

Family Share

Introduction

First Steps has implemented a payment system for First Steps' services called Family Share. The Family share will require families to share in the cost of their early intervention services. Based on the family's income and size, and using a sliding fee scale, First Steps will calculate the payment amount. For some families, their income will not be considered high enough on the sliding fee scale to be required to make a payment. For other families, they may be required to pay \$20.00 per month and others up to \$50.00. This amount is a per month participation payment and is not related to how many services your child has or how many times your child receives services. While the child and family participates in First Steps, they will be obligated to make the monthly "participation fee".

Family Share payments are important to the First Steps program in order to offset some of the costs of services. With income from families who are able to pay, First Steps will have additional funds for services for all children who have a developmental need. Family Share payments also gives First Steps an opportunity to leverage payments from other sources, like private insurance. The income generated will reduce the state cost and assist in supporting services for more children.

SECTION 1:

- (1) First Steps shall implement a Family Share system requiring the family to share in the cost of their early intervention services. The Family Share system uses a sliding fee scale that is based on the size of the family and the family's earned income.
 - (a) If the sliding fee determines that the family is responsible for a monthly Family Share fee, the family will only pay based on one child, regardless of how many children are enrolled in First Steps.

- (2) The Service Coordinator shall determine the members of the household using the following definition:

"Household" means a single housing unit which is legally considered the residence of one (1) or more persons who may or may not be related. "Legally", in the context of the aforementioned definition, means a person identifies that residence as his/her address. *Note: unborn children cannot be counted as a member of the household until they are born.*

- (3) The Service Coordinator shall collect the household earned income information in one or more of the following ways:
 - (a) Of those identified as members of the household, the Service Coordinator shall observe the current Federal Income Tax form for the Adjusted Gross Income (1040 is line 33, 1040EZ is line 4, 1040A is line 18) of each member to verify a sum total of the household earned income.
 - (b) If the Federal Income Tax form cannot be produced or is not accurate of the current earned income situation, the federal taxable gross column on the pay stubs of each identified member who has an earned income may be used to calculate and verify the sum total of the household earned income.

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- (c) If the identified members have earned income that does not require tax returns, then it cannot be counted as earned income (i.e. Social Security benefits, SSI benefits, WIC or Food Stamps, child support) and does not have to be observed.
 - (d) If the child has a Kentucky Medical Card or KCHIP, the household earned income does not need to be verified, unless the family is willing and wants to participate in the Family Share.
 - (e) If the child will age out prior to October 1, 2000, the household earned income does not need to be verified, but shall be reported.
 - (f) If a child is enrolled in First Steps and will age out within ninety (90) days of the referral, the household earned income does not need to be verified, but shall be reported.
 - (g) If any of the identified household members refuses to have their earned income verified by the Service Coordinator, they can have their earned income verified by the Lead Agency or alert the Lead Agency of the complete refusal of earned income verification, by completing the attached *Income Verification Request or Refusal of Income Verification Form*(Form 12).
- (4) Immediately prior to the initial IFSP and each annual IFSP thereafter, the Service Coordinator shall take the total number of identified members of the household and the sum total of the verified household earned income and calculate, on the First Steps Sliding Fee Scale Wheel, the identified Fee category for that family. The Service Coordinator shall identify the category and the total household earned income on the IFSP Meeting Form (Rev.2-24-00) or Demographic Changes/POE Home Visit Form (Rev. 2-24-00) and send the appropriate form to CBIS. *Note: Be sure to black out any earned income information and Fee category prior to sending copies of IFSP out to other team members.*
- (a) If the child has the Kentucky Medical Card(KMAP) or KCHIP, the child will automatically fall in category 1. If the family wants to participate in the Family Share, then identify the category by the family's size of household and earned income as though they did not have a Medical Card or KCHIP.
 - (b) If the family is willing to pay the highest category fee (\$50.00) and does not want their earned income verified, then check the Category 5 on appropriate form and list earned income as a dollar more than the highest figure in Category 4 under number in their household.
 - (c) For sole custody, use the earned income and count the household members for the parent that has sole custody.
 - (d) For joint custody, use the earned income and count the household members for the parent that is identified as being responsible for the child's educational and medical care.
 - (e) Children placed in Foster Care will typically have either KMAP or KCHIP, so no reporting or verification of the Foster family's income is needed. Identify the number of household as one (1) and zero (0) income on the correct CBIS form.
- (5) The Service Coordinator needs to be aware of those services that do not require participation in the Family Share.
- (a) Evaluation, Assessment, Service Coordination, and IFSP development are not eligible for the Family Share; therefore any identified Family Share amount will not be collected until other IFSP services are authorized.

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(b) The family size and household earned income still must be verified and recorded on the appropriate CBIS forms.

(c) The Family Share will not be collected if all services are suspended for the whole month and for each month thereafter when services were not delivered and the Service Coordinator has completed the *Temporary Suspension or Waiver Request from Family Share Form*(Form 13) to request the suspension of the Family Share.

Best Practice Guideline: The request for temporary suspension of Family Share Fee could be due to illness of the child or primary care giver or a planned family chosen vacation from service, but not for missed appointments.

(6) The family may choose to use their private health insurance to deflect all or part of their obligated Family Share Fee.

(a) Families must explore what services their health insurance will cover and to what extent the use of that insurance will affect their life time cap coverage.

(b) If the insurance will cover First Steps services, and enough of those services, that the amount of that coverage would be greater or equal to the sum of the obligated Family Share over that calendar period, then the family will be exempt from the Family Share fee for that period. Therefore, each calendar year the use of the family's insurance must be reviewed to see if it will again cover the otherwise obligated Family Share Fee amount.

(c) The Primary Service Coordinator will need to verify periodically that insurance has been used. (note: the procedure for this action is pending and instructions will be forthcoming.)

(d) First Steps will pay for all other services not paid for by insurance, including deductibles and co-pays, and will pay for all services after insurance has reached the insurance coverage limit.

(7) The Service Coordinator shall implement Family Share procedures without placing undue hardship on any family.

(a) If the family is in crisis and the Family Share fee would exacerbate the situation, then the Service Coordinator is obligated to introduce the Family Share as a requirement of the program, determine that paying the fee at that time would put the family in more severe crisis, and submit the *Temporary Suspension or Waiver Request from Family Share Form* (Form 13) explaining the situation to the First Steps central office and recommending delay.

(b) If the family reports that they are unable to pay their identified Family Share, then consideration may be given to either reducing or eliminating the Family Share fee by:

1. Making sure the family is eligible for services.
2. Making sure the family is obligated to pay and assessing the amount of the Family Share fee.
3. Only requesting if the family initiates a need to request exemption.
4. Using the *Inability To Pay Exemption Request Form* (Form 14) to determine exceptional cost due to disabilities and calculate the new obligation.
5. Receiving from the First Steps central office a written response as to the outcome of the request.

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- (8) The Service Coordinator shall initiate the Family Share process.
- (a) For those families currently enrolled in First Steps, the Primary Service Coordinator shall contact all those not already contacted by the POE, to determine the Family Share for each of those families and report that information to CBIS on the *Demographic Changes/POE Home Visit* Form (Rev. 2-24-00) by June 15, 2000.
 - (b) CBIS will transfer the Family Share category on each existing and newly enrolled family to the Family Share Administrator.
 - (c) The Family Share Administrator will notify each family of the expected Family Share amount and method of payment. This notice will be delayed for new families until their actual services are authorized.
 - (d) After three (3) months of failure to pay, either consecutively or cumulative, the Family Share Administrator will notify the First Steps central office.
 - 1. The First Steps central office will contact the Primary Service Coordinator to determine the possible reason for non-payment.
 - 2. Depending on that outcome, the First Steps central office may consider several avenues to solve the problem, including reduction of Family Share, exemption from fee, different payment plan, etc.
 - 3. The Primary Service Coordinator will work with the family to determine the most appropriate approach.
 - 4. The First Steps central office will follow up after determination is made.