

Together Beyond the School Day: Out of School Time for ALL!

Tips for Parents and Caregivers

For many parents and guardians of children with disabilities, finding safe and accessible out of school time (OST) activities can be a difficult and frustrating process.

Parents and caregivers wonder...

“Will the program take the steps necessary to make sure my child is safe and fully able to participate?”

“Is a program right for my child?”



Taking part in fun, engaging activities outside the school day is good for all children! Giving young people with and without disabilities the opportunity to participate together is beneficial to all.

Your child should be able to participate fully in an OST program – even if it means the program will need to make changes to accommodate your child. The law requires that almost all OST programs, regardless of size, take steps necessary so that all children can safely and meaningfully participate.

If you ask an OST program whether your child can participate in a program or activity, the answer should be:
“YES!”

This flyer provides information about ways to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to participate in OST programs.

What you need to know:

In deciding how your child will participate in an OST program or activity, it is important to note:

- ◆ Your child has the right to be in any OST program for which he or she meets the basic requirements for participation.
- ◆ There are resources available to help an OST program meet your child's needs.

Choosing a program:

- ◆ Explore your child's needs and interests.
- ◆ Ask questions about staffing, schedules, expectations and rules of the program.
- ◆ Think about whether any part of the OST program may need to change for your child to participate.

Before your child begins a program:

- ◆ Share information with OST program staff about your child and her/his unique needs.
- ◆ Share details about what your child enjoys and what helps her/him be successful in different activities at home and at school.

While in the program:

- ◆ If needed, sign appropriate forms to release information so that the OST program staff can be prepared to help serve and support your child.
- ◆ Work closely with OST program staff to develop an individualized plan of accommodations and supports, if needed.

You can ask for help:

Maryland Out of School Time Network

Phone: 1-888-219-2440 ext. 1

Web:

www.mdoutofschooltime.org

Disability Rights Maryland

Phone: 410-727-6352, select "0" for intake

Web: www.disabilityrightsmd.org



Additional Resources:

Abilities Network/Project ACT Child Resource Center

Phone: 410-828-7700 ext. 1226

Web: www.abilitiesnetwork.com

Maryland Coalition of Families

Phone: 410-730-8267, select "0"

Web: www.mdcoalition.org

Parent's Place of Maryland

Phone: 410-768-9100

Web: www.ppmmd.org