

# Developmental Screening and the *Help Me Grow* System

Developmental screening is an indispensable tool for detecting children at developmental risk. However, it is of value only to the extent that it is paired with developmental surveillance and with linkage to appropriate and effective programs and services. The *Help Me Grow* system is designed to be that necessary link between screening, surveillance, and connection to community resources.

“Screening and surveillance are too often viewed as separate activities,” writes Paul Dworkin, M.D., on [The Help Me Grow Blog](#). “This perspective minimizes the effectiveness of both. Surveillance without screening is likely to contribute to children eluding early detection, while lofty expectations for the isolated use of screening tools may result in over- or under-identification.” (See the [July 2006 AAP Policy Statement](#) for recommendations on how child health providers can use developmental surveillance.)

When accurate detection does occur, linkage to appropriate services must follow. Ellen Perrin, M.D., Director of Research at the Center for Children with Special Needs and professor at Tufts University School of Medicine, questions the ethics of detection without the provision of services. She states, “Detection without referral/intervention is ineffective and may be judged unethical.”<sup>1</sup>

The following examples show how four *Help Me Grow* affiliates use their centralized access point to provide families and child health providers both screening and surveillance tools **and** linkage to community resources.

## ***Help Me Grow Connecticut Ages & Stages Monitoring Program***

*Help Me Grow Connecticut* offers the [Ages & Stages Child Monitoring Program](#) via [Child Development Infoline](#) (CDI). The program is voluntary, free, and designed for families with infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers.

To begin the process, a family completes the online program enrollment form or fills out a paper form to send to CDI. CDI then mails a developmental questionnaire and postage-paid envelope to the family as the child reaches the appropriate age. The family returns the completed questionnaire to CDI, where the staff score it. If the questionnaire shows that the child is developing on schedule, CDI sends a letter saying such to the family and encloses suggestions for fun parent-child activities. CDI mails the next age-level questionnaire to the family at the appropriate time.

If a questionnaire leads to a concern, a CDI Care Coordinator contacts the family for further discussion. This process may result in a development evaluation completed by [Connecticut Birth to Three System](#) if the child is under age three, or by the local school district if the child is between the ages of three and five. With the parents’ consent, the results of the questionnaires are sent to the child’s primary health provider.

## ***Help Me Grow Michigan Regional ASQ Developmental Screening Project***

Michigan uses state funds along with a grant from United Way for Southeastern Michigan to support the [Regional ASQ \(Ages & Stages Questionnaire\) Developmental Screening Project](#) in the Metropolitan Detroit area.

Other counties have begun to use this screening tool and as a result, *Help Me Grow Michigan* is leveraging the regional efforts into a statewide approach. *Help Me Grow Michigan* has also created [annual regional and county data profiles](#) based on the ASQ results; a [one-page FAQ](#) on the project; and a [comprehensive list of ASQ project partners](#).

## Help Me Grow Delaware PEDS Online

[PEDS Online](#) is a web-based tool that allows parents to complete a free developmental screening assessment. The tool is electronically scored and the results are available for the child's health provider to review with the parent at the next well-child visit.

The *Help Me Grow* Delaware Health Provider Outreach staff coordinate efforts to promote the use of PEDS Online, including Grand Rounds at all major hospitals in the state; Meet and Greets within the state's three counties; and speaker sessions by [PEDS author Frances Page Glascoe, Ph.D.](#) To date, approximately 11,000 developmental screens have been administered in Delaware with the participation of 28 pediatric and family practice centers.

Recently the PEDS referral system was streamlined to ensure that physicians utilize the [2-1-1 Help Me Grow](#) call center as a referral source for families. The outgrowth of this effort has been the development of a PEDS promotional kit that includes an algorithm on the PEDS referral process and an intake form for physicians.

## Help Me Grow Washington Child Development Screening

Washington State's Within Reach Call Center provides the [Ages & Stages tool](#) both online and by telephone. The state's first *Help Me Grow* call from a parent resulted in the care coordinator using the ASQ to complete a screening over the phone with the mother, who worried that her young daughter might not be getting the services she needed. The screening results prompted referrals made for the child, who did receive effective and appropriate help. *Help Me Grow* Washington created a powerful [video](#) about the experience. (See also the [Help Me Grow Washington PowerPoint](#).)

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The *Help Me Grow* system can also support screening in other sectors, such as child care settings. See [Community & Family Outreach](#) and [Child Health Provider Outreach](#) for more information.

See the [Administration for Children and Families's Thrive by Five Initiative](#) for detailed information on screening tools and further resources for child health providers and families.



### Building the *Help Me Grow* System

## The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Questions regarding HIPAA compliance often arise when a health provider contacts the *Help Me Grow* Call Center.

The Federal HIPAA Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information, or [Privacy Rule](#), address the disclosure and use of individual's protected health information. The Privacy Rule permits a Covered Entity to disclose protected health information for the purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations, including care coordination. A Covered Entity refers to a health plan, health care provider or health care clearinghouse. *A Help Me Grow centralized access point is not considered a Covered Entity.*

A summary of the HIPAA Privacy Rules can be found [here](#).