

FIRST STEPS FAMILIES APRIL 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



INCLUDING ALL CHILDREN

When most people think about inclusion they think about children with developmental delays being included in the typical classrooms within their schools. But inclusion should extend beyond the classroom and into the community. Parents may be hesitant to enroll their child with special needs in a typical recreation program for fear he or she will not be able to fully participate or that he or she will be made fun of or rejected. However, many parents choose to include their child in typical community programs and there are strategies listed below that they can use to help with successful inclusions.

- The most important starting point is finding an activity that is of interest to your child. People form friendships based on common interests so finding this point of connection is the first step towards success.
- Look for a recreation provider that has a welcoming attitude. Do they have a welcoming message in their flyers and brochures? Do they welcome questions and suggestions? Do they encourage family participation?
- Look for programs that promote cooperation rather than competition; involve children with a wide range of abilities; allow children to progress at their own pace; offer activities that encourage lasting friendships.
- Find someone within the program who is open to the idea of inclusion and is willing to work with you. This probably will not be the first person you approach. You may have to make contact with several people before finding the right person. Remember to present your child in a positive light and highlight his or her strengths and abilities. Also highlight the benefits your child will be to the program. The program will be seen as progressive; inclusion benefits all children; inclusion promotes diversity.
- Observe the activity ahead of time and determine if any adaptations or modification need to be made. Think about how simple modifications can be made to allow for successful participation. Can directions be presented in a different way? Can equipment be easily modified? Can distractions be eliminated? Can visual or verbal cues be used to help the child? Remember to think outside the box.
- Prepare your child. Are there skills that can be practiced ahead of time? Let your child know what is going to happen.

The road to inclusion is not always easy, but forming early friendships and connections in the community is important for all children.



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

Quotable Quotes

"It's not only children who grow. Parents do too. As much as we watch to see what our children do with their lives, they are watching us to see what we do with ours. I can't tell my children to reach for the sun. All I can do is reach for it, myself."

~Joyce Maynard

PLAY IN ANOTHER KIND OF NURSERY



Looks like Spring is finally here and what better time to enjoy all the fun things to do at an outdoor plant nursery/garden center. Let your baby or toddler touch and listen to the wind chimes on display, tour the greenhouse, see and smell all of the beautiful flowers and plants and watch the fish in the water garden pond (the bright-colored fish swarm up to greet kids because they expect food). A baby carrier is perfect to navigate the tight corners. Have fun!!

ARE YOU ON THE LISTSERV?

The First Steps Family Listserv is used to send informational emails from time to time for First Steps families. Examples of things we feel are useful to you and your family may include the monthly First Steps Family Newsletter, the yearly family survey, information about trainings and conferences or other helpful resources for your family, etc. Your email address will not be shared with any other program. The listserv is maintained by the state lead agency staff in Frankfort.

If you know of other First Steps families that are not a part of the listserv they can join by sending a blank email to join-first-steps-families@listserv.ky.gov

If you wish to no longer receive First Steps Family listserv emails, you can unsubscribe by sending a blank email to leave-first-steps-families@listserv.ky.gov



Thursday, July 25-
Saturday, July 27
2013

Lexington Convention Center

Save The Date!

Early Bird Registration Opens April 15th

Family Scholarships are available for the 2013 Infant Toddler Institute in Lexington, KY. Scholarships are available for one day or all three. If you have an infant, toddler or preschooler you won't want to miss out on the opportunity to hear from some of the leading experts in early childhood here in our state. Child care is not provided at the institute. For more information about registering please contact Connie Coovert at cccoov2@uky.edu; 859-257-6427 or Laura Beard at laura@kypartnership.org, 502-875-1320. A limited number of scholarships are available. Registration must be completed by May 15, 2013. Sponsored by Kentucky's System to Enhance Early Development and Kentucky Partnership for Families and Children, Inc.