



FY 2022–2023 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?

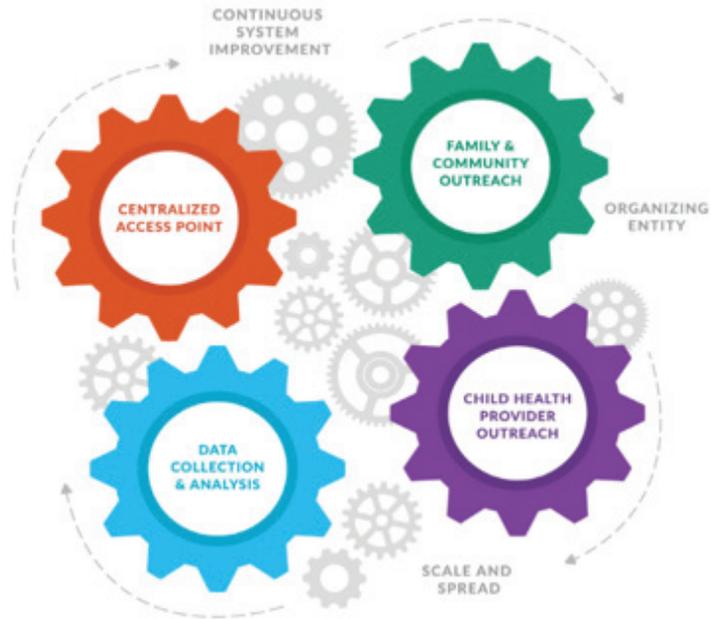
Help Me Grow® Florida (HMGF) is a coordinated system of supports that connects children and families to

- 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 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 #C1032 by the State of Florida, Division of Early Learning. Funds are recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund. For fiscal year 2022-2023, 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 and had Memorandums of Understanding with two additional affiliate sites that sourced their own funding to implement Help Me Grow in their service area.



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 to ensure successful implementation of Help Me Grow in their respective counties and areas.

MEET THE HELP ME GROW® FLORIDA SCO TEAM



Erin Smeltzer
President and CEO,
Children's Forum



Help Me Grow® Florida Organizational Chart



Denise Bishop
Chief Operations Officer
Children's Forum



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



Brenda Romuald
Program Coordinator
Help Me Grow® Florida
Children's Forum



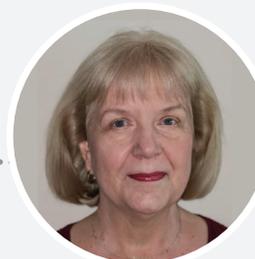
Aly Avila
Outreach Specialist,
Help Me Grow® Florida
Children's Forum



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 child was referred by his pediatrician to Help Me Grow for concerns about his communication skills. His speech was unclear and he had a limited vocabulary for his age. The HMGF care coordinator completed the Ages and Stages questionnaire with his mother. The scores confirmed the concerns with the child's communication. After speaking with the mother about service options, the mother decided to move forward with a referral to Homesafe, an entry agency in Palm Beach County for 0-5-year-olds. From there, the child was referred to Early Steps and has begun receiving services. The mother also reached out with developmental and parenting questions about her newborn. The HMGF care coordinator assisted her with completing a questionnaire for her newborn and provided information on at-home activities to continue to encourage development. In four months, the care coordinator will follow-up with the family again to check in on the newborns' developmental and behavioral progress.

– 2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast



OUR IMPACT

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



4,390
new children served

50%

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



4,096
referrals to community services and programs made



4,032
new families served

6

average number of care coordination follow-ups per family

78%

of children reached were Medicaid enrollees helping to reduce future dependency

24

physician champions advocated for HMG across the state



103

community-based screening events to bring our services to families and community partners

94%

of children were successfully connected to at least one service



7,195
developmental and behavioral screenings completed

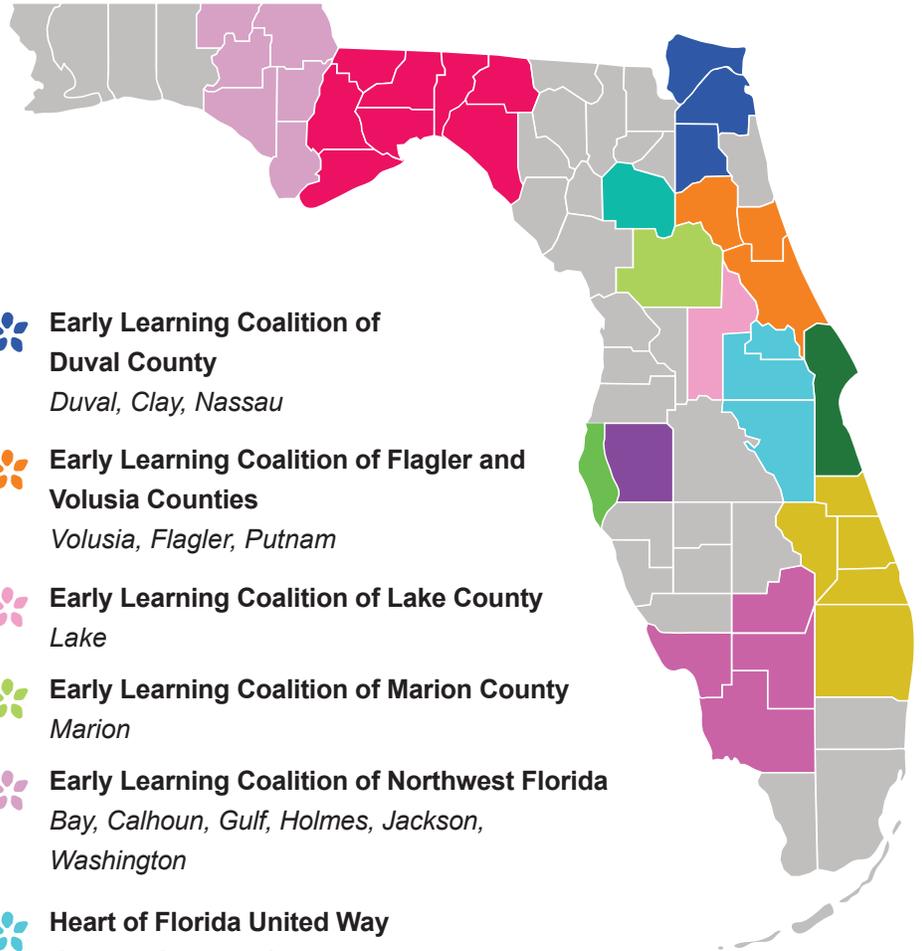


OUR AFFILIATE PARTNERS

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 for Help Me Grow or connecting to a care coordinator through the HMGF website. The Help Me Grow care coordinators remain in contact with families they serve until they are successfully connected to a service.



AFFILIATE MAP



 **2-1-1 Big Bend**
*Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon,
Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla*

 **2-1-1 Brevard**
Brevard

 **2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast**
*Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee,
Palm Beach, St. Lucie*

 **Children's Home Society Tallahassee
Gainesville Region**
Alachua

 **Early Childhood Council of
Hillsborough County, Inc.**
Hillsborough

 **Children's Home Society
Suncoast Region**
Pinellas

 **Early Learning Coalition of
Duval County**
Duval, Clay, Nassau

 **Early Learning Coalition of Flagler and
Volusia Counties**
Volusia, Flagler, Putnam

 **Early Learning Coalition of Lake County**
Lake

 **Early Learning Coalition of Marion County**
Marion

 **Early Learning Coalition of Northwest Florida**
*Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson,
Washington*

 **Heart of Florida United Way**
Orange, Osceola, Seminole

 **United Way of Lee, Hendry, and Glades**
Lee, Hendry, Glades, Collier



HMG on the Go event at
The Learning Experience
in Brandon, FL

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 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 supports or services needed.

Books, Balls, & Blocks!



Books, Balls, and Blocks event held by the Early Learning Coalition of Flagler and Volusia Counties



Parent interacting with their child during a Books, Balls, and Blocks event

95

BOOKS, BALLS, AND BLOCKS
EVENTS WERE HELD
THROUGHOUT FLORIDA

1,307

SCREENINGS WERE COMPLETED
THROUGH BBB EVENTS



OUR ACTIVITIES

HELP ME GROW NATIONAL FORUM

HMGF was the co-host of the Help Me Grow National Forum which was held Sept 19-22, 2022. Liz Randall, the HMGF Statewide Director, moderated a general session panel which included four Florida stakeholders: Erin Smeltzer, the CEO and President of the Childrens Forum, Vance Aloupis, CEO of The Children's Movement of Florida, Talethia Edwards, parent leader and community development advocate, and Tamara Price, Early Learning Program and Policy Manager at the Division of Early Learning. Four HMGF affiliates presented virtual site visits each highlighting an HMG core component. It was a great opportunity for HMGF to be recognized on a national stage!

HELP ME GROW® FLORIDA ANNUAL MEETING

HMGF held the virtual annual meeting on April 18-19th, 2023. This meeting was geared towards HMGF affiliate staff and governing team members. It was full of rich information and professional development. Morgan Evers, CEO and founder of FINACIOUS, was the keynote speaker. Other presenters included Dr. Lisette Levy, Early Learning Program Specialist with the Division of Early Learning, Dr. Paul Dworkin, Founding Director of Help Me Grow National, Gabi Lara, outreach specialist for Florida Health Kids Corporation, and Erin Smeltzer, CEO and President of the Children's Forum.



FCAAP OUTREACH

HMGF was featured in the June edition of the Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (FCAAP) newsletter. The newsletter, which is distributed to pediatricians across the state of Florida, provides advocacy and policy updates, news on the latest medical guidance, practice tips, legislative reports, and links to educational opportunities. HMGF also has a website banner - running on the FCAAP website (fcaap.org). The FCAAP website provides information on the Chapter, current pediatric news, continuing education opportunities, events, legislative updates, practice resources, and more. The ad targets physicians and directs them to the HMGF webpage about physician partnerships.

PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES PARTNERSHIP

HMGF has embarked on a statewide partnership with Pediatric Associates, a primary care practice. There are 89 Pediatric Associate offices across Florida, and ten of our affiliate sites currently have Pediatric Associates within their service area. Pediatric Associates is especially interested in HMGF's ability to follow-up with families and ensure successful connections.



FANDECK

HMGF has developed a developmental fandeck for children aged 4-8 years old. This is the first printed resource for children of this age range for HMG nationally and is featured on the HMG National website. This fandeck is published in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. The fandecks include developmental milestones for each age listed, and a knowledge check with age-based interactive activities. Children complete these activities on their own and caregivers can review their work.



HMGF LIST OF GOVERNING TEAM MEMBERS

Erin Smeltzer, MS - President and CEO
Children's Forum, Inc.

Denise Bishop, EdD - Chief Operations Officer
Children's Forum, Inc.

Lesha Buchbinder - Executive Director
Early Learning Coalition of Lake County

Melissa Clements, PhD - 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

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

Dana Trabulsy - Public Relations and Special Projects Director
Children's Forum, Inc.

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

