



Helping Families Connect to Early Childhood and Family Support Resources

Michele Kvikstad
Early Identification and Intervention Coordinator
Michele.Kvikstad@state.mn.us

Shawn Holmes
Help Me Connect Coordinator
Shawn.Holmes@state.mn.us

Land Acknowledgement

Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted. Truth and acknowledgment are critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference.

We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. We are standing on the ancestral lands of the Dakota people. We want to acknowledge the Dakota, the Ojibwe, the Ho Chunk, and the other nations of people who also called this place home. We pay respects to their elders past and present. Please take a moment to consider the treaties made by the Tribal nations that entitle non-Native people to live and work on traditional Native lands. Consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today. Please join us in uncovering such truths at any and all public events.*

*This is the acknowledgment given in the USDAC Honor Native Land Guide – edited to reflect this space by Shannon Geshick, MTAG, Executive Director Minnesota Indian Affairs Council



Start Early Stay Connected

Michele Kvikstad | Early Identification and Intervention Coordinator

Minnesota Department of Health

- **Mission:** Protecting, maintaining, and improving the health of all Minnesotans
- **Vision:** The MDH vision is for health equity in Minnesota, where all communities are thriving, and all people have what they need to be healthy.



Children and youth with special health needs (CYSHN) are...

Those who have or are at risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition, and who also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally.

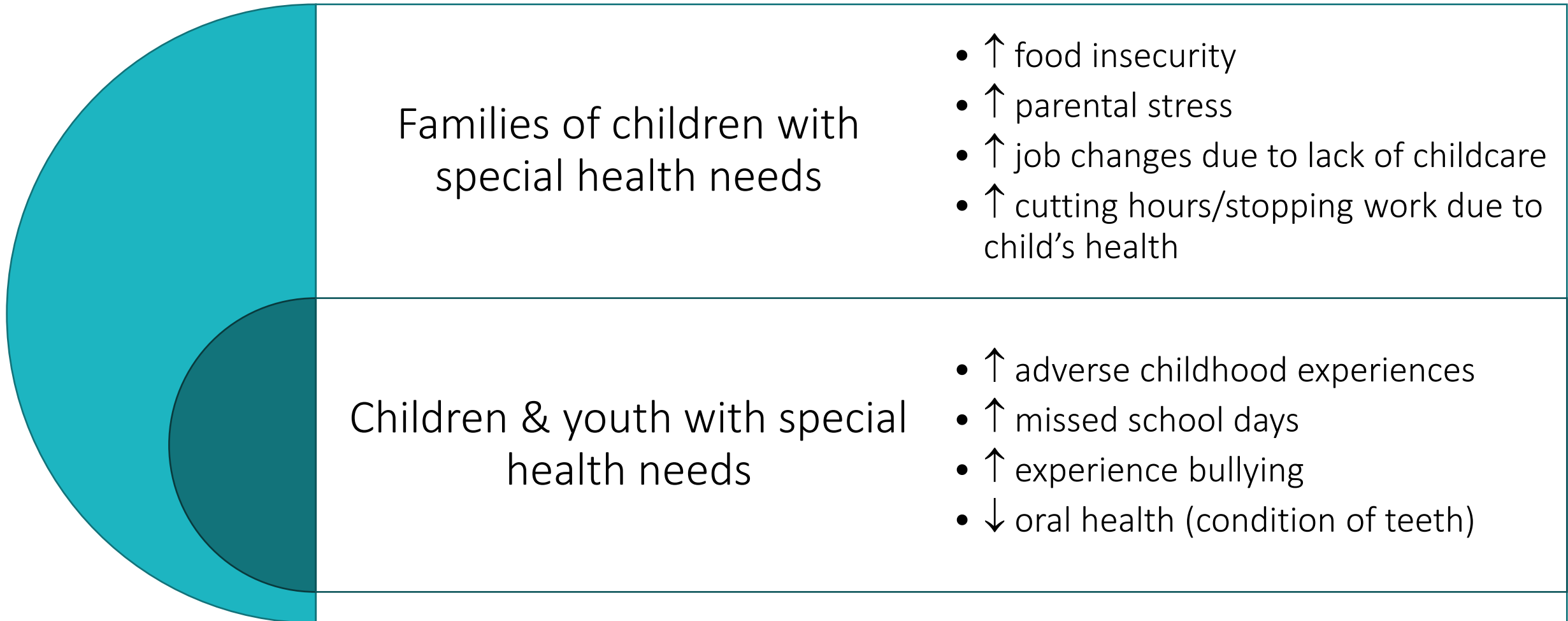
- Federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau

In Minnesota, **17.4%** of children have special health needs.

Nationally, **19.4%** of children have special health needs.

- 2019-2020 National Survey of Children's Health

Disparities Experienced...



Source: 2016-2017 NSCH

While Minnesota has prioritized young children and families in systems work, troubling disparities still exist



Low birth weight rate is 13.5% for African Americans, compared to 7% for Whites (Medicaid births).¹



20% of Black children (0-17 years) had at least one ER visit, compared to 13% of White children.⁴



Infant mortality rate for African Americans is 8.8 per 1,000 live births, compared to 3.9 per 1,000 live births for Whites.²



29% of Black, non-Hispanic children (0-17 years) have one or more functional difficulties, compared to 23% of White children.⁴



37% of Black or African American children live in poverty.³



23% of Black, non-Hispanic children (0-17 years) have a special health need, compared to 20% of White children.⁴



76% of Black children (0-17 years) have had a preventive visit in the past 12 months, compared to 83% of White children.⁴



Black, non-Hispanic children weren't diagnosed with ASD until 4 years, 8.5 months on average (diagnosis can be made at 18 months).⁵



Providing services at a critical time to make the biggest long-term impact

Creating relationships in early childhood to support complex and unique needs that change over time.

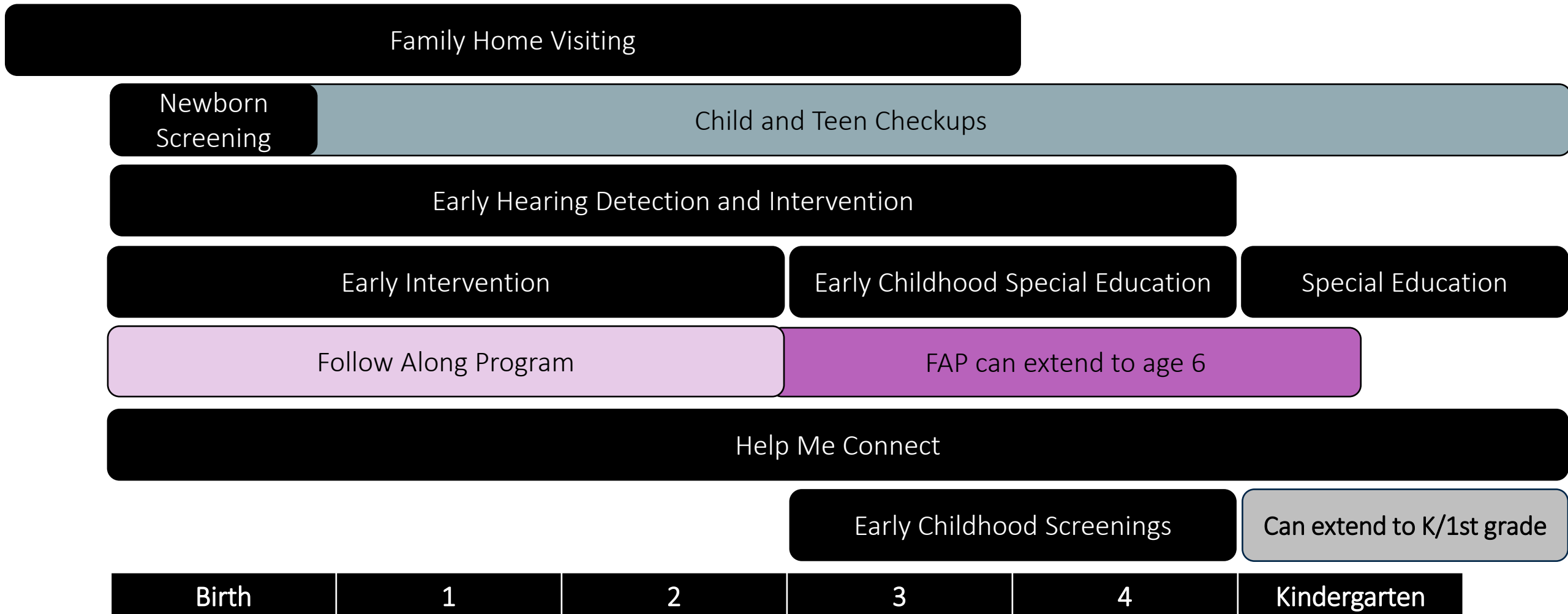
Follow Along Program

Weaving community supports with interagency resources

- Together we achieve more
- Strengthening families with local and state services
- Giving voice and choice

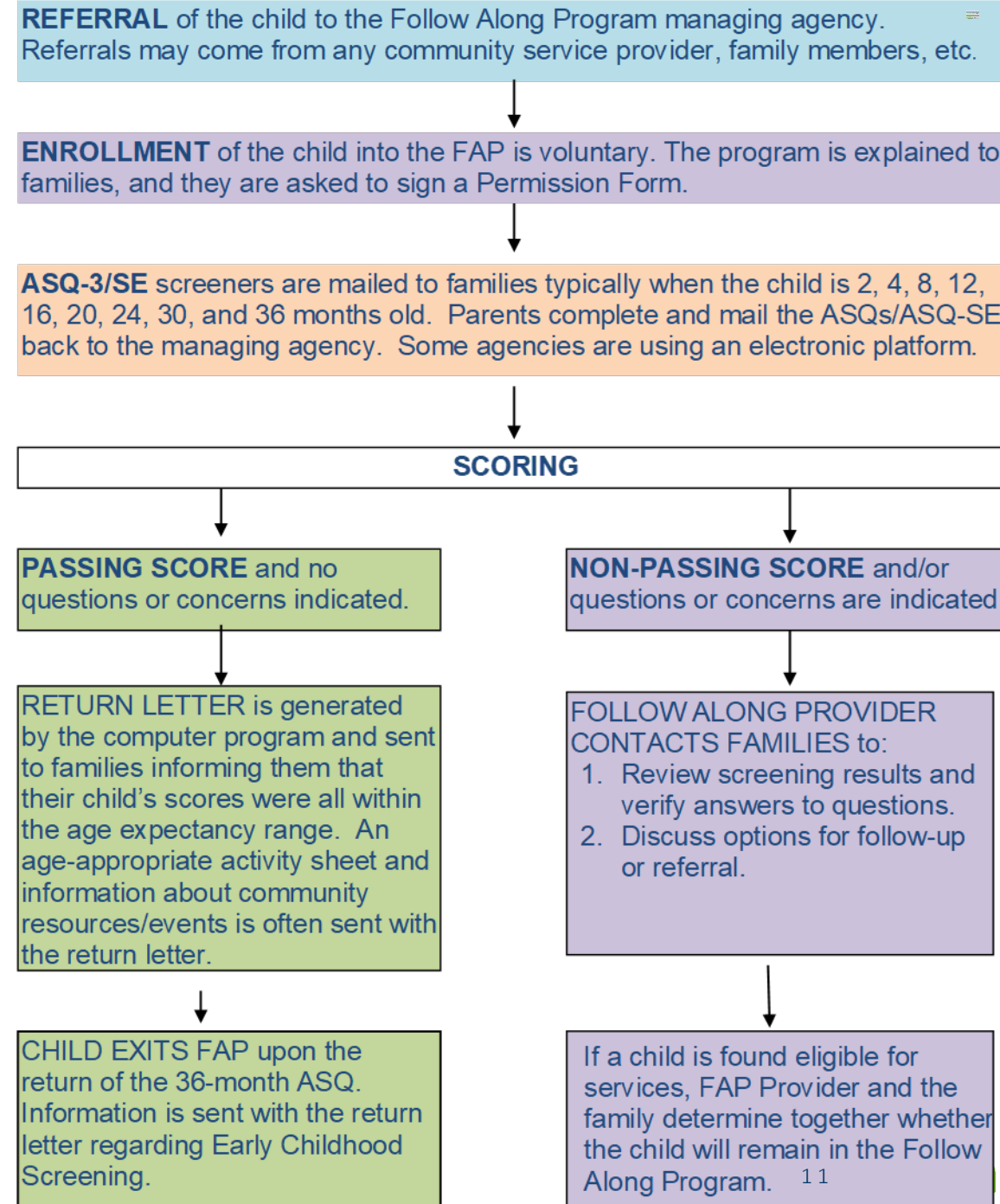


Early childhood activities and programs vary in the ages of children they serve

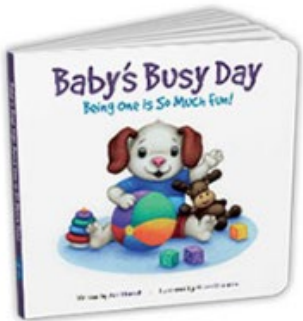


FAP Process

- LPH send screening tools to families at recommended intervals based on the child's age
- Families complete the tools and send back to LPH.
- LPH will follow-up with families based on screening score and/or concerns noted by families.



Children's Books





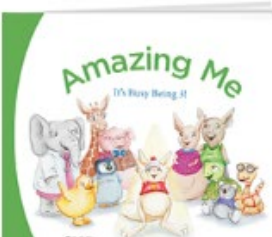
Baby's Busy Day: Being One is So Much Fun! – [Order Online](#)

- [English](#)  [4 MB, 12 Pages, 508]
- [Spanish](#)  [4 MB, 12 Pages, 508]






Where is Bear? A Terrific Tale for 2-Year-Olds – [Order Online](#)

- [English](#)  [27 MB, 13 Pages, Print Only]
- [Spanish](#)  [27 MB, 11 Pages, Print Only]



Amazing Me: It's Busy Being 3! – [Order Online](#)

- [English](#)  [7 MB, 18 Pages, 508]
- [Spanish](#)  [7 MB, 18 Pages, Print Only]
- [Coloring sheets](#)  [378 KB, 6 Pages, Print Only]

Developmental Resources for Families

- Anticipatory guidance is shared with families at each age interval
- In partnership with Help Me Grow, the CDC Learn the Signs Act Early, Child & Teen Check-ups, etc. a variety of books, handouts, and online tools are shared
- Prioritizing families and their need for resources

Partnerships are Vital

- In order to be able to effectively implement the Follow Along Program, Local Public Health agencies must have partnerships in place with other early childhood systems.
- This helps to ensure smooth referrals and transitions to needed services and supports.



Follow Along and Help Me Connect

Language English Go

help me **CONNECT**

A navigator connecting expectant families, families with young children (birth – 8 years old) and those working with families to services in their local communities that support healthy child development and family well-being.





[About](#) [Help](#) [My Account](#)

I am looking for services and resources about ...

Click on the topics below to find what you are looking for. Services and programs listed may be available on a sliding fee, covered by health insurance or free to families.



Healthy Development and Screening



Developmental and Behavior Concerns



Disability Services and Resources



help me **C O N N E C T**

Help Me Connect

Shawn Holmes, Coordinator; shawn.holmes@state.mn.us

Help Me Connect was created based on suggestions from parents and providers looking for an early childhood “one-stop shop” that connects families to local resources. It is a joint initiative between the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health, Human Services and the Governor’s Children’s Cabinet.

Help families thrive with Help Me Connect

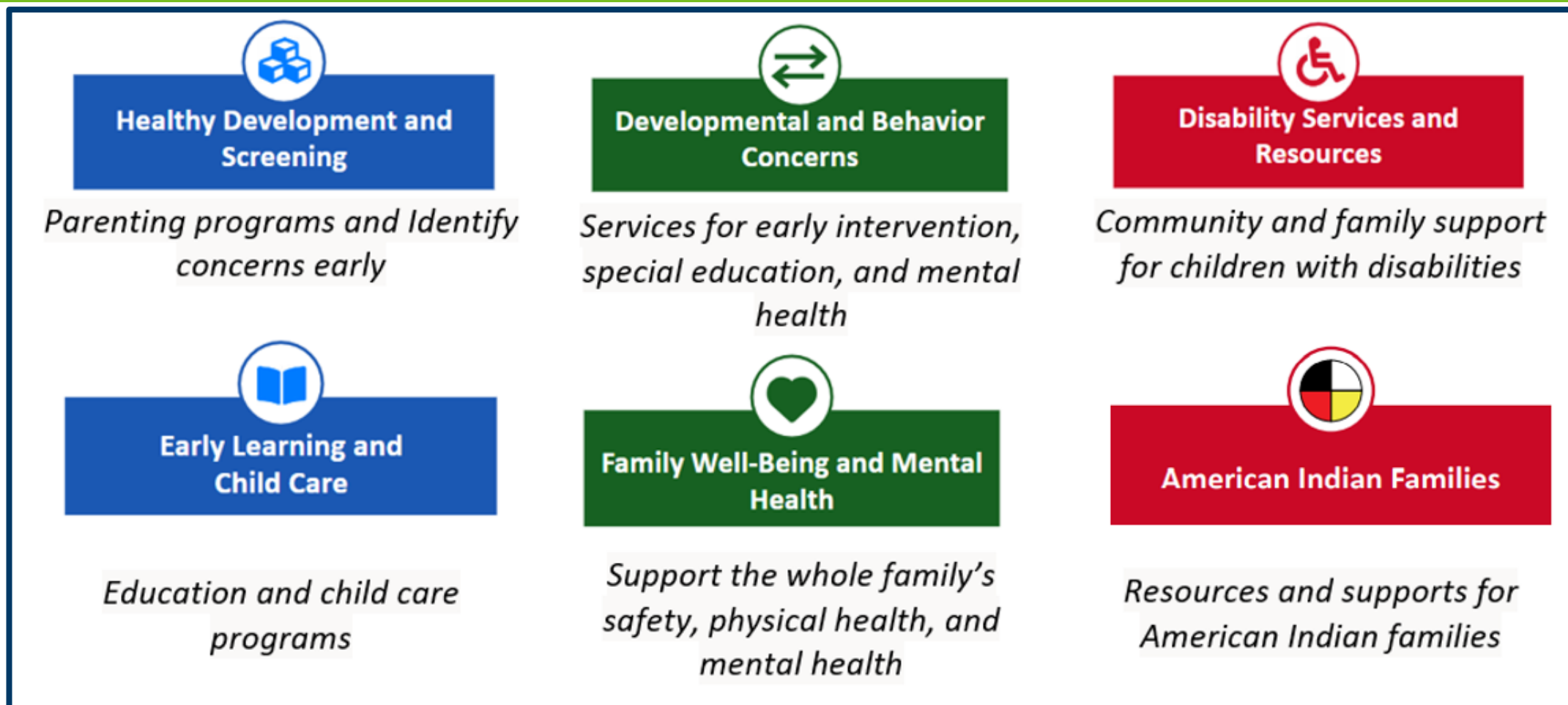
MN Help Me Connect is an online service navigator that connects expectant and parenting families with young children to services in their local communities that support healthy child development and family well-being.

- Over 12,000 program/service listings (*updated at least annually*)
- Search by keywords or content area (11 categories)
- Filter by location (city, county, home address)
- Translations in Spanish, Somali, Hmong (Karen very soon)
- Create an account and save favorites
- Helpful Resources
- Mobile friendly

www.helpmeconnectmn.org



Help families find services and resources (1)



Help families find services and resources (2)



Caregiving and Community Support

Resources for homeless, immigrants, refugees, teen parents, and other family situations



Legal Services

Low-cost or free legal services and information



Dental and Health Care

Find and access affordable dental care



Basic Needs

Food, housing, Transportation, plus more



COVID-19 Resources

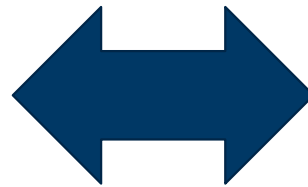
Support during crises

**See Help Me Connect
Table of Contents
handout.**

Help Me Grow and Help Me Connect

Help Me Grow

*Statewide System for
Part C (ages 0 to 3) and
Part B619 (ages 3 to
Kindergarten)
Referral to ECSE only*

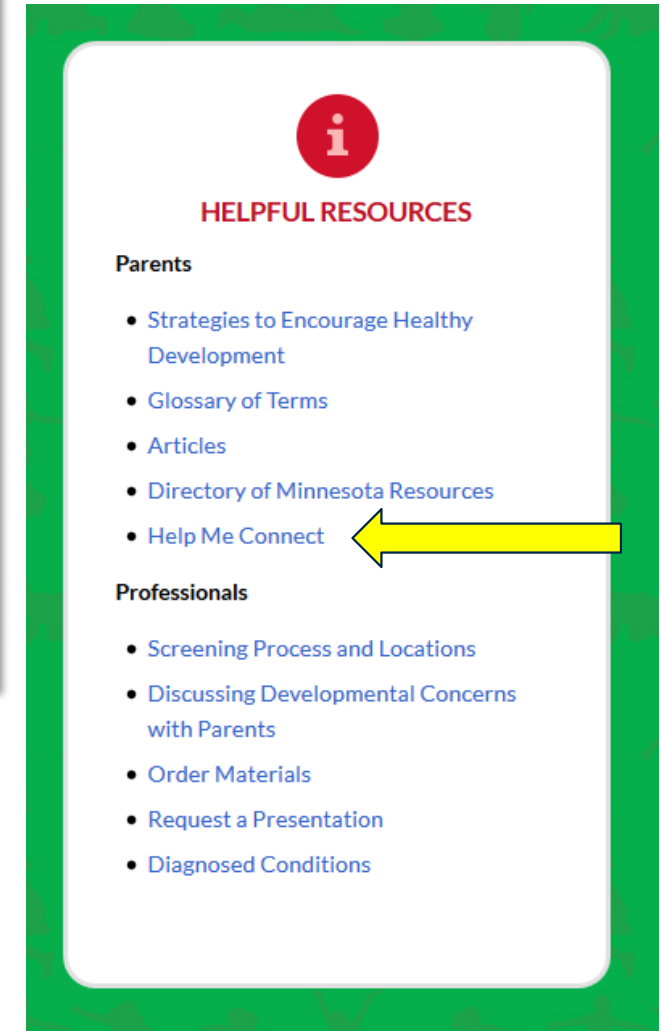
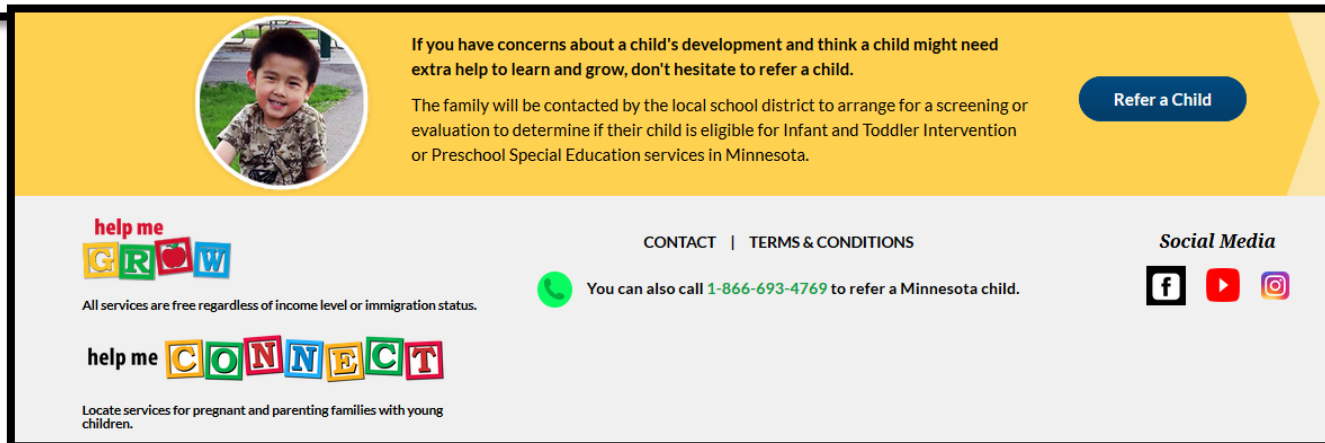
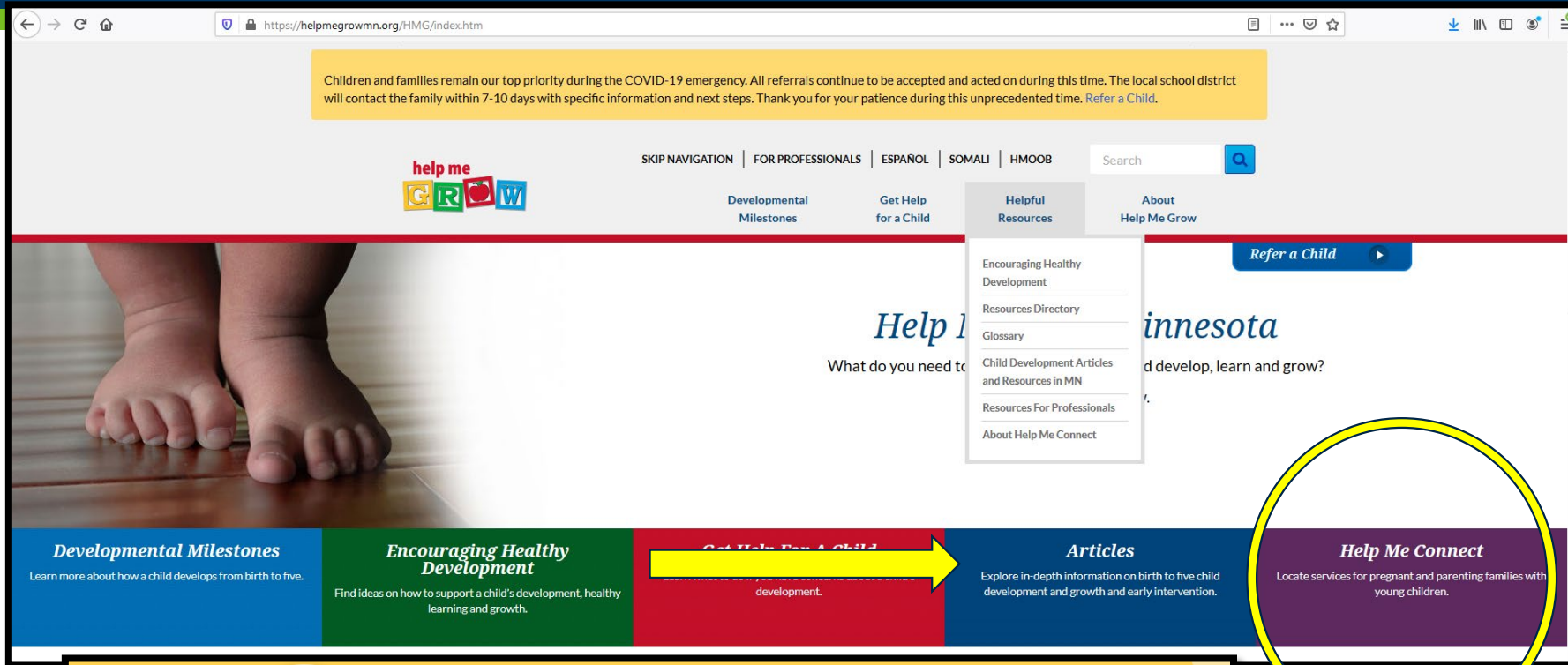


Help Me Connect

*Statewide Early Childhood
Services Navigator to
support prenatal individuals
and families with children 0
to 8 years of age.*



Help Me Connect linked on Help Me Grow



Priorities and Next Steps

We connect families with resources to support the diverse needs of children across Minnesota.

Share Help Me Connect as a resource today!

Community services that empower families to stay healthy

help me **CONNECT**

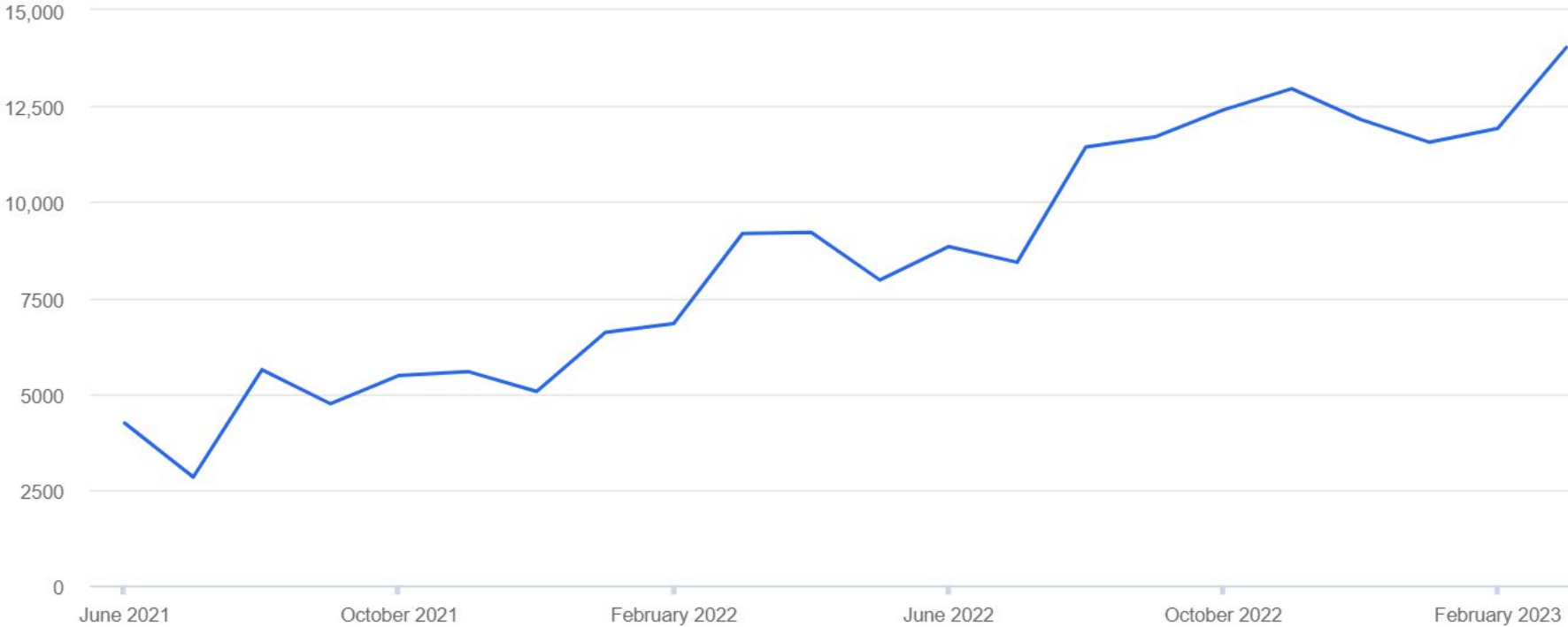
- Add culturally-specific services and community level services
- Add a new Prenatal tile and review existing categories based on suggestions
- American Indian Families resources review and redesign
- Create a provider referral mechanism “Resource Connector” for select programs types
- Supporting providers to use include Help Me Connect in their work with families (*See Family Questionnaire*)
- Ongoing evaluation will be used to prioritize improvements; social media; videos, and more

help me **CONNECT**

Help Me Connect Analytics

(June 2021 – March 2023)

Visits 214,759 No trend data ?	Page views 455,801 No trend data ?	Unique visitors 177,022 No trend data ?
---	---	--



June 2021 – March 2023



Top 10 search queries:

- Autism
- Housing
- Transportation
- Diapers
- EIDBI
- Food
- Mental Health
- Family Home Visiting
- ECFE
- Child Care

Live Demonstration

help me **CONNECT**

A navigator connecting expectant families, families with young children (birth – 8 years old) and those working with families to services in their local communities that support healthy child development and family well-being.

[About](#) [Help](#) [My Account](#)

Family and Community Resource Navigators are available in some areas to help expecting and parenting families connect to local early childhood and family well-being services.

I am looking for services and resources about ...

Click on the topics below to find what you are looking for. Services and programs listed may be available on a sliding fee, covered by health insurance or free to families.



Healthy Development and Screening



mn MINNESOTA

Help Me Connect is an interagency collaboration between Minnesota's departments of Education, Health and Human Services.



help me GROW

Help Me Grow provides resources on infant and young child development, and what to do when there are concerns.



✉ For questions, more information, or to suggest a new resource, please contact us at HelpMeConnect@state.mn.us

[Terms & Conditions](#)

Share



Help us share and improve

Help Me Connect is evolving based on provider and community feedback!

- Share information with other providers and families.
- Videos and resources are available through the [About section](#) on Help Me Connect (flyer, rack card, poster).
- Training resources available in the [Help section](#) (live demos, videos available in June).
- Help us fill in the gaps. Let us know what's missing and suggested improvements – email: helpmeconnect@state.mn.us.



Thank You!

Michele Kvikstad

Early Identification & Intervention Coordinator

Michele.Kvikstad@state.mn.us; 651-201-3723

Shawn Holmes

Help Me Connect Coordinator

Shawn.Holmes@state.mn.us; 651-201-3641