

FIRST STEPS FAMILIES NOVEMBER 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 cccoov2@uky.edu to receive the newsletter electronically or call me at 859-257-6427 to arrange for a hard copy.

Connie



WHAT IS "TOTS" AND HOW CAN I CHECK IT OUT?

Technology-Assisted Observation And Teaming Support System (TOTS): Kentucky's electronic recordkeeping and data system used by our state to track children, birth to three, as they enter and progress through First Steps.

Did you know that you can read your child's early intervention record on TOTS? TOTS is accessible on the Internet. First Steps parents have the right to inspect their child's full early intervention record at any time at the Point of Entry (POE). Through the Internet, parents can access a modified TOTS record that contains read-only critical sections of the early intervention record. The parent logon is child specific—if you have more than one child in First Steps, you will have a logon for each child.

Tell your service coordinator that you want a logon to TOTS. You will receive a form, *TOTS Parent Portal Acceptable Use and Safety Policy*, that you need to read. Then you will need to sign a *Parent Agreement for TOT Access via the Internet*.

The How to Register for TOTS Parent Access is a step-by-step instruction for obtaining a logon. The process is very simple and like other Internet web-sites with a secure logon/registration process. The first screen is the logon

THE MOST POPULAR TURKEY EVER!

The hand print turkey is a classic Thanksgiving craft for kids of all ages. It works well as a keepsake to record the size of the infant's hand on that Thanksgiving. The basic format of the craft involves painting the child's palm and fingers to create a turkey. Make this cute little painted turkey with your little one each and every year!

1. Paint your child's hand and all fingers with brown tempera paint using a medium-sized watercolor brush.
2. Help him press his hand onto white or light brown construction paper, or a paper bag cut into a square. Be prepared to demonstrate this first. Your child may enjoy making several handprints right away once you have shown him how. If you would like one for display, let him practice this a few times, then help him press his hand onto the final paper, making sure to gently push down each finger, and pulling his hand straight up.
3. Once the paint is dry, go back with a small paint brush dipped in red. and show him how to make a stroke along one of his finger prints to paint the red feather. (You can even do one or two with him hand over hand.) Toddlers are likely to make a bunch of paint swipes everywhere — that's OK. The idea is to get them painting.



4. Repeat step 2 with other colors: yellow, orange, green, black for the remainder of the fingerprint feathers.

5. Dip the stick end of your paintbrush in black and dot on eyes. Paint the turkey beard red.

PARENT CONSULTANT

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

Quotable

Quotes!

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.

Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.

Melody Beattie



EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY CONFERENCE

The fourth annual Early Childhood Family Conference will be held on November 22-24th at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Lexington, KY. This conference is open to families with children ages birth to five who are receiving state funded services through Public Health or Behavioral Health and their siblings up to age 12. This two and a half day conference is sponsored by Kentucky Partnerships for Children (KPFC), KY SEED, Department of Public Health and Department of Behavioral Health. Each year the mission of the conference is to empower families of young children with skills and resources so that they can advocate and play an integral role in their child's service team. This is done through keynote speakers, breakout trainings, resource sharing and family activities.

The Early Childhood Family Conference is unique because families can attend with their children. A nursery, along with four other age range groupings and classes are provided for participants. Staff from Kentucky Partnership for Families and Children and partnering agencies, provide care and activities for the children during the training sessions for parents. Some of these activities include painting, pottery, music, games and guest speakers. In previous years a fall festival has been held on Saturday evening with a trick or treat trail, games and prizes. This year we will host a fall festival with a Thanksgiving theme. Partnering agencies and community organizations are welcome to come and participate in this event and share resources with families.

If you are interested in registering for this event, please contact Laura Beard at laura@kypartnership.org.



READING TO YOUR BABY

Have you ever wondered how reading to your baby, especially a newborn, could possibly be beneficial? Your little one can't really understand what is being read, nor can he or she talk yet, so how in the world could she benefit from your reading aloud long before she can talk?

Reading to babies and toddlers definitely promotes later communication skills, builds vocabulary and boosts memory, listening and attention skills. As you read to your baby he develops other important skills by looking at, pointing to and touching pictures. Babies hear different emotions in your voice as you read. Fine motor skills increase as they learn to turn pages in cardboard "chubby" books. Toddlers soon learn to "right" a picture if the book is turned upside down. Reading to young children also promotes the closeness between parent and child and can be a special time to soothe a child into sleep.

Try to pick a certain time each day to read to your child and make it a routine. Don't worry about finishing an entire book or even reading word for word. Sometimes just making animal sounds or talking about the pictures on each page can be enough. For young babies pick vinyl or cardboard page books with one large simple picture per page. For toddlers you can add texture books with crinkly & shiny pages to touch and explore. For older toddlers pop-up books become fun. All babies and toddlers enjoy books with real life pictures, as well as rhyming books and books with repetitive text.

Be sure to check with your local library since many offer story times just for babies and toddlers, geared to their attention span and developmental level. Have fun!