

ODE-OEC MEMO #2016-2

To: Ohio Educational Agencies Serving Children with Disabilities
From: Sue Zake, Ph.D., Director of the Office for Exceptional Children
Date: February 3, 2016
Subject: *Service Provider Ratio and Workload Clarification*

This memo provides guidance to school districts on use of a process for making decisions about the workload for providers of services to students with disabilities as required by Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) [3301-51-09\(I\)](#).

When determining service provider workload and caseload, here are definitions of terms.

- “Workload” means all services and duties assigned to service providers. This consists of direct and indirect (including but not limited to meetings, paperwork, professional development) service to children with and without disabilities.
- “Caseload” means the number of children who receive specially designed instruction or direct related service from a service provider.
- “Serve” means fulfill the service role of preschool and school-age service providers under OAC [Rule 3301-51-09\(G\)\(3\)](#). Therefore, “serve” includes direct and indirect activities such as: direct services and interventions, diagnostics, paperwork, arranging parent involvement, meetings, correspondence, planning, lesson preparation, prevention activities, professional development and collaboration with general education teachers.
- “Case management” means case coordination of a specific student’s IEP process and includes the activities listed above.

To ensure that children with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), a district must consider a “case management” ratio and a “per instructional period” ratio. ([OAC 3301-51-09\(I\)](#)). The district must first determine case management requirements for a particular service provider, and then make sure that the service provider has enough time to provide specially designed instruction or direct related service to all assigned children.

The district must consider the individual needs of each child and the level and frequency of services required. To assist in this determination, the Ohio Department of Education has created a [workload calculator](#). It applies weighted values based on typical needs for students in a disability category and age/grade range. Your district may consult the calculator to help determine the maximum number of students for each individual provider. However, your district must always consider the specific needs of your student population. If a provider cannot perform all workload duties and meet the direct service/specially designed instruction needs for your assigned children, then you must reduce the caseload or workload. This is regardless of the maximum numbers outlined in the *Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities*. ([OAC 3301-51-09\(I\)](#)).