
The Rich Center for Autism will receive a total of \$550,000 from the state of Ohio in the new biennial Capital Budget, to be used toward building renovations.

As a result of the efforts from the state legislature, The Center will receive \$100,000 from the One Time Strategic Community Investment Fund and \$450,000 from the 2025-2026 capital budget. These funds are part of the \$3.5 billion House Bill 2, which was approved by the legislature and then signed by Governor Mike DeWine on June 28, 2024. This historic bill was formulated to support facilities and local community infrastructure in a focus on creating jobs and growing Ohio's economy.

The Center launched their Building for Tomorrow campaign in 2020 as a renovation project to begin updates and additions within the building, including more resources for students and their families. The first phase included the addition of an ADA compliant elevator for the building, an independent living and life skills lab and a sensory motor skills room.



The life skills lab in the Rich Center on YSU's campus

With phase I completed, Michael Latessa, Rich Center executive director, had continued to work diligently to begin phase II. Following a Drive-In event hosted by the Chamber of Commerce, a meeting took place with representatives from local organizations such as KO Consulting, Hitch-Hiker Manufacturing, MS Consultants, First National Bank, Capitol Partners, as well as Chamber staff, with the hope of earning funds to support this next phase. Latessa credited the collaborative work among The Youngstown Warren Regional Chamber, as well as the Office of Government Affairs and Administration on campus for this achievement.