

Children’s Mental Health Services

Challenges to children’s emotional well-being and development are common, affecting one in every five young people. In Minnesota, nine percent of school-age children and five percent of preschool children have a serious emotional disturbance, which is a mental health problem that has become longer lasting and interferes significantly with the child’s functioning at home and in school. An estimated 109,000 children and youth, birth to age 21, in Minnesota need treatment for serious emotional disturbances.

With appropriate identification, evaluation and treatment, children and adolescents living with mental illness can achieve success in family life, in school and at work. However, the overwhelming majority of children with mental disorders fail to be identified and lack access to treatment and support.

Supporting mental health for all Minnesota children

DHS is committed to promoting and supporting the mental health and development of all Minnesota children and youth. DHS is committed to services that are informed by research and that will lead to a measurable reduction in mental health symptoms and increases in strengths and functional abilities, so that children who have had challenges during their development can approach and enter adulthood as resilient, competent youth.

Mental health matters at every stage of life

Helping children and youth facing challenges to their emotional well-being and development requires a continuum of services to meet the needs of each individual.



Youth ACT—Assertive Community Treatment CTSS—Children’s Therapeutic Support Services MH-TCM — Mental Health Targeted Case Management
PRTF— Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility

Children's mental health services

Early Childhood Mental Health

Identifying difficulties early, before age five, and providing families with the proper assessments and interventions can make a difference in a child's earliest years and for many years thereafter.

Collaborative Psychiatric Consultation Service

The Psychiatric Consultation Service offers a phone line for health care professionals to help determine the most appropriate medication for children and youth struggling with mental illness.

Culturally-Specific Capacity

Culturally-Specific Capacity Grants increase access to mental health services for children from cultural minority populations, develop and enhance the capacity of providers who serve these populations and support members of cultural and ethnic minority communities to become qualified mental health professionals and practitioners.

Mental Health Targeted Case Management

MH-TCM assists recipients in gaining access to needed educational, health, legal, medical, social, vocational and other services and supports. The four core components are: assessment, planning, referral/linkage and monitoring/coordination.

Crisis Text Line

Crisis Text Line is a statewide suicide prevention text messaging service.

Respite Care

Respite services provide temporary care for children with serious mental health needs who live at home, giving families and caregivers a much needed break while offering a safe environment for their children.

Mobile Crisis Services

Mobile crisis response teams are the front-line safety net for children in psychiatric crisis. The goal of this grant is to ensure that every Minnesota child and family has access to timely intervention by trained mental health responders.

Evidence-Based Practices

This grant develops the capacity of the children's mental health service system to implement evidence-based interventions throughout the state.

School-Linked Mental Health Services

School-based mental health services reach children in normal, every-day environments. The natural, non-stigmatizing location offers an early and effective environment for intervention.

Screening in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems

Grants to child welfare and juvenile justice agencies provide mental health screenings to children receiving child protective services or those in out-of-home placement, a child for whom parental rights have been terminated, a child found to be delinquent, a child in juvenile detention and certain children in trouble with the law.

Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility

Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs) provide services to children and youth with complex mental health conditions. PRTFs are more intensive than other services, such as residential treatment or day treatment, but less medically intensive than a psychiatric hospital or a hospital psychiatric unit.

At DHS, we are committed to creating consistent quality, access and accountability for children's mental health services. Learn more at:

mn.gov/dhs/childrens-mental-health