm worried about my child's progress and am not sure what to do.
- I would like to have someone attend and support me at an IEP meeting or another meeting at school.
- I'm not sure if I have all the information I need and would like to speak with someone who can provide information in a "parent-friendly" way.

Parents and staff who wish to contact Mrs. Howley are encouraged to call her at 937-484-1570. Her office is at the Madison-Champaign Educational Services Center, 1512 S. HWY 68 Urbana OH. You can also email Mrs. Howley at howley@mccesc.k12.oh.us