



Help Me Grow is a system for early identification of developmental, behavioral, educational and health concerns that links children and their families to community-based services and supports.

OVERVIEW: WHAT IS **HELP ME GROW**?

Pediatricians play a critical role in identifying developmental delays and disabilities in children as well as referring families to appropriate services. Parents trust their pediatricians and often seek their guidance in areas other than health, such as their child's development or behavior. This is a significant responsibility considering the importance of early identification and intervention. Research shows that when developmental concerns are addressed at a young age, children have the best chance of benefiting from intervention.¹ However, only 30% of children who have disabilities are diagnosed prior to school entry. According to the Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), detection rates of developmental disabilities rise to 70-80% with the use of a standardized screening tool.² Therefore, it is critical that pediatricians establish surveillance and screening protocols and know where to refer families and children when concerns are identified. *Help Me Grow* is a resource that assists pediatricians in fulfilling this responsibility for early detection and referral.

Help Me Grow is a system for early identification of developmental, behavioral, and educational concerns. It links children and their families to community-based services and supports. *Help Me Grow* Florida helps parents, health professionals, and early educators identify and address concerns they may have about a young child's development, behavior, health, or learning in the first eight years of life. *Continued next page...*

How to use *Help Me Grow*

If you have a concern or want more information about a child's development, you can contact *Help Me Grow* in any of the following ways:

- Call 2-1-1 and ask for *Help Me Grow*
- Pediatricians can instruct a family to call 2-1-1/Help Me Grow during a visit or meeting
- Physicians can write a "prescription" to call 2-1-1/Help Me Grow to obtain help with finding services
- Fax or email a referral form to *Help Me Grow*— Call 211/Help Me Grow for forms
- Visit website for more information at helpmegrowfl.org

Why and when to use *Help Me Grow*

- If screening identifies a developmental, behavioral, or learning concern.
- If a child or family needs connection to resources or more support.
- If a child needs a developmental screening or assessment.
- If the parent wants more information about a child's development, behavior, health, or learning.
- If you see a need for parenting education, such as information on developmental milestones.
- If you need assistance to help patients access services and supports.

| *Help Me Grow* can help you connect children to the community-based services and supports they need.



The central component of *Help Me Grow* Florida is a call center located within a local 2-1-1 program. The care coordinators at the call center are trained to take the calls from parents, teachers or healthcare providers regarding children's health, development, behavior, or learning. They are knowledgeable about community services and establish connections between families and services.

Help Me Grow also provides outreach to healthcare providers and offers office-based education, trainings and workshops. These trainings help physicians develop or improve surveillance and screening procedures for their practices. They also teach healthcare providers about using *Help Me Grow* for care coordination services.

When a pediatrician refers a family to *Help Me Grow*, a care coordinator will listen to the family's needs and provide resources and referrals. The care coordinator will also assist the family to link to services and will follow-up with the family until they are connected to the services they need. The information is then looped back to the pediatrician so that they are aware that the family referred was successfully connected. *Help Me Grow* can be a valuable asset for healthcare professionals both to support early identification efforts and to help link families to community-based services and supports.

Help Me Grow care coordinators will quickly return your call or contact the family.

Who will answer the call?

Trained professional *Help Me Grow* care coordinators will answer the call and they:

- Have been specially trained to work with families.
- Can work with many languages through tele-interpreters.
- Will find appropriate services and supports for children and families.
- Will stay in touch until families are successfully connected to those services and supports.
- Will also loop back to the child's medical home with information.



Services provided

The 2-1-1 call center and *Help Me Grow* staff provide education and support to families around specific developmental or behavioral concerns that have been identified. Supports could include:

- Exploring what has been tried before and what has and has not worked.
- Having families enroll their children in a developmental monitoring program, such as the Ages and Stages Child Monitoring Program.
- Providing referrals to parenting and support programs.
- Providing followup and advocating for families as needed.
- Enrollment assistance for families to access services.
- Providing information about parenting, child wellness, and other topics.

REFERENCES

- 1 Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2010). *The foundations of lifelong health are built in early childhood*. http://developing-child.harvard.edu/library/reports_and_working_papers/foundations-of-lifelong-health/
- 2 TeKolste, K. (2015). *Developmental Surveillance & Screening - Washington State Medical Home*. <http://medicalhome.org/physicians/developmental-surveillance-screening/>



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