



SLO County Help Me Grow is a county-wide system that supports children and their families by providing free developmental screenings and linkages with community services to promote healthy growth and development for all children from birth to age five. Help Me Grow brings together families, pediatricians, early care and education, and human service providers to ensure that San Luis Obispo County's children reach their optimal potential.

FEBRUARY'S HERO

Maddie Torrey,
*Program Specialist, San Luis Obispo
County Help Me Grow*

Maddie Torrey is a champion for children, embracing families' unique identities and circumstances as she provides guidance on developmental milestones, screenings and support during their critical early years.

As a Program Specialist for Help Me Grow (HMG) San Luis Obispo County, Maddie is the first voice parents and caregivers hear when they call with questions or concerns about how their baby/toddler/young child is doing. Maddie leads the Centralized Access Point, a new family resource hub in our county that connects families to developmental screenings and support services in the community. Colleagues say Maddie's warm demeanor, knowledge and empathetic listening skills put families at ease as they navigate the health system and receive referrals to helpful resources. This has become increasingly important given the isolation and overwhelming feelings associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Maddie's background certainly lends itself to her current position. She was a Child Development major, taught preschool for nearly ten years, and has a master's degree in Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education. Before joining the Help Me Grow team, Maddie worked as an in-home behavioral interventionist, implementing Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

therapy with children with disabilities. At HMG, Maddie uses her expertise to walk alongside families as they use screenings as valuable tools to highlight their children's skills, personality traits and learning styles. These screening "snapshots" can also help to identify children who may be at risk for delays and link them to services early, when there is the best potential for positive impact.

In addition to her efforts with Help Me Grow, Maddie has been instrumental in the monthly Clothing Closet with Children's Resource Network, a partnership that provides clothes to kids and families throughout SLO County. Maddie was equally vital to the opening of the Help Me Grow Family Resource Center, a family-friendly, safe environment where families can receive any needed support from the HMG team and other local agencies.

**Thank you, Maddie.
You are a true Hands-On Hero.**



"Hands-on Heroes is a recognition program, coordinated with partner agencies, that honors individuals making a difference in the lives of young children and families. The year 2021 highlights Heroes in working in child growth and development. To learn more about "Help Me Grow" and "Hands-on Heroes," please visit slohelpmegrow.org and first5slo.org.