

Dear {Insert your local representative},

My name is..., and I am a...at... Thank you for...

I am writing this letter on behalf of every child in the state of Ohio currently identified as a student with a Developmental Delay. According to Sec. 300.8(b) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), Developmental Delay is defined as children aged three through nine experiencing developmental delays as defined by the State and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures in one more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development, and by reason thereof needs special education and related services.

Ohio has limited the identification of Developmental Delay in both the Ohio Revised Code, ORC 5123.01, 5123.011 and OAC 3301-51-11 (C)(6) of the Operating Standards for the Education of Children With Disabilities to children ages three through five. Ohio's definition of being able to be identified through the age of five is a stark difference from the federal definition of being allowed to be identified through the age of nine. OSPA, OAPSA, and my request is simple and requires no funding, just action. We ask that ORC 5123.01, 5123.011 and OAC 3301-51-11 be revised to match that of the federal definition and allow for children to be identified as having a Developmental Delay beyond five years old as the federal law defines and permits. Data and advocates are available to further justify the need for this bi-partisan change to the law. I appreciate your consideration in the passing of this important change as it will significantly benefit children and their families.

I can be contacted at...

According to the 2020 Annual State Report on Preschool Children with Disabilities in Ohio, 7,134 children were identified as having a Developmental Delay from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. Action needs taken now to support over 7000 children ages three to five and ensure they continue to receive a free and appropriate public education upon turning six.

Respectfully,