



OACB

**42ND ANNUAL
CONVENTION**

NOV 19-21, 2025 • COLUMBUS

Schedule At-A-Glance: Breakout Sessions

Last updated: Friday, November 14, 2025

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

Track: SSA

10:30-11:30 Updates and Review of Decision-Making Supports in Ohio

Join Derek Graham of Philipps and Graham for an informative session on decision-making supports in Ohio. This session will cover current practices, recent updates, and important considerations for families, providers, and professionals helping people with developmental disabilities exercise choice and control.

Presenter: *Derek Graham, Principal (Philipps & Graham)*

1:00-2:00 Tech Tools for Better Health and Independence

Learn how new technology and virtual care services are improving health outcomes and supporting independence. See how thermal imaging can detect health concerns in real time, helping individuals stay independent with less staff support. Explore 24/7 virtual medical access through the new Health Care Assessment waiver service. Discover how AI can promote healthy lifestyle choices. Stay up to date on the latest technology for medication management. Hear how these services enhance independence, privacy, and wellness.

Presenters: *Emily Martinez, Account Executive (StationMD), Ali Rahimi, CEO (MedForAll), Dr. Wendy Hanasky, Founder and CEO (AI Learning Solutions), James Ravenscraft, Account Executive (Impruvon Health)*

2:15-3:15 Self-Direction Mythbusters!

Myths and misconceptions surrounding self-direction can make it seem impossible. This session will break down those barriers by sharing real experiences and practical insights to show how self-direction empowers people to not just survive—but thrive.

Presenter: *Erica Andres, Senior Consultant (Applied Self-Direction)*

3:30-4:30 Lessons from Nebraska: Transitioning to the InterRAI Assessment (Hybrid)

As Ohio prepares to replace the DDP and AAI with the InterRAI tool, Jackie George of Myers and Stauffer LLC will share insights from Nebraska's statewide transition. This session will highlight successes, challenges, and key lessons learned in implementing InterRAI for budgeting and acuity assessments, offering practical guidance for Ohio stakeholders navigating this major change.

Presenter: *Jackie George, Senior Healthcare Manager (Myers and Stauffer, LLC)*

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Track: Leadership

10:30-11:30 Systemwide Organizational Change (Hybrid)

This session will take a deep dive into effective change management for public sector agencies. It will look at models, tools, and best practices specific to the field of intellectual disabilities. Some of the features of the presentation are strategies for evidence-based transformation, including trauma-informed care and collective impact partnerships.

Presenter: *Dr. Eric Hutchison, President (Hutchison Consulting, LLC)*

1:00-2:00 Innovative Workforce Strategies

This session explores the ongoing workforce shortage, focusing on innovative ways to recruit, retain, and support your staff. Attendees will explore creative strategies for candidate search, career progression, and upskilling within organizations, leaving with fresh ideas to strengthen and sustain their teams.

Presenter: *Dr. Eric Hutchison, President (Hutchison Consulting, LLC)*

2:15-3:15 Strengthening Board and Leadership Collaboration for Effective Governance

It is essential to recognize the separate functions of the board and executive leadership, and to strengthen their linkage. Discover ways to enhance role clarity and learn how self-assessment instruments and evaluation tools can improve collaboration and board performance.

Presenters: *David Mustine, Partner (CDM Partners, Limited), Laurie Lupinetti, Board President (Warren DD), Dr. Jason Jolley, Board Vice President (Athens DD), Ed Stark, Superintendent (Trumbull DD)*

3:30-4:30 Fostering Belonging in a Time of Change

Organizations are increasingly rebranding or reframing their efforts to focus on broader goals and to reduce jargon or political resistance, while still retaining the core values of fairness, opportunity, and belonging. Audience participation will be encouraged to discuss examples of approaches, their effectiveness, and guidance on navigating the current environment.

Presenter: *Dr. Jessie Tudor-Tangeman, Senior Consultant, Performance Coach (Hutchison Consulting, LLC)*

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Wednesday, November 19, 2025

Track: Early Intervention

10:30-11:30 Building Strong Foundations: Social-Emotional Support in Early Intervention

Social-emotional development is at the heart of a child's ability to form relationships, navigate challenges, and learn effectively. This session explores the critical role of social-emotional support within Early Intervention (EI) services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities. Participants will gain practical strategies for fostering emotional regulation, attachment, and resilience through relationship-based, family-centered practices. Emphasis will be placed on collaboration with caregivers, culturally responsive approaches, and integrating social-emotional goals into everyday routines. Whether you're a provider, administrator, or policymaker, this session will deepen your understanding of how to support the whole child and strengthen outcomes that last a lifetime.

Presenter: *Colleen Wallace, Master Trainer (Nationwide Children's Hospital)*

1:00-2:00 Why Use AAC in Early Intervention? (Hybrid)

Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices in Early Intervention can do much more than help a child communicate. AAC supports stronger friendships, richer social interactions, and greater participation in family and community life. It also fosters independence, decision-making, and respect from others, improves communication with care providers, and can enhance personal safety, employment opportunities, and overall physical and mental health, setting children up to thrive.

Presenter: *Bree Lanham, Early Intervention Speech Language Pathologist (Butler DD)*

2:15-3:15 Bridging the Gap: Supporting Transitions from EI to School-Age Services

This session equips educators and service providers with a clear understanding of the legal, procedural, and collaborative requirements for transitioning children from Early Intervention (Part C) to school-age services (Part B). Topics include IDEA compliance, Ohio timelines and policies, evaluation practices, and strategies for family-centered collaboration. Attendees will also explore service delivery expectations and best practices to support seamless transitions, strong school-family partnerships, and positive outcomes for children.

Presenter: *Regina Caproni, Psychological Services (The Psych Studio)*

3:30-4:30 Reflective Supervision in EI: Building Capacity Through Mentorship

As the Early Intervention field continues to evolve, the need for strong, well-supported leadership is more critical than ever. This session will explore how mentorship and reflective supervision can serve as powerful tools for building leadership capacity and driving meaningful change. With the theme of "Changemakers" at the heart of this year's Annual Convention, presenters from various counties will share real-world examples of how they are using structured mentorship and reflective practices to support new leaders. Participants will gain insights into what's working well in different communities, practical strategies for implementation, and how these approaches are helping to foster confident, resilient, and effective EI leaders.

Panelists: *Kathy Greenawalt-Cherry (Miami DD), Catie Metzler (Scioto DD), Holly Weatherson (BHN), Melissa Leighton (Mahoning DD) and Jennifer Reigle (Summit DD)*

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Track: Communications

10:30-11:30 What Digital Barriers Look Like

The Internet removes barriers to communication and interaction that people with disabilities encounter in the physical world. However, poorly designed websites can create digital barriers that prevent people from accessing the Web. The presenters will share practical tips for building and managing a team to ensure that Web content and mobile apps meet ADA standards. Topics include identifying and removing common digital accessibility barriers, integrating accessibility into workflows, staying updated on ADA regulations, and educating staff on the importance of ADA compliance.

Presenters: *Hollie Elam LaMar, Chief Creative Officer; Brian Deep, Graphic Designer; Larry Marotta, Digital Accessibility Coordinator (Ohio Secretary of State)*

1:00-2:00 Coordinating Advocacy with Communications Strategies

This session combines a Government 101 overview with communication strategies tailored for county boards of DD and people with developmental disabilities. Participants will learn about the legislative process, how boards can engage effectively with their communities, and how to craft clear messages that strengthen both local and statewide advocacy efforts.

Presenters: *Jacob Dowling, Legislative Affairs Manager, and Andy Jesson, Policy Coordinator (OACB)*

2:15-3:15 Meeting Upcoming Title II Requirements (Hybrid)

With the deadline for the recent Title II Final Rule quickly approaching, many are asking, "How do we meet the requirements and prove it?" Join a discussion led by James Warnken, CPACC, to dive into the process of making your digital products and services accessible and documenting your progress along the way. In this session, James will share strategies for testing, remediation, training, and documenting so that you can confidently meet the 2026/2027 deadline. Participants will leave with a better understanding of the new requirements and all the tools needed to build a roadmap towards compliance following this session.

Presenter: *James Warnken, Digital Marketing & Digital Accessibility Consultant (Clear Vision Marketing and Media)*

3:30-4:30 Humanizing Your Content in the Age of AI

AI is transforming content creation, but how can county boards maintain authentic, human communications? This session covers AI basics, content and SEO impacts, and practical strategies for integrating AI while protecting brand voice. Attendees will learn to safeguard privacy, use compliant examples, meet accessibility standards, and humanize content through staff, mission, and community stories. A pre- and post-AI checklist ensures content remains accurate, engaging, and compliant.

Presenter: *Shawna Burger, VP of Client Services (Burgie MediaFusion)*

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Track: Human Resources

10:30-11:30 Disability Download: The Human Perspective

Disability Download offers practical strategies and guidance for interacting with and serving people with disabilities in any setting—from the workplace to customer-facing roles. Participants will learn current best practices for creating inclusive, universally accessible programs, services, and spaces, and leave with actionable tips they can implement immediately.

Presenter: Dawn Bentley, M. Ed., Principal/ Consultant, CAIRE, LLC (Community Access Inclusion Representation and Equity)

1:00-2:00 Feedback That Fuels Growth and Commitment

Great leaders know that pay and benefits aren't the only reasons people stay—they stay when they feel valued, supported, and able to grow. This session gives leaders practical tools to use feedback as a driver of performance and retention. Learn how to balance recognition with constructive feedback, weave formal and informal conversations into daily practice, and build a culture where staff thrive and stay committed.

Presenter: Julie Doyle, SHRM-SCP, SPHR, Principal (Integral Ops)

2:15-3:15 Critical Thinking as a Powerful HR Tool

In today's fast-paced and complex work environments, the ability to think critically is more essential than ever. Learn to think critically, communicate more effectively, and foster a solution-focused mindset. Hasty decisions, overlooked details, and ineffective problem-solving can hinder productivity and lead to considerable mistakes within work environments. In this session, attendees will learn how to challenge assumptions, identify biases, and apply proven strategies to approach workplace challenges with clarity and confidence through critical thinking.

Presenter: Dr. Kitty Brandal, President (Corporate Compass Training and Development)

3:30-4:30 Doing More with Less: Cost-Saving Strategies for County Boards in Challenging Times

As county boards face increasing financial pressures, creative and strategic approaches to cost savings are more important than ever. This panel discussion will bring together leaders from across the state to share practical measures they have implemented to reduce expenses while maintaining quality services. Panelists will explore strategies such as leveraging community partnerships, maximizing efficiencies, restructuring staffing models, and prioritizing mission-critical functions. Attendees will walk away with actionable ideas, lessons learned, and renewed confidence in navigating today's fiscal challenges without compromising support for the people we serve.

Panelists: Danielle Dillon, Director of Human Resources (Montgomery DD), Dwight Finch, ACC, SHRM-SCP | HR and Operations Director (Butler DD), Christina Brown, Chief Operations Officer (Cuyahoga DD)

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Thursday, November 20, 2025

Track: Health, Safety, and Wellness

10:30-11:30 Specialized Medical Care for Adults with Autism (Hybrid)

The Center for Autism Services and Transition (CAST) at Ohio State provides specialized care for autistic adults aged 18-35. This session highlights CAST's patient-centered approach, multidisciplinary team, and accommodations for sensory and communication needs. Attendees will learn how CAST supports the transition from pediatric care, promotes independence, and fosters lifelong health and self-advocacy.

Presenters: *Christina Sayres, LSW CAST Social Worker, OSU Hilliard Internal Medicine and Pediatrics and Brittany Brock, CAST RN Care Coordinator (OSU- Wexner Medical Center)*

1:00-2:00 County Board Strategies for Mental Health Services

This training session will provide valuable insights into how county boards can effectively support the mental health needs of the people they serve. The presenters will share their firsthand experiences and offer a variety of approaches that can be explored to address these needs. Throughout the session, different strategies will be discussed, highlighting both the benefits and potential drawbacks of each. By examining various options, participants will gain a better understanding of which approaches might be most effective for their specific communities and how to implement them in a way that best supports individuals with developmental disabilities.

Presenters: *Carlisa L Parker, Inclusion and Engagement Coordinator (Clark DD), Dr. Scott Kidd, Clinical Psychologist (Montgomery DD)*

2:15-3:15 Barriers to Reporting Sexual Assaults for Victims with Disabilities

This session presents research identifying gaps in supporting people with DD in reporting sexual assault. It covers communication barriers, policies, accommodations, and training needs. Participants will also learn about tools—such as inclusive interview guides, visual schedules, and social stories—designed to center the voices of people with DD and ensure they are actively included in decision-making and reporting processes.

Presenters: *Dr. Brittany Hayes and Dr. Ráchael Powers (University of Cincinnati)*

3:30-4:30 Critical Relationships for Improved Outcomes: Forensic & Healthcare Liaisons

Cuyahoga and Summit DD will share their experiences as changemakers, highlighting partnerships with adult and juvenile justice systems and hospitals. The session explores how these collaborations were developed, their impact, and the results achieved. Participants will learn about the overrepresentation of people with DD in these systems, the value of specialized services, and how interagency partnerships and liaisons support positive outcomes.

Presenters: *Aveion Fields, Forensic Liaison (Cuyahoga DD), Missy Kuhn, LISW-S, Behavioral Health Supervisor (Cuyahoga DD), Darann Riley, SSA Director (Summit DD), Chris Watts, Senior Manager (Summit DD), Hannah Segers, Licensed Independent Social Worker (Summit DD)*

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Thursday, November 20, 2025

Track: Employment

10:30-11:30 Helping People Get Jobs and Take Flight - Part 1: Flight Plan and Take Off

Planning a job search is like preparing for a flight—success requires a solid plan, a skilled crew, and backup strategies. This session explores best practices for employment planning, including Employment First principles like the path to employment. Participants will learn how to assemble a strong support team and create a “flight plan” to help the people they serve soar into meaningful careers.

Presenter: Keith Banner, Community Life Engagement Project Lead (DODD)

1:00-2:00 Helping People Get Jobs and Take Flight - Part 2: Pushing Through Turbulence and Landing the Plane

Mid-flight, pilots and crews check in to keep the journey safe and smooth. This session explores how to maintain strong communication among the “crew and passengers”—including OOD counselors, employment providers, employers, families, and jobseekers—so any turbulence is managed. Participants will also get updates on the Works4Me project and upcoming changes to HCBS waiver services that support the path to employment. Happy landing!

Presenters: Keith Banner, Community Life Engagement Project Lead (DODD), Roya Hood, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

2:15-3:15 County Boards as Connectors: Linking People, Partners, and Employment

This session looks at how county boards and the people they serve work together to find the best employment options for each person. The session will explore some of the challenges, but also the successes, when making an employment transition.

Presenters: Sarah Zimmerman, Superintendent (Sandusky DD), Bobbi Kirch, Employment Coordinator (Knox DD), Mandy Camden, SSA Director (Sandusky DD)

3:30-4:30 F.E.A.R. Factor: Breaking Down Barriers to Work and Benefits (Hybrid)

This panel will introduce OACB and DODD's collaborative Fear Factor training series, which helps professionals, families, and people with disabilities better understand and overcome fears around losing benefits when pursuing employment. Presenters will highlight the importance of benefits analysis, share updates on recent improvements to benefits, and discuss future initiatives aimed at reducing penalties for individuals with disabilities who choose to work.

Panelists: Lisa Comes, SSA Advisor (OACB), Anne Tapia, CLE Liaison (DODD), Christine Brown, Clinical Research Asst. (Nisonger), Latosha Olinger, Work Incentives Coordinator (Warren DD), Darendia Geer, Disability Benefits Support (DBS Consulting), Jeanne Ehmke, Work Incentives Consultant (Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities), Nate Turner, Advocate Policy Specialist (DODD)

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Track: Advocacy

10:30-11:30 Legislative 101: Learning the Process, Leading the Advocacy

This session provides an overview of how bills and rules are made at both the state and federal levels. Participants will learn how OACB and its lobbying team advocate for county boards and how boards can engage locally. Attendees will leave with sample one-pagers on potential 2026 issues and practical guidance on when and how to communicate effectively with lawmakers.

Presenters: *Jacob Dowling, Legislative Affairs Manager (OACB), Reese Gallagher, Lobbyist (Statehouse Impact Group)*

1:00-2:00 Strengthening Board and Advocacy Relationships (Hybrid)

This session brings county board staff and advocates together to examine current collaborations, identify opportunities for stronger partnerships, and envision a future with enhanced teamwork. Through personal stories and guided discussion, participants will explore practical strategies for improving communication, coordination, and shared impact, leaving with actionable ideas to strengthen relationships and better serve the community.

Presenters: *Stewart Jones, Advocate; Ruben Garcia, Board Member (Vinton DD); Carmen Shelton, Advocate; Ryan Phillips, Director of Communications, Advocacy & Community Relations (Franklin DD)*

2:15-3:15 Grassroots Advocacy in Action

Grassroots advocacy has driven major changes throughout history, and this session highlights its impact on the developmental disabilities system. Participants will hear from advocates who have led movements advancing self-direction, independence, and voting rights. Through discussion and conversation, attendees will explore how grassroots efforts continue to improve the lives of people living with developmental disabilities.

Presenters: *Erica Andres, Senior Consultant (Applied Self-Direction), Jennifer Kuchera, Chair (Ohio Olmstead Task Force)*

3:30-4:30 Navigating System Stressors

This session offers a comprehensive look at the *Funding the Future* series, sharing collected data and actionable steps for addressing current system challenges. Participants will review key conversations from the year on DD system sustainability and gain practical strategies for county boards to advocate effectively for the services and supports provided to people with developmental disabilities.

Presenters: *Adam Herman, CEO (OACB) and Jake Dowling, Legislative Affairs Manager (OACB)*

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Track: Youth and Transition Support

10:30-11:30 Changing Needs, Changing Relationships: Bridging the Gaps in Service

This session explores how families and county boards can work together to navigate challenging situations. Participants will learn strategies for fostering positive relationships, applying trauma-informed care, and understanding Ohio's DD system. Using real-world examples, the session will highlight how service and support administrators (SSAs) and families can build lasting, effective partnerships to meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities.

Presenters: *Sarah Davies, Parent, and Amber Clapsaddle, SSA (Lucas DD)*

1:00-2:00 Supporting Transition-Age Students in IEP Planning

Feeling anxious about IEP meetings or unsure how to support a student's transition? This session will guide participants through Ohio's education landscape, clarify roles on the IEP team, and introduce the backwards planning process. Attendees will learn practical tools and strategies at each step to help transition-age students successfully navigate their transition planning years.

Presenters: *Alex Corwin, Superintendent (Licking DD), Elizabeth Wietmarschen, Transition to Adulthood Consultant (OCALI)*

2:15-3:15 Collaboration in Action: Building the Child Wellness Campus (Hybrid)

Child-serving agencies in Cuyahoga County will share their collaborative efforts addressing the child welfare crisis and the upcoming launch of The Centers' H.O.P.E. Campus (child wellness campus). The session will highlight the community needs driving the project, strategic priorities and goals, partner selection through the RFP process, stakeholder contributions, the board's role, campus design, and next steps in ongoing planning and collaboration with the Ohio Department of Children and Youth.

Presenters: *David Merriman, Director (Cuyahoga County Department of Health and Human Services), Karen Storman, Deputy Director (Cuyahoga County Department of Children Services), Dawnya Underwood, Executive Director (The Centers' H.O.P.E. Campus), David Gray (The Centers' H.O.P.E. Campus), Leah Dalton, SSA Manager, Youth and Transition (Cuyahoga DD), Stephanie Hayward, SSA Supervisor, Youth and Transition (Cuyahoga DD)*

3:30-4:30 Collaboration in Action: Community Partnerships that Transform MSY Support

Amy Brinkman (Wood DD) and Amanda Tharp (Belmont, Harrison, and Noble DD) will share how their county boards collaborate with partners—including Family and Children First Councils, Job and Family Services (JFS), Mental Health and Recovery Boards (MHRB), and Juvenile Courts—to support Multi-System Youth (MSY). The session highlights county boards' roles in planned respite and home-based supports, their engagement with councils, and how cross-system partnerships are improving outcomes for youth with complex needs.

Presenters: *Amy Brinkman, Director of Service and Support Administration (Wood DD), Amanda Tharp, Director of Community Supports, (Belmont, Harrison, and Noble DD)*

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Thursday, November 20, 2025

Track: Business Managers

10:30-11:30 Enhancing County Board Operations with Technology and AI

Technology, including artificial intelligence, is transforming every aspect of life. This session explores how AI tools can be leveraged to improve business practices within county boards. Participants will learn practical ways to increase efficiency, generate new ideas, and strengthen fiscal management, helping boards optimize resources while supporting the people and communities they serve.

Presenters: *Dr. Wendy Hanasky and Karen Mamone, Instructional Technology Consultant (AI Learning Solutions)*

1:00-2:00 Partnering with SSAs: Meeting Business Needs

How can business leaders effectively collaborate with SSAs at county boards to understand waiver enrollment, costs, and service delivery? This session brings together a panel of county boards to demonstrate successful collaboration between business and SSA teams. Participants will hear about successes, challenges, and lessons learned, gaining practical strategies to strengthen partnerships and better support the people they serve.

Panelists: *Jo Elle Barath, SSA Director (Cuyahoga DD), Jeramee Caraballo, Director, Medicaid & Data Analytics (Cuyahoga DD), Ed Lewis, SSA Director (Stark DD), Leigh Donatella, Business Manager (Stark DD)*

2:15-3:15 Strategic Plans for a Changing Landscape

County boards must develop strategic plans to set priorities and allocate resources for children and adults with DD. With growing waiver enrollment and utilization, predicting future needs is increasingly challenging. In this session, a panel of county boards will share their approaches for projecting needs, planning for future waiver resources, and ensuring they can continue meeting the needs of the people they serve.

Presenters: *Neil Townsend, Director, Office of Budget and Administrative Operations, and Jennifer Meadows, Medicaid and SSA Director (Hamilton DD), Michele Myerholtz, Superintendent (Lucas DD), Steven Tucker, Director of Finance (Lucas DD), Amber Cross, SSA Director (BHN Alliance), Lori Balvin, Business Manager (BHN Alliance)*

3:30-4:30 Impact of Efficiency on Targeted Case Management

Case management is essential for people with DD and their families, making the critical role of SSAs even more important. County boards can also be reimbursed for activities like assessment and planning for Medicaid-eligible people. This session will provide an overview of Targeted Case Management and showcase how different county boards approach efficiency, billing, and rates to maximize support for the people they serve.

Presenters: *Tyler Davis, Finance & Operations Director (Champaign/Shelby DD), Christy Eley, Business Services Director (Darke DD)*

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