



Growing Times January 2023

Promoting the maximum development of the whole child and adult through innovative, individualized and comprehensive brain-centered programs and services.

What Makes Us So Special?

A Chance To Grow is a special place for many reasons, not the least of which is our Turnquist Child Enrichment Center, which primarily serves young families that require county assistance to receive childcare services. These parents, many of whom are still teenagers, are faced with countless obstacles that prevent them, and their children, from reaching their full potential. We understand their struggle and have implemented initiatives like our Teen Parent Transportation Program and free food pantry to help them establish a solid foundation on which to build their lives. But our services extend even further, beyond any other childcare program in the Twin Cities, by providing our integrated Clinical Services to each child in our Turnquist family.

Turnquist consists of age-specific rooms for infants, toddlers and on up to preschool age. In addition to implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum, Turnquist teachers are responsible for completing developmental assessments for each child every two months.

“Most times, we [the teachers] are the first to notice any social, verbal or motor skill issues,” says Sami, an infant room teacher of three years. “If a child isn’t meeting certain developmental milestones, we notify the parents that we’ve identified an issue and recommend they be referred to our Clinics team. Parents are almost always OK with an observation, and quite often say that they’ve seen the same issues at home, but didn’t know how to address them.”

Depending on the nature of the referral, an Occupational Therapist (OT) or Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) will observe the child in their classroom, alongside the Turnquist teacher. This provides a safe, familiar space for the child, and allows our therapists and teachers the opportunity to discuss whether evaluation and treatment would best address the child’s needs. Once an evaluation is complete and a care plan is established, a child will receive...Continued on page 2.



Larico in an OT session with Sophie.

**Call us at
(612) 789-1236
or visit ACTG.org
to Schedule a
Vision Exam!**



Vision Clinic Accepting New Clients

Are you or a loved one struggling to see clearly? Do you need an annual checkup? Then come SEE us! We offer screenings and therapies to meet the whole family’s eye care needs. Our friendly optometric team is dedicated to helping individuals of all ages obtain optimal vision through custom treatment plans. Whether it’s glasses, contacts, preventative eye care or disease management, our Clinic and OptomEYES Vision Therapy services are here to help you SEE your full potential!

1-3 therapy sessions per week, with the teacher available to receive additional instructions from the therapist about ways to continue the treatment. The teacher also serves as the intermediary between therapist and parent, providing progress reports and suggestions for therapy at home.

“Working with the therapists is really nice,” says Sami, “especially when they show us how to do certain techniques. It makes a big difference that the teachers know how to help them, not just the therapists, because that means the child is getting the therapies they need all day, not just during one or two sessions. Parents really appreciate the convenience, they don’t have to take time out of their work days and it makes their lives a lot easier.”

Michelle Koyama, MA OTR/L, ACTG’s Assistant Director of Clinical Services, knows that this process is only possible with great communication from everyone involved. “Normally, these families wouldn’t have access to additional therapies, but we’re able to take that barrier away because we are able to fluidly communicate with the teachers in Turnquist,” she says. “We have a shared philosophy and see things through a developmental and trauma-informed model. We’re on the same page so it makes our communication very easy.”

Presently, 20 out of 32 children at Turnquist are receiving OT or SLP services. The need for these services has grown substantially in the wake of the COVID pandemic, and has often led to other areas of concern, including vision and auditory issues. Luckily, we offer vision and hearing screenings as well, and give parents the option to allow their child’s Turnquist teacher to represent their child in the exam room. Not only does this allow for the most optimal treatment schedule for the child (and parent), it provides our doctors with additional insight into their development, because they’re hearing it directly from the person that interacts with them in the early learning setting.

“During the pandemic, seeing became flat,” says ACTG’s Optometrist, Dr. Shelby May, OD. “The world got small and children of all ages stayed in the same loop. They didn’t go to the grocery store, take vacations or have other novel experiences. The world wasn’t big enough for these children to grow properly, and we’ve seen milestone delay amplify.”

From infants unable to hold their heads up (motor skills), to toddlers throwing tantrums (self-regulation), and preschoolers unwilling to give up screen time (attention),

the effects of COVID are everywhere. The therapists and teachers at ACTG, however, are uniquely prepared to help these children. “Early intervention is so important,” says Sophie Reynolds, MS, OTR/L. “It’s really cool that our clinic is able to intervene at such early ages, where change can be made quickly because we can get to them so soon.”

Dr. May sees several Turnquist children in her clinic, and despite the difficult environmental factors, she says that she’s now starting to see a rebound effect. “Kids are picking back up really fast. If we give them the right tools, all those skills come back. Their brains didn’t change, they always had the capability, they were just missing the experience - we have to give them the right stimulus to grow.”

Shania, a parent with two children at Turnquist, has seen how transformational the clinical services can be. Her oldest son, Larico (4), had behavioral and social issues that concerned his teachers. “He was having a rough time, he was hitting, so I had to come in for meetings with the teachers,” says Shania. “They recommended he receive OT to help him learn to be more gentle with his brother and peers. It’s been a lot better since he started OT, and now more recently speech. He’s saying please, and thank you, not hitting, big boy stuff!”

Shania said that Larico had been to other daycares, but they didn’t provide the type of communication, support or sense of community that she wanted. “Now when they wake up, they’re both excited to go to school and to see their teachers and therapists. They really love it here, and I do too.”

A Chance To Grow’s Turnquist Child Enrichment Center and Clinical Services are amazing resources for young parents striving to provide the best foundation for their children. But more importantly, the community that our teachers and therapists cultivate is what sets A Chance To Grow apart from any other daycare, school or clinic in the Twin Cities.

“My kids wouldn’t be where they are today without the Turnquist teachers and the other services. It’s great that everything and everyone is in one building,” says Shania. “You can’t find a place like this anywhere else.”

Learn more about A Chance To Grow’s Turnquist Child Enrichment Center and our Clinical Services by visiting ACTG.org.

2023 S.M.A.R.T. Workshops Begin Next Month

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The first S.M.A.R.T. Workshops of 2023 begin in February! Learn about a developing brain and how S.M.A.R.T.'s movement-based activities will ENERGIZE your student's learning readiness. Don't miss your chance to experience this transformational workshop. Registration is open for all our upcoming Elementary & Pre-K workshops! Our experienced instructors will help you understand how to easily implement these brain-stimulating activities in your classroom. [Register today at ACTG.org/workshops](https://actg.org/workshops).

S.M.A.R.T. Workshops

• February 21-23, 2023

S.M.A.R.T. Pre-K Workshops

• February 28-March 2, 2023



All workshops will be held in Minneapolis, MN unless otherwise noted. Register two weeks in advance and save \$25!

S.M.A.R.T. Steps Program Expands!

The S.M.A.R.T. Steps program - a pilot project designed to bring the S.M.A.R.T. program to Family Child Care providers - has begun its 4th cohort, with nearly 80 providers from around the state enrolled in 2023. Special thanks to the Mardag Foundation, who recently awarded ACTG \$25,000 to expand the program to the middle and northern regions of Minnesota. Additionally, we want to thank the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, the Northland Foundation, and the Initiative Foundation for helping to cover participant costs for 100 new providers across the state.



New Year, New Focus with Neurofeedback Brain Training

Happy New Year! Do you have a lot of resolutions you are hoping to achieve in 2023? Feeling overwhelmed or stressed by it all? We can help! ACTG's Neurofeedback Brain Training is a great way to stay calm all year long. Non-linear dynamical Neurofeedback is a holistic tool that trains the brain to become more resilient, helping clients feel more relaxed and focused while often improving sleep! It allows individuals to become more aware of their body's natural rhythms, helping mind and body reach a state of optimal regulation. Please visit [ACTG.org/braintraining](https://actg.org/braintraining) to learn more. Start the new year off right with Neurofeedback Brain Training.



MNRI Courses Return to A Chance To Grow this Spring!

ACTG will be hosting two Masgutova Neurosensorimotor Reflex Integration (MNRI) courses this spring at its facility in Northeast Minneapolis. The first course, titled *Dynamic and Postural Reflex Integration*, runs from April 21-24, 2023 and is led by Trina Deiss. The course focuses on the importance of primary motor reflex pattern maturation. Cost is \$756.

The second course, titled *Proprioceptive and Cognitive Integration*, runs from May 19-21, 2023, and is led by Theresa Fischer. In this course, participants explore links between the proprioceptive and cognitive systems. Cost is \$576. To learn more or register for either course, visit www.masgutovamethod.com/events. For all other questions, please call (612) 706-5553.



Thank You, Edith!

Last month, we said goodbye to a long-time member of our ACTG family, Edith Lockhart. For more than 18 years, she served in our Home-Based Services department, helping hundreds of families receive the care and support they needed to achieve independence.

"She was an essential member of our team and we will miss her greatly. The dedication and loyalty to the agency, as well as the PCA's she managed and the families she served, has been outstanding and admirable. We know that she will excel in her new adventure and wish her all the best! Thank you, Edith!" - Erica Dickerson, ACTG Executive Director



Save the Date for the 2023 Race for the Children!

A Chance To Grow is excited to announce we will be holding our **32nd Running of the Race for the Children** event on **Sunday, August 20, 2023 at Canterbury Park in Shakopee, MN**. Event details, sponsorship and registration information will be shared later this year. Proceeds from the event support the essential programs and services of A Chance To Grow. Contact us at (612) 789-1236 or visit **ACTG.org** to learn more!



28th Annual Minnesota Autism Conference

A Chance To Grow will be a sponsor and exhibitor at the **28th Annual Minnesota Autism Conference** on April 26-28, 2023 at the Marriott Minneapolis Airport Hotel. The conference will have keynote speakers and breakout sessions featuring experts, educators, caregivers, parents and direct support professionals in an effort to connect, collaborate, educate and advocate for the Autism community. More event details and registration information can be found at **www.ausm.org/events/state-autism-conference**.



Sheet Metal Connectors Helps Turnquist Families

Over the years, our friends at Sheet Metal Connectors, Inc. have made many generous contributions in support of A Chance To Grow's mission. Recently, they donated \$2,000 worth of gift cards to the 40 families at our Turnquist Child Enrichment Center, with each family receiving \$50 to help them through the holidays. Thank you Sheet Metal Connectors for your steadfast support of the families we serve, we are truly grateful!

We would also like to sincerely thank the Minnesota Department of Health, who awarded us \$2,500 to purchase and install a new hydration station in our lobby, ensuring access to clean and safe water for our clients and staff.



We need you! Support A Chance To Grow's Essential Programs and Services!

Visit **ACTG.org**, click on the "Donate" tab on the homepage and fill out the form. Your contribution makes a difference in the lives of individuals with learning disabilities, developmental delays and brain injuries. All donations are tax-deductible.

View our newsletter online! Visit **ACTG.org** and subscribe!

Equal Employment Opportunity

A Chance To Grow provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants.

Employment is based upon capabilities and qualifications without discrimination because of race, color, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, national origin, disability, gender identity, genetic information, service in the military or any other protected characteristic as established by law. This policy of Equal Employment Opportunity applies to all policies and procedures relating to recruitment & hiring, promotion, compensation, benefits, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, training and all other conditions of employment.



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