

Early Intervention for Autism

Signs & Symptoms

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) can be identified in children as young as one year of age. Research suggests that early, intensive treatment of children with autism can lead to more inclusion and better prognosis once the child begins school. In order to maximize the benefit to the child and the family unit as a whole, LifeScape offers an interdisciplinary team approach that emphasizes parent involvement.

Who Can Benefit?

- Children between the ages of one and five years of age – who have been diagnosed with, or display symptoms of, an autism spectrum disorder.
- The program is intended for children who are showing limited communication and social interaction, as well as restricted and repetitive behaviors and interests.
- A formal diagnosis of ASD **is not necessary** to begin outpatient speech-language, occupational therapy, or psychology services.
- An ASD diagnosis **is required** to access the outpatient services of a BCBA.

Outcomes

Our program targets a variety of developmental skills, to maximize progress and help children to be ready to learn and socialize once they go to school. **Skill areas include:**

- Receptive and expressive communication
- Social skills, joint attention, and imitation
- Cognition
- Play
- Fine and gross motor
- Behavior
- Activities of daily living (eating, dressing, hygiene)

About Early Start Denver Model (ESDM)

The ESDM combines ABA and developmental methods in an interdisciplinary treatment model. Goals are addressed through play-based activities, and are written to address each developmental domain within every 12-week period. The ESDM is the only comprehensive treatment model with support from a randomized controlled trial that has been shown to be effective for children as young as 18 months of age, and is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.



Early Intervention Specialists



Megan Wiessner,
MA, CCC-SLP

An interdisciplinary team, including professionals from psychology, behavior therapy, speech-language pathology, and occupational therapy will use the ESDM curriculum to select learning goals that meet the unique needs of each child with traits of autism. Many of our clinicians have completed the ESDM Introductory Workshop, and are supported by Megan Wiessner, MA, CCC-SLP, the first and only clinician in South Dakota certified in ESDM.

For more information:

- **Sioux Falls** Call 605.444.9700
- **Rapid City** Call 605.791.7400
- **Toll-Free** 800.584.9294
- **Visit** LifeScapeSD.org