

## FIRST STEPS FAMILIES OCTOBER 2012

The editor of First Steps Families is a mom that had a child in the First Steps program. Hopefully the information shared will provide you with helpful resources for your family. To conserve resources and to make sure you don't miss out on helpful information, please send your e-mail address to Connie Coovert at [cccoov2@uky.edu](mailto:cccoov2@uky.edu) to receive the newsletter electronically.



Connie

### ONE FAMILY'S STORY

My name is Connie Coovert. My husband Dave and I live in Lexington and are the proud parents of a daughter and son. When our son was about 18 months old we began to worry because he still was not saying any words and did not appear to understand a lot of what we said to him. By the time he was two there wasn't much change so we began looking for help and that's when we found First Steps.

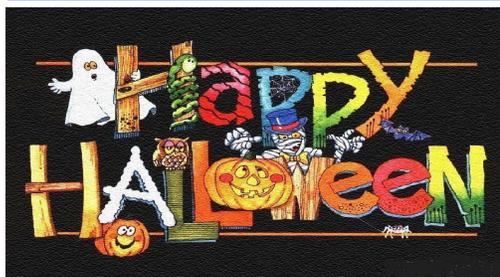
First Steps staff helped us to get the services our son needed. Speech and occupational therapies along with Developmental Intervention became a part of our day-to-day routine. Of course I was hoping for a quick solution to our problems, but usually solutions take time. As it turned out, our son made great progress. Today he is a college senior majoring in music performance and plays both guitar and viola. I believe his accomplishments are due, in part, to the early intervention services he received through First Steps.

Becoming involved with First Steps also gave me the opportunity to be in contact with other parents. It was great to find out that I was not the only other Mom in the world with a child like our son. I decided then that I wanted to help other families find information and network with one another. I was given the chance to work as a Parent Consultant for the First Steps program. My job is to provide training and information to service providers, parents, legislators and the general public. Please call or email me any time. My contact info can be found throughout this newsletter.

#### **Do you have a success story you would like to share?**

Never underestimate the power of your story. A well-told story has the potential to touch hearts and minds. While impersonally delivered facts can easily be forgotten or dismissed, a story lingers and mingles with all the other stories that shape our shared human experience. What you share will likely encourage other families in similar situations. Family stories can also help professionals receive the encouragement and motivation they need to continue in their work and to find new, creative ways to make a difference in a child's life. We would love to hear from you. If you would like some help "pulling" your story together we would be happy to help. Contact Connie at [cccoov2@uky.edu](mailto:cccoov2@uky.edu)

### QUOTABLE QUOTES



**A GRANDMOTHER PRETENDS SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE ON HALLOWEEN. ~ ERMA BOMBECK**

**THERE IS A CHILD IN EVERY ONE OF US WHO IS STILL A TRICK-OR-TREATER LOOKING FOR A BRIGHTLY-LIT FRONT PORCH. ~ ROBERT BRAULT,**

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## PARENT CONSULTANT

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We are on the Web:  
[http://chfs.ky.gov/  
dph/firststeps.htm](http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/firststeps.htm)  
Or  
[kyfirststeps.org](http://kyfirststeps.org)

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## Think Creatively

The early years of a child's life are a time when the fastest growth and development occurs. Take advantage of daily routines as a time to interact with your child.

For example, during diaper changes encourage eye contact while singing to your child. When shopping with your child, talk about the foods that you see, ask your child questions about them and help them to describe them. Have your child 'help' at meal times by letting them do things like put ingredients in a salad, have them help to stir foods.

Little ones love being "helpers"!

## PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

What is "People First Language"? The term came about primarily to recognize the fact that people with disabilities are first and foremost people, and should not be described by their disability alone. People First Language (PFL) tells us what a person HAS, not what a person IS. Keep in mind that one out of every 5 people has a disability of some kind and that these people are our friends, neighbors, co-workers, moms, dads, husbands, wives, kids and more. This largest minority group is the only one which any person can become part of, at any time! Some join at birth-others in the split second of an accident, through illness, or during the aging process. If it happens to you, how would you like to be described? Think of yourself, are you "myopic" or do you wear glasses? Are you "cancerous" or do you have cancer? Are you "freckled" or do you have freckles?

You may still hear people saying things like "He's a cripple" or "She's an epileptic" and even statements such as "He is wheelchair bound" or "She suffers from cerebral palsy". All these statements are archaic. PFL strives to eliminate stereotypes, focus on people's abilities, and promote dignity and respect. PFL avoids negative words that imply tragedy, such as "afflicted with", "suffers from", "victim of", etc. What should you say? Below are some examples:

- Instead of "He's an epileptic" you can say "He has epilepsy" or "He has a seizure disorder"
- Instead of "She had a Down's baby" you can say "Her baby has Down Syndrome"
- Instead of "He's confined to a wheelchair" you can say "He uses a wheelchair for mobility"
- Instead of "The blind lady" you can say "The lady with the visual impairment"
- Instead of "He's an autistic" you can say "He has autism"

Instead of "She's afflicted with dwarfism" you can say "She is of short stature"  
Always remember the person comes first!

## HALLOWEEN SAFETY

Halloween is one of the most exciting times of the year for kids—and one of the most stressful times for parents as they worry about sugar highs and safety. Here are a few Halloween safety tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics:

Plan costumes that are bright and reflective. Make sure that shoes fit well and that costumes are short enough to prevent tripping, entanglement or contact with flame.

Consider adding reflective tape or striping to costumes and Trick-or-Treat bags for greater visibility.

If a sword, cane, or stick is a part of your child's costume, make sure it is not sharp or too long. A child may be easily hurt by these accessories if he stumbles or trips.

Small children should never carve pumpkins. Children can draw a face with markers. Then parents can do the cutting.

To keep homes safe for visiting trick-or-treaters, parents should remove from the porch and front yard anything a child could trip over such as garden hoses, toys, bikes and lawn decorations.

A parent or responsible adult should always accompany young children on their neighborhood rounds.

Remain on well-lit streets and always use the sidewalk. If no sidewalk is available, walk at the far edge of the roadway facing traffic.

Only cross the street as a group in established crosswalks (as recognized by local custom). Never cross between parked cars or out driveways.