



Part 3: Clinical Audiologist & Educational Team Collaboration; Releases of Information; Sharing Children’s Clinical and Educational Information

Clinical Audiologists are critically important to children with hearing loss and their families – and to the Minnesota EHDI system. Minnesota interagency stakeholders strive to meet the EHDI goals of “1-3-6”, with “6” reflecting the goal of infants confirmed with hearing loss being enrolled in early intervention services by 6 months of age at the latest. Diagnostic audiology records are extremely important for education staff as they consider young children’s eligibility for support services, provide educational services, and monitor children’s ongoing development. Professionals’ collaboration and exchange of information related to clinical audiology and school support services are beneficial to children, families, and professionals alike. However, there can be system challenges to sharing private child information, as clinic and school staff comply with the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 \(HIPAA\)](#) and the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) privacy laws.

Below are suggested processes for how Clinical Audiologists could share clinic reports of children’s hearing levels and hearing technology with education staff: (1) when initially referring young children confirmed with hearing loss through the Help Me Grow MN online system, and (2) when communicating with Educational Audiologists (or other designated IFSP/IEP Team member) about eligible children with hearing loss who are receiving Part C Infant-Toddler Intervention Services or Part B Preschool Special Education services.

Sharing clinical audiology reports when referring young children with confirmed hearing loss through the Help Me Grow MN online system:

A suggested process for how Clinical Audiologists may share audiological records with a child’s school district ECSE intake staff at the time of referral through Help Me Grow MN is outlined in [“Obtaining Parent’s/Guardian’s Permission to Release Information \(ROIs\), Sharing Clinical Audiology Reports when Referring Young Children Through Help Me Grow MN; Spring 2021 Pilot Process”](#), Revised February 2022.

The suggested process includes the current steps and online links to:

- Find a child’s resident school district name and number based on their home address, using the MN Legislative Coordinating Commission’s online [Geographic Information Services | School District Finder](#).
- Use “[School district name] Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Program” as the report recipient on clinic Releases of Information (ROIs) to be signed by parents. This will allow all members of the school district’s assigned evaluation team (including an educational audiologist) to access the records as part of the child’s initial eligibility evaluation.
- Find the child’s resident school district’s Help Me Grow Central intake contact person using one of two optional ways on the MN Department of Education website. Option 1 links are provided here:
 - An online list of [Help Me Grow Birth to 2 Central Intake](#) staff for each MN school district, along with their contact email addresses and phone numbers, is maintained by the MN Department of Education. School districts are listed in alphabetical order in the chart. Scroll down the list to find the name of the child’s school district and corresponding intake staff who assist with referrals of infants and toddlers.
 - An online list of [Help Me Grow 3 to 5 Central Intake](#) staff for each MN school district, along with their contact email addresses and phone numbers, is maintained by the MN Department of Education. School districts are listed in alphabetical order in the chart. Scroll down the list to find the name of the child’s school district and corresponding intake staff who assist with referrals of preschool-aged children from 3 years of age up to entrance into kindergarten.
- Contact the child’s resident school district intake staff to discuss the best way to send clinical diagnostic audiology reports to the district ECSE program at the time of referral through Help Me Grow MN.

Sharing reports and communicating with Educational Audiologists (or other designated IFSP/IEP team member) for children with hearing loss who are receiving Part C Infant-Toddler Intervention Services or Part B Preschool Special Education services.

Educational Audiologists work in almost every region of Minnesota, participating in eligibility evaluations of young children with hearing loss, serving as members of children’s IFSP and IEP teams, providing information to families, supporting children’s use of personal hearing technology as well as assistive listening devices, and consulting

with other education staff. They are often in direct contact with children's Clinical Audiologists to receive updated clinical audiology reports, discuss hearing aid/cochlear implant/assistive listening device fitting and use, and discuss any questions or concerns. Educational Audiologists may be employed by one specific school district, a Special Education Cooperative in Greater MN, or an Intermediate District in the Region 11 metro area which serves several school districts.

After the initial referral → evaluation/assessments → eligibility determination → IFSP/IEP processes are completed by the child's resident school district ECSE team and family, it is suggested that the Educational Audiologist (or other professional on the child's IFSP/IEP team) be designated to (1) receive future clinical audiological reports directly from the Clinical Audiologist, and (2) share education-related information about the child with the Clinical Audiologist.

- The child's parent/guardian would be asked to sign their consent on the school district's Release of Information (ROI) form for the Educational Audiologist/designated team member to exchange a child's hearing- and education-related information with the Clinical Audiologist.
- Given parent or guardian consent, the Educational Audiologist/designated team member would then reach out to the child's Clinical Audiologist and identify himself/herself as a member of the child's educational team and a primary contact person.
- Clinical and Educational Audiologists and families would determine together what individual child information and reports they will continue to share, how they will be collaborating, and how often. Educational Audiologists/designated team member could share updated clinical audiology reports with other members of the child's IFSP/IEP team and explain educational implications as needed.

To assist with communication and collaboration, a contact list of MN Educational Audiologists and the school districts they serve is posted at [Minnesota Educational Audiologists, 2021-2022](#).

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