

WELCOME!

This event will start shortly. In the meantime,
visit us at OhioFamiliesEngage.osu.edu

Ohio Family Engagement
— LEADERSHIP SUMMIT —

Family Engagement

BY DESIGN



Building Trust with Families Before, During, and Beyond Special Education Evaluation

Prepared for the Ohio Family Engagement Leadership Summit
September 20, 2024



Department of
Education &
Workforce



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
CENTER ON EDUCATION AND
TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT

TODAY'S FACILITATORS



DR. GABRIELLE JOHNSON

Ohio Parent Mentor Project Director
Licensed School Psychologist



KRISA RHODES

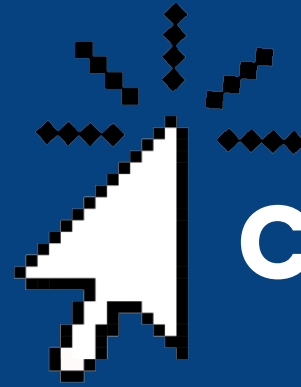
Parent Mentor
Muskingum Valley Educational
Service Center



PAULA DRUMMER

Parent Mentor
Educational Service Center
of Lorain County

- Understand the importance of trust in the special education process and its impact on student outcomes.
- Identify strategies for building and maintaining trust with families before, during, and after the special education evaluation process.
- Learn practical techniques for effective communication, collaboration, and follow-up that foster strong family-school partnerships.



CHAT CHECK-IN

We'd like to know who has joined us today! Let us know in the chat what your role is...

For example: teacher, parent, administrator, intervention specialist, etc.

OHIO'S PARENT MENTOR PROJECT Established 1991

Parent-to-
Parent
Support

Connections
to resources

Supporting
schools and
educators

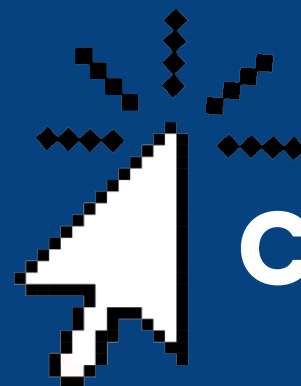
**All Parent
Mentors are
parent to a
child with a
disability*



PARENT MENTORS ARE NOT PARENT ADVOCATES

Think *helpers, coaches, liasions, bridge builders*

GOAL: Collaborate with and strengthen the child's educational team



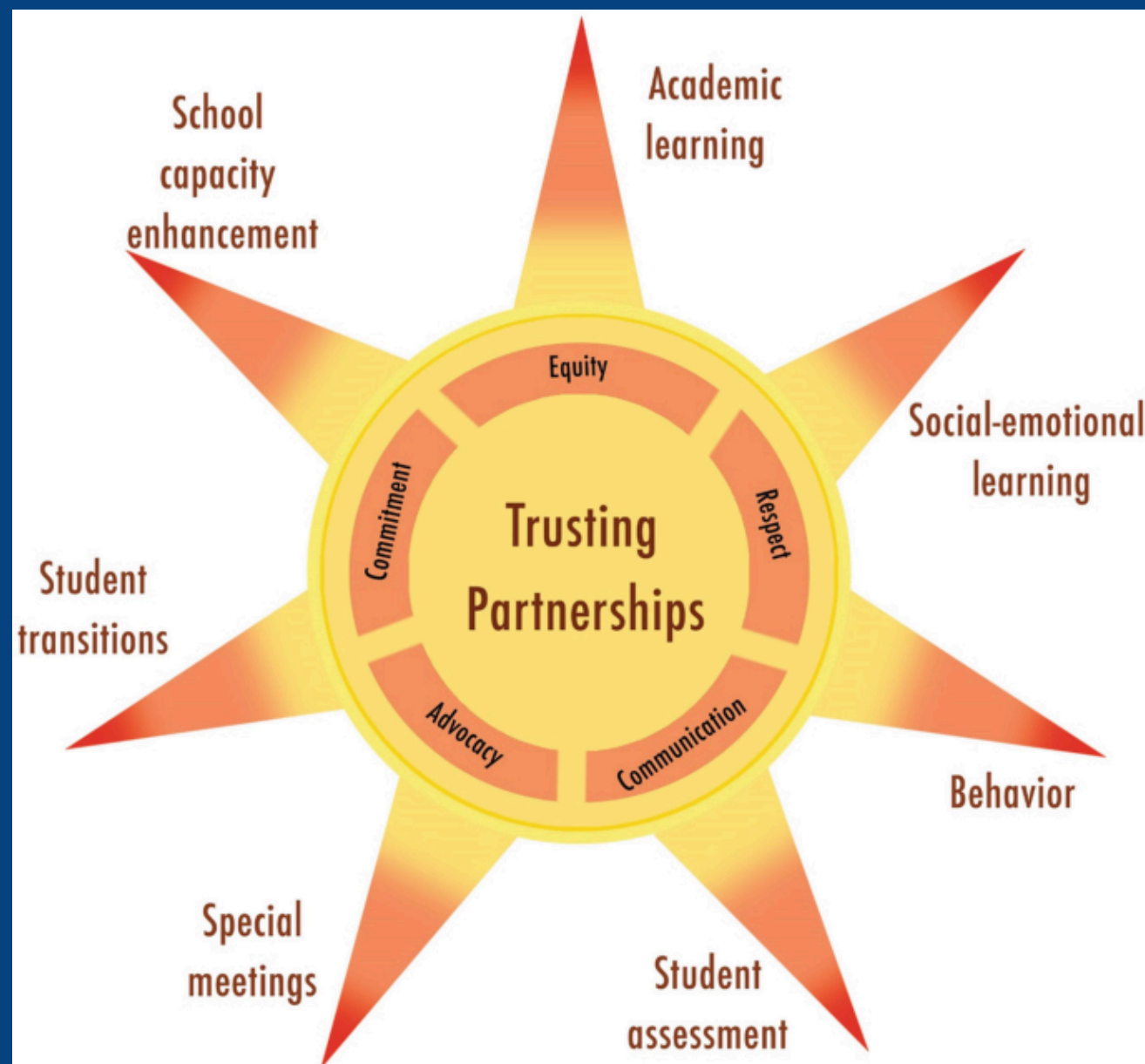
CHAT CHECK-IN

What are some words that come to mind when you think of the word TRUST?

How do you know when a family or student trust you?

SUNSHINE MODEL OF TRUSTING FAMILY-PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Turnbull, A. & Turnbull, R. (2021)



TRUST: Confidently believing that someone is reliable, honest, and will do what they say they will do.

- Centers trusting family-professional relationships as the primary support for children with disabilities.
- 5 Dimensions: Equity, Respect, Communication, Advocacy, and Commitment.

WHY BUILDING TRUST MATTERS

✓ Enhances open communication between families and educators.

✓ Encourages active family participation in the child's educational journey.

✓ Leads to better student outcomes and more collaborative decision-making.

➤ Families may have past experiences that make it hard to trust the system (previous miscommunication, cultural barriers, etc.).

BEFORE THE EVALUATION

WHAT'S THEIR STORY? Learn their journey

ESTABLISH EARLY COMMUNICATION

- **Reach out to families early and often—be proactive.**
- **Personal introductions: Ensure families know key staff members.**
- **Open discussions about the child's needs, strengths, and concerns.**

ENCOURAGE TRANSPARENCY

- **Explain the evaluation process clearly, including steps, timelines, and goals.**
- **Share information about legal rights and resources in understandable terms.**

BEFORE THE EVALUATION

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

- Know your community!
- Take time to learn and incorporate the family's cultural background, values, and expectations into the overall experience.
- Provide materials in the family's preferred language.
- If possible, provide interpreters who have basic background knowledge in special education.

CONSIDER ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

- Determine technology needs such as access to internet, email, phone, etc.
- Determine communication preferences—*How do you like to be communicated with?*
- Coordinating access to electronic documents and consent forms.

DURING THE EVALUATION

INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROCESS

- Reimagine families as expert evaluation team members—*because they are!*
- Include families in the decision-making process regarding assessment methods.
- Solicit their input on observations about the child's strengths and challenges.



DURING THE EVALUATION

COLLABORATION DURING MEETINGS

- **Conduct meetings that feel welcoming, collaborative, and family-centered.**
- **Use plain language, avoiding jargon that could alienate parents.**
- **Ask for feedback and ensure they understand all the findings.**

SHARING RESULTS WITH SENSITIVITY

- **When presenting results, focus on the child's strengths and areas of growth.**
- **Provide clear explanations of the evaluation and any identified supports.**

AFTER A STUDENT QUALIFIES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

COLLABORATIVE GOAL SETTING

- **Work with families to create individualized education goals.**
- **Ensure the family feels heard and involved in every decision.**

CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION

- **Continue regular check-ins beyond the evaluation.**
- **Encourage ongoing feedback and proactive dialogue about the child's progress and needs.**

PROACTIVELY SUPPORT TRANSITIONS

- **Assist families during major transitions, like moving from elementary to middle school or post-secondary planning.**

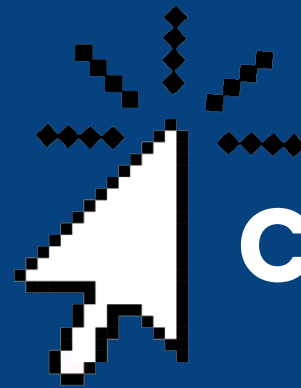
Take every opportunity to make an individualized experience possible for students and their families

MAINTAINING SUPPORT AND TRUST WHEN A STUDENT DOES NOT QUALIFY FOR AN IEP

- **Be transparent about the process, results, and eligibility criteria.**
- **Work collaboratively with the family to determine next steps.**
- **Communicate results with sensitivity: be clear and compassionate.**
- **Validate concerns and acknowledge the family's efforts.**
- **Provide alternative support options: 504 Plan, additional interventions, community programs and specialists.**
- **Stay engaged with the family and monitor student progress.**

REBUILDING DAMAGED OR BROKEN TRUST

- 1. Listen with intentionality and validate feelings and concerns.**
- 2. Take responsibility, if applicable.**
- 3. Communicate transparently and clearly.**
- 4. Collaborate on solutions.**
- 5. Be consistent and follow through on actions (and document them).**
- 6. Encourage mediation before escalation.**
- 7. Focus on your shared goal: supporting the child's success.**
- 8. Be patient and stay engaged.**



CHAT CHECK-IN

Share one aspect of today's presentation that you look forward to implementing with families navigating special education.



FINDING A PARENT MENTOR

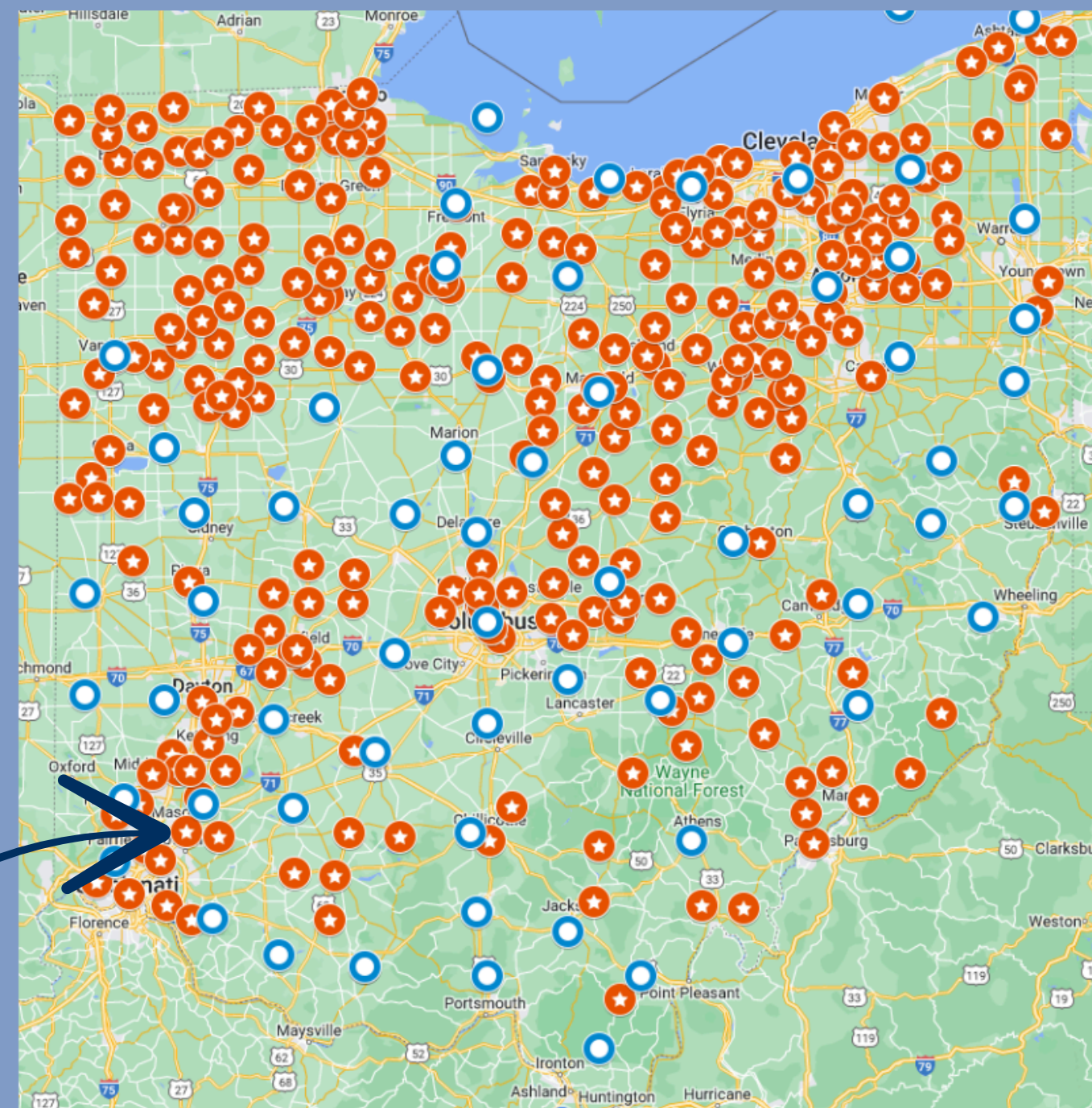
Website: parentmentor.osu.edu

“Find a Parent Mentor”

Search by District, ESC, or County

Areas not covered by Parent Mentors are serviced by Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD)

- ocecd.org



QUESTIONS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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Passionate. Connected. Accessible.

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 [ParentMentorsOh](https://twitter.com/ParentMentorsOh)



Family Engagement
BY DESIGN

THANK YOU FOR WATCHING!

OhioFamiliesEngage.osu.edu



Ohio Statewide
**Family
Engagement
Center**

—at The Ohio State University—



**Ohio Statewide Family
Engagement Center**



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@OhioEngage