



UNITED LIVING SERVICES

Ohio DODD: Getting Started Guide

A simple starting point for individuals of all ages and the families who support them.

You do not have to figure this out alone.

This guide explains the first steps for connecting with Ohio developmental-disability services. Start where you are, ask questions, and bring someone you trust if that helps.

Who this guide is for

Ohio children, teens, and adults with a developmental disability—and parents, guardians, family members, and other supporters who are new to the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) system.

Your first call

Contact the **County Board of Developmental Disabilities** for the county where the individual lives. The county board is the local starting point for eligibility, needs assessment, and coordination of supports. It can explain next steps even if you are not sure the person will qualify.

Ask for this:

"I am new to Ohio developmental-disability services. I would like to learn about eligibility and speak with someone about getting started."

Need help reading this guide or preparing for a call?

United Living Services (ULS)

Phone: 330-445-4135

Email: qualitycare@unitedlivingservices.org

Website: www.ulservices.org

The first four steps

1. Contact your county board

Ask how to request an eligibility review. The board will tell you who to contact, what forms or records may be useful, and what to expect.

2. Share information about the person

The board may ask about diagnosis, development, school history, daily-life needs, work, living situation, health and safety, and the support already in place. Bring what you have; do not delay the call because records are incomplete.

3. Complete eligibility and needs assessments

The county board uses Ohio's process to decide eligibility for county-board services and to understand the person's needs. Ask who your contact person is and when you should expect an update.

4. Make a plan for supports

If eligible, you may work with a service and support administrator (SSA) or another coordinator to build a person-centered plan. The Ohio Individual Service Plan (OhioISP) documents goals, services, providers, and important health and safety information.

Helpful documents to gather

- Identification and contact information, including insurance or Medicaid information if available.
- Medical, psychological, developmental, speech, occupational-therapy, or autism evaluations.
- School records, IEPs, ETRs, transition plans, and recent progress reports.
- A short list of current needs, strengths, routines, medications, safety concerns, and the help the person already receives.

Important:

A diagnosis does not automatically mean eligibility, and lack of a diagnosis should not stop you from calling. The county board can explain the review process for your situation.

Understanding common DODD words

Term	Plain-language meaning
County Board of DD	Your local public agency and the usual entry point for Ohio DODD services.
DODD	Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, the state agency that oversees the system.
SSA	Service and Support Administrator. A county-board professional who can help coordinate planning and services.
OhioISP	Ohio Individual Service Plan. The plan centered on the person's goals, needs, and supports.
Waiver	Medicaid funding for certain home- and community-based services. A waiver is one possible way to pay for eligible supports; ask the county board about availability and next steps.
Provider	A person or organization approved to deliver a service, such as direct support, transportation, or other supports.
Respite	Short-term support that gives a family caregiver time away from caregiving responsibilities.

When to say it is urgent

Tell the county board immediately if the person faces a serious health or safety risk, is at risk of homelessness or losing a caregiver, is leaving a hospital or other setting without supports, or has another urgent change. Ask what crisis or immediate-need options are available in your county.

At any appointment, you can ask:

- “What is the next step, who is responsible for it, and when will it happen?”
- “What services or funding options could fit the person’s needs?”
- “How can we participate in planning and receive a copy of the plan?”

Your first-call checklist

Use this page before or during your call with the county board.

- The person's name, date of birth, address, and best phone/email contact.
- A brief description of why you are calling and the help you are seeking now.
- Any immediate health, safety, housing, caregiver, school, or employment concerns.
- Names and contact information for doctors, school staff, therapists, or other supports, if relevant.
- Questions you do not want to forget.

Write down:

Name of the person you spoke with: _____

Date and time: _____ Phone/email: _____

Next step: _____

Expected follow-up date: _____

Stay connected with ULS

United Living Services is here to help individuals and families take the next step. Contact us to ask questions, discuss support needs, or learn more about our services.

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www.ulservices.org

Official resources

Ohio DODD—"Your Family": dodd.ohio.gov/your-family (county-board contacts, waivers, provider tools, and family resources).

Ohio DODD main site: dodd.ohio.gov

This guide is for general information and is not legal, medical, or benefits advice. Services, eligibility, and funding are determined by the appropriate public agencies and may change.