

## FIRST STEPS FAMILIES AUGUST 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](mailto:cccoov2@uky.edu) to receive the newsletter electronically or call me at 859-257-6427 to arrange for a hard copy.



Connie

### ONE FAMILY'S STORY

My name is Connie Coovert. My husband Dave and I live in Lexington and are the proud parents of a daughter and son. When our son was about 18 months old we began to worry because he still was not saying any words and did not appear to understand a lot of what we said to him. By the time he was two there wasn't much change so we began looking for help and that's when we found First Steps.

First Steps staff helped us to get the services our son needed. Speech and occupational therapies along with Developmental Intervention became a part of our day-to-day routine. Of course I was hoping for a quick solution to our problems, but usually solutions take time. As it turned out, our son made great progress. Today he is a college sophomore majoring in music performance and plays both guitar and viola. I believe his accomplishments are due, in part, to the early intervention services he received through First Steps.

Becoming involved with First Steps also gave me the opportunity to be in contact with other parents. It was great to find out that I was not the only other Mom in the world with a child like our son. I decided then that I wanted to help other families find information and network with one another. I was given the chance to work as a Parent Consultant for the First Steps program. My job is to provide training and information to service providers, parents, legislators and the general public.

I want you to know I am here to help you in any way I can and I would love to hear from you.

**Do you have a success story you would like to share? What you share will likely encourage other families in similar situations. Please e-mail your story to Connie at [cccoov2@uky.edu](mailto:cccoov2@uky.edu) or call her at 859-257-6427.**

### PARENT VOICES COUNT



Parents—would you like to have a voice in the future planning and policy decisions for Kentucky's Early Intervention System (First Steps)? As a Parent Representative of the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) you will learn how the Early Intervention system works and be on the forefront of receiving information that affects the Early Intervention system. Parents have the opportunity to "sit at the table" and voice their opinions with other Key advisors to the Department of Public Health, lead agency for the Early Intervention program.

Interested? Contact Connie Coovert for more details.

## PARENT CONSULTANT

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We are on the Web:  
[http://chfs.ky.gov/  
dph/firststeps.htm](http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/firststeps.htm)



## Think Creatively!

Opportunities to help your child with early intervention skills are everywhere you go. Social interactions, motor skills, speech, and other abilities can be practiced anywhere. Try them out during these times:

- Brushing teeth
- Diapering
- Mealtimes, naptime or bedtime
- Watching TV
- Folding laundry
- Reading stories

## 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 preschool or other programs in your community.

For more information, ask your service coordinator for a copy of **A Step by Step Guide for Transition** from the *Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project*. This guide is also available on the First Steps website.

## 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 Cooverrt for a registration form ASAP!  
Ph. (859)257-6427, cccoov2@uky.edu

