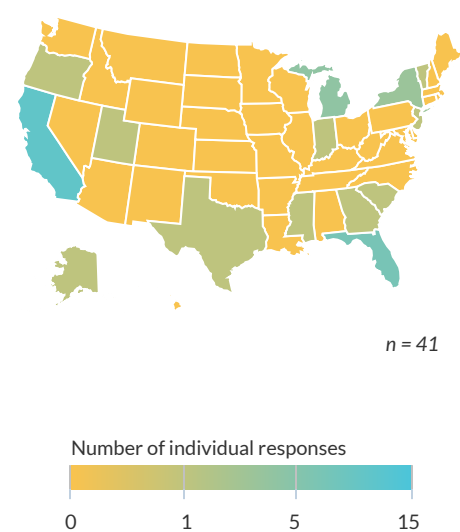


Supporting Families and Communities in Times of Crisis

Help Me Grow Affiliate Responses to COVID-19

Help Me Grow (HMG) assists families in supporting their young children's healthy development and helps them easily access resources in the community during times of need. In the face of a global pandemic, the HMG National Center recently surveyed HMG affiliates to learn how COVID-19 has been impacting their efforts to support families, how they are leveraging HMG to activate community response, and what resources are needed now to meet the current needs. Below is a brief summary of key themes that emerged from affiliate survey responses during this unprecedented health crisis.

Affiliate Responses to the HMG National COVID-19 Survey



Primary emerging trends amongst affiliate responses include:

- Increase in calls to the HMG Centralized Access Point.** Nearly 50 percent of responses to the survey identified that the HMG Centralized Access Point has seen an increase in calls in response to the conditions of COVID-19.
- Connecting families to resources.** As threat of COVID-19 continues to rapidly impact families' health, economic, and social well-being, HMG affiliates have reported connecting families to resources during this time.

WHAT CONCERNS ARE FAMILIES CONTACTING THE CENTRALIZED ACCESS POINT FOR?

- Basic needs, particularly diapers and formula
- Emergency child care
- Educational, at-home activities
- Supportive services via telehealth
- Healthcare

"Priorities have not changed - responding to callers and providing care coordination and connection to services is still intact." - Help Me Grow Orange County, California

"Before the pandemic, about 30% of inquiries received by the program were from people in need of basic items like food, formula and diapers. As COVID-19 has evolved, our intakes have increased over 300%, with 92% of families seeking help with accessing basic needs." - Help Me Grow Long Island, New York

"We have extended support to our statewide partners, we have been clear in our messaging about what HMG can and cannot assist with and how to access resources. A large amount of our calls with families involve more problem solving and listening support instead of concrete referrals to services." - Help Me Grow Vermont

Common Strategies Enacted to Address Family Need

Below are three common strategies affiliates reported utilizing to be able to address family need:



Researching Resources

The pandemic has impacted workforce capacity, service utilization, and revenue among community based providers, forcing services to rapidly assess their ability to continue operation and disrupting service offerings for families. HMG affiliates reported efforts to stay up-to-date with swiftly evolving service changes and updating the HMG resource directory accordingly.



Connecting with Familiar Families

Affiliates reported they have dedicated time to contacting families with whom they have worked previously in order to maintain connection with them, check-in about their current situation, and potentially offer a re-screen of their child's development.



Utilizing Technology

Through the use of mobile phones, text messaging, video conferencing, social media, and more, HMG affiliates are relying on technology to stay connected with families to provide updates about connecting to services, child development, at-home activities, and reliable information about COVID-19 in their community.

New Approaches in Outreach to Community Partners and Service Providers



While some affiliates have noted that outreach has slowed, several affiliates have taken a virtual approach to conducting community meetings, partner meetings, and professional development for service providers. Additional information is needed about how partnerships have been impacted due to COVID-19.

"We are working with our 'Learn the Signs. Act Early.' partner to provide virtual training opportunities and supports around infant/toddler mental health." - Help Me Grow Indiana

"Current and relevant information released by the GA Department of Public Health has been forwarded to our Centralized Access Point. The information forwarded includes: steps to getting tested in our state, DPH COVID-19 health help line, and access to the CDC for pediatricians and physicians COVID-19 related trainings." - Help Me Grow Georgia

Promising Practices to Strengthen Cross-Sector Collaboration

Below are two promising practices related to strengthening partnerships and promoting cross-sector collaboration.



Rapid Response System

As family needs related to COVID-19 are emerging and evolving swiftly, one promising practice from Onondaga County, NY has been to utilize a rapid response system approach to quickly identify family need and connect them to services through the county child welfare agency.



Reflective Supervision

To aid programs that continue to operate during this time, Indiana is offering elements of reflective supervision to programs in order to promote and support relationship-based services, especially during times of crisis.

Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect during COVID-19

Child-serving sectors have widely acknowledged that children may be at greater risk for maltreatment in the face of COVID-19 due in part to the uncertainty and change the pandemic has placed upon families. HMG is a strategy to prevent child maltreatment, especially during this time, by listening to families and connecting them to information and resources to support their child's development.



For Questions or Additional Information

To learn more about the Help Me Grow National Center and the National Affiliate Network's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit:

<https://helpmegrownational.org/resources/affiliate-resources-for-responding-to-covid-19/>