

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 or call me at 859-257-6427 to arrange for a hard copy.

Connie



### ONE FAMILY'S STORY

My name is Ellen and my husband Eric and I are the proud parents of two boys; Colton age 6 and Cody age 3. Our 3 year old has Down Syndrome. When we first found out the Cody might have Down Syndrome it was during a routine 20 wk ultrasound, that indicated that he had "soft markers" for Down syndrome. When he was born in June of 2010 he was a very healthy happy beautiful little boy. The initial shock and fear of having a child with Down syndrome was an adjustment for me and although I loved my son dearly I was very frightened. I had no idea what to expect or how to make sure he grew to his fullest potential. That's when First Steps entered our lives, at 3 months old we had our initial visit with our Service Coordinator and that set things in motion...we were amazed by the loving, caring, compassionate individuals that stepped into our lives to assist with Cody's growth and development and to offer guidance to us. They helped us get the services he needed and became not only advocates in that sense but also a very wonderful addition to our "family".

I was so impressed with the care and attention that we received that I pursued a career with LifeSkills and have now become a very strong, advocating parent for my son and for the First Steps program. I have been asked several times to share our story and do so with pride and enthusiasm each time, hoping that I can reach just one individual and show them how important early intervention is. First Steps changed our lives, they gave us direction, hope and guidance during an uncertain time. Cody aged out of the program this past June and they eased the transition from First Steps to Preschool. I am now involved with the First Steps program professionally and offer my services to deliver our story, give advice from a parents view and to let people know how wonderful a program it is. Early intervention is the key and we are enormously thankful for the First Steps program!

First Steps not only helped Cody but they helped me too, they comforted me in a time of doubt, gave me reassurance and showed me that we were not alone. They took a very scary experience and molded into a part of our lives that has profoundly impacted us and others. They showed us a new path and took our hand and guided us down it. For that we are forever grateful!

### DO YOU HAVE A STORY 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)

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## PARENT CONSULTANT

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We are on the Web:  
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## Quotable quotes!

“Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home.”

— [Edith Sitwell](#)

## WHAT EXACTLY IS AN IFSP?

Children found eligible for First Steps have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) which is a plan that reflects a family’s concerns, priorities and resources with regard to the development of their infant or toddler. Families participate as partners in the planning, development, implementation and review of their IFSP. The IFSP process is unique to each family. Service coordinators and service providers recognize that families are diverse, and collaborate with family members to ensure the development of meaningful goals and related services that assist the family in improving their child’s functioning in everyday routines and activities.



## IT’S TIME TO QUIT SMOKING!

.Women who are planning a pregnancy or who think they might be pregnant should stop smoking and avoid being around sources of secondhand smoke, including others who smoke.

Smoking increases the possibility of preterm birth, miscarriage, stillbirth, bleeding problems and abnormalities of the placenta.

Babies born to smoking mothers are at high risk for stunted growth, breathing problems, asthma, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and behavior and learning problems.

Use of birth control pills combined with cigarette smoking dramatically increases the risk of cardiovascular problems, especially blood clots, in the mother.

Secondhand smoke is a dangerous health hazard to everyone, especially unborn babies, infants and children. It can badly damage their smaller, less-developed lungs and brains.

Health care professionals can help you quit smoking. There is also free help at the Kentucky Quit Line, 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669).

## IT’S SNOWING INSIDE!

If the bitter cold and snow are keeping you and your child indoors, why not play with “snow” in the warmth of your home.

Gather cotton balls to scatter on the floor or arrange on a sheet of paper. Infants and older babies will be fascinated by the soft wispy threads as you pull the cotton balls apart. Stack cotton balls together to build snowmen and create your own large snowflakes out of cotton balls.

Depending on the age of your child, you may want to use small amounts of glue to paste the cotton snowballs together or on construction paper. If your child has a tendency to put the cotton balls in her mouth, use other types of white balls to create your snow-balls. Try arranging ping pong balls or golf balls in the shape of a snowman and draw a snowman face on the top “snowball.” You can also lay a fluffy white blanket on the floor to create a more win-try scene for your infant's snow-time play.