

FIRST STEPS FAMILIES NOVEMBER 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

INCLUDING ALL CHILDREN

When most people think about inclusion they think about children with disabilities 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. Parents may opt to enroll their child in a recreation program specifically for children with disabilities. If parents choose to include their child in typical community programs there are strategies that they can use to facilitate successful inclusion.

- The most important starting point is finding an activity that is of interest to the 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 are conducive to friendship.
- 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 contact. Remember to present your child in a positive light and highlight his or her strengths and abilities. Also highlight the benefits to the program. Benefits include that 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 the child. Are there skills that can be practiced ahead of time? Let the child know what is going to happen.
- The road to inclusion is not always an easy, but forming early friendships and connections in the community is important for all children.

by Kristen Burke, OTR/L

FEDERAL REGULATIONS IN EFFECT OCT 28



The final Part C regulations for the early intervention program for infants and toddlers with disabilities were published in the Federal Register and became effective Oct. 28. The regulations focus on measuring and improving outcomes for children served by the Part C [First Steps] program, with the goal of ensuring that these children are ready for preschool and kindergarten.

For more information, go to <http://idea.ed.gov/part-c/search/new>.

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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!



Salt dough is a great developmental activity for even the tiniest of hands.

EASY SALT DOUGH RECIPE

2 cups plain flour (not self-rising)
1 cup fine-grained plain salt
1/2 cup water at room temperature

Mix the salt and flour in a large bowl and then add the water. Knead the mixture for about five to 10 minutes, until it becomes smooth and elastic. Cover with cling wrap to keep the dough from drying out, and let the dough sit for 30 minutes before using.

WELCOME TO HOLLAND

by Emily Perl Kingsley

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I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this...

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay. The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around...and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills...and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy...and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned." And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away...because the loss of that dream is a very very significant loss. But...if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things...about Holland.



CAR SEAT SAFETY REMINDER

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has announced that parents should keep their children in rear facing car seats up until age two (not one, as previously recommended). The newest research has shown that kids in rear facing seats are more than five times safer than those riding in forward facing seats. Statistics from recent studies have shown that children under the age of 2 who ride in rear facing seats are 75% less likely to die or suffer major injury during a collision.

Previous thinking was that children who rode in rear facing car seats where their feet touched the vehicle seat were more prone to injuries of their lower limbs. It has been found, however, that lower limb injury while riding in a rear facing seat is rare. The rear facing seats seem to better support the head, neck, back and trunk of children and help distribute the impact of a crash evenly over a child's whole body. Forward facing seats for toddlers are found to concentrate the impact more on the seat belt contact points, making them more prone to injury.

For more information, go to <http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/carseatsafety.cfm>.