

All about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Introduction to Autism

- **What is Autism?** Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain. <https://www.cdc.gov/autism/about/index.html>
- **Early Signs and Diagnosis** - Common early signs of autism and the importance of early diagnosis. Consult with healthcare providers if you have concerns. https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/LTSAE-Checklist_COMPLIANT_30MCorrection_508.pdf

Pathways to Services in Minnesota

- **Early Intervention Services**
For children under age five, *Help Me Grow* is Minnesota's early intervention system. Contact information: 1-866-693-4769. <https://www.helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/index.html>
- **School-Aged Children**
For children five years or older, contact your local school district's special education services, even if the child isn't yet enrolled in school.
- **Medical vs. Educational Diagnosis**
There is a difference between a medical diagnosis and an educational determination of autism, and each affects access to services.
<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-6751M-ENG>
- **Navigating Services**
Navigating Autism Supports and Services guidebook, offers step-by-step assistance in accessing services.
<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-8129-ENG>
<https://mn.gov/autism/programs-and-services/services/>
- **Pathway to Transition and Long-Term Services and Supports for Autism Spectrum Services:** Provides resources as children/teens transition into adulthood. Usually, start addressing around age 14.
<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-6751K-ENG>

Local Resources and Support Networks

- **Minnesota Autism Resource Portal**
The [Minnesota Autism Portal](https://mn.gov/autism/), offers a comprehensive directory of services, supports, and information.
<https://mn.gov/autism/>
- **Autism Society of Minnesota**
A statewide organization providing advocacy, resources, and support for individuals with autism and their families. <https://ausm.org/resources/directory/autism-society-of-minnesota/>
- **PACER Center**
Offers support and advocacy for children with disabilities and their families.
<https://www.pacer.org>
- **Family Voices of Minnesota**
Connects families to resources and provides peer support. <https://familyvoicesofminnesota.org/>

- **Disability Hub MN**

A free statewide resource network offering information on services, benefits, and community support.

https://disabilityhubmn.org/for-families/parent-and-family-supports/organizations-products-and-resources/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Safety and Emergency Preparedness

- **Creating a Safety Plan**

Develop a safety plan tailored to your child's needs. Resources are available through Ready.gov and The Autism Community in Action (TACA)

<https://mn.gov/autism/supports/safety>

- **Emergency Information Form**

Complete an Emergency Information Form (EIF) to provide essential health and safety information to first responders.

[https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/EIF%20\(Blank%20Form\).pdf?_ga=2.222165528.1432968033.1660060845-1206240620.1660060843](https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/EIF%20(Blank%20Form).pdf?_ga=2.222165528.1432968033.1660060845-1206240620.1660060843)

Additional Tools and Guides

- **Autism Speaks Tool Kits-** Autism Speaks has developed tool kits and guides to help people with autism and their families throughout their lifespan. <https://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-speaks-tool-kits>

Tips for Supporting Your Child

- **Positive Reinforcement**

Use of positive reinforcement to promote desired behaviors.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit-excerpt/helpful-strategies-promote-positive-behavior>

- **Communication Strategies**

Discusses the importance of clear and direct communication and explores tools like PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) for non-verbal children.

<https://www.autism-foundation.org/parent-support-toolkit>

Contact Information

| | |
|--|--|
| Autism Society of Minnesota Phone: 651-647-1083 | Help Me Grow Phone: 1-866-693-4769 |
| PACER Center Phone: 952-838-9000 | Disability Hub MN Phone: 1-866-333-2466 |