

Dear Family,

Congratulations! Welcoming a new child into your family is one of the most exciting and intense experiences, one full of hopes, dreams, and challenges. We are excited to be on this journey with you!

By now, you have learned that your child has a hearing difference. (Some people may use the term hearing loss.) The amazing brains of babies and young children are learning every day. For babies and young children who have hearing differences, the first years of life are an especially critical time for developing language and communication, social connections, and early skills that lead to later learning in school and beyond. There are many people who can support you on your journey: family members and friends, your community, other families of children who have hearing differences, deaf or hard of hearing adults, members of faith communities, and health and education professionals to name a few. We are also here to help you and your child as you grow together.

Help Me Grow Minnesota is a referral system that provides information and resources for families as your child is growing and learning and connects you directly with supports and services when you have worries or concerns about their development. These services, which may be called early intervention services, are free of charge to all eligible children and families through local public school districts and cooperatives across Minnesota and 11 Tribal Nations who share land with us, regardless of family income or immigration status.

Your audiologist and pediatrician are required by law to connect all babies and young children who have hearing differences or other developmental concerns and their families to early intervention and preschool special education services. You may also make this connection directly for your child and your family online or through a phone call. Check out this online resource for families: [Help Me Grow MN \(www.helpmegrowmn.org\)](http://www.helpmegrowmn.org).

Online forms are currently available in:

- [Hmong \(www.helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/Refer/referhmoob/index.html\)](http://www.helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/Refer/referhmoob/index.html)
- [Somali \(www.helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/Refer/refersomali/index.html\)](http://www.helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/Refer/refersomali/index.html)
- [Spanish \(www.helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/Refer/referespanol/index.html\)](http://www.helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/Refer/referespanol/index.html)
- [English \(www.helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/Refer/index.html\)](http://www.helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/Refer/index.html)

You may also call Help Me Grow Minnesota directly at **1-866-693-GROW (4769)** to speak to a live person. Interpreters are available for every language.

Professionals from your school district or cooperative will contact you after this connection is made, usually in about a week or two. These people are trained and committed to supporting you and your baby or young child with the unique information, resources, and services you may want and need to help your child grow and learn.

If you would like more information or have any questions about early support services for your baby or young child and your family, please feel welcome to contact one of us directly. We are committed to supporting you and your child any ways we can.

Enjoy these early days and weeks of discovery! We encourage you to keep interacting and communicating as much as you can with your child to help language access from the start.

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