

Building Connections with Hmong Families:

**Culturally Competent Approaches to
Child Development**

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Supported by: Mai Chang (Arc Advocate)

This event was made possible by:



MN Act Early Team through the Institute on
Community Integration
Arc Greater Twin Cities

Event Sponsors

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

State systems grants support local work around the promotion of early screening and intervention around the CDC's "Learn the signs. Act early." campaign.

History and Culture

- Hundreds of years living in remote parts of East and Southeast Asia
- Farming way of life
- Clans
 - 18 mainstream Laotian clans
 - Close family structure
- Strong belief of ancestral lineage
 - All members of a clan are believed to be descendents of a single ancestor

Complex family system

- Hierarchy
 - Gender, age, social status
- Clan/Village leader → Elders → Parents → Married adults → Children (all kids and unwed adults)
- Spiritual Leaders (Shaman)
- Hierarchy dictates decision making
 - Younger generation look up the tier for support/information/guidance

Shamanistic belief system

- Strong spiritual connection to ancestors who govern and guide families through life
- Belief that spirits or ancestors can cause sickness, disabilities, and disease
- Many turn to Shamans for guidance
- Strong belief of karma
- The need for the body to be intact at death for reincarnation

Role of Children

- Many children = many helping hands
- Help in the fields
- Older children babysit younger children
- Continue family lineage
- Children expected to care for parents in old age
- Can make or break a family's status



Secret War in Laos

- Support of US against communism in Laos
- Exodus to the United States and beyond



Holding onto Culture

- A whole new world
- Being relevant with American society while preserving own culture
- Belief system still maintained



Congenital disability VS acquired disability



Hmong view on disability

- Typical life of someone disabled/ special needs
- Birth to death with family
- Responsibility of disabled passes from parents to siblings
- Not expected to marry or be independent
- There is still a lot of personal shame and embarrassment.
- Old views of disability

How do people with disability fit within Among families and community?

- Burden to family and possibly to future family if person with disability marries
- Lack of understanding
- Fear of judgment
- Changing ideas



How do Hmong parents view child development?

- Physical development plays a big role in Hmong child development.
- Healthy physical growth = good child development.
- Very little emphasis put on anything else



Where do Hmong families get their information and support?

- Immediate family →
 - Parents / Grandparents / Elders
 - Siblings
 - Aunts and Uncles
 - Cousins (also considered as siblings)
- Shaman →
- Medical Professional / Internet

How can professionals best approach families about developmental concerns?

- Education/ Awareness
 - Thorough explanations
 - Have visual aids, if possible
- Nod and agree = being polite NOT that there is understanding
- Understand they are regular families with little medical backgrounds

Mainhia and Yia



Fonte (age 13)

Maly and Eddie



Jiena (age 8), Eddison (age 6), and Mason (age 2)

How can professionals, educators, and healthcare providers build the best relationships with Hmong children and families?

Awareness:

- Cultural awareness and a simple “Nyob Zoo”
- Generational differences
- Allow families to speak
- Offer visual aid and through explanation
- Allow trusted family members to be present and possibly interpret for them (if non English speaking)
- Be understanding of parents wanting to seek own family support before final decision-making

Be open to spiritual treatment



Resources available to Hmong families:

- Hmong Helping Hands
- The Arc Greater Twin Cities
- Learn the Signs. Act Early.
- Help Me Grow



Hmong Helping Hands



Mission:

To support, educate and empower families of chronic illnesses and disabilities while dispelling stereotypes and stigma within the community

Hmong Helping Hands



The Arc Greater Twin Cities is a non-profit grassroots advocacy organization serving the seven-county metro area.

- Services span the lifetime
- Issues range from early intervention, education & the transition to adulthood to employment, housing, health care access, guardianship & more



www.arcgreatertwincities.org



Mission

The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, actively supporting them and their families in a lifetime of full inclusion and participation in their communities.

Programs & Services The Arc offers:

- *Abuse Prevention & Awareness*
- *Advocacy*
- *Common Connections (mentoring)*
- *Information & Assistance*
- *Lifetime Assistance Program*
- *Networking/Support Groups (including Hmong groups)*
- *Self-Advocacy*
- *Sibshops/Sibling programs*
- *Public Policy Advocacy*

www.arcgreaterwincities.org


The Arc
Greater Twin Cities



Individual Advocacy

- Ongoing work with a family or individual on an identified disability-related issue
- Advocates work with families and individuals to identify critical needs & develop an individualized plan of support
- Advocates also provide coaching around problem-solving, communication, advocacy skills & mentoring to help parents increase their skills

www.arcgreatertwincities.org


The Arc[™]
Greater Twin Cities

It's time to change how we view a child's growth.

4 feet

5 years

4 years

3 years

2 years

18 months

1 year

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

It's time to change how we view a child's growth.

3 years
Shakes affection for playmates.
uses four- to five-word sentences.
points to object like named.

2 years
imitates adults (kisses after adult kisses).
points to interesting objects.

18 months
plays pretend (kisses, hugs, or toy phone).
uses simple gestures (waves, bye-bye).
names sounds (bark, moo, and "ba").

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Learn your baby's milestones.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Your Child's Early Development is a Journey

Check off the milestones your child has reached and share your child's progress with the doctor at every visit.

6 MONTHS

12 MONTHS (1 YEAR)

18 MONTHS (1 1/2 YEARS)

4 YEARS

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

NATIONAL CENTER ON BIRTH DEFECTS AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Developmental Screening FACT SHEET

Important Milestones By the End Of 2 Years (24 Months)

Autism Spectrum Disorders FACT SHEET

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

CDC has free information to help educate parents about childhood development.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Every day you see them reach milestones. There are free resources to help you spot a few more.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Milestone Moments

One Week

Newborns begin to turn to the sound of a parent's voice during the very first week!

Talk to your baby to help her learn your voice.

www.cdc.gov/actearly

Milestone Moments

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

One Week

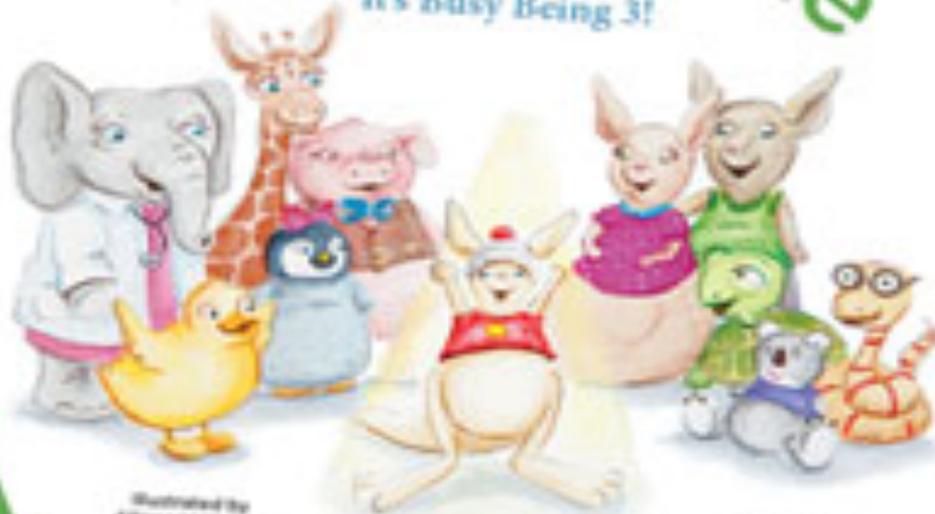
Newborns begin to turn to the sound of a parent's voice during the very first week!

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www.cdc.gov/actearly

Amazing Me

It's Busy Being 3!



Illustrated by
Alicia Williams

Written by
Julie Cook and
Laura A. Jana, MD



What is Help Me Grow?

- Help Me Grow provides resources for families to look at developmental milestones
- State-wide referral system
- School district will provide confidential screening or evaluation at no cost.
- For Minnesota children from birth to five-years-old, if found eligible, can receive services in their home, child care setting or school.
- These services are free regardless of income or immigrant status.

www.helpmegrowmn.org

Conclusion



- War refugees and now American citizens
- Culture still very ingrained
- Beliefs slowly changing to include the disabled
- Relationships built by being culturally sensitive and aware
- Families only want their children to be happy and healthy just like everyone else.

Hmong LTSAE materials

Coming soon!

- Milestone Moments brochure
- 1pg development flier

Visit www.lend.umn.edu

Raws koj tus menyuam
cov theem ntawm nws
txoj kev loj hlob



Koj tus menyuam txoj kev loj hlob thaum
nws tseem yau no muaj ntau qib. Siv
daim ntawv no taw koj kev txog tej qib
no thiab yuav soj ntsuam yam twg thiaj
yuav pab tau koj.

Rau cov niambxiv muaj menyuam yug tshiab
mus rau 4 xyoo.



Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/ActEarly
1-800-CDC-INFO

Speaker Information

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Webinar information

This webinar has been recorded and can be found at:

www.lend.umn.edu

Under webinar tab

All materials from the webinar, including translated LTSAE materials, will be available here.

Thank you