



FY 2021–2022 Annual Report Summary

Community. Collaboration. Connections.

OUR MISSION

To promote healthy development for every child in our state
and for every child to receive routine developmental screenings

OUR VISION

For Florida to have a comprehensive system to support the optimal health,
development, and well-being of all children in Florida.

OUR VALUES

Building collaboration among community programs
Providing a centralized access point for information and referral
Promoting surveillance and screenings Educating and informing the community

WHAT IS HELP ME GROW?

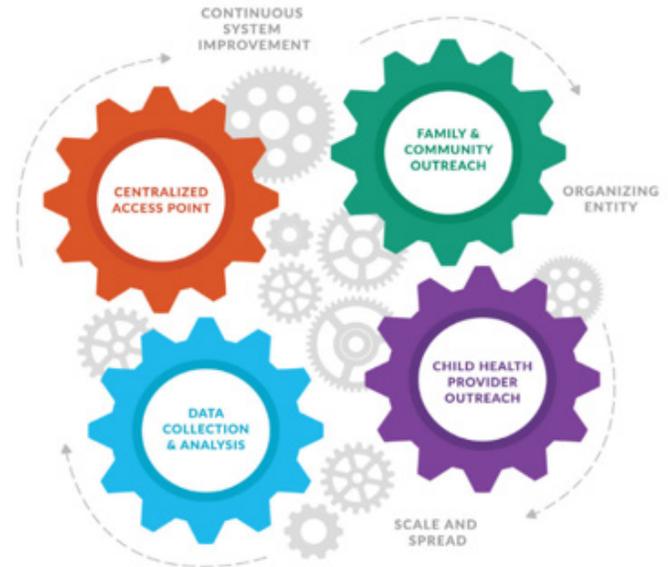
Help Me Grow® Florida (HMGF) is a coordinated system of supports that connects children and families to

- Child developmental and health services
- Virtual resources for children birth to 8
- Parenting tips and information

HMGF is designed to empower families and support their children's healthy development through the implementation of four

Core Components:

-  **Centralized Telephone Access Point** – assists families with questions and information on their child's development through care coordination
-  **Family & Community Outreach** - promotes awareness of HMGF to families and community partners
-  **Child Healthcare Provider Outreach** - motivates and encourages medical providers to collaborate with HMGF to provide more comprehensive services to their patients
-  **Data Collection and Analysis** - supports evaluation and guides the system to ensure continuous quality improvement



AUTHORITY & FUNDING



The Help Me Grow® Florida (HMGF) system is administered by the Children's Forum, Inc. and funded under contract #C103 I by the State of Florida, Division of Early Learning. Funds are from Specific Appropriation 82, as recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund.

For fiscal year 2021-2022, the Florida Legislature allocated **\$1,808,957** to support the Help Me Grow® Florida network. During this period, the HMGF State Coordinating Office contracted with eleven affiliate sites. There were two additional HMGF affiliates who had Memorandums of Understanding with the Children's Forum to be part of the HMGF network, but who did not receive any funding from the Children's Forum. These were the Early Learning Coalition of Northwest Florida and the Children's Home Society of Florida operating in Alachua County.



Help Me Grow served children in **38 of 67** counties in Florida. However this means that one in two children in Florida still need access to Help Me Grow.

STATE COORDINATING OFFICE

The HMGF State Coordinating Office (SCO), located at the Children's Forum, Inc. in Tallahassee, FL is responsible for oversight of the administrative, programmatic, and fiscal activities of the Help Me Grow system at the state level.

The SCO provides technical assistance and other resources to its affiliates so that they may successfully implement Help Me Grow in their respective counties and areas.

MEET THE HELP ME GROW® FLORIDA SCO TEAM



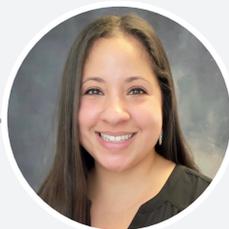
Phyllis Kalifeh
President and CEO,
Children's Forum



Help Me Grow® Florida
Organizational Chart



Denise Bishop
Vice President of Outreach and Innovation,
Children's Forum



Alexandra Goldberg
Statewide Director,
Help Me Grow® Florida
Children's Forum



Liz Randall
Assistant Director,
Help Me Grow® Florida
Children's Forum



Brenda Romuald
Outreach Specialist,
Help Me Grow® Florida
Children's Forum



Lauren Wofford
Chief Financial Officer,
Children's Forum



Wioleta Gaddy
Contracts and Grants Manager,
Children's Forum



Paula Donaldson
HMG Contract Compliance Specialist,
Help Me Grow® Florida
Children's Forum

HELP ME GROW *in action*

A caregiver with triplets was referred to Help Me Grow by 2-1-1. The caregiver wanted to apply for subsidized child-care and needed help with resuming early intervention services from Early Steps but had no idea where to start. The HMG care coordinator assisted the family with a referral to Early Steps and to the Early Learning Coalition of South-west Florida for childcare financial assistance. The HMG care coordinator followed up with the caregiver, to find he was very overwhelmed with all the responsibilities he has with the girls in the evenings and weekends.



Due to the caregivers work hours, he was unable to get in touch with Early Steps and did not have much free time left to follow up with referrals much less with all the paperwork involved for the three girls. The HMG care coordinator offered the caregiver a referral and he was connected to Better Together, which will assist the caregiver with a host family that will help in the evenings, on weekends and with all the paperwork needed. The caregiver appreciated all the help!

OUR IMPACT

The early detection and intervention services provided through the Help Me Grow system are critical for optimal outcomes for children.

92% of children were successfully connected to at least one service

7,985
developmental and behavioral
screenings completed

4,496
new families served

Average of **5**
care coordination
Follow-Ups per family made

3,357
referrals to community
services and programs made

73%
of children reached were
Medicaid enrollees- helping to
reduce future dependency

51%
of children served did not attend an
early learning program and might not
have otherwise received supports



In the 2021-2022 fiscal year, Help Me Grow® Florida had **113** community-based screening events to bring our services to families and community partners

OUR AFFILIATE PARTNERS

The local affiliates ensure that the HMGF system builds collaboration across sectors, including early care and education, healthcare, and family support.

Families can contact Help Me Grow by dialing 2-1-1 and asking to speak with a care coordinator. The Help Me Grow care coordinators remain in contact with families they serve until they are successfully connected to a service.



38

Counties implemented a
Help Me Grow system

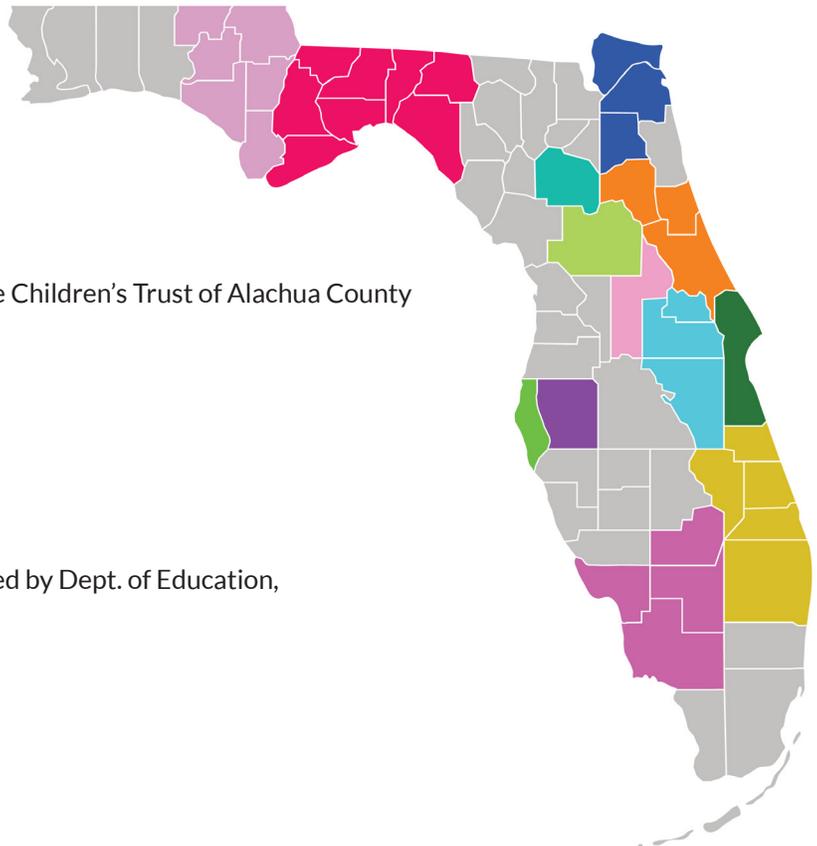


24

Physician Champions advocated
for HMG across the state

2021-2021 FY AFFILIATES

- 2-1-1 Big Bend
- 2-1-1 Brevard
- 2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast
- 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares
- Children's Home Society of Florida – funded by the Children's Trust of Alachua County
- Early Childhood Council of Hillsborough County
- Early Learning Coalition of Duval
- Early Learning Coalition of Flagler & Volusia
- Early Learning Coalition of Lake County
- Early Learning Coalition of Marion County
- Early Learning Coalition Northwest Florida– funded by Dept. of Education, Hurricane Michael Disaster Relief Grant
- Heart of Florida United Way
- United Way of Lee, Hendry, and Glades



BOOKS, BALLS AND BLOCKS EVENTS

HELP ME GROW® FLORIDA CONNECTS FAMILIES TO RESOURCES TO GIVE CHILDREN THEIR BEST START

Books, Balls, & Blocks (BBB) events are free, fun, family community-screening events for families and children (ages birth-5). These events are comprised of various activity stations in which children can engage in developmentally appropriate play while their parents complete a valid and reliable developmental questionnaire to pinpoint their child's developmental progress. A trained professional will then review the screening results with the caregiver and provide information and referrals to any support or services that may be needed.



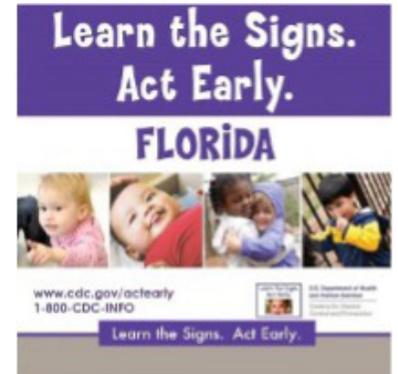
77 BOOKS, BALLS, AND BLOCKS
EVENTS WERE HELD

1,547 SCREENINGS WERE
COMPLETED THROUGH
BBB EVENTS

OUR ACTIVITIES

ACT EARLY/COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAMS GRANT

Help Me Grow® Florida was awarded a 12-month extension of the Act Early/COVID-19 Response Teams grant by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This extension provided an opportunity to continue supports for COVID-19 recovery and strengthen resiliency in Florida's children and families by bolstering the early identification of developmental delays and disabilities. HMGF continued implementing the virtual "Learn the Signs. Act Early." developmental milestone checklists which are completed by families online. Families receive a summary of their child's development based on the checklist responses, and the results are sent directly to the local HMGF affiliate site to provide follow-up to families.



As a project initiative, HMGF developed screening events in partnership with local libraries called "Stories & Screening" events. Stories & Screening events promote early literacy by providing a story-telling opportunity while educating families on child development. HMG Care Coordinators encourage families to engage with their children through developmentally appropriate activities that they can easily do at home and encourage families to complete developmental and behavioral screenings for their children. These events provide a safe and nurturing space for children and their families during COVID-19 pandemic.

25 STORIES & SCREENING
EVENTS COMPLETED

329 MILESTONE CHECKLISTS
COMPLETED



HELP ME GROW'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE JOINT REFERRAL COLLABORATION PROJECT



The Division of Early Learning initiated the Joint Referral Collaboration project, supported by the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), to engage key stakeholders in dialogue that leads to the creation of an equitable, family-driven system that is comprehensive, bidirectional, and cross-sector to support screening, referral, tracking and early intervention services and supports for children and families. Through several regional meetings and statewide summits, referral staff and child care coordinators across the state met to gain a better understanding of the resources available in their communities while discussing ways in which referral practices could be enhanced.

Help Me Grow® Florida was heavily involved in this project and is committed to collaborating with other organizations across the state to streamline referrals for families. An outcome of this project was a directory, which includes referral agencies and procedures, services provided, and contact information. HMGF is represented in this directory at a state and local level.



HMGF LIST OF GOVERNING TEAM MEMBERS

Phyllis Kalifeh, EdD - President and CEO,
Children's Forum, Inc.

Denise Bishop, EdD - VP of Outreach, Innovation, and Training,
Children's Forum, Inc.

Lesha Buchbinder - Executive Director,
Early Learning Coalition of Lake County

Melissa Clements, PhD - VP/Chief Research Officer,
Children's Forum, Inc.

Amanda Fraser - Lobbyist,
Colodny Fass

Peter Gorski, MD, MPA - Professor,
Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, Florida International University; Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami; Help Me Grow Florida Physician Champion

Lisette Levy - Manager,
Division of Early Learning/ Department of Education

Tamara Price - Manager,
School Readiness Program & Policy, Division of Early Learning/ Department of Education

Sharon L'Herrou - President and CEO,
2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast; Vice President of FLAIRS

Erin Smeltzer, MS - Executive Director,
Association of Early Learning Coalitions

Rocio Velazquez - Professor,
Children's Movement

Andrea Ward - Child Care Resource and Referral Program Manager,
Division of Early Learning/ Department of Education

Sharlee Whiddon - HMG Program Manager,
Division of Early Learning/ Department of Education



For more information and program data, please visit www.helpmegrowfl.org