

Parent and Family Resource Guide

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General / comprehensive resources

[Minnesota DeafBlind Project](#)

[DHHS Family Services](#)

For families with deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing children, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) offers services designed to meet the unique needs of parents and guardians in need of support, resources and information. Whether the topic is education, communication, or technology, DHHS staff are available to discuss options for parents and family members so that they can best support the needs of their child.

[Project SPARKLE: Supporting Parent Access to Resources, Knowledge, Linkages, and Education](#)

Toll-Free: 1-888-800-1487

A new model of individualized learning that will enhance the ability of parents of children who are deafblind to fulfill their critical and expanded role in the development and education of their children. Many parents of children who are deafblind currently access information and training through workshops, conferences, and parent retreats. Through Project SPARKLE, parents will have access to information, training, and resources in their homes via the Internet. Project SPARKLE is funded as a model demonstration grant and is currently working with about 60 families in the states of Georgia, Minnesota, Texas, and Utah.

[Children Who Are Deaf-Blind \(PDF\)](#)

An overview of deafblindness in children, from the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness.

[Fact Sheets from NCDB](#), the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness.

Topics include Communication, Child Development, Interaction, Orientation and Mobility (O&M), Internet Resources, Literacy, Psychological Evaluation, Recreation and Leisure, Sexuality Education, and more.

[Articles on Parenting Issues](#) and DeafBlind children

Archived articles related to raising a DeafBlind child. From SEE/HEAR, "a quarterly newsletter for families and professionals on visual impairments and deafblindness."

[reSources – newsletter of California Deaf-Blind Services](#)

Each quarterly issue has a different theme, such as communication, family support, transition, assessment, employment, sexuality, education, or living options. Available online in PDF format by mail from California Deaf-Blind Services – call 1-800-822-7884 Voice/TTY for subscription info.

[Parent's Perspectives on Communication, Behavior, and Instructional Strategies \(PDF\)](#)

80 parents of DeafBlind children composed "a list of the most important practices to parents in the areas of behavioral issues, communication and instructional strategies in the education of their child who is deaf-blind."

[Through the Looking Glass](#)

Find support and information for your family, and envision your disabled child leading his or her own family one day. "Through the Looking Glass (TLG) is a nationally recognized center that has pioneered research, training, and services for families in which a child, parent or grandparent has a disability or medical issue. TLG is a disability community based nonprofit organization, which emerged from the independent living movement, and was founded in 1982 in Berkeley, California. Our mission is to create, demonstrate and encourage non-pathological and empowering resources and model early intervention services for families with disability issues in parent or child which integrate expertise derived from personal disability experience and disability culture."

[Hadley School for the Blind – Correspondence Courses](#)

700 Elm Street

Winnetka, IL 60093-2554 USA

Toll-Free: 1-800-323-4238 Voice
(847) 446-0855 Fax
info@hadley.edu

"Hadley has a course for you if you are a blind adult (14+ years of age), a parent or grandparent of a blind child, a family member of an adult who is blind, or a (para)professional in the blindness field. The Hadley School for the Blind offers more than 90 distance education courses to eligible students completely free of charge." Designed for blind and visually impaired people, but many of the courses can be helpful to DeafBlind people and their families as well.

[Minnesota State Resources List](#)

List of Minnesota resources for adults and children with all types of disabilities, compiled by the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities

[V. I. Guide](#)

"A guide to internet resources about visual impairments, for parents and teachers."

[Minnesota Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division](#)

We provide information, resources and empowerment opportunities to assist deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing Minnesotans and their families to effectively access services in their communities.

[Letter of Intent: A Way to Communicate Your Wishes into the Future](#)

Description: "Every parent's concern: What will happen to my child if I am not able to care for him?... A Letter of Intent is a document that you prepare to help the guardians, trustees and the courts interpret your hopes and desires for your child."

[Children's Books About Disabilities](#)

Grouped by age group/grade level, these books help siblings and classmates understand what it is like to live with a disability.

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Diagnosis / Identification of Dual Sensory Impairment

Newly diagnosed young person in your family? Contact the [Minnesota DeafBlind Project](#)
3055 Old Highway 8, Suite 302
St. Anthony, MN 55418
(612) 638-1526 Voice
(800) 848-4905 Voice
(612) 706-0808 TTY
(612) 706-0811 Fax
mndb@skypoint.com

[Psychological Evaluation of Children who are Deaf-Blind: An Overview with Recommendations for Practice \(PDF\)](#)

Answers to frequently asked questions about psychological evaluations for infants, children and adults who are deaf-blind, ... evaluation process and the active roles that may be taken by everyone who is involved—family members, professionals, educators, and the student ... quality indicators and desired outcomes, ... ways to view and use the evaluation process so it will benefit the student to the greatest degree possible.

[Assessment Resources for Vision and Hearing](#)

A variety of assessment tools which we hope will help parents and educational staff gather functional information that may then be shared with these doctors to aid them in making a definitive determination of hearing or vision loss. These materials include those which will: guide observations and organize that information to share with medical staff; expand the range of questions to explore with the professionals to get good testing results; and help prepare the student for more formal testing procedures. Additionally, we have included materials which will aid the educational staff in determining modifications to improve programming for the child in the classroom.

[Sight & Hearing Association](#)

Non-profit organization dedicated to preventing the needless loss of vision and hearing through effective screening, education, and research. This site provides public information about vision and hearing topics as well as information regarding our products and services.

[Minnesota Newborn Hearing Screening \(NHS\) Program](#)

Offers low-cost, reliable and valid early identification of deaf and hard of hearing children [shortly after birth]. Tracks hearing screening, evaluation, and intervention for children 0 to 5 years old with hearing loss, integrating with mandated Newborn

Metabolic Screening (NMS) data system and MDH Infant Follow Along Program (FAP) for children and families in need of services.

[Hearing Loss Simulator](#)

Provides a way for hearing parents to get a general idea of what the world may sound like to their child, based on his or her audiogram pattern. Please note auditory perception varies across individuals; two people with the same audiogram on paper may experience sound differently.

[Intervention Services for Children](#)

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) actively works with other agencies, including the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to provide families with coordinated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary services and funding for both Part C and Part B services of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). This page contains information about upcoming events and provides background information regarding intervention services.

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Child Development

[Talking the Language of the Hands to the Hands](#)

It is important to understand what role the hands play in typical development, and in the development of children who are blind and children who are deaf. This understanding will help educators, parents, and friends interact as skillfully as possible to facilitate the development of the hands of the person who is deafblind.

[National Transition Follow-Up Study of Youth Identified as Deafblind: Parent Perspectives \(PDF\)](#)

The first research initiative to thoroughly explore the post-school life of youth who are deaf-blind... regarding communication, sensory status, mobility, health, and problem behaviors, ...secondary school experiences, especially regarding services and supports, work experience, and transition planning..."

[Strategies to promote early eating skills](#)

This article provides advice on practical ways to develop effective eating skill in deaf blind children who are functioning at a developmental levels below twelve months.

[Regions Hospital Health and Wellness Program](#)

640 Jackson Street
St. Paul, MN 55101
(651) 651-254-4786 (V/TTY)

Health and Wellness Program Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing people (HWP) provides mental health services to deaf, deaf-blind and hard of hearing people of all ages. It is located at Regions Hospital in downtown St. Paul and is part of the Behavioral Health Department. HWP offers a wide range of services focused not only on survival and minimizing vulnerability, but on empowerment of Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons who need help making well-informed choices about life issues.

[Overview of the Van Dijk Approach](#)

A developmental inter-relationship exists between the neurological state of the sensory deprived child and the external influences of the child's environment. And it is that inter-relationship that leads the child out of a closed, limited world of interaction to an open, functional world of interaction.

[Sensory Integrative Dysfunction in Young Children](#)

Sensory integration... is the ability to take in information through senses (touch, movement, smell, taste, vision, and hearing), to put it together with prior information, memories, and knowledge stored in the brain, and to make a meaningful response... This article will explain ways of addressing sensory integrative problems within the context of family life and the child's normal activities.

[Repetitive Behaviors In Children With Sensory Impairments And Multiple Disabilities](#)

Many children with sensory impairments and multiple disabilities show repetitive or stereotyped behaviours – for example, rocking, head shaking, mouthing objects or repeating sounds... [This article is about] roles which repetitive behaviours may play in children's development and the ways in which educators interpret and respond to them.

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Language Planning

[Communication Interactions: It Takes Two \(PDF\)](#)

What is communication? How can we increase communication? What can you do? (Strategies for communication interaction.)

[Early Interactions With Children Who Are Deaf-Blind](#)

Ways you can interact with your young child, ... giving your child consistent sensory cues, ... ways you can recognize and then respond to your child's responses, ... encourage exploration of the environment ... playing simple games that are not only fun but also help develop interaction and communication.

[Tactile, Sequential Communication Strategies](#)

Working with and playing with and interacting with deaf-blind DD [developmentally delayed] folks who don't necessarily have a formalized language system and some ways to start establishing some concrete communication.

[Project SALUTE – Successful Adaptations for Learning to Use Touch Effectively](#)

This website is intended as a resource on tactile learning strategies for working with children who are deaf-blind or who are blind with additional disabilities. It has three purposes: (a) to provide procedures for service providers to document tactile strategies being used with individual students, (b) to assist families and service providers in sharing challenges and successes in using tactile strategies, and (c) to disseminate the findings of Project SALUTE and information on tactile strategies.

[Communication at Home and in the Community \(PDF\)](#)

Helpful strategies and suggestions from parents and families with a child who is Deaf-Blind.

[Communication Fact Sheets](#)

Information for parents and service providers so they can better understand the communication and language modes and systems that may be appropriate for many children and youth who are deaf-blind.

[Hands & Voices International](#)

A parent driven, non-profit organization dedicated to providing unbiased support to families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. We provide support activities and information concerning deaf and hard of hearing issues to parents and professionals that may include outreach events, educational seminars, advocacy, lobbying efforts, parent to parent networking, and a newsletter. We strive to connect families with resources and information to make informed decisions around the issues of deafness or hearing loss.

[Communication Choices](#) a concise and unbiased explanation of how to choose a communication method for a child with hearing loss, with brief descriptions of American Sign Language, Auditory-Oral, Auditory-Verbal, Bilingual Education, Cued Speech, Simultaneous Communication, and Total Communication.

Book: [Choices in Deafness: A Parent's Guide to Communication Options, 3rd Ed.](#)

A useful aid in choosing communication options for a child with deafness or a hearing loss. Experts present: Auditory-Verbal Approach, Bilingual-Bicultural Approach, Cued Speech, Oral Approach, and Total Communication.

Book: [Just Enough to Know Better: A Braille Primer](#)

A self-paced workbook... Using your sight, you will learn to identify the braille alphabet, numbers, contractions, and even a few exceptions to the rule that make braille so interesting. One volume print book, with exercises in braille, includes a braille symbols wall chart and braille flash cards.

[Seedlings Braille Books for Children](#)

P.O. Box 51924
Livonia, MI 48151-5924
(800) 777-8552 Voice
info@seedlings.org

A non-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to increasing the opportunity for literacy by providing high quality, low cost braille books for children.

[101 Ways to Use Braille \(PDF\)](#)

[Tack-Tiles® Braille Systems \(Tack-Tiles® Braille Systems\)](#)

A sophisticated teaching tool for all ages based on LEGO-type blocks. These Braille blocks provide a unique bridge, a smoother, shorter, more interesting path to Braille literacy. Easy, low-tech ways to use braille in your daily life, even if you only know the basic braille alphabet.

[Effective Interaction: Communicating With and About People with Disabilities in the Workplace](#)

Clear advice about how to interact with a person who has a visual, hearing, mobility, or cognitive disability.

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Educational Rights and Options

[Minnesota Department of Education Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children](#)

a statewide resource providing information and resources to help families and educators meet the educational needs of Minnesota children and youth who have a hearing loss. Children and youth who have varying types and degrees of hearing loss may be eligible to receive special education and related services. The Minnesota Resource Center: Deaf/Hard of Hearing is located in Faribault, Minnesota, at the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf.

[Minnesota Special Education Mediation Service \(MNSEMS\)](#)

Provides conflict resolution assistance for students, schools, parents and agencies. Parents and school staff can use a mediation session or a facilitated IEP/IIP meeting to address issues of concern.

[Resources for Families](#)

Excellent tools and information for parents of children who have severe and sensory disabilities (including deafblindness/ sensory impairment). From the [National Center on Severe and Sensory Disabilities](#).

[The Council for Exceptional Children \(CEC\)](#)

2900 Crystal Drive, Suite 1000

Arlington, VA 22202-3557

(800) 232-7733 (V)

(866) 915-5000 (TTY)

A comprehensive collection of information and resources about special education, disabilities, and gifted children.

[Guide to Disability Rights Laws](#)

Includes brief summaries and contacts for further information or to file a claim. Parents may wish to gain a firm understanding of special education laws, especially IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act.

[Acronyms Frequently Used in Special/Gifted Education](#)

From the Council for Exceptional Children

[The Intervener In Early Intervention and Educational Settings For Children and Youth With Deafblindness \(PDF\)](#)

This paper is an effort to discuss important issues, clarify concepts, explain terminology, and answer common questions in order to increase awareness and understanding about interveners and their role in the field of deafblindness.

[Help Me Grow: Minnesota's Early Intervention System](#)

Minnesota's early intervention system includes two programs for eligible children. Minnesota children eligible for Help Me Grow can receive services in their home, child care setting, or school. Help Me Grow services are free to eligible families regardless of their income or immigrant status.

[Metro area schools and programs for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students \(PDF\)](#)

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Support and Advocacy

[DHHSD DeafBlind Consumer Directed Services Grant Program](#)

See also:

- [General/Comprehensive Resources](#) section above
- Our [FAQ Page](#)
- [Consumer Advocacy Groups](#) on our [Tools for Independence page](#).

[Wrightslaw: Minnesota Yellow Pages for Kids with Disabilities](#)

A free service to help people "get reliable information and support [from] many resources – government programs, grassroots organizations, and parent support groups, ... evaluators, educational consultants, academic tutors, advocates, attorneys, and others who help parents get services for their children."

[National Family Association for Deaf-Blind](#)

An aid for families/individuals as they begin their search for resource referrals. Information is listed by state.

[reSources Newsletter – Siblings Issue \(PDF\)](#)

Fall 2002 issue of reSources, the newsletter of [California DeafBlind Services](#). The topic of this issue is support for siblings of deafblind children. Includes an article written by a teenager who has a deafblind sister, a fact sheet about sibling support, and a list of helpful books.

[DeafBlind Pen Pals Directory – from Sense](#)

"If you're feeling isolated or just [want to get] to know someone, our penpals section will help. You can search for people and then contact them electronically for a chat."

[MUMS: National Parent to Parent Network](#)

Julie J. Gordon

150 Custer Court

Green Bay, Wisconsin 54301-1243

Toll-free: 1-877-336-5333 (Parents only please)

(920) 336-5333 Voice

(920) 339-0995 Fax

MUMS is a national Parent-to-Parent organization for parents or care providers of a child with any disability, rare or not so rare disorder, chromosomal abnormality or health condition. MUMS' main purpose is to provide support to parents in the form of a networking system that matches them with other parents whose children have the same or similar condition. Through a database of over 17,000 families from 52 countries covering over 3000 disorders, very rare syndromes or conditions can be matched.

[PACER Center](#)

8161 Normandale Boulevard

Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044

(952) 838-9000 Voice

(952) 838-0190 TTY

Toll-free in Minnesota: (800) 537-2237

(952) 838-0199 Fax

The mission of PACER Center is to expand opportunities and enhance the quality of life of children and young adults with disabilities and their families, based on the concept of parents helping parents. With assistance to individual families, workshops, and materials for parents and professionals, and leadership in securing a free and appropriate public education for all children, PACER's work affects and encourages families in Minnesota and across the nation.

[Minnesota Department of Human Rights](#)

(800) 657-3704 (V)

(651) 296-5663 (V)

(651) 296-1283 (TTY)

(651) 296-9042 (fax)

Info.MDHR@state.mn.us

A neutral state agency that investigates charges of illegal discrimination. Web site includes Information about your rights in employment, housing, and other settings, and a very extensive listing of related resources.

[Disability Services – Minnesota Department of Human Services](#)

The Minnesota Department of Human Services Disability Services Division manages publicly funded programs that support people with a variety of disabilities, including developmental disabilities, chronic medical conditions, acquired or traumatic brain injuries and physical disabilities.

- [Alcohol and drug abuse division](#)
- [Personal care assistance](#)
- [HIV/AIDS Programs](#)
- [Adult Mental Health Division](#)

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Technology

See also:

- [Assistive Technology and Independent Living Aids](#) information on our [Tools for Independence page](#).
- [Telephone Equipment Distribution \(TED\) Program](#)

[Minnesota Interpreter Referral Web Site](#)

Information about sign language interpreters, how to use them and how to find them... created to help ensure that all Minnesotans are able to locate needed sign language interpreter services.

[101 Ways to Use Braille](#)

Easy, low-tech ways to use braille in your daily life, even if you only know the basic braille alphabet.

[Assistive Technology](#)

Information about technology for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, or have a speech or mobility impairment. Includes assistive listening devices, special telephone technology, relay service, and the telephone equipment distribution program. From the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

[Assistive Equipment and Technology Fact Sheet](#)

Definitions and examples of several types of technologies used by people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard-of-hearing. Includes alerting devices, telecommunication devices, assistive listening devices, and captioning.

[Effective Interaction: Communicating With and About People with Disabilities in the Workplace](#)

Clear advice about how to interact with a person who has a visual, hearing, mobility, or cognitive disability.

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Recreation

See also:

- Our [FAQ Page](#)
- [Consumer Advocacy Groups](#) on our [Tools for Independence page](#)

[Recreation and Leisure Fact Sheet](#)

Practical information on how to get people who are deaf-blind with cognitive disabilities involved with recreational activities. The focus is on recreational activities for pre-adolescent children through adult. Includes steps required to develop a recreational plan, examples of recreation activities with different people who are deaf-blind, extensive resource list.

[Learning to Play or Playing to Learn: Fostering Play Development Patterns in Deafblind Children](#)

In this article Julia Martín Cuervo, who is a teacher of deafblind children and Juan José Martínez González, a psychologist in social services, report their work on the importance of play for deafblind children.

[Yoga for the Deafblind](#)

Yoga can be beneficial to people of all ages, abilities, and sizes. In this article Dipti Kamad describes the way in which the teaching and learning of yoga is making a real contribution to the lives of deafblind children at the Sadhana Unit for Deafblind Children at the Clarke School for the Deaf, Chennai, India.

[Tactile Colour](#)

an easy system of twelve standardized textures representing twelve colours." Can be used for art, play, sensory integration, augmentive communication, maps, greeting cards, jigsaw puzzles, and more. Individuals use the sheet vinyl to make pictures, maps, labeling systems and games.

[Tack-Tiles® Braille Systems \(Tack-Tiles® Braille Systems\)](#)

A sophisticated teaching tool for all ages based on LEGO®-type blocks. These Braille blocks provide a unique bridge, a smoother, shorter, more interesting path to Braille literacy.

[Uncle Goose Toys](#)

Sells a variety of toys, including Braille Math Blocks, Sign Language Braille Blocks, and many other tactile and high-contrast toys.

[Toys and Accessories for Children with Disabilities](#)

A list of toy companies from the Council for Exceptional Children.

[Toys, Glorious Toys](#)

How to select toys and activities that fit your deafblind child's developmental age and abilities. Includes list of resources.

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Financial Assistance

[Minnesota's Healthcare Programs](#)

Description of MA, GAMC and MinnesotaCare: services covered under each plan, eligibility requirements, and how to apply.

[Economic and Community Supports](#)

The Minnesota Department of Human Services supervises a variety of economic assistance programs. Most economic assistance (including welfare) programs are administered at local county agencies.

[Post-Secondary Financial Aid](#)

Advice and resources for students with disabilities seeking funding for college or vocational school.

[Directory of Funding Resources for Assistive Technology in Minnesota](#)

Information about Minnesota and national agencies and organizations that fund technology, in a format that lets you compare programs and tells you how to get in touch with people who can help. From Minnesota's STAR Program.

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