

help me



HelpMeGrowMN.org
1-866-693-GROW (4769)

Referral Guide for Minnesota Health Care Providers

Specialized services are available to eligible infants, toddlers and preschool children in Minnesota who have disabilities or are experiencing delays in their development. Together with the parent, a small team of early childhood professionals will create a plan of early intervention services and support for their child and family. These services are **free** to eligible children, regardless of income or immigrant status.

When should I make a referral?

- When you or the child's parent(s) are concerned about any aspect of the child's development, including cognitive, physical, communication, adaptive or social-emotional.
- When your screening of the child indicates concerns and the need for a complete developmental evaluation.
- When the child has a confirmed diagnosis* that is likely to result in a developmental delay.

*A diagnosed physical, cognitive or mental health condition is not required to make a referral.

How do I refer a child?

- An online referral form is available at the HelpMeGrow.org website, or
- Call 1-866-693-GROW (4769), or
- Contact the child's local school district.

To meet the requirements of Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, referrals should be made as soon as possible, but in no case more than seven days after the concern has been identified.

What should I discuss with the parent before making a referral?

- Describe observed strengths and any concerns about the child's development.
- Let the parent know that all children referred will participate in a process to determine eligibility, with parent consent. These activities are provided at no cost to the parent.
- Assure the parent that even if their child is found eligible, they are not obligated to accept services.

What happens after I make a referral?

- A representative of the local early intervention system will contact the family to make an appointment to gather information and plan a course of action. This plan will include activities to determine if the child is eligible for services.
- With the consent of the family, you may be contacted by the child's school district for additional medical information about the child to assist with eligibility determination or early intervention planning.
- If the child is found eligible, a service coordinator will be identified and early childhood specialists from the child's school district, and other agencies as needed, will work with the child and family to plan appropriate services and supports. These may include:
 - Special instruction and other services, such as speech, physical and occupational therapy;
 - Parent education so families learn new skills to support their child's development; and
 - Service coordination to connect the family to other supports in the community.
- If the child is not found eligible, the family will be provided information about other early childhood community services and programs that may be helpful.

Why is it important to make a referral as soon as concerns arise?

- Health care providers that serve young children are in a unique position to identify developmental concerns early and refer them for further evaluation and treatment.
- Parents depend on their child's health care providers for advice, guidance and support.
- Findings from prevalence studies show that 16-18 percent of children have developmental problems, including children with mental health conditions. That is approximately one in every five children.
- Federal regulations require a referral.

How can I stay involved?

- Ask the parent(s) for their consent to release relevant diagnostic, evaluation, or medical reports from your office to the identified service coordinator.
- Ask the parent(s) to give consent so the school district may release the results of the developmental evaluation to you.
- Connect with the service coordinator to participate in the development of the plan for services for the child. This is the best way to share your recommendations for services.

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