

January 2013 Newsletter



Help Me Grow Alameda County

is a streamlined system of early identification and referral that supports children ages 0-5 with developmental, behavior and/or social-emotional concerns and their families.

We build collaboration across sectors, including health care, early care and education and family support to ensure better outcomes for children.

From the Coordinator's Desk

This month, as part of the White House plan for community safety, President Obama rightly noted that too often children with mental health problems go unnoticed and untreated. His new plan lays out efforts to increase early identification of school-age children with mental health problems and train mental health providers to serve children and young adults.

We applaud President Obama for taking important steps to improve the mental health system for children. However, for those of us working on behalf of young children ages 0 - 5, it is important to note that early detection and intervention can happen long before a child reaches school. In fact, the earlier the intervention, often the better prognosis. Early intervention is also an important strategy for reducing the burden on our overextended mental health care system - the very problem the President is seeking to address.

We at Help Me Grow believe that to successfully address the mental health system in our nation, we must not leave behind our youngest children. Please help educate your communities about the importance of early detection and intervention for young children.

Loren Farrar, Coordinator, Help Me Grow Alameda County

2nd Quarter

2nd Quarter Linkage Line Data Oct. 1 2012-Dec. 31, 2012

of total calls/referrals: 302

- Pediatricians: 285
- Early Care & Education Providers: 10
- Parents: 6
- Other: 1

Most common age range of children referred:

- 18-24 months

Top 3 languages represented:

- Spanish
- English
- Cantonese

Top 3 cities represented:

- Oakland
- Hayward
- San Leandro

Top 3 concerns/reasons for call:

- Communication & Language Development
- Fine Motor Skills
- Cognitive (Problem Solving)

[Click here for full data.](#)

Supported by

Supporting Families through the Linkage Line

An important component of the Help Me Grow system is a central point of telephone access. Our Help Me Grow Linkage Line has served over 2,000 families in Alameda County since 2009. With the Linkage Line, families can have conversations with early childhood specialists who answer questions and point families toward local resources. The Linkage Line team speaks Spanish, English, Mandarin and Cantonese and use interpreters to support other languages. Read Maria's story to see how the Linkage Line can support a family.

Maria, a mother of two year old twin boys, was surprised when her pediatrician told her that he was concerned about their language development. He recommended that she call the Help Me Grow Linkage Line to seek more support. When Maria called she spoke with Beatriz, an early childhood specialist, who explored her concerns and provided more information about her children's development. Maria and Beatriz decided that further evaluation would be helpful for her children. Beatriz explained what options existed and over a few weeks and several phone calls, successfully linked Maria to an evaluation. As a result, Maria's sons received speech therapy. When Beatriz checked in with Maria, she reported that her sons were thriving and talking much more.

If you or a family you work with needs support to find resources for children's learning, behavior or development, **please call the Help Me Grow Linkage Line at 1-888-510-1211.**

Partner Spotlight: Family Resource Network

The Family Resource Network (FRN) is a community-based organization that has been supporting families of children with disabilities and special needs since 1992. FRN helps families access local services and supports for their children and offers valuable parent-to-parent support.

FRN is also important part of the Help Me Grow system, providing Family Navigation services. FRN staffs a diverse team of Family Navigators who are all parents of children with special needs and, among them, speak over five different languages. Since 2009, Family Navigators have helped more than 300 families access services and supports for their family and build their capacity to advocate for their child. **Read Fanny's story in this month's newsletter to hear how a FRN Family Navigator helped her!**

In 2011, FRN helped launch Help Me Grow's Family Leadership and Involvement strategies. Through the leadership of Eileen Crumm, FRN Executive Director, family members now participate on a variety of Help Me Grow committees and we have established a Family Advisory Committee. Family member involvement has been an enormous asset to Help Me Grow's system in ensuring that we are meeting the needs of the children and families we serve. For more information about Family Resource Network visit their website at www.frnoakland.org.



FRN Staff (Back row , from left): Larene Pare, Young Ha, Corina Samaniego, Eileen Crumm (Executive Director), Silvia Gonzales, Cam-Mi La (Front row , from left): Emilee Leon, Carol Cohen, Yaneth Maldonado, Nava Shaham, Sonia Waters

Fanny - One Mother's Story

I had never heard about Help Me Grow or the Family Resource Network program until my youngest son was found to have language delay when he was 2 years old. I was referred to Help Me Grow and Cam-Mi La, from the Family Resource Network (which is part of the Help Me Grow system).

Cam-Mi came to my home to help me fill out all the forms and sent them to the interrelated departments. She talked to me about how my son could get service for the speech therapist at home, and gave me some information about where to apply for child care services in my area. My son was referred to the Regional Center of East Bay. They assessed my son and let me know what services he could have. Right now, he has early intervention and speech therapist services. During the progress of the service, FRN's Cam-Mi called me a few times to follow up on any updates of my case. In the meantime, she sent me some information about where I could find parent and child activities in my area and encouraged me to attend them.

Now my son is almost three years old, Cam-Mi also provided me the information how my son might transfer to the school district and possibly continue services because Regional Center of East Bay only provides service [Early Start] until children are three years old. I also joined the Help Me Grow Family Advisory Committee, where I learn more about the Help Me Grow system and how they help the family and their young children who have special needs. Now, my son's language development has improved. I hope that Help Me Grow and the Family Resource Network program can continue to help more families in need.

Thank you!
Fanny, mother of a 2-year-old son

Help Me Grow "is growing" in California

We are excited about a new effort that we have been participating in - **the Help Me Grow California Learning Community.**

The statewide learning community is designed to share information on Help Me Grow, provide subject-matter expertise, establish peer learning and promote the dissemination and implementation of best and promising practices. Ultimately, the learning community will help position new counties to join Help Me Grow California. 18 counties are participating in the learning community, including Alameda, Contra Costa, Del Norte, Fresno, Lassen, Mendocino, Merced, Orange, San Bernardino, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, Sonoma, Sutter, Ventura and Yolo. In December, representatives from over 15 counties and several state-level organizations came together in Sacramento for the first learning community summit. We are enthusiastic about the expansion of Help Me Grow throughout the state and look forward to many rich opportunities to for county-to-county learning and sharing.



(888) 510-1211

Help Me Grow Linkage Line

connects Alameda County families to resources for children's growth and well-being

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