

The Gallatin Valley Resource Guide



for Parents of Children with Disabilities

The Gallatin Valley Resource Guide for Parents of Children with Disabilities is a reference source that has been created for parents and those who serve children with developmental delays and disabilities age birth to 18 in Gallatin County, specifically Bozeman and Belgrade.

This guide was created by Joanna Dumas as a final project for a Master's of Science degree in Health and Human Development at Montana State University under the direction of Dr. Bethany Letiecq. The internet version of the guide will be maintained by the Bozeman chapter of the Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA). This is the first edition (April 2011). Updates will be made at http://www.bsd7.org/district/departments/special_education/documents/Gallatin%20Valley%20Resource%20Guide.pdf. If you have corrections or updates or would like to request the addition of a resource, contact Bozeman SEPTA at BozemanSEPTA@hotmail.com.

The intent of this guide is to provide local, state and national resources for parents of children with developmental delays and disabilities and includes information on early intervention, school services, and transition into adulthood. Every effort was made to include an accurate, comprehensive list of resources. The list is not exhaustive, but rather a starting point for parents to obtain information particular to their family needs. The information in this guide was gathered through community contacts, internet research, local telephone directories, and the following:

All About IEPs by Peter W. D. Wright, Esq., Pamela Darr Wright, MA, MSW, and Sandra Webb O'Connor, M.Ed., 2010

"First Steps: A Parent Information Handbook to Infant and Toddler Programs and Preschool Special Education," a publication of Montana's Parent Center at PLUK, revised 2007
http://www.pluk.org/Pubs/PLUK_First_Steps_04_2008.pdf

From Emotions to Advocacy Second Edition by Pam Wright and Pete Wright, 2006

"IEP meetings" PLUK Notes, prepared and published by PLUK, 2005
http://www.pluk.org/PLUKNotes/Pnotes_IEP.pdf

"Montana Parent's Handbook on Transition: What Happens After High School," a publication of Montana's Parent Center at PLUK, revised 2007
http://www.pluk.org/Pubs/PLUK_Transition_High_School_04_2008.pdf

"Montana Parents Handbook to Special Education," a publication of Montana's Parent Center at PLUK, revised 2005
http://www.pluk.org/Pubs/MT_SPED_Handbook_2005.pdf

"Pediatric Resource Guide" by the Park County Pediatric Community Care Team, 2009

"Planning Ahead for When Your Special Child Turns 18," by Nichole Vandiver Bryan from www.eparent.com/EP Magazine, March 2010
http://www.eparent.com/uploads/1/Planning_Ahead_For_When_Your_Special_Child_Turns_18.pdf

"Rights and Responsibilities of Parents of Children with Disabilities," from the Learning Disabilities of America website retrieved on March 13, 2011 at
http://www.ldanatl.org/aboutld/parents/special_ed/print_rights.asp

Special Kids Need Special Parents by Judith Loseff Lavin, 2001

Thank you to the following organizations that contributed to the printing costs for this publication



Special Education Parent Teacher Association



Family Outreach, Inc.

DISCLAIMER: Links and information provided herein do not necessarily express the opinion of the author of this guide or SEPTA, nor does the author or SEPTA control or guarantee accuracy or extensiveness of outside information. The inclusion of information does not reflect an endorsement of the individuals, products or services therein. All resources provided in this guide are for informational and educational purposes only.

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Gallatin County

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Gallatin County

406-587-1216

<http://www.bigbrotherssisters.org/>

Provide children facing adversity with 1-to-1 relationships

Big Sky Youth Empowerment

406-539-0399

<http://www.byep.org/>

Provide creative outdoor programs for high school-aged, at-risk youth

Boys and Girls Club of Southwest Montana

406-587-8442

<http://bgcswmt.org/>

Provide a positive environment for children and teens of all backgrounds; help cultivate character-building, self-esteem, values, and skills

Bozeman Help Center

406-586-3333

<http://bozemanhelpcenter.org/>

24 hour crisis counseling, information and referral services, and telecare program for individuals with disabilities

Child Care Connections

406-587-7786

<http://www.childcareconnections.info/>

Research and referral agency for quality, affordable, and available childcare

Eagle Mount

406-586-1781

<http://www.eaglemount.org/>

Therapeutic recreation for individuals with disabilities

Family Outreach

406-587-2477

<http://www.familyoutreach.org>

In-home early intervention education and support services for children 0 to 3 years old; services for children with severe or profound cognitive delays, children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, and adults with disabilities

Greater Gallatin United Way

406-587-2194

<http://greatergallatinunitedway.org/>

Support services and advocacy for children in need of a caring adult to help shape their future; promote increased mental health services

Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) District IX

406-587-4486

<http://www.thehrdc.org/>

Educational and training opportunities and transportation for Montanans with disabilities

HRDC Head Start

406-587-4486

<http://www.thehrdc.org/programs/headstart/>

Classroom style experiences for children with various developmental disabilities at no charge to qualified families

Kids Management Authority

Vicki DeBoer

406-600-4073

Family-centered, community-based system of care for children with significant emotional disturbances

One Step Up

406-556-7218

<http://www.onestepupbozeman.org/>

Preschool that specializes in children with physical and developmental disabilities

People First of Bozeman

Julie Munson

406-585-9132

Peer self-advocacy group that promotes independence for individuals with disabilities age 16 and older

Parents Let's Unite for Kids (PLUK)

800-222-7585

<http://www.pluk.org/>

Assistance, training, support, resources, and information to aid children with disabilities at home and in school

PLUK advocate for Bozeman area:
Vicki McGinnis
888-556-0764

REACH

406-587-1271
<http://reachinc.org>
Support to adults with disabilities

Special Learning 1-on-1

406-580-2640
<http://speciallearning1on1.com>
Serve children with cognitive and behavioral disorders

Support Groups

AUTISM

Easter Seals-Goodwill P.L.A.Y. Project (Play and Language for Autistic Youngsters)
406-217-8768
http://esgw-nrm.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=NRMM_PLAY Project
In-home training and support for families of children age 14 months to 6 years with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Montana Autism Society of America

<http://www.montanaasa.org/>
Provide support and local resources for families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders in Montana

Montana Community Autism & Asperger's Network

Denise Dahlberg
406-239-9156
<http://mtcaan.org>
Parent-driven organization that supports individuals on the autism spectrum and their families; create awareness and advocate at the state and local level

Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA)

Aly Ball
406-582-8566
http://www.bsd7.org/district/departments/special_education/septa.php
Advocate for the educational needs of children with disabilities

Thrive

406-587-3840
Belgrade: 406-388-1300
<http://www.allthrive.org/>
Education, information, and support to parents to foster child development and help families thrive; family center offers parenting classes, support groups, play groups, and resource library

BLINDNESS

Montana School for the Deaf and Blind

800-882-6732
406-771-6063 (TTD)
<http://msdb.mt.gov/>
Educational opportunities for Montana's deaf, hard of hearing, blind, and visually impaired children; resources for parents

National Federation of the Blind of Montana

Daniel Burke
406-546-8546
Support and advocacy for visually impaired Montanans

National Federation of the Blind Parents of Blind Children

Jim Beyer
406-728-9402
Support and information for parents of blind children

BRAIN INJURY

Brain Injury Association of Montana

800-241-6442
<http://www.biamt.org/index.html>
Information for families about life after a brain injury

Local support group:
Mary DeBernardis: 406-763-4268
Kathy Fisher: 406-586-8030

CANCER

Cancer Family Network

406-587-8080
www.cancerfamilynetwork.org
Support and education for Montanans diagnosed with cancer and their families

Center for Cancer Support

406-582-1600
Comprehensive supportive care, resources, programs, and support groups for those affected by cancer

CELIAC

Montana Celiac Society

www.montanaceliacsociety.com
Information, support, and resources for individuals with Celiac disease

CYSTIC FIBROSIS

Cody Dieruf Benefit Foundation for Cystic Fibrosis

460-587-5055
<http://breathinisbelievin.org/>
Raise awareness of Cystic Fibrosis and offer financial and emotional support to local children and young adults with Cystic Fibrosis and their families

DEAFNESS

Bozeman's Deaf Club

Sherilyn Renner
406-586-9354

Gallatin Association of the Deaf

Cheryl Dicken: 406-763-0518
Theresa Dubois: 406-763-0498
Interpreter referral system, community education, advocacy, and employment opportunities for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing

Montana Association of the Deaf

<http://www.mtdeaf.org/>
Promote and protect the rights of deaf and hard of hearing Montanans

Montana School for the Deaf and Blind

800-882-6732
406-771-6063 (TTD)
<http://msdb.mt.gov/>
Educational opportunities for Montana's deaf, hard of hearing, blind, and visually impaired children; resources for parents

DOWN SYNDROME

Down Syndrome Research, Education and Advocacy in Montana (D.R.E.A.M.)

406-599-2556
<http://www.dream-mt.org/>
Local support system for parents of children diagnosed with Down syndrome; offer grants to help individuals with Down syndrome and their families

FOOD ALLERGIES

Food Allergy Support Group

Kendall McGlynn
406-585-1219
For families of children with food allergies

FOR ALL TYPES OF DISABILITIES

Belgrade KIDS

Jacque Adams
406-924-2217
For parents and educators caring for children with disabilities in Belgrade

Our-Kids

<http://www.our-kids.org/>
Support and resources for parents, caregivers and others who are working with children with physical and/or mental disabilities and delays

Our Special Kids

248-478-1130
<http://www.ourspecialkids.com/>
Virtual community for parents of children with disabilities; information on books and articles, newsletter, and a section for children's victories

Parent 2 Parent

<http://www.p2pusa.org>

Information and emotional support for families of children with disabilities; no group in MT, contact ND for a matching parent

SHARE

Linda Sherwood
406-587-9412

Bozeman support group for parents of children with disabilities

The Sibling Support Project

<http://www.siblingsupport.org/>

Support for brothers and sisters of individuals with disabilities

Special Needs Network

<http://www.myspecialneedsnetwork.com/>

Private social network for learning solutions for children with disabilities; message boards to connect, network, share, and learn best practices

FRAGILE X

Fragile X Resource of Montana

866-372-9268



There are numerous qualified therapists in Gallatin County. Those listed below specialize in pediatrics and/or patients with disabilities.

OCCUPATIONAL

The Cozy Nest

406-587-2755

Epicenter Therapy Services

406-522-3722

www.epicentertherapy.com

Mosaic Rehabilitation

406-388-4988

www.mosaicrehab.com

Play of Life Therapies

406-556-8770

Local contact:

Mary DeBernardis: 406-763-4268

For individuals with Fragile X and their families

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning Disabilities Association of Montana

406-259-3110

<http://www.ldaofmt.org/>

Information, advocacy, and support for children with learning disabilities and their families

SEIZURES

Seizures Support Group

<http://www.inspire.com/groups/seizures/>

Online support group for individuals who experience seizures and their families

SPINA BIFIDA

Spina Bifida Association of America Montana Support Group

406-458-7006

<http://www.sbamontana.org>

For individuals with Spina bifida and their families

Pediatric Potentials

406-582-4182

SPEECH

The Cozy Nest

406-587-2755

Epicenter Therapy Services

406-522-3722

www.epicentertherapy.com

Mosaic Rehabilitation

406-388-4988

www.mosaicrehab.com

Scala Communication Services

406-586-5609

Sullivan Speech

406-556-9853

Tanis Trenka

406-570-9465

PHYSICAL

The Cozy Nest

406-587-2755

Epicenter Therapy Services

406-522-3722

www.epicentertherapy.com

Little Lighthouse Therapy

406-219-3477

littlelighthouse@bresnan.net

Mosaic Rehabilitation

388-4988

www.mosaicrehab.com

Montana Resources

Bridge to Benefits

877-227-2227

<http://mt.bridgetobenefits.org/>

Provide a screening tool to help individuals and families determine eligibility for support programs and tax credits, including Medicaid, Healthy Montana Kids Program (HMK), Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships, Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP, Weatherization), School Lunch Program (Free and Reduced School Lunch), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Child Care Plus

800-235-4122

<http://www.ccplus.org/index.htm>

LEARNING

A Plus Phonics Reading Center

406-586-7737

Learn to Read Tutoring

406-539-0044

www.learn Toread Tutoring.com

Mathworks of Montana

406-582-1805

One Step Up

406-556-7218

www.onestepupbozeman.org

Preschool for children with disabilities

Sage Learning Center

582-9570

www.sagelearningcenter.com

Sylvan Learning Center

406-586-7323

www.SylvanLearning.com

Debra Turnquist

406-586-4695

Reading specialist

Special Needs Subsidy to offset child care costs for low income families who are working or enrolled in educational or training programs; information about inclusion in child care

Child Development Center

800-914-4779

www.childdevcenter.org

Free developmental evaluations for children 0-5 years old

Disability Rights Montana

800-245-4743

<http://disabilityrightsmt.org/janda/>

Assistance with care, treatment, accessibility to programs and services, employment, and education

**(Eugene F.) Herman Scottish Rite
Childhood Language Disorders Clinic**
406-259-1680

Early intervention services for preschool children with speech and/or language disorders

Montana Adaptive Equipment Program
406-444-2288

Provide adaptive equipment for mobility and positioning based on physician prescription and therapist recommendation

**Montana Council on
Developmental Disabilities**
866-443-4332

<http://www.mtcdd.org/>

Advocate with and for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families on issues such as education, employment, transportation, housing, health care, and community inclusion

Montana Legal Services Helpline
800-666-6899

Montana Law Help

[http://www.montanalawhelp.org/
MT/index.cfm](http://www.montanalawhelp.org/MT/index.cfm)

Legal resources, information, and blank forms for a variety of law issues for low and middle income Montanans

Montana Network of Care
[http://montana.networkofcare.org/
mh/home/index.cfm](http://montana.networkofcare.org/mh/home/index.cfm)

Information about behavioral health services, laws, resources, and related news for individuals, families and agencies concerned with behavioral health

Montana Talking Books Library
800-332-3400
[http://msl.mt.gov/talking_book_library/
default.asp](http://msl.mt.gov/talking_book_library/default.asp)

Free mail loan of recorded book and playback equipment available to Montana residents with visual, physical, and/or reading disabilities

**Montana Telecommunications
Access Program**
800-833-8503

The Montana Relay Service (866-735-2968) provides telephone access to individuals with disabilities by relaying conversations over a TTY or verbally; the Equipment Distribution Program (800-877-2579) provides low or no cost telecommunications equipment to individuals who have difficulty using a phone due to hearing, speech or physical disabilities.

Montana Youth Leadership Forum

June Hermanson
406-442-2576

<http://www.montanaylf.org/>

Intensive leadership training program for high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors with disabilities to cultivate leadership, citizenship, and social skills and gain access to assistive technology, community support, and self-advocacy resources

Optimist Special Children's Camp

Shawn Ashcraft
406-861-1806

<http://optimistcamp.blogspot.com/>

Week long overnight summer camp in Red Lodge for children with disabilities ages 8-21

Partners in Policymaking

<http://www.partnersinpolicymaking.com/>

Help individuals with developmental disabilities and their families become effective advocates; website offers free online courses and resources

Special Olympics Montana

800-242-6876

<http://www.somt.org/>

Athletic training and competitions for children and adults with disabilities

The University of Montana Rural Institute

406-243-5467

<http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/>

Support the independence, productivity, and inclusion of persons with disabilities into the community

State of Montana Government Offices

Children's Special Health Care Services

800-762-9891

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/PHSD/family-health/cshs/cshs-index.shtml>

Clinics for a variety of disabilities and financial assistance for children with special health care needs

Consumer Credit Counseling Services of MT

406-582-9273

<http://www.cccsmt.org/>

Programs to help individuals and families achieve economic independence; budget and housing counseling, preventive money and debt management programs

Gallatin County Health Department

406-582-3100

http://gallatin.mt.gov/public_documents/gallatincomt_Health/Health

Immunizations, well-child examinations, and health and nutrition information

Women-Infants-Children (WIC)

nutrition program: 406-582-3115

Health Care Financial Assistance Programs for Children

800-362-8312

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/programsservices/medicaid.shtml>

Information on eligibility and application process for Medicaid for children

Healthy Montana Kids

877-543-7669

<http://hmk.mt.gov/>

Free/low cost health insurance for children up to 19 years old

Montana Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

406-771-9056

406-771-9194 (TTY)

Services include advocacy and an interpreter referral system

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services Developmental Services Division

877-296-1197

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/dsd/index.shtml>

Services for individuals with disabilities and their families

Bozeman office:

Brad Johnson

406-587-6066

Office of Public Assistance

406-582-3010

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/programsservices/publicassistanceprograms.shtml>

Apply for food stamps, Medicaid, and TANF cash assistance

Social Security Administration

406-586-4501

www.ssa.gov

Apply for supplemental security income for children with disabilities

Social Security Benefits for Children with Disabilities publication:

<http://ssa.gov/pubs/10026.pdf>

Montana Mental Health Facilities and

Acadia Montana

Butte, MT

800-477-1067

<http://www.acdiamontana.com/>

Treatment facility for children and adolescents ages 8-18 experiencing on-going behavioral and/or emotional problems

Billings Clinic Behavioral Health Pediatric Psychiatry

406-255-8550

<http://www.billingsclinic.com/body.cfm?id=107>

Treatment programs for youths

The Children's Mental Health Bureau

406-444-3964

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/mentalhealth/children/>

Information on residential treatment, mental health centers, and support groups

Mental Health America of Montana

406-587-7774

<http://www.montanamentalhealth.org/>

Resource referrals, education, and advocacy for the mental health of Montanans

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Montana

<http://www.namimt.org/>

Support, education, and advocacy for Montanans with severe mental illnesses and their families

NAMI Bozeman

Tom Peluso

406-585-8959

**Western Montana Mental Health Center
Bozeman Mental Health Center**

406-522-7357

<http://wmmhc.net/bozeman>

Adult case management, adult outpatient therapy, crisis residential, drop-in center, emergency services, and psychiatric services

GALLATIN COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS

There are numerous qualified mental health service providers in Gallatin County. Those listed below specialize in individual therapy for children or family therapy.

Christine Adams, LCSW

406-570-7613

Specializes in working with children

A.W.A.R.E.

406-587-1181

<http://www.aware-inc.org>

Services for individuals with disabilities and/or mental illness including treatment programs, youth case management, intensive residential services, intensive family education and support services, Early Head Start for preschool aged children, and transportation services

Kate Beck, MA, MS

406-587-9486

Experience working with severely emotionally disturbed youth and children with disabilities

Belgrade Counseling Clinic

406-388-1607

Family therapy

Hallie Bornstein-Banziger

406-219-3311

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Bridger Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

406-586-9735

Psychiatric services for children of all ages

Michael Cater, LCPC

406-587-3097

Specializes in children and adolescents

Kathleen Cullen-Mielnick, MS, JD, LCPC

406-587-6290

Specializes in children and families

Charlotte Dickenson, LCPC

406-585-1477

Specializes in children and adolescents

Kristin Evans, LCSW

406-580-0627

Therapy for children and adolescents

Family Counseling

406-587-7515

Specializes in relationship therapy

Jeffery Green, MD

406-586-9735

Psychoactive medications

The Heart and Hand Center

Sally Hand
406-600-8319
Art therapy, equine assisted therapy, and psychotherapy

Human Development Clinic

406-994-4113
<http://www.montana.edu/wwwhhd/humandevelopmentclinic.htm>
Low-cost mental health services for adults and children experiencing behavioral/achievement difficulties at school; staffed by faculty and graduate students of the counseling program at Montana State University

Sandra Jackson, LCPC

406-585-0020
Specializes in children and adolescents

Kim Lockwood, EDS, LCPC

406-581-8377
Psychoeducational evaluations

Judy LeRoux

406-581-4910
Mental and behavioral health therapy

Emily Krushefski, LCPC

406-522-0410
Individual therapy for youth as well as Dialectical Behavior Therapy group for 13-18 year olds

Dana Miquelle, LCPC

406-587-8775
Acute psychological disabilities

Jodi Murray, MS, LCPC

406-579-83074
In home parenting education and assessment

Joni Patterson-Crosky, ICSW

406-587-3792
Family therapist

John Platt

406-587-7468
Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Sherry Sims Beach

587-5987
Child and family therapy

Leah Thronson, MD

406-220-0654
Psychotherapy; long-term effects of raising a child with disabilities

Robert Velin, MD

406-586-4600
Neuropsychologist; travels to Bozeman 2 times per month

Tina Visscher, MS, LCSW

406-586-3767
Works with children with emotional and/or behavioral problems; families of children with disabilities

Steve Wagner, PhD

406-595-2263
Specializes in families and children age 10 and older who are coping with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch

406-222-6490
<http://www.ybgr.org/>
Individualized mental health treatment plans for emotionally disturbed youths and their families

Youth Dynamics, Inc.

406-585-9402
Big Sky Youth Center Shelter Care/
Group Home
406-586-2566
<http://www.youthdynamics.org/>
Treat children and teens with behavioral or mental health issues or diagnosed with a severe emotional disturbance

Specialty Medical Centers

Billings Clinic Pediatrics Center

800-332-7156

<http://www.billingsclinic.com/body.cfm?id=359>

Specialty clinics in pediatric cancer, diabetes, pulmonology, and neurology

The Children's Hospital

Aurora, CO

800-624-6553

<http://www.thechildrenshospital.org/>

More than 1,000 pediatric specialists treating a wide range of diagnoses; level III NICU, the highest rating established by the American Academy of Pediatrics

Community Medical Center

Missoula, MT

406-728-4100

http://communitymed.org/index.php/care/childrens_services

Level III NICU, providing care for infants born premature or sick

Shodair Children's Hospital

Helena, MT

800-447-6614

<http://shodairhospital.org/>

Specializes in child and adolescent psychiatric treatment and genetic disorders

Spokane Shriners's Hospital

888-895-5951

<http://www.shrinershq.org/hospitals/spokane>

Specializes in pediatric orthopedic care, including Cerebral Palsy, Spina bifida, Muscular Dystrophy, and spinal cord injury at no charge to families

St. Louis Children's Hospital

Center for Cerebral Palsy Spasticity

800-416-9956

http://www.stlouischildrens.org/content/med_services/CerebralPalsyCenter.htm

Diagnose and treat infants, children, and adolescents with cerebral palsy

St. Vincent's Healthcare

Billings, MT

406-237-7450

<http://www.svh-mt.org/body.cfm?id=455>

Level IIIB NICU, the highest distinction in the region. Pediatric specialties include: cardiology, neurology, orthopedics, spine, urology, neonatology, behavioral and developmental, pulmonology, gastroenterology and psychiatry. Specialty clinics include: Cleft/Craniofacial, Cystic Fibrosis, Endocrine, Gastrointestinal, Genetics, Hemophilia, High Risk Infant Follow-up, Metabolic, Nephrology, Neural Tube Defect, Neurology, and Rehabilitation

National Resources

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Ability Hub Assistive Technology

<http://www.abilityhub.com/index.htm>

Adaptive equipment to assist individuals with disabilities to access computers

AbleData

800-227-0216

www.abledata.com

Information about assistive technology products and rehabilitation equipment

Closing The Gap

507-248-3294

www.closingthegap.com

Information on the latest computer-related products available for individuals with disabilities

Family Center on Technology and Disability

202-884-8068

www.fctd.info

Resources on assistive and instructional technologies and the role of assistive

technology in schools; extensive list of websites organized by category

ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)

800-233-4050

<http://www.chadd.org/>

Support for individuals, parents, teachers, professionals, and others helping children with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

AUTISM

Asperger's Syndrome

<http://www.aspergersyndrome.org/>

Information, resources, support groups, and message boards for families and others who deal with the challenges of Asperger's Syndrome, autism, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder/Not Otherwise Specified (PDD/NOS)

Autism Research Institute

619-281-7165

http://www.autism.com/fam_whatisautism.asp

Extensive information for families living with an individual with an autism spectrum disorder

Autism Society of America

800-328-8476

<http://www.autism-society.org/>

Information about autism, advocacy, research, and living with autism

Autism Speaks

323-549-0500

<http://www.autismspeaks.org/>

Information, social networks, resources, advocacy, awareness, and research for individuals with an autism spectrum disorder

National Autism Association

877-622-2884

<http://www.nationalautismassociation.org>

Information, support, and resources for

families affected by autism and other neurological disorders

Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH)

919-966-2173

<http://www.teacch.com/>

Diagnostic evaluations, parent training and support groups, social play and recreation groups, individual counseling for higher-functioning clients, and supported employment for individuals of all ages with an autism spectrum disorder

BLINDNESS

American Council of the Blind

800-424-8666

<http://acb.org>

Resources, scholarship, newsletter, job bank, and more for individuals who are blind

American Foundation for the Blind

800-232-5463

www.afb.org

Resources for individuals with vision loss and their families

National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments

800-562-6265

<http://www.spedex.com/napvi>

Information, support, referral services, and advocacy; conferences and workshops for parents of children with visual impairments

National Federation of the Blind

<http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Default.asp>

Education and programs that encourage independence for individuals who are blind; advocacy, research, and technology

National Federation of the Blind Training Centers

Colorado Center for the Blind

800-401-4632

<http://www.cocenter.org/>

Training programs for individuals who are blind, including summer programs for middle

school to college-age students, and career exploration

CEREBRAL PALSY

eMedicine Health – Cerebral Palsy Center
http://www.medicinenet.com/cerebral_palsy/article.htm

Definitions, treatment plans, long-term outlook, and other information on Cerebral Palsy

United Cerebral Palsy

800- 872-5827

202- 973-7197 (TTY)

<http://www.ucp.org/>

Service provider and advocate for adults and children with disabilities, including Cerebral Palsy

CORNELIA de LANGE SYNDROME

Cornelia de Lange Syndrome Foundation

800-223-8355

<http://www.cdlsusa.org/>

Family support services, information on research, and advocacy awareness for families of children with Cornelia de Lange syndrome

CRANIOFACIAL DEFORMITIES

Cleft Palate Foundation

800-242-5338

<http://www.cleftline.org/>

Information about clefts and other craniofacial anomalies; information about cleft palate/ craniofacial medical teams

Children’s Craniofacial Association

800-535-3643

<http://www.ccakids.com/>

Information, support, family networks, and a financial assistance program for families of children with craniofacial differences

FACES: The National Craniofacial Association

800-332-2373

<http://www.faces-cranio.org/>

Information on specific craniofacial disorders, networking, resources, and information on specialized craniofacial centers

CYSTIC FIBROSIS

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

800-344-4823

<http://www.cff.org/>

Information about Cystic Fibrosis, treatments, research, and living with Cystic Fibrosis

DEAFNESS/HARD of HEARING

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

202-337-5220

202-337-5221 (TTY)

<http://nc.agbell.org>

Training, financial aid and scholarships, referrals, and advocacy for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families

American Society of Deaf Children

800-942-2732

717-334-7922 (TTY)

<http://www.deafchildren.org/>

Information, support, and resources for parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

301-496-7243

<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/>

Information and research regarding hearing, balance, smell and taste, and speech and language disorders

DISABILITY INFORMATION and RIGHTS

Disability.gov

<http://www.disability.gov/>

Information on benefits, community life, education, emergency preparedness, housing, employment, health, civil rights, and transportation for individuals with disabilities

National Council on Disability

202-272-2004

202-272-2074 (TTY)

<http://www.ncd.gov/>

Information and publications on disability issues being addressed by the federal government

**Rocky Mountain Disability and Business
Technical Assistance Center**

800-949-4232

<http://www.ada-infonet.org/>

Information on the Americans with Disabilities
Act (ADA)

A Guide to Disability Rights Laws

<http://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm>

From the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights
Division, Disability Rights Section

DOWN SYNDROME

National Down Syndrome Congress

800-232-6372

<http://www.ndsccenter.org/>

Facts, news articles, and information about
self-advocacy, healthcare, education, and
behavior for individuals with Down syndrome

National Down Syndrome Society

800-221-4602

<http://ndss.org/>

Facts, education, development, community life,
healthcare, research, and self-advocacy for
individuals with Down syndrome

EPILEPSY

Epilepsy Foundation

800-332-1000

<http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org/>

Information, research news, and advocacy for
individuals with epilepsy and their families

FRAGILE X

National Fragile X Foundation

800-688-8765

www.fragilex.org

Information, intervention, research news,
education, and life planning for individuals
with Fragile X and their families

GENERAL INFORMATION

About.com Special Needs Children

<http://specialchildren.about.com/>

Information about diagnoses, difficult behavior,
and education; links to family activities, a
website for kids, and a shopping site

Allsup, Inc.

800- 854-1418

<http://www.allsup.com/>

Disability-related support services including
social security disability insurance
representation, personal financial services,
Medicaid advice, and disability life planning
services

The Arc of the United States

800-433-5255

<http://www.thearc.org/>

Information about a variety of diagnoses, civil
rights, education, employment, housing, health
care, and long-term services for individuals
with intellectual and developmental disabilities
and their families

Bridges 4 kids

<http://www.bridges4kids.org/>

Information regarding education and disability
laws, transition into adulthood, and legal
matters; disabilities/disorders tabs links to a
comprehensive list of disabilities and includes
general information, education and classroom
accommodations, and medical information

Center for Disease Control

800-232-4636

800-232-6348 (TTY)

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/index.html>

Information on a variety of disorders and
conditions

Child Development Institute

<http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/>

Information on child development, and
psychological and learning disorders

Children's Disabilities Info

<http://www.childrensdisabilities.info/>

Articles, resources, and support groups for
parents of children with disabilities

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

<http://www.chop.edu/healthinfo/index.html>

Health information on hundreds of disorders
and afflictions

Do 2 Learn

<http://www.do2learn.com/>

Activities, songs, games, print resources, and information for children with disabilities; disabilities tab offers advice, books, diagnosis, and family advocacy pertaining to select disabilities

Easter Seals Goodwill

Northern Rocky Mountain

800-771-2153

<http://esgw-nrm.easterseals.com/>

Services for children and adults with disabilities and other special needs, and support for their families

Family Village

<http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/>

Education and information on a variety of disability-related services

The MassMutual Special Care Program

<http://www.massmutual.com/planningtools/additional-resources/special-needs/special-care/autism?source=google11&adgroup=autism&keyword=autism+research>

Information, resources, and tools for individuals with disabilities and their families

Parents Helping Parents Child Development

408-727-5775

<http://www.php.com///Child-development>

Informational videos regarding when to seek therapy, sensory processing disorder, and more

Special Needs Resource Project

<http://www.snrproject.com/>

Information on early intervention, education, family finances, housing, insurance, medical equipment, and transportation for parents of children with disabilities; sample forms to help parents get organized and resource lists

Yellow Pages for Kids with Disabilities

<http://www.yellowpagesforkids.com/>

Lists services for children with disabilities by state, including special education schools, learning centers, treatment programs, parent groups, respite care, community centers,

grassroots organizations, and government programs for children with disabilities

JUVENILE DIABETES

Juvenile Diabetes Foundation

800-533-2873

<http://www.jdf.org/>

Information, resources, research news, and advocacy for families of children with juvenile diabetes

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Edbydesign.com

<http://www.edbydesign.com/>

Software for children with disabilities and ideas to help children with intellectual disabilities reach their potential

Learning Disabilities Association of America

412-341-1515

<http://www.ldaamerica.org/>

Information on assessments and evaluations, Attention-Deficit Disorder, special education (including determining eligibility and IEPs), early signs of learning disabilities, coping with learning disabilities, mental health, legislative updates, and resources

National Center for Learning Disabilities

888-575-7373

<http://www.nclld.org/>

Informational podcasts and articles on financial aid and scholarships for students with learning disabilities; IDEA Parent Guide

LD OnLine

<http://www.ldonline.org/>

Information, resources, support, and advice about learning disabilities and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

LUPUS

Lupus Foundation of America

800-558-0121

<http://www.lupus.org/>

Information, support, and services for individuals with Lupus syndrome and their families

MAGAZINES

Ability Magazine

<http://www.abilitymagazine.com/>

Articles on disability, health, and insights into human levels of ability

Apostrophe Magazine

<http://www.apostrophemagazine.com/>

For Montanans with disabilities who are overcoming “can’t” and “don’t” in their lives

Attitude Magazine

<http://www.additudemag.com/>

For individuals with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Autism Asperger’s Digest

www.autismdigest.com

For families of children with Asperger’s and autism

Complex Child

<http://www.complexchild.com/>

Written by parents of children with disabilities; articles on a wide variety of topics

Exceptional Parent

<http://www.eparent.com/index.asp>

Education, healthcare, family planning, legal and other information for families of children with disabilities

Montana Parent Magazine

<http://www.mtparent.com/>

Free magazine for parents of infants through teens featuring health, education, activities, books and products, and local resources in Bozeman and Belgrade

Special Needs Resource Magazine

<http://snrmag.com/>

Creative arts and information on issues pertaining to parenting a child with disabilities

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Multiple Sclerosis Association of America

800-532-7667, ext. 154

<http://www.msaa.com/>

Information, news, publications, and support

for individuals with Multiple Sclerosis and their families

Multiple Sclerosis Foundation

888-673-6287

<http://www.msfacts.org/>

Information, news, forums, and coping strategies for individuals with Multiple Sclerosis

National Multiple Sclerosis Society

800-344-4867

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/index.aspx>

Local Chapter: Greater Northwest

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/chapters/WAS/index.aspx>

Research news and a social network for individuals with Multiple Sclerosis

MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

Muscular Dystrophy Association

800-572-1717

<http://www.mda.org/>

Information, research, resources, advocacy, support groups, chats, and blogs for individuals with Muscular Dystrophy

Muscular Dystrophy Family Foundation (No Boundaries)

800-544-1213

<http://noboundariesff.org/>

Resources, services, and adaptive equipment for individuals with muscular dystrophy to support independent and productive living

RARE DISORDERS

National Organization for Rare Disorders

800-999-6673

<http://www.nord-rdb.com/>

Database of more than 1,200 rare diseases and disorders; extensive index of organizations

SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER

Sensory Processing Disorder Foundation

303-322-5550

<http://www.spdfoundation.net/>

Information, education, resources, research, and online classes for individuals with a sensory processing disorder and their families

SPEECH and COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

The Childhood Apraxia of Speech Association

412-343-7102

<http://www.apraxia-kids.org/>

Articles and information on childhood apraxia of speech; diagnosis, treatment, research, message board, and store

The Stuttering Foundation

800-992-9392

<http://www.stutteringhelp.org/>

Resources, services, and support to individuals who stutter and their families

SPINA BIFIDA

Spina Bifida Association of America

800-621-3141

<http://www.spinabifidaassociation.org/>

Information, resources, and support for individuals with Spina bifida and their families

Early Intervention

Under the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA), states must provide services to children 0 to 3 years old experiencing developmental delays or children at risk of delays who have been diagnosed with a physical or mental condition as part of the Part C Infant and Toddler Program. The program is free, voluntary and family focused. Eligible children are assigned a Family Support Specialist (FSS). An Individual Family Support Program (IFSP) is developed with input from the family and the FSS to plan the services needed to reach developmental goals set for the child.

At age 3, the FSS assists eligible children transition out of Part C services and into Part B services, the special education services administered by the public school district. Participation is voluntary. A transition planning meeting takes place usually 3 to 6 months prior to the child's 3rd birthday to assist the family in deciding if they want to pursue public school services. If school services are desired, a meeting will be held with the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team, which includes parents, and goals will be written for the child's special education program, as well as where the services will take place, for example, in a special education preschool classroom, private preschool, Head Start or home setting.

Family Outreach administers early intervention services in

Gallatin, Park, Madison and Meagher counties

406-587-2477

www.familyoutreach.org

Transition guide from Part C to Part B services: "First Steps: A Parent Information Handbook to Infant and Toddler Programs and Preschool Special Education"

[http://www.pluk.org/Pubs/PLUK First Steps 04 2008.pdf](http://www.pluk.org/Pubs/PLUK_First_Steps_04_2008.pdf)

Special

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the IDEA Improvement Act of 2004, every child is entitled to a free and appropriate public education. Children with disabilities "who, by reason thereof, need special education and related services" (IDEA, 2004) are eligible for free services from the school to prepare them for employment, education and/or independent living after high school to lead independent, productive lives. According to IDEA, the school system is required to provide an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to eligible children with disabilities.

The IEP is a plan between the school, parents and the child that outlines the special education goals for the child for a specific period of time, usually one year, and how the school will assist the child in achieving those goals through, if necessary, academic assistive technology, services, aids and special accommodations. The IEP does not guarantee outcomes. It is a plan for the school to provide individualized instruction and assistance. Special education services are available at age 3 for preschoolers and age 5 for school children.

Parents must provide the school with written consent to evaluate the child. After the school assesses the child, parents and school staff meet to discuss results, determine eligibility, and decide on the child's educational needs. Parents share equal partnership with schools in the child's education. If parents do not agree with the test results, they have the right to request an independent education evaluation be performed independent from the school district, and the school must consider the results. Students must be re-evaluated at least every 3 years to determine eligibility of special education services unless the IEP team decides it is not necessary.

An IEP Team will make decisions regarding the special education services the child needs and appropriate goals for the child. The IEP team must include:

- Parent(s) (if the child is younger than 18; see Transition to Adulthood)
- One or more special education teacher
- One or more regular education teacher if the child participates in regular education classes
- A school administrator, such as the special education director or the principal
- A person knowledgeable about the general curriculum (usually a teacher or administrator)
- A person knowledgeable about available resources (usually a teacher or administrator)
- A person that is able to interpret the evaluation results as they pertain to instructing the student (usually a teacher or administrator)
- The student (when appropriate)

All team members should attend IEP meetings unless the services provided by that person will not be discussed during the meeting. If the services will be discussed, a written report may be filed prior to the meeting. In either case, the parent must give written consent for the team member's absence. Others may be invited to IEP meetings if they have something to contribute such as school therapists and psychologists. Parents can also invite anyone to an IEP meeting for support.

IDEA requires that IEPs contain all of the following elements:

- The student's current level of performance
- Strengths and needs
- Goals
- Special education, support services and supplementary aids needed to achieve goals
- Accommodations and modifications needed in the classroom, if appropriate
- A plan to deliver services, including frequency and duration of services
- Location of services, based on student need, not parental preference or convenience of the school
- How progress will be measured and reported (frequency, duration, distance or accuracy)
- Transition plan (if applicable)

For special education students with special health care needs, an Individualized Health Care Plan may supplement the IEP to include information about medications and health care that is necessary during the school day. Special transportation requirements and training with assistive technology should also be written into the IEP if needed. Level of English proficiency, language, and communication needs of the student should also be considered. Additionally, behavior as it relates to

the child's disability must be addressed. A Positive Behavior Plan may be part of the IEP to help the child display appropriate behavior at school.

Special education students may receive services that extend beyond the school year at no cost to parents if the IEP team decides that the information lost over the break interferes with the child's free and appropriate public education. Extended School Year (ESY) services must be written into the IEP. Contact the Office of Public Instruction at 888-231-9393 or refer to the Extended School Year Services guide at <http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/SpecED/guides/ExtndSchoolYr.pdf>.

IEP meetings

The types of services the school will provide to the child with disabilities are decided at the IEP meeting. To have a successful meeting, parents must be prepared. Both parents should attend IEP meetings, if applicable. Before the meeting:

- Write down a statement or long-term plan and timeline for your child's education and the life you hope your child will lead after high school; use this to focus your thoughts about IEP goals
- Get organized
- Create a file of your child's educational, private and school medical and therapy documents
- Keep copies of everything sent to/received from the school regarding your child, including conversations and events; write letters and emails for documented proof
- Educate yourself about special education laws and your rights
- Educate yourself about your child's disability and how it affects learning; share information with the IEP team if it is not a common condition
- Review current information regarding your child, such as current IEP, test scores and notes
- Get an independent evaluation of your child, preferably by a specialist (i.e.: a neuropsychologist)
- Ask to meet with your child's teacher to discuss his/her concerns; think about solutions
- Think about your child's strengths; build upon those to write goals for new tasks
- List concerns and ideas for your child's education; bring copies for the IEP team
- Talk to other parents of children with IEPs; ask them strategies that worked for them
- Notify the IEP team ahead of time in writing if you plan on bringing anyone to the meeting
- If you are unable to attend, a video or telephone conference call may be used to allow for parent participation

At the meeting:

- Be on time
- Provide copies of private evaluations done outside of school
- Listen
- Ask questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how
- Ask for clarification; review what was said out loud to ensure there is no misunderstanding
- Ask how the services will directly affect your child
- Keep the lines of communication with the school as open as possible
- Use the golden rule: treat others with respect, just as you would like to be treated
- If you disagree, speak with facts, not emotions and give examples as to why you disagree
- Be flexible and open to new ideas and willing to negotiate, if appropriate
- Write short and long term goals that are measurable, specific and realistic
- Make notes about the meeting, outside of what was written in the IEP
- Do not sign an IEP that you do not understand or agree with; Leave the meeting with an unsigned copy of the IEP, review it later, and request or make modifications as needed
- Follow up by politely expressing concerns with your child's education in writing avoiding a blaming or critical tone; request action, don't demand it

IEP goals should allow your child to learn basic communication, social and reading skills to become independent and self-sufficient. The IEP should address academic, social, emotional, and behavioral goals as appropriate and can include extracurricular and nonacademic activities.

Once an IEP is in place, it is up to the parent to monitor the progress of their child to determine if services are being delivered as outline in the IEP. If services are not being delivered or the child is not making reasonable progress, ask for an IEP team meeting to review goals. For more information on measuring goals and understanding test scores visit http://www.bsd7.org/district/departments/special_education/documents/Measurable%20Goals.pdf. For more detailed information on composite scores and interpreting data, visit http://www.fetaweb.com/03/tests_measurements.htm.

If a dispute over an IEP occurs, ask for an IEP team meeting and try to work out a fair solution. If an agreement cannot be reached, contact PLUK at 800-222-7585 or the Early Assistance Program at the Office of Public Instruction at 406-444-5664 to request informal mediation.

To file a complaint against a school district that may be violating a special education law or ask for formal mediation of a dispute, contact the Office of Public Instruction at 406-444-5664.

Parental and Student Rights

Under IDEA, students have the following rights:

- A free appropriate public education, but not the best education or one that maximizes the child's potential; the school system is obligated to provide services to accommodate the child's disability and help the child make progress toward his or her specified goals
- Learn in the least restrictive environment, usually a regular classroom if the child's needs are met to ensure academic success "to the maximum extent possible" (IDEA, 2004)
- Physical education in the school

Parents have the right to:

- Grant consent before the school evaluates, provides special education services or places the child in a special education or regular classroom
- Revoke consent, in writing, at any time
- Refuse special education services
- Request an IEP meeting or evaluation at any time
- Receive written notice from the school of all IEP meetings and who will be in attendance
- Expect to have an IEP meeting at a time that is convenient for all those involved
- Participate in all meetings regarding their child
- Refuse to accept and sign an IEP or agree to part of an IEP by signing "with exceptions"
- A free copy of your child's IEP
- Receive progress reports
- Be informed and receive a copy of any evaluation performed on your child
- Obtain an independent educational evaluation
- Review all educational records and ask to make copies

LOCAL RESOURCES

Belgrade Intermediate

Laurie Salo, Special Education Director

406-388-3311

<http://www.belgrade.k12.mt.us/>

Bozeman Special Services Central Office

Chad Berg, Director

406-522-6000

http://www.bsd7.org/district/departments/special_education/

Gallatin/Madison Co-Op

Ron LaFerriere, Director
406-388-6508
Provide special education services to schools in Gallatin County that do not have their own dedicated services

Robin T. Kellog, Ed.D.

406-600-1606
Education and family consultant and advocate

Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI)

888-231-9393
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SpecialEd/>

Parent resources and dispute resolution concerning special education

Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA)

Aly Ball
406-582-8566
http://www.bsd7.org/district/departments/special_education/septa.php
Advocate for the educational needs of children with disabilities

ATTORNEYS

Mark Bryan, P.C.
406-586-8565
Experienced in special education law

Disability Rights Montana
800-245-4743

<http://disabilityrightsmt.org/janda/>
Assistance with care, treatment, accessibility to programs and services, employment, and education

Kathleen F. Holden, Esq.

406-330-2008
Experienced in obtaining special education services for children

NATIONAL RESOURCES

Building the Legacy of IDEA 2004

<http://idea.ed.gov/>
Resources and information on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act from the U.S. Department of Education

GreatSchools

<http://www.greatschools.org/>
Information on school performance; under the Special Education tab, information on learning disabilities, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, autism, family support, health and development, legal rights, advocacy, assistive technology, and parent forum

Special Needs Advocacy Institute

301-681-6233
301-593-5166
<http://specialneedsadvocacyinstitute.com/>
Companion website for the *Special Needs Advocacy Resource Book* by Rich Weinfeld and Michelle Davis; links to radio broadcasts regarding education and children with disabilities, includes national experts as guests

US Department of Education

800-872-5327
Special Education Pages for Parents:
<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/spced/edpicks.jhtml?src=ln>
Information, laws, and resources pertaining to various disabilities that inhibit learning

For more information on letter writing and sample letters refer to:

“Montana Parent’s Handbook to Special Education”
http://www.pluk.org/Pubs/MT_SPED_Handbook_2005.pdf

Wrightslaw’s *From Emotions to Advocacy, Second Edition* by Pam Wright and Pete Wright, 2006

For more information on IEPs refer to:

“Advocacy Handbook: A Parent’s Guide for Special Education” from the Learning Disabilities Association of America, 2003: <http://www.lidaamerica.org/pdf/LDAadvocacyhandbook.pdf>

“All About the IEP” from the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities <http://www.nichcy.org/EducateChildren/IEP/Pages/default.aspx>

Better IEPs: How to Develop Legally Correct and Educationally Useful Programs, Fourth Edition by Barbara D. Bateman and Mary Anne Linden, 2006

Kids Together: The IEP - Tips for getting what your child needs
<http://www.kidstogether.org/IEP.htm>

“Montana Parents’ Guide to Special Education”
<http://www.pluk.org/Pubs/PLUK MT Parent Guide 467k.pdf>

“A Parent's Guide to Special Ed/Special Needs” by Maiya Lueptow, in consultation with Friends of Special Education from The Council for Disability Rights
<http://www.disabilityrights.org/guide1.htm>

US Department of Education IEP Guide:
<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>

Wrightslaw: From Emotions to Advocacy Second edition by Pam Wright and Pete Wright, 2006
companion websites:
www.fetaweb.com
www.Wrightslaw.com

To determine the best reading format for your child, access a Learning Media Assessment at:
<http://www.perkins.org/resources/scout/literacy-and-braille/learning-media-assessment.html>

Transition into Adulthood

THE LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

Under Montana law, once a child turns 18, even a child with a disability, parents have no legal responsibility or control over the child, including educational matters. Families will need to plan ahead, usually by the time the child reaches age 16, to make sure all the necessary documents are in place so the child can take advantage of the maximum amount of benefits and be protected in the event of the parents’ death.

Necessary documents may include:

Designation of guardian/trustee – Guardianship is a legal court proceeding in which the person with disabilities is declared illegally incompetent and another person(s) is named to act for him or her. If the child is unable to make personal and financial decisions for him or herself, a guardian may

need to be named to help meet the physical and mental needs of the child with disabilities. An attorney will need to meet with the child with disabilities to determine the child's capacity. In Montana, there are three levels of guardianship. Full guardianship bestows the full rights and responsibilities of parenthood. Limited guardianships are granted duties and powers that have been court ordered. Conservators manage property or finances on behalf of the individual with disabilities.

Developmental Disability Services - Children with a cognitive delay, autism, Cerebral Palsy or epilepsy may qualify for financial assistance through the Montana Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP) to pay for services or items the child may need to live as independently as possible under the Community Supports program. Children should apply for adult DD services at age 16 and if eligible, ask to be placed on the waiting list. Contact Brad Johnson at 406-587-6066.

Identification card - If an individual with a disability is not able to drive and acquire a driver's license, a State Identification Card should be obtained from the Driver's Licensing Bureau.

Legal and estate planning – consult an attorney to discuss options

Letter of intent – provides instructions and guidance for guardians that will take care of the child/adult with special needs after the parents' death; should be amended periodically as the child ages or needs change

Special needs trust – A living special needs trust, in place when the grantor is alive, is a fund that provides additional income to the child/adult with disabilities beyond government assistance. This type of fund is protected from third-party creditors. A Testamentary Special Needs Trust provides funds after the grantor's death and is a tax shelter for certain taxes.

Will – consult with an attorney and ask about Health plan options

Montana Law Help

<http://www.montanalawhelp.org/MT/index.cfm>

Legal resources, information, and blank forms for a variety of law issues, including family matters, for low and middle income Montanans

Montana Legal Services Helpline

800-666-6899

Helene Orenstein, P.C.

406-587-5282

Experienced in guardianships and conservatorships

Stuart Whitehair

406-587-4200

Experienced in guardianship for children with disabilities

Government Benefits

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) - Upon turning 18, a child with disabilities may be eligible for SSI. The child must have limited income and resources; adult SSI considers only the income and resources of the adult with disabilities, not that of the family. Assets cannot exceed \$2000, but do not include a home, household goods, personal belongings, one vehicle, burial space, and certain life insurance policies. A Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) allows an individual with a disability to set aside otherwise countable income/resources for a specific period of time to achieve a work goal. Visit <http://www.passplan.org/> for more information.

Adults must also meet the adult disability eligibility requirements of the Social Security Administration. An adult is considered disabled if a medical or physical impairment prohibits gainful

activity and is expected to result in death or has lasted and is expected to last continuously for at least 12 months. If the child was receiving SSI prior to turning 18, the child will need to re-apply for benefits and qualify under the adult eligibility rules. The child should see a physician upon turning 18 to document that the child is eligible for SSI as an adult. In Montana, adults who qualify for any amount of SSI automatically qualify for Medicaid.

Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) – is based on earned income from employment rather than the severity of the disability and assets are not considered.

For more information contact:

Disability Rights Montana

800-245-4743

<http://disabilityrightsmt.org/janda/>

Assistance with care, treatment, accessibility to programs and services, employment, and education

U.S. Social Security Administration

Disability Social Security

800-772-1213

800-325-0778 (TTY)

Bozeman office: 406-586-4501

<http://ssa.gov/pgm/disability.htm>

Online application for disability benefits

Disability Group Inc.

800-207-5491

Experienced in the law regarding social security disability benefits

The People's Law Center

866-650-9013

Experienced in social security disability

Social Security Disability Benefits

<http://ssa.gov/pubs/10029.pdf>

THE SCHOOL PERSPECTIVE

IDEA requires that the IEP team address transition into adulthood by age 16, but the family of a child with disabilities should begin to research the necessary steps much sooner to ensure a smooth transition. The student must be invited to any IEP meeting in which transition service are discussed. When determining how the life of a child with disabilities will look beyond high school, the team (including the child) should examine the child's strength, skills and interests and consider how much independence the child with disabilities can achieve. The IEP meeting during the student's senior year may include representatives from agencies that can assist with transition, for example, a vocational rehabilitation counselor, future employer, or case manager.

The school must provide notice to parents and students regarding the transfer of rights to students at age 18 and this information must be included in the IEP at least one year before the transfer. Parents may still participate in IEP meetings, and may continue to represent the child's educational interest if the child writes a statement granting the parents authorization, or the parents obtain an educational power of attorney.

Employment Programs

Helena Industries (HI) Case Management

Bozeman Office

406-587-7703

<http://www.helenaindustries.org/>

Case management by linking individuals with disabilities to benefits and support (HI does not offer direct care services)

Job Corps

406-259-2322

Job training for young people with disabilities and other disadvantaged youths if they meet the minimum physical and mental requirements

Montana Vocational Rehabilitation Program

877-296-1197

Bozeman office

406-587-0601

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/vocrehab/vrs/index.shtml>

Services for individuals who want to work but physical or mental disabilities prevent them from getting or keeping a job; also promote independence for Montanans with disabilities

The University of Montana Rural Institute

<http://www.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/transition/>

Transition and employment projects

Social Security Administration Red Book - A Guide to Work Incentives

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/>

Information about Impairment Related Work Experience, Subsidy, Special Conditions, Student Earned Income Exclusions, and more

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)/Employment Works

<http://www.msubillings.edu/socialsecurity/>

Assist Social Security Disability beneficiaries understand work incentives for their employment goals

For more information contact:

Tiffany Kelker

Mark Williams

3888-866-3822

406-447-3225

Secondary Education

Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD)

704-947-7779

<http://www.ahead.org/>

For individuals with disabilities in post secondary education; the rights of students with disabilities, what to expect at US colleges and universities, and transition resources

Housing

homeWORD

<http://homeword.org/>

Assist individuals with disabilities find affordable housing in Montana

Montana Home Choice Coalition

406-449-3120

[http://www3.aware-](http://www3.aware-inc.org/awareinc/montanahomechoice/MHCC.asp?Title=8)

[inc.org/awareinc/montanahomechoice/MHCC.asp?Title=8](http://www3.aware-inc.org/awareinc/montanahomechoice/MHCC.asp?Title=8)

Housing options for individuals with disabilities, including subsidies for individuals with disabilities who want to buy houses

Bozeman Independent Living Project

406-522-7300

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/vocrehab/silc/index.shtml>

Goal is to develop and implement a State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) to make independent living a reality for Montanans with disabilities

Section 8 Housing

Contact District IX HRDC

406-587-4486

Housing assistance based on income; there is a waiting list

The State of Montana Housing

<http://mtfinanceonline.com/default.mcp>

Information about Montana housing options

Other Resources

Montana Office of Public Instruction

http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SpecialEd/Index.html#gpm1_12

Webinars on transitioning to adulthood

Montana Youth Transitions

Sarah Volesky

406-442-2576

<http://www.montanayouthtransitions.org/>

Connects students and families to other Montanans currently or recently in transition; information on IEPs, 504 Plans, social security, guardianship, conservatorship, trusts and transitions to employment, housing, transportation, education, social and

recreation, money, and health issues

Bozeman Area

Galavan 406-587-2434

Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities

Streamline Bus Service 406-587-2434

Fare free service throughout Bozeman

PUBLICATIONS AND GUIDES

Guide to Success: Navigating Montana's Developmental Disabilities Program a publication of Montana's Developmental Disabilities Program and PLUK:

<https://sites.google.com/a/pluk.org/ddpguide/>

Available services for Montanans with developmental disabilities

Montana Disability & Health Program Health Resource Guide: Preventing and Managing Secondary Conditions with Adult Montanans Who Have Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

<http://mtdh.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/Publications/ResourceGuide.htm>

Resources for communication difficulties, physical fitness and conditioning problems, weight problems, low level of persistence/low tolerance for frustration problems, personal hygiene problems, vision problems, memory problems, fatigue, and depression

Montana Parent's Handbook on Transition: What Happens After High School a publication of Montana's Parent Center at PLUK:

[http://www.pluk.org/Pubs/PLUK Transition High School 04 2008.pdf](http://www.pluk.org/Pubs/PLUK%20Transition%20High%20School%2004%202008.pdf)

Montana's Programs for Individuals with Developmental Delays

From the University of Montana's Rural Institute: [http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/DD Pamphlet.pdf](http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/DD_Pamphlet.pdf)

Planning for Your Transition from High School to Adult Life

A workbook to help you decide what you want your life to look like after graduation and to help you outline the steps so you can make it happen!

<http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/transition/Articles/PlanningWorkbook.pdf>

Planning Ahead for When Your Special Child Turns 18

<http://www.eparent.com/uploads/1/Planning Ahead For When Your Special Child Turns 18.pdf>

Transitions Toolbox

<http://transition-toolbox.pluk.org/>

Agencies, services, and resources useful when planning transition from school to adulthood