

FIRST STEPS FAMILIES SEPTEMBER 2011

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



YOUR OPINION COUNTS!

First Steps strives to offer the very best services to children and families. Every year we ask families to complete a Family Survey to see how we are doing. The survey allows us to receive feedback from parents and guardians related directly to the services their children received through First Steps and the progress that their child has made. This year we are very excited to have the ability to send the surveys electronically for families who have an email address. Once the window for completing the online surveys is closed, First Steps will mail surveys directly to families that haven't responded.

We ask that all families take the time to complete the survey. Your feedback is extremely important to First Steps. The responses that we receive from families are not only included in a performance report that is given to the U.S. Department of Education, but also help us to identify where changes can be made and how we can better serve families. The online window is quickly closing and the surveys will be mailed within the next week. Please be on the lookout for your survey! The family surveys must be returned to First Steps by Friday, September 30th.

NEED HELP LOCATING CHILD CARE?

Kentucky's Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (known as "CCR&R'S") assist families in locating and identifying local quality child care. Your local CCR&R provides the following services:

- Information about local child care providers
- Information to help families recognize the quality child care option that is best suited for them
- Direction to the appropriate sources for child care assistance and support

Information can be obtained in person, by phone, by mail and through the website. Your local CCR&R can also help you identify child care facilities that are participating in the STARS for KIDS NOW program. STARS for KIDS NOW is a voluntary quality rating system for licensed type I and type II Child Care Centers and certified family day care homes. This system uses a scale of one through four STARS to identify levels of quality. STARS for KIDS NOW provides parents with a tool to help identify levels of quality when seeking child care outside of their home. For more information call 1-877-316-3552, or visit:

<http://www.kentuckypartnership.org/Info/Family/ccsearch.aspx>

For a parent guide to the STARS for KIDS NOW program visit:

<http://www.kentuckypartnership.org/Info/Family/stars.aspx>



PARENT CONSULTANT

Connie Coover
229 Taylor Ed. Bldg.
Lexington, KY 40506
1-859-257-6427
cccov2@uky.edu

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

Think Creatively!

It's time to make your toddler snug as a bug. Swaddle her in a blanket as you did when she was a newborn. Fold it snug so that your toddler has to wiggle and worm her way out. You can even tickle her a little to help with the wiggling!



While you wrap up your toddler talk about how you did this when he was a baby

- As you fold over each corner, count them! 1, 2, 3!
- Talk about how the blanket feels, is it soft, fuzzy, or smooth?

CHILD CARE CONSIDERATIONS WHEN YOUR CHILD HAS A DISABILITY

Placing a child in out-of-home care can cause anxiety, particularly when a child has health or developmental challenges. If your child has a disability, he or she is protected from discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Child Care facilities cannot refuse to care for your child just because he or she has a disability. Child Care centers can refuse to serve your child only in the following circumstances:

- Centers can exclude children who would pose a *direct threat* to the health or safety of others, such as a child with an infectious disease.
- Centers are not required to serve a child that would require a *fundamental alteration* of the program. An example of a fundamental alteration would be a center having to provide a one-to-one staff ratio for a fragile child.
- Centers have to make *reasonable modifications* to their policies and practices to integrate children with disabilities into their programs unless doing so would constitute a *fundamental alteration*. "Reasonable modifications" might include cutting up food in small pieces for a child who has difficulty chewing, or rearranging furniture to accommodate a child who uses a walker for mobility. A "reasonable modification" might also include training the child care staff to recognize an oncoming asthma attack or seizure.

Most centers will find that complying with the ADA will not cause undue burden, but with good policy and quality practice, complying with the ADA will fit into the center's policy of meeting the needs of all the enrolled children. Parents can help facilitate successful child care placement for their child by doing the following:

- ⇒ Communicate openly with potential child care providers. Providing clear, accurate information about your child's needs will often alleviate concerns.
- ⇒ Provide your child care provider with a copy of your child's IFSP and ask him/her to participate in the IFSP planning process
- ⇒ Include in your child's IFSP a plan for your First Steps providers that can offer support and information to child care providers.

EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY CONFERENCE

The Kentucky Partnerships for Families and Children is excited to announce that registration is now open for the 2nd Annual Early Childhood Family Conference on **October 14, 15 and 16th** at the Clarion Hotel in Lexington KY.

- * This conference is free to families (including hotel and food).
- * Registration is on a first-come first-served basis with limited spots available.
- * Activities and sessions will be available to children birth to five and their siblings.
- * We are pleased to announce the return of the "Ask the Doctor session" as well as some new topics for Early Childhood Parents.

A full conference list of detailed presentations will be included in registration packets.

Interested? Contact Connie Coover for a registration form ASAP!
Ph. (859)257-6427, cccov2@uky.edu

