

# Ohio Disability Impact Study

## OUTCOME STATEMENT:

A research project will acquire and analyze data to demonstrate the direct and indirect social, economic, and psychological impact of a child with disabilities as it relates to the immediate family, the local community, and greater society in the State of Ohio.

## SCOPE OF PROJECT AND COUNCIL INTENT:

According to a new national study, “Families with disabled children are struggling to keep food on the table, a roof over their heads, and to pay for needed health and dental care. But these challenges are now falling on middle-income households and not just on poor families as previous research has found.” (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008)

Although clearly acknowledged by both the public and by policymakers, often the effects of the addition of a child with disabilities to a family are viewed in a limited way as they directly relate to the immediate family. Council recognizes the fact that the impact on a family also has a ripple effect on the community and the state. In addition, evidence of this impact is often anecdotal. In the absence of hard data and analysis, the public and policymakers are unable to recognize the need for services and supports, much less that these services and supports can be a positive investment for the society and economy of the greater population

For example, the loss of a professional income-earner to stay home to care for a child with disabilities can mean:

❖ “Brain Drain”

- An educated professional and/or a person with experience is removed from the workforce.

- Loss of the investment in education, training and experience and its effects on our society and economy
- ❖ Social and psychological impacts
  - The individual's engagement with the family and the community is affected.
  - Less time for friends, gatherings, volunteering, activities, etc.
  - Increased divorce rates
  - Alienation from community
- ❖ Socio-Economic effects of reduced family incomes:
  - Less local spending affects local and Ohio economy as well as sales tax base
  - Less savings and investment for the future, i.e. retirement and education, has significant long-term effects
  - Loss of taxable income means less tax base for local and state government
  - Reduced home values as families don't spend on higher-priced real estate, limit home improvements and defer maintenance.
  - Schools and other services affected as real estate tax base is reduced
  - Reduced entrepreneurship and leadership
  - Reduced abilities to donate to charities and organizations.
  - Generation of a "working poor" class where families struggle to maintain services that have income and asset limits
- ❖ A lack of investment in services can impact the larger economy. One example is:
  - Child care providers may not be prepared for a child with special needs, thus potentially limiting the availability of job applicants and employees.

Council will fund a project to collect and organize Ohio specific data to complete two types of analysis. First, a comparative analysis will be completed to reflect the differences between families caring for a child with disabilities and families with typical developing

children. This analysis will document direct, measurable effects on the families. Second, an impact analysis should be completed to reveal the larger direct and indirect effects that these issues have on local communities and the State of Ohio. Council will utilize the analysis to educate the public and policymakers and find opportunities for improvement to systems and services for families that would result in greater socio-economic good.

**RESOURCES TO BE ALLOCATED:**

Federal:	\$110,000
Matching Funds:	<u>36,667</u>
Total:	\$136,667

**REQUIRED PERFORMANCE TARGETS:**

**Area of Emphasis: Cross Cutting**

**Identification  
Number**

CR1: Public Policymakers educated by council about issues related to Council initiatives.

Year 2010: 10                      Year 2011: 225

CR3: Members of the general public estimated to have been reached by Council public education, awareness and media initiatives.

Year 2010: 250                      Year 2011: 500

**FUNDING METHOD:**

Competitive Grant