

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



EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

The mission of the Kentucky First Steps System is to help Kentucky's families meet the developmental needs of their infants and toddlers who have delays or disabilities. First Steps does this by providing services that help children learn, talk and play. These services are called early intervention services.

The Kentucky First Steps System may look different from what you expect. First Steps services are provided in places where your child lives and plays. Early intervention providers will not work with your child while you watch or are in a nearby room. You are a very important part of your child's early intervention team. The professionals working with your child will be including you in every session. They will teach you activities to use with your child throughout the day. Research shows that very young children learn best this way.

We work closely with you to provide the kinds of supports that best meet your family's priorities and your child's needs. We will be talking about these supports throughout your time with First Steps. As your child grows and changes, the kinds of supports your family will need may change as well.

Things Every Parent Should Know About First Steps

All staff that work in First Steps are qualified professionals who must meet state personnel standards. They are all screened before they come to meet with you and your child.

The relationship you develop with your First Steps team is an important relationship for both you and your child. Communicate clearly to your team what you think is best for your child. Work with your team and advocate for your child. Don't be afraid to speak up if you think things are not going well.

You and your First Steps team create an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) for your child. Every child's plan is individually designed to fit priorities and needs. The progress that a child makes is based on many factors: Your child's unique learning characteristics, the skills needed to learn and the number of opportunities to practice the skill. Research shows that more services do not result in better or faster progress. It's the practice throughout the day that makes the difference.

Your doctor or specialist may prescribe a certain amount of hours of therapy for your child. Early intervention providers will teach you activities to use with your child. This is called a consultative model of service delivery. The team, which includes you and the professionals working with you, will determine the number of hours of early intervention services needed for your child based on the needs of your child and the length of time needed to teach you the strategies.

As a parent you and your child have certain rights under federal law. Please check your Family Handbook to review your rights.

PARENT CONSULTANT

Connie Covert
229 Taylor Ed. Bldg.
Lexington, KY 40506
1-859-257-6427
cccoov2@uky.edu

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

Quotable

Quotes!

“You are always in my thoughts. When you were little, I knew your whereabouts at any given moment. Now that you are...off on your own, I still always know where you are, because I keep you in my heart.”

— [Elizabeth Berg](#)



WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We need your help! As the parent or guardian of a child who has received First Steps services, you know how important it is that the services be provided in a professional, timely and family friendly manner. Every year we ask families to complete a survey to let us know how we are doing and how they believe their child has progressed. The results of this survey are reported yearly to the U.S. Department of Education as part of Kentucky's Annual Performance Report.

The survey has been prepared and will be sent out sometime soon. They will be sent electronically to First Steps Families that have provided us their email address. When you receive it please fill it out and send it back in, The “snail mail” surveys will be sent in early September. Please keep an eye out for it, fill it in and return it. It will only take a few minutes of your time and the information will be used to improve the quality of the services we provide.

Please feel free to send any additional comments you may wish to share to chfs.firststeps@ky.gov. You are welcome to contact the state lead agency at 1-877-417-8377 or Connie Covert, First Steps Parent Consultant at 859-257-6427 should you have any questions.

HOW IS KENTUCKY DOING?

When infants and toddlers get a strong start, our state and our nation prosper. There are more than 12 million infants and toddlers in the United States, many spending their most vulnerable years in circumstances that place them at risk developmentally. But with the facts about babies and toddlers in our state, we all can support policies that ensure their success and their readiness for school. The ZERO TO THREE Policy Center recently updated our State Baby Facts, which tell the story about how the youngest children are doing in our state and across the U.S.

www.zerotothree.org/policy/statebabyfacts

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Everything that happens between a child and parent and child and teacher is a teachable moment. To give a more structured definition, a teachable moment is a learning opportunity for a child to acquire new information, values, morals, a new behavior or a new skill, or a new way of expressing and coping with an emotion. While the opportune time for interaction with your baby is during the "quiet and alert" phase, we teach our babies constantly by the way we respond to their needs. Going to them when they cry, cuddling and making eye contact while feeding, and talking and singing to them are all ways our babies begin to trust us and the world around them.

The natural curiosity and boundless energy typical in small children provides fertile ground for teachable moments. Literally every activity you participate in during the day can be utilized in some way. Asking questions about what you see, pointing out colors and shapes in the supermarket, comparing something familiar with something that is not, are just a few ways you teach your child about the world. Remember also that your children are watching you. The behaviors and values they see you practicing are the ones they will emulate. They learn to be kind to others by observing your kindness. When you demonstrate calmness in the face of frustration, they are learning patience and self-control. Even simple acts such as driving with caution and following traffic laws teach your child about good citizenship!

First Steps Family Newsletter is emailed each month to families and contains articles and tips highlighting current topics in early intervention, child development, and parenting. I also try to include Developmental Activities as a great way to interact with your child. Past issues are archived at kyfirststeps.org Check them out!