

Children who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing: Family Needs and Resources

Children who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing and their families need a range of information, support, services, and technologies. Government and nonprofit systems in Minnesota provide a robust set of resources and programs, but not all needs are met.

NEEDS

1. LANGUAGE

All children and their families need access to language and options to facilitate access to communication from birth and as hearing loss is identified or progresses.

2. ACADEMICS

Students cannot access PreK-12+ supplemental services until they exhibit a deficiency. Access to accommodations and supports during postsecondary and job training programs may be a challenge in some cases.

3. INFORMATION & RESOURCES

In 2015, there were over 68,000 newborns screened for hearing loss in Minnesota (99% of all babies born). Nearly 5% of those infants were referred for follow-up testing and over 300 were diagnosed with hearing loss. Parents who have a child who is deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing need immediate information and resources to help them make decisions about their child's care and access support and services across a range of possible needs.

4. SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

(to peers & other families)

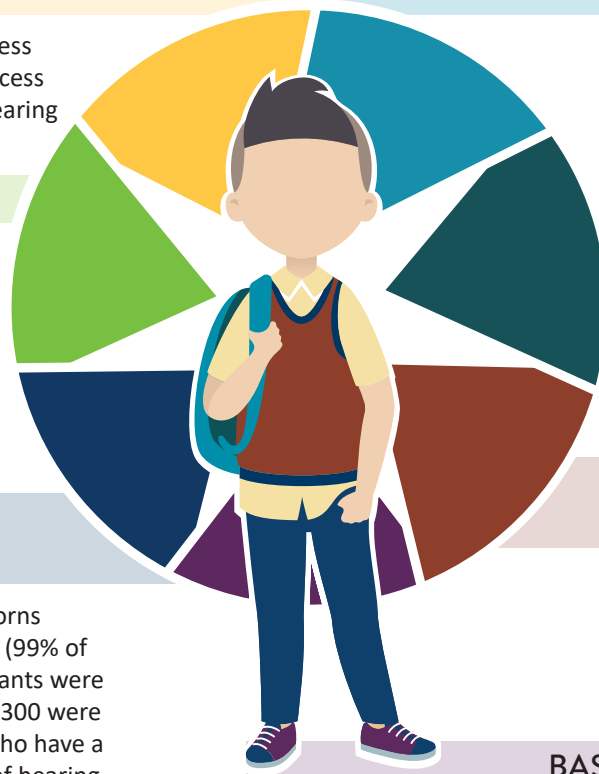
Both children and their families need to form social connections with other children and adults (a community).

5. CAREER READINESS

Youth need more exposure to career options and more training (soft skills, academic, job-specific). These youth may struggle with underemployment.

6. SELF-ADVOCACY & LIFE SKILLS

Children and youth need to learn how to speak up for themselves and their needs, including how to navigate in school and work settings.



BASIC NEEDS

Children who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing have the same needs as all children: love, fun/play, communication/human connection, food, shelter, healthcare, etc. Some children and their families may have an extra layer of needs due to:

- Poverty or low income
- Moving frequently
- Very busy schedules
- Speaking a language other than English
- Dealing with trauma, abuse, addiction, chronic health concerns, mental illness, etc.
- Other disabilities or health conditions

BASIC NEEDS

- Early intervention (parent-child bonding, connections, communication)
- Social work support (health insurance, SSI, county services)
- Medical/psychological assessments

1. LANGUAGE

- Early intervention services from teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students, and teachers of blind/visually impaired for deafblind students
- Preschool programs (visual, auditory, multi-modal)
- The University of Minnesota Lions Infant Hearing Device Loaner Program
- Deaf Mentor Family Program—ASL instruction
- Speech-language services
- Cued Speech Association of MN
- MN DeafBlind Project

2. ACADEMICS

- Part C Early Intervention and Part B Early Childhood Special Education
- Teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students in resident school districts
- Deaf schools and resources
- Educational interpreters, cued speech transliterators, deafblind interveners
- Technology—assistive hearing technologies, closed captioning/real-time captioning

3. INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Advocacy services—MN Hands & Voices, PACER, Deaf Equity, MN Deaf Muslim Association, Black Deaf Advocates
- Regional Low Incidence Facilitators
- MN Department of Health—Beginnings Binder
- MN Department of Education—Help Me Grow and other resources
- MN Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing
- MN DeafBlind Project
- Deaf education websites (e.g., National Deaf Center)

4. SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

(to peers & other families)

- Minnesota deaf schools (MDS and MSAD) and resource programs
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing Role Model Program
- Local Educational Area activities and events
- MN Hands & Voices—parent-to-parent support, family events
- Regional Low Incidence/ECSE events
- Camps for youth (Camp Inspiration, Camp Courage)

5. CAREER READINESS

- Vocational Rehabilitation
- VECTOR program
- Summer transition programs

6. SELF-ADVOCACY & LIFE SKILLS

- Teacher of deaf and hard of hearing and teachers of blind and visually impaired students, including support for soft skills and career networking
- Vocational Rehabilitation services
- Compensatory skills training

For more information:

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