



## Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

**Ted Strickland, Governor**

**John Martin, Director**

November 2008

Greetings!

You are receiving this notice, as you are recognized as someone who represents an interest in Ohio's services and supports for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families.

You may have heard that the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) was designated the lead by the Strickland Administration to coordinate state agency work focusing on autism. To meet this charge, the Department has recently pulled together some of its key state agency partners to form an Interagency Work Group (IWG) on Autism. The group has been meeting to identify opportunities to better communicate and coordinate the way the state agencies do business to assure that efforts to serve individuals on the autism spectrum are responsive, effective, and an integral part of Ohio's system for serving all individuals with developmental disabilities.

The Work Group has drafted a work plan identifying six guiding priorities and accompanying activities as a launching point for its work. These priorities and activities are built on the strength and history behind the 2003 Ohio Autism Task Force recommendations, as well as current state autism-related initiatives. The work plan outlines strategies and activities that can begin immediately, or are already in progress. In trying economic times, the work plan offers the state attainable activities that can achieve positive results in the short term with little financial burden through: building more coordinated state and local partnerships; capitalizing on already existing services and supports statewide; and more creatively and effectively communicating with one another.

The draft work plan is attached for your review. You will see that the plan has designated several state agency leads to facilitate work around particular activities. As leads, these agencies will form the necessary partnerships (including state agencies, individuals and families, advocates, and service providers) to work together to achieve the work plan activities. The plan is about making and keeping connections.

ODMRDD embraces two overriding core values to guide its role as lead for coordinating this work:

- ❖ *Quality outcomes through a combination of people and process, and*
- ❖ *Partnership with stakeholders for positive results*

Thus, as an individual, family member, advocate, service provider or leader in the field, your input into the IWG work plan is critical and valued. You are invited to review this draft work plan, determine if the plan hits the mark for moving Ohio in the right direction, and provide feedback. You are also encouraged to share this plan with others that may be interested in providing their thoughts. All feedback will be shared with the Interagency Work Group and be used to finalize the work plan.

Comments or feedback can be directed to [autism-feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:autism-feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us). Should you have an interest in becoming involved with any of the specific activities outlined in the plan, please include your contact information.

Thank you, in advance, for your time to provide input!

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Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities