Minnesota Educational Services and Supports for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

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Accessing ASD Supports and Services in MN

• Minnesota Educational Services and Supports for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
  Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)/Metro Educational Service Cooperative Unit (ECSU)

• Public Health and Disability: Moving Past the Medical Model
  Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)

• VRS Student Career Services
  Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)

• MN-DHS Services
  Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)
Pathway to Services and Supports for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

If you've noticed that a child you work with is exhibiting signs of autism or has been diagnosed with autism, there are a variety of services and benefits their family might be able to access. Below, you can see the types of support services different state agencies can connect you with.

### Healthcare
A healthcare provider or clinic may help with:
- Developmental screening
- Well-child checkups
- Medical diagnosis, including:
  - Initial history, exam, and labs
  - Referral to psychology, developmental pediatrics, or other specialist for diagnostic assessment
- Care or referral for:
  - Nutrition or digestion
  - Seizures
  - Sleep problems
- Referrals for:
  - Occupational therapy (OT)
  - Physical therapy (PT)
  - Speech and language pathology (SLP)
- Medications

### Education
Services could include, but are not limited to:
- Assistive technology
- Child care services
- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program
- Early intervention
- Educational/developmental interventions
- Head Start program
- Hearing and vision screenings
- Home visits
- OT, PT, and SLP
- Preschool
- Service coordination and community referrals

These services are free to all qualified students.

Visit HelpMeGrowMN.org, call 1-866-692-GROW (4769), or contact your local school district for an education evaluation.

### Intervention services
- Case management
- Child care services
- Children’s Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS)
- Early Intensive Developmental and Behavioral Intervention (EIDBI)
- Family Support Grant
- OT, PT, and SLP

### Transition and long-term services & supports
- Behavioral health services
- Employment services
- Home care nursing
- Independent living
- Home health aide
- OT, PT and SLP
- Postsecondary education
- Case management

Contact your local county or tribal human service agency to request financial assistance or a MnCHOICES assessment. This can give you access to waiver services. Services could include, but are not limited to:

- Consumer Support Grant (CSG)
- Personal Care Assistance (PCA)
- Waiver services:
  - Housing
  - Transportation

- CSG
- PCA
- Waiver services:
  - Case management
  - Employment
  - Equipment and supplies
  - Transportation
  - Housing

For more information, visit mn.gov/autism or contact ASD.DHS@state.mn.us. Call the Disability Hub MNTM at 1-866-333-2466 or visit disabilityhubmn.org to get connected to resources and services.
• Overview of how and when to seek help (evaluation and services)
  • Getting an evaluation
  • Starting services

• Overview of Special Education Services in the Schools
  • Services available based on individualized needs
  • Examples of individualized services and supports

• Resources for providers, educators, and parents
  • Minnesota Autism Resource Portal ➔ Interventions and Services ➔ Education
Topics that will be covered:

• Early Childhood

• Educational determination vs. medical diagnosis

• Educational supports

• Transition planning and post-secondary education

• Education advocacy and legal supports

• Cultural education resources
Educational services are **FREE** to all who qualify and *do not require a medical diagnosis*. Services typically start within 30–45 business days of evaluation.

**Children Birth – 5:**

- **Help Me Grow MN** 1-866-693-GROW(4769) or visit [HelpMeGrowMN.org](http://HelpMeGrowMN.org)
- **Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)** provides programs to enhance family relationships and school readiness. Contact the community education program in your local public school district

**Children over the age of 5:**

- Contact your local school district
- School Team (including parent) will meet and determine next steps
When and how to seek help

When to seek help

• When you have any developmental or behavioral concerns regarding your child

• Parents, grandparents, day care providers, and others can go to HelpMeGrowMN.org to access resources and review age-appropriate developmental milestones (what your child should be doing at specific ages)

How to seek help (through your child’s school district)

Contact HelpMeGrowMN.org

OR

Contact your school district directly
Help Me Grow MN

- Connects families with their local school district to initiate an evaluation and intervention services starting from birth
- Provides referral information and resources designed for parents/caregivers and professionals
- FREE TO ALL FAMILIES regardless of income

Contact Help Me Grow MN with ANY concerns about your child’s development

Call 1-866-693-GROW(4769) or visit HelpMeGrowMN.org
Services provided at no cost through your school district from birth through age 21

- **ECSE – Early Childhood Special Education**
  - Evaluation of developmental areas
  - Individualized special education services

- **Special Education (Kindergarten – age 21)**
  - Evaluation of all areas of identified need
  - Individualized special education services
  - Related services including speech language therapy and occupational therapy
  - Case manager/teacher on your team

*The law requires school districts to provide all students with a free, appropriate public education from birth through age 21*
## Birth to 5 Educational Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Birth to three</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan if child qualifies for special education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Services</strong></td>
<td>• Services are provided in the <em>natural environment</em>, such as the home or child care setting.</td>
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<td>• Early interventions include, but are not limited to, assistive technology, hearing and vision testing, occupational, physical or speech therapy.</td>
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<th>Three to Five</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan if child qualifies for special education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individualized Education Program (IEP)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Services</strong></td>
<td>• Services are provided within a <em>preschool or community setting</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Program options may vary by school district.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Services could include, but are not limited to:

- Assistive technology
- Child care services
- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program
- Educational/developmental interventions
- Head Start program
- Hearing and vision screenings
- Home visits
- IEP
- OT, PT, and SLP
- Preschool
- Service coordination and community referrals
- Special education
• Educational eligibility for special education services is different and separate from a medical diagnosis of ASD.

• Students can qualify for special education services under a number of categories including ASD
  
  • Students ages 7 and under can qualify for services under the category of Developmental Disability (at age 7 the student will need to be re-evaluated and qualify for a categorical eligibility to continue to receive special education services)
  
  • Some students with needs similar to ASD qualify under other categories including Specific Learning Disability and Other Health Impairment.

• If a student qualifies for special education in 1 category, their IEP can include any areas of identified need without qualifying in another category.
## Educational Eligibility for ASD vs. Medical Diagnosis

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<th>Medical Diagnosis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not a diagnosis but student meets the set of criteria set out in MN Rule for Special Education Services related to ASD</td>
<td>DSM-5 or ICD-11 diagnosis by a medical professional outside the school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criteria is similar to medical diagnosis criteria (but requires educational need)</td>
<td>Diagnostic criteria is similar to educational eligibility criteria for ASD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The educational team may not require a medical diagnosis</td>
<td>NOT required to receive special education services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The educational team must conduct their own evaluation which should include “considering” the medical diagnosis as one piece of data for the evaluation</td>
<td>NOT sufficient (alone) to qualify for special education services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student only qualifies if they meet the educational criteria which includes demonstrating educational need.</td>
<td>Helpful in better understanding ASD and accessing services beyond the educational environment.</td>
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</tbody>
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Special Education Process

Referral submitted by parent, educator

Evaluation

Reevaluation

Eligible for services - Yes or No?
(If yes, then the team develops an IEP; determines placement and service delivery)
What does an effective education look like?

• Identifying supports and services for the child based on individualized evaluation and IFSP/IEP team determination.

• The child demonstrating mastery in goals outlined in IFSP or IEP.

• Family as important members of the IFSP/IEP team.

• Behavior and skills are effectively taught utilizing evidenced based strategies and generalized across people and settings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Setting 1</th>
<th>Federal Setting 2</th>
<th>Federal Setting 3</th>
<th>Federal Setting 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students receive special education services outside the regular education classroom for less than 21 percent of the day</td>
<td>Students receive special education services outside the regular education classroom from 21-60 percent of the day</td>
<td>Students receive special education services outside the regular education classroom for more than 60 percent of the day</td>
<td>Students receive special education services at separate school facilities for more than 50 percent of the day</td>
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This is an IEP team decision based on individual student needs and is listed on the front page of the IEP.
## Examples of Individualized Services and Supports

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<tr>
<td><strong>Up to 21% in special education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Up to 60% in special education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Over 60% in special education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Separate school site for more than 50% of the day</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student is provided accommodations in the general education classroom with same-age peers.</td>
<td>• Student receives some of their instruction in the general education classroom including accommodations and special education teacher consult</td>
<td>Student is provided services in a center-based classroom with additional structure/support and may attend some general education activities based on individual needs (including accommodations and special education teacher consult).</td>
<td>Student is provided a highly structured and supported instruction across all need areas including academic, social, behavioral, communication and related needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student receives (minimal) special education instruction in separate room than general education.</td>
<td>• Student is provided special education services such as academic, social, and related services in a resource or separate room as the general education classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Special education teacher consults with general education teacher.</td>
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The role of the educator beyond the classroom

Educators can:

- Connect families with support groups and advocacy organizations
- Promote effective collaboration and genuine partnerships across educators, providers and professionals
- Help families determine if their child needs collaborative services
A transition evaluation will be conducted for all students when they enter high school

• During grade nine the IEP plan shall address the pupil's needs for transition from secondary services to postsecondary education and training, employment, and community living.

• This is the first step of the process of preparing students for life after high school and includes planning for postsecondary education or training, employment and independent living.

May include additional IEP members not in the school district

• The areas of evaluation and planning must be relevant to the pupil's needs and may include work, recreation and leisure, home living, community participation, and postsecondary training and learning opportunities. To appropriately evaluate and plan for a pupil's secondary transition, additional IEP team members may be necessary and may include vocational education staff members and other community agency representatives as appropriate.

Assessment results will be documented in an evaluation report and used to develop an appropriate IEP.

• Secondary transition evaluation results must be documented as part of an evaluation report. Current and secondary transition needs, goals, and instructional and related services to meet the pupil's secondary transition needs must be considered by the team with annual needs, goals, objectives, and services documented on the pupil's IEP.
Transition planning and post-secondary education

• The Next Stage: Pathway to Transition and Long-Term Services and Supports for ASD, DHS-6751K, (PDF) outlines resources available to young adults and adults as they transition into independent living and the work world. The Next Stage: Pathway to Transition and Long-Term Services and Supports for ASD document also is available in Hmong (PDF), Somali (PDF) and Spanish (PDF).

• Minnesota Disability Law Center created a Special Education Transition Planning Fact Sheet (PDF).

• Post-secondary training can be a four-year college, a community college, a technical school, an internship or other learning opportunity that allow young adults to gain knowledge and skills that will help them transition. Students are encouraged to explore these and other resources with a vocational rehabilitation counselor, school guidance counselor and others. Visit MN Autism Resource Portal: Intervention and Services – Transition and employment for more information.
Post-secondary program options

• **Minnesota Independence College and Community**: a nonprofit vocational and life skills training program for young adults with learning differences and autism spectrum disorders.

• **Bethel University’s Build Program**: provides a supportive and comprehensive educational experience for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

• **Central Lakes College Occupational Skills Program**: a post-secondary educational program for students with disabilities

• **Ridgewater College Occupational Skills Program**: helping students with documented intellectual disabilities transition to entry-level employment.

• **Educational support**
Education advocacy and legal supports

- When parents and schools cannot agree on how to best meet a child’s needs, **procedural safeguards** become important. You should be informed by reviewing your rights as every school is required to provide you with these rights yearly and have you initial indicating you received them. **Formal complaints** are part of parental protections. To file a formal complaint about educational services you can email the Minnesota Department of Education, Division of Compliance and Assistance or send a fax to 651-582-8725.

- The Minnesota Department of Education has a section primarily for teachers and school administrators with legal/technical information on Individualized Education Programs (IEP), Evaluations and Eligibility.

- Visit the MN Department of Education website for information on **Conflicts in Special Education**, Parental Rights, Physical Holds and Restraints and other information for student with disabilities.

- Contact the MDE Compliance and Assistance Team at mde.compliance-assistance@state.mn.us or 651-582-8689. Team members who are familiar with special education compliance and parental rights are available during regular business hours.
Additional Resources for Educational Advocacy

- Additional resources and contact information for educational advocacy and legal services include:

- Your local school district special education department. Ask for the school district’s special education director(s).

- **Arc of MN** has offices throughout the state and can help with advocacy.

- **Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER)** also helps parents advocate for their child’s educational rights.

PACER CENTER offers multicultural services and Multicultural staff work with all PACER projects and help families understand and access education, health, mental health, transition, and other services.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) ensures educational equity and access for English learners (ELs) through high-quality language instruction.

Minnesota Education Equity Partnership uses a race equity lens to transform educational institutions, organizations, and leaders to ensure that students of color and American Indian students achieve full academic and leadership success.

Immigrant Children and Youth information through the MDE provides information on safeguarding the civil rights of all students.

World Languages prepares students to communicate and collaborate with people of diverse backgrounds at home and abroad.

Language Immersion Programs is a method developed to teach people a second language, in which the language being taught is used for instruction processes. The Minnesota Advocates for Immersion Network provides a list of immersion programs in Minnesota.

The Office of Indian Education provides information, resources, support and oversight to district, charter, and tribal contract schools throughout the state of Minnesota.

The Office of Equity and Inclusion through the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system consults, advises, trains, and provides policy development in the areas of equity, inclusion, diversity, equal opportunity, and affirmative action.
Websites for MN Education Information for ASD

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Site for ASD

• https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/sped/cat/aut/

Minnesota Low Incidence Projects Site for ASD

• http://www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org/Projects/asd/index.html

• Minnesota Low Incidence Projects Distance Learning Site for ASD

• http://www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org/distanceLearning/asd/index.html
Make a list of educational providers, their role, and their contact information

- IEP Case manager
- Related Services Providers (OT, Speech/Language)
- Social Worker

Create a binder, notebook or file online with copies of all forms and assessments

- Consent documents
- Evaluations
- IEPs

Organize by service or provider
Any Questions