



Audiology (Statewide Hearing Conservation)

The purpose of the Statewide Hearing Conservation Program is to identify and provide services to children with hearing impairments. The Office of Public Instruction contracts with eight providers (five private providers, two university providers and one public school provider) for audiology services. These providers are located in Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Glasgow, Great Falls, Kalispell, Lewistown and Missoula. Every school district in Montana has access to audiology services. Contractors provide the needed matching funds for the program's operation. The program is an excellent example of public and private partnership for the benefit of Montana's children. The Special Education Division administers the Hearing Conservation Program.

The Audiology Program:

- Ensures Montana's children who have been identified as having a hearing impairment are reported to schools so that necessary instructional supports can be provided for the children's successful education.
- Assures public schools have on-going access to qualified audiology providers even in the most rural and remote regions of the state.
- Screens approximately 63,000 children annually and refers nearly 1,700 children for follow-up medical evaluations when screening data indicate a hearing problem needing medical attention.
- Provides about 50 comprehensive hearing evaluations annually for children suspected of having a hearing impairment.
- Provides follow-up to hospital screenings of infants suspected of having a hearing impairment to determine the need for referral to DPHHS for infant and toddler services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (special education).
- Works with schools and contractors to ensure services are provided in accordance with contracts and technical assistance requirements.