



Procedure Letter 33

TO: Early Care and Education Stakeholders

FROM: Kara B. Wentz, Director

DATE: September 30, 2025

SUBJECT: Special Needs Enhanced Rate for Publicly Funded Child Care Requires the Ohio PROMISE Program Designation

Background

Ohio PROMISE is a statewide initiative to promote resources, opportunities, and meaningful inclusion through support and education. This initiative is focused on increasing access for children with special needs.

As part of Ohio PROMISE, the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) issued [Child Care Manual Procedure Letter \(CCMPL\) No. 163](#) announcing the Inclusive Child Care Program (ICCP) designation to assist families in identifying programs with staff specifically trained to support children with special needs. All designations are indicated on the Ohio Search for Early Care and Education Programs webpage at childcaresearch.ohio.gov.

At the launch of the ICCP designation in October 2023, DCY automatically awarded the ICCP designation to approved programs receiving the special needs enhanced rate for a period of one year. These legacy-approved programs did not have to meet the eligibility criteria for the ICCP in that first year but were required to maintain the ICCP designation in the second year and beyond.

Purpose

This letter is being issued to:

- Announce that **DCY has renamed this program the Ohio PROMISE Program Designation (OPPD)**.
- Remind programs that were automatically awarded the OPPD (formerly the ICCP designation) and that they are required to obtain and maintain the designation as described in CCMPL No. 163.



- Require programs applying for the special needs enhanced rate beginning with the effective date of amended Ohio Administrative Code rule 5180:6-1-09 to obtain and maintain the OPPD designation.

The OPPD eligibility requirement is met with two steps, outlined below.

1. Staff Complete Professional Development

The Professional Early Childhood Inclusion Credential (PECIC) was created to raise the level of awareness, knowledge, competency, and increase the confidence of professionals caring for the needs of children with disabilities and creating an inclusive environment. More details about obtaining the inclusion credential can be found on the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA) website at [Ohio PROMISE Professional Early Childhood Inclusion Credential - OCCRRA](#).

2. Program Obtains the Ohio PROMISE Program (OPPD) Designation

To be eligible for the designation, programs must ensure that staff (designated below by program type) obtain a minimum of Level 1 of the PECIC (Levels 2 and 3 are also available).

PECIC credentialed staff at eligible programs are to serve as a peer resource for all other staff within the program. More information about the OPPD designation can be found on the DCY website at [Ohio PROMISE | Department of Children and Youth](#).

Early Care and Education Program Type	Staff Required to Obtain the PECIC
Center School-Based Preschool and School-Age	Administrator and One Lead Teacher
Family Child Care Home (Type A & Type B)	Provider

How to Apply and Maintain the OPPD Designation

To obtain the OPPD designation, programs must apply online through their Ohio Child Licensing and Quality System (OCLQS) provider portal. A job aid with step-by-step instructions for completing the application in OCLQS is available [here](#).



The OPPD designation is in place for one year from the date of approval. All programs must renew the OPPD designation through OCLQS at the end of their award period. A renewal reminder will be emailed to OPPD-designated programs.

Rule 5180:2-16-09 promulgated as 5180:6-1-09 is being revised to include this requirement.

Contact

For questions on how to obtain the OPPD, contact OCCRRA at support@ocrra.org or 614-396-5959.

For questions about the special needs enhanced rate and PFCC payment, contact the Family and Customer Support Center at 1-844-234-5437, option 6 or childcarepolicy@childrenandyouth.ohio.gov.

Rules/Forms

The chart indicates the impacted Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rules and/or required forms.

OAC Rules	DCY Forms
5180:2-16-09/5180:6-1-09	DCY 01231