



FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.

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Help Me Grow

The Council supports funding for the *Help Me Grow* program to continue, expand, and further strengthen a Florida *Help Me Grow* Program.

Help Me Grow is a system that links families with local resources to address parents' concerns about the health, development, behavior and learning of their young children. Help Me Grow is a system that builds collaboration across many areas, including early care and education, health care, and family support. There are four core components to Help Me Grow: a centralized telephone access point for connecting children and their families to services and care coordination; community outreach to promote awareness and use of system partners; child health care provider outreach to support early detection, intervention and knowledge of local resources; and data collection to identify gaps and barriers and ensure continuous quality improvement.

Florida became a Help Me Grow replication state in 2012, with the simultaneous launching of the initiative in Hillsborough (Tampa) and Miami-Dade counties. The 2014 Florida Legislature appropriated \$2 million to the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. as fiscal agent, through the Department of Education, Office of Early Learning to establish a Help Me Grow State Coordinating Office, provide an infrastructure for a state Help Me Grow program, and to launch 3-5 additional local Help Me Grow sites.

The major program goals for this Help Me Grow (HMG) initiative for 2014-2015 are as follows:

- Develop a statewide HMG Coordinating Office with sufficient staffing and support for meeting the goals.
- Launch a minimum of three new HMG affiliates by providing training, technical assistance, and resources to develop the four core components of HMG at each new affiliate so that families with young children who have developmental concerns will be able to access effective screening and referral to appropriate services that may lead to early identification of needed services and supports.
- Provide statewide training and resource development for the addition of future affiliates by building the capacity of 2-1-1 service areas to deliver the components of HMG.
- Implement training on the importance of child screening, developmental milestones, and the HMG system to physicians/ARNPs and early childhood and education professionals.
- Conduct a HMG Florida public awareness campaign for existing HMG affiliates and local 2-1-1 organizations working to become HMG affiliates to promote child development and screening and HMG.
- Develop a statewide plan for a statewide web-based parent portal to provide families access to local information.

Funding for next year would be used to continue to support a state coordinator office and newly developed local Help Me Grow affiliates launch more local Help Me Grow sites and to further strengthen the core program components that are essential to the success of the initiative.