

Organization profiles



**2100 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, IL, 60201, (847) 328-0001 (voice)
1-800-366-PLAY (toy resource helpline), www.lekotek.org**

The National Lekotek Center uses interactive play experiences, and the learning that results, to promote the inclusion of children with special needs into family and community life. Developed in Sweden in the 1960s, the first American Lekotek was established in Evanston, Illinois, in 1980. Evanston remains the nonprofit organization's headquarters and is the administrative and training center for the nationwide network of 43 Lekotek centers in 11 states.

Serving children with a range of disabilities, Lekotek's primary services are play sessions and toy-lending libraries for children birth to eight years old. Families, including siblings, participate in monthly play sessions in which trained leaders use specially adapted and off-the-shelf toys to ensure the play experience is accessible for the entire family. Families check out toys from an extensive toy-lending library for use at home.

Many Lekoteks also have Compuplay programs, which use computers and adapted equipment to help families learn through play while using technology to build skills for a more independent future. Play groups, home visits, parent support groups, educational seminars and trainings and in-services for professionals are representative of the programs that round out Lekotek's continuum of services.

Lekotek is a pioneer in its field, with a wide range of accomplishments and "firsts." It has received numerous awards, including the Freedom Foundation Award as the country's most innovative service to children and a special commendation from the Los Angeles Commission on Disabilities.



6610 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL, 60626, (773) 973-7900 (voice), (773) 973-2180 (TTY), www.anixter.org

The mission of the Lester and Rosalie Anixter Center is to assist people with disabilities to live and work successfully in the community. Established in 1919, Anixter Center is a leading provider of high-quality vocational, residential and educational options, substance abuse prevention and treatment and health care. Anixter Center annually serves more than 4,000 people throughout greater Chicago.

Recent highlights and innovations include:

- In 1999, Casa Contreras, an apartment building for individuals and families in the Latino community affected by HIV/AIDS, opened its doors.
- In 2000, eight medically fragile children moved into Evanston Home. As the residents turn 21, they can decide to continue to live at the home as it will convert into a Community Integrated Living Arrangement. Avondale Home, a second residence for medically fragile children, opened in 2002.
- In 2001, ACT (the Adult Community Transition Program) began operation. It is a collaborative project of the Parent Advisory Group, North Suburban Special Education District, Anixter Center and Community Alternatives Unlimited to transition students from special education into independent life in the community.

Anixter Center has received a variety of awards, including the Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce 2002 Community Contributor Award, the United Way of America's Excellence in Service Quality Award, the Beatrice Foundation Award of Excellence for Outstanding Achievement in Nonprofit Management and the Naomi Williams Donnelly Award for Outstanding Service to the Developmentally Disabled.