

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



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Assistive Technology (AT) is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. First Steps will fund trial rentals of AT and will purchase equipment if they are payer of last resort. Please discuss with your child's team to determine if he/she could benefit from AT. Below are commonly used items for infants and toddlers:

- **Switches** come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and textures and are used to activate. It could be an adapted toy, communication device, or a computer.
- **Adapted toys** provide motivation for learning, teaches cause and effect, and enables the child to obtain transferable switch skills.
- **Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)** refers to communication methods that help children who struggle to produce or comprehend spoken or written language. AAC devices are available in single or multiple messages, static or dynamic display, often using pictures or symbols to increase vocabulary.
- **Computer Access** could involve a touch screen monitor, switch interface, alternative keyboard or mouse, and switch adapted software.
- **Daily Living Aids** assist with skill development. This includes adapted utensils, flexi-cut cups, scoop bowls and plates, and bath chairs.
- **Environmental Control Units** allow switch users to control up to two electrical appliances with single switches. Switch latch timers adds modes of control to any switch accessible toy or appliance.
- There is a variety of AT available for **Seating, Positioning, and Mobility** (i.e. Gait Trainers, Standers, Adapted Seating, Wedges). This type of equipment assists with maintaining body alignment, weight bearing, improved head or trunk control, and increased interactions with the child's peers and environment.
- If your child has a **Visual Impairment**, possible AT may be a light box, lighted switches and toys to draw attention to device, or the use of tactile objects or raised pictures.

You are invited to join the *First Steps to Assistive Technology Website* – an online network that provides information and resources on what type of equipment is available and guidelines for requesting AT through First Steps. To receive an invitation to join the network, please contact Cindy Huston @ (270) 852-1488 or email: chuston@wfcampus.org.



PARENT CONSULTANT

Connie Coovert
229 Taylor Ed. Bldg.
Lexington, KY 40506
1-859-257-6427
cccoov2@uky.edu

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

Quotable

Quotes!

“There is a child in every one of us who is still a trick-or-treater looking for a brightly-lit front porch.”

~ Robert Brault



EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY CONFERENCE

The fourth annual Early Childhood Family Conference will be held on November 22-24th at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Lexington, KY. This conference is open to families with children ages birth to five who are receiving state funded services through Public Health or Behavioral Health and their siblings up to age 12. This two and a half day conference is sponsored by Kentucky Partnerships for Children (KPFC), KY SEED, Department of Public Health and Department of Behavioral Health.

Each year the mission of the conference is to empower families of young children with skills and resources so that they can advocate and play an integral role in their child's service team. This is done through keynote speakers, breakout trainings, resource sharing and family activities.

The Early Childhood Family Conference is unique because families can attend with their children. A nursery, along with four other age range groupings and classes are provided for participants. Staff from Kentucky Partnership for Families and Children and partnering agencies, provide care and activities for the children during the training sessions for parents. Some of these activities include painting, pottery, music, games and guest speakers. In previous years a fall festival has been held on Saturday evening with a trick or treat trail, games and prizes. This year we will host a fall festival with a Thanksgiving theme. Partnering agencies and community organizations are welcome to come and participate in this event and share resources with families.

If you are interested in registering for this event, please contact Laura Beard at laura@kypartnership.org.



HELPFUL RESOURCES

Here are some great resources that can provide you with information and support to help your little one grow in many ways.

CDC National Center on Birth Defects and Disabilities

cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html

The CDC provides bulleted information on developmental milestones for children ages 3 months to 5 years, and provides developmental warning signs for each age group. The site also offers interactive tools for users to specify certain ages, select areas of development, and examine expected changes in milestones over time. Visit the above website to view information and download materials on the “Learn the Signs. Act Early” campaign for parents and health care professionals.

PACER Center www.pacer.org

Pacer center is a non-profit organization providing training and information for families of children and young adults with disabilities and education professionals. Their site is chock full of information about early intervention. You can also sign up for their newsletter called Early Childhood Connections.

NAEYC For Families | <http://families.naeyc.org/> National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) This site provides research based information on children's learning and development that families can trust.