

Early Identification and Intervention

OBJECTIVE: Advocate for policies and transformative practices to ensure that public systems provide maternal health services as well as child early identification and intervention services.

WHY WE CARE

We have a critical window of time – prenatal to age 5 – to build the foundations every child needs to prepare for success in school and life. Research shows it is during this time that a child’s brain develops most rapidly. In fact, 90 percent of their brain is developed by age 5.

Fifteen percent of children experience a developmental delay and a quarter of children under 5 years old are at risk for delays. It is crucial during these years to determine if a child’s development is on track and to address any concerns as early as possible to have the greatest impact. Early identification greatly increases the likelihood that a young child with or at risk for developmental and behavioral delays will be linked to prevention and early intervention services and supports.

By achieving results for children and families that families optimize their child’s development and children receive early developmental supports and services, we are contributing to our north star that by 2028 all children in L.A. County will enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life.

SYSTEMS CHANGE EFFORTS

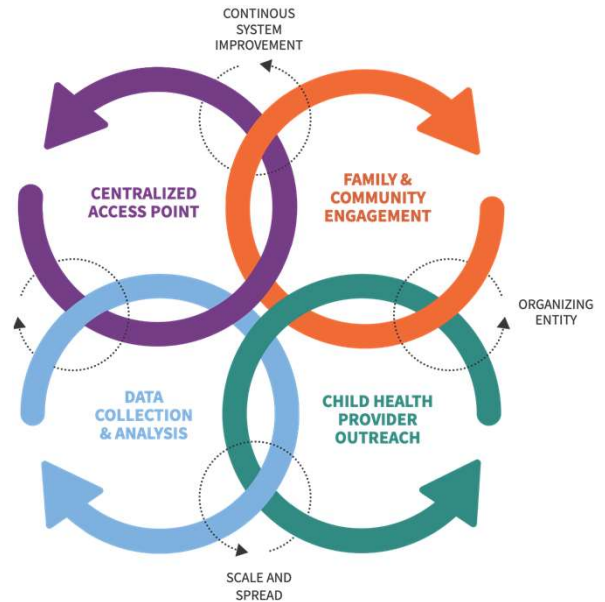
First 5 LA is focused on strengthening the coordination between child and family serving systems to ensure all families can access timely screenings and early intervention services needed for their child’s healthy development through a variety of approaches. Project highlights include:

• Practice Change

- **First Connections** – Implements innovative approaches for community-based providers to embed developmental screening and strengthen referral processes within their practices to better identify children with or at-risk for developmental delays and connect children and families to culturally and linguistically appropriate early intervention services and supports as early as possible.
- **Help Me Grow LA (HMG LA)** – HMG is a national effort that promotes local cross-sector collaboration to bolster early identification of developmental and behavioral delays. HMG LA will coordinate existing systems that serve children to implement and strengthen early identification and link children and their families to appropriate intervention services and supports. The [Promoting Children’s Optimal Development](#) recommendation report from HMG LA planning members guides and informs the next phase of planning for HMG LA. First 5 LA is partnering with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to launch, test and refine core components (see diagram at upper right). Decentralized efforts are being conducted with **L.A Care Health Plan** and within select **HMG LA Pathways** communities to ensure a phased, data-driven rollout of HMG LA.

CALL TO ACTION

- You are often the first line of defense. Screening early leads to more successful long-term outcomes.
- Partner with Help Me Grow LA to make sure all families are supported and provided resources to benefit their child’s developmental health.



• Policy Change

- Cohesive advocacy strategy to educate policymakers on state and federal screening requirements; and support state and federal policy to strengthen language on screening services (e.g., bills related to the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program, developmental screening incentive payments, trauma screening incentive payments, maternal depression screening, etc.).

• Will Building

- **MCO Engagement** – Promotes optimal development through Managed Care Organization (MCO) engagement to raise awareness of state policy decisions and improve reimbursement rates of developmental screenings.



To learn more, contact:

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