



Department
of Education

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Autism Scholarship Program

Questions and Answers

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Autism Scholarship Program Questions and Answers

ELIGIBILITY:

1. Who is eligible for Autism Scholarship?

Generally, any student who has been identified by their public district of residence as autistic and for whom the district has created an Individual Education Plan (IEP) qualifies for the Autism Scholarship Program (ASP).

- *The student has been identified by their public district of residence as autistic. [This means the child’s evaluation team report (ETR) from the district of residence states that the child is eligible for services under the category of autism under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA)].*
- *The student must also have a current IEP from the District of Residence that is finalized and all parties, including the parent, must be in agreement with the IEP. (The IEP must be written by the district of residence.)*
- ***Please note:*** *A child who has been identified as having a “pervasive developmental disorder – not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS)” shall be considered to be an autistic child for purposes of the ASP per the language in Section 3310.41 of the ORC.*

2. How old must a child be to participate in the ASP?

A child is eligible to apply to participate in the program when the child turns 3, and if the child meets all other program eligibility requirements.

3. Can a community school student participate in the Autism Scholarship Program??

*Yes, a parent whose child attends a community school may apply to participate in the program. **The parent/child must obtain a current MFE and IEP from their district of residence to apply to the ASP.** The parent must withdraw the child from the community school. (Please note: Community schools cannot be providers in the Autism Scholarship Program.)*

4. If a child is being educated by the educational service center (ESC) eligible to participate in the Autism Scholarship?

Yes. A child with autism who attends a special education program in an Education Service Center (ESC) can apply and be approved for the ASP. However, the child cannot continue in the ESC program once the child begins using the scholarship.

5. Can I use the Autism Scholarship to supplement my child's public education?

No. A student utilizes the ASP in place of attending a public district.

APPLICATION:

6. How does a parent apply for the Autism Scholarship Program (ASP)?

*Once the district of residence has identified the child as autistic and created a current and agreed to IEP, a parent can apply for the ASP by submitting an application to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), Office for Exceptional Children (OEC). **Appendix A** of the ASP Guidelines is the parent application. Applications can be obtained by visiting the department's website or by calling (614) 466-2650.*

7. What is the deadline for applying for the Autism Scholarship?

Parents must submit an application by the last day of March to seek reimbursement for the last quarter of the scholarship year. Providers can apply to the program at any time. What is important to note is that parents cannot claim services for reimbursement in the ASP prior to the date on which they and their provider(s) were approved. Retroactive claims are not allowed. The ASP school year begins July 1 of each year and ends June 30 of the succeeding year.

8. How should the district of residence address the scholarship on the child's IEP if the child will be applying for the scholarship?

The district of residence must always write the IEP as if the district of residence would be implementing the IEP. There should be no mention of the ASP on the child's IEP.

PARTICIPATION:

9. What services are covered by the scholarship?

The scholarship pays for goals and services on the child's IEP.

10. Can a parent claim reimbursement for services that are not listed on the child's IEP?

*Services and/or education provided to children that are not listed on the child's IEP **CANNOT** be claimed for reimbursement through the ASP. Only services listed on the IEP can be claimed for reimbursement by the provider and the parent.*

11. What is the maximum amount of money available for the scholarship?

The scholarship can pay for goals and services on the child IEP up to \$20,000 per school year. The child must be in the program for at least eight months to claim the maximum amount.

12. If the services in the ASP exceed \$20,000 per year OR if a parent wants more service than is specified on the IEP, who is responsible for the costs of these services?

Parents can only claim and receive payment for services specified on the child's IEP. If the cost of the implementation of the IEP exceeds \$20,000 per year, the parent would be responsible for covering the additional cost.

13. Can a parent use scholarship money for transportation?

If transportation is listed on the IEP as a related service, the parent may obtain transportation from a registered private provider qualified to provide such transportation and claim it for reimbursement through the Autism Scholarship Program.

PRIVATE PROVIDERS:

15. Who can be a provider in the Autism Scholarship?

Any school, company, or individual with staff who have the appropriate credentials to provide services on an IEP may become a registered private

provider. The school or company must have been in operation for at least one full school year prior to enrolling children in the autism scholarship program. See the program rules, guidelines, and application materials for details.

16. How can a nonpublic school be a provider in the ASP?

*The easiest way for a nonpublic school to become a registered private provider is to employ a special education teacher. **Public school employees cannot be used to satisfy this requirement.** The special education services that the nonpublic school can provide in the ASP are dependent upon the credentials of their staff implementing the child's **IEP** (not the non-public individual service plan.) See the program rules, guidelines, and application materials for details.*

17. Who is responsible for ensuring that the IEP is fully implemented?

The parent(s) chooses the provider(s) and must ensure that the IEP is implemented as written. Also, the district of residence will be responsible for the annual IEP. Providers in the ASP are required to send quarterly progress reports to the resident district about the child's progress related to goals and services on the IEP.

STATE TESTING:

19. Are students in the ASP required to participate in state testing?

Students who are attending chartered nonpublic high school are required to participate in the Ohio Graduation Test. Otherwise; students in the ASP are NOT required to participate in state achievement and graduation tests.

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS:

20. Will there be any proration of payment for any child that attends the Autism Scholarship Program less than the full payment period?

Yes, ODE will prorate services based on when a child begins to receive services in the autism scholarship program, assuming both the parent/child and the provider(s) have been approved.

Examples:

- *Proration is most relevant when a child enters the program. The proration rates for anything less than the full three months are \$650 per week and \$2,500 per month.*
- *If a child entered the program during the first week of April, the maximum a parent could claim for services is \$7,000.*
- *If a child enters the program during the third week of January, the maximum amount a parent could claim for services is \$14,000, \$7,000 per quarter.*
- *The same proration rules would apply if a child withdraws from the program before the end of the specific payment period.*