

FIRST STEPS FAMILIES JUNE-JULY 2014

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

At the age of two we grew increasingly concerned that our son was not developing his speech and vocabulary age appropriately. Without knowing where to turn I asked my mother who was a public school teacher if she knew of any services that we might be eligible for. She had a very good friend who was working as a First Steps speech therapist and we gave her a call. Although she was not able to work with our child because she was out of the area, she referred us to the Point of Entry and we began our journey.

I was a young mother, still in college and staying busy with a little one during the day. The fact that services were offered in our home was such a blessing. Other alternatives with our insurance carrier would have required us to make weekly trips to Children's Hospital in Cincinnati, OH. Our son received several months of First Steps services at which point a transition plan was made for Preschool. During the end of the first semester of Kindergarten our son was no longer eligible for speech services because he was exhibiting age appropriate language skills. I believe the help we received through First Steps as an early intervention prevented us from needed services long term.

Several years later we adopted a child with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. She showed signs at birth that she would need several interventions. We knew to call First Steps. She was evaluated and began receiving physical and occupational therapy once a week. She is now 6 years old and is doing great!

I appreciate the relationship my family had with the service providers, therapists and service coordinators over the years. First Steps was the right program to meet the needs of our family.

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

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We are on the Web:
<http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/firststeps.htm>
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You have to love a nation that celebrates its independence every July 4, not with a parade of guns, tanks, and soldiers who file by the White House in a show of strength and muscle, but with family picnics where kids throw Frisbees, the potato salad gets iffy, and the flies die from happiness. You may think you have overeaten, but it is patriotism.

Erma Bombeck

SMILE, SMILE, SMILE!



Healthy teeth can last a lifetime. So teach kids good dental care at an early age. Even before the first tooth appears, wipe baby's gums with a clean, damp cloth after feeding.

Once the first tooth appears, begin brushing. Start flossing your child's teeth as soon as any two teeth touch. Once children begin brushing their own teeth, supervise them to make sure they are doing a good job.

Because letting food sit on the teeth promotes tooth decay, teach children to brush after meals. Bottles filled with milk or juice can also cause decay. So don't put children to bed with a bottle or let them walk around unattended with a bottle. If possible, wean kids from the bottle by age 1.

The American Dental Association recommends that you take your child to a dentist within six months of getting the first tooth and no later than 1 year old. Your child's dentist can tell you how often your child should get regular checkups thereafter.

5 MISTAKES PARENTS MAKE WITH CAR SEATS

You wouldn't think of not having a car safety seat for your infant or toddler, but are you using it the right way?

Safe Kids Worldwide estimates that three out of four children are too small for seatbelts, or are incorrectly restrained in car seats or booster seats. Don't join the crowd; avoid these mistakes:

- **Using a defective car seat.** Don't buy a used seat; you don't know its history. Avoid old ones (more than 10 years old), especially with missing parts or cracks. And never use seats that are missing a label or instructions, have been recalled, or were in a crash.
- **Using a forward-facing car seat too soon.** Until children are age 2, they should face the rear. When they're older than 2, and have outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for their car safety seat (depending on the seat's limitations), the car seat can face forward. Older children should be in booster seats until they're at least 4 feet, 9 inches tall (usually ages 8 to 12). Until age 13, all children should sit in the backseat.
- **Installing the car seat incorrectly.** Make sure it's tight, and never place the car seat in the path of an airbag.
- **Securing the harness straps incorrectly.** They should always be snug and straight. For rear-facing car seats, use the two lower slots, and strap the harness at, or slightly below, the shoulders. For forward-facing seats, use the top slot and strap at, or slightly above, the shoulders.
- **Positioning the chest clip incorrectly.** Snap the chest clip at armpit level for rear-facing car seats, and at mid-chest or armpit level for forward-facing ones.

