Auglaize DD
County Board of Developmental Disabilities
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Fall
2025

The Grassroots Gazette

Communication Boards & Tools: Thinking Beyond the Playground

Last fall, we shared the exciting news of our ability to collaborate with 13 local partners in order ot bring 15 playground communication boards to Auglaize County thanks to grant dollars from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD).

Since then, both DODD and Auglaize DD have continued to focus on these valuable tools, creating digital communcation boards which can be printed or saved as a pdf, ensuring they are available and ready for use by anybody, anytime, anywhere!! Learn more inside!

A Note from our Superintendent, Renee Kohler

While the use of pictures to enhance expressive and receptive communication is not new, we are excited to see the increasing use of these tools which provide support and accessibility to children and adults with communication differences and language barriers.

Taking a deeper dive into the benefits of these tools, I first want to stress they can be just as valuable for adults as they are for children. In addition to language barriers and communication challenges, there are many adults who use non-verbal communication strategies to express their needs, wants, and thoughts. From high-tech tools to simple communication tools, it is important that everyone has a way to engage with friends and neighbors in their community.

Second, I encourage each of us to think about expressive and receptive communication. For most of us, these skills come naturally. We use spoken and written communication as well as non-verbal cues to both convey our thoughts and to understand what others are saying. We all know relationships and experiences are improved when all persons feel heard and understood, and it is ok to acknowledge these interactions can be awkward and intimidating when communication barriers exist. So, what can we do to navigate the two-way street of communication?

For those seeking to reduce frustrations and enhance community experiences, think beyond the playground by exploring the resources listed below. Print or save to your smart device and break down barriers by modeling the use of these tools as you live, work, learn, and play within your community.

For those feeling empowered to think beyond the playground to create more inclusive spaces and experiences for others, please consider printing communication tools relevant to your business, school, office, or event. Train staff to use these tools and feel free to reach out to us for ideas or to discuss the creation of customized tools.

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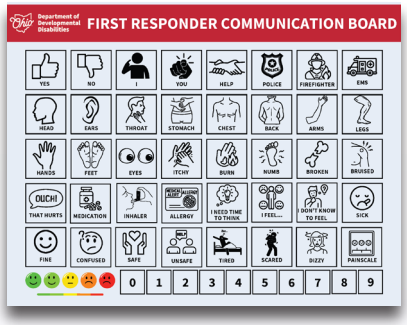

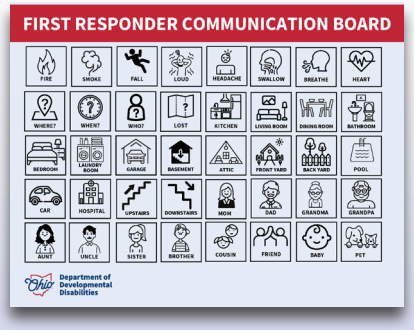

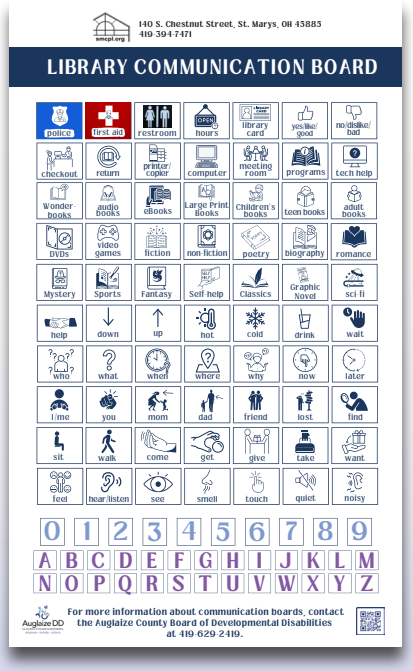

A Closer Look at Social and Emotional Learning

As toddlers learn how to be friends and manage their feelings, they are building important skills that support their overall growth and development.

Social skills, such as taking turns and asking for help, aid in building and maintaining healthy relationships with other children and adults. **Emotional skills** include recognizing and expressing feelings, learning how to calm down, and showing empathy for others. These early skills lay the foundation for a child's long-term happiness, health, and success.

Families who participate in Early Intervention report these services help them better understand their child's social and emotional strengths and needs. Many also report feeling more confident in supporting their child's development at home.

If you have concerns about how your child reacts, behaves, or plays with others, ACT EARLY! Contact us today or visit our website for more information on eligibility or making a referral.

Contact: Rachel Hausfeld, Early Intervention Services Manager at 419-977-2210 ext. 204 or visit us at auglaizedd.org

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) - Celebrating 80 Years -

In celebration of the 80th anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we're shining a spotlight on a local employer that is making a difference. CJ's Pizza's commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment sets an example for others to follow. Ashley Golden, a manager at CJ's Pizza, has witnessed firsthand the impact this approach has on the company and the community. In a fast-paced environment, David, fondly known as "the box king," and Hunter, a new hire finding his niche, alleviate the workload and "are more of a help than they realize."

Join us in applauding CJ's Pizza in Wapakoneta for its commitment to diversity and inclusion.

#80YearsOfNDEAM
#InclusiveHiring
#empower
#include
#achieve

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20 E. First Street
New Bremen, OH 45869

Our Mission:
To ensure individuals with developmental disabilities have access to quality supports, providing them opportunities to live, learn, work and play in their communities.

Upcoming Events:

October 1st-3rd
Synergy Conference

October 23rd
Wapak Halloween Parade

October 28th
Boo! On the Moon

November 18th-21st
OCALICON

SCAN ME

2025 Board Members:

Kristine Stinebaugh, President
Kristi Klopfenstein, V. President
Judi Martin, Secretary
Steve Koenig
Amy Wellman
Randy Wilker

Contact Information:

Auglaize County Board of DD.....419-629-2419
Early Intervention.....419-977-2210
Report Abuse, Neglect or Theft.....419-629-2419
After Hours/On-Call SSA.....419-629-2419

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