Children who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing and their families need a range of information, support, services, and technologies. Government and nonprofit systems in Minnesota provide a robust set of resources and programs, but not all needs are met.

**NEEDS**

1. **LANGUAGE**
   
   All children and their families need access to language and options to facilitate access to communication from birth and as hearing loss is identified or progresses.

2. **ACADEMICS**
   
   Students cannot access PreK-12+ supplemental services until they exhibit a deficiency. Access to accommodations and supports during postsecondary and job training programs may be a challenge in some cases.

3. **INFORMATION & RESOURCES**
   
   In 2015, there were over 68,000 newborns screened for hearing loss in Minnesota (99% of all babies born). Nearly 5% of those infants were referred for follow-up testing and over 300 were diagnosed with hearing loss. Parents who have a child who is deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing need immediate information and resources to help them make decisions about their child’s care and access support and services across a range of possible needs.

4. **SOCIAL CONNECTIONS**
   
   (to peers & other families)
   
   Both children and their families need to form social connections with other children and adults (a community).

5. **CAREER READINESS**
   
   Youth need more exposure to career options and more training (soft skills, academic, job-specific). These youth may struggle with underemployment.

6. **SELF-ADVOCACY & LIFE SKILLS**
   
   Children and youth need to learn how to speak up for themselves and their needs, including how to navigate in school and work settings.

**BASIC NEEDS**

Children who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing have the same needs as all children: love, fun/play, communication/human connection, food, shelter, healthcare, etc. Some children and their families may have an extra layer of needs due to:

- Poverty or low income
- Moving frequently
- Very busy schedules
- Speaking a language other than English
- Dealing with trauma, abuse, addiction, chronic health concerns, mental illness, etc.
- Other disabilities or health conditions
RESOURCES

BASIC NEEDS
- Early intervention (parent-child bonding, connections, communication)
- Social work support (health insurance, SSI, county services)
- Medical/psychological assessments

1. LANGUAGE
- Early intervention services from teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students, and teachers of blind/visually impaired for deafblind students
- Preschool programs (visual, auditory, multi-modal)
- The University of Minnesota Lions Infant Hearing Device Loaner Program
- Deaf Mentor Family Program—ASL instruction
- Speech-language services
- Cued Speech Association of MN
- MN DeafBlind Project

2. ACADEMICS
- Part C Early Intervention and Part B Early Childhood Special Education
- Teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students in resident school districts
- Deaf schools and resources
- Educational interpreters, cued speech transliterators, deafblind interveners
- Technology—assistive hearing technologies, closed captioning/real-time captioning

3. INFORMATION AND RESOURCES
- Advocacy services—MN Hands & Voices, PACER, Deaf Equity, MN Deaf Muslim Association, Black Deaf Advocates
- Regional Low Incidence Facilitators
- MN Department of Health—Beginnings Binder
- MN Department of Education—Help Me Grow and other resources
- MN Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing
- MN DeafBlind Project
- Deaf education websites (e.g., National Deaf Center)

4. SOCIAL CONNECTIONS
(to peers & other families)
- Minnesota deaf schools (MDS and MSAD) and resource programs
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing Role Model Program
- Local Educational Area activities and events
- MN Hands & Voices—parent-to-parent support, family events
- Regional Low Incidence/ECSE events
- Camps for youth (Camp Inspiration, Camp Courage)

5. CAREER READINESS
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- VECTOR program
- Summer transition programs

6. SELF-ADVOCACY & LIFE SKILLS
- Teacher of deaf and hard of hearing and teachers of blind and visually impaired students, including support for soft skills and career networking
- Vocational Rehabilitation services
- Compensatory skills training

For more information:
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