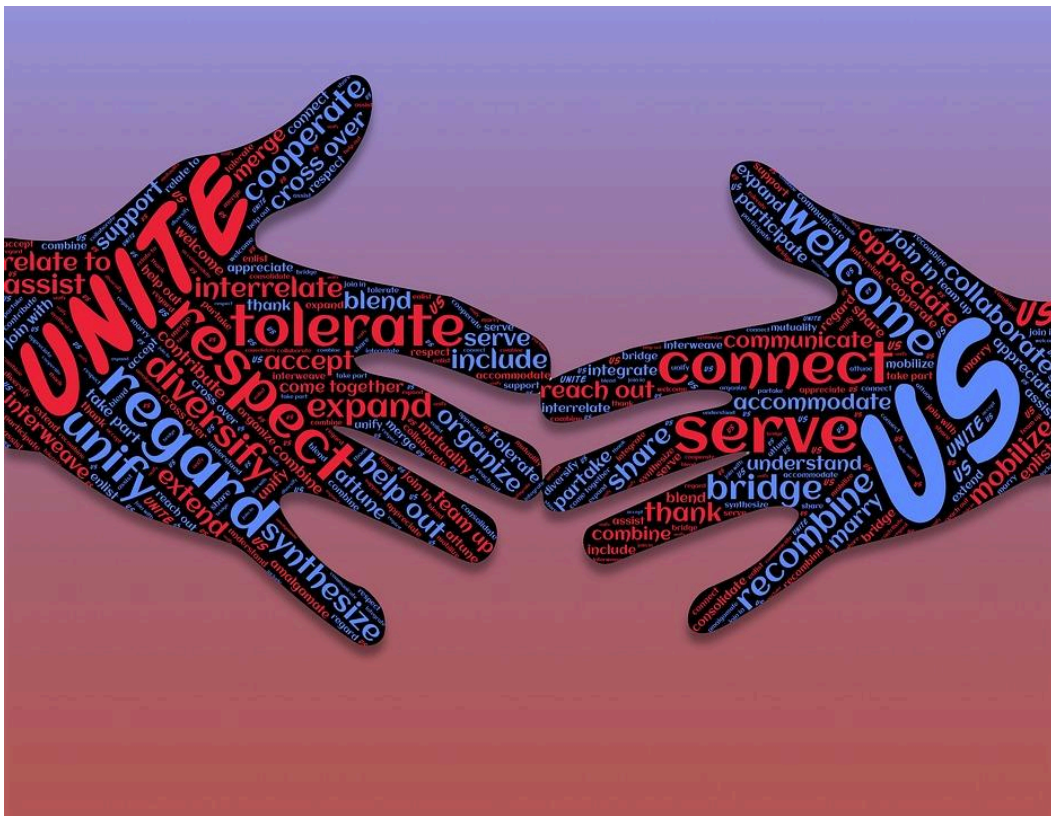


Parent Resource Booklet

For parents/guardians of preschool and
school-age children



*Northern Lights Interagency Council (NLIC)
Interagency Coordinating Council of Duluth (ICCOD)*

April 2023

*Electronic version of this booklet can be found at Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative:
www.nlsec.org*

For updates or changes to the booklet, please email: sproulx@nlsec.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Introduction</u>	2
<u>Overview of Special Education</u>	2
<u>Referral to Special Education</u>	4
<u>Obtaining a Social Worker</u>	5
<u>Behavioral/Mental Health Resources</u>	6
<u>Community Resources</u>	8
<u>Advocacy</u>	13
<u>Early Hearing Detection</u>	13
<u>Preschool Age Resources</u>	14
<u>Disability Specific Resources</u>	15
<u>Assistive Technology</u>	16
<u>Developmental Milestones</u>	18
<u>Web Based Resources</u>	18

Introduction: Special Education within NLSEC Member Districts

This Parent Resource Book was developed in collaboration between the Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative and the Northern Lights Interagency Council.

The Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative (NLSEC) provides, by cooperative efforts, comprehensive special education services within member school districts for children and youth having significant learning needs due to disability or developmental delay. More information about Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative can be found by viewing our website at: www.nlsec.org

The Northern Lights Interagency Council (NLIC) is comprised of approximately 60 individuals from 5 area counties, The NLSEC, private and school programs as well as parents, students, business and university personnel who serve needs of individuals with disabilities from birth through adulthood. The purpose of Northern Lights Interagency Council is to provide eligible children with disabilities and their families with a coordinated, multi-disciplinary, interagency, intervention services system that is family centered, community based and culturally competent.

The purpose of this Parent Resource Book is to provide parents, guardians and caregivers a comprehensive resource & directory where information regarding special education, county based services, behavioral/mental health resources, other community based resources, special education & disability advocacy, pre-school resources, information regarding assistive technology, as well as information regarding where to obtain information on child development.

Transition resources for students graduating high school are contained in the companion [Secondary Transition Resource Booklet](#) or by visiting www.nlsec.org and clicking on Services - Secondary Transition - Secondary Transition Resource Booklet.

Overview of Special Education

Every child is unique and learns in different ways. If your child has been identified as needing special education services to support his or her learning at school, you can play a major role in shaping the services your child receives.

There are many resources to help you understand the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the importance of your participation in developing your child's IEP Plan. **PACER** is one of the most recognized resource and advocacy agencies in Minnesota. Visit their website to find many resources available for parents: www.pacer.org/parent

You are a required member of your child's IEP team, and your ideas must always be considered in any decisions the IEP team makes. The development of the IEP is required in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004), its regulations (known as 34 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 300 and 301), and in Minnesota state special education rules and statutes. The federal regulations, which have the force of law, explain how the law will be carried out.

Each state implements the federal laws somewhat differently, but all follow federal guidelines which define the purpose of special education, which is "to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment,

and independent living.” — IDEA 601(d)(1). The law also requires that children are educated in the **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** which is further discussed below.

A Guide to the IEP for Parents

PACER has developed a guidebook that is designed for the parent, guardian, or surrogate parent of a child (ages 3 to 21 or graduation) with disabilities who receives special education services in a Minnesota public school or charter school. This publication can be found [here](#), or by visiting the PACER website - www.pacer.org, then click on Resources - Publications - Special Education Rights. PACER is the Minnesota Parent Training and Information Center, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs.

Least Restrictive Environment

The least restrictive environment (LRE) for a child with disabilities is an educational setting that provides an appropriate program, including any necessary special supports, in as typical a school environment as possible. As much as is appropriate for the individual child, children with disabilities should attend the school they would typically go to if they did not have disabilities. They should have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities with children who do not have disabilities. These decisions are made by the IEP team based on the child's needs. The IEP must explain why and how much time your child will be educated or participate in activities outside of the regular education setting. The explanation will include why the nature and severity of your child's disability is such that he or she must be removed from general education to receive services. You must be invited to participate in all educational placement decisions for your child. If you are not able to attend a meeting when a placement decision is made, the school must use other methods, such as individual or conference telephone calls or video conferencing, to help you participate. The school must keep a record of how staff tried to help you be involved in making the decision. In addition, you must be informed about the placement alternatives that are available for your child. The IEP team will discuss these alternatives and together you will decide what is most appropriate to meet your child's needs in the least restrictive environment. The services must be developed to fit your child, not the other way around. IDEA requires school districts to have a variety of placement settings, called federal settings, available to meet the individual needs of children.

Service Coordination and Case Management, and difference between Part C and Part B.

If your child is identified as needing special education, the terminology for the staff involved with, and the plan written for your child will vary depending on your child's age:

	Part C: Children age 0-2 yrs 11 months	Part B: Children age 3-21
Name of your child's plan	Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)	Individual Education Plan (IEP)
Title and Duties of the person in charge of your child's plan	Service Coordinator	Case Manager
Age that plan ends	Age 3. Student must be evaluated and found eligible (if appropriate) prior to their 3rd birthday.	Plan ends when student graduates from high school. In some instances, the IEP team may retain a student and delay graduation until IEP goals have been met. A child ages out of special education July first of the year they turn 21.

Referral to Special Education

Birth to Kindergarten entry

The process to refer a child birth to Kindergarten entry can be done in a variety of different ways. Anyone can refer a child, including a parent, family member, friend or professional who works with the child. There are three ways to refer a child who is not yet enrolled in Kindergarten:

1. Refer online: www.helpmegrowmn.org
2. Refer by phone at 1-866-693-GROW (4769)
3. Refer directly to the school by calling the local school district where the child lives.

If you are not the parent or guardian, you may make a referral without parent consent for children ages birth to five. However, we encourage you to speak with the family about this referral. The local Infant and Toddler Intervention or Preschool Special Education program will contact the family for their permission to proceed with the referral. Parents may accept or decline the referral. The parent's contact information must be provided at the time of referral. This helps connect the child with the correct local school district

Kindergarten to Grade 12 process

Before a student can be referred for an evaluation the school must be able to document the efforts it has made to address and solve the presenting problems of the student. The school must be able to document a minimum of two research based interventions. Typically, the two interventions are put in place for three to four weeks in an attempt to solve problem(s) exhibited by the student. If the team determines that the student is not making appropriate progress following the interventions and believes the student may be a student with a disability, they may proceed with the evaluation referral.

If the pre-referral interventions are not successful in solving the problems and the school believes the child might qualify for special education services, the student is referred to the child study team. This team determines what areas need to be evaluated and who will be involved in the evaluation process. This results in an evaluation determination plan that is reviewed with the parents. Parents have to give their permission for the district to proceed with an evaluation if the student has never received special education support previously.

If the parent requests an evaluation to determine whether a child has a disability and needs special education, the school district must respond within 10 school days of the request. The response may include the proposal of interventions or an evaluation plan. If the district refuses to conduct the evaluation, it must give the parent appropriate notice and inform the parent of their rights. The parent must be asked to give permission, in writing, for an initial (first-time) evaluation. Once the parent agrees to the evaluation plan, the evaluation report and a discussion of the results must be completed within 30 school days.

Once a child is found eligible for special education services, an Individualized Education Program is written. This happens as the result of a team meeting. PACER Center-Champions for Children with Disabilities-offers a parent guide to the IEP process. This document can be found [here](#).

Obtaining a County Social Worker

County human or social service departments connect people to agencies that provide programming that promotes independence, productivity, and community inclusion, such as, semi-independent living services, vocational services, and medical assistance. County social workers can also play a part in the transition planning process for students. They can assist in coordinating services and accessing funding for needed adult programming.

Depending on the type of disability your child has, the process for acquiring a social worker can begin at any age; however, it is encouraged to apply by age 14 when schools are beginning the transition process. If students have a developmental/intellectual disability, this process can begin during early childhood (birth on up). If and when a county social worker is acquired, inviting them to IEP meetings is highly encouraged to assist with programming.

To begin the process, one must contact an intake worker. Ask for an intake worker for either adult services, mental health, or developmental disabilities. In order to qualify for a Developmental Disabilities (DD) social worker, individuals must have an intellectual disability with an IQ score of 70 or below. Other impairments that may also qualify for services even when an IQ score is higher than 70 may include Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Autism, or other developmental disabilities. Mental health social workers work with individuals with a medical mental health diagnosis obtained by a Psychiatrist, Ph.D. Psychologist, or Clinical Social Worker. Finally, some individuals with health impairments or other physical disabilities may qualify for adult services in the disability unit.

Applying for a county social worker can be done at no cost to the family. Students who are 18 or older and do not have a legal guardian can apply for a social worker without getting parental consent. Below is the contact information for the surrounding counties.

Local County Health & Human Service Departments

County	Address	Phone Numbers
Aitkin	Aitkin County Health & Human Service Agency 204 - 1st St NW Aitkin, MN 56431-1291	(218) 927-7200 1-800-328-3744 www.co.aitkin.mn.us/departments/hhs/hhs-home.html
Carlton	Carlton County Public Health & Human Services 14 N. 11th Street Cloquet, MN 55720	(218) 879-4511 1-888-818-4511 www.co.carlton.mn.us/277/Public-Health-Human-Services
Fond du Lac	Fond du Lac Health and Human Services 927 Trettel Lane Cloquet, MN 55720	(218) 879-1227 1-888-888-6007 www.fdlrez.com/humanservices/
Mille Lacs Band	Mille Lacs Band 43408 Oodena Drive Onamia, MN 56359	(320) 535-4181 1-800-709-6445 https://millelacsband.com/

Pine	Pine County Health & Human Services 1610 Highway 23 North Sandstone, MN 55072	(320) 591-1570 1-800-450-7463 www.co.pine.mn.us/departments/health_and_human_services/index.php 320-216-4100 1-800-450-7463
Lake	Lake County Health & Human Services Department Two Harbors Service Center 616 3rd Ave. Two Harbors, MN 55616 Silver Bay Service Center 99 Edison Blvd. Silver Bay, MN 55614	(218) 834-8400 https://www.co.lake.mn.us/health-and-human-services/ (218) 226-4443 1-800-450-8832
St. Louis	St. Louis Co Public Health & Human Services Government Services Center 320 W 2nd St Duluth, MN 55802-1495 P.O. Box 307	(218) 726-2000 www.stlouiscountymn.gov/departments-a-z/public-health-human-services

Behavioral/Mental Health Resources

In School Services	Agency & Contact Information	Referral Process & Other Information
School Based Mental Health	North Homes 324 West Superior St. Suite 150 Duluth, MN 55802 Phone: 218-733-3000	School based mental health services strengthen students and their families through prevention and intervention within a school setting. In order to determine eligibility for the program, students need to complete a Diagnostic Assessment conducted by a mental health professional. If determined eligible, a mental health professional or practitioner will meet with the student and family to formulate goals and objectives identified by the family and student in conjunction with feedback from school professionals. www.northhomesinc.org
	Human Development Center Carlton County: 40 11th Street Cloquet, MN 55720 Phone: 218-879-4559	Human Development Center (HDC) works cooperatively with most school districts in our services area to provide therapy/counseling at school sites, and at HDC clinic locations. Referrals come from school personnel at each location. https://hdcnorth.org/locations/carlton-county/

	<p>St. Louis County: 1401 East First Street Duluth, MN 55805 Phone: 218-728-4491</p> <p>Lake County: 325 11th Avenue Two Harbors, MN 55616 Phone: 218-834-5520</p>	
	<p>Paradigm Therapy Services</p> <p>1102 Cloquet Avenue, Cloquet, Minnesota 55720 218-499-7000 info.paradigmtherapy@gmail.com</p>	<p>Paradigm provides school-based therapy to the following locations: Cloquet Middle School, Cloquet Area Alternative Education Program, Northern Lights Academy, Winterquist Elementary School, Esko High School, Bayview Elementary and Pike Lake Elementary.</p> <p>Paradigm Therapy Services</p>
EIDBI (Early Intensive Developmental Behavioral Intervention)	Accend	<p>With funding support from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Accend provides school-based mental health services in schools in the Lake Superior (ISD 381) and Cook County (ISD166) school districts. These services include Diagnostic Assessment, Clinical Consultation, Psychotherapy and CTSS Skills training, delivered on-site and in family homes.</p> <p>www.accendservices.com</p>
Children's Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS)* *Agency must be certified	<p>HDC</p> <p>North Homes</p> <p>Accend</p> <p>Therapeutic Services Agency</p>	<p>CTSS is designed to help children under the age of 18 with mental health, emotional and/or behavioral issues. This service is based on the unique and changing needs of the child and is designed to improve the child's functioning within the family and community. CTSS activities take place in the child's home and the community or school and referrals for services come from County Social Services. CTSS is available in St. Louis and Carlton Counties.</p> <p>A therapist recommends CTSS and directs these services.</p>

Behavioral/Mental Health Resources: Out of School Services

Out of School Services:	Agency	Referral Process & Other Information
Mental Health Case Management	County & HDC	Carlton, Lake and St. Louis Counties contract with HDC to provide case management services to adults and children with serious mental health issues. Case managers work closely with individuals and families to help them access needed supports and services to maximize independence, mental health, and community integration. See County Section for accessing Children's Mental Health.

Outpatient Mental Health Services	HDC North Homes Accend Amberwing	www.humandevelopmentcenter.org www.northhomesinc.org www.accendservices.com www.amberwing.org
Intensive Day Treatment	Northwood Children's Services Main Campus (218) 724-8815 714 W. College Street Duluth, MN 55811 - Chester Creek Academy - Merritt Creek Academy - Little Learners - Rockridge	Intensive day treatment serves youth with behavioral, emotional or learning problems who need more intense services than public schools provide, yet do not need out-of-home 24-hour care. Students receive special education, counseling, behavior management and family services, but return to their own homes each day. https://www.northwoodchildren.org/
Residential	Northwood Children's Services Main Campus (218) 724-8815 714 W. College Street Duluth, MN 55811	Northwood offers 24-hour residential treatment at our Main and West Campuses. Within an assigned team of 10 to 12 students (grouped according to treatment needs, gender, diagnosis, and age) children learn to live with others in a family-like atmosphere. Residential treatment enables youth to build positive relationships with caring staff that is committed to their personal growth and success. https://www.northwoodchildren.org/
Other Private or outside counseling, therapy and mental health services.	Psychology Today - Online Directory for Mental Health Practitioners NAMI Duluth Area - National Alliance for Mental Illness Online Directory St. Luke's Mental and Behavioral Health services and resources Essentia Mental and Behavioral Health services and resources	

Community Based Resources

Program	Information	Contact
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, Inc. (AEOA)	Established as a Community Action Program (CAP) for the northeast Minnesota counties of St. Louis, Lake, and Cook. Some programs have extended to the four neighboring counties of Aitkin, Carlton, Itasca, and Koochiching. AEOA is divided among five major departments and provides programs, services or assistance with: Arrowhead Transit, Head Start, Housing, Employment and Training, and Senior Services.	Administrative office: 1-800-662-5711 (218) 749-2912 702 3rd Avenue South Virginia, MN 55792 www.aeo.org

Arc Northland	The Arc Northland provides advocacy, education, housing, PCA and other support services for individuals and families with disabilities. They provide services for Southern St. Louis, Carlton, Lake, Cook Counties.	Zeitgeist Arts Building 222 E Superior Street, #302 Duluth MN 55802 (218) 726-4725 http://arcnorthland.org/
Asthma Home Visiting Program for St. Louis County residents	St. Louis County offers free asthma home visits for children and adults, living in St. Louis County, who have poorly controlled asthma. A Public Health Nurse can conduct a home assessment for asthma triggers, provide asthma self-management education, offer care coordination and support, and provide one-on-one instruction on how to use asthma medications. Tools and equipment may be available to help reduce asthma triggers in the home.	Contact Suzy Van Norman, Public Health Nurse, St. Louis County (218) 725-5291 vannormans@stlouiscounty mn.gov www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/asthma/professionals/home-basedservices.html#Example1
Circle of Parents	Free community-based support groups for parents, caregivers and their children. These groups foster an open exchange of ideas, support, information and resources. These groups serve those parenting children of all ages and families of all types.	Contact Jenna Schmidt, Northern MN Director of Prevention Initiatives jschmidt@familywiseservices.org 218-461-0292 https://familywiseservices.org/find-parenting-support/
Courage Kenny - Northland Adaptive Recreation	The Institute provides quality recreational opportunities for youth and adults with physical disabilities, including sensory impairments and autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in the Northland.	424 W. Superior Street, 200 Duluth, MN 55802 (218) 491-0585 mark.hanna@mdfoundation.org
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services - Northeast	The Department of Human Services provides a variety of services to people who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing through its Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division. They serve Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis Counties.	11 E. Superior St., #220 Duluth, MN 55802 Cell: (218) 490-0460 Video phone: (218) 206-8452 TTY: 866-488-3833 https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/
Duluth Regional Care Center (DRCC)	DRCC supports individuals with disabilities by creating opportunities to live rich and meaningful lives with family, friends, work and community. They provide residential services, waived homes, semi-independent living services and in-home family support and respite services.	5629 Grand Avenue Duluth, MN 55807 (218) 722-8180 https://drccinfo.org
Family Home Visiting & Follow Along	In the Family Home Visiting program, a Public Health Nurse is available to visit with families,	Aitkin County 218-927-7200

Program	<p>free of charge, who are expecting a baby or have just welcomed a baby into the home. The nurse will meet with you in your home to offer parenting support and growth and development information. Families will have the opportunity to ask questions about nutrition for both mom and baby, check blood pressure, discuss well-being, and learn about signs and symptoms of pregnancy, labor and delivery, physical and emotional changes, breastfeeding, caring for the newborn, immunizations, and more.</p> <p>Minnesota's Follow Along Program can help you track your child's development and let you know if your child is playing, talking, growing, moving, and behaving like other children the same age. Contact your local public health department to sign your child / family up for the Follow Along Program or visit this website for more information: www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrenyouth/fap/index.html</p>	<p>www.co.aitkin.mn.us/departments/hhs/PH-home.html</p> <p>Carlton County 218-879-4511 www.co.carlton.mn.us/665/Family-Home-Visiting</p> <p>Lake County 218-834-8400 www.co.lake.mn.us/health-and-human-services/public-health/</p> <p>Pine County 320-216-4149 https://www.co.pine.mn.us/departments/health_and_human_services/index.php</p> <p>St. Louis County Duluth office - 218-725-5210 www.stlouiscountymn.gov/departments-a-z/public-health-human-services/public-health/family-home-visiting</p>
Gillette Children's Northern Clinic	Provides specialization in health care for people who have disabilities and complex medical needs.	<p>Duluth - Lakewalk Center 1420 London Road, #210 Duluth, MN 55805 (218) 728-6160 www.gillettechildrens.org/locations/duluth-clinic</p>
Lighthouse Center for Vital Living	The Lighthouse Center for Vital Living provides training and other services to 1,500 individuals with vision loss each year. They serve youth, working-age adults, and seniors through services provided at the vision rehabilitation center, at home, or in the workplace. Their mission is to foster independent and vibrant lives for individuals with vision loss. Located in Duluth, their Low Vision Store is open by appointments.	<p>309 West First Street Duluth, MN 55802</p> <p>(218) 624-4828 Toll Free: (800) 422-0833 TTY: (218) 624-8822</p> <p>www.lcfvl.org</p>
Local Libraries	Local libraries offer different activities for children and teens such as baby and toddler time, story time, movies, LEGOs at the library, teen time and Kaleidoscope presentations in the summer.	<p>Cloquet Library 320 14th St. Cloquet, MN 55720 (218) 879-1531 www.cloquetlibrary.org</p> <p>Duluth Public Library 520 W. Superior St. Duluth, MN 55802 (218) 730-4200 www.duluthlibrary.org</p>

Mentor Duluth	Mentor Duluth Collaborative matches positive adults with young people between the ages of 5-18. Mentors are a role model, guide, resource and most importantly, a friend to their mentees.	206 W. 4th St. Suite 202 Duluth, MN 55806 (218) 722-3600 http://mentorduluth.org/
Minnesota Masonic Children's Clinic	The Minnesota Masonic Children's Clinic provides families with the assessments and tools they need to successfully open up the world of communication to their child. The services they provide include: hearing and communication assessments, consultation with allied professionals, direct management of language disorders, referral to the medical and educational communities services, onsite outreach visits and intensive parent education.	24 W. 2nd St. Duluth, MN 55802 (218) 720-3911 www.masonicchildrensclinic.org/
North Country Ride	North Country RIDE's (NCR) mission is to promote personal growth and development through equine assisted therapeutic, educational, and recreational activities. NCR is an accredited member of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, International (PATH, Intl.) Clients are able to participate in a variety of equine assisted therapeutic activities, following individualized programs designed and taught by one of our PATH Int. certified instructors. Programs operate on a seasonal basis: April through October. The season is divided into four 6-week sessions.	180 Hatinen Rd. Esko, MN 55733 (218) 879-7608 https://www.facebook.com/NCRinEsko/
Outpatient Therapy	<p>Essentia Health-Polinsky Medical Rehabilitation Center specializes in outpatient therapy services. Provides treatment, education, and support to adults and children with disabilities. Their mission is to help each patient function at their highest level and gain independence. We offer four types of therapy, including physical, occupational, behavioral health, and speech-language therapy.</p> <p>St. Luke's Pediatric Rehabilitation Services help children who experience physical and communication challenges live up to their potential. Comprehensive and coordinated rehabilitation is available for children from birth through adolescence. The pediatric rehabilitation team of Pediatricians, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech Therapy, conducts a thorough assessment in order to develop the most effective treatment</p>	<p>Polinsky 1600 Miller Trunk Hwy, #C Duluth, MN 55811 (218) 786-5360 www.essentiahealth.org/find-facility/profile/essentia-health-polinsky-medical-rehabilitation-center-duluth/</p> <p>St. Luke's 1001 E. Superior St. Duluth, MN 55802 (218) 249-6040 www.slhduluth.com/Services-Specialties/Rehabilitation-Services/Pediatric-Rehabilitation-Services.aspx</p>

	plan.	
Salvation Army	The Salvation Army provides assistance in these categories: basic needs, housing, youth services, rehabilitation, disaster relief, counseling and spirituality.	<p>Duluth 215 S. 27th Ave. W. Duluth, MN 55806 (218) 722-7934</p> <p>Cloquet 316 Carlton Ave Cloquet, MN 55720 (218) 879-1693</p> <p>https://salvationarmynorth.org/</p>
Special Olympics	Special Olympics provide a year-round program of sports training and competition for people with mental disabilities that contributes to lifelong physical fitness, personal growth and achievement.	<p>(218) 525-5860</p> <p>www.somnduluth.org</p>
State Services for the Blind	State Services for the Blind offers tools and training for employment, living independently, and accessing print. They assist Minnesotans who are blind, DeafBlind, losing vision, or who have a disability that makes it difficult to read print.	<p>Duluth Office 402 West First St. Duluth, MN 55802 (218) 302-8418 1-800-657-3752</p> <p>https://mn.gov/deed/ssb/</p>
Trillium Services, Inc.	Trillium provides community living, family services, connections and supported employment in Duluth and the surrounding area. Trillium empowers people to have a voice in conquering barriers and following their dreams.	<p>4629 Airpark Blvd Duluth, MN 55811 (218) 722-5009 1-877-722-4951</p> <p>www.trilliumservice.com</p>
University of Minnesota - Duluth	The Robert F. Pierce Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic provides evaluation and therapy services for individuals with communication and hearing impairments. Services are free of charge for persons of all ages.	<p>156 Chester Parkway 31 West College Street Duluth, MN 55805 (218) 726-8199</p> <p>https://cehsp.d.umn.edu/departments-centers/departments/communication-sciences-and-disorders/clinic-services</p>

Advocacy

ARC Northland: Provide services in the following area: self advocacy, housing access assistance, PCA and respite services, social groups (summer), classes, parental support and groups. Located downtown Duluth at 424 West Superior Street, Suite 500. (218) 726-4725 www.arcnorthland.org

Minnesota Disability Law Center: Provides legal help for Minnesota residents with disabilities. All individuals with disabilities are eligible to receive help, regardless of age or income level. (612) 334-5970; (612) 332-4668 TDD. www.mndlc.org

PACER Center: A parent training and information center for families of children and youth with all disabilities from birth through 21 years old. It expands opportunities and enhances the quality of life of children and young adults with disabilities and their families, based on the concept of parents helping parents. PACER provides individual assistance to families and offers more than 30 programs for parents and professionals. (952) 838-9000; (800) 537-2237 toll free. www.PACER.org

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention

The goal of the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program is to promote communication from birth for all children through the early identification of hearing loss and the initiation of appropriate intervention services. Newborn hearing screening and follow-up plays a critical role in the EHDI process by identifying newborns who are at risk for hearing loss and connecting them with diagnostic, support, and intervention services. Without EHDI, infants with hearing loss may experience delays in many developmental areas including language, vocabulary, articulation, social interactions, and behavior. EHDI Protocol includes the 1-3-6 Hearing Screen Model: screen before 1 month of age, diagnose before 3 months of age, and intervention before 6 months of age.

Delay in hearing loss diagnosis can often be considered a neurodevelopmental emergency. The newborn period is a critical time for development and growth, and changes quickly. Studies have shown that when hearing loss is identified before three months of age and intervention is initiated at no later than six months of age, children perform as much as 20 to 40 percent higher on school-related measures than children with hearing loss that was not identified early. Many different healthcare professionals and entities play a role in the hearing screening and follow-up process. As required by law (Minnesota Statute 144.9661), hospitals and out-of-hospital birth providers are expected to screen all infants for hearing loss and report results to the family, primary care provider, and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

Young children with permanent hearing loss are at risk for delays in many developmental areas including language and communication, social interaction and behavior, as well as literacy and later academic achievement. It is critical that children with permanent hearing loss and their families receive appropriate support services as soon as possible. The population of children who are deaf and hard of hearing has diverse and unique needs and requires individualization in order to help each child reach his/ her full potential. Access to highly qualified service providers who have specialized knowledge and skills in early childhood development, supporting families, and the communication opportunities chosen by each family is critical. To provide the highest quality of intervention, more than one provider may be required.

For information on **hearing screening and hearing tests**:

<https://www.asha.org/public/hearing/Hearing-Testing/>

For free downloads and information on **hearing loss in children**:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss/freematerials.html>

Preschool Age Resources

Program	Information	Contact
Early Childhood Family Education	Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) is based on the idea that parents provide their child's first and most significant learning environment and parents are children's first and most enduring teachers. ECFE works to support you as a parent/caregiver and to strengthen and empower families. The goal is to enhance the ability of all parents and other family members to provide the best possible environments for their child's learning and development.	Search for your Local ECFE Program: https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/elsprog/ECFE/
Head Start	Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood program for low income families (federal income guidelines apply). Head Start serves pregnant mothers, children birth to 5 years old and their families. Several agencies in our region provide Head Start programming to families.	Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency St. Louis, Lake, and Cook County 1-800-662-5711 https://www.aeo.org/arrowhead-head-start-overview Lakes and Pines Aitkin, Carlton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine County www.lakesandpines.org/head-start Fond du Lac Head Start www.fdlrez.com/Headstart/index.htm
School Readiness	Contact your local school district for program options.	
Parent Aware	This is a directory of all possible Early Learning Program options including family child care, center child care, faith based programs, wrap around care and school based programs.	www.parentaware.org/learn

Disability Specific Resources

Autism Society of Minnesota (AUSM): <https://www.ausm.org/index.php>

The Autism Society of Minnesota is a non-profit organization committed to education, advocacy and support designed to enhance the lives of those affected by autism from birth to retirement.

Caravel Autism Health <https://caravelautism.com/>

Caravel Autism Health's team of autism health professionals is dedicated to working with children with autism and related developmental disabilities and their families to develop skills, create connections and instill confidence. Their approach to ABA therapy is rooted in research and results.

Down Syndrome Association of Minnesota: <https://www.dsamn.org/>

The mission of the Down Syndrome Association of Minnesota is to empower individuals and families to create community and celebrate the abilities of people with Down Syndrome.

Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota: <https://www.epilepsyfoundationmn.org/>

The Epilepsy Foundation offers services across Minnesota and eastern North Dakota to those facing the challenges of epilepsy. They also serve the broader community by fostering a better understanding of epilepsy, promoting basic seizure training, and raising awareness of how common it is to experience a seizure.

Minnesota Autism Center (MAC): <https://www.mnautism.org/>

As a comprehensive provider, they offer a broad range of programs for children and youth with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Their programs focus on early intervention, life skills development, group learning and school readiness opportunities.

Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance: <https://www.braininjurymn.org>

Their mission is to raise awareness and enhance the quality of life for all people affected by brain injury.

Muscular Dystrophy Association: <https://www.mda.org/>

The Muscular Dystrophy Association is committed to saving and improving the lives of kids and adults living with muscular dystrophy.

Northway Academy:

<https://www.remminnesota.com/who-we-serve/autism-spectrum-disorders-services/northway-academy/>

Northway Academy provides Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) day programs across Minnesota for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or related conditions. We believe that all children deserve the opportunity to grow and thrive in the community they call home.

Assistive Technology

What is assistive technology?

Assistive technology (AT) can be a device or service which will help a student gain independence in his or her school environment. AT devices can be low-tech, like a pencil grip or high tech, like a communication device. An AT service is a service that assists in the selection and use of a device. An AT service can range from an evaluation to training and technical assistance of the device. The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) mandates that all students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be considered for assistive technology devices or services.

Considering a student for AT services? What does it mean to be considered for an AT device?

Consideration is a short process and should not be confused with assessment. During the consideration phase, the IEP team members collect and discuss information regarding a student's strengths, abilities and skills. This is tied in with discussion regarding the student's environment, general education, curriculum needs for meeting the IEP goals and possible AT services and devices to achieve these goals.

Who is involved in considering a student for AT?

When considering the AT needs of a student, the team process is crucial. Each member of the IEP team brings his or her skills and knowledge to the group. Combining these skills and this knowledge creates a collaborative effort that benefits the student by choosing the best AT device or service for his or her needs.

Members of the IEP team may include:

The student, parent, special education teacher, regular education teacher, paraprofessional, physical health disabilities teacher, teacher for the deaf/hard of hearing, teacher for the visually impaired, speech language pathologist, psychologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, building administrator or special education administrator.

How does the IEP team consider AT?

The team does a thorough review of the Student, the Environment, the Tasks and the Tools (SETT).

- **Sudent:** What are the student's current abilities? What are the needs of the student?
- **Environment:** Where is the student expected to complete the tasks? What is the physical arrangement of room?
- **Tasks:** What are the tasks the student needs to complete to meet IEP goals?
- **Tools:** What AT tools or services will help meet the task requirements? What strategies might be used to increase student performance?

Examples of AT:

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) - adapted utensils, adapted devices for hygiene, dressing aids, smart devices/plugs to turn devices on/off
Cognitive (Organization, Memory, Study Tools) - picture schedule, sticky notes, timer, calendar software or app, mobile device with organization apps, highlight text, index cards, recorded lessons

Communication – communication boards, simple voice output devices, portable communicator, communication apps, augmentative communication devices
Composing Written Material - word prediction apps, word cards, writing templates, digital recorder, dictionary/thesaurus, speech to text apps
Computer access – keyguards, alternate keyboards, adapted mouse, trackball, touchscreen, switch with scanning, voice recognition software
Environmental control – remote controls, switches that can activate electronic devices such as a blender, fan, radio or lamp, smart devices/plugs to turn devices on/off
Hearing – Hearing aids, closed captioning, real time captioning, FM system, peer notetaker/scribe
Math – money calculator, talking watches/clocks, talking calculator, online math programs or apps, adapted calculator
Mechanics of writing – pencil grips, adapted papers, slant board, mobile devices, SmartPen, digital recorder, writing implements, non-slip surface, word prediction, voice recognition apps
Reading – changes in text size or background color, symbols with text, scan and read programs, electronic books, handheld reading pens, highlighting, reading strip, visual windows, audio books, text to speech apps
Recreation and Leisure – adapted toys, adapted sporting equipment, arm supports for drawing, art software, computer games, voice operated smart devices
Seating and Positioning/ Mobility - walkers, wheelchairs (manual and powered), bikes, mobile standers, grab bars and rails, adjustable tables, gait training devices, adapted/alternate chair, hooyer lift, bolyster, Tactile boundaries, directionality devices, Signaling device
Sensory - Weighted lap pad, fidgets, alternative/flexible seating options, visual timer, noise canceling headphones, compression vest, chair t-band
Vision – magnifiers, large print books, screen magnifier, braille materials, tactile labels, talking calculators, light box, Bookshare, color contrast on screen, voice activated smart devices, handheld scanner, alternate keyboard

Should assistive technology be described in a student's Individual Education Plan?

Yes! In order to assure that a device is utilized to its fullest potential, and that all members of the IEP team are in agreement about the hows, whens and wheres of using the device, it is critical that the device is described in the student's IEP.

Who makes sure the AT device really gets used?

The IEP team is responsible for making sure that the student, school staff, family members and other interested parties are knowledgeable about how an AT device works. For instance, if a student has a

communication device, it is important that the school staff as well as family members at home know how to operate the device with the student. This may require ongoing training or instruction.

Payment for assistive technology

According to policies of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) schools must provide AT services and products necessary for a student to receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE).

For more AT resources, including pdf downloads for the SETT process, visit the NLSEC website: <http://www.nlsec.org> and click on Resources - [Assistive Technology Resources](#).

Other AT Resources:

Minnesota's Guide to Assistive Technology - <https://mn.gov/admin/at/>

CAST - Universal Design for Learning - <http://www.cast.org>

MDE Assistive Technology Manual (pdf) - <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/sped/tech/>

Developmental Milestones

You can find great information on your child's development on any of these great websites:

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: How Does Your Child Hear and Talk?

<https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/chart/>

Help Me Grow: Motor, Communication, Social/Emotional and Cognitive Milestones

<https://helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/DevelopMilestone/index.html>

Center for Disease Control (CDC) - Developmental Milestones

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

Web Based Resources

Disability Minnesota Home

The purpose of this website is to provide a single entry point to over 100 Minnesota state agency programs, products, and services that are devoted to the range of disability issues. We also provide access to laws, statutes, and regulations in pertinent disability-related areas.

<https://mn.gov/disability-mn/>

Family Voices of Minnesota

A free, statewide, parent-to-parent peer support program for families who have children with chronic and complex health care needs or disabilities. This program is called CONNECTED.

<http://familyvoicesofminnesota.org/>

MinnesotaHelp.info

An online directory of services designed to help people in Minnesota identify resources such as human services, information and referral, financial assistance, and other forms of aid and assistance within Minnesota. It is especially rich in resource information for seniors and their caregivers, disabled and their caregivers, parents and families, and low-income people.

<https://www.minnesotahelp.info/>

Minnesota Department of Education - Special Education Information for Students and Families

The information on this page guides parents and educators through the special education process. Here you will find resources and programs for helping students who may not be able to do some things children of the same age can do. This includes information on IEPs and other tools, bullying, parental rights, resolving disagreements between parents and educators, program monitoring, and supports for special and general education students.

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/sped/>

Minnesota's Part C Central Directory

Federally required Part C Central Resource Directory for infants, toddlers and preschoolers with disabilities and their families.

https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=052509&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary (PDF)