



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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John R. Kasich / Governor

Memo #14-06

To: Help Me Grow Central Coordination, Early Intervention Service Coordination, and Home Visiting Contract Managers

Copy: Family and Children First Council Coordinators, DODD, and HMG staff

From: Lea Blair, Chief *LB/BC*
Bureau for Children with Developmental and Special Health Needs

Subject: Help Me Grow with Books Literacy Initiative

Date: March 18, 2014

During the time of pregnancy through age five, every child's brain forms connections for simple, then complex functions; prunes or reduces these connections; then creates more. This time of life is unparalleled for brain growth, development, and inter-connectivity, which literally determine the structure of every child's brain for his or her entire life. The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University has produced In Brief documents that make the science of brain development accessible to the public. While we have learned that genetics play a part in when brain connectivity occurs, the child's individual experiences determine whether brain connections are strong or weak. Source: In Brief: The Science of Early Childhood Development www.developingchild.harvard.edu

Ohio Help Me Grow is excited to launch its new early literacy initiative on March 17, 2014, *Help Me Grow with Books*, within Help Me Grow Home Visiting and Help Me Grow Early Intervention in order to help provide opportunities during early childhood to build that strong foundation for academic and life success. In collaboration with Scholastic and their philanthropic partnership with medical providers, known as Reach Out and Read (ROR), *Help Me Grow with Books* supports opportunities to encourage school readiness through the contribution of low-cost books. Participating authors in the program have agreed to accept reduced royalties on books sold through the ROR program in order to provide invaluable literacy and foundational language skills to more than 4 million children and their families annually.

With the *Help Me Grow with Books* program, each child enrolled in Help Me Grow Early Intervention, Help Me Grow Home Visiting, or MIECHV may receive a maximum of **five (5)** books per calendar year. Providers may order books five at a time, one at a time, or any variation.

You can access the *Help Me Grow with Books* webpage through the Providers Resources page on the Help Me Grow website found here: <http://www.helpmegrow.ohio.gov/Resources/HMG%20Provider%20Resources.aspx>. Help Me Grow funds the program, so pricing is not available on any of the pages.

The ordering process for the books involves an online order form, similar to the process used to order Help Me Grow literature. Providers submit book orders via an online form, using one form per child. Submitted orders go directly to the vendor we currently use for the literature orders and program referrals. The vendor will retrieve all orders sent over 24 hours; then send to ODH for review and approval. Once approved, ODH sends the orders to Scholastic for fulfillment. Scholastic is responsible for delivering orders to the provider. Expect this process to take 3 weeks from the date of order. Should issues arise during the order process, we will notify providers directly.

We are thrilled to have an additional opportunity to support the early literacy development of the children and families we serve in Ohio. Please pass the vital information along to your service coordinators and home visitors so we can get every child in Ohio ready to read and succeed!