



Help Me Grow  
Inland Empire

2020-2021  
**Community  
Progress Report**

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# INTRODUCTION

For children with developmental delays, or who are at risk of delays, early identification and intervention (EII) can make a dramatic difference in their lives.

Help Me Grow Inland Empire (HMGIE) works to ensure that all children in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties have access to developmental screenings and risk screenings, and that families are connected to needed services and supports. HMGIE began planning in 2017, and since 2019, has been offering screenings to families through pilots, partnerships, and its centralized access point or call center, the HMGIE Access Center. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, the HMGIE Access Center was able to pivot quickly. The established processes allowed for flexibility and seamless responsiveness, even in the face of crisis. Through HMGIE, providers and families were able to access virtual support for developmental concerns as well as to connect families to a range of services to meet their health, social emotional and basic needs without any interruption.

2020-2021 marks a year of growth and expansion for the initiative. The Community Progress Report shares the year's impact and achievements.

## ABOUT EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION (EII)

The period from birth through age five is the most significant time of development for children. They are learning the physical, emotional, behavioral, and communications skills that will provide the foundation for all future learning and development. A developmental delay, which is when a child is not able to complete a certain skill around a certain age, can become a lifelong challenge. Identified early, however, developmental delays can be supported and addressed, enabling the child to continue to learn new skills and reducing the need for longer-term interventions.

Widespread screening for developmental delays is an essential tool to ensure children receive the supports they need. And yet less than one-third of all children in California receive timely developmental screenings, and 70% of children with delays go undetected until kindergarten.<sup>1</sup> Children of color are disproportionately affected by the systemic

barriers that prevent early identification and connection to developmental services.

We also know that children’s social circumstances--their socioeconomic status, the well-being of their caregivers, and the stability and security of their home environment, impact the likelihood that they will experience developmental delays. These social determinants of health (SDOH) are an important piece of the early identification and intervention landscape.

## WHAT IS HELP ME GROW INLAND EMPIRE?

Help Me Grow Inland Empire is based on the Help Me Grow National model, which began in 1998 in Hartford, Connecticut and has since expanded to states around the country. In California, Help Me Grow systems are implemented at the county level. HMGIE was the first regional Help Me Grow initiative in California, working across San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

Help Me Grow is a system model that promotes cross-sector collaboration. It aims to increase access to developmental screenings and to leverage local resources already in place to connect families to supports. The model includes four components:

- 1. A Centralized Access Point** that helps families and professionals navigate resources and referrals.
- 2. Child Health Care Provider Outreach** that supports early detection and intervention and connects providers to community-based resources to support families.
- 3. Community and Family Outreach** that builds community understanding of what screening is and the importance of screening, and increases awareness of the system and the services it offers to families and community providers.
- 4. Data Collection and Analysis** that supports evaluation, helps identify system gaps, bolsters advocacy efforts, and guides quality improvement.



Help Me Grow Inland Empire recognizes that there are many risk factors that can cause children to be more likely to experience developmental delays. These include social determinants of health such as household income, household stability, and adverse childhood experiences, such as abuse and neglect. To address both delays and risk factors for delays, HMGIE supports two screenings: developmental screenings (ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE) and risk screenings (a social determinants of health, or SDOH, screening).

HMGIE currently has two avenues for providing and tracking screenings:

- 1. The HMGIE Access Center**, the local name of the centralized access point for HMGIE,

can be reached via phone or email, and is staffed with program coordinators who provide ASQ and SDOH screenings, provide developmental information, make referrals to resources and services, and follow-up with families to make sure they were able to access services. Any family in the Inland Empire can contact the Access Center to receive this support. In addition, HMGIE has developed targeted partnerships with two local school districts to provide universal screenings through the Access Center.

**2. The electronic data system pilot** is a partnership with pediatric clinics in the region to use the HMGIE data system to conduct screenings during well-child visits. The data system is integrated with an existing electronic health record system, EPIC, that is currently shared by Loma Linda University Children’s Health, Riverside University Health System, and SAC Health System. This integrated data system allows ASQ and SDOH screenings to take place within a child’s existing electronic health record, so that it can be accessible to any of the child’s health providers. The pediatric clinics that participate in the pilot enter screening results in the system and utilize it to make referrals. Additional data system functionality will be developed in fiscal year 2021-2022.

## About this Report

The 2020-2021 Community Progress Report report follows the 2018-2020 Community Progress Report, which shared accomplishments and insights from the system planning and pilot phases of HMGIE, and provided significant background information on the initiative and its approaches.<sup>2</sup> This report also includes findings from the first data evaluation of HMGIE.

The goal of the 2020-2021 Community Progress Report is to share information on the following evaluation areas:

- HMGIE’s overall impact: reach and services provided
- Families’ experiences with HMGIE and the EII system
- System partners’ experiences working with HMGIE
- Opportunities for further partnership and system development
- Progress in advancing HMGIE’s strategic goals



# HELP ME GROW'S IMPACT IN 2020-2021

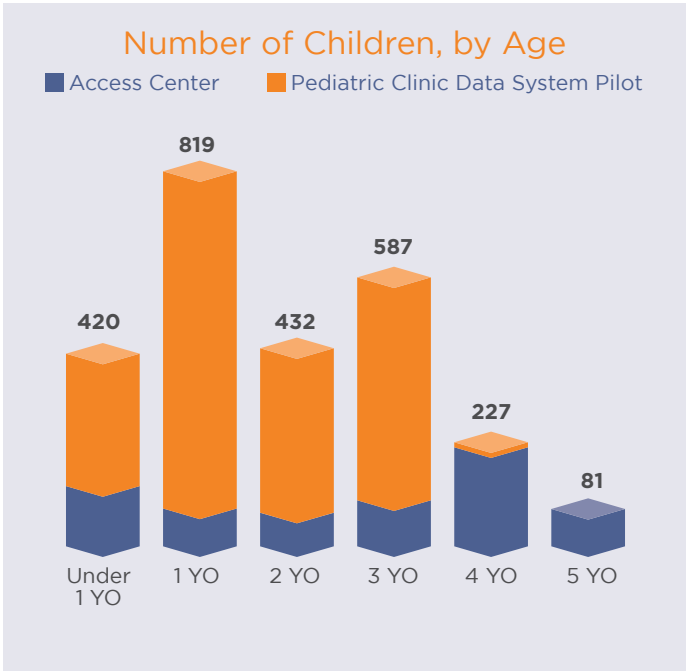
Fiscal year 2020-2021 (FY20-21) marks a year of exciting growth and expanded partnership for Help Me Grow Inland Empire. The piloting of the HMGIE electronic data system in pediatric clinics continued from 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 marked the first full year of HMGIE Access Center operations. HMGIE has been intentional in its outreach and partnership development with organizations across the region's early identification and intervention system, strengthening relationships to improve services and activating new opportunities to increase the number of children who receive developmental screenings.

These efforts were completed against the backdrop of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic hardships facing many Inland Empire families. HMGIE's dual focus on developmental delays and risk factors for delays—the social determinants of health—enabled it to support families with a range of needs during this challenging time. However, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on many regional partners and on the provision of early intervention services, making some more difficult to access.

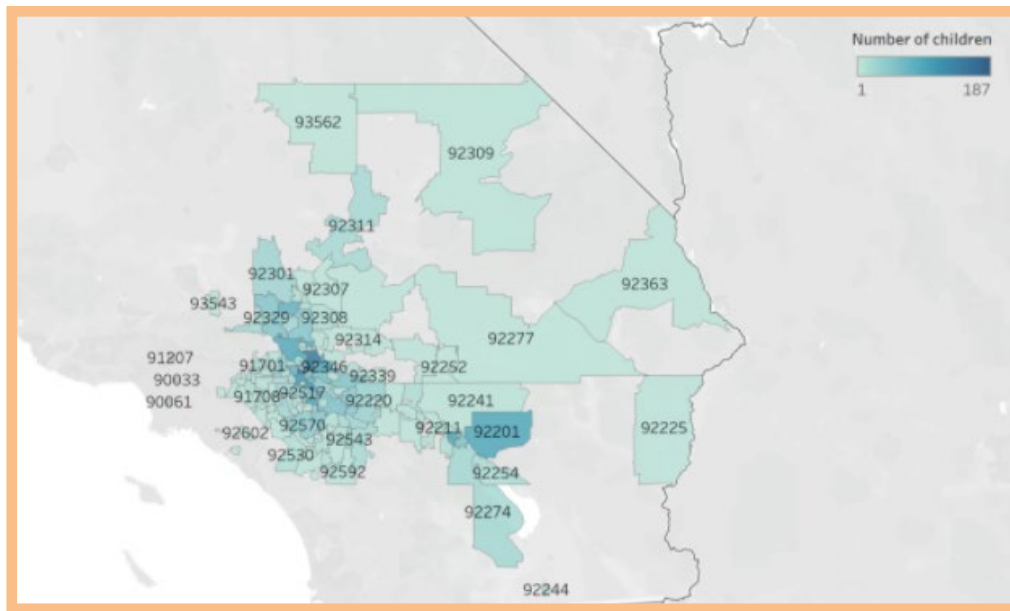
## REACH, SERVICES, AND IMPACT

### Who was served

Almost 2,700 children were served through Help Me Grow Inland Empire in fiscal year 2020-2021 (FY20-21). This total includes children who were served through the Access Center (803) and the electronic data system (1,883). The vast majority of these children (2,566) were 5 years old or younger. Most of the children were screened before they were four years old, with one year olds comprising the largest portion of children screened.



Children entered HMGIE from zip codes throughout the Inland Empire. In most zip codes, under 50 children entered HMGIE in FY20-21. The zip codes with the highest child counts were 92410 (187 children) and 92404 (148 children), both in the city of San Bernardino.

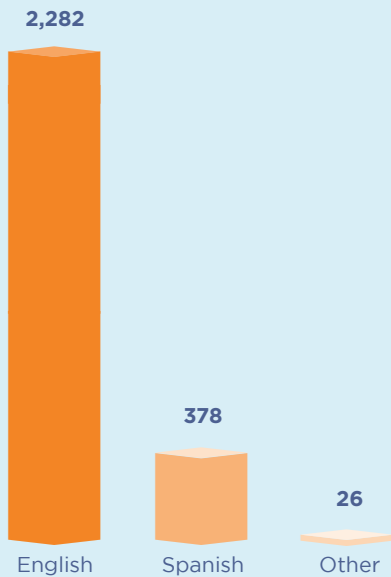


Callers outside of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties were referred to local care hub agencies in their home communities.

### Demographics of the Children Served by Help Me Grow Inland Empire

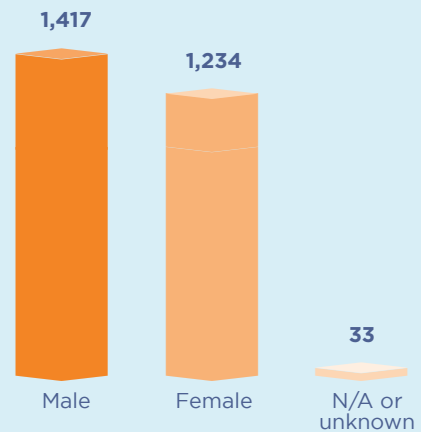
#### Number of Children, by Primary Language Spoken at Home

(Access Center and Pediatric Clinic Data System Pilot)



#### Number of Children, by Gender

(Access Center and Pediatric Clinic Data System Pilot)



Note: "Other" includes Sign Language, Portuguese, Korean, Mandarin, Panjabi/Punjabi, Armenian, Cambodian, Arabic, and Other

## How Families Reached HMGIE

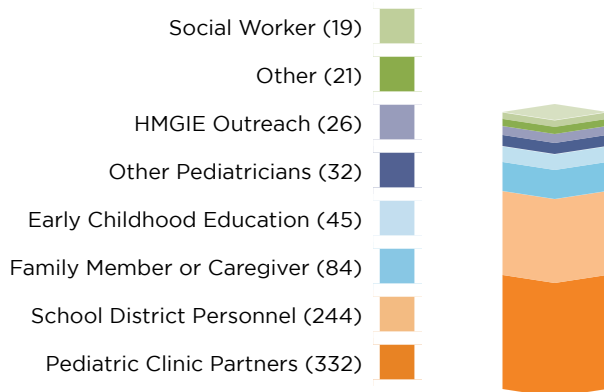
Families come into the Help Me Grow Inland Empire system through a variety of channels. A majority of children in the system were screened through HMGIE’s clinic partners as part of the electronic data system pilot. For families who came in through the Access Center, the majority were referred by a pediatric clinic partner (who participated in the original electronic data system pilot) or school district personnel.

These findings show the impact of intentional partnerships in bringing families into the system. For example, Loma Linda’s physician champion has been instrumental in making HMGIE part of Loma Linda University Children’s Health care practices. Additionally, HMGIE had two school district partnerships in FY20-21, for which HMGIE provided universal screenings, through its Access Center, for the pre-kindergarten children in those districts. Given the success of these partnerships, it is recognized that there is significant value in broadening and expanding partnerships like these to reach more families.



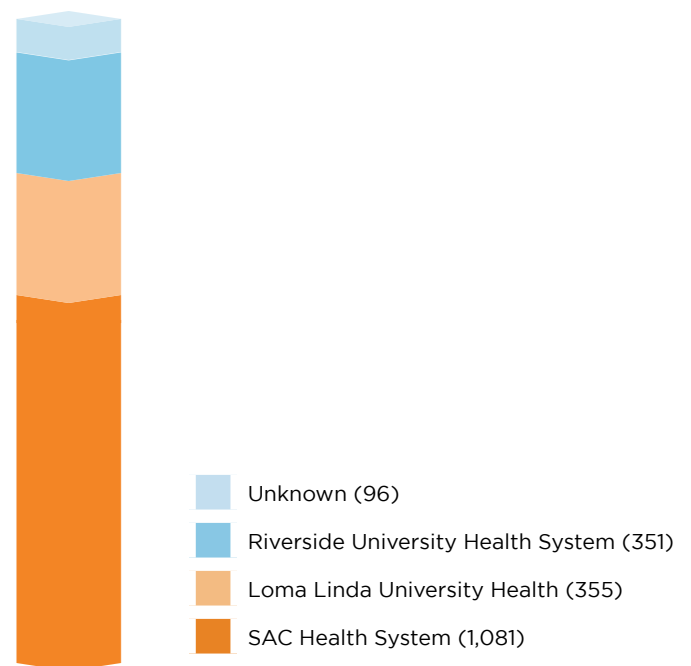
### Family Entry into HMGIE, by Referral Source

(Access Center)



### Family Entry into HMGIE, by Referral Source

(Pediatric Clinic Data System Pilot)







## Needs Supported by HMGIE

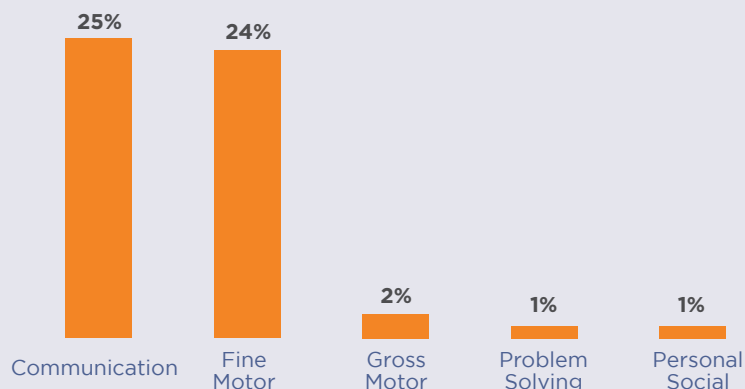
### ASQ - Developmental Screenings

HMGIE offers a developmental screening, the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ®-3), which identifies delays in different areas of development.

A total of 1,936 ASQ screenings were administered. As the ASQ screening must be administered in full, the breakdown of ASQ domains matches total administered. Roughly 25% of Communication and Fine Motor Skills screenings had atypical results, whereas only 1-2% of Gross Motor, Problem Solving, and Personal Social screenings had atypical results.

#### ASQ-3 Screening Atypical Rate

(Access Center and Pediatric Clinic Data System Pilot)

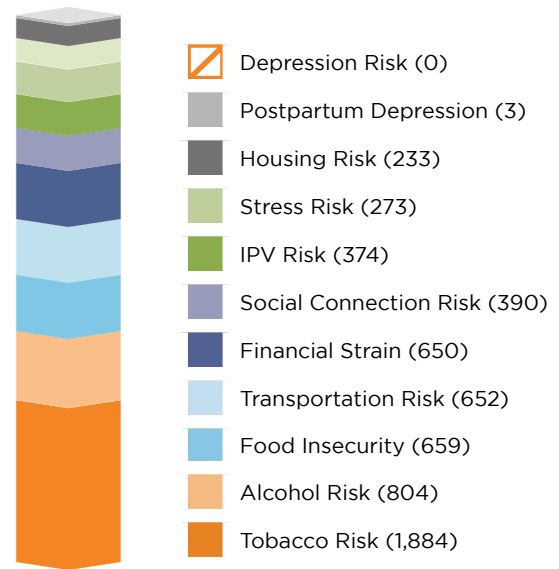


## Social Determinants of Health - Risk Factors for Developmental Delays

Risk screenings, or screenings for social determinants of health (SDOH) concerns, are an important complement to the developmental screenings conducted by HMGIE. The SDOH screening includes 12 different domains, which can be given separately, as appropriate based on a family's needs and interests. Each domain that is administered to a HMGIE client counts as a separate screening.

Of the 803 clients served through CAP in FY20-21, 33% (265 children) received at least one SDOH domain screening. Of the 1,883 clients served through EDS, 100% received at least one SDOH domain screening. In total, 2,148 children received at least one SDOH domain screening, with a total over 6,328 SDOH domain screenings.

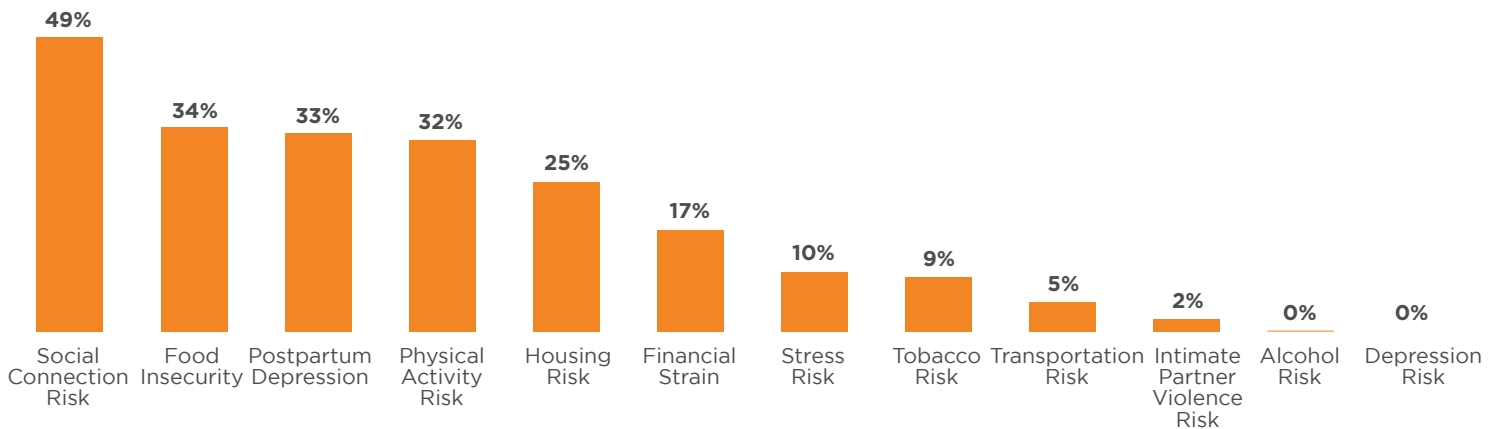
## Number of SDOH Domain Screening



Depression risk screening is an optional SDOH screening, but was not administered by either the Access Center or the pediatric clinics in 2020-2021. Pediatric clinics screen for depression risk through other questionnaires administered at well-child visits.

## Atypical Screening Score Rates, by Screening Type

(Access Center and Pediatric Clinic Data System Pilot)



## COVID-19 AND FAMILY NEED

It is widely understood that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenges facing many families. HMGIE first began supporting families' basic needs in 2020, when the Access Center opened shortly after the beginning of the pandemic. As the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting job loss and economic disruptions continued for many, HMGIE was able to continue to provide supports for basic needs. Frequent needs identified through the SDOH screenings conducted by HMGIE included food, financial strain, diapers, and housing. These are areas where additional community resources and investment would be beneficial.

Additionally, SDOH screenings provide a glimpse into the mental health toll of the pandemic. Screenings for social connection risk were conducted 390 times by pediatric clinics using the electronic data system, and indicated an atypical score nearly 50% of the time (48.7%). This screening was not administered in the Access Center. Screenings for physical activity risk were also administered 390 times through the electronic data system, with 33.3% returning atypical scores. These risk areas can be indicators of general mental/emotional well-being and may indicate the negative toll that COVID-19--and the social isolation it has imposed--has taken on families.

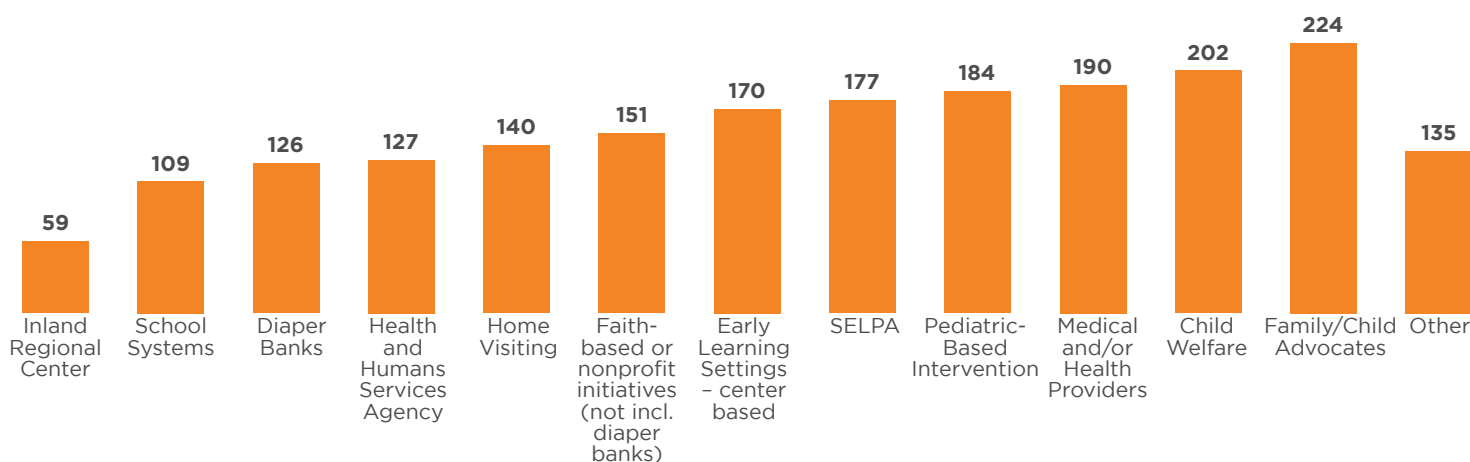
"[Our] collaboration with HMGIE has benefited the Black Infant Health participants with some of the basic needs that have been hampered due to COVID-19, such as housing and food resources." - Elizabeth Sneed-Berrie, Public Health Program Coordinator, Black Infant Health (BIH) Program, San Bernardino County

## Connecting Families to Resources

As a result of the screenings, almost 2,000 referrals were made. Referrals to faith-based or nonprofit initiatives were the most common, followed by referrals to family/child advocates and referrals to child welfare agencies.

### Number of Referrals, by Type

(Pediatric Clinic Data System Pilot)



Note: "Other" includes social workers, intimate partner violence prevention, child and family legal services, parent educators, and special supplemental nutrition.

Within referrals to Health and Human Services Agencies, the most referrals were to Cash Assistance and related programs. Referrals to California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE), were a distant second in terms of frequency of referrals.

Six types of support received less than 100 referrals. These supports are: social workers (0), intimate partner violence prevention (2), child and family legal services (8), parent educators (51), Inland Regional Center (59), and special supplemental nutrition (74).

Based on the 803 clients who entered the system through the Access Center, 489 received at least one referral (almost 61% of clients), and of those clients, 419 received more than one referral (almost 85%).

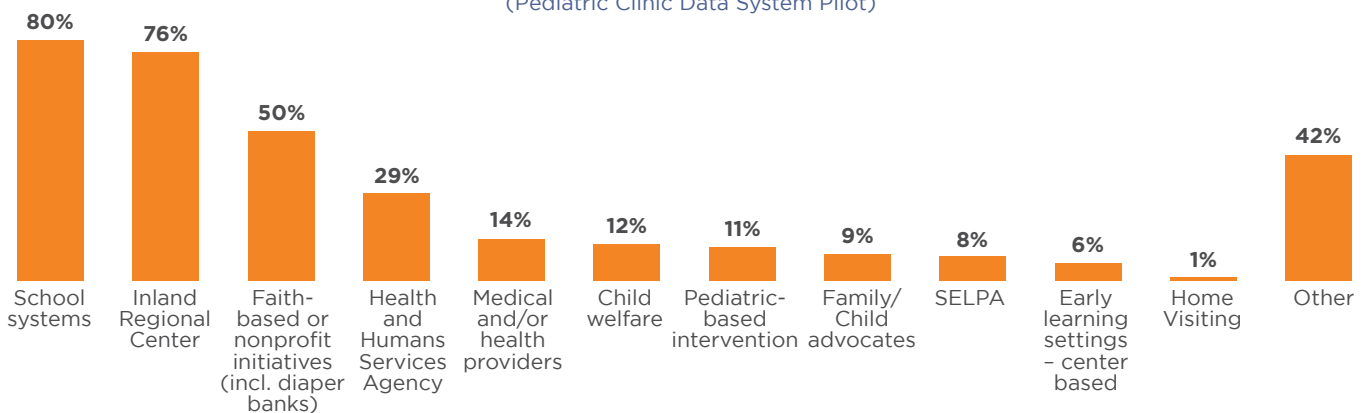


The HMGIE Access Center reaches out to clients up to three times in follow-up to confirm if they’ve been able to connect to services or if they have additional questions or needs. The following information on completion rates is based on self-reporting by clients during these follow-up calls. It is important to note that not all families are reached during these follow-up calls, and therefore the actual completion rates likely differ from what was able to be confirmed and is shown below.

Referrals to school systems, the Inland Regional Center, and child and family legal services had the highest completion rates (80%, 76%, and 63%, respectively). Referrals to center-based early learning settings, home visiting, and intimate partner violence prevention had the lowest completion rates (6%, 1%, and 0%, respectively).

### Percent of Referrals Completed, by Type

(Pediatric Clinic Data System Pilot)





# FAMILY EXPERIENCES

Help Me Grow Inland Empire provides value to the families it serves, linking them to needed resources and providing an important throughline as they navigate new and unfamiliar systems of care.

Several families\* participated in interviews to share their experiences navigating the early identification and intervention system, including receiving support from HMGIE. Their stories are useful for understanding their experiences getting support from HMGIE, as well as the experience a family has trying to navigate systems of support for their children. They can provide insights into system-wide impacts on families' experiences.

## DIANA'S JOURNEY

Diana's daughter, Ana, was diagnosed with a heart condition at birth. Following years of no change in her condition or options for treatment in Mexico, Diana, who was born in the United States, made the difficult decision to immigrate back to the United States to get different care for her daughter. Once settled in the Inland Empire and after she was able to receive Medi-Cal coverage for Ana, Diana sought treatment at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital. While at Loma Linda, Diana was connected to HMGIE for additional support.

Diana's experience has been developed into a family journey map. Family journey maps are visual tools to help understand families' experiences navigating systems or services. They can be used to understand how individuals or families access social services, programs, or support systems; whether they receive the support they need; and what their experience is along the way.

Diana shared her experience in early 2021. Diana's journey highlights both how HMGIE was able to provide support and how often children are not able to get the early intervention support in their first years.

\* Families' names have been changed for this report.

**1** November 22, 2013 | Child Age: Newborn  
**Diagnosis**



Just days after giving birth, Diana and her newborn daughter spent 40 days in a hospital in Guadalajara, Mexico. Physicians told the mother that her daughter was born with a cardiovascular issue that required further investigation. Once released from the hospital, Diana and her daughter visited doctors monthly. Doctors informed Diana that her daughter's height and weight needed to meet healthy development milestone before additional treatment could be offered.

**Challenge**

Waited for several years for Ana to gain weight and height while no alternative treatments were given.

"So I waited and waited but I should have demanded surgery for her, but I did not. I remained stubborn that I was going to wait and that it was going to get better."

**2** 2020 | Child Age: 7 Years Old  
**No Visible Progress**

After years of waiting and no visible progress, Diana took Ana to a private pay physician in Tepic, Mexico. Again, she was told there was nothing more to do and was advised to administer medication that would keep her daughter calm and ease discomfort.

Following the visit with the private pay physician, Diana decided to move her family to the USA to access medications and treatments not available in Mexico.

**3** 2021 | Child Age: 7 Years Old  
**Immigrated to the United States**



The family moved to California to seek medical care and a second medical opinion.

**Challenge**

The family arrived in CA with little and were in need of housing, income & basic needs. Medi-Cal and social security process took 4 months.

"There are ups and downs. I was happy to be looking for another second opinion, but at the same time scared because this has been a radical change. A little bit depressed also because in Mexico I was used to doing things, going places, working all the time and here I had to pause that way of life."

**4** 2021 | Child Age: 7 Years Old  
**Received Medi-Cal**



Eventually, Ana saw a cardiologist at Loma Linda Childrens Hospital. Diana was hopeful that the medication would lower Ana's blood pressure enough for open heart surgery.

**Support**

Medication and medical advice from Loma Linda Children's Hospital Physicians.

"I was a little bit depressed at first. I was hoping, like all moms, for someone to say that the first diagnosis was wrong. Unfortunately, it was not... but compared to a diagnosis with no opportunity or chance at all, then there is still hope that my daughter can get help."

**5** 2021 | Child Age: 7 Years Old  
**Learned of HMG-IE**



While her daughter, Ana, was in the LLUCH hospital for 7 days, she was given a phone number for Help Me Grow Inland Empire and told to contact them for guidance.

**Support**

Diana was able to communicate with HMG via phone and ask questions. HMG staff explained paperwork and processes.

"As soon as I dialed, I was answered by Miss Erika, and she provided information for everything I had questions."

**6** 2021 | Child Age: 7 Years Old  
**Accessing Developmental Services**

While Diana received relatively quick responses from therapists and her daughter's new school, support from the Regional Center has taken much longer. Diana anticipates that the Regional Center will notify her in a few months due to the ongoing pandemic.

**Challenge**

The pandemic caused a delay in services from the local Regional Center. She must wait for the county to contact her.

"In the school process, I submitted the request through the regional center. No response has been received. Due to the pandemic processes have taken a long time."

**7** 2021 | Child Age: 7 Years Old  
**Continued Support through HMG-IE**

Help Me Grow Inland Empire helped Diana enroll her daughter in school and apply for early intervention services. HMGIE also connected Diana to resources that provided her with free diapers and food during the pandemic.

**Challenge**

The distance and time it takes to get to entities who have the resources she needs.

"The locations of where families need to get resources, like the diapers, it is a little far away and it is like in my case... It would be a great idea to have service delivery routine on a specific day, once a month for example in a nearby place."

**Support**

HMGIE offered resources to support and improve the families social determinants of health and Ann's educational

"The way in which HMG quickly moves to help has been most positive. I thought it would be a slow process but quite the opposite. For food I got a reply as soon as I dialed, the diapers, same with that, as soon as I sent an email, then I got a reply. The speed in which they helped is what surprised me the most."

## ELISA'S STORY

*Elisa shared her experience with HMGIE through two interviews. The first interview took place in June 2020, then she spoke with HMGIE again one year later.*

When he was just three years old, Nico was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. His mother, Elisa, had noticed that something was not right with her child's health, and several visits to the pediatrician confirmed her suspicions. For Elisa and her family, the change was drastic and confusing. They struggled to make sense of Nico's diagnosis and to navigate a new system of supports.

Nico receives care at Loma Linda University Children's Health, which has provided the family with educational materials and workshops about proper nutrition and restrictions necessary to care for Nico. In addition to connecting her to the Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP), California Children's Services (CCS), and MediCal, the health clinic told Elisa about Help Me Grow Inland Empire and connected her for counseling and speech therapy for Nico.

In June 2020, through a few phone calls, HMGIE made an assessment of the family's medical, emotional, and financial needs. The next step was to wait for the results of the evaluation and get a first consultation for services. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, changed the process of service delivery, as well as the ongoing medical treatments by the health clinic. During her first interview, Elisa shared her hesitation with virtual services. "Everything has to be virtual. It's nothing like going in person," she said. "I don't know if my son will be patient enough to be on the phone for the entire appointment."

Elisa hoped that the pandemic would be resolved quickly and everything would return to normal. A year later, with the pandemic restrictions still in place, services continued to be offered by phone and video. Elisa's family has had to overcome obstacles and changes in daily life because of the pandemic. For Nico, this has been much more difficult—he exhibited aggression and frustration from being cooped up due to the shelter-in-place guidelines. Elisa and her family started new routines to support Nico's health and wellbeing. Since February 2021, Elisa has also been reaching out to the school nurse for information and resources that will help her support Nico and her family's mental health.

"Emotional support is so important for children with different abilities and health needs. As a parent, it's hard to know where to go sometimes, but there are counselors and people that can guide you and [help you identify what your child needs]."

### HMGIE ACCESS CENTER

At Help Me Grow Inland Empire (HMGIE), we listen to families' stories and experiences to help identify children's developmental needs early. Then we connect families to the resources they need. Our community partners make referrals to HMGIE when there is a concern about a child's development, learning, or behavior and families can call our Access Center anytime they have questions. There is no "wrong door" for families because this is a collective approach in the Inland Empire.

We recently had a mom call to express concerns with her second child's development. Even though the pediatrician and other family members said "It's okay. It just takes time", this mom felt something was not right. She knew she had to act

early, so she called First 5 Riverside who connected her to the HMGIE Access Center. She shared a lot of detail about her child’s development and behavior, and we ended up doing a more comprehensive evaluation. We shared insights with the family, then made a referral to the Inland Regional Center (IRC) for a follow-up on specific areas of need.

I’ve talked with this mom over the phone more than nine times throughout this process. Even though we don’t know each other, it’s great to hear her familiar voice. The first time her son called her “mom,” I was delighted to hear from her. We help families navigate resources, complete paperwork, and make many phone calls, but it all starts when parents take action.

**Stephanie Mosqueda**  
**Program Coordinator**  
**Help Me Grow Inland Empire**

## LESSONS FROM HMGIE FAMILIES

These stories can provide valuable insights into the experiences of families navigating unfamiliar systems to seek the best care and support for their children. While individual interviews and family journey maps can only provide a perspective on an individual person’s experience, rather than wide-ranging insights from many clients, stepping into these families’ shoes can illuminate the barriers, supports, and other factors that impact whether and how a family receives the supports they need.

The following are a few takeaways from families’ experiences that will inform the ongoing development of the EII system in the Inland Empire:

- Each family reported that the HMGIE Access Center staff was professional, helpful, and supportive. Having a real person on the other end of the phone to offer help and information, as well as to reach back out in follow-up, was greatly appreciated.
- Mental and emotional health supports for children and their parents/caregivers are an important aspect of navigating challenging health or developmental diagnoses, but families may have more difficulty finding or using these services.
- Continuing to strengthen partnerships between HMGIE and referral destinations may help ensure that the follow-up process is satisfactory for parents, and that the information they receive from HMGIE matches the reality of their experience as they reach out to referrals for help.
- The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on services, especially for young children who may have found a shift to virtual services difficult. There is an opportunity to continue to evolve and improve how services for children are delivered to maximize safety and effectiveness.

HMGIE will continue to identify opportunities to engage and involve families in the design and development of HMGIE to ensure that services are responsive to their needs.





# SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS

The success of HMGIE is highly dependent on building successful partnerships across the region. Nine representatives from agencies and organizations that have collaborated with HMGIE over the past year completed written interviews to share information on their partnership with HMGIE, the benefits they've experienced, and opportunities for continued system improvement.

Of these partners, four have primarily partnered with Help Me Grow to offer/increase access to screenings, three have partnered to coordinate referrals, and one has supported HMG-related outreach and communications. One has just begun the process of partnering with HMGIE on screenings.

## PARTNER INSIGHTS

Partners shared three key noteworthy areas where they see HMGIE is having an impact and opportunities for continued growth:

**1. HMGIE is bridging gaps.** The majority of partners expressed that HMGIE has helped them bridge communication and coordination gaps that they've encountered in their early identification and intervention work. These include:

- Providing ASQ and SDOH screenings to families in a timely way, which frees up organizational capacity
- Working with families to connect with resources following a screening
- Working closely with partner organizations to ensure that referrals are successful.

“Help Me Grow Inland Empire directly connects with us about children who need our program. HMG understands our processes and is able to begin some very important conversations with the families about their children’s possible delays, as well as communicating with pediatricians the importance of starting referrals for specialized services (i.e. therapy) for children as needed.”

**-Edyth Gallardo, IRC Early Start Program Manager, Inland Regional Center**

“As the program evolved over the years to include a range of prevention, early intervention and mental health treatment services, it became more difficult to effectively respond to screenings that were submitted. HMGIE is helping to bridge this gap as we are able to leverage their support to ensure providers still have a means of screening patients, while our program is able to focus on the service side.”

**-Anna Loza, Behavioral Health Supervisor, Riverside University Health**

## **2. HMGIE is most effective in its core services, screening and linking to services.**

Partners shared where they thought HMGIE contributed most effectively to the early identification and intervention system. Additionally, HMGIE has been effective in following up with families, being prompt in its work with partners and families, helping with basic needs services, the HMGIE database, and building community awareness and engagement.

“I think HMGIE has done a great job at building community awareness and engagement from stakeholders in different sectors in the Inland Empire. It has also slowly started to build a presence in the IE and definitely enhanced the early identification aspect of the system by providing the screening and partnering with entities in the community.”

**-Verenice Torres, Health Educator, Inland Empire Health Plan**

“We are able to send our families to HMGIE for more resources.... I am able to connect with them to get families help.”

**-Caryn De La Torre, CAHELP**

## **3. Partners want to see HMGIE continue and expand.** Partners were asked about additional gaps that HMGIE could fill in the early identification and intervention system that it was not currently filling, and ways that it could improve. All responses supported HMGIE continuing down the path it is on. Specific suggestions included:

- Continuing to collaborate and work to link different systems (including basic needs services) and care providers (including physicians)
- Keep growing and expanding, including by continuing to raise awareness and by offering developmental screening events as COVID-19 allows.

“There is still more work to be done in linking systems but I feel that with time that is something that will get better. I think COVID-19 has also made that a little difficult because not all entities are operating the way they usually operate and it is difficult to make decisions at the moment.”

**-Verenice Torres, Health Educator, Inland Empire Health Plan**

“More connections to basic needs services (diapers, food, housing support). Families may not want to participate in developmental services for their children if their basic needs are not met.”

**-Robin Ferguson MS CCLS Program Manager, Early Start, Inland Regional Center**

# PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

## Inland Regional Center Collaboration for Stronger Connections to Developmental Services

*Help Me Grow Inland Empire partners with the Inland Regional Center (IRC) to refer children and families to key services that the IRC provides to more than 33,000 people with developmental disabilities and their families. By working closely with IRC, both organizations are able to better ensure that families coming in through the Access Center who are referred to IRC are able to get connected to the care they need. Early Start Program Manager Edyth Gallardo and Program Manager Robin Ferguson, share their stories.*



“[The HMGIE] referral staff ensure that families are supported through the intake process. This helps us ensure that families who need our services are not going to fall through the cracks,” says Gallardo, on how HMGIE has been able to ease the workload in current conditions. HMGIE is able to fill key gaps that allow more families to take full advantage of the IRC’s services. “[HMG provides] more connections to basic needs services, like diapers, food, housing support. Families may not want to participate in developmental services for their children if their basic needs are not met,” says Ferguson. “I can see the bridge starting to form,” she continues. “HMGIE is another path for families to access early intervention services. I think as we continue into the future, we will see the bridge grow.”

## School District Partnerships for Universal Screening

*Help Me Grow Inland Empire piloted universal developmental screening programs with preeschool age children at two school districts in the Inland Empire, San Bernardino City Unified School District and Snowline Joint Unified School District. Help Me Grow administered ASQ-3 screenings to families in these districts through the HMGIE Access Center. Patricia Kendrick, Program Principal at Snowline Joint Unified School District, and Nancy Carrillo, Program Specialist shared their experiences.*

Nancy Carrillo is a Child Development Program Specialist with SBJUSD. She operates a program that serves low income children ages 0-5, and when COVID-19 hit, she had a hard time guiding stressed parents to fill out the paper ASQ forms. By partnering with Help Me Grow IE, parents were provided a digital ASQ-3, which “lifted the burden” and “made it much easier” for families. “[The Access Center team] from HMGIE .. goes above and beyond for our program and parents,” Carrillo added.

Patricia Kendrick also partnered with Help Me Grow Inland Empire to pilot the implementation of universal developmental screening. “The HMGIE team is amazing and met with us weekly to discuss the process and systems we had agreed to,” she said. “They

also followed up with us regarding parents who had not yet completed the screening or were not responding to efforts from HMGIE to discuss the assessment results.” Throughout the process, HMGIE was there to guide and support the implementation of a new pilot during an already unpredictable time. “I have been in the child development field for over 30 years and have never experienced the level of collaboration and support demonstrated to us by the HMGIE team,” said Kendrick.

## Health and Behavioral Health Partners

*Help Me Grow Inland Empire piloted online screening programs with both Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP), and the Riverside University Health System (RUHS). These health systems support members’ holistic health and wellness. Through these partnerships, Help Me Grow leveraged its Access Center availability and expertise to ensure that members and non-members of these health networks were able to complete developmental screenings. Verenice Torres, Health Educator with Inland Empire Health Plan, and Anna Loza, Behavioral Health Supervisor shared their experiences.*

Verenice Torres leads the Early Childhood Wellness Program. “With COVID- 19, we had to get a little creative and it took a couple of months before we could have a virtual presence. Our partnership with HMGIE has supported our Early Childhood Wellness Program immensely.”

Anna Loza’s organization’s programs include preschool 0-5 programs, SET-4-School, Prevention and Early Intervention Mobile Services (PEIMS), and the Growing Healthy Minds Collaborative. “Services are available for children aged 6 and under with or without any type of insurance,” she notes. Partnering with HMGIE has allowed her and her team to “focus more on interventions and the countywide expansion of zero-to-five services as part of the Growing Healthy Minds Initiative.”

Both providers note that HMGIE made navigating their crucial services through the pandemic much more manageable for Riverside families. “[There was] prompt and effective follow-up communication, a well developed and user-friendly website, a well-established system for screening and connection with families throughout the process,” Loza shared.





# STRATEGIC PROGRESS

Help Me Grow Inland Empire's work during 2020-2021 has been guided by its 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. Key accomplishments from 2020-2021 by HMGIE Strategic Goals are captured below.

## COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

*Community members understand the importance of child development, the benefits of early intervention and the role of Help Me Grow Inland Empire.*

- Hosted the Early Intervention Virtual Summit 2020, bringing together nearly 200 community stakeholders to learn, discuss, and share insights related to the role of race in early childhood development, strategies for supporting development during and after COVID-19, and ideas for ongoing regional EII system strengthening and expansion, including targeted conversations in priority zip codes previously identified by HMGIE ((92410, 92404, and 92395 in San Bernardino County, and 92509, 92240, and 92507 in Riverside County.)
- Conducted a family engagement landscape analysis to understand and identify best practices for engaging families in the ongoing development of HMGIE
- Developed a HMGIE family engagement plan, to be implemented beginning in fiscal year 2021-2022
- Convened a community outreach committee to provide insights into existing pathways and communications with families
- Expanded the HMGIE website with parent and partner information
- Developed parent informational brochure to be included in First 5 Riverside and First 5 San Bernardino's Kits for New Parents
- Shared local and state EII updates through regular newsletters for community stakeholders
- Developed and executed social media strategy targeted at families, through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter

- Created developmental milestones giveaway resource in English and Spanish for families
- Developed videos in English and Spanish to help families better understand the importance of developmental screenings and how they work Developed web pages featuring at-home developmental activities
- Developed Lobby posters for use by partners
- Deployed radio advertising in English and Spanish across both counties upon the advice of HMGIE’s community engagement outreach committee

## EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND SYSTEM LINKAGES

*Young children in the Inland Empire receive developmental screenings and are successfully connected to community services.*

- Continued ongoing outreach to medical staff, educators, and community partners to participate in HMGIE
- Continued electronic data system pilot with pediatric clinic partners
- Conducted ASQ and SDOH screenings to Access Center callers, made referrals and provided follow-up support to families
- Partnered with Snowline Joint Unified School District and San Bernardino City Unified School District to provide screenings to preschool families
- Added an oral health screening tool, developed as part of the regional IE Smiles oral health initiative, to the HMGIE Access Center, to link more families to oral health services

## CENTRAL ACCESS POINT AND CARE COORDINATION

*Children are connected to early identification and intervention services through a centralized system of referrals and care coordination.*

- Served 803 children through the Access Center and 1,883 through the electronic data system pilot
- Screening partnerships in place with school districts and community health partners; other partnerships in progress
- Referral partnerships in place to ensure successful referrals
- Received funding to design and construct new software to improve Access Center tracking and follow-up

## DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

*Stakeholders have accessible reliable and valid data to make informed decisions at both individual and systems levels to improve child and family outcomes.*

- Continued piloting of data system that includes the ASQ-3 and Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) screening tools in two pediatric clinics, Riverside University Health System and Social Action Community Health System in San Bernardino
- Identified and analyzed key data indicators to measure services and impact

## SYSTEMS ALIGNMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

*Services and resources are aligned for an effective and sustainable early childhood development system of care for young children.*

- Increased collaboration across strategic partners including physicians; health care provider groups; and health, behavioral health, family support, and education agencies
- Continued commitment to five years of funding (FY 17-18 through FY 22-23) from First 5 San Bernardino and First 5 Riverside Commissions to support the design and launch of HMGIE
- Conducted research and developed and began implementing a sustainability work plan to ensure the ongoing stability and growth of HMGIE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

*There is an effective partnership model for the operation and governance of Help Me Grow Inland Empire as a collective impact initiative.*

- Ongoing partnership between the HMGIE operating entity, Loma Linda University Children's Health, and lead funders, First 5 San Bernardino and First 5 Riverside, as the HMGIE Steering Committee
- Planned for and developed an expanded governance structure for the ongoing operation of HMGIE in future years, to include community partners and families
- Building partnerships for future engagement in the expanded governance structure



# WHAT'S NEXT

HMGIE is continuing to strengthen its approaches and expand its reach across the Inland Empire. Areas of focus for fiscal year 2021-2022 include:

- Continued work on program sustainability.
- Ongoing and broadening partnerships across the community so that there is widespread screening of young children, and a strong and connected network of referral sources to meet their needs.
- Engagement of families across the region to understand their needs and priorities, to inform HMGIE's continued development and service efficacy.
- Additionally, during fiscal year 2021-2022, the HMGIE Steering Committee will update its existing strategic plan, to ensure continued growth of the initiative and the region's EII system in the years to come.

## JOIN US

HMGIE has benefited tremendously from community partners who have been involved in the planning, development, and operations of the system. Opportunities to partner with HMGIE will continue in 2021-2022 and beyond. We invite your involvement!

Visit [HelpMeGrowIE.org](https://HelpMeGrowIE.org) for updates and to subscribe to our newsletter.

Contact [info@HelpMeGrowIE.org](mailto:info@HelpMeGrowIE.org) to discuss specific partnership opportunities.

Call 1-888-464-4316 to access developmental screenings, risk screenings, or to be linked to community resources.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The HMGIE 2020-2021 Community Impact Report was developed by VIVA Social Impact Partners. VIVA conducted interviews with community partners and parents and worked with Loma Linda University Health's HMGIE program staff and evaluator who gathered and analyzed the service data for the year, to highlight the progress of the HMGIE initiative in reaching children and families in the Inland Empire. The HMGIE partners would like to acknowledge the contributions of the community partners and families who shared their time and experiences, both informing the 2020-21 report and helping to shape HMGIE's future direction.

## INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

*The following community partners were interviewed to inform this report.*

**Anna Loza**, Behavioral Health Supervisor, Riverside University Health System

**Caryn De La Torre**, CAHELP

**Edyth Gallardo**, IRC Early Start Program Manager, Inland Regional Center

**Elizabeth Sneed-Berrie**, Public Health Program Coordinator, Black Infant Health (BIH) Program, San Bernardino County

**Nancy Carrillo**, Program Specialist, San Bernardino City Unified School District

**Patricia Kendrick**, Program Principal, Snowline Joint Unified School District

**Robin Ferguson**, MS, CCLS, Program Manager, Early Start, Inland Regional Center

**Sarah Mosley**, Owner-Director, Family First Child Care

**Verenice Torres**, Health Educator, Inland Empire Health Plan

### **HMGIE Families:**

*Thank you to the families who volunteered to share their stories as part of this report.*

# HMGIE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Tammi Graham**, First 5 Riverside

**Barbara Andrade DuBransky**, First 5 Riverside

**Jill Kowalski**, First 5 Riverside

**Carol Abella**, First 5 Riverside

**Edward Emery**, First 5 Riverside

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**Marti Baum**, MD, Loma Linda University Children's Health

**Brett Walls**, Loma Linda University Children's Health

**Ronald Stewart**, Help Me Grow Inland Empire

## FOOTNOTES

1. Help Me Grow California, <https://helpmegrowca.org/index.php/help-me-grow-california/policy-and-advocacy/>. Accessed August 2021.
2. Help Me Grow Inland Empire Community Progress Report 2018-2020, <https://helpmegrowie.org/community-progress-report-2018-2020/>. Accessed August 2021.