



# Help Me Grow

### Key facts

The Birth-to-Three Act expands Help Me Grow to include a confidential referral helpline, through which families connect with care coordinators who provide resources and referrals to health professionals and service providers throughout the District. DC Health oversees this program.

As a part of this expansion, Help Me Grow must also maintain an up-to-date directory of available public and private programs and services.

# 1 in 5

One in five children from the age of six months to five years old does not meet all the determinants of “flourishing” in regard to mental and emotional health.

**Help Me Grow connects expecting parents and families to resources they need to encourage positive parental and child health. Help Me Grow helps families locate services such as prenatal and child developmental screenings and links families to community-based support services.**

### How it works

The Birth-to-Three law requires DC Health to establish a data system to track child health and well-being data, such as developmental screening results and referrals. This would make it easier to identify programmatic gaps, improve systems, and connect more families to quality services. As part of the program, DC Health must provide developmental screening training for pediatricians and other health care providers.

### Why it matters

DC offers many child and family-focused resources, but it’s not always easy for families to learn about or connect with these vital supports. Help Me Grow helps reduce this burden by connecting expectant parents, children, and their families to a network of community-based services.

Child development services, such as screenings and care coordination, help infants and young children develop and grow up healthy. Unfortunately, only one in three children in the District ages zero to three received developmental screenings between 2020-2021.<sup>1</sup> Greater access to these services is critical. With one in five children in DC from ages six months to five years old not meeting all the determinants of “flourishing” in regard to mental and emotional health,<sup>2</sup> Help Me Grow’s services are more important than ever. If fully funded, Help Me Grow would help more children receive screenings, allowing more families and health providers to detect and address early signs of developmental delays or disabilities. This would give children greater possibilities for positive future health and academic outcomes.

Help Me Grow also supports expectant parents and children by connecting families with home visiting programs. When working with families, care coordinators can provide information on support programs and provide referrals to help strengthen the overall health and well being of families.

### Who Help Me Grow helps

Help Me Grow helps expecting parents and the 39,000 DC children ages four and under, along with their families, who are eligible for services. Healthcare and community-based service providers that Help Me Grow makes referrals to also benefit, as the referrals reduce their need to conduct outreach to serve families in need.



## Help Me Grow

### Learn more

Let's make the District of Columbia a city where equitable opportunities begin at birth. Find out how to take action for our youngest residents and their families.

[Under3DC.org](https://Under3DC.org)

### Join the conversation

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### What's Next

The District should engage in increased outreach to families with young children to ensure they are aware and able to take advantage of the Help Me Grow program. From FY21 through FY23, Help Me Grow served 756 individuals.<sup>3</sup> DC Health is currently considering building a new data system to centralize the intake process, support Help Me Grow's care coordination services, and collect and record District-wide population-level data for families referred to home visiting, and track other key data points. The 2023 fiscal year DC budget provides no new funds to carry out improvements to Help Me Grow. The coalition remains engaged with agency partners to support the growth and success of the program for District families.

<sup>1</sup> Kids Count Data Center. (2020-2021). [Children Ages 9 Months to 35 Months who Received a Developmental Screening in the District of Columbia](#).

<sup>2</sup> Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. (2022). [Indicator 2.3: Flourishing for Young Children, Ages 6 Months-5 Years](#).

<sup>3</sup> DC Council Committee on Health, Department of Health. (FY2022). [Performance Oversight Hearing Questions](#).

### About Under 3 DC

Under 3 DC, a broad based coalition in the District of Columbia, harnesses the voices and power of parents with young children, early educators, advocates, and health professionals to create transformative social change. The Coalition's efforts center on the people experiencing racial and economic injustice every day. It shines a spotlight on the need for more public investments to support families with infants and toddlers. Together, we can set the city on a path to creating and sustaining a high quality, equitable early childhood system.