



General Description of Help Me Grow

Help Me Grow is Ohio's prenatal to age three system designed to provide and maintain a coordinated, community-based infrastructure that promotes trans-disciplinary, family-centered services for eligible expectant families, newborns, infants, toddlers and their families in order to assure that all children in Ohio have the best possible start in life.

In conjunction with state and other community partners, each of Ohio's 88 county Family & Children First Councils administer Help Me Grow programs which provide eligible children and families with a number of services.

The services offered by the Help Me Grow program equip parents with the resources to help their child succeed early in life. Scientific evidence strongly suggests that a child's success is significantly determined by the quality of nurturing in the first three years of life. The information and supports provided to families help them maximize this important period of development in their child's life.

Currently Help Me Grow consists of two components, a Home Visiting program for targeted populations under age three and the Early Intervention program for infants and toddlers (and their families) with developmental delays or disabilities.

Both of these programs are overseen by the Ohio Department of Health, who provides technical assistance, guidance, rules, and monitoring of the programs. Staff are part of the Division of Family & Community Health Services and the Bureau for Children with Developmental and Special Health Needs. Information is available at www.helpmegrow.ohio.gov

Early Intervention oversight is shared with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. They provide training, technical assistance and administration of the program at the state level; with County Boards of Developmental Disabilities serving as the state's biggest provider of Early Intervention services.

Description of the Statewide HMG Home Visiting program

In July 2010, the Ohio Department of Health implemented a restructured Home Visiting program to serve first-time pregnant women and parents as well as targeted populations of families with children under the age of three years. Although home visiting has existed in Ohio for many years, the revised program was designed to incorporate research-supported and evidence-based practices while simultaneously focusing program resources on the most vulnerable populations across the state.

The Home Visiting component of Help Me Grow seeks to increase healthy pregnancies, improve parenting confidence and competence, increase family connectedness and social support, as well as improve children health, development, and readiness in the populations that it serves. Each of these goals and outcomes are subject to rigorous program evaluation measures to examine the key indicators of success for the program, including measures of each of the following:

- Access to prenatal and primary care
- Smoking prevention during pregnancy and after the birth of a baby
- Prevention of child abuse and neglect
- Parent knowledge of early childhood development
- Healthy parent-child interactions
- Home environment
- Level of family support
- Sense of community connectedness

Description of the Statewide HMG Early Intervention program

When the United States congress authorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA Part C), they wrote that there was an urgent and substantial need to:

- Enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities;
- Reduce the educational costs to our society... by minimizing the need for special education and related services;
- Maximize the potential for individuals with disabilities to live independently in society; and
- Enhance the capacity of families to support the development of their children with developmental delays and disabilities.

The Help Me Grow Early Intervention system in Ohio was developed to address the above concerns and is Ohio's initiative for identifying and serving children under the age of three with developmental delays and disabilities. In every county in Ohio, local Help Me Grow programs reach out to parents, doctors, hospitals, childcare providers and other community agencies to identify children with developmental delays.

Parents with concerns about their child's development can participate in a global developmental evaluation and/or child assessment by a multidisciplinary team at no cost to the family. Children are evaluated for developmental delays in the areas of cognitive, physical, communication, social-emotional and adaptive development.

Infants and toddlers identified as having a developmental delay or a medical diagnosis with a high likelihood of leading to delay(s) are eligible to receive a child assessment to determine if there is a need for early intervention services to meet the developmental needs of the child and family.

All EI Service providers, whether public, private, nonprofit, or an independent; participate in the IFSP team's ongoing assessment of an infant or toddler with a disability and a Family-directed assessment of the family's resources, priorities and concerns as it relates to the needs of the infant or toddler; development of integrated goals and outcomes for the IFSP, provide EI services in accordance with the IFSP and consult and train parents and

others regarding the provision of EI services described in the IFSP [34 CFR §303.12]. Services which may be provided as part of Early Intervention include (but are not limited to):

- Audiology services
- Assistive technology, devices and services
- Family training; counseling; psychological or social work services
- Special instruction to teach parents how to enhance their child's development in everyday activities and routines
- Speech-language pathology and audiology services
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Nursing/Medical/Health services which allow for participation in EI
- Nutrition Assessment, planning, and services
- Service coordination
- Other services which enhance a child's development

These services are provided to families by qualified personnel and are facilitated by a Help Me Grow Service Coordinator, who guides the family through every step of the process from program entry until the child transitions out of the program.

Families can be simultaneously enrolled in both Help Me Grow Early Intervention and Help Me Grow Home Visiting, when they are eligible for both. Both Help Me Grow programs are voluntary and cannot be mandated by any entity; both require informed parent consent to participate. Families have rights in the programs and can file a formal complaint with the Ohio Department of Health by writing or calling the main Bureau at the contact information below:

Mailing Address: Ohio Department of Health, Help Me Grow, 5th floor
246 N. High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215

Phone: 614-644-8389

Fax: 614-728-9163

Email: hmg@odh.ohio.gov

Website: <http://www.helpmegrow.ohio.gov>