

FIRST STEPS FAMILIES APRIL 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 to receive the newsletter electronically or call me at 859-257-6427 to arrange for a hard copy.

Connie



DEVELOPMENTAL CONCERN ?

Maybe it starts as a gut feeling that something is wrong, or perhaps relatives have suggested that your child isn't developing skills as quickly as other children of the same age. Some might say things like, "Shouldn't Mary be feeding herself by now?" or "When Jack was Josh's age, he was already walking."

"But he's healthy and fine otherwise," you tell them. In the back of your mind, however, you wonder.

If you have concerns about your child's development, the most important thing to do is seek an expert opinion as soon as possible. You can do that by contacting your local early intervention program, First Steps. To contact the program in your area you can call toll free 877-417-8377. They will direct you to your local First Steps office.

LEARN THE SIGNS, ACT EARLY IN KENTUCKY

Kentucky parents, teachers and caregivers who want to understand a child's developmental milestones and recognize the early signs of autism or related disorders, will benefit from a statewide campaign that launched April 2 as part of Autism Awareness Month

The University of Louisville Autism Center at Kosair Charities has partnered with the University of Kentucky Human Development Institute, the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services and autism support groups to launch a program modeled after a national crusade. The campaign, "Learn the Signs. Act Early In Kentucky," will feature public service announcements, workshops, webinars and downloadable materials, all aimed at helping caregivers understand what is "typical" when it comes to a child's physical, social and cognitive progress.

According to the center's assistant director, Rebecca Grau, the primary objective for the campaign is to help Kentuckians recognize developmental delays so they can act quickly to seek intervention. "If children aren't passing certain milestones typical for their age, it's very important to talk with a physician," Grau said. "I just can't stress enough how important it is for parents and other caregivers to act early."

Dr. Harold Kleinert, executive director of the University of Kentucky Human Development Institute, said he expects the campaign to be effective because it takes a three-pronged approach of education, tools for families and physicians and pointing people toward available resources.

"The materials included in this campaign are great and address a critical state need," Kleinert said. "If we can get parents to put one of the campaign's childhood development charts on their refrigerator and mark off their child's milestones, then we've succeeded."

More information about the "Learn the Signs. Act Early In Kentucky" campaign are available at <http://louisville.edu/education/kyautismtraining/actearly> or by contacting Grau at 502-852-7799

PARENT CONSULTANT

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We are on the Web:
<http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/firststeps.htm>



NEW FIRST STEPS WEBSITE!

On March 1st, First Steps launched its new website. The address is kyfirststeps.org, and it contains lots of information including the Central Directory of Early Intervention Resources.

It does not replace the Cabinet website (address above) but is in addition to it.

“CHILDREN MAKE YOU WANT TO START LIFE OVER”

MUHAMMAD ALI

SPRING HAS SPRUNG! GET OUT AND ENJOY!



Walking is a great way to exercise with your little one and encourages healthy habits that will last a lifetime. Toddlers enjoy going for walks in a stroller or wagon as the weather begins to warm up. The fresh air is a nice change after months of stale indoor air during the winter. Toddlers enjoy walking with you for short distances and it is great exercise for them and a wonderful way to ensure a long naptime when you get home. Turn your walk into a nature walk by bringing along a paper bag and encouraging your toddler to collect leaves, sticks, and rocks as you walk.

BUTTON BATTERIES ALERT

The holidays are over, bringing many electronic toys, musical/talking books, mini remote controls, singing greeting cards and other electronics to homes and early learning and child care programs. Inside the battery compartment of these items are button-size, lithium batteries that can cause serious injuries when swallowed. These batteries can get stuck in a child's throat. Saliva triggers an electrical current that causes a chemical reaction that can severely burn the esophagus (food tube) in as little as two hours. Children under the age of 4 are at highest risk for the injury.

In 2010 alone, more than 3,400 button battery swallowing cases were reported in the U.S., resulting in 19 serious injuries and in some cases, deaths. To learn more, view the 2-minute video from The Battery Controlled, a campaign supported by Energizer® and Safe Kids Worldwide: <http://thebatterycontrolled.com/>.

Share the following safety information with caregivers, friends, and family members:

- * Look for any items that may contain coin-sized button batteries.
- * Place devices out of sight and out of reach of young children.
- * Keep loose or spare batteries locked away.

Keeping these batteries locked away and secured in devices is very important, but if a coin-sized button battery is swallowed:

- * Take the child to the emergency room immediately. Tell doctors and nurses that it might be a coin-sized, button battery.
- * Do not let the child eat or drink until an X-ray can determine if a battery is present.
- * Do not induce vomiting.
- * If possible, provide the medical team with the identification number found on the battery's package.

INFANT-TODDLER INSTITUTE



The 2012 Infant-Toddler Institute will be held in Lexington at the Lexington Convention Center & Hyatt Regency Hotel. Registration information will be available in late April 2012.

Some family scholarships will be available. For more information contact Connie Covert at cccoov2@uky.edu, or call 859-257-6427.