



Help Me Grow Western New York (HMGWNY) was launched in 2011 as the first Help Me Grow affiliate in New York and one of the earliest in the country. HMGWNY has evolved over the past ten years, expanding from the original focus in Erie and Niagara Counties to the inclusion of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties in 2017-2018. Success has been achieved in promoting and leveraging required screenings, expanding the adoption of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ:SE-3) and in engaging early childhood educators, community-based providers, child health professionals, and others in the field.

Conducting a deep analysis of the early childhood environment in Western New York. Help Me Grow WNY engaged in strategic planning during 2020-2021. By gathering insights from peers and partner organizations across the region, it became clear that HMGWNY needed to narrow its focus on ways to leverage its impact in the early childhood sector and reach the ultimate goal of the Help Me Grow model, which is to develop and enhance a comprehensive approach to early childhood system-building in order to support the healthy development of all children.

Building a better early childhood system. Looking toward the future, HMGWNY will assume the role of systems builder, serving as a regional catalyst in forming a shared vision and data-informed action plan. HMGWNY will seek to align and strengthen community resources in a system that responds to the needs of young children and deploy the collective power of the early childhood system to advocate for policy change.

Strategic Priorities:



Support “action tables” working collaboratively to build a seamless system of supports responding to the needs of young children and families.



Supply data to inform action and measure progress.



Identify and collectively address gaps in resources and supports to ensure a well-functioning and responsive system of care and support.



Engage in policy advocacy for long-term sustainability of the system.

Why systems-building? Change requires multiple actors, and based on our conversations with partners, it became clear that children and families will be best served through a collaborative effort with shared goals and a vision for success in early childhood development. To build a comprehensive system in the region, HMGWNY will focus on two areas specifically, data and policy. Building a sophisticated data system to capture screenings and track outcomes will not only help service providers to identify gaps and solve problems but will provide a strong foundation for policy advocacy leading to transformative legislative change in the field of early childhood.

Implementing a system building approach requires creating and maintaining a high-performance team with CCNY, Inc. and Liffitt WNY sharing responsibility for achieving strategic goals. This includes a lean staffing model, adding two new positions – a HMG Systems Builder and HMG Data Manager. A Governance Assembly will be formed, comprised of cross-sector early childhood leaders to provide oversight and strategic guidance to HMGWNY in the years to come.

