

FIRST STEPS FAMILIES MARCH 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



ONE FAMILY'S STORY

Our story:

When Joshua was born we did not know we were his parents. We learned that we would have the blessing of taking this medically fragile 4lb. 5oz. baby boy home when he was two weeks old. Joshua had spent his first two weeks of life in the NICU virtually alone except for his nurses. Joshua was born with very high levels of several illegal and prescription drugs in his system. We learned that his biological mother had also abused alcohol and also had had only one brief prenatal visit.

We knew that there would be hills to climb and battles to win but again we had no idea. We dubbed him Joshua because he had fought so hard to just be here and we knew he would have to continue to fight to stay here. Joshua was not in good health from the beginning at about three months old he was getting and keeping ear infections and this affected his hearing. Respiratory infections were always haunting us. He was at a very early age using steroids and nebulizers to help him breathe. We fought these issues until he was about one and a half years old. Then through the advice of his pediatrician we had his hearing tested. Joshua's hearing was impaired and it was determined that having tubes placed in his ears would help. At the same time his doctor suggested that he be tested in speech and for autism spectrum disorders due to observations he had made and some concerns we had. That evaluation showed that he was delayed in speech and that he was not autistic but had markers for SPD or Sensory Processing Disorder. We learned right around the same time that Joshua had delayed gastric emptying and significant acid reflux. He had trouble swallowing, eating, and threw up **A LOT**.

I believe it was at this point we got involved with First Steps and began our journey with speech therapy. We did not do OT at this point because we felt he needed to have as much speech therapy as possible. After several months of First Steps speech therapy Joshua was making huge strides in his speech. One of my goals I wanted set with his therapy was that he would say "momma." He was right around eighteen months old and had not said "momma." Well, let me tell you he did say "momma" within the first six months of therapy and has been saying it ever since and every time he does it is music to my ears.

We did decide to implement Occupational Therapy soon after because Joshua's sensory issues were affecting his daily living and they still continue to affect his life. But with the AWESOME support, guidance, knowledge, and therapy of our First Steps team Joshua is a lively three year old who will no doubt continue to flourish. Joshua will begin preschool in a few days and we were told that he does not qualify for preschool due to any speech delay that he ranked in 95th percentile in speech for his age group. This is a child who wasn't saying as simple a word as "momma" at nearly eighteen months old. Wow, what a testimony!!

We have also been blessed with having Joshua's biological half brother and soon to be full adopted brother. Matthew has some of the same issues as Joshua but we do not think as severe. We have started OT with him and have been able to use the same OT. We will begin our journey again.

I have said many times and will continue to say that if it hadn't been for our First Steps team I don't know where Joshua would be or what we would have done without them. Words will never express how much we love everyone at First Steps. Thank you

Our First Steps readers love to hear other family's success stories. Would you like to share yours? Contact Connie at cccoov2@uky.edu.

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

NEW FIRST STEPS WEB- SITE!

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.

Check it out!



FAMILIES HELPING TRAIN PROVIDERS

Dr. Robin McWilliam (at right, in the photograph below, with Amy DiLorenzo, a First Steps Parent) and Dr. Amy Casey from the Siskin Children's Institute in Chattanooga, Tennessee provided an intensive 4-day training last week on the Routines-Based Interview for a group of First Steps service coordinators from across the state.

The Routines-Based Interview (RBI) is a conversation that a First Steps service coordinator has with a family to learn about and collect information about the activities that occur in a family's (and a day care's) typical day and the roles of adults and children during the activities. It is designed to identify a child's abilities and determine educational/therapeutic needs. The interview produces a list of functional goals; they are functional because the family and teachers choose them on the basis of the child's abilities and needs within the context of their family and community.

A total of 16 families helped us with this training by offering to be interviewed by the trainees. We couldn't have done it without them! Thank you, First Steps families!!!



POISON PREVENTION WEEK MARCH 18-24

Each year since 2001 an average of nearly 78,000 unintentional nonfatal poisonings among children have been treated in emergency departments.

In 2010, more than 68,000 children were treated in emergency departments for unintentional poisoning-related incidents; almost 72 percent of those treated were under 5 years of age.

Of the approximately 2.4 million human exposure cases received by poison control centers in 2010, children under age 3 were involved in almost 40 percent. More than half of calls involved children ages 5 and under.

Learn the toll-free nationwide Poison Control Center number 1-800-222-1222) or keep it near every phone. This hotline will connect you to your local poison control center, which is staffed by medical professionals in poisoning management.

If you suspect your child has been poisoned, take the product to the phone when you call.

If your child has collapsed or is not breathing, call 911.

Additional information and educational materials are available on the Poison Prevention Week Council website at [www. poisonprevention.org](http://www.poisonprevention.org).

DID YOU KNOW?

Every eight seconds someone calls a poison center.