



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

Clinical audiologists' and educational providers' ongoing collaboration and information sharing is beneficial to children and families. As part of that collaboration, diagnostic clinical audiology records are extremely important for education staff as they determine a child's eligibility for Part C Infant and Toddler Intervention Services or Part B Preschool Special Education services, provide support services, and monitor the child's ongoing development. However, as clinic and school staff comply with health ([HIPAA](#)) and education ([FERPA](#)) privacy laws, there are often system challenges to that collaboration and sharing of private child information.

After the school district ECSE Program receives a referral of a young child with confirmed hearing loss, the district will discuss possible next steps with the child's parents/guardians as they consider the child's eligibility for support services. Given signed parent/guardian consent to proceed, the school district team is required to complete an evaluation within legal timelines to determine if the child is eligible for support services—within 45 calendar days of receiving the referral for infants and toddlers; within 30 school days from the date parents/guardians provide the school with their signed consent for an evaluation for children 3 years of age and older. To complete an eligibility evaluation within these legal timelines, it is critically important for the school district to have received clinical audiology records of the child's hearing levels and any hearing technology recommended and used very quickly. However, clinical audiology and/or other medical records cannot simply be attached to the online referral form through Help Me Grow due to laws protecting child and family privacy.

In Spring 2021, members of a MN Regional EHDI Teams' Educational Audiologists Workgroup, in collaboration with partner clinical audiologists completed a pilot process to describe ***how clinical audiologists can share clinical audiology reports of a child's hearing levels and hearing technology with the child's school district when referring young children with hearing loss through Help Me Grow MN.***

This document describes that pilot process. The process may change in the future when changes or updates are made to the MN Department of Education and Help Me Grow referral processes to facilitate information sharing.

Feedback about this pilot process is welcome! Please send comments and questions to Kathy.Anderson@metroecsu.org

Providing Clinical Audiology Reports of a Child's Hearing Levels and Hearing Technology to the Child's School District When Referring Young Children with Hearing Loss Through Help Me Grow MN

1. Quickly refer the child for possible Part C Infant and Toddler Intervention Services or Part B Preschool Special Education services through the [Help Me Grow MN](#) online referral system.
2. When meeting with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s), ask them to sign a clinic release of information (ROI) form to share the child's clinical audiology reports with the "[School District] Early Childhood Special Education Program" of the child's resident school district.
 - a. To find the name/number of the child's resident school district, go to the MN Department of Education's online [Geographic Information Services | School District Finder](https://www.gis.lcc.mn.gov/iMaps/schooldistricts/) (<https://www.gis.lcc.mn.gov/iMaps/schooldistricts/>). Type in the child's home address and click on the search icon. The resident school district name will show directly under the child's address.
 - b. Addressing the clinic ROI to release records to the school district, using the words "[School district name] Early Childhood Special Education Program", will allow all members of the district's assigned evaluation team (including an educational audiologist) to access the records as part of the child's initial eligibility evaluation.
 - c. Note: As IFSP/IEP services are initiated, the assigned educational audiologist or other IFSP/IEP team member may complete a school district release of information (ROI) with the family to facilitate ongoing direct communication between the child's educational audiologist/assigned IFSP/IEP team member and the clinical audiologist.
3. **After determining the child's resident school district and receiving parent consent to share private information, contact the school district's intake person for infants and toddlers, ages birth through two years of age, or for preschoolers, ages 3 years up to kindergarten age, to (1) let them know you have completed an online referral of the child through Help Me Grow MN and (2) to discuss how to best send the clinical audiology reports to the child's school district evaluation team at the time of referral (secure email, secure fax, mail, etc.).**

There are two ways on the MN Department of Education website to find the name and contact information for the appropriate Help Me Grow intake staff in the child's resident school district.

Option 1:

- 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.

Option 2:

- a. First go to the MN Department of Education webpage <https://public.education.mn.gov/MdeOrgView/>. Type the school district name in the search bar at the center of the page. Click *Search*.
 - b. You will then be on a page that lists Organizations within that school district. Scroll down to the *[Name] Public School District* main heading (in larger font). Click on the *Contact View* hyperlink beside the school district name.
 - c. You will then be on a page that provides hyperlinks to different school district programs and contact persons. Scroll down to the bottom of the list and click on either "*Jump to Help Me Grow Birth to 2 Central Intake*" or "*Jump to Help Me Grow 3-5 Central Intake*."
 - d. You will see the name, phone number, and email address for the current intake person for infants and toddlers or for preschoolers with special needs within the child's resident school district.
4. **Please send the diagnostic audiology results/report to the school district representative as soon as possible** so that the appropriate initial evaluation team members can be assigned quickly, the eligibility evaluation can be completed within the legal timelines, and young children and families can begin to receive educational support services.

This resource is made possible with a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education using federal funding CFDA 84.027A, Special Education - Grants to States. Unless otherwise specified, this resource does not necessarily represent the policy of Metro ECSU, the federal Department of Education, the MN Department of Education, the MN Department of Health, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal or state government.