



FY 2020–2021 Annual Report

*Promoting the Healthy Development
and Well-Being of Florida's Children
through Collective Impact*

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

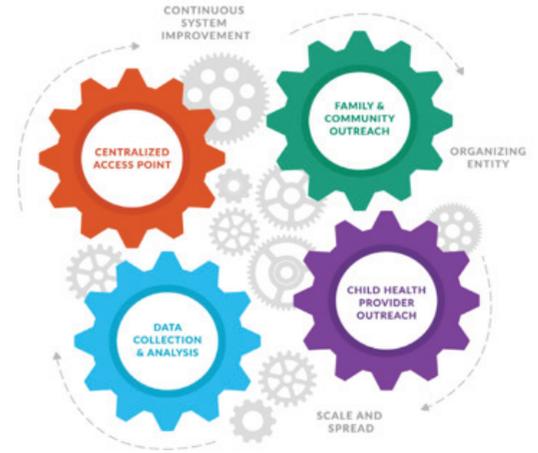
WHAT IS HELP ME GROW?

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 to 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



STATE COORDINATING OFFICE

The Help Me Grow® Florida 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 HMGF system. The SCO provides technical assistance and other resources to its affiliates so that they may successfully implement HMGF 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



Melissa Clements
Vice President/Chief Research Officer,
Children’s Forum



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



Liz Randall
Data and Research Manager,
Help Me Grow® Florida
Children’s Forum



Yolanda Tervil
Program and Outreach Specialist,
Help Me Grow® Florida
Children’s Forum



Kerri Cloud
Chief Financial Officer,
Children’s Forum



Catherine Hall
Contracts and Grants Manager,
Children’s Forum



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

AUTHORITY AND FUNDING

The Help Me Grow® Florida (HMGF) system is administered by the Children’s Forum, Inc. and funded by the State of Florida, Division of Early Learning. (*General Revenue Fund – Chapter 2019-116 – Appropriation 84*). For fiscal year 2020-2021, the Florida Legislature allocated **\$1,808,954** to HMGF. During this period, the HMGF State Coordinating Office contracted with eleven affiliate sites.

In addition, there are two locally funded HMG affiliate sites. Across the state funded and locally funded sites, children and their families are served in a total of **37** Florida counties.

OUR AFFILIATE PARTNERS

The local affiliates ensure that the Help Me Grow® Florida system builds collaboration across sectors, including early care and education, healthcare, and family support.

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

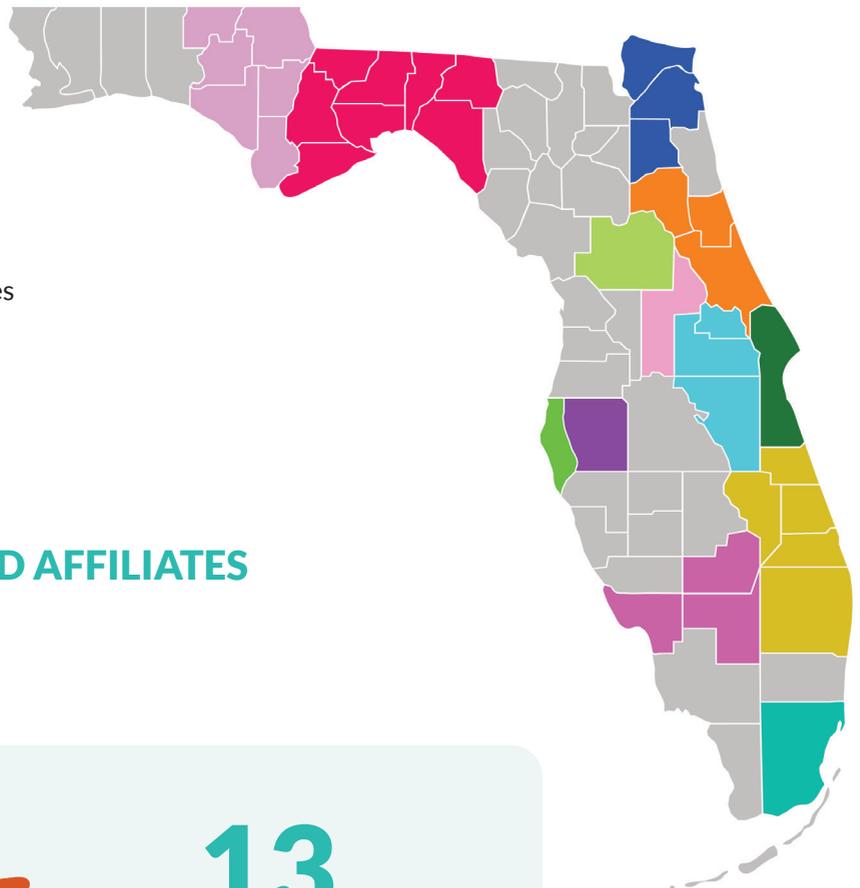


2020-2021 FY AFFILIATES

- 2-1-1 Big Bend
- 2-1-1 Brevard
- 2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast
- 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares
- Early Learning Coalition of Duval County
- Early Learning Coalition of Flagler-Volusia Counties
- Early Learning Coalition of Lake County
- Early Learning Coalition of Marion County
- Early Childhood Council of Hillsborough County
- Heart of Florida United Way
- United Way of Lee, Hendry, Glades

2020-2021 FY LOCALLY FUNDED AFFILIATES

- Jewish Community Services of South Florida
- Early Learning Coalition of Northwest Florida



37
Counties with a Help Me Grow® program starting July 2020



13
Local affiliate sites implement HMGF into their service areas

OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT

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

DATA OUTCOMES

4,009
children served

3,613
families served

7,132
screenings completed



92%
children stressfully
connected to services

569
healthcare providers
partnered with HMGF

3,857
referrals to
community agencies
and programs made

HMGF BENEFITS OUR CHILDREN AND OUR ECONOMY



\$1 = \$7.62

Every dollar invested in HMGF
returns \$7.62 per year.²

The total economic impact of HMGF is \$11.6M annually through increased sales and revenues, income, employment, and lifetime earnings.²



²Harrington, J., M.R. Niekus, S. Whitney. Help Me Grow® Florida – Economic Valuation and Assessment Study. Final Report to Help Me Grow® Florida, November 2020. See: <https://www.cefa.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1851/files/Final%20HMGF%2011-9-20%20Clean.pdf>

COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACT

FAMILIES NEED HELP ME GROW MORE THAN EVER.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread loss of employment as well as school and childcare closures and has severely challenged the mental health of parents and their children. The disruption to children's daily lives poses a risk to their health and development.² Help Me Grow is minimizing adverse health and emotional effects on children by linking families to educational, nutritional, physical and mental health services.

As families continue to battle the effects of COVID-19 in their communities, we need to ensure that **all** families across Florida have an opportunity to receive comprehensive and coordinated Help Me Grow services for their children.



ONE FAMILY'S STORY

A family recently moved to Florida from out-of-state. With concerns about his child's development, the father contacted Help Me Grow after searching the internet for developmental support. The Help Me Grow care coordinator talked to the father about his concerns, and was able to provide a general developmental screening, in addition to a social-emotional developmental screening. These screenings indicated concerns, and he was connected to an agency that would provide a formal evaluation. As new Florida residents, the care coordinator was also able to help the family find local employment services, financial supports, medical insurance and a pediatrician. The father expressed gratitude and said that he had been unsure of where to go to get help for his family and for his son's developmental needs.

²Karpman, M., Dulce Gonzalez, D., and Kenney, G.M. (2020). Parents are Struggling to Provide for Their Families During the Pandemic: Material Hardships Greatest among Low-Income, Black, and Hispanic Parents. Urban Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/parents-are-struggling-provide-their-families-during-pandemic>

OUR ACTIVITIES

BOOKS, BALLS, AND BLOCKS EVENTS

Help Me Grow® Florida affiliates regularly host Books, Balls, and Blocks community screening events, where families and their children participate in developmental play and screenings in-person while connecting with community resources and partners.

55 Books, Balls, and Blocks events were held in the 2020-2021 FY where **1,027** children received screenings. This year, Books, Balls, and Blocks events were held virtually to abide by health and safety rules during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACT EARLY/COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAMS GRANT

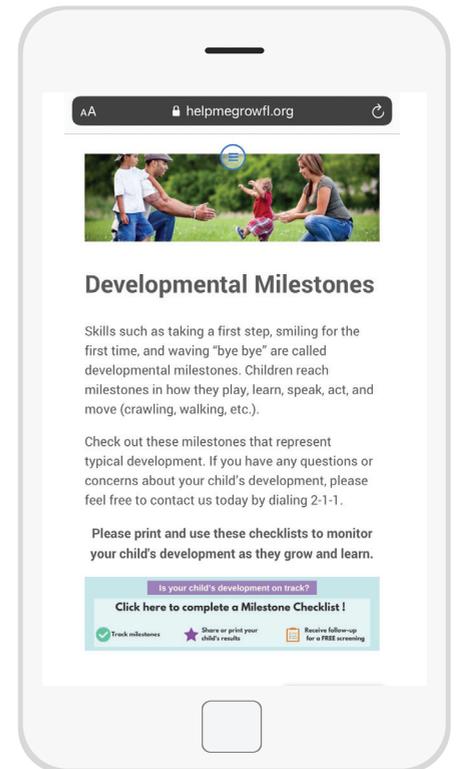
Help Me Grow® Florida was awarded a 12-month grant by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Act Early/COVID-19 Response Teams grant provided an opportunity to support COVID-19 recovery and strengthen resiliency in Florida's children and families by bolstering the early identification of developmental delays and disabilities.

As a project initiative, HMGF developed virtual "Learn the Signs. Act Early." developmental milestone checklists that could be 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.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/actearly
1-800-CDC-INFO

By integrating "Learn the Signs. Act Early." materials and resources into outreach and care coordination, HMGF was able to reach more of Florida's children and families during times when they need the most support. A new HMGF statewide initiative, "HMG on the Go" was developed as a way to continue connecting with families in the community. These family drive-through events allowed families to receive supports for their children, while adhering to CDC COVID-19 safety guidelines.



 **Help Me Grow**
...on the GO!



15
HMG on the Go
events conducted

162
Milestone
checklists completed

2,665
families reached from
HMG on the Go events

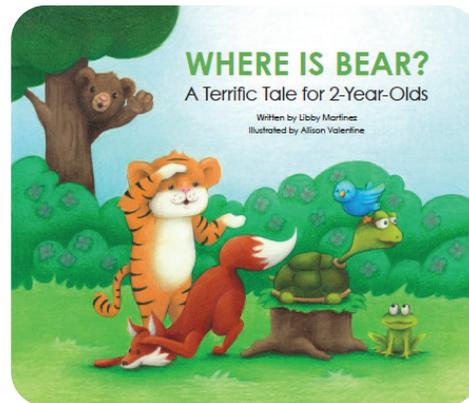
REACH OUT AND READ COLLABORATIONS

HMGF collaborated with Reach Out and Read Florida (ROR) at the Miami-Dade Family Learning Partnership to develop and implement a local pilot project. The Early Learning Coalition of Lake County and six ROR pediatric healthcare providers in Lake County collaborated to provide children's books to patients and refer families to HMGF for more comprehensive services.



FLORIDA

With ROR's embedding within pediatric primary care, these collaborations have drawn upon each other's strengths to support early literacy and the developmental outcomes of children. Providers offered HMGF "Learn the Signs. Act Early." developmental milestone checklists to their patients, and HMGF followed-up with families to offer developmental screenings and care coordination.



HMGF also collaborated with ROR to customize the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." children's book for 2-year-olds, titled *Where is Bear?* These books were customized to include language about the HMGF system and ROR program, along with reading tips for families to help promote early literacy.

ECCS COLLABORATIONS

HMGF continued its participation in the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Impact Project. With a grant through the Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions (FAHSC) contracted with the Children's Forum to include HMGF as an implementation partner.

With funding from Project HOPE, HMGF collaborated with the FAHSC to create a social-emotional health booklet for families with young children throughout the state. The pamphlet was printed and shipped to HMGF affiliates throughout the state and the ECCS place-based communities in Tampa and Orlando.



LIST OF GOVERNING TEAM MEMBERS

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

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

Courtnie Wheeless, MPA - Director Child Care Resource & Referral,
Office of Early Learning

Tamara Price - Manager, School Readiness Program & Policy,
Office of Early Learning

Annik Babinski - Director of Communications,
The Children's Movement of Florida

Ted Granger - *United Way of Florida (retired)*

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

Ghia C. Kelly, MSW - ECCS Impact Project Manager,
Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalition

Rachel Spector - Senior Program Manager, Early
Childhood and Quality Counts, *The Children's Trust*

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

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*

Marisa Macy, PhD - Professor, School of Teacher
Education, Early Childhood Development & Education,
College of Community Innovation and Education,
University of Central Florida; Principal Investigator-
Florida Technical Assistance and Training System



Help Me Grow[®]
Florida connects
families to
resources to give
children their
best start.



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