

# Information Sheet

## Help Me Grow / Early Intervention In Hamilton County

October 25, 2005

- Help Me Grow – a system of services in Ohio to children ages birth to their third birthday
- Ohio Department of Health is the lead agency for early intervention Part C services under the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA).
- Help Me Grow funding is disbursed to each county's Family and Children First Council.
- Ohio Family and Children First Councils were established by state law under Governor Voinovich to bring county governmental child-serving agencies together to better coordinate services for children with the most intense needs.
- Part C of the IDEIA – mandates that children 0 to 3 receive an evaluation to determine eligibility for early intervention services and the provision of service coordination for Part C eligible children.
- Children are determined eligible for Part C services through a comprehensive standardized assessment or by having a medical diagnosis as identified by the Ohio Department of Health.
- Local school districts have a responsibility for Child Find meaning they need to make every effort to locate and evaluate any child age 0 to 21 with a suspected disability. They are not responsible to provide services to children 0 to 3.
- Ohio (Department of Health) has been found to be out of compliance by the Office of Special Education Programs (federal monitoring office for IDEIA compliance) for not meeting the 45 day timeline for entry into the EI system.
- Children who have a substantiated case of child abuse must be referred for a Part C evaluation under the CAPTA law (Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act). This has added to the number of assessment completed for eligibility.
- Hamilton County has a target number of 925 children that should be assessed each year.

- County boards of MRDD are the largest providers of early intervention services across the state. Not all MRDD's provide the same set of services within the Help Me Grow system of their county.
- Hamilton County Board of MRDD offers families a choice of an early intervention specialist to assist with meeting the developmental needs of their child. Consultative OT, PT and speech therapy is also provided. Services are at no cost to the family and supported mostly by local levy dollars.
- Lighthouse Youth Services is the central coordinating cite for Part C services. They also provide the majority of the mandated service coordination. The county number to access services is 281 – GROW.