



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Help Me Grow?

Help Me Grow (HMG) is a model for an early childhood system that promotes child development, detects issues early and successfully links families to existing resources to address needs. It does so by working across provider systems- child health care, early care and education, social services, community-based programs- to more seamlessly meet the needs of families with young children.

HMG is based on a national model that has been implemented in over 100 communities across 30 states, and HMG "affiliate" sites each look different based on local assets and needs. In New York State, there are 3 HMG sites and counting: Long Island, Western New York (Buffalo) and Onondaga County (Syracuse).

2. What makes Help Me Grow different?

Help Me Grow not only provides referrals that meet families' unique needs, but also provides ongoing assistance to help families overcome the barriers to accessing that referral. HMG Family Resource Specialists work with families to address each obstacle, and rely on "warm handoffs" at partner agencies and consistent, ongoing communication with families to ensure linkage to services. HMG's help is virtual (via phone, text and email), allowing us to reach families across the Island and allowing us to keep in touch with families who may struggle with their schedules or transportation. HMG also offers free online developmental and social emotional screens in English and Spanish and activities for families to do to promote their child's development.

3. How much does it cost?

Help Me Grow – Long Island is free to use! HMG provides information, referrals, screens and care coordination. HMG tries whenever possible to only refer to programs that are free or low-cost for families. HMG also covers the cost of screens and training for sites that want to offer screening.

4. Is Help Me Grow a nonprofit?

Help Me Grow is not a program or nonprofit, but a system overseen by a Leadership Team comprised of partners who care about Long Island's youngest children and their families. HMG-LI is managed by Docs for Tots, housed at the Child Care Council of Nassau, and is accessible through United Way of Long Island's 211 system.

5. Why is developmental screening important?

One in seven children have a developmental delay. The earlier delays are caught and addressed, the more likely a child is to get back on track with their development in time for school. While observation alone catches about 30% of delays, standardized screening tools capture 70-80% of delays.

To Contact Help Me Grow – Long Island Directly:

Call: 516-548-8924

Visit: www.helpmegrownny.org

Email: info@hmgli.org



6. Who does Help Me Grow help?

Help Me Grow – Long Island is available for all families living in Nassau and Suffolk counties who are expecting a baby or have a child who has not yet entered kindergarten. HMG also helps providers who work with families of young children by offering screening integration, advice, and follow-up on cases so that we can work together better to support families.

7. Why do you only serve Nassau and Suffolk, and children 0-5?

The first years of life lay the foundation for health, education, and economic outcomes, yet there is no one place that serves young children. HMG-LI helps families connect to crucial supports before children start kindergarten, and offers free developmental screens for children 2-65 months old.

Nassau and Suffolk Counties are commonly known to make up the region of Long Island, and many families live their lives- school, work, play, home- between the counties. Long Island is also separated by the rest of the state by the boroughs that make up New York City, and New York City has different systems in place for supporting young children and their families.

8. How does HMG make referrals?

Help Me Grow – Long Island does not have a “one size fits all” referral approach. Rather, we speak to the families to learn more about their situation and concerns, and take a step-by-step approach to meeting the families’ needs. Referrals can include but are not limited to:

- Developmental support: Early intervention or preschool special education, home visiting, developmental groups, early care and education
- Basic needs: Community-based organizations that offer baby items (diapers, clothes, etc.), social service programs
- Parenting support: Workshops, classes, groups

HMG-LI maintains a resource database that is constantly updated based on new information and parent feedback.

9. I’m concerned about a child’s development. When should I refer to Help Me Grow?

You can always refer to Help Me Grow if a family has questions or wants to complete a developmental screen. If a family wants an evaluation, you can refer them directly to their county’s Early Intervention program (for children under 3) or their school district (for children 3-5), and also refer to Help Me Grow to help them through the process or help them find other options if their child is found ineligible for services.

10. What happens to the information Help Me Grow collects?

The “data system” for Help Me Grow – Long Island consists of 2 components: screening system (ASQ Enterprise), and the resource database/client management system (STAR). Both are maintained by Docs for Tots. Individual case information is confidential and restricted to HMG staff unless a parent consents to share information, such as with their physician or child care provider. General information from data collected may be used to identify community needs or report to HMG-LI supporters, but personal information such as names, dates of birth, and contact information are not shared.

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