Launched in January 2018, Help Me Grow – Long Island (HMG-LI) is a FREE resource connecting families and providers to community resources and child development information in Nassau and Suffolk counties, with the mission of promoting optimal development of Long Island’s young children. Although known for its wealth, Long Island has a growing population of families that struggle with the high cost of living and the challenges of raising a family. HMG-LI addresses these issues by making developmental and social emotional screening universally available, and offering ongoing support for families to successfully navigate systems to access services they need. HMG-LI isn’t an agency, but a partnership coordinated by Docs for Tots based on a national model for organizing existing agencies with the goal of more efficiently and effectively reaching and helping at-risk children so they do not fall through the cracks.

This report includes data collected as part of HMG-LI over a 12 month period from October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019, a time during which HMG-LI was fully operational after its initial launch. This 12-month snapshot represents a consistent level of care coordination and processes in which 461 children were served via our Centralized Access Point and an additional 758 children screened through our partner sites.

Sections 1-3 will attempt to provide answers to 3 critical questions:

**Who did we serve?**
Expanding Reach and Advancing Equity:
Characteristics of children and families served by HMG-LI’s activities

**What did we do?**
Addressing Needs and Optimizing Development:
Sources of Centralized Access Point interactions and concerns of Long Island’s families

**How did we do?**
Increasing Early Access for Families to Thrive:
Improving early childhood support on Long Island, and improving the system as a whole

None of this would be possible without the partnerships that make HMG-LI thrive. In section 4 we will highlight how these partnerships have grown and strengthened in our collective impact community for early childhood on Long Island.
Who did we serve?

“Thank you so much for all the info. I really needed this. I was so stressed because I can't afford to have a baby shower and I didn't know where I would get everything for the new baby.”

Pregnant parent looking for assistance with basic needs
HELP ME GROW — LONG ISLAND DEMOGRAPHICS

A Snapshot of Transformation

- The data in this report represents families connecting to HMG-LI primarily through its Centralized Access Point (CAP), the care coordination arm of HMG-LI that is staffed by 2 Family Resource Specialists and accessible via phone, website, fax and email. Additional families participated in HMG-LI through our developmental screening partner sites during this period. That work will be discussed in section 4.

- The geographic distribution of the families demonstrates that we are moving towards meeting our goal of serving all of Long Island. However, there are “hot spots” of usage of our services that can be linked to established community referral partnerships and/or increased need in certain communities.

Nearly three quarters of the children served by the CAP were under the age of 3 years (36 months) and 6% of all calls were from expecting parents. Research shows that early identification and receipt of assistance in the first 3 years of life results in better long-term outcomes for families.

“I got your message regarding Tommy. I am going to get him evaluated through preschool special education. Give it a shot and see what happens. Thanks for your help!”

Parent who called with developmental concern
The HMG-LI CAP population is more diverse than the general Long Island population. Compared to the general population of Long Island, our CAP serves 3x and 2x the percentage of Hispanic/Latino families and African American families, respectively.

Long Island is rapidly diversifying and that means families often speak a language other than English. Nearly half of our families have a non-English primary language, Spanish being most common, followed by Haitian Creole, the two additional languages spoken by HMG-LI staff. A phone translation service is utilized to ensure the best communication possible with languages not spoken by our team, and has helped us serve families that speak such languages as Bengali and Turkish.

### Equitable Access to Services

Long Island has an increasing number of non-English speaking families. For them, processes that can be difficult for any family – like having their child evaluated for developmental support services – can be extra challenging. One such family had connected with HMG-LI about their son’s development. In order for the 3-year-old to be evaluated for services by the family’s school district, the family first had to register for school. However, despite there being instructions available in Spanish, none of the new paperwork had been translated into Spanish, presenting a barrier for the family to proceed. Thanks to our Family Resource Specialist’s advocacy and help from the Long Island Language Advocacy Coalition, the school district made translations available in several languages so that future families will not face the same barrier.
What did we do?

“Getting a family on board, having them partner with the process and seeing a child ‘catch up’ in the key areas needed to foster further ‘building’ of developmental skills are critical to future success. I am proud to be a part of the effort to bring universal screening to the pediatric population of Long Island.”

Dr. Suanne Kowal-Connelly, Long Island Federally Qualified Community Health Centers
HELP ME GROW — LONG ISLAND

Centralized Access Point

Families Finding the Support they Need

The HMG-LI Centralized Access Point (CAP) received a steady increase of calls and referrals over the year. Families can connect with us from many different "entry points": by calling directly; calling 2-1-1 and speaking to an operator or selecting our menu option; faxed referrals from doctors' offices or community partners; completing a developmental or social emotional screen on our website.

The number one reason for contacting HMG-LI was a developmental concern. Most of these families named communication as their specific developmental concern.

Families Served by CAP per Quarter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Number of Unique Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Oct - Dec</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Jan - March</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 April - June</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 July - Sep</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How Did You Hear About Help Me Grow — Long Island?

- Health Care Provider: 55%
- 2-1-1: 12%
- Social Service or Community Agency: 9%
- Friend/Family Member: 7%
- Help Me Grow Website: 5%
- Early Intervention or CPSE: 5%
- Social Service or Community Agency: 2%
- Other: 4%
- WIC: 2%

The Importance of Access to Basic Needs

As a key strategy to optimize child development, HMG-LI helps families access resources to meet basic needs, such as food, housing, clothing, and diapers. Often an overlooked factor in supporting a child’s development, a family’s unmet basic needs can cause extra stress, which both impacts the children directly and makes it harder for caregivers to attend to their children’s developmental needs. Harvard Center for the Developing Child lists “reducing sources of stress” as one of three ways to improve developmental outcomes, and “meeting basic needs” is one of the five protective factors in the Strengthening Families Framework that promote optimal outcomes.

More than half of families served by the HMG-LI Centralized Access Point were referred by their primary care doctor. As we focus our outreach to doctors that serve high-needs populations, we know that most of our families are low-income. Doctors typically refer families when there is a developmental concern, whereas families that contact us directly are more likely to need the basics for their children, like diapers and car seats.

Families were more likely to identify their main concern as “basic needs” when the child was under a year old. Between ages 1-5, caregivers were more likely to have a concern about the child’s development, with the number one concern being communication.
### Centralized Access Point

#### Entry by Age (in months)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (in months)</th>
<th>0-12 M</th>
<th>13-36 M</th>
<th>37-60 M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical Provider</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caller</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-1-1 HMG Online Screen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Number of Families Served

- 0-12 M
- 13-36 M
- 37-60 M

### Reason for Contacting

#### by Entry Point: Medical Provider vs. Caller

- **Basic Need**
- **Developmental Concern**
- **Child Care**
- **Parental Support**
- **Other**
- **Behavioral**

#### Reason for Contacting by Age (in months)

- 0-12 M
- 13-36 M
- 37-60 M

---

*Developmental Concerns include Communication, General Development, Fine Motor, Gross Motor, and Cognitive (Learning) Concerns*
“Thanks to HMG-LI, our postpartum home visiting program, Northwell Health Visits/Family Connects Long Island, has been able to serve diverse community families during a very exciting and vulnerable part of their lives with any resource and referral needs they have. The HMG-LI team has also supported our assessment and screening efforts, with particular focus on developmental milestones.”

Amparo Abel-Bey, MPH, Northwell Family Connects Long Island
HELP ME GROW — LONG ISLAND INITIAL IMPACT

Successes & Opportunities

HMG–LI was designed to improve Long Island’s ability to provide cohesive, collaborative support for families with young children and the providers that serve them.

- Our main indicator of success is connection rate. We strive to improve the percentage of families linked to support services so fewer children fall through the cracks. For many Long Island families, connection takes patience: sometimes it will take several months of HMG-LI working with a family to ensure a connection with desired services.

- Family Resource Specialists follow up with caregivers an average of 4.5 times per case, ensuring they understand the process and are confident to take the next steps for their child.

- HMG-LI also tracks what parents identify as barriers to receiving services. Identifying trends in barriers allows HMG-LI to work with partners to build a more responsive and effective system for young children.

Service providers are also a major part of HMG-LI, often referring to us and us to them. In order to understand their experience with HMG-LI we surveyed referring physicians. Respondents agreed that HMG-LI added value for the families they serve.

“This has been a journey that is just starting. I truly appreciate you, I would be so frustrated and helpless without Help Me Grow’s support and resources.”

Mom served by HMG-LI

Report of Connection to Services*

* This chart does not include families that stopped responding to attempts to contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connected</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Connected</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pending Services</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Outcome</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health Care Provider: Help Me Grow — Long Island is a Value-add for my Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top 5 Caregiver Reported Barriers to Services**

** Based on the 146 barriers documented during the time period; not every caller reported a barrier, and some reported multiple barriers to services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Barrier</th>
<th>Percent of Reported Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not meet eligibility criteria</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency unable to provide service</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency did not return call</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation not available</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not have a good experience with agency</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did not meet eligibility criteria: 25%
Agency unable to provide service: 20%
Agency did not return call: 15%
Transportation not available: 10%
Did not have a good experience with agency: 5%
This summary illustrates how concerns, connections, and barriers differ by age group. For newborns, the most pressing concern that families identify is needing basic items like diapers, clothing, and car seats. Although we may be able to find programs that meet a family’s needs, transportation is often a barrier to successful connection. For 1-3-year-olds, development becomes a concern, and parents are more likely to report having difficulty speaking to someone at the program to which they were referred. For 3-5-year-olds, development was also the top concern. At this age families need to go through the school district to receive a developmental evaluation, which is a long process, serving as a barrier for many families.

**Summary of Connection Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0-12 M</th>
<th>13-36 M</th>
<th>37-60 M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Concern</td>
<td>Basic Needs</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection rate by age</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary caregiver language</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main barrier to care</td>
<td>Transportation not available</td>
<td>Agency did not return call</td>
<td>Process took too long</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**One Success Story Out of Hundreds**

A federally-qualified health center referred a mother in need of urgent intervention for her child via our universal referral form. The physician had been struggling to get the child help since 2017. When our Family Resource Specialist called, she found out that the mom spoke only Spanish, could not read or write in any language and her child had increasingly demonstrated a need for special education services because of developmental delay. Through the persistent, coordinated efforts of HMG-LI, including calling in for extra help from the Early Childhood Direction Center, the child finally received evaluation and enrollment into services.

This mom, like so many parents, knew that her child needed help but couldn’t navigate the red tape of the system on her own. She shared her deep gratitude with us.

“Wow my daughter’s development is on track!! I was worried but today I am happy! Thank you for your support.”

Spanish speaking parent after completing the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (translated to English)
“There’s a great existing working relationship between HMG-LI staff and staff of the resource and referral agency on all levels – visitors are surprised to learn they are not staff members; we’ve layed the groundwork for future growth together as we improve comprehensive service to families of young children.”

Jan Barbieri, Executive Director, Child Care Council of Nassau
HELP ME GROW — LONG ISLAND

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Partnerships

- Community resources are like a power grid: when the grid functions well, families can plug in wherever they are to get the help they need. Help Me Grow aims to strengthen the grid, and relies on its partners to do so.

- HMG-LI is overseen by a Leadership Team of Long Island’s early childhood stakeholders, including agency representation from the pediatric, child care, and social service sectors.

- HMG-LI receives referrals from and refers to agencies across Long Island, and works with organizations to promote child development among the families they serve.

- HMG-LI also trains sites that serve young children — like child care and home visiting programs — to integrate developmental and social emotional screening into the work they do with families using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. HMG–LI has 17 partner sites that actively provide and share results for developmental and or social emotional screening to the children they serve. From October 2018 through September 2019, these sites screened 758 children for a total of 846 screens. Since its January 2018 launch, HMG–LI and our partner sites have completed 2,200 screens.

HMG–LI Leadership Team Members
(*current member)

- Allied Physicians Group
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) NYS Chapter 2*
- Barry & Florence Friedberg JCC
- Child Care Council of Nassau*
- Child Care Council of Suffolk*
- Children’s Medical Center at NYU Winthrop Hospital*
- Choice for All
- Cohen Children’s Medical Center*
- Docs for Tots*
- EOC of Nassau County
- Every Child Matters
- Family partners*
- Family Place Libraries*
- Family Support LI (Molloy College)*
- HealthySteps, Nassau University Medical Center*
- HITE/Greater NY Hospital Association
- Help Me Grow – Western NY
- Hofstra University School of Public Health
- Hudson River Healthcare (HRHCare)*
- Institute for Parenting (Adelphi University)*
- Long Island FACE (formerly ECDC)*
- Long Island Federally Qualified Health Centers*
- Long Island Federally Qualified Health Centers – Women, Infant, and Children (WIC)*
- Long Island Pre-K Initiative
- Nassau BOCES*
- Nassau County Department of Health*
- Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Coalition/LI Health Collaborative
- Northshore Family Guidance
- Northwell Health Visits – FamilyConnects Long Island*
- NYS Council on Children and Families*
- NYS Infant Mental Health Association
- ParentChild+
- Postpartum Resource Network*
- Stonybrook Children’s Hospital*
- Suffolk County Dept. of Social Services
- Suffolk County Executive*
- Suffolk County Early Intervention*
- Suffolk Infancy Leadership Circles
- United Way of Long Island*
- Western Suffolk BOCES*
- VNSNY – Nassau Nurse Family Partnership
Promoting Developmental Screening

Books, Balls, and Blocks:
Originated by Help Me Grow – Utah, Books, Balls and Blocks (BBB) is a free, fun, family event for children ages 0-5. It is comprised of different volunteer-led activity stations in which children can engage in developmentally appropriate play while their parents complete an ASQ-3 developmental screen. BBB events are hosted in partnership with local Family Place libraries across Long Island.

Born to Read:
In 2019, HMG-LI partnered with the Nassau Library System’s Youth Services to provide 1,000 “Born to Read” bags to pregnant and postpartum moms at Women, Infant and Children centers in Nassau County. The bags included a bilingual book, diapers, information on local libraries, and developmental health promotion materials.

Early Learning Screening Collaborative:
In partnership with the Child Care Council of Nassau, Child Care Council of Suffolk, and QUALITYstarsNY, HMG-LI launched its first ever learning collaborative model for child care settings around using developmental screening in their classrooms. The pilot launched in Fall 2019 and will be offered to child care providers in an ongoing manner starting 2020.

Developmental Screening Results for a Total of 846 Ages and Stages Questionnaires

- **Above**
  - Children developing as expected
  - 52%

- **Monitoring**
  - Children with mild concerns in one or more areas of development
  - 26%

- **Below**
  - Children at risk for developmental delay
  - 22%

Partnering to Inform State and National Systems Building

Partial funding for the implementation of HMG-LI comes from the New York State Council on Children and Families via the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant (ECCS) from 2016-2021 to support reaching the ECCS aim through utilization of HMG-LI resources and services. Developmental screenings and referrals to services conducted through HMG-LI are submitted as biannual and annual indicators to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the National Institute for Children’s Health Quality (NICHQ) to meet the deliverables of the NYS ECCS Grant. Through collaborative partnership ECCS seeks to enhance early childhood systems and demonstrate improved outcomes in population-based children's developmental health and family well-being. This federal funding has strengthened state collaboration with communities and provided the opportunity to apply lessons learned in other communities throughout New York State.
The Path Forward from Here

The HMG-LI partnership aims to assist Long Island’s parents in obtaining support from the early childhood system smoothly and seamlessly. A big part of meeting this aim is taking what we learn – about how children are developing, what they need, and what they are able or unable to access – and using it to improve processes. But addressing barriers and advocating for real systemic change will require a collective effort, both locally and at the state level, to go from a number of programs that function independently to a system that can be greater than the sum of its parts. The gears on a watch can be perfectly made, but unless they connect to each other and work in unison, you can’t tell time. We strive for excellent health care, quality child care, and accessible family supports, but a system for families with young children does not function optimally unless they all work in a synchronous manner.

Help Me Grow – Long Island is not standing still. The data in this report represents a snapshot of the needs of young children on Long Island and demonstrates the unique role that HMG-LI plays in providing critical information to all our partners for systems-building. We continue to collect and analyze data to be used for quality improvement across Long Island, to help us better understand the needs of families on Long Island, and to ensure that HMG-LI is not just “doing” but “doing good.”

In 2020 We Strive to:

1. Seek feedback from our families on how we can serve them better, both by text message surveys and additional participation in our Leadership Team

2. Increase the number of families that are accessing support for their young children’s needs through HMG-LI

3. Provide support to families that have been affected by COVID-19 directly, or indirectly through loss of income or access to services

The Future of HMG-LI

We always state that HMG-LI is a partnership and we mean it. Changing systems so that young children and their families have the support they need will require lots of partners and allies. We are forever thankful for our partners on Long Island, and also for our partners across New York State and within the Help Me Grow affiliate network where we “steal shamelessly and share seamlessly” new ideas, and learn what did not work, too. Our vision for the future is to work together to make a difference for young children – so please join us. Contact info@hmgli.org to learn more.
Help Me Grow – Long Island (HMG-LI) is a partnership coordinated by Docs for Tots based on a national model for organizing existing agencies with the goal of more efficiently and effectively reaching and helping at-risk children. HMG-LI is housed at the Child Care Council of Nassau, and connected to United Way of Long Island’s 2-1-1 phone system. Docs for Tots is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization led by pediatricians to promote practices, policies, and investments that will enable young children to thrive. Docs for Tots creates linkages between doctors, policymakers, early childhood practitioners and other stakeholders to ensure that children grow up healthy.

Acknowledgements

The publication is the result of teamwork on the part of the many Help Me Grow – Long Island partners. Special recognition goes to:

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- Hofstra University GIS Department, Ligia Clara, Adriana Galarza, and Craig Dalton, for their work on mapping the distribution of the families served by the HMG-LI CAP on Long Island
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  - Caroline Friedman Levy, Clinical Psychologist, Child Welfare Specialist, Docs for Tots Board Member
  - Kimberly Noble, Associate Professor of Neuroscience and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, Docs for Tots Board Member
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  - Lauren Smith Brody, Author and Founder of The Fifth Trimester movement, Docs for Tots Board Member

HMG-LI Funding

HMG-LI would not exist without the generous support of private foundations, state funding, and individual donors. HMG-LI supporters share a vision with Docs for Tots: to impact young children to create a just, prosperous, and dynamic community. Foundations and individuals interested in promoting solutions that build the cognitive, emotional, and social capacities of young children can invest in the growth of the HMG-LI collective impact partnership of agencies that serves as a safety net for vulnerable children.

Contact Dr. Elizabeth Isakson, Executive Director of Docs for Tots, for more information about funding opportunities.
dft@docsfortots.org

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Quotes have been edited for clarity and names have been changed where applicable.