

## Help Me Grow Virtual Forum Bio of Forum Presenters

### Engaging with Unique Communities

***Cat Tamminga, MA, LSLS Cert. AVEEd.***

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)  
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Cat Tamminga, MA, LSLS Cert. AVEEd., is the Part C (0-3) Coordinator for the state of Minnesota. She has been immersed in the world of infants, toddlers, and their families since she was 11 when she started her own neighborhood babysitting company via hand-written business cards. She graduated from Fontbonne University in St. Louis with a BA in Deaf Education (dual minor in Elementary Education and Speech-Language Pathology) in 2001 and an MA in Early Intervention in Deaf Education in 2002. Cat served children and families statewide in Indiana through St. Joseph Institute for the Deaf (SJID) and was the Lead Early Intervention Specialist for the St. Joseph Institute Indiana Service Corporation (SJIISC), where she helped develop and maintain the statewide Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education (CDHHE) in partnership with the Indiana School for the Deaf and the state of Indiana's First Words (0-3) program. CDHHE became state law in 2012 through Indiana Code IC 20-35-11. On top of her duties as a Part C Coordinator for systems development and implementation, Cat is a Listening & Spoken Language mentor and a member of various professional organizations. She works tirelessly for equitable services for young children and their families, and supports professionals across Minnesota in their work to change the story. She is presenting at this forum on Help Me Connect: A statewide online navigator developed through an interagency collaboration in Minnesota connecting all families with their self-identified villages.

***Shawn Holmes, BA, CAPS***

MN Department of Health  
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Shawn Holmes works for the MN Department of Health (MDH) as the Early Identification and Intervention Coordinator in the Children and Youth with Special Health Needs Section. She manages a statewide developmental and social-emotional screening program provided through local public health departments for children birth to 36 months who are at risk of health or developmental issues. Shawn conducts statewide training opportunities for early childhood screening providers on the use of the ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE screening instruments, typical development resources, communicating screening results, referral procedures, and connection to local evaluation and early intervention services. She has led numerous electronic screening projects from over the past eight years and provided recommendations to interagency partners on a statewide electronic screening system and screening results portal implementation.

**Lucy Littlewolf Arias, M.Ed. Parent and Family Education**

Minnesota Department of Education

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Lucy Littlewolf Arias the PDG Tribal Nations Lead for the state of Minnesota. She earned a BS in Child Psychology and a M.Ed. in Parent and Family Education from the University of Minnesota. Her career in early childhood includes research addressing lead exposure during the first five years of a child's life and quality early learning environments. Ms. Arias helped develop the SEEDS of Early Literacy curriculum widely used in MN and the nation. She has been a preschool teacher and director, and has coordinated public health initiatives while working for Little Earth of United Tribes, a subsidized housing complex in South Minneapolis, for primarily Native American families. There she coordinated several projects working with families and children, including a half-day preschool program, Women's Wellness Group, and public health initiatives addressing nutrition, physical activity and smoke-free policies. Ms. Arias was a board member of Wicoie Nandagikendan an Ojibwe/Dakota Immersion preschool and currently sits on the Montessori American Indian Childcare and Minneapolis Nature Preschool's board of directors. She firmly believes in helping families and communities create healthy environments for children to thrive in. In her role as PDG Tribal Nations Lead she will continue this work by working with urban and rural American Indian communities to implement the Preschool Development Grant which includes the Help Me Connect. She is presenting at this forum on Help Me Connect: A statewide online navigator developed through an interagency collaboration in Minnesota connecting all families with their self-identified villages.

## The Value of Parent Leadership within New Jersey's Early Childhood Initiative:

**Deepa Srinivasavaradan**

SPAN Parent Advocacy Network - State Parent Lead for NJ's Early Childhood Initiatives

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Deepa Srinivasavaradan is the State Parent Lead for New Jersey's Early Childhood initiatives - Help Me Grow, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems CoIN, and Home Visiting. She is also CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." Ambassador and the Division for Early Childhood Recommended Practices (aRPy) Ambassador for New Jersey. She works for the SPAN Parent Advocacy Network, a one-stop for families to receive information, support, and training, where she is also the Southern Regional Coordinator of the Family to Family Health Information Center.

Deepa is passionate about early identification and early connection to services for families with young children because she firmly believes that healthy child development leads to lifelong health and wellness. She is committed to helping families, including the most underserved, to navigate systems of care because of her own experiences as an immigrant mother, supporting parent leadership development activities, and enhancing family-professional partnerships.

Deepa is NJ's Association for Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) Family Delegate and the recipient of the 2020 Merle McPherson Award for her exemplary contributions to further family/professional collaboration within state Title V programs and AMCHP. She is also a Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Family Fellow. As the co-chair of the "Early Screening & Diagnosis" workgroup of Community of Care Consortium and a member of the Infant-Child Health Committee of the Council for Young Children in NJ, she has helped create several NJ-

specific resources to address gaps in connecting to services when developmental concerns are identified in young children.

***David Armstrong***

Parent Partner – NJ Help Me Grow/ECCS Impact

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David Armstrong is a Parent Partner on the Essex county Place Based Team/NJ state Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems COIIN team. In this role, he has made significant contributions to making systems more father-friendly by sharing his personal experiences and perspectives at several forums at the state level and nationally. As a Parent Liaison for the Essex County Council for Young Children and the PTO president of his school district, he educates, empowers, engages, and encourages parents to take an active role in their children's development and well-being.

David's work on the NJ Project Launch initiative led him to join the Steering Committee of the National Early Childhood Family Network Steering Committee (NECFN). In this role, he collaborates with other family leaders across the country to bring families together to advocate for policies and educational research that promote the well-being of young children and their families. As a Resource Parent of the SPAN Parent Advocacy Network, he helps parents understand their rights and responsibilities under Federal and State laws and be effective advocates to help their children reach their potential. David's focus is on engaging and empowering fathers and grandfathers to become more involved in the well-being of their children's/grandchildren's life, starting from when they are born, so those children can experience better outcomes and reach their full potential.

***Erin Markan***

Parent Partner – NJ Help Me Grow/ECCS Impact

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Erin Markan has always had a passion for community service. Erin served as an AmeriCorps\*State and AmeriCorps\*VISTA member in rural Pennsylvania, worked as the volunteer coordinator for Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge post-Katrina, and after having her first child began organizing neighborhood moms in Wild & Wonderful West Virginia.

Two handsome sons and one IEP later, Erin is now volunteering as an ECCS Parent Partner in Middlesex County, New Jersey, as well as serving as a Middlesex County Council for Young Children (CCYC) Co-Chair, the Community Service VP for the Moms Club of Woodbridge, a trained SPAN Parent Advocacy Network Resource Parent and the co-captain of Rage Against the Latrine, a fundraising team for the Crohns & Colitis Foundation- NJ Chapter. She also helps out with her sons' active cub scout pack, multiple PTOs, her church's Social Justice Committee, and most recently helped initiate & lead the fight for free universal preschool within her community.

Erin finds great joy in sharing her personal experiences and lessons learned with neighbors not sure how to pursue early intervention or tackle the local school-based special education system. And with the help of the amazing New Jersey ECCS team, Erin has so many more resources and connections to share with her community!

## Using Infant Mental Practice to Deepen Understanding

### ***Sherri L. Alderman, MD, MPH, IMHM-E Clinical and Policy, FAAP***

Sherri is Portland State University adjunct faculty, a Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician, CDC Act Early Ambassador to Oregon, Oregon Help Me Grow Physician Champion, and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Council on Early Childhood Executive Committee member. She has Infant Mental Health Mentor (Level IV) endorsement in clinical and policy and a Masters of Public Health. Her special interests include early childhood development, trauma informed care and workplace, child rights, implicit/unconscious bias, systems of care for families with young children, and reflective supervision. She has made more than 175 presentations in a wide variety of venues. She serves on multiple state advisory committees, work groups, and boards.

## How to Spark Child Health Provider Outreach

### ***Jill Sells, MD, FAAP***

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Dr. Jill Sells is a health, early childhood, and systems consultant with experience as a primary care pediatrician and executive leader. She focuses on early childhood's systems and pediatric practice transformation efforts that increase equity and optimize the health and well-being of young children and their families. Dr. Sells facilitates health-early childhood systems connections at the national, state, and local levels. She has supported the development of state cross-sector early childhood systems, early learning, and birth to 3 plans. At the local level, she has partnered with communities and public-private initiatives to support alignment of state and local early learning and school readiness efforts, and to integrate doctors and health systems into early childhood initiatives. As a non-profit executive, she created statewide systems to engage doctors in early childhood policy advocacy through Docs For Tots, and to integrate parenting support and early literacy promotion into 220 diverse primary care clinics through Reach Out and Read. She is currently providing technical assistance to national early childhood initiatives, including Help Me Grow, and to equity-driven pediatric practice transformation efforts to support young children and their families in Mississippi and California. Dr. Sells is a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Washington Schools of Medicine and serves as Chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Council on Early Childhood.

### ***Abby Alter, MPA***

Childhood Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI)  
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Abby Alter is the Senior Associate for Early Childhood Initiatives and has been with CHDI since 2014. She leads CHDI's efforts in obesity prevention, socio-emotional development, and early childhood systems, such as home visiting and early care and education. Abby is the current co-chair of the Connecticut Home-Visiting Consortium, and manages CHDI's [www.kidsmentalhealthinfo.com](http://www.kidsmentalhealthinfo.com) website, a resource for parents and providers. She is currently working with the Office of Early Childhood and CT United Way-Child Development

Infoline to manage testing of Sparkler, technology designed to engage families with young children and Early Care and Education providers in Connecticut in developmental screening.

Abby has a Master's Degree in Public Administration (MPA) from New York University and more than 20 years of experience in the human service field, specifically in children's mental health, public health, child welfare and managed care. She also served as an adjunct faculty member in the Human Services Department at Goodwin College for more than 8 years

***Loren Farrar, MSW***

First 5 Alameda County

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Loren Farrar is the Help Me Grow Senior Program Administrator for First 5 Alameda County, where she oversees the local implementation of Help Me Grow, a system that supported the completion of 30,000 developmental screenings in FY 2018-19 and served over 3,000 families through its Central Access Point in the same time period. Loren has played a significant role in efforts to expand the Help Me Grow model across California and was part of the coalition to bring the Help Me Grow model to California in 2011. Previous to working at First 5 Alameda County, Loren worked in the social services and early childhood fields in both direct service and administrative positions. Loren holds a Master's in Social Welfare, with a specialty in Management and Planning, from UC Berkeley.

***Taylor Caragan, MPH***

Tacoma Pierce County Health Department/ Help Me Grow Pierce County

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Taylor is a Master of Public Health specializing in Maternal and Child Health. She earned her MPH from the University of South Florida. She recently moved to Tacoma, Washington from Tampa, Florida where she was a Title X- Family Planning program supervisor at the Florida Department of Health. She currently works at the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department as the Health Care Liaison for Help Me Grow Pierce County. Most of her short career has focused on health literacy, family planning, and reproductive health so she is excited to be diving deeper into child and family focused Public Health and Public Health Programs by working with Help Me Grow Pierce County.

***Melissa Passarelli, MA***

Docs for Tots

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Melissa Passarelli is the Director of Programs at Docs for Tots, where she oversees the development and implementation of their initiatives including Help Me Grow – Long Island and pediatric practice transformation. She is also the Center for Disease Control's Act Early Ambassador for New York State. In 2014 Melissa earned her M.A. in International Disaster Psychology from the University of Denver and trained as a trauma therapist and disaster responder with refugees, homeless women and children, and survivors of sexual assault both domestically and internationally. Prior to this, she received her B.A. in Psychology and Public Policy from The George Washington University, during which time she worked for non-profits such as A Wider Circle, Fiver Children's Foundation, and First Book that focused on providing equal opportunities for education and healthy development for children of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

**Emily Sherer, MD**

Physician Champion, Help Me Grow Indiana  
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Dr. Sherer is a general pediatrician in Indianapolis, IN where she works at a community health center providing primary care. She has served as the Physician Champion for Help Me Grow Indiana since its earliest stages. Dr. Sherer also serves as the Early Childhood Co-Champion for the Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. She and her husband have two daughters and enjoy spending time outside together.

## Accelerated Scale and Impact of Help Me Grow

**Elise Tosun**

The Bridgespan Group  
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Elise Tosun is a Manager in Bridgespan's Boston office. Since joining in 2012, she has worked with nonprofit organizations, national networks, and foundations in a number of areas, including early childhood, public health, child welfare, and education. Her case work has included supporting foundations to make strategic investments in early childhood care and education, strategic planning with an education nonprofit focused on dropout prevention, and supporting a national public health network to develop and test several new initiatives.

Prior to joining Bridgespan, Elise had experience in management consulting with McKinsey and in direct service with the nonprofit microfinance institution ACCION USA. She started her career in economic research, working on financial services projects abroad in India and in Washington D.C. at the Federal Reserve Board of Governors.

Elise holds a MPA in International Development from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, as well as a BA in Economics from Wellesley College.

**Jerry Petit-Frere**

The Bridgespan Group  
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Jerry is a Case Team Leader in Bridgespan's Boston office. Since joining Bridgespan, Jerry has focused on developing transformative scale strategies while researching and understanding the opportunity for non-traditional financial institutions such as Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to deploy capital to those with the greatest needs in communities of color. Always with a racial equity lens in mind, his work has covered early childhood, justice system reform, and measuring for equity.

Prior to Bridgespan, Jerry was an engagement manager at Accenture Strategy, where he advised fortune 500 organizations in growth and functional strategy as well as organizational redesign. Additionally, Jerry spent six years part of the Management Development Program with E&J Gallo Winery, where he led pricing, sales, marketing decisions, and new brand launches in New York. Jerry is heavily involved with his community. Jerry co-founded Out-to-Reach, a non-profit organization focused on the social, mental, and spiritual recovery in Haiti post-earthquake. Jerry continues to travel to Haiti annually, taking other volunteers with him to contribute towards community building recovery efforts and economic growth. Today Jerry sits on the board of Community Roots Charter School and the Haitian American

Caucus. Jerry graduated with his bachelor in Finance and International Business from Temple University and an MBA from Cornell Business School as an Emerging Markets Institute fellow.