



Early Childhood Development Programs

Media contacts: Sharlene Shelton, Human Services and Public Health Department: 612-348-4831
Karen Adamson, Human Services and Public Health Department: 612-348-2896
LuAnn Schmaus, Public Affairs: 612-348-7865

Fast facts

- ▲ Each year Hennepin County's early childhood development team of social workers, public health nurses and early childhood staff receives more than 2,000 calls from families and others who are concerned about a child's development.
- ▲ Developmental concerns may include learning, hearing, being emotionally appropriate, moving, talking, paying attention, seeing, playing and thinking.
- ▲ Interagency Early Intervention Committees include at least 15 community agencies working to improve outcomes for children who have special needs.

What are Hennepin's early childhood development programs?

Early childhood is the most rapid stage of development for humans and includes physical, emotional and cognitive development. Hennepin County's early childhood development programs and services help families assess their children in a variety of areas, such as talking, walking, moving, behavior, emotional maturity, hearing, seeing and more, and, if needed, helps the families get connected to resources and services.

Hennepin works with all suburban and Minneapolis Interagency Early Intervention Committees to find and serve children who have developmental delays and need intervention services.

Hennepin's four primary early childhood development programs or services are:

- **348-TOTS:** This program helps Minneapolis children under the age of three and is offered in partnership with the Minneapolis Public Schools. Hennepin public health nurses and other professionals make home visits, screen children and connect the families to resources if needed. (To receive services, call 612-348-TOTS.)
- **The Follow Along Program:** Through questionnaires, in English and Spanish, Hennepin helps families track the development of their children and, if needed, helps them find resources. (To receive services, call 612-348-5624.)
- **Early childhood social workers:** Social workers assist families by connecting them to resources, including child care, parent education, transportation, support groups and more. This service is offered to families with children under the age of five who have developmental delays.
- **Developmental disabilities services:** Social workers assist families of children who are developmentally disabled by helping the families create plans for their children and navigate various systems, including education, medical and financial, so the children are getting needed resources. When the children become three years old, they may be eligible for other services from the county's Aging and Disability Services unit.

In addition, Hennepin provides training, public health and social service support, and referrals to children throughout the county as part of the interagency system.

How many are served and at what cost?

In 2007, Hennepin staff assisted approximately 4,000 families with needed information and resources. The 2007 budget for Early Childhood Developmental Services was nearly \$1.7 million.