

Help Me Grow – Long Island Rises to COVID Challenge: Doubles Number of At-risk Infants, Toddlers, Families Aided in 2020

New report highlights connection to services for vulnerable families in new communities, distribution of 300,000 diapers, emphasis on developmental promotion.

LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, May 11, 2021

/EINPresswire.com/ -- [Help Me Grow – Long Island](#), a regional partnership promoting early childhood development, rose to the unprecedented challenges of COVID in 2020, doubling the number of vulnerable families aided and expanding services to 36 new communities across the island.

The [2nd Annual Report](#) provides a snapshot into the challenges and opportunities families faced in providing for and supporting their young children prenatal to age 5 in the past year and proposes recommendations to the Long Island community for moving forward together.

Families contacted Help Me Grow – Long Island (HMG-LI) for several major reasons:

- Basic needs such as diapers and food became their No. 1 concern during COVID and remain critical needs today.
- Parents needed additional support when COVID made navigating developmental support services more difficult.
- Three times as many families contacted Help Me Grow – Long Island after family members, friends, and neighbors recommended it as a valuable resource during COVID.

Help Me Grow – Long Island served 900+ children from 100+ Long Island communities:

- Distributing diapers, wipes, and formula through community partners to families that could



Resources are like a power grid - the goal is for families to be able to plug in and have resources flow consistently and reliably to help their young children succeed!

 **HELP ME GROW**
LONG ISLAND
THE EARLY YEARS MATTER

Find new HMG-LI report on [docsfortots.org](#)

HMG-LI Connects Vulnerable Families to Essential Resources

not afford them due to COVID impact,

- Connecting 90% of families to resources despite many service providers closing or shifting priorities,
- Promoting young children's development by administering over 2000 developmental and social emotional screens,
- Encouraging healthy development and resilience via BRIGHT BY TEXT - a national evidence-based text messaging platform, reaching 1100 families across LI with national and local resources while other forms of contact and communication were limited.




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Despite the pandemic, developmental and social emotional screening at HMG-LI was consistent, with **more than 2,000 screens** completed October 2019-September 2020.



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HMG-LI continued developmental and social emotional screening during COVID

About Help Me Grow – Long Island:

HMG-LI is a FREE resource connecting families and providers to community resources and child development information in Nassau and Suffolk counties, with the mission of promoting optimal development of Long Island's young children. HMG-LI provides free, virtual, ongoing support to families to meet the needs of their young children, and trains providers to use developmental screens with the families they serve. HMG-LI is a community partnership coordinated by [Docs for Tots](https://docsfortots.org) and is connected to United Way of Long Island's 2-1-1 phone system.

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During a time of such uncertainty, HMG-LI continually supported our referred families needing access to resources for basic needs. We are deeply grateful for their coordinated efforts.”

Amparo Abel-Bey, Northwell Health Solutions

About Docs for Tots: HMG-LI has been overseen by Docs for Tots since 2018. Docs for Tots is a non-profit, non-partisan organization led by pediatricians to promote practices, policies, and investments that will enable young children to thrive. Docs for Tots creates linkages between doctors, policymakers, early childhood practitioners, and other stakeholders to ensure that children grow up

healthy. Our focus is on the youngest children and their families, from prenatal to age five.

Families and partners say the following about HMG-LI:

“Every time I followed [HMG Specialist's] direction, something grew... A seed was planted, and it was growing every time I followed [her] direction. It's simple as that.”

-HMG-LI Grandparent Caregiver

"Help Me Grow – Long Island has played such an important role during the COVID-19 pandemic – helping to ensure that basic needs were met for struggling young families during a time when many of the in-person support systems were shut down. I'm so excited to see this captured in the annual report, and am eager to see what comes next as HMG-LI continues to spread its roots in our community."

-Dr. Victoria Chen, Cohen Children's Medical Center

"Our partnership with Help Me Grow – Long Island has empowered childcare providers to successfully complete developmental screenings and also engage parents in promoting their children's growth and development."

-Karin Sperb, QUALITYstarsNY

"The Stony Brook WIC Program has worked with Help Me Grow – Long Island throughout the pandemic. Our partnership has been extremely valuable to our WIC participants as we have been able to provide referrals for families to further explore their children's developmental needs."

-Lauren Brand, Stony Brook WIC Program

Robin Halloran

Docs for Tots

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HMG-LI releases 2nd Annual Report presenting comparative data on families we served, how they found us, and what they needed