

Services for Professionals

Wisconsin First Step is a valuable resource for professionals in their work with families. Parent Specialists are available to share ideas and provide input and resources that may be helpful. Hotline staff can also mail brochures and other materials to providers, which can be made available to families.

Visit our website

www.mch-hotlines.org

Visitors to the website can learn more about services provided by Wisconsin First Step, the Birth to 3 program and the Regional Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Centers. The website offers an easy-to-use search engine to access the complete database of services available through Wisconsin First Step. A Special Topics List of disability-related subject headings and program terms allows users to quickly locate resource information on agencies and organizations serving children and youth with special needs. The website can be used by providers to update their agency and service information on-line and to find out how many times users searched for and viewed their agency's information.

“The Help Book”

Wisconsin First Step publishes five regional directories focusing on services for children and youth with special needs. Directories are published annually and are distributed to the Birth to 3 program coordinators, Regional Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Centers, special education personnel, neonatal and pediatric medical personnel and other professionals and organizations serving children and youth with special needs.

Wisconsin First Step is operated by Great Rivers 2-1-1, a community service of Gundersen Lutheran Health System, La Crosse, Wis.

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“Where can my family get help paying for specialized equipment for our child?”

Wisconsin First Step
1-800-642-7837
24 hours a day/7 days a week
Language interpretation and
TTY services available
www.mch-hotlines.org
wispubhealth@mch-hotlines.org
1900 South Avenue
La Crosse, WI 54601

Wisconsin
First Step

For children
with special needs

*Have Questions?
We can help!*

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Wisconsin First Step

Having a child or youth with special needs often creates unique family challenges. Many programs and services exist for children with special needs although it is often difficult to sort through them. Wisconsin First Step can help find resources for children birth to 21 with special needs.

When You Call

Staff are available 24 hours a day to provide information and discuss your concerns. Between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday calls are answered by a Parent Specialist, a professional who also has a child with special needs. Staff will listen and gather information, identify needs, explore options and assist in finding appropriate referrals. Follow-up is offered to all parents and professionals when needed. Staff can also send out brochures and materials about specific diseases or conditions.



“Are there any support groups in my area for families who have a child with special needs?”

“What are the options for my son after he graduates from high school?”

Access to Information

Staff have access to a database of more than 3,000 agencies and 15,000 services. The database includes local, state and national resources such as:

- Early Intervention Services
- Financial Assistance Programs
- Support Groups
- Respite Care
- Home Health Care
- Therapy Providers
- Educational Resources
- Advocacy
- Medical Diagnosis and Evaluation Resources
- Transportation
- Medical Resources
- Assistive Technology
- Mental Health Resources
- Parent to Parent Support

Wisconsin First Step links parents and professionals to five Regional Children and Youth with



Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs

Special Health Care Needs Centers across the state. These centers provide the following services for children birth to 21:

- Easy access to diagnosis-specific resources
- Parent support and connections to local resources
- Links to local resources and service providers



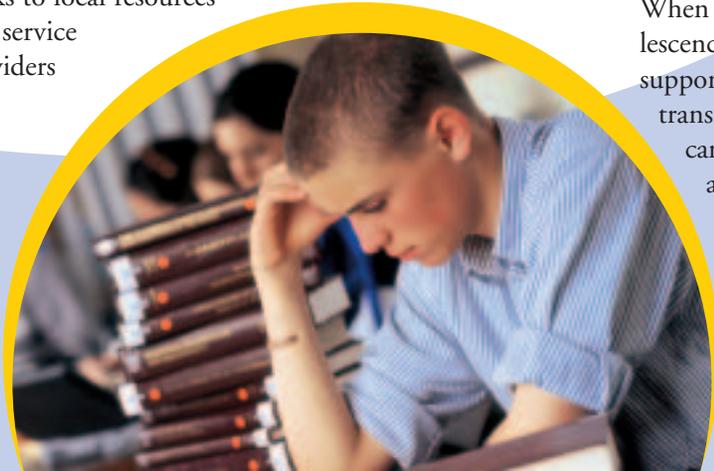
“I just learned that my child has hearing loss. What resources are available for my child and my family?”

Wisconsin First Step serves as the central directory of services for Wisconsin's Birth to 3 program. This statewide program, available in every county, provides support and services to infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. Available services include:

Birth to 3

- Family Education
- Developmental Education Services
- Communication Services
- Related Health Services
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy

Services for Adolescents and Young Adults



When a child with special needs moves into adolescence, it is important to maintain or find the support services needed to ensure a successful transition into adulthood. Wisconsin First Step can help families and professionals find available services for adolescents and young adults. Parent Specialists can provide information on mental health resources, special education, learning disabilities, transition resources, employment, centers for independent living and more.