

Working Together

in

Franklin County



Help Me Grow
(Early Intervention/Part C Services)



**Franklin County Board of
Developmental Disabilities
Early Intervention Services**

Introduction

Help Me Grow is a program for Ohio's expectant parents, newborns, infants and toddlers that provides health and developmental services so that children start school healthy and ready to learn. One part of Help Me Grow is to support caregivers and their young children (0-3) who need extra help because of premature birth, health problems or a diagnosed delay, such as trouble seeing, hearing, talking, thinking, playing or moving.

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities is one of the agencies that provides early intervention services for children who have developmental delays and live in Franklin County. While the Franklin County Help Me Grow system and the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities are separate systems, they do coordinate some services for young children who have developmental delays.

This booklet is intended to provide these families with a better understanding of what each system does and who to call if there are questions.

What does Help Me Grow of Franklin County do for 0-3 year old children with delays or suspected delays?



First Contact

Help Me Grow of Franklin County is the first contact for families of 0-3 year old children who have delays or suspected delays. Families or others can call **614-227-9860** to get started.

When Help Me Grow of Franklin County is called, staff will interview family members and request certain information such as birth verification, medical or other family information. Help Me Grow staff will also provide family members with answers to common questions.



Developmental Evaluations

Once the basic information is received, Help Me Grow may refer the child to an organization to have a "developmental evaluation" within 45 days from receipt of the referral. One of the organizations that conduct the "developmental evaluations" is the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

 **Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)**

When the evaluation is complete and assuming the child is determined eligible, the Help Me Grow Service Coordinator will work with the family to develop an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) for the child. The Individual Family Service Plan should also be completed within 45 days of referral. This plan is intended to be a roadmap for the child's development.

 **Referral for Services**

Upon completion of the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), the Help Me Grow Service Coordinator will make referrals to agencies or 'providers' who can help to implement the IFSP by providing certain early intervention services. One of the agencies that provides services is the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities within their Early Intervention Program.

 **Ongoing Contact**

The Help Me Grow Service Coordinator will keep in touch with the family and periodically update the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). The Service Coordinator will also assist with transition to educational services when the child approaches age 3.

What does the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities do for 0-3 year old children who have developmental delays?

The Board provides or contracts for services for eligible children who are referred and for whom there is no waiting list. Help Me Grow Service Coordinators also may refer to other agencies or providers.

Services provided by the Board include: Developmental Evaluations, Early Intervention Services in the home (Home Based Services) or Center Based Early Intervention, provided in one of the Board's or partner agencies' Early Childhood Centers. The Board also provides "Bridge Services", and with all these services, occupational, physical and speech therapy may be provided. These services are described in the following paragraphs.

 **Developmental Evaluations**

As an in-kind service to Help Me Grow, the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities agrees to conduct approximately 100 developmental evaluations per month. These are done by Early Intervention staff or through contract with Nationwide Children's Hospital. Developmental evaluations are conducted by certified Early Intervention Specialists or certain therapists, including occupational, physical, or speech therapists.

Home Based Services

The Board's Early Intervention Services provided in the family's home are called Home Based Services. An Early Intervention Specialist is assigned and visits the home at least once per month. In addition, an Occupational Therapist, a Physical Therapist and a Speech Therapist are assigned based on need and also visit the home at least once a month.

The Early Intervention Specialist and therapists evaluate the child, monitor progress and coach the parents on those things they can do on a daily basis with their child to meet the goals outlined in the IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan).

Center Based Services

The Board's Center Based Services are provided at early childhood sites operated by the Board or under contract with the Board. The Board's two main early childhood facilities are located on Johnstown Road (near the Columbus Airport) and on Rudy Road (north of Riverside Hospital). Contract sites include Nisonger Center at The Ohio State University, Childhood League, Children's Hospital, Easter Seals, Dahlberg Center, Oakstone Academy, the Columbus Speech and Hearing Center and the YMCA Community Support Sites. (In addition to these locations, Help Me Grow has also developed an extensive list of referral sites for early intervention services.)

Children enrolled in Center Based programs are assigned to classes with eight or fewer children and receive services two to four days per week. Transportation may be provided or parents provide transportation. Teams of therapists are assigned to each class to assist the children in meeting the goals outlined in the Individual Family Service Plan. Children attend either in the morning or the afternoon and staff also continue to provide home visits. At age 3, children transition out of the early intervention program, at which time the family will work with their school district to determine future options.

Bridge Services

In an effort to expand opportunities for families and to meet demand for those waiting for services, the Board has developed another service that families can use before their child receives ongoing Home Based or Center Based Services.

These "Bridge Services" bridge the gap of time from the development of the IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) to initiation of ongoing services. Bridge services provide opportunities for families to meet with early intervention specialists and therapists to learn what they can do to help children meet the goals on their IFSP. Staff 'coach' the parents on developmentally appropriate activities that parents can implement on a daily basis.

Medicaid Waivers

One of the Medicaid programs of the federal and state government is to provide Medicaid Waivers to eligible individuals. These Level 1 or Individual Options (IO) Waivers provide funding for some supports for individuals who have disabilities. However, it is important for people to realize that when they apply for a 'Waiver' they will be placed on a very long waiting list. Many parents decide to place their young child's name on a list knowing that they may not need or want the services until their child is an adult. To place a child's name on a waiting list, one can request an application from their Service Coordinator or they can call the Intake Department of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities at 614-342-5490.

Family Resources

Family Resources may be provided for children who have been determined eligible for services from the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities. A limited pool of funds is shared between families who request services, such as respite services, counseling, parent training or financial assistance for adaptive equipment. The Family Resource program is operated by Franklin County Residential Services, Inc. For more information or to apply, a family should call 614-844-3800.

Terminology

As with most programs, there are new words or acronyms to learn. We hope these descriptions help to clarify.

Service Coordinator: Help Me Grow of Franklin County has Service Coordinators who assist families by developing Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and who make referrals to service providers.

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities also has Service Coordinators for older children and adults. The Board Service Coordinators are not assigned to serve 0-3 year old children who have a Help Me Grow Service Coordinator.

Early Intervention Services: Early Intervention Services are provided to children who are 0-3 years old. These services might include therapies and may be provided in the home or in an early childhood center.

IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan): This is a plan that is put together with a Help Me Grow Service Coordinator and the family. The plan is developed, following a comprehensive evaluation of the child. This evaluation is called a "Developmental Evaluation.

'Part C' Services: Sometimes the term 'Part C Services' is used in conversation. 'Part C' is a section of rules from the United States Department of Education and it refers to services for 0-3 year old children who have developmental delays. 'Part B' services are for children who are 3 years of age or older and benefit from preschool or school-age special education services. These rules are included in the federal legislation called IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act).



What Now?

Now that you know some basic information about Help Me Grow in Franklin County, feel free to call the Help Me Grow office for more details (614-227-9860). If you have or know of a child with a developmental delay or a suspected delay, the Help Me Grow staff can walk you through the process to get an evaluation or services. Following the initial call, the Help Me Grow Service Coordinator will be in contact with the family within two business days. To save some time, we advise parents to gather together the following materials to have when they meet with Help Me Grow staff: birth certificate, medical documentation and any evaluation reports that may be available.

**This document was prepared in response
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