

FIRST STEPS FAMILIES JULY - AUGUST 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



DEVELOPMENTAL CONCERNS ?

Maybe it starts as a gut feeling that something is wrong, or perhaps relatives have suggested that your child isn't developing skills as quickly as other children of the same age. Some might say things like, "Shouldn't Mary be feeding herself by now?" or "When Jack was Josh's age, he was already walking." "But he's healthy and fine otherwise," you tell them. In the back of your mind, however, you wonder.

If you have concerns about your child's development, the most important thing to do is seek an expert opinion as soon as possible. You can do that by contacting your local early intervention program, First Steps. To contact the program in your area you can call toll free 877-417-8377. They will direct you to your local First Steps office.

TIPS FOR TRANSITIONING FROM FIRST STEPS

If your child has been receiving Early Intervention services you have been working with other First Steps providers to figure out how best to help your child learn. Together, you drew up an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). All of this is done in accordance with "Part C" of the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA).

As your child approaches his third birthday, there are some changes ahead. At age three, Early Intervention (Part C) comes to an end and "Part B" of IDEIA may begin. Part B covers children with disabilities ages 3-21, has different eligibility criteria from Part C and changes the way that services can be delivered. To begin this transition, your Service Coordinator will work closely with you in the months prior to your child's birthday to develop a Transition plan so that you will have the information you need about resources and supports for your child and family.

The following tips will help you prepare for the time when your child turns three and is no longer eligible for First Steps:

- ~ Start early. Families can never begin the transition process too soon. Transition takes time and planning. Even as early as your child's second birthday, you may want to explore program options that are available in your community for three-year-olds.
- ~ Keep a folder with information about your child all in one place. Keep evaluation information, medical information and anything that can help you in providing accurate information to the preschool professionals during the transition period.
- ~ Be prepared to share methods that are successful for you in working with your child at home.
- ~ Visit potential programs for your child. Call ahead to schedule a convenient time.
- ~ Talk with other families of children who have already transitioned into programs in your community.

PARENT CONSULTANT

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

Quotable Quotes

A baby will make love stronger, days shorter, nights longer, bankroll smaller, home happier, clothes shabbier, the past forgotten, and the future worth living for."



COTTON CANDY ANYONE ?

You may not have been to the fair since you were a teenager but it's time to hit the carousel again. You will love it!

Summer brings with it a parade of fairs and carnivals in just about every city and town in America. Those annoying carnival workers begging you to throw a dart at the balloons or toss a ball at the milk bottles that never fall will seem like Disneyland when viewed through the eyes of your baby.

There's usually a train to ride, a boat bell to clang and the carousel is a hit with nearly every baby on the block. What little one doesn't like horses and lights and waving to mom and dad at every turn?

Rides you may have discounted as a teen or part of a couple without children hold new magic now that you have a baby.

So when you see the telltale signs of the fair or carnival coming to a town near you, make plans to go!

Most fairs have dozens of animals for babies to gape at in addition to rides for little ones so make sure to bring your camera so you can capture the moment baby first lays eyes on pigs and turkeys and cows. Just you watch. Before you know it you'll be one of *those* parents. Standing and waving for all your worth each time your little one looks up to see if you're watching.

Even if your baby is too young to go on the rides, just strolling around, taking in the lights and music can be a magical experience!

So check the papers or log online and make sure you don't miss all the action coming soon to a town near you!



PARENT VOICES COUNT

There are many ways for families to become involved with planning and developing Early Intervention services in Kentucky. One way is to be a Parent Representative on the **Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)**, a state council appointed by the Governor where families can learn how the Early Intervention system works and be on the forefront of receiving information that affects the EI system. Parents have the opportunity to "sit at the table" and voice their opinions with other key advisors to the Department for Public Health, the lead agency for the Early Intervention program.

Another way is to be a Parent Representative on the **District Early Intervention Council (DEIC)**. This group meets to discuss and take action on issues affecting young children with special needs in your community. The DEICs encourage local interagency coordination, identify early childhood issues and help plan district service delivery systems for families of eligible infants and toddlers from birth to age 3. The DEICs often organize trainings or host guest speakers to bring current information about topics of interest to those who have, or work with, children with and without developmental delays. Interested? Contact Connie.

Not all children develop at the same pace. The website ParentingCounts.org offers a variety of free resources, including developmental timelines and videos, to help parents understand the many different ways their son or daughter develops from birth to age 5, including social emotional development. Parenting Counts is the research-based family of products created by Talaris Institute to support parents and caregivers in raising socially and emotionally healthy children. For more early childhood development resources, visit PACER.org.