

FIRST STEPS FAMILIES FEBRUARY 2013

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 cccov2@uky.edu to receive the newsletter electronically or call me at 859-257-6427 to arrange for a hard copy.

Connie



HEALTHY PETS, HEALTHY PEOPLE

Pets provide many benefits to humans. They comfort us and they give us companionship. However, some animals can also pass diseases to people. These diseases are called zoonoses.

Although animals can carry germs, it is important to know that you are more likely to get some of these germs from contaminated food or water than from your pet or another animal you encounter. The CDC (Center for Disease Control) has created a Web site to provide you with information about the health-related risks of owning and caring for animals. They encourage you to follow the links located throughout this Web site for general information about companion and wild animals and the diseases they can carry.

Many groups encourage people to enjoy the benefits of common household pets. By following CDC's simple tips on the **Healthy Pets, Healthy People Web site**, you can enjoy your pets while protecting yourself and your child against diseases they carry.

For more information go to <http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/>

ART FOR OUR FUTURE REMBRANDTS

Toddlers and even infants take pleasure in art projects. Just as important, craft activities promote cognitive development and improve motor skills. Very young children focus more on exploring with different materials rather than on creating final products. Art lessons for toddlers and infants should be safe, simple and sensory. All supplies should be nontoxic, in case of accidental ingestion.



Finger Painting

Infants may not have the motor skills to manipulate a brush, but they are able to use their hands to push paint around. The earliest "finger painting" probably involves baby food on a highchair tray. When toddlers are past the stage of putting everything in their mouths, they can move from edible finger paint to nontoxic paint on waxy paper.

Printing and Stamping

Objects dipped in paint or liquid leave impressions on paper. Babies can simply use their hands or feet as stamps. Toddlers can grip sponges and stamps with large handles. Bright fruit drinks make a safe dye. In addition, objects dipped in water make temporary prints on colored construction paper.

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

Quotable Quotes

"I continue to believe that if children are given the necessary tools to succeed, they will succeed beyond their wildest dreams!"

David Vitter,
U.S. Senator



SELECTING A FIRST STEPS SERVICE PROVIDER

Selecting the early intervention providers for your child is very important and should not be rushed or done without considering the needs of your family and child. Federal regulations require First Steps to begin early intervention services within 45 days from the time the referral is made. To assure your family's provider selection and timelines are achieved, your Service Coordinator can play an important role in this process while honoring your priorities.



Your family will experience service providers coming into your home and incorporating their early intervention services into your daily routines. You will develop a close working relationship with your service providers. Please consider the points below and enlist the help of your Service Coordinator before choosing your service providers:

- * The provider's educational background and years of experience working with infants and toddlers.

- * The experience the provider has working with children with your child's diagnosis or temperament.

- * Does the provider enjoy working with children with your child's temperament (active, quiet, busy, etc)?

- * Will the provider have regularly scheduled appointments with your child?

- * Does the provider have flexibility in scheduling appointments?

- * How will the provider include siblings and family members into your child's intervention services?

- * How will the provider communicate with your child's other service providers and care-givers?

- * Is the provider willing to participate in planning meetings concerning your child's First Steps services?

Some counties in Kentucky have provider shortages. This may occur in rural areas where providers are limited. If this happens, your Service Coordinator can help you try to locate other programs that may be able to help meet your child's specific need.

First Steps requires all service providers to have a professional license or certification in their specific discipline. First Steps also requires that all service providers have background checks for safety purposes. However, within each field, service providers have different areas of experience. Service providers also have varying strengths and different personalities. The needs of your family are important, so talk with potential service providers and investigate how they can help you and your child.

As a family, you have the right to request a change of service provider at any time and for any reason. You may also discharge from a service at any time. You do not need to feel bad if you want to try another provider. There are many different personality types and providers use many different intervention techniques. It is important that you find the right fit for your child and family. If your child is not making significant progress after several months you may want to try another provider to see if they have a different technique that may work better for your child. If scheduling with the provider is causing a hardship for you, because you have to take off work to meet with them, ask your service coordinator if there is another provider available that has more flexible hours. **If you have any concerns or questions about your service providers, please speak with your Service Coordinator or contact Connie Cooverrt, First Steps Parent Consultant.**